

School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work

**Fieldwork Placement for Social Work Students: What Persuades
Managers to Open the Agency Door?**

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Doctor of Philosophy of
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DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature: P. A. Harlow

Date: 1 July 2014

ABSTRACT

The provision of fieldwork placement is a crucial component of social work education in a student's preparation for the profession. The international literature identifies both a shortage of fieldwork placements and the challenge of finding meaningful placement experiences for social work students in developed countries. This study examines the role social service manager's play in fieldwork placement and what factors influence their response to requests for student placement provision. An understanding of how institutional relationships could be strengthened in this context was a subsidiary question. Agency managers are pivotal to the placement decision making process, yet their role in fieldwork placement provision is neglected in fieldwork practicum discourses. Managers in non-statutory services are of particular interest because of the sectors obscurity in the fieldwork education literature and policy. On an international scale the size of the non-statutory sector itself provides a justification for this study as does the long standing connective links between social work education and this sector. Furthermore it contains the views of both Māori and non-Māori social service managers who provide the resources necessary for student placement provision. The qualitative research method utilized a constructivist-interpretative approach along with ecological systems theoretical methodology. One of the main contributions of this study is that it explains how managers' roles, organizational needs and expectations contribute to their involvement in fieldwork placement. Although this dissertation is based in *Aotearoa* New Zealand it has broader relevance and applicability because social service managers are particularly important to the wider international social work education picture.

Kia ora, Tena koutou katoa (greetings)

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my late husband Ross Gerald Hanlen, my adult children and their wives and husbands: David and Natalie Hanlen, Annie-Marie and Barry Sadlier, John and Stacey Hanlen and Catherine and Stephen McKenzie and my numerous grandchildren (Elizabeth, Katie, James, Isaac, McKenzie, Sienna, Amelia and Ruby).

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Gratefully, Patricia (Trish) Hanlen.

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CHAPTER ONE

FIELDWORK PLACEMENT PROVISION

FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS: INTRODUCTION TO AN

INTERPRETIVE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The value of fieldwork placement in social work education has consistently been expressed in the international literature. Schools of social work education have increasingly become aware of the complexities involved in arrangements for student fieldwork practicum and the need to proffer and maintain fieldwork placement opportunities for students of social work. The development of such opportunities is generally considered a collaborative process of transactions between two organizational systems, initiated by educators. Its success depends upon availability of suitable placements, contributions from schools of social work, its educators, coordinators or field directors and students, interconnecting with social workers as supervisors of students. Fieldwork placement, alternatively known as practicum, has been a practical period of student learning since professional social work education began.

Although many studies exist on fieldwork placement supervision of social work students on practicum, little research appears to exist on how social service agency managers might participate in field education placement process, what persuades them towards provision and what factors influence their decision. It appears from the social work education and fieldwork literature that social or human service managers have been tangential or peripheral to the process, although managers hold the role of agency resource holder. To support the argument for this study, Shardlow, Scholar, Munro and McLaughlin's (2012) email survey and literature search in nine countries, yielded no English language evidence of previous empirical studies on the nature of employer's involvement in social work education for the previous ten years. The

survey found that practicum learning in field education was employer's main area of engagement in social work education programmes with considerable variation in how they engaged in admission, management and assessment of student competency. Although its conclusions have an indicative status of caution the study questions as "to what extent, if at all, and if so how, should employers be involved in social work education?"(Shardlow, et al., 2012 p. 222). This study attempts to explore how non-statutory social service managers respond to the fieldwork placement question and their views on the issue.

The research topic, aims and objectives of this study, its design method and methodological framework is described in this chapter. The background to social work education and fieldwork, management in non-statutory social services, along with an introduction to the economic, professional, political and cultural contexts of fieldwork practica, in both the international and *Aotearoa* New Zealand contexts is offered. This chapter concludes with a preamble to subsequent chapters on this complex topic.

1.2 Research topic, aims, objectives, design and framework of this study

As fieldwork placement is a large component of social work education programmes worldwide, I am interested in the research topic of the role of non-statutory social service managers in social work fieldwork placement in *Aotearoa* New Zealand. The aim is to understand what factors influence managers' decisions on the provision of a student placement with their agency. This suggested a need for a study to understand what factors might influence their responses to a hypothetical question from schools of social work education, when asked the question: "Will you take a student on fieldwork placement?"

The research objective is to understand and explore the role of social service managers within the bigger picture of fieldwork education. What I am particularly interested in is how experienced non-government agency managers in provincial

Aotearoa (land of the long white cloud) New Zealand view provision of the fieldwork practicum placement. The objective was to study and provide description and interpretation of my understanding of the possible factors that could influence managers' willingness or unwillingness responses towards fieldwork placement. The objective was to gather sufficient data from managers and explore informational, organisational, psychological, social and cultural factors influencing their responses to questions on this research topic.

Secondly, to support this stem question about my interest in managers, a subsidiary question aimed to understand how arrangements could enhance and mutually benefit exchanges between schools of social work and agencies involved in provision. This research objective was to describe and understand how existing fieldwork relationships or connections could be developed, maintained, strengthened or transformed. It could be argued that reciprocity is a core feature of field education practice, but in my experience formal partnership arrangements have limited the construction of informal and personal reciprocal relationships essential for placement provision. My objective was to explore these two questions within the traditional fieldwork placement model utilized largely in the Asia Pacific region. This traditional model is described in the background to this study (1.3) in this chapter.

Although these questions may appear to come from a dualistic thought perspective, with bifurcated aims and objectives by the asking of stem and subsidiary questions, the following chapters will provide interpretations and weave together a circle of explanations and understandings gathered from the qualitative data which has been analysed and synthesised with the literature. Findings associated with these questions are examined in chapter four to ten under organizational, informational, student, cultural and relational themes arising from the analysis.

The setting for this study is non-statutory social service agencies from large provincial towns, cities and semi-rural districts from the North and South Island of *Aotearoa* New Zealand. The sample of participants was comprised of fifteen male

and female managers with three or more years' experience drawn from both Māori *kaupapa* (philosophy) and non-Māori social service agencies. To aid description and increase understanding and usefulness of the findings I have identified participants in terms of their ethnicity, gender and by the type of agency they managed. This research journey began in my role as a social work *kaiako* (teacher) in a *Wananga* (Māori translation for University). The topic was chosen on the assumption that Māori and non-Māori would benefit from the findings of this study. Māori and non-Māori (*pākēha*) managers are therefore identified in this way in the text for their contribution to this study. Ethical approval for this research was gained firstly from *Te Wananga o Aotearoa*, New Zealand and secondly from Curtin University, Perth, Australia.

Fieldwork placement has consistently been referred to in the literature on social work education for its importance as a vital component; (Bogo, 2010; Bogo & Vayda, 1998; Doel, Shardlow & Johnson, 2011; Hay & O'Donoghue, 2008; Hay, O'Donoghue & Blagdon, 2006; Homonoff, 2008; Maidment, 2002b; Noble, 2011; Perry & Maher, 2003). Others have described the experiential learning in fieldwork as the "universal expectation of universities" and the "heartbeat of social work" (Doel & Shardlow, 1996a, p.12, 24) or at the heart of social work education (Hicks & Maidment, 2009). Other authors have espoused that fieldwork education is crucial to professional social work and education of social workers (Noble 2011; Yu, 2011; Zuchowski, 2011), its development (Barton, Bell & Bowles, 2005) and it makes a critical contribution to the development of professional values (Hoffman, 2008). Understanding how fieldwork for social work students is managed in the fieldwork placement agency, such as non-government organizations is therefore vital. Students are educated at schools of social work, which for this purpose, in this local context, refer to social work departments or units within universities, polytechnics, private training establishments or *wananga* (Māori translation for University). Students of social work will generally receive allocated placements arranged by schools of social work in a wide range of government and non-government organizational settings.

This research was designed utilizing a qualitative method because it was considered a useful tool for collecting and analysing distinctive contributions from managers. This study brought together a multiplicity of expectations, points of view, frames of reference, opinions and positions of participants. There were five points of data gathering of empirical materials in this qualitative research: examination of the literature; a notebook journal for field notes which includes notes to myself; two semi-structured interviews of each participant; and the gaining of participant feedback related to the research questions.

My choice of interpretive philosophy from social science is based on its focus on understanding and describing meaningful social situations and the social interactions that managers brought to this study context. A constructivist-interpretative approach was used to aid interpretation of the data. Constructivism gives emphasis to the place for different roles in the fieldwork placement setting, how roles are carried out, what inter-action might take place between systems and what meaning those roles might give to the reality (Engel & Schutt, 2005). The research methodology was constructivist grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin (1998); Charmaz, (2000) which aided the construction of theory as an outcome of the manager's construction of their views on fieldwork placement issues.

As this study involves complex inter-organizational relationships between social service communities and educational communities, with interconnecting events, roles, relationships, policies and practices, the ecological approach to interpret and understanding the data also seemed appropriate. Roles and expectations have a place at various levels in organizational systems. This framework for this study drew upon eco-systems theory to aid description, thematic analysis and synthesis of the interpreted findings with the literature. Ecosystems theories (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Compton, Gallaway & Cournoyer, 2005; Germain & Gitterman, 1996; Gitterman, 1996b; Pincus & Minahan, 1973; von Bertalanffy, 1968) aided understanding of the macro or societal level of social structures influencing manager's decision making about fieldwork placement provision and the complexity involved in student practicum transactions. My research intention was to gain new

understandings and findings that would be useful to social work education, the social services sector, and for those being researched in the context of social service management. One postulation was to create meaning from the findings, which may add to international discourses on this important topic involving agency management as it applies to student learning in the agency context and how certain decision making factors may affect the availability of such provision.

1.3 Traditional fieldwork placement in social work education

This chapter sets the scene for this research topic into the role of managers within fieldwork placement utilizing the traditional model for practica. By way of a brief background to fieldwork placement, early records of fieldwork learning for students goes back to Britain when Birmingham University students took part in a settlement project which provided “practical work for students to study social and economic conditions contributing to poverty” (Payne 2005, p.230) in 1899. Social work stemming from the notion of charity work, commenced elsewhere in England and the United States of America at much the same time. This early type of project work is still an aspiration of modern day social work education. Although social work fieldwork programmes vary from country to country with differences between educational institutions, it is not surprising that social workers and social work educators have long espoused fieldwork placement as a valued and essential component in social work education curriculums.

In many countries, the prevalent traditional model of social work fieldwork placement is described as reflecting a one-to-one relationship, involving one student assigned to one supervisor in one location (Cleak, Hawkins & Hess, 2000) for a specified period of time. Practica occurs when a student is hosted and supported in a social or human service agency with the goal of learning about social work practice by being socialized into the profession (Shardlow & Doel, 2002; Zuchowski, 2011) and to integrate theory from the classroom into practice (Berg-Weger & Birkenmaier, 2000; Lager & Robbins, 2004) for a pre-arranged period.

In *Aotearoa* New Zealand the (NZ) Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) policy statement on 'Practicum within a recognised Social Work Degree' states that each student will (1) undertake a minimum of 120 days of supervised practicum; (2) do a minimum of two practica; (3) do one practicum for at least 50 days; (4) do at least two practica in different organisational settings and (5) be exposed to at least two different fields of practice ((NZ) SWRB, 2012). Also, ANZASW requires its members to complete a minimum total of 120 days of student placement, carried out in at least two different settings, although statutory requirements are gradually overtaking this particular previously held role. However, these requirements describe the essential components of policy requirements of the fieldwork placement model referred to in this study.

The term 'supervisor' is used in this study to describe the social worker responsible for the student's professional learning and development and allocated tasks, often in a specific social work field of practice in the agency context. Alternatively useful terminology such as fieldwork 'instructor', 'field educator' or 'teacher' is used in various countries. In this country such hosting is dependent upon the deliberate commitment by a registered social worker to act as a student supervisor and educator. Recent changes to the (NZ) SWRB practicum requirements now require that all placements "must have supervision provided by registered social workers" and that "all students must have at least one practicum with on-site supervision by a registered social worker" (SWRB, 2012). The (NZ) SWRB expects social work programme providers to ensure supervisors/field educators are trained to provide student supervision and have access to on-going professional development in field education. A student placement prospect requires at least one staff member willing to support it as a volunteer, "through goodwill and no extra remuneration" (Maidment, 2002a, p.36), an altruistic response. Therefore, social workers generally provide free supervisory services delivered primarily through organizational structures and agency systems. The placement availability depends largely on a registered social worker's goodwill towards a student's learning needs which suggests that the 'quality' of the supervision may depend upon their measure of goodwill at acceptance. At times the registered social worker as supervisor, may be external to the social service agency and receive remuneration, with less frequent contact with

the student, although other types of supervision may be available within the agency setting. The release of a student supervisor and provision of resources for fieldwork placement or the accommodation of an external supervisor may depend largely upon an agency manager who may or may not be social work trained.

In contrast to *Aotearoa* New Zealand fieldwork requirements, supervised practicum in Britain and Wales is 200 days (Humphrey, 2011, p.53), which is an even greater imposition on agency goodwill, whereas in Australia it is at least 980 hours of field placement in two settings over two academic years (Testa, 2011, ASWEAS, 2012, v1.2).

It would seem that the (NZ) SWRB and the professional body (ANZASW) in this country have little direct control over management decision making towards student placement provision in social or human service agencies. It could be argued that these requirements and regulations are quite an imposition upon agency resources and there is little evidence to suggest that non-statutory agency managers have ever been asked about their resource availability, attitudes towards social work fieldwork or what influences provision, or indeed what role they play if these policies are agreed to.

Over the years there has been a range of fieldwork placement models developed and evolved in this country and overseas. The British and American traditions of social work has influenced the early model adopted in *Aotearoa* New Zealand in the 1950s where apprentices (Apprenticeship model) observed and learned on the job in a one-to-one relationship with a supervisor. Since then various fieldwork placement models have appeared such as those in the 1990s called the Advocacy/empowerment model (New Zealand Council for Education & Training in Social Services (NZCETSS, 1993) the Internship model (NZCETSS, 1993; Ellis, 1998) and the Field Setting model (Ellis, 1998). This latter model is currently active and is referred to as the traditional model discussed in this thesis. An adaptation to the traditional apprenticeship model is the Industry-based training model designed as a result of

changing economic, social and demographic trends, for those already working in the social/human services workforce in *Aotearoa* New Zealand. This model is approved by the (NZ) Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) and it appears to be more suitable for social workers in full employment seeking a social work qualification who may find it difficult for various reasons to study full time. Hopkins and Cooper (2000) identified work-based programmes as an emerging trend to accommodate students already in the workforce. It allows students to take one practicum in their place of work with conditions (SWRB, 2012), with the balance of practicum requirements conducted in another setting.

Other models identified by Ellis (1998) are the contact-challenge model, and the consortium model and Allan, (2000) has identified the direct partnership model. Many other fieldwork placements models have been developed in various countries including the Community development model (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993); Network placement model (Boutland & Batchelor, 1993); Teaching Centre model (Bogo & Globerman, 1994); Partnership or banking model (Ruffolo & Miller, 1994); Intensive and Trouble Shooting Model (Miller et al., 1995) and the Resource Dependency model (Bogo & Globerman, 1999). More recent models have been the Exchange model (cited in Camilleri & Humphries, 2005); the Hunter's Rotation model (Ivry & Hadden, 2002) and the St. Paul's Model for social workers in schools, based on student well-being (Testa, 2011). Further, social work writers have identified a community situation in sub-Saharan Africa where student placements in the medical field were given the task to "challenge the persistence of superstition where disability or cancer was seen as a spiritual punishment, brought about by bewitchment" (Shardlow & Doel, 2002, p.174), but I have not been able to identify the name of the model. There are many other models emerging from countries where social work as a profession is being established, such as in the Philippines in the Asian Pacific region.

The rapid development of international placements has also led to the development of different models evolving into a global framework where interconnectedness through technological advances is rapidly increasing, along with the further

development of models to meet the needs of Indigenous people. A study by Hunter and Hollis (2013) on the model used to develop international placements, identified that block and concurrent placement Partnership models included the one-time/independent placement model, the Neighbouring Country model, the On-site model, and the Exchange/reciprocal model as identified by Pettys, Panos, Cox and Oosthuyen, (2005). The Neighbouring Country model, allowed for more student participation for a longer period of time than other international internships, according to Hunter and Hollis (2013), which increases expectations of host agencies. It would seem that models have been developed for particular places and times, but the question still remains as to whether the potential host agency managers were consulted about resource provision in the developmental stages of such models.

Some writers have pleaded for the re-organization of social work education to be based on collaboration and partnerships (Allan, 2000; Bogo & Power, 1992; Jarman-Rohde et al., 1997; Perry & Maher, 2003), because of the need for ‘good quality’ placements (Doel & Shardlow, 1996). In *Aotearoa* New Zealand and other western countries the traditional model of fieldwork placement for social work students has developed and changed through the energy of educators and feedback from students, supervisors and agency staff over the years. Further, Cleak, et al., (2000) and Noble, Heycox, O’Sullivan and Bartlett, (2005) note a decrease in the number of social service agencies willing or able to undertake a student learning partnership. Cleak, et al., (2000) though this diminished willingness towards student provision was through constraints of the traditional field education model. Beddoe (2007) noted that over the last decade, despite programme and student increases, agency support for placement provision had decreased, which likely compounds the problem of fieldwork placement scarcity, as reviewed in the literature in chapter two.

1.4 Background to management in non-government social services

Although the generic term ‘social services’ refers to both large scale statutory social service departments of government with specific legal responsibilities and non-statutory social and welfare services or community services, these are inter-

connected to social work field education and other sectors at meso and micro systems level of communication. Management of the day to day activities of social service agencies is the responsibility of managers, who are likely to be accountable to trusts, governance boards or committees of incorporated societies in this country. Managers in this context are alternatively called Chief Executive Officers, Directors, Practice Managers, Co-ordinators or *Kaiwhakahere* (important person).

I have chosen to research fieldwork placement in the non-government social services sector because this sector is more likely to be marginalized in global and local social work practice, human service delivery (Lyons, 2001). This sector appeared to be under-researched in the social work education and management literature, despite decades of altruistic links to social work fieldwork education. An alternative choice would have been the government social service sector or a comparative study of both sectors. Both sectors are part of my professional background, but it was important to keep my study manageable.

In *Aotearoa* New Zealand, the non-government social service sector, although diverse, complex and difficult to describe, is made up of a broad variety of groups merging into a community sector of voluntary groups, non-government organizations (NGOs), non-profit (NP) not-for-profit (NFP) groups or third sector (Lyons, 2001) organizations. Marginalization and a discourse of 'lesser than' to government or private business sector, leaves the social service sector in third place, ahead of the family sector, (Lyons, 2001). The third sector term appears to undermine its value. The British Association of Social Workers (2011) lamented the lack of statutory social work experience for two hundred and eighty students surveyed. They found that thirty four per cent had not secured a placement in a statutory setting, which suggests approximately sixty six percent of placements in Britain were receiving their fieldwork placements in non-statutory settings. This also suggests that the non-statutory sector was positioned as less valuable for student learning. Although these sector names suggest a positioning of organizational groups in society, this may be because the state sector pays more for services than the non-government sector who often rely on free labour. They may be seen as an economic drain on the state sector.

The non-government social service sector provide forty three percent of practicum opportunities ((NZ) Tertiary Education Commission, 2009).

Although it is difficult to estimate the number of managers of social services in this country, but it is thought they reach up to 10,000 organizations (New Zealand Council of Social Services, 2014). This Council suggests that there are around 500 delivery sites in New Zealand, such as Presbyterian Support (Family Works), Anglican Social Services and Salvation Army (New Zealand Council of Social Services, 2014). Social service groups are heavily funded by the Ministry of Social Development (Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB), 2012) but the level of funding is likely to respond to economic direction and social policy prerogatives at the time of allocation. Some small local agencies such as *iwi* (tribal) social services and community based agencies may employ fewer than five staff members and are often supported by volunteers. Such non-statutory, sectarian or non-denominational organizations cover a diverse and varying range of fields of social work practice that voluntarily offer or withhold learning experiences for students of social work. Fields of practice will often include health, welfare and care and protection of children, (although Child Youth & Family, Ministry of Social Development, retain the forensic components of child protection work). These fields of practice are largely influenced by the macro and meso contexts of economic and managerial circumstances.

1.5 Economic change and management influences on social services

In this introductory chapter fieldwork education is situated in a context based on liberal ideas of a free unfettered market economy. The economic context encourages beliefs that are based on efficiency of delivery and effectiveness of staff in service delivery. Such ideas arise from neo-liberal thinking about the value of increased competition in the market place, government contracting and funding of efficient services, the reduction of wasted time and resources, accountability to government, and the provision of choice for clients, or consumers. This effects social service agency management and wider networks, impacting on social service operations at

social, organizational and institutional levels (Lager & Robbins, 2004). Tensions caused by economic restraint for all involved in field education in *Aotearoa* New Zealand are said to be created by the current political climate of a “*potent mix of rather adverse conditions*” (Maidment, 2006, p. 48) as managers consider a student’s transition into fieldwork. Although important to this introduction, the three phases of economic change which arrived in New Zealand is described in chapter two for the purpose of providing background to the findings in chapter four on organizational factors influencing fieldwork placement provision.

1.6 Professional and political context of social work education

The social work profession internationally aims to describe, explain and improve human behaviour and social workers endeavour to respond to complex social needs in a multitude of environmental settings. “The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being...” (International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), 2004). Some social workers would argue it is also about social stability, social cohesion, sustainability, environmentalism and it is certainly governed by social justice principles and based on human rights and values such as respect and the preservation of integrity. The above statement draws upon the current international definition of social work, which will be replaced in 2014, as a result of consultation by the international bodies of social work.

In 1964 the professional body of the New Zealand Association of Social Workers (NZASW) was established, although social work education commenced well before this. It was not until 1971 that legislation “officially classified the term ‘social worker’ as a State Services occupation in New Zealand” (Maidment, 2002a, p. 36; Nash, 1998a). In 1975 the New Zealand Social Work Training Council (NZSWTC) began accreditation of new social work programmes with the traditional model of fieldwork. This Council later lost the confidence and support of non-statutory providers through non-recognition of community work training programmes run by

the sector which subsequently led to its disestablishment in 1985 (Nash, 1997). When the prevalent government department student units were closed during the 1980s, (Sutton, 1994) the non-government and voluntary sector agencies were then recruited to provide fieldwork placements and provide supervision for students (Nash, 1997).

The New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (NZCETSS) was established in 1987 as a ministerial advisory body, instructing social service organizations “to provide adequate resources and facilities,” for students, allowing agencies the right to refuse to accept particular students (NZCETSS, 1993, p.9). How agencies were recruited to agree to provision is unclear, but it seems non-government agencies were always positioned as the ‘fall back’ providers of placement and I have failed to find any evidence that any number of disparate social service agencies or their managers were ever asked their views on the traditional placement model at that time. However, some managers may have been involved in the NZSWTC or NZCETSS. Perhaps lack of consultation is why this phase of fieldwork development of the traditional model became the start of what Joyce (1998) described back then as a “subordinate relationship” (p.23) where agency practice held less status than classroom theory. Although times have changed, this had the effect at that time of marginalization within social work courses, which in turn reflected ambivalent attitudes to the social work profession within society (Joyce, 1998). This led to a struggle for resources and recognition of training and education, which Nash (1997) called the period of ‘deconstruction and diversity’. Fieldwork units were again disestablished in the 1990s and 2000s within Child Youth & Family, (Hay & Teppett, 2011), which may have led to a greater call on the generosity of non-statutory social services for provision of fieldwork placements for social work students.

The policy development of social work education and fieldwork education in this country has largely been influenced by the professional body *Aotearoa* New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) and its demands for ethical practice from its members. The Social Workers Registration Act (2003) arrived twenty seven years

after the professional body ANZASW; (formerly known as NZASW) commenced lobbying for it. The reconfiguring of the health disciplines under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (2003) (HPCA) signalled to politicians that the time was ripe to enact social work legislation aimed at consumer protection (from less than satisfactory social workers), an Act similar to the HPCA Act (2003).

With the subsequent event of the Social Workers Registration Board (NZ) (SWRB), this Crown agent has become the legal authority that recognizes social work education providers' programmes of study in conjunction with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and is required to advise and make recommendations to the Minister of Social Development on matters relating to the regulation of the social work profession. The key functions of this Board is to provide a mechanism for public protection by ensuring registered social workers are competent to practice; to manage the registration of social workers, set standards for social work education and training; consider complaints against registered social workers, enhance the professionalism of social workers and promote the benefits of registration (NZ) SWRB, (2012). This board has a statutory responsibility to recognize social work programmes and produce policies that these programmes must abide by, including fieldwork placement practicum. Industry expectations, legal regulations and educational requirements also impact on the training requirements of social work students.

A two tier system of social work training for initial social work degrees currently exists in *Aotearoa* New Zealand. Universities offer a four year social work degree and other qualifications in social work, and Polytechnics and *Wananga* (literal translation - university) offer three year social work/social service degrees with a few Private Training establishments offering under-graduate education in social work. However by 2015 the (NZ) SWRB, will require social work programmes eligible for re-recognition within a five year cycle, to provide four year under-graduate social work degrees taught by registered social workers.

Prior to the existence of the Social Workers Registration Act (2003), and the subsequent Board, the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW), the only professional social work body in the country, conducted course approvals of social work programmes, which has meant the professional body has undertaken a painful restructure of its role. Currently university programmes follow an approval pathway via the New Zealand Council of University Academic Programmes (CUAP) and a recognition processes by the Social Workers Registration Board. Polytechnics receive academic approval via Polytechnic Councils and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and programme recognition via the Social Workers Registration Board. Currently the benchmark qualification for the registration of social workers is a three year social work degree qualification, the meeting of 'fit and proper' requirements including Police record checks for clearance, and evidence of competency. Competency approval can be conducted either through an ANZASW membership approval process or the (NZ) SWRB on-line process related to registration requirements. Schools of social work have a part to play in confirming a student's qualifications as a precursor to their application for registration.

Registration of social workers is not yet mandatory for either the statutory or non-statutory sectors, although this is strongly encouraged by the (NZ) SWRB. Legislation currently fails to fully protect the public from less than professional people who call themselves social workers. Lack of mandatory registration also means there are limited numbers of registered social workers in non-statutory agencies, which is possibly due to the cost involved. It seems a pity that the title of social worker was not protected by legislation initially, although the use of the title of registered social worker is.

In *Aotearoa* New Zealand there are seventeen schools of social work with social work qualifications recognized by the (NZ) SWRB in 2014. The problem appears to be an oversupply if compared with the twenty nine degree programmes in Australia accredited by the Australian Association of Social Work (Healy & Lonne, 2010). Schools of social work in this country reported the need for approximately 1000

placements per annum (NZ) (Joint Working Party Report, 2009). A 2010 report by (NZ) Child Youth and Family on social work graduate projections estimate that in excess of 1700 placements will be required per annum by 2016. This report suggests this figure does not include demands placed on agencies to provide work experience for other programmes of a similar nature. It questions the capacity of the social service sector to meet these projected numbers in the future and sustainability of the current model. Given the continued shortage of placements and the projected increase in students to accommodate each year, this may mean a restriction placed on the number of students enrolling in fieldwork placement papers in any one year. However, earlier in a (NZ) SWRB report (2007) Beddoe commented that the net number of graduates had not increased, which may contribute to shortage of social workers as student supervisors. A few years later the Child Youth and Family Report (2010) concluded although a forty percent increase in graduate numbers per annum was projected for 2016, giving employers some assurance for a future qualified workforce, they question the sustainability of those projected numbers of qualified graduates. This could be considered a worrying trend, a trend that supports the urgency of this study, given the demands on fieldwork placement, reduction in agency willingness, shortage of social workers locally and nationally, the tightening up of local supervisory requirements, as well as workload and macro influences on agencies. The question has to be asked as to how agency managers see their role in supporting fieldwork placement for students of social work, given these projections.

Equally the shrinking government and non-government sectors vital to placement sustainability for fieldwork placements is part of this context. Such a challenge is set in the context of institutional struggle with workplace issues, lack of resources and workers having to produce more for less (Cleak, Hawkins & Hess, 2000) and a complex organizational environment (Cooper & Briggs, 2000; Maidment & Woodward, 2002), which suggests these pressures might also contribute to unwillingness.

The shortage of suitable placements is one problem and the neglect of Māori and non-Māori social service managers as stakeholders is another. Fieldwork placement

hosting is dependent on the voluntary goodwill of social and human service agency managers to support the student or support a staff member to supervise a student's learning about social issues and the professional work it involves. Although the components of the (NZ) SWRB social work programme curriculum is loosely standardized, but under review, students locally and internationally learn to work alongside those who are marginalized, disadvantaged, disempowered, oppressed, excluded, vulnerable, and unwell and/or in conditions of poverty. Graduates of social work programmes wrestle with challenging work in cultural, social, economic and political situations, with individuals, families, *whānau*, (extended family), communities and societies. Social workers are not as well publicly identified or recognized for their work in the non-statutory sector in this country compared with the statutory sector. Therefore graduates of social work programmes such as social, community, youth and *iwi* (tribe) development workers are confronted with difficult work, such as social conditions of insufficient income, illicit drug use, alcohol misuse, homelessness, crime, violence and domestic violence, marital or partnership breakdowns, school truancy or bullying, suicide, teenage runaways, physical and mental un-wellness, grief and loss, child neglect and abuse, discrimination, loneliness and boredom. Professional social work education draws upon theories of human behaviour and social systems; it links closely to social and community development, social justice and human rights. In this country educators strive to promote social action and bi-cultural social work practice (examined in chapter five) through classroom learning and fieldwork experiences in diverse situations, whilst working cross culturally is likely a feature of all social work practice internationally.

At an international level, fieldwork placement sits firmly within the Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession and programme curricula standards. These standards were adopted in Adelaide, Australia in 2004 by the International Association Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) general assemblies. Fieldwork practicum is part of the social work programmes curricula (Standard 3) and supervised fieldwork education (Standard 4.2.3.) and other sections of the core curricula of the Global Standards (Sewpaul & Jones, 2012). The IFSW is a global federation of national social work organisations “in 90 countries representing over 750,000 social

workers”; the IASSW represents “2,000 schools of social work and 500,000 students” (Jones & Truell, 2012, p.2).

The International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW) is a large global network of non-government organisation representing “tens of thousands of organisation” worldwide delivering programmes promoting “social welfare, social development and social justice” (Jones & Truell., 2012, p.2). It is significant to the advancement of social work that these three international organizations developed a Global Agenda document for the 2012-2016 periods because they recognised that historical and present political, economic, social and cultural situations in various contexts have consequences for inequalities globally with negative impacts upon people, which pose challenges for social workers. Global challenges and crisis such as “the worldwide recession, heightened inequality, extensive migratory movements, increased pandemics and natural catastrophes, and new forms of conflict” were said to force a rethink on global realities and social work action (Jones & Truell., 2012, p.1).

1.7 Cultural context of social work education

In this introductory chapter it is important to establish the value base of this study and my endeavour to incorporate the Treaty of Waitangi (*Te Tiriti o Waitangi*), social justice and human rights principles. Application of values and principles are important to social work research and because Māori were study participants which involved my gathering of indigenous knowledge, ways of making knowledge and making meaning from the data, additional care and understanding of cultural protocols was necessary.

The Treaty of Waitangi, an agreement between the British Crown and about 540 Māori *rangatira* (chiefs), was first signed on 6 February 1840, at a North Island location, called Waitangi. It was subsequently signed at other locations. The Treaty of Waitangi guaranteed acknowledgement of the importance of *tangata whenua*, the

Māori people of the land. The three articles of the treaty, in brief, allowed for ceding to Her Majesty the Queen of England all rights and powers of sovereignty, with her extension of royal protection, rights and privileges of British subjects. The Queen of England confirmed and guaranteed the Chiefs and Tribes full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their lands, estates, forests, fisheries and other properties. Since the 1980's political and community recognition of this treaty has brought past wrongs into the daylight and tribunal recommendations have resulted. The social work profession in *Aotearoa* New Zealand is committed to and its members are bound by Treaty of Waitangi principles, such as partnership, protection (of treasures, including language) and decision making participation with *tangata whenua* (Indigenous people of *Aotearoa* New Zealand), partners in this study. It is important that research and publications are to be informed and are “grounded by the Articles of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*” (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, (ANZASW), 2008, p.14).

Furthermore, any understanding of such decision making in field education would be in deficit if it excluded the reciprocation required in this relationship of exchange, tied to the partnership principle of the Treaty of Waitangi. Therefore, the research intention was the development of values based interaction between researcher and participants, as co-researchers, with resulting knowledge becoming a community asset for both Māori and non-Māori (*pākēha*). Studying cross-culturally coupled with the complexity and multiplicity of elements in the data gathered created a significant challenge to the achievement of the study aims and objectives, but it was considered important to include both Māori and non-Māori (*pākēha*) managers as beneficiaries of the findings. However, some may argue the inclusion of Māori is inappropriate because I am not Māori, despite my extensive exposure to Māori culture.

Iwi and Māori social services are relatively recent providers of social services. This sector now includes voluntary, faith-based, *iwi* (individual Māori tribes) and Māori (pan tribal) and self-help groups with paid staff; organizations most likely to provide student placements, more so than government agencies (Joint Working Party Report, 2009). Māori social services are provided by *iwi* (tribe), pan-tribal, or *hapū* (sub-

tribe) organizations at *rohe* (regional) level. An *iwi* (tribal) group is a collection of kin-based people who are likely to be able to trace their genealogical links back to a common ancestor. Māori and *iwi* social services provide holistic services integrating health models, welfare, social and cultural characteristics and operate from a Māori *kaupapa* (philosophy) with an increasing national spread. Since the 1980s pan-tribal, tribal, *hapū* and *whānau* (extended family which can include non-biological kin) social services have further developed to meet the needs of *tangata whenua* (people of the land) and others. Some Māori *Hauora* (health) services integrate social welfare services, delivering from a holistic Māori *kaupapa* (philosophy) and collective decision making with *whānau* (extended family) in child and family welfare, youth justice and corrections (Walsh-Tapiata, 2008). This author suggests that this growth in health and social services, created by *iwi* (tribal) and Māori organizations offers a fresh and vibrant contribution to social work, leading to a corresponding growth for more Māori social workers. “Māori social services have grown from zero to 1,000 in the twenty years from 1984” (Aimers & Walker, 2011, p. 40) which Tennant, Sanders and O’Brien (2006) claim has posed multiple challenges such as strained relationships between new community and voluntary services and the traditional tribal groups and authorities.

The social service sector and social work education in *Aotearoa* New Zealand has a strong Māori cultural dimension, developed through the early work of New Zealand Council of Education and Training in the Social Services (NZCETSS) New Zealand Association of Social Workers (NZASW), ANZASW and the seminal document of *Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū* (day-break), which Hollis-English (2012) suggests has informed Māori social work since 1986 as a foundation document, second to the Treaty of Waitangi. This ground breaking document was published in 1986 by the New Zealand government which reported institutional, cultural and personal racism in the Department of Social Welfare. This resulted in a paradigm shift in social work and social policy thinking, which lead to critical analysis of the relevance of western literature, teaching and practice and to the place of the Treaty of Waitangi. Members of the ANZASW professional body and registered social workers must meet the requirements of cultural competence.

Since 2002 *wananga* (literal translation is university) (*Te Wananga o Aotearoa* and *Te Wananga o Raukawa*) have delivered social work education programmes from a Māori *kaupapa* (philosophy), as have other tertiary institutions. Bi-cultural social work degree programmes are delivered in both classroom-based and work-based (industry-based) formats.

1.8 Preamble to thesis structure

This thesis is structured to firstly introduce the aim of this study on the topic of managers and fieldwork placement provision for social work students in the specific context of *Aotearoa* New Zealand. This introductory chapter has set out the study questions, introduced the study design, the fieldwork in social work education, social service management, the non-statutory sector setting, and economic professional, political and cultural contexts in which fieldwork practicum of social work education takes place.

Chapter two reviews relevant literature on the thesis questions to find out what is known about managers roles in fieldwork placement and players within social work education and identifies important areas for consideration and relevance. The review considers what has been written on fieldwork education, social service management, organizational theories, social work professional practice, and student fieldwork supervision. Chapter three engages with the question of how the research was designed and carried out. It explains the ontological, epistemological, methodological and ethical ideas connected to this constructivist-interpretative enquiry. Key contributions to this thesis are found in chapter four to ten where the major themes of organizational change, informational factors and pre-placement transactions, student factors contributing to manager's willingness or unwillingness are distilled from the data gathered in relation to the stem questions. The subsidiary question is answered in chapters nine and ten. I have drawn upon eco-systems theories to aid the unfolding of the empirical evidence, interpretation and synthesis with the literature. For example chapter four on the theme of organizational factors affecting manager's decision-making on student placement, firstly examines the

influences on non-statutory organizations at a macro systems level then examines managers and others within the organization at the micro level. Chapter four has a focus on how organizational change may influence manager's willingness or unwillingness towards fieldwork placement provision.

The findings on manager's need for student information, Indigenous imperatives and student's cultural learning opportunities unfold in chapter five. The student theme continues in chapter six where factors that influence managers in pre-placement transactions towards safe choice of student is examined. Chapters seven and eight scrutinize manager's willingness and unwillingness attitudes towards students which influence manager's decisions on fieldwork placement provision. Chapter nine and ten consider a relational theme where fieldwork relationships, partnership ideas and mutual benefits between social work education and social service agency staff in relation to the subsidiary question are examined. Manager's views, perceptions, needs and expectations of the traditional fieldwork placement model utilized in the Aotearoa New Zealand context, roles within it and whether this model adequately meets the needs of managers is discussed in chapter ten. Some innovative fieldwork models developed internationally have emerged and creative responses to educational needs are acknowledged in chapter ten. Chapter eleven brings forward new understandings, limitations to this study and how various actors might influence manager's views on fieldwork placement provision. It considers implications for international debates along with suggestions for future research.

This chapter has outlined the structure of this thesis. Each chapter of the findings includes an introduction, method of construction; analysis of the distilled findings synthesized with the literature, interspersed with discussion, analysis and conclusions. Linked to this introductory chapter, the following chapter contains a review of material relevant to the manager's involvement in fieldwork placement, their likely role and linkages to other roles within student fieldwork placement education and learning. The complexities around fieldwork placement opportunities are highlighted in chapter two, such as the identified problems of fieldwork placement scarcity, fieldwork placement unavailability and quality of supervisors.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT MANAGERS

INVOLVEMENT WITH FIELDWORK PLACEMENT?

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to critically review the literature on the role of social service managers within fieldwork placement settings, how this connects with other roles in fieldwork placement and the study questions. This review intention is to provide a broad explanation of what managers' views may be in association with management responses to the fieldwork placement request for student provision and factors that may influence their decision. The literature is also reviewed for collaboration between field and school and beneficial exchanges within the traditional placement model, as it applies to the subsidiary question.

The purpose of my examination and review of background literature was to engage with both domestic and international debates, to identify gaps and overlaps, to avoid duplication of interpretation and to inform myself and others of its contribution towards the answering of the research questions. The literature information provides a source of data and context and it is interwoven throughout the thesis as “another voice” that contributes to my theoretical reconstruction (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006, p. 5) of this work.

A wide search was made of both local and international literature from social work education, social work fieldwork placement, student fieldwork supervision, management and organizational literature. These deposits were drawn upon to evaluate what has been written about the placement questions involving a management perspective and to identify key areas for examination and parameters to this study.

This chapter firstly examines the influence of economic change on organizations and their management and secondly I consider how divergent organizational structure, purpose and process may be associated with the study questions. I then consider the relevance of the literature on social work fieldwork education, placement uncertainty and placement quality. I review the literature to find out what it said about the role of non-statutory managers and their views on fieldwork placement provision. As indicated in chapter one very little is written about managers or employers of social worker in relation to this topic. The literature on the responsibilities of the fieldwork placement co-ordinator who orchestrates the transitional process across systems and the essential contribution of the supervisor/field educator allocated to teach student(s) social work on fieldwork practicum is considered for their significant contribution to this topic. The powerfulness of fieldwork placement learning on students is briefly examined in the latter part of this chapter. Although the client or client groups are the reason why social work training and professional social workers exist, the client role is not reviewed here in order to keep this study manageable. These latter roles are vital but as I do not wish to dilute the focus of this research, I have addressed these roles briefly. Some relevant literature on the importance of Māori cultural well-being and integrated social services and values in Iwi and social services is considered for its relationship to student learning on fieldwork placement and how this knowledge may relate to the subsidiary question.

The relevant literature is written by educationalists which it could be argued, might reflect an uneven state of educational relationships with community agencies in the fieldwork practicum context. On the other hand, educationalists, as leading players have endeavoured to 'raise the bar' in social work fieldwork availability, quality standard and supply. A review of the literature suggests that most fieldwork education writers appear to restrict themselves principally to the essential roles of fieldwork placement co-ordinators, supervisors and student roles.

The international literature on fieldwork education starts from the perspectives of the profession or school, although in reality "the placements are defined by the agency" (O'Connor, Wilson & Setterlund, 1995, p.253), but these writers do not go as far as

to say the agency manager. Reference to the 'agency' (O'Connor et al., 1995) as being important to the structure of fieldwork placement, as a hermeneutic interpretation, may refer to the role of the manager, social worker, administrator and or staff or the governance body. The 'agency' terminology clouds the important role of the manager and suggests a passive add-on unidentified involvement, therefore subtly excluding the management role in literary works related to fieldwork in social work education. This suggests de-personalization to a non-person by linguistic heuristics with the use of the word 'agency'. Such language may reduce the significance of and the identification of a manager's role and their overall contribution to placement provision in their organization.

2.2 The influence of economic change on organizations and the sector

The stem question considers the factors influencing managers' responses to the question of provision and their role within fieldwork placement. The political and economic literature suggests that management decision making may be influenced by macro-economic changes with an international spread that impact locally. Economic changes could be viewed as arriving in three phases in *Aotearoa* New Zealand. It is important to set out these phases of economic change and discuss their relationship to the research questions.

The first phase of economic change was strongly influenced by neo-liberalism, a political philosophy on the minimization of state intervention, the dismantling of collaboration and the introduction of a "competitive contracting environment causing fragmentation in the early 1990s to the dissatisfaction to the NGO/third sector organisations" (Aimers & Walker, 2008, p.15).

The second phase was seen as marketization and de-regulated markets and the coming of neo-conservative social policy with outcome based accountability. Values, management and the objectives of social work were said to change with managerialism (Gibbs, 1999). Managerialism is a discipline of running organizations

using managerial techniques. This originally included the idea that managers tackled the building of community spirit and social disharmony through social transactions. These ideas could also lead to strengthening social service delivery, as values such as efficiency, flexibility, quality, competition and effectiveness coupled with social work values of respect, preservation of dignity and social justice applied to service delivery, the outcomes could be enhanced. The managerial value of effectiveness and neo-liberal ideas could challenge social workers through the application of rules around efficient use of time as a resource for students. Effectiveness as a neo-liberal idea could have a bearing on the manager's response to the research question. Further the economic and managerial context suggests that all social workers and staff are required to keep up-to-date with technology that aims to increase efficiency. It is said that management theories can determine such activities as downsizing of services (Bilton, Bonnet, Jones, Skinner, Stanworth & Webster, 1996) and it is likely that such changes in social and human services might mean that these types of organizations downsize more frequently than other kinds of organizations (Jarman-Rohde, McFall, Kofar & Strom, 1997).

The effects of restructuring and the resultant downsizing, create an environment of increased workload on social workers in agencies providing placements (Wayne, Raskin & Bogo, 2006) and noted earlier by Jarman-Rohde et al. (1997). This situation continues today, in a capitalist economy of funding shortage and stringent financial service delivery and accountability in the economic, political and professional sphere. Further, O'Donoghue (2003) identified managerial processes as not only affecting the volume and complexity of social problems, but also that public expectations surpassed resource availability, which in turn appears to have a compounding effect on social service delivery contracts and capacity to provide services. On the other hand, students viewed as providing free labour for their service may be a motivation for fieldwork placement provision.

The third phase of economic change heralded globalization, further marketization and what was described as being “ ‘set in stone’ contracts as a one-way process”, which varied between similar programmes (Aimers & Walker, 2008, p.15).

Government economic and social policies affect how and if social services are financially supported through contracts for service which may include the Ministry of Social Development and or the Ministry of Health in New Zealand. Increasingly the Ministry of Social Development's role has become regulatory in nature and reduced or limited to what government considers essential services (Gynnerstedt, 2011), but still positioned to govern any partnership by setting the rules in their Standards of Approval documents and contracts. Over time accountability has increased; contracts are based on cost reduction and improved organisational performance and efficiency (Gibbs, 1999) and evaluative research into efficacy of services is required by some government funders of social service programmes. These requirements have resulted in the reduction of non-government social services or their demise through loss of contracts, resulting in the loss of social workers, which possibly leads to a reduction in the student fieldwork placement pool. Reduction in services include the rapid decline in state provided housing of those in need, including older people, although a small number of local governments still assist those who met the difficult means-tested requirements (Gynnerstedt, 2011), a situation which likely increases social workers workload. New Zealand government spending is being increasingly reduced on social services associated with education, health; counselling and legal services coupled with active encouragement of the involvement of private providers and corporations. For those organizations with reduced funding and stringent contractual requirements tied to contracts the cumulative effect is that of "large case loads, recurrent organisational restructuring, high levels of stress, and rationing of resources" (Maidment, 2001, p.281) perhaps leading to social workers taking flight.

Globalization, the state of national economies and ideas stemming from neo-liberalism continue to pressure the management and governance of non-statutory social or human service organizations locally and globally. On the other hand, globalization, although a complex process that crosses international boundaries and effects social, political, cultural, organizational and economic process and systems, can bring opportunities as well as threats to social services and education. This aspect of Aimers & Walker's (2008) third phase of economic change and globalization is further discussed in the study findings in chapter four.

Economic changes over the last thirty years have impacted on social service organizations significantly both in focus and manner (Beddoe, 2000; Buck, Bradley, Robb & Kirzner, 2012) It could be said that these major economic influences on managers and changes in economic systems at a macro and meso level, filter down to the micro systems level of management of staff and the economic costs of resourcing fieldwork placement. Such changes have correspondingly affected roles in social service organizations, such as senior social workers becoming team leaders and social workers becoming case managers (Gibbs, 1999). Commercialization of higher education, changes in accreditation standards and pressures to provide “customer-friendly” and student-centred programming, with degrees becoming an indispensable part of successful employment, these have brought about changes in social work education in United States and Canada (Buck et al., 2012, p. 2) and other countries such as Australia and New Zealand. Just as these phases of economic change have impacted on social service delivery we now examine how divergence in organizational structures, purpose and process may inform the research questions.

2.3 Divergent organizational structure, purpose and process

Social work education and fieldwork is not a free standing activity but controlled by organizational structures and processes (Jones & May, 1992), standardized by professional and legal requirements as well as swayed by a sea of external macro level systems, meso forces and micro internal structures, administration and communication systems.

Although there is limited organizational literature that examines or compares the diversity of organization purpose between tertiary education providers and non-government social service organizations in the context of fieldwork education and management, nevertheless it is worthy of consideration, because it links to decision making factors in the stem question of this study. The literature suggests that the differences in organizational purposes must influence the way in which fieldwork placement is perceived because education and social service organizations are constructed for different legally mandated purposes. Managers and educators are

employed to achieve goals and direct the organization's work towards their legitimate purpose which may also lead to differences in expectations. Such organizational systems in fieldwork are about negotiation and inter-action by interacting people in inter-dependent roles.

Diversity in organizational purpose can possibly relate to the historical divide between universities and community with differing expectations of institutions perceived to be involved in the development of student education. Such a perceived divide is associated with an idea coined by Evans (1987) as the historical 'town and gown split'. This perceived split was noted by Doel and Shardlow (1996) who suggested that such a perceived split was largely a product of the institutional structure of social work, although these writers later concluded that the education of students for professional practice was not a core concern of the agency; rather its prime role was that of service delivery (Doel & Shardlow, 2005). A fault in the educational model was said to be caused by the separation between the university and the community, a separation between "the poet in the ivory tower and the labourer in the field" (Beddoe, 2000, pp.51-52) which she suggests will result in resourcing issues. Further, it was reported that students were caught in dynamics reminiscent of the "medieval town-gown schism" (Dent & Tourville, 2002, p.33) where occupations appeared to hamper dialogue. However, students, although they might not know it, may be expected to heal the assumed split between classroom education, knowledge and theory and the practice of social work. The literature differentiates between the university and the local community in its purpose which suggests the university is 'outside' the community, but the 'agency' is subsumed within the community, although it could be argued this is not so.

2.4 Social work field education, placement uncertainty and quality

The fieldwork practicum literature suggests that universities control "intellectual concepts and principles" and are "given greatest emphasis" (Doel & Shardlow, 1996, p.16) over social work practitioner's skill. On the other hand more recent social work education literature suggests that fieldwork placement in social work

programmes has significant value to educationalists, students and others. Fieldwork placement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is said to have moved into a central position in the Social Work degree with a 35% increase in placement days according to Lefevre (2005). Therefore, it could be considered an indispensable gold standard which must be sustained to ensure the future of social work. To support this, there is an elevation of the status of fieldwork in social work education in the United States of America and Canada to a "...‘Signature pedagogy’, a term coined by Shulman, (2005)" as a "central form of instruction and learning" (Buck, et al. 2012, p.1). This fieldwork status of instruction and socialization prepares people for the profession by being a pervasive part of the curriculum. Zastrow (2003) and Wayne, et al., (2006) identified fieldwork as an integral component of social work education with Zastrow (2003) stating it is designed, supervised, co-ordinated and evaluated on criteria which requires the student to demonstrate the social work programme objectives. Later Wayne, Raskin and Bogo (2010) found congruence in selected organizational arrangements and disparities in the way Shulman (2005) had defined ‘signature pedagogy’ and the implementation of field education in social work education. These writers lobby for broader application of Shulman’s criteria with emphasis given to group structures for learning and teaching in the field and the drawing upon adult learning theory of Knowles (1980) and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). Wayne, et al. (2010) also suggests that students learn through subjective reflection, the process of conceptualization of the situation and intervention by making connections to theory, supplemented by a field instructor’s explanations.

Further, it is significant that Lager and Robbins (2004) note that this field education or practicum component takes up approximately twenty to thirty per cent (20-30%) of the total social work course content, while Douglas (2011) suggests that the one hundred and twenty (120) days in this country is approaching half of a student’s study time, although internationally this will depend on the length of the programme and the placement period as this may vary between programmes.

In addition to the extensive literature on the importance of a place in curriculums for fieldwork placement and a commitment to fieldwork social work education internationally (Clare, 2001), a common theme in the literature has been a longstanding seasonal uncertainty for schools of social work around student placement availability. Educationalists such as Wayne, et.al. (2006) identified that the supply of fieldwork placements was a problem in New York in 1964 and stated there was a need for radical change in field education because of the roadblock to placement provision. Fieldwork placement scarcity was studied by Raskin, Skolnik and Wayne (1991) in an international comparative study finding fieldwork placement scarcity in responses received from 511 countries, which illustrated the extent of the problem at that time. Since then, fieldwork placement scarcity has been further noted in the literature (Briggs & Cooper, 2000; Chilvers, 2011; Cleak, Hawkins & Hess, 2000; Cooper & Crisp, 1998; Doel & Shardlow, 1996; Hay, 2010; Jarman-Rohde, McFall, Kolar & Strom, 1997; Maidment, 2001; Noble, Heycox, O'Sullivan & Bartlett, 2007; Noble, et al., 2005), which further suggests on-going problems around scarcity of provision for a social work student's learning in the field. Furthermore, a continuing local and international trend towards placement shortages has been exacerbated by a rapid increase in the number of social work and social welfare programmes and increased number of students (Noble, Heycox, O'Sullivan & Bartlett, 2005; Townsend, Long & Trainor, 2011), which could lead to withdrawal from provision.

In 2006, Wayne, et al. thought that changes were needed to stem the unavailability, because of those noteworthy and critical changes in agencies, universities, and with students of social work. Given that fieldwork placement shortages has been identified for many decades despite expectations of cooperation and inter-organization participation in practicum, it is not surprising if earlier traditions have been lost, and perhaps apathy and indifference has crept in through lack of understanding of social service agency views and expectations. Prolific writers on fieldwork placement Doel and Shardlow (1996) have highlighted the challenge that educators face in working in a collaborative way with those in social work practice. Other writers were surprised "that no studies existed that illuminate the factors that

motive organizations to collaborate with universities” (Bogo & Globerman, 1999, p.1) to aid the integration of theory with practice.

Not only does placement scarcity continue as an international issue, but also the quality and unevenness of student supervision has been identified in *Aotearoa* New Zealand. The quality of non-government sector placements was found to be a concern and a pressure point in a survey of social work supervisors/educators which was said to be a reflection on the unevenness of training of fieldwork supervisors ((NZ) Tertiary Education Commission, 2009). Supervisor training aside, it was found earlier that ninety percent of student supervisors had no official directive to decide on fieldwork placement (Maidment, 2001), although it could be argued that such authority is delegated to them from managers or the decision shared with managers. The literature has identified the need to encourage agency support (Ellis, 1998; Maidment, 2000; Zuchowski, 2011), for student placement, which in turn requires the commitment of social work education (Cooper & Briggs, 2000) if quality placements are to be achieved (Hay, O’Donoghue & Blagdon, 2006). Despite these calls for quality and greater evenness of placement supervision, the shortage of fieldwork placements and student practicum supervisors, it would appear that placement scarcity continues. This situation of fieldwork placement scarcity and the need for quality placements illustrates just how dependant social work education is on ‘agency’ management to provide this increasing valuable but limited non-government or community sector resource.

2.5 Role of non-statutory managers in fieldwork

This section of this chapter considers what the literature says about the role and responsibilities of the social service agency manager who holds a liability for release of the practicum resource as the controller of agency activities. As identified in the introductory chapter, the role of the non-statutory agency manager has received insufficient depth in the national or international literature for their contribution to fieldwork placement. This review was difficult to achieve due to shortage of literature on managers’ roles in social work student hosting for practicum. However,

Shardlow, et al. (2012) internet enquiries in ten countries explored the involvement of employers in social work education programmes. Although the findings are limited they suggest that employer's main area of involvement was in practice learning/fieldwork education and admission processes, programme management and student competency assessment. Their engagement was deemed variable in this "impressionistic account on the nature of employer engagement in social work education." (Shardlow et al., 2012, p.206). However, it is rarely mentioned in social work text books (White & Harris, 2007). If it is, it could be seen in a negative light of disinterest in field education or the role referred to as 'the agency'. The literature fails to address the time, energy, resources, expertise and commitment of the manager and the fundamental role he or she plays in fieldwork education provision and its sustainability. The implication gathered from the social work fieldwork literature is that the role of the manager, caretaker of scarce internal agency resources, is overlooked in the multiple relationships required to make fieldwork placement provision work as an educational function.

However, in writing about critical success factors for inter-agency collaboration in social work practice Weinstein, Whittington and Leiba, (2003) include the important role of the manager. These authors write about working in partnership with social work education but state that "social workers and social work managers are a resource in short supply" and may divert "attention and resources away from the core business of professionals and organizations" (Weinstein, et al., 2003, p. 213). These writers suggest that if there are power differentials in the partnership it could result in losses for all participants. Scarcity of placements suggests that greater inter-agency collaboration is needed which requires "commitment and leadership in each organization; good communication within as well as between collaborating agencies; consultation, training, planning and reflection time; (and) an infrastructure to deliver these key elements of support" (Weinstein et al., 2003 p. 157).

Although literature on manager's role in fieldwork is sparse, writers such as Furness and Gilligan (2004) would argue that lack of commitment by managers is one factor that contributes to lack of supervisors for student placement and consequently fewer

placements are available for students. Other writers on student supervision purported that “one of the challenges for the social work profession is to encourage agency management to see the worth of field education...” (Hay, et al., 2006, p.27). However, many of the unwillingness factors influencing placement provision illuminated in the literature relate to and may depend upon the actions of the person in a managerial role of such social services.

Managers have the role and responsibility to make decisions that impact on the operation and functioning of the agency. In a review of the social services literature, Watson and West (2006) contend that decision-making roles of social workers in social service agencies are steadily been overtaken by managers. These writers of social service management reason that this is an efficient way of carrying out policies relevant to the context as fieldwork placement. Managers are positioned well up in the organizational structure to exercise legitimate power and authority in determining tasks and their allocation, including how the tasks are to be grouped, who reports to whom, and where decisions are to be made (Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe & Waters-Marsh, 1998). There is a considerable volume of social work and organizational literature documenting research into organizational management and managers’ decision making styles and cognitive processes. For instance, O’Hare (2006) in writing about neuroscience suggests that the understanding of decision making is enhanced by identifying three decision pathways in the brain. These pathways were named as the cognitive analytical system, analogical system and the affective system (O’Hare, 2006) but this literature is not developed further here for this purpose.

It could be argued that it is the social worker on staff who provides the supervision and makes the decision, but this happens in paid agency time, using agency resources and it is the agency manager whose role it is to shepherd agency activities. So managers, responsible for staff are closely connected to the social worker who offers to supervise social work students. Furthermore, multiple stakeholders may be involved in the process of student placement decision making, so understandably managers in the past may have had few expectations and perhaps left the decision making process to others, such as their staff acting as student supervisors.

Further, within an organization at a micro level, sub groups may be vying for decision making status over student placement, while on the other hand they may be wishing to avoid the issue because of workload. Furthermore, internal conflict may be generated between supervisors making contradictory decisions to managers about student placement, which may require negotiation between the supervisor and manager, who may have had said 'no', if they were initially asked. A manager may wish to share power and encourage participation of staff and leave the decision of provision to one powerful individual (or sub-group) in the organization with designated authority roles, which the literature suggests is the student supervisor within the agency (Moore, 2000). As Moore (2000) concludes, it is the field educator's decision to accept a student and Allan (2000) maintains the partnership is between educators and practitioners. On the other hand, in identifying the agendas of fieldwork players Moore (2000) describes the organisation's focus as being on the service delivery to its clients, not on student training. Although for Māori placements a *kaumatua* (Māori elder) may be involved with the fieldwork placement contract (Smart & Gray, 2000) and decisions are based on collective values for relational development (Ruwhiu, Ruwhiu & Ruwhiu, 2008).

2.6 Responsibilities of the fieldwork placement co-ordinator

For student placement to be successful the fieldwork literature indicates that fieldwork education is generally considered a collaborative process involving schools of social work (principally co-ordinators and educators), student supervisors, and students of social work, roles reviewed here for their relevance to the stem question. From a functional perspective fieldwork placement social and educative systems can be viewed as functioning structures that are ideally interconnected and interdependent, where equilibrium, consensus and integration are seen as essential components (Parsons & Shils, 1965). Hence role interaction and integration are required for successful placement of students and are themes in this critical analysis of this literature. Although social work educators and social workers have long espoused fieldwork placement as a valued if not crucial component in social work education the shortages of the mandated resource must cause considerable stress to

fieldwork co-ordinators charged with the recruitment of sufficient placements for enrolled students eligible for this curriculum component.

Within the contextual framework of fieldwork education, social work fieldwork co-ordinators make the most significant contribution to fieldwork provision as they work with the 'agency', (Hughes & Heycox, 1996; O'Connor et al., 1999) and are "the hub of the process" (Coll & Eames, 2000, p.9). This is an inter-organizational and relational co-ordination role which may be viewed as a producer role involving another physical system. "Managing a field education learning environment is like setting the stage for a play. The stage is the agency and the community is in the wings" (Thomlison & Collins, 1995, p. 223). But the stage manager is left out and it is argued that the co-ordinator is absent in most part from the stage management or found deep within the wings out of sight of the student. Moore (2000) saw the placement co-ordination role as:

"...locating sufficient field placements and allocating them in as fair and equitable manner as possible for all students and field educators...accessing sufficient resources to support both student and field educator during the fieldwork; maintaining quality control over fieldwork; ...balancing the training body's expectation for student learning with the human services organisation's expectations for effective and efficient service delivery."

(Moore, 2000, p. 185)

It is interesting that this quote suggests that the co-ordinator is expected to balance the school of social work's expectation with the organizations for effective and efficient service delivery, but it is questioned as to how such nebulous measures of 'quality control' are achieved, without input from the manager. Even if some form of quality measures are applied to the nature of social work student supervision, it is likely that co-ordinators will have little control over staff who are paid primarily to be social workers. Further Coll and Eames (2000) suggest there are three models of

placement coordinator role, ranging from an administrative role, part of a centralized unit of coordinators, or where they hold joint positions of coordination and teaching. The joint faculty-placement coordination role is seen by these authors as advantage over the other two because it results in the best matching of a student with employer and greater levels of satisfaction. Further role achievement was said to result in cost saving for employers and result in collaboration between the agency and the learning institution (Coll & Eames, 2000).

The co-ordination role is also about gaining maximum benefit for the student to learn and minimizing the risks in as far as they can be predicted prior to placement, as well as managing and monitoring parts of the process that enhance student learning. To gain such benefits co-ordinators are charged with the recruitment, development and retention of competent, knowledgeable supervisors as part of the goal for schools of social work aiming to produce excellent education (Bogo, 1996), although this requires commitment and strategies to manage fieldwork education. As Coll and Eames (2000) suggest, it is student matching with employers that is critical for both parties.

2.7 Essential contribution of the supervisor/field educator

Studies on the essential and vital contribution made by the student supervisor (alternatively known as fieldwork or agency educator in different international settings) to fieldwork placement, throws some light on what might influence manager's views on fieldwork placement and their willingness or unwillingness responses towards fieldwork placement request.

Writings on fieldwork placement supervision have fluctuated over recent years; although relatively prolific particularly between 1985 and 2000 (Brill, 1990; Burke, 1996; Cooper & Briggs, 2000; Fortune & Abramson, 1993; Gitterman, 1989 and others), but since that time there appears to be a reduction in the volume in academic journal articles on the topic. However, literature on quality and quantity of

supervision; measurement and purpose of student learning in the field; theory of practice teaching; learning theory and its application and the importance of the integration of fieldwork learning with classroom learning, as the traditional way of preparation for the social work profession, are available for review. The important topic of education and the application of social work theory during placement was not canvassed here in order to keep the study manageable. Suffice to say that despite the prevalence in the literature about the importance of supervisors teaching students to integrate theory into practice, some supervisors fail to assist students with this (Chilvers, 2011). To counter such a teaching shortfall, a set of learning and teaching activities called *Kia tene* (off the cuff) were developed in this country to assist supervisors with a range of teaching methods (Douglas, 2011). On the other hand, supervisors who desire to provide for a student “may be restricted in student choice”, if organizational needs are considered to be paramount (Briggs & Cooper, 2000, p.188) which suggests the organizational needs may dictate the type of student chosen.

Although the local and international fieldwork education literature considers the essential role of the social work student supervisor as the traditional controller of the student in placement, it gives support to epistemological assumptions about where the power base may historically have lain. Various writers suggest that it is the agency supervisor who is the first point of contact rather than the manager, in relation to placement provision decision making. Not only is the supervisory role essential to the student’s learning in the agency situation, it is required by legislation in this country through the application of the (NZ) Social Workers Registration Act, (2003). Fieldwork educators, or supervisors, through the process of supervision, take responsibility for the management and administration of the student learning process which Cooper and Briggs (2000) consider encompasses the tasks of planning for learning, orientation to the agency, arranging the learning contract and being involved in the mid- and end-of-placement fieldwork assessments. Thomlison and Collin’s (1995) place emphasis on the learning rather the work experience of placement, which suggests that the supervisor’s prime responsibility is that of facilitation of the student’s education plan. Desirable attributes of supervisors have been identified as social workers having the time to supervise and listen to students

and their ideas; a supervisory style that complements the student's learning style with expertise and the ability to share knowledge and skills without clashing with the student's personality (Cleak & Wilson, 2004). These writers are of the view that supervisors provide a range of practice situations for the student's learning, although it could be argued that such provision may be the preserve of senior social workers or managers and these are high expectations of supervisors offering goodwill.

Many studies into student supervision and fieldwork placement have been conducted internationally at varying times over the last thirty years which shed some light on cognitive factors such as a supervisor's motivation towards provision and willingness to take a student on placement. Early student supervisor studies by Kahn (1981) and Rosenfeld (1989) showed that intrinsic rewards such as teaching enjoyment, contribution to the profession and instruction as an additional learning experience contributed towards motivation for becoming and remaining a field work instructors. These writers found an overwhelming majority of the instructors (supervisors) were personally very satisfied or satisfied with their experiences in terms of teaching enjoyment as they made a contribution to the social work profession and were placed to sharpen their own practice skills. Cleak and Wilson, (2007) suggest that willingness is increased by intrinsic motivational factors in addition to those found by Kahn and Rosenfeld's study, such as the teaching challenge for field educators.

However, in the Bogo and Power's study (1992) into forty nine new field instructors' perceptions of institutional supports for their role, the results evidenced a high turnover of field instructors, with forty six per cent not volunteering the following year; therefore resulting in shortages. Sixty four percent (64%) cited agency-related reasons for discontinuance, such as reorganization, inadequate space and agency policy to rotate the role, with thirty six percent (36%) of supervisors citing personal life events such as pregnancy, health and job changes for entropy in their study. The same study found ninety four percent (94%) of instructors had high levels of teaching enjoyment and that supervision sharpened their practice skills, while ninety two per cent (92%) felt they were making a contribution to the profession. Others were found to gain relief from the boredom of the job and others found making connections to

the university satisfying or very satisfying for more than sixty per cent (60%) of the sample (Bogo & Power, 1992). Status enhancement was found to be encouraging by fifty five per cent of respondents (Bogo & Power, 1992), but Kahn's (1981) earlier study found that status enhancement was not a major motivating factor to undertake supervision of students. These studies conducted over a long period of time suggest that shortage of supervisors or instructors for students has been a considerable concern to educators and they illustrate the reliance on social workers in agencies motivated to undertake such a role.

Unwillingness of supervisors to provide placements for students were identified as factors contributing to tensions by "educators not being released from their workloads, lack of agency resources and lack of training for educators" (Hay, O'Donoghue & Blagdon, 2006, p.27). Earlier, Bell and Webb (1992) and Slater (1992) had found that the inability or unwillingness to supervise included lack of resources and support; inadequate preparation and understanding of programme providers' expectations; superficial divisions of labour between schools and agencies; a non-user friendly environment; the sense of isolation and lack of recognition.

Furthermore, the field work education literature refers to macro and micro factors such as organizational restructuring, the lack of workload relief; staff sickness, low morale and staff shortages (Furness & Gilligan, 2004). The fieldwork education literature suggests that it is the availability and willingness of the social worker that influences availability. This may be so, but as this thesis will argue, the decision to release time of staff for another role, is likely the manager's prerogative. Furness and Gilligan (2004) purport that there was a need for experienced staff in social service agencies to take extra responsibility for a student and thought unavailability of material resources such as office space prevented continuance of supervisors being available to students.

The fieldwork education literature takes a step forward in time and questions not only the shortage of supervisors but the quality and interest of agency involvement in fieldwork placement. In 2008, Hay and O'Donoghue believed the shortage of suitable placements in *Aotearoa* New Zealand for social work students was due to a shortage of qualified and experienced educators able to take students. Internationally, placement shortage has led to new ways of thinking about supervision of students on placement such as Long arm practice teacher model of supervision (cited in Furness and Gilligan, 2004) and e-support for students on line placements (Quinney, 2005). In response to the issue of lack of staff continuity and staff resources as supervisors, Cleak, et al. (2000) suggested that field work be split between two agencies with flexibility in university fieldwork structure. This flexibility could include multiple supervisors, diverse locations; co-field teaching by part-time staff, university offering co-supervision and two students placed together for informal support for each other (Cleak, et al., 2000). Although splitting a placement could ease the burden on an agency manager and likely enhance willingness, it raises the question as to practicalities of such supervision arrangements and whether it is fair on the student to enter into multiple environments during the course of their study, whatever the size of the agency. It will likely cause additional work for the fieldwork co-ordinator.

Writing on seven frames of difference between student fieldwork supervision and social work staff supervision, the purpose and mission of fieldwork supervision was seen as education, with the school's activities being teaching and research, focused on future-oriented goals, values, knowledge, skills and analysis on current practice (Bogo & Vayda, 1988). Alternatively, staff supervision of social workers is about quality of client service; its maintenance, enhancement, effectiveness and efficiency of delivery, with present-oriented goals, about competent performance, systems maintenance and teamwork, carried out within a centralized hierarchical structure where accountability is to management and funding bodies (Bogo & Vayda, 1988). These ideas illuminate this literature review by highlighting the nature of the occupational divide between student and social worker supervision and how much adaptability may have to take place for the social worker, undertaking student supervision, perhaps at the same time providing supervision of staff.

The supervisory role is a vital thread essential for student fieldwork placement learning. It is argued that a student supervisor's position in the organization will have different professional interests and perspectives from the manager plus they will be less likely to be aware of economic, financial, personnel, organizational or relational perspectives of management, hence this study is important.

In *Aotearoa* New Zealand supervision is provided free by internal agency supervisors or by paid external contractors, but the payment or recompense system varies from country to country. If no financial compensation changes hands for this valued service it is understandable that various players seek the continuance of this free service to enhance the learning of students of social work.

2.8 Powerfulness of fieldwork placement learning on students

The powerfulness of fieldwork placement learning on students of social work is confirmed (Cooper, 2000a; Ellis, 1998; Lefevre, 2005; Maidment, 2000; Power & Bogo, 2002). It is a major component of a programme that introduces a student to social work practice and its sustenance. There has also been an increase in interest by Australian students in international placements, such as those in the Asia and Pacific regions. However, the opportunity for such placements requires a significant amount of goodwill and additional responsibility of agency managers and student supervisors. For students and schools of social work preparation and the skill of information gathering on the contextual framework that fieldwork placement this exposes them to, is needed. As social work education literature on international placement states: "preparation for placement requires knowing some pertinent information usually concerning who, what, when and where in terms of roles, responsibilities and expectations within the contextual framework of the field education placement" (Garrity, 2011, p.120), which emphasizes the importance of pre-placement preparation. Furthermore, Lefevre (2005) discusses the powerful impact that supervisors or practice teachers have on the creation of a student's learning environment and relationship competency.

Whilst on placement it was thought that the student's occupation included critical analysis, developing, testing and reporting new ideas, with independent intellectual activity (Bogo & Vayda, 1988) and the mechanism to learn to integrate theory into practice. Furthermore, it was thought that it provides sustainable learning of knowledge and skills for students (Knight, 2001; Miller, Kovacs, Wright, Corcoran, & Rosenblum, 2005) and practicum socializes students into the profession (Zuchowski, 2011). Beddoe and Maidment (2009) identified that students and educators were confront with "increasingly complex case and community concerns" (p.1) in service delivery. Such work likely makes a major impact on a graduate's entrance into the profession (Wayne, Raskin & Bogo, 2006) as well as providing exposure to a previously unfamiliar field of social work practice. It could be said that fieldwork placement is where the real learning and application of theory, research and ethical practice happens for students. It brings benefits to the agency who host such learning whilst staff model the social work profession.

"The main benefits identified were the work undertaken by students such as counselling, research projects, evaluations, group work and staff training. Importantly, enhancement of the supervisors' own professional development and reflection on practice was the second most frequently identified benefit. An unanticipated benefit was that placements appear to function as pre-employment trials, with 80% of respondents reporting that students were subsequently employed by the practicum agency. The major costs included time spent in student supervision and student use of agency resources."

(Barton, Bell & Bowles, 2005, p. 301)

In the Barton et al. (2005) study, exploring the benefits and costs of student placement to agencies, it was found the benefits outweighed the costs. The student supervisors were asked how the manager might view the costs and benefits of students on placement. Forty one of the forty three supervisors suggested that managers saw the major costs as "time and resources and reduced supervisor output"

(Barton, et al. 2005, p.308). The supervisors thought the managers perceived benefits as “improved service delivery, project completions, development of students, skills brought by competent students, fresh ideas and staff professional development via supervision” (Barton, et al., 2005 p. 308). These results are based on supervisor’s perceptions of manager’s views, which in itself justify the need for this stem study question.

The ideal is for a student to be accommodated in an agency which leaves them with feelings of being valued, inspired about the social work profession and looking forward to future work in the profession. Furthermore, students have reported that the component of field placement is the most significant event in their social work education because of its lasting impact on how they approach practice (Chilvers, 2011). The reality is that field education is “highly competitive with a shortage of suitable placements for social work students and inadequate numbers of qualified and experienced field educators able to take students” (Hay & O’Donoghue, 2008, p.9). As this quote suggests, it is extremely difficult for co-ordinators to find sufficient placement for students because of the competition for these and because there are insufficient supervisors to offer to take a student. Student expectations of a suitable placement may be high for the finding of a placement appropriate to their needs and wishes which may be unrealistic. Practicum is to provide a forum for the integration of theory into practice, the development of transferable skills and the competencies named by the (NZ) SWRB (2012) and an increased understanding by students of what is meant by ethical behaviour. Students are likely to be involved in the matching and allocation process while some may have expectations of gaining placements that result in employment (Moore, 2000) and have expectations of being valued and being subject to evaluation processes.

The fieldwork placement literature relates to the research question in that factors on student competencies may impact on their response to the placement question. It is suggested that “exemplary students brought “value added” to the field instructor and the organization, because learning was reciprocal” (Bogo, Hughes, Regehr, Power, Woodford & Regehr, 2006, p. 587). These writers thought some exemplary students

lacked social work practice skills with some having “excellent presentation skills, including being prepared, clear, organized, focused and engaging, (and) others were nervous and intimidated” (Bogo, et al., 2006 p. 587), perhaps reflecting student variability.

Students may feel they are doing the agency a favour with their unpaid labour, which is accruing personal financial costs to themselves (Cleak & Wilson, 2004). It is suggested that such attitudes throw all parties into negotiation at the commencement of the placement and if these are not resolved early on the student is likely to dive into stage three of Cleak & Wilson’s model (2004, p.3) where disappointment, aloneness and unmet expectations could have various parties counting the days towards completion, if such attitudes are not addressed by the supervisor. Student’s evaluation of their performance is up to the student and the supervisor, without input from the manager or other staff (Cleak & Wilson, 2004).

In writing about Australian social work students in Vietnam Garrity (2011) identified that as well as the development of a professional identity beyond social work knowledge, students on placement from Cairns were challenged markedly with the complexities of difference between Western knowledge and cultural and contextual environments, which in turn changed their own social work knowledge base, their practice and social work professional identity. Further Garrity (2011) thought that social work and nursing programmes encourage the use of journals for students on placement for reflection purposes and they learnt to master thoughts, feelings, challenges or experiences whilst on fieldwork placements (Garrity, 2011). However in order for agencies to make a commitment towards student provision, students had to “earn their keep” (O’Connor, Wilson and Setterlund, 1999, p.206). The organization is seen as existing to ensure the student is able to meet the organisation’s standards in an effective and efficient way and to balance the physical resources and the allocation of staff time for student supervision with the student’s contribution to the service (Moore, 2000), which suggests that resources are allocated according to contribution.

2.9 Māori cultural well-being in integrated services

There is a shortage of literature about Māori managers' views on fieldwork placement and factors that influence their decisions, but some deposits are linked to the findings on the subsidiary question in chapter five and ten. Relevant literature which particularly relates to the subsidiary research question is the importance of Māori values and reciprocal arrangements with working relationships with Māori managers of Iwi (tribal) and Māori (pan-tribal) social services. "Culturally recognised relationship places priority on notions of reciprocity, role reversal, shared mana enhancing learning, advocacy, planning, guiding and whakapapa responsibilities (Bradley, Jacob & Bradley, 1999; Walsh-Tapiata & Webster, 2004; Webber-Dreadon, 1999)" and specific processes which Ruwhiu, et al. (2008, p. 27) relates to a supervisory relationship. This relationship starts with the "historical analysis, understanding the power of one's own narratives and articulating a thematic framework of wellbeing" (Ruwhiu, et al. 2008, p.27) towards supportive engagement. This literature links to the subsidiary question about relationship development and reciprocity.

The literature includes a public policy announcement in 2010 in Aotearoa New Zealand of a whānau (family) centred approach to health and social services underpinned by Māori values. This approach seeks "whānau-ora" (well-being of the extended family), an approach that is taught to social work students (Personal communication, Emma Webber-Dreadon, University of Waikato, 2013). It requires "health services to work across traditional sector boundaries to improve client health" and establish "an integrated model of health and social service delivery, across the range of human services"... focusing "(on the health of the whole whānau not just the health of the individual) (Boulton, Tamehana & Brannelly, 2010, p. 24). This approach contains seven principles derived from Māori cultural beliefs and values along with practice derived from public policy which included:

"nga kaupapa tuku iho (the presence of Māori values, beliefs, obligations and responsibilities, to guide whanau in their day-to-day lives); whānau

opportunity (the changes in life that enable whānau to engage with their communities and foster whanaungatanga or connectedness); best whānau outcomes (increases in whānau capacities to undertake those functions that are necessary for healthy living and the well-being of whānau members); coherent service delivery (the unification of interventions so distinctions between service sectors do not overshadow whānau needs); whānau integrity (the acknowledgement of whānau accountability, innovation and dignity); effective resourcing (that resourcing should be adequate to the size of the task and tied to results); and competent and innovative provision (recognizing the need for skilled practitioners able to contribute to whānau empowerment and positive outcomes).

(Boulton, Tamehana, Brannelly, 2010, p. 25)

The extract suggests Maori values and skilled practitioners can contribute to whānau empowerment and positive outcomes as fundamental to the fieldwork placement process. Central to relationships between social work education and social and human services is “that each party maintains or gains mana (prestige, status) in the process” (Truell, 2004, p.14), which in turn relates to the study design and the questions. Others would say that the challenge of placement success is to achieve a balance between the clients, agency, student and school’s needs, with such needs made explicit (O’Connor, Wilson & Setterlund, 1999), although this may be considered an ideal rather than a reality.

2.10 Conclusion

In examining the literature it was discovered just how completely dependent education was on agency goodwill and of individuals within organizations to educate a student and to respond to requests for student placement (Wayne, et al., 2006). These writers described the fieldwork placement relationships as precarious, impermanent and informal. The longstanding placement shortages and diminishing resources are concerns that give relevance to this study. This lengthy review has

produced themes on economic challenges, diversity of organizational purpose, management responsibilities, the contribution of co-ordinators and supervisors to placement provision and the powerfulness of placement on students and learning expectations. The applicability of Indigenous values were reviewed from the literature deposits.

Review and analysis of the fieldwork education and management literature suggests a paucity of research into how social service managers are influenced towards willingness or unwillingness towards student fieldwork placement provision. Even though there is a considerable amount of literature on many important aspects of fieldwork education, particularly on literature and on how supervisors contribute to student learning, and to a lesser extent on the role of co-ordinators and students. This review highlights shortfalls in relevant management literature as it relates to fieldwork. Managers bear the responsibility for any students transferring into their agency and subsequent transactions they make in the agency system. Fieldwork placement preparation and its execution is a highly collaborative process where all major player's roles, responsibilities and expectations need to be explicit to ensure the continuance of its positive contribution to social work education and status enhancement.

Before we examine the findings unfolding in chapter four, weight must be given to the research methodology and the research method utilized in this study. How I arrived at the answers to the research questions is described in chapter three which describes ontology, epistemology, the researcher's position in the research, methodology of constructivist grounded theory and an ethical perspective. The design method, participant sample, interviewing, transcription, interpretation and analysis, and synthesis of the literature with the findings and subsequent reflections is discussed next.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD TO ANSWER THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

“Nice opportunity to just talk about placements as we do not do it that often.”

(Interviewee: Pākēha social services manager)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter’s purpose is to guide the reader through the dialogue, structure and interpretative research process of my study in an attempted to answer the stem question about how managers view the request of fieldwork placement for social work students and what factors influenced their response to student placement requests. A subsidiary question was considered necessary as it was supposed that fieldwork practicum was embedded in relationship factors particularly important to managers which might need to be developed, maintained, strengthened or transformed. The participants were social service managers situated in non-government organizations in various provincial locations in *Aotearoa* New Zealand cities and towns with populations ranging between 25,000 and 127, 000 people. As in the quote above managers are identified in this study as either Pākēha (or non-Māori) or Māori managers.

This study largely employed the constructive-interpretative approach to different assumptions of knowledge embedded in ontology and epistemological orientation and connections, with an ethical stance and actions. I provide a justification as to why the qualitative design method was chosen to answer the research questions, how the sample was found, how data was collected from managers using in depth interviews, thematic data analysis, transcription, coding, diagrams and synthesis with the literature. How the collection and analysis of dense narrative text came together into themes from the transcriptions of twenty four semi-structured interviews of fifteen Māori and non-Māori (pākēha) managers is described here. Inductive and

deductive reasoning was utilized to gain explanations and understanding of manager's views and factors influencing their response to the stem and the subsidiary question. Eco-systems theory aided deductive analysis, while grounded theory aided the development of how relational elements could be added to the traditional placement model as described in chapter ten. It could be said that this methodology is similar to constructivist grounded theory (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006), on the positioning of the researcher with participants, and the interpreting of manager's experiences into grounded theory. How the research questions were answered is tied up with these theoretical issues which define human reality (ontology) and the nature, scope and limits of knowledge (epistemology), the methodology and methods used to aid the ethical structure and process of this study as I endeavour to link theory and method together.

3.2 Ontology: A sense of being, a theory of what exists

An ontological foundation as a paradigm is closely related to the research process and its shape. It defines human reality, concerns itself with what already exists, how it is understood and how things are categorized (O'Leary, 2007). An ontological stance or philosophic assumption of knowing who I am, what I believe in, how social forces shape me, a woman in the third one third of my life, influenced the methodology and method chosen. I exist as a pragmatic *pākēha* (non-Māori) New Zealander; a third generation New Zealander of Irish/English/Scots descent. My extensive voluntary and non-statutory sector background is part of the force that gives me a position in this research study. My reality of wifehood, motherhood, widowhood, student-hood, grand-motherhood (in that order!), are part of those forces that informed my decision making and gives me both an actual and constructed position in this discourse. Christianity, social justice, professional social work inclusive of bi-cultural and multi-cultural practice, and employment experience in a large Māori tertiary institution, and now a university, provides me with a unique world view of my sense of being. The question about what exists and what is constructed in my mind made demands on this study which influenced my attempts to be both ethically and methodologically sound with this chosen topic.

The aim of the research was to promote the managers as equal collaborators, as co-researchers, rather than separate individuals. This aim relates to Lincoln and Guba's second axiom (1988) that assumes an interactive interplay between both parties, as opposed to the independent relationship of positivist methodology and a quantitative method. Therefore, the researcher's positioning was one of co-work as the knower/known together, connecting, relating, and pinning down some knowledge, some verisimilitude of truth from a position of ontology. This relationship building was enhanced by my life experiences of living in numerous communities with high Māori populations which afforded me exposure to and participation in Māori cultural practices, so this study is constructed as a collaborative creation. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) plea for a close relationship between the researcher and the researched. Understandings of this ontological relativist framework lead to my asking about the nature of non-statutory managers' social reality in relation to provision for student practicum. My research task was to acknowledge starting points, suspend assumptions and let the manager's talk at length, in response to the research questions. As this study involved two interviews of the same manager, half of whom were Māori, up to three hours of time with the manager was required, which allowed for relatively close empathetic relationships to develop.

3.3 Epistemology: A theory of knowledge, a set of questions

Philosophical epistemology is "the study of knowing, the basis for knowing and how it is that people come to know what they know" (Johnson, 2000, p.106). Therefore a set of questions was developed to uncover knowledge. Although an epistemological viewpoint is similar to ontology, it is considered to be more about a process of enquiry into beliefs and knowledge, into the nature of experiences – the researcher and participant's experiences and interrelationship. An understanding was gained from the history of Denzin and Lincoln's 'moments' of the development of enquiry (Denzin, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It could be argued that epistemology is similar to ontology because I am placed into the research and I am also shaped by the enquiry process. Therefore, epistemology, the study of knowing, helped with appreciation of managers' perceptions and what they gave meaning to, through discourse. Personal experience as a mature student, a former manager of non-

statutory social services, experience as a practicum supervisor and as a *kaiako* (teacher) and social work educator, along with fieldwork placement co-ordination responsibilities at two tertiary institutes, aided knowledge creation. These experiences, along with an interest in the voluntary and not-for profit sector management led to the choice of this topic, a topic which needed to be a ‘transportable’ across employment situations as I tend to rise to organizational development challenges and then move on to new employment learning after their completion. These philosophical foundations begin with assumptions that guide judgements and present a justification for what can be regarded as knowledge creation as an active process. The propositions or sets of skills and ideas that assisted in the knowledge gathering process were those which included my interrelationship, my interaction and active listening skills, self-reflective concern for the manager’s time constraints and finding conscious ways of seeing the socio-cultural context and the political nature of the research activity. This relates to the way I am positioned as an epistemologically subjectivist researcher.

3.4 Researcher positioning

This research and my ontological and epistemological positioning for this investigation was strengthened by the researcher’s experience as a *kaiako* (tutor) of social work in a pan tribal Māori organization with knowledge of its Māori *kaupapa* (philosophy). As a *pākēha* woman employed by a Māori institution, I was in a privileged position to be selected by my employer to apply for PhD candidacy for the purpose of recovering both Indigenous and non-Indigenous voices on a self-selected topic. This position and a subsequent employment location equipped me with access to resource people necessary for this opportunity to conduct research in a bi-cultural sensitive manner. A pressure shaped the research with my recognition of my dual ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspectives brought to this research by my history. This in turn shaped my subjective views.

Subjectivity as espoused in constructivist grounded theory suggests that constructivism as a methodological imperative does “not quickly or easily reach any

sort of conclusion or resolution about our own view of the nature of reality” (Mills, Bonner, Francis, 2006, p. 2) where there are many individual realities influenced by context. Subjectivity, an essential component of science is about influences of self-awareness, perception or viewpoints that are adopted (Johnson, 2000). My role as a researcher was to recognize that subjectivity was inevitably incorporated into the process. I was aware of my own Kiwi culture and cultural heritage, my predispositions, values, biases and prejudices, my ‘emic’ position, my own experiences, perceptions, understandings and subjectivities. Through self-reflection and my beliefs about the nature of reality, I was aware that these become an inevitable part of the outcome (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Consideration was given to a commitment to what ethnographic researcher’s call an ‘emic’ position, an ‘insider’ stance, or researching from the researcher’s practice and writing about it, which Gould (2008) says has been treated as a creative tension in qualitative research. My previous experience was that of a social service agency manager, a position that the participants appeared to appreciate because of enhanced understanding of the role. Culture, gender and professional standing as a social work educator, may have positioned the researcher as an ‘outsider’, in an ‘etic’ position by some managers but I was not treated as if it did. This research is related to Lincoln and Guba’s (1988) third knowledge axiom which suggests that qualitative researchers are committed to an emic, idiographic truth, whilst paying specific attention to particular cases, bound up by time and context as this research effort endeavoured to be. An opposite stance is often associated with quantitative studies where knowledge is seen as a series of facts, objective and value free.

I am aware that research with indigenous people’s worldwide, using western models can be considered as oppressive and Smith (1999) argues decolonization can only take place if self-determination is a political and social justice goal. Also Smith (1999) contends that social justice transverses psychological, cultural and social environments which “involves the processes of transformation of decolonization, of healing and of mobilization as peoples” (pp.115-116). She stresses the importance of “processes, approaches and methodologies” that are open to difference (Smith, 1999,

(pp.115-16) as vital fundamentals of a research agenda. Further this writer also explicitly supports research for its political and ethical possibilities by restoring and recovering indigenous people's voices deemed to be lost in the colonization process, to achieve self-determination, emancipation and practical benefits for indigenous people.

I was acutely aware of the importance of understanding the research context as an 'outsider', in Maori contexts, although employed as an 'insider' in a Maori organization, I understood my responsibility of cultural respectfulness and responsiveness as a *pākēha* (other, non-Māori) woman interviewing managers, some of whom were Māori, not necessarily employed by *iwi* (tribal) organizations. It was thought by Kiro (2000) "that any method (with suitable ethical requirements) is acceptable if it answers the research question and ultimately leads to a better understanding of the dynamics of Māori" (p.27), health in that case. Ethical approval was received from two tertiary institutions to carry out this study. Knowledge of *kawa* (protocol) and *tikanga*, (customs) such as the important emphasis on *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face-to-face) relationship building and observing local *tikanga* (customs, beliefs or the right way of doing things), were part of the process of enquiry. Particularly crucial and culturally important were *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face-to-face) verbal and non-verbal methods of communication, with little use of communication technology. Prior to the first interview, I made preparations for the possibility of marae-based *pōwhiri* (gathering) and *hongi* (sharing of breath by pressing of noses) and wearing of black clothing as a mark of respect to the ancestors. However, on one occasion it was unclear as to the cultural background of the participant until the actual *hui* (meeting) took place but I was prepared. Cultural observances involved inviting or responding to *karakia*, (prayer) acknowledgement of spiritual dimensions of well-being, exchanging *pepeha*, (acknowledging relationships to the land), providing *kai*, (food for sharing), formally greeting and ending our encounter with *aroha* (kiss on the cheek and hug). Although *kai* (food) was taken to all interviews, as a reciprocal gift in acknowledgement of the manager and collective, it also served to 'open the door' to informality and general *whakawhānautanga* (relationship building). This sharing often happened well before the interview questions were

asked. Māori managers usually introduced available staff at the beginning of the visit and invited them to share the *kai* (food).

The Treaty of Waitangi between *tangata whenua* (indigenous people of *Aotearoa* New Zealand) and the English Crown guaranteed protection of indigenous customary rights and *taonga* (treasures such as forests, fisheries and language) and guaranteed equal right as citizens to Māori, in return for the Crown's governing rights over *Aotearoa* New Zealand. Although there are many other principles distilled from recent *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (Treaty of Waitangi) Tribunal claims, the social services, social workers and the profession, are required to work to treaty principles of partnership, protection of language and treasures and participation in decision making with Māori. Non-members of ANZASW or un-registered social workers are also required to fulfil this obligation through agency contracts such as those with the New Zealand Government Ministry of Social Development.

Culture survives, because practices have, suggests Mattaini in Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer (2002), therefore Māori cultural practices are important and relevant to co-working or co-operative enquiry with *tangata whenua* (people of the land). Co-operative enquiry, reflective practice and analysis of self and others are important social work principles brought to this study. In two instances during the course of the interviews, the researcher was asked to relay messages to other mutual contacts and in one case provide the manager with information and advice about career prospects and another on travel to Western Australia! This could relate to critical practice which argues for action-orientated change, positioning the researcher as an agent of change, and meeting unexpected contingencies through these connections. Through the use of cultural advice, and a *Tiaki* (mentor) model, advice and support was sought from Māori in authority and readily available from my cultural adviser, colleagues at *Te Wānanga o Aotearoa* (University of New Zealand) (Appendix C) and with my subsequent employers. Interaction in different employment contexts along this journey influenced the construction of this study, as did my supervisors who strongly encouraged the development of a separate cultural theme as it relates to both the stem and subsidiary questions. My researcher disposition towards a

constructive-interpretive orientation provided pathways not only on the nature of reality, but an awareness that I could not be objective and that facts stand apart from me whilst my values and ethics drive my behaviour as an integral part of the research process.

3.5 Methodology: Constructivist grounded theory

My ontological and epistemological stance links to the use of constructivist grounded theory which “brings to the fore the notion of the researcher as author” (Mills et al., 2006, p. 6). These authors are of the view that by applying the strategies of traditional grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to the constructivist paradigm an external grounded reality is assumed. They contend that reality is ‘discovered’ “from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural context”. Constructivist grounded theorists such as Charmaz (2000) focus on the data and the possibility of multiple meanings and go further to search for “tacit meaning about values, beliefs and ideologies” by adding description of the situation, the interaction, the person’s affect and their perception of how the interview went” (Mills, et al., 2006, p.7). The heading of this chapter gives voice to one manager as to how the interview went. Descriptions were made of these manager’s many realities and how they work in the fieldwork placement context before it was developed into an interpretive process.

Constructivism was about gaining an understanding of these manager’s viewpoints on factors influencing fieldwork placements and reciprocal relationships in relation to the stem and subsidiary question. To discern a constructivist approach to this enquiry is to arrive at a theory “that is richer and more reflective of the context in which participants are situated” (Mills, et al., 2006, p. 4) as an outcome of what the participants have shared. My approach has included many quotes as constructive-interpretative work “must include the perspectives and voices of the people who we study” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p.274).

3.6 Philosophy: An essential ethical perspective

The position of values and an ethical perspective was important in this study, because this assisted with critical thinking about this complex social work education and management research issue. Values, from the fifth set of Lincoln and Guba's (1988) axiomatic format of how provisional truth relates to subjectivity, therefore values held were an inherent component of this research as they directly determine how the research was conducted. Values also relate to authenticity in design rigour, fairness in representation of managers' views and ethical consideration of cultural matters and possibility of perceived power imbalances. My ethical behaviour was concerned with how reality was understood, explained and expressed in a truthful way and I endeavoured to interpret the data correctly. Gould (2004) states 'truth' is a series of metaphors, represented in various ways where thought is given to subjectivities and narratives as an alternative to theories. Whereas grounded theorists acknowledge the importance of a multiplicity of truths and perspectives (Mills, et al. 2006). There was a need to question certainty and keep assumptions and statements about social matters contingent and conditional on other factors (Lovelock, Lyons & Powell, 2004).

Ethical philosophical perspectives were essential as a theoretical perspective that informed the ontological underpinnings, because they guided adequacy of method and the avoidance of harm to participants. Therefore the minimization of significant harm to participants, organizations and others connected with the research was a study imperative I adhered to ethical and professional principles such as respect and worth of persons, informed consent of participants, privacy and confidentiality of data, and those providing it. I have to always ask "who stands to benefit from a particular version of the truth" (Lincoln 2001, p. 12). Respect for persons involved recognition of personal dignity, cultural beliefs and autonomy. Justice, truthfulness and social sensitivity to the age, gender, culture, religion and social class of subjects was abided by. As a social work researcher I endeavoured to focus clear attention to working to achieve a society that is more just if and when the opportunity arose. The researcher followed the social work ethical principle of social justice which requires the fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of research. A duty falls to the

researcher to neither neglect nor discriminate against individuals or groups who may benefit from advances in this study. Therefore my position was made explicit, justified ethically and acknowledgement given to different manager's viewpoints.

However, it is acknowledged that the interpretations brought forward are from a non-Māori (*pākēha*-broadly speaking means other than Māori) perspective: a study shaped by bi-cultural practice. As research is a political process where those researched must benefit. With the inclusion of *tangata whenua* (people of the land) as research participants, there is a greater likelihood for more equitable exposure to the study findings. By excluding Māori, benefits would have been likely exclusive to non-Māori. Minimization of harm to Māori research participants was achieved by the inclusion of Māori colleagues as participants in the design, implementation and management, such as some translation of data.

I was aware that issues for Māori may have included minimizing harm to *te taha whānau* (the family and community), *te taha hinengaro* (the emotional well-being and state of mind), *te taha wairua* (the spirit), and *te taha tinana* (the body or physical self). Meaning is produced through social constructions so cultural inclusion was significant as it was about interaction in a particular context of Māori traditions and acknowledgement of a unique role and listening for cultured narratives from cultural contexts. Significant harm (physical, psychological, spiritual, social and economic) was minimized by conducting the interviews at appropriate venues, of the participant's choosing, which was mainly their own office although one had her office located on a marae.

The research intent was to avoid the breaching of confidentiality of data of identifiable persons or their agencies, or to deceive participants in any way. Two participants asked for their favoured fieldwork model to be named, which revealed a location, so this name is referred to in chapter ten. Steps to protect individuals include the restricting of access to information about identifiable individuals, by encrypting information, recording information anonymously and storing research

data in secure facilities. The data is stored on a password protected computer and data relating to publications is available for discussion with other researchers. The type of data stored is interview notes, notebook journal, interview tapes, transcribed information, electronic documents, and electronic data files. The researcher's office filing cabinet is lockable. The safety of the data storage and its retention will be the researcher's responsibility for five years if access is required. The research did not have to be discontinued because of an evidence that harm has been suffered by a research participant, or any known risk disproportionate to the benefits of the activity. Ethical research conforms to 'adequacy' of method, so design rigour was important.

Denzin and Lincoln, (2005) suggest that the constructivist paradigm requires a criteria of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and confirm ability. These terms "replace the usual positivist criterion of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity" of quantitative studies, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.24). Trustworthiness criteria for the study is a critical question according to Smith (1999), particularly when studying Indigenous peoples as it represents political and ethical dimensions that have the potential to be disempowering of marginalized groups such as Māori. Smith (1999) argues the need to decolonize research and the knowledge that is constructed from it so I was careful to contact participants who were given the opportunity to confirm the data after the second interview.

The gathering of qualitative data and interpretative research methods are generally considered to be 'valid' by generating an 'in-depth picture' of the phenomenon (Thompson & Priestley, 1998) in a way that participants were not needlessly inconvenienced or harmed. I therefore aimed at dignified transactions in the data collection while simultaneously advancing the development of relationships with participants. Further, there was researcher awareness that prior understandings and prejudices shape the process of interpretation as noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2005)

Ethical approval for this study was gained firstly from Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (Approval Number RE-15-05-07-002) my employing tertiary institute and then from Curtin University of Technology Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number HR 35/2007) Perth, Australia.

3.7.1 Qualitative research design: Interview method

This study was designed to answer the stem question, to describe, understand and interpret factors that influence manager's decision making about fieldwork placement provision for students and how this works at a point of time, situated in various organizational cultural, bi-cultural or mono-cultural contexts. The interpretive approach assisted with studying, shaping and thinking about ways of making meaning and knowledge and understanding it, including questions asked and interpretations brought to them. Therefore, an interpretive approach is a "basic set of beliefs that guides actions" Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.22). Further, it is the "systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds," (Davidson & Tolich, 1999, p.26). The design rationale was based on the assumption that before the first interview managers had received a placement request from a co-ordinator, given their acceptance to participate in the study. It was assumed that such contact may have involved both acceptance and decline of requests for student placement. Based on an assumption to gain participation from social services that did and did not provide fieldwork placements, it was explained to managers that the study was designed to capture both willing and unwillingness views on placement provision.

In order to answer the research question I chose a qualitative research design which included two in-depth interviews appropriate to the nature of this study and the nature of social work itself. A theoretical aim of this study was to elicit an 'in depth' picture and 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973), "of lived experiences" (Lincoln, 2001, p. 2) of factors influencing managers' decisions in relation to the fieldwork placement question. It was perceived that managers could choose to saying 'no' to a

placement, perhaps as frequently as saying 'yes', so the design intention was to accommodate differential responses on the fieldwork placement question of provision.

Triangulation as a combination of research actions adds vigour, breadth, complexity, richness and depth in any enquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The double interview design aimed to enrich credibility and confirm how managers constructed their own views, how and why they made the decisions they did and how fieldwork student placement is understood by them. To support the need for increased rigour in this qualitative method, I endeavoured to gain immersion in the topic, to gather sufficient data, to ask participants to check their various quotes and chapters, I receive peer debriefings and supervision to manage my subjectivity and I have left an account in documents on the interviews, tapes and a journal, as suggested by Morrow and Smith, (2000) and Patton (2002). The journal contains notes from reflections on the interviews, informal discussions with colleagues, research seminars, group meetings, conversations with friends and thoughts gathered from lectures.

3.7.2 Finding the participants and sample selection

The process of this study involved the finding of the participants, construction of interview questions and methods to guide actions, the examination of the material, data analysis, and methodology and writing about the questions to capture meaning; all interconnected activities, which eventually lead to the findings.

Five geographical locations chosen for this study included provincial locations from both North and South Islands of *Aotearoa* New Zealand. Provincial areas were specifically chosen because a significant number of social services are located outside the main metropolitan areas of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and Dunedin for ease of access. It was considered that factors influencing manager's responses to the placement question may possibly be stronger in localized provincial communities with inter-organizational relationships and tensions perhaps more

visible and unavoidable. Attempts to contact agencies in these locations took five communications on average, initially by phone, by email or by letter, or all three, before a response accepting or declining an Information Sheet was gained. Nine agencies initially contacted by phone or email declined to participate with two agencies declining participation because they did not consider themselves social/human service providers of student placement. Contacting the sample was difficult due to a number of reasons, some associated with technological roadblocks. Such observations could indicate that social service agencies are working to capacity or communication barriers relate to self-preservation. Accessibility factors could possibly contribute to the identified shrinking of placement opportunities and perhaps a sign of a sector under siege, struggling to survive.

Most of the non-statutory social service agencies in this study sample were small to medium in size, with one with 20-30 staff but most had less than ten paid staff, and some were affiliated to a national network. The sample of thirteen agencies yielding fifteen managers was drawn from non-statutory, non-profit social/human/community services and from organizations with Māori *kaupapa* (philosophy). I deemed such a sample size of fifteen managers as sufficient for a qualitative study as further numbers were unlikely to yield new data. Davidson and Tolich, (1999) suggested a sample between ten and sixteen as sufficient for this type of research. A sample was selected from every 10th agency listed in social service directories gathered from each location, so that each agency had the same probability of being chosen. In order to ensure inclusion of Indigenous managers, the sample was purposely stratified for one Māori /Iwi (tribal) or hapū (sub-tribal) social service organization selected for each geographical stratum. This selection judgment was based on the agency's name in Māori language. The Citizens Advice Bureau in each geographical area was contacted for lists of social services in each location. If a large list was available, every 5th agency was chosen. Although it transpired that some *pākēha* (others, non-Māori) sounding agencies were run by Māori managers. This stratified sampling method did not necessarily pre-determine the cultural background of the participants, but the design intention to include Māori participants was achieved. The design captured both Māori (pan tribal) and *Iwi* (tribal) social service managers' views and cultural *tikanga* and *kawa* (customs and protocols) were observed. The concern was

not only to give voice to women and men but also to the marginalized non-statutory social services. Sample selection of non-statutory managers, as opposed to statutory managers, aimed to bring these managers in the provinces out from the margins as an under-researched group. The contribution of these social services is vital to the health, safety, learning, resourcing and socialization of students and their social work education needs. There was an element of luck involved in the participant selection which happened to reflect near gender and cultural balance.

The selected agency managers were asked if they were interested in receiving information and if so they were posted an Information sheet, a list of questions and consent form (Appendix A-D) to enable an informed judgment to be made about participation. Individuals had the right to decide whether or not to participate, with time to understand the benefits, risks and time required, before an appointment for the first interview was made. They had the right to withdraw from participation at any time. Consent was given voluntarily, without coercion, inducement and intimidation or deception and privacy and confidentiality were entitlements. Existentialism, a system of philosophy, claims the absolute responsibility for freedom of the individual and irrevocable responsibility for their individual actions.

Fifteen managers were interviewed initially, and eleven were available for the second phase of interview/email option, thus providing a total of twenty four interviews. Managers with over three years' experience were chosen because it was considered any contribution they made would be based on experience of answering the fieldwork placement provision question asked by co-ordinators from schools of social work. A sample resulted in seven *tangata whenua* (people of the land) and eight *pākēha* (others, non-Māori) participants. There were five men and ten women participants, but at the time of selection gender and assurance of ethnicity was unknown and it was not a selection criteria. Of the five men, two were Māori and three were non Māori. Of the ten women participants five were Māori and five were *pākēha*. In one agency two women managers were interviewed together, one Māori and one non-Māori, one a social work practice manager and one an operations manager. In another agency one Māori woman manager was interviewed, supported

by a non-Māori man, a visiting research manager contributing at her request. It was considered entirely culturally appropriate for Māori to receive *awhi* (support) during the interview process and for a non-Maori manager to include her Māori practice manager. These responses were recorded as a single response, enriched by two people, rather than two separate contributions, therefore the data was from thirteen different agency sources.

3.7.3 In-depth interviewing and data collection

The design included two sequential interviews of each manager at three-four month intervals for the pragmatic purpose of capturing subsequent reflections on the key study questions to increase design robustness. The potential participants were posted information sheets, interview questions and consent forms three to four weeks before the initial interview, to fully inform them about the nature of the study if they chose to participate, therefore for shadowing my purpose (Alston & Bowles, 2003). It is inappropriate to begin the formal process of a recorded interview before there has been a *hongi* (pressing of noses, sharing of breath/life force) or greeting (handshake or kiss on the cheek) and the establishment of relationships (*pepeha*) prior to formalities. When appropriate I carried out cultural protocols such as a basic *mihi* (introductory speech) (this included stating my name, my mountain, my river, my tribe/clan, my ancestral transport to this country and where I consider my home or my place to stand is). I took *kai* (food) to interviews to show respect for cultural traditions. Knowledge of Indigenous cultural protocols were seen as a starting point in my dialogue, as social work professional imperatives in *Aotearoa* New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) Code of Ethics (2008) and (NZ) Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) Code of Conduct (2005).

The method of *Te kanohi ki te kanohi* (The face-to-face) interviewing, as a process for gathering information was culturally appropriate for building *whanaungatanga* (relationships) and connectedness with managers, particular Māori managers.

“An important part of any research process is actually fronting up, face-to-face to the community where the research is being conducted. This might happen, for example, in an office, at a school or on a marae. It is an essential part of the ‘ritual of first encounter’ ...and is one signal that the researchers are willing to cross that space between researchers and researched.” (Cram, 2001, p.43)

In this country there seems to be absorption of Māori cultural protocols, practices and language into non-Maori social services (and the wider society) which is understandable given that social work training is about social workers feeling comfortable to work with both cultures. I had a clear understanding of the questions and the importance of establishing an open and culturally sensitive relationship with the participants by introducing myself and restating my purpose, time frame, commitment to confidentiality and when it appeared appropriate I signalled the start of the questions.

Open questions were asked to reduce formality and to allow motivational influences and outlooks to be identified such as how exchanges could be mutually beneficial to themselves and schools of social work. A few closed questions were used to make it easier for manager’s to answer, with answers made in much the same way, and to elicit facts, such as the number of student placement requests they received in a six month period. All participants were asked the same questions, although at times reframing and additional questions were required to encourage participants to elaborate on their views. Choice of response methods (email, interview) for the second interview was identified in the information sheet at the onset of the study.

The aim of these in-depth interviews was to let the participants “feel free to openly express their inner thoughts and feelings” and “feel heard, accepted and understood” (Alston & Bowles, 2003, p.118). Some managers had already been through the questions and prepared notes as prompts for themselves prior to the first interview.

As one women manager indicated it was “*nice to have the opportunity to just talk about placements as we do not do it that often*” which suggests she valued the interview process. On the other hand, one manager was quite distressed in the interview about her recent negative experiences with staff from a social work programme as described in the vignette in chapter eight. I think it was quite therapeutic for her to be provided with a safe outlet for her strong feelings. Through the use of open-ended questions we finished on a positive note. Negative experiences from past fieldwork student placements or cultural sensitivities are more likely to be shared through the interview method and this type of setting rather than in focus groups. In depth interviews allow for participants to discuss and share opinions without being influenced by others’ viewpoints or judgments in a setting where confidentiality is more likely to be maintained. As Alston and Bowles (2003) state it is important in in-depth interviews to be sensitive to a participant’s state of mind. The first interviews lasted between 1 ½-3 hours which was sufficient to observe cultural and research protocols and gather responses to the research questions.

The face-to-face interviews were all conducted, transcribed verbatim, and analysis made of the raw data by the researcher. Responses to the interview questions were hand written in the gaps created under each question on A4 paper prepared prior to the interviews and captured by an audio tape. There was no objection to the taping and no one wished to receive the tapes at the conclusion of the study I felt privileged to hear manager’s views on the stem and subsidiary questions and receive their valuable time, given that I was to carry out a follow-up interview to ascertain further reflections and consolidate the data. Participant awareness of the research questions had generated self-reflection in between times, having created organizational awareness and provided an expansion on previous responses thereby producing richer themes for analysis. In a few instances at the end of the interview some managers wanted to bounce off some management issues me, trusting that confidentiality would be kept.

The research commenced during the traditional fieldwork placement season when the bulk of student are placed, but in hindsight it may have been better to commence

interviews at the end of the calendar year to gather reflections on their year. However this timing during the fieldwork placement season did capture and increase the likelihood of participants being immersed in the very situation the research questions related to. For pragmatic reasons it was assumed that other requests for placement over the ensuing 3-4 month period were likely, therefore the second interview allowed for expansion of the original data, resulting in a richer construction reflecting the participant's experience (Ungar, 2006).

3.7.4 Transcription, coding, diagramming, interpretation and analysis

A technological system was not used for data interpretation as a computer system for thematic data analysis might have distanced me from my data and generated specific single contexts. Manual coding of the data was used as an analytic tool to uncover grounded theory. I applied the three stages of grounded theory (Glaser, 1998) to the development of categories which clarify the data, followed by the saturation of categories with relevant data, and then the production of a general analytic framework (Silverman, 2010).

The individual agency participants were allocated a number for coding purposes. The data from each interview response was added manually in numbered tabular form to each of the individual questions as suggested by Sarantakos (1998) in the order they were asked of managers. As data from the second interview was gathered it was merged into the individual manager's earlier responses to each question in matrix form. Although there was repetition of questions in the second interview held three months later, this yielded added depth to each manager's data. This transcription process of twenty four interviews was laborious work. It resulted in a page of data gathered for each question, with each agency manager's response to the question. This step of open coding was the first step to theoretical analysis.

The paradigm for looking at the data as categories called "conditions, interaction among actors, strategies and tactics and consequences" (Strauss, 1990, p.270), called

axial coding, produced headings that were not totally useful. However it assisted with looking across the data at roles, relationships and interaction within fieldwork practice, with the action strategies managers had adopted with failing placements as consequences to their decision. The guide for axial coding was developed to provoke thinking “about relationships between categories and their properties and dimensions but that it should not be used rigidly” (Mills, et al., 2006, p. 5), particularly if it stops the researcher from “capturing the dynamic flow of events and the complex nature of relationships” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.129). The word tactics, a military term, was less helpful for looking at the categories. I found headings such as (organizational) context, intervening conditions, and consequences were more useful as a matrix to develop interconnections through macro and micro level conditions that could influence manager’s responses to the placement question. Some responses and generated concepts were collapsed into other existing categories and some were eliminated. It was noted that some managers were quite circular in their thinking, so some data was difficult to fit it to a particular response code and therefore eliminated. Comparisons were made between the broad level of extraction and consistent meanings were found until such uniform meanings were generated (Alston & Bowles, 1998). The data was collated into about twelve practical categories and then sifted and selectively coded into five major themes which are described, analysed and synthesized with the literature in chapter’s four to ten.

A common characteristic of grounded theory is theoretical sensitivity which is about the researcher’s insight to accommodate the nuances and complexity of the participant’s words and actions, ability to reconstruct meaning from the data and capacity to separate out what is not pertinent (Mills, et al., 2006). With the evolution of grounded theory Strauss and Corbin (1998) advocated for greater flexibility and creativity,” reflective of the constructivist intent” (Mills, et al., 2006). Identifying the core category is the central point of a constructivist grounded theory which integrates all aspects of the theory and acknowledges the researcher as the author of a theoretical reconstruction (Mills, et al. 2006, p.6) through the act of selective coding. As these authors state, a category will emerge into a core theory, from among many categories. The core interpretation or central themes come from data analysis of the responses to the questions is illustrated in a diagram (1) in the appendix. Core themes

unfold as macro level organizational factors influencing provision in chapter four, two chapters on meso level pre-placement informational and transactional factors, two chapters on micro student factors as they relate to the stem question and two chapters written on response to the subsidiary question at an eso level. Cultural factors influencing provision emerged across the themes and it was suggested by my supervisors that these be selected as a core cultural theme. Relational aspects as they relate to the subsidiary question were collapsed into the themes of chapters nine and ten.

This dense thematic analysis of the results and its integration with the literature enhanced an approximation of trustworthiness of the findings with its inevitable limitations. I acknowledge there may be bias, inconsistencies or irrelevant reasoning in the data interpretation because analysis is influenced by the researcher's values, subjectivity and understandings of the topic. Although bias may be levelled at the researcher as a former social service agency manager as well as an educator, it is argued that my background and experience aided understanding of the various roles examined in this study, which may reduce bias and increase a balanced interpretation.

3.7.5 Synthesis with literature

This research began with creation of data, which provided the base material for abstraction. This was followed by analysis and synthesis into the literature to develop a generalization or core. The research process included a review of both local and international literature relevant to the study, gathered over six years. The literature suggested general ideas, which led to some deduction of specific expectations from these ideas and as Mills et al., (2006) says it is another voice. This meant the point of starting to analyse the data was not entirely at the clean slate stage in the research cycle, as the literature engagement started at the commencement of the research process. Although the bulk of the social work education fieldwork literature focuses on the roles of co-ordinators and supervisors of students on placement, with little

about the role of managers, it provided similar occurrences that stimulated my thinking about what was inherently useful to examine the data.

Inductive reasoning was applied to the collection and analysis of data from the researcher's transcriptions of interviews, where individual meanings were studied and meaning ascribed. An eco-systems framework of concepts was also applied (Diagram 1) to see if they were helpful to the interpretation and the macro-micro systems idea aided ordering of the chapter writing, This application of a theory to the findings could be considered deductive reasoning moving from a theory to a particular case as a way to see what emerged by their application to the data and a way to explain data within a context. Eso systems from Germain (1983) and ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) allow for analysis of relationships, finance, and government systems and although religious and health systems can be included in the analysis these are not utilized or relevant here. Eso systems analysis is particularly relevant to the subsidiary question and understandings gained in chapter nine and ten. There are inter-organizational and inter-relational meeting points within and between systems with the role of the manager seen as the probable gate keeper at the boundary between separate systems An ecological framework is appropriate to use with Indigenous material about relational factors and reciprocity between institutions, but not culturally exclusive, as it sits essentially in the eso system of the ecological framework.

3.7.6 Reflection and findings

Gathering of background material along with reflection and unproductive periods punctured by new literature was arguably time consuming and an invisible part of the study for the researcher. Reflection is a term used in Denzin and Lincoln's fifth moment of post modernism of experimental, ethnographical and cultural writings. As social work recognizes the reflective nature of knowledge production (Fook, 1996), intellectual and reflective activities were used to gain new understandings and appreciations. To aid reflection I kept an analytic notebook/journal over a four year period to clarify and document thoughts, reflections, ideas, reactions and impressions

on the research topic. It contributed to the reflective process involved in capturing the participant's reality, contributing to data collection, contextual analysis and laying the foundation for knowledge that is transferable. My notebook included advice received from another researcher "to include metaphors rather than, or along with themes, when interpreting the data" (F. Crawford, personal communication, 2008), but another colleague advised against this, though some metaphors are used because of the pictures they create in the reader's mind. The researcher's notebook contained notes such as 'record as if it is being seen for the first time'. This skill of note taking assisted the enquiry immediately after the interviews with the subsequent data analysis, synthesis and research report as well as during the writing process. The use of a notebook aided the remembering of issues that needed follow up at various stages of the process and improved reliability. A three stage model of learning from experience was adapted by the researcher to focus on "returning to the experience, attending to feelings connected with the experience and re-evaluating the experience through recognizing implications and outcomes" (Boud & Knight, 1985, p.19), which aided reflection after the two interviews of individual managers, which frequently happened on the long drive or air flight home, with the latter allowing for journal entries. The development of the research questions, research methodology, research design and research methods were appropriate to answer the research questions.

As the draft chapters emerged feedback was sought from participants. Five managers preferred to read a number of chapters and review their quotes while others indicated a preference for receiving a copy of the completed work. Towards the end of this study I again sent the findings chapters to managers I could contact for their feedback. An additional two managers confirmed their particular quotes for accuracy, another thanked me for sending it and one agency sent on my letter to the participant who was then emailed the full thesis. This provided the researcher some assurance that the quotes had clarity of purpose and contributed to the partial trustworthiness of the thematic description. A few alterations to words were received, although four managers could not be reached because of a job changes, another retired and contact was lost, unfortunately one participant, a Māori chief, passed away. My purpose was to clarify if there was researcher bias, and as part of the

reciprocal process of enquiry. Reflections, expectations, explanations, experiences, attitudes, perceptions and motivations were identified and interpreted, along with phrases or metaphors that seemed particularly revealing of the manager's experiences which I aimed to capture and report in an unbiased manner as possible. It was a privilege to be invited into the manager's world in a study which was grounded in a collaborative partnership between the researched and the researcher. These manager's reflections could be considered a distinctive feature of social theory which is primarily concerned with historical interpretations (Bottomore, 1979) where managers recognised the opportunities to view their own progress. These techniques were used to gather, process, explain and interpret ideas in an attempt to gain a holistic picture of manager's views on the main research questions.

During the research process of discovery the participants were keen to share their knowledge and also gain knowledge for themselves, to examine what rules, processes and procedures they themselves followed in their own epistemology and therefore were interested in receiving the findings. A few aspects of the study findings may not transferable to other countries because of some cultural customs discussed here, on the other hand they may be very useful to enrich cultural aspects of this research focus. I thought it was ethical to include Māori managers with the aim to produce verifiable knowledge about management factors that influence manager's decision making and turn it into statements which might be useful in another contexts. Further, Ungar (2006) suggests it places the responsibility on research consumers to decide if findings from one study fit another context. This study attempted to bring the data interpretation together to make it work on a practical level, on the ground. It is about what is happening rather than what should, could or ought to happen by adding research rigour, greater completeness and depth to the findings (Glaser, 1999). The design serves the purpose of capturing descriptions of managers' views and contextualization of the data and external review to assess its usefulness. An international conference presentation was given in late 2009, a chapter was published in an edited book in 2011, and also an article was written for a peer reviewed social work journal in 2011 on some findings from this study which were or categories applicable to an Asia Pacific audience.

3.8 Conclusion

This constructivist-interpretative study allowed for consideration to contextual issues such as time, place, culture and circumstances (Davidson & Tolich, 1999), of managers of non-statutory social service organizations in the provinces of *Aotearoa* New Zealand. This design and framework unfolds as a philosophical analysis, a bricoleur of ontology, epistemology, methodology, ethical cross-cultural consideration and value positioning. The qualitative method of this study is underpinned by constructivist grounded theory and the use of systems theory to develop understanding of managers' views on fieldwork placement and the development and enhancement of inter-organizational relationships in a theoretical way. Although this qualitative study was data intensive the objective was for the study to yield 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) from which concepts and categories could be formed from the 'ground' resulting in the discovery of new elements or theories which could provide new understanding that may be applicable to the traditional fieldwork placement model.

This study design set the scene for the next chapter which unfurls the findings from the literature and manager's views on how external and internal organizational systems may affect their willingness towards fieldwork placement provision. Chapter four is structured to discuss how a sea of social service organizational change influences manager's willingness towards placement. Global influences on social service organizations; the impact of fieldwork placement competition; funding arrangements, financial disparities and incentives; government funding and social service contracts and organizational practicalities, capacity and resources, are all factors that contribute to the answering of the study questions. The managers in this study are seen as nestled in local social service organizations in the wider society, in keeping with understandings from eco-systems theory (Germain, 1983) where there are separate but the opportunities to arrive at interconnecting systems.

CHAPTER FOUR

A SEA OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: FACTORS INFLUENCING MANAGER'S WILLINGNESS TOWARD PLACEMENT

"We are a warship not a passenger liner so to speak."

(Interviewee: Māori community centre manager)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter brings the study method and methodology to life by examining findings on macro political and meso level organizational factors influencing manager's responses to the stem research question on fieldwork placement provision. Study participants were asked as to what internal and external organizational factors would influence their student placement decision making. Such a question was asked based on the assumption that these managers had the right to choose whether or not to open the organizational door to student placements. This thesis argues that managers have the lawful duty and legitimate authority to decide when or whether a student is offered a place in the organization they are responsible for. The organizational theme arising from the data analysis and synthesis with the literature suggests managers have a number of student choices available, before a student is permitted to cross their organizational boundary into their system of social service delivery. The impact of part time staff on student supervision, managers 'covering' for missing staff and lack of organizational policy to guide manager's decision making are also findings, but these are not developed further here to make the study manageable.

The literature on economic influences on *Aotearoa* New Zealand as discussed in a previous chapter, also provides a global context of liberal reform which increasingly is influencing social service delivery and fieldwork in social work education, in macro global, meso networks and local levels of inter-action. In this chapter my study findings are examined under five main organizational themes: the global

influences on social service organizations; the impact of fieldwork placement competition; funding arrangements, financial disparities and incentives; government funding and social service contracts; and organizational practicalities, capacity and resources. The data analysis is influenced by the understanding that social service organizations are imbedded in macro settings of complexity (Cooper & Briggs, 2000; Hay & O'Donoghue, 2008), with fieldwork placement seen as a "complex business in all cultural contexts" (Hicks & Maidment, 2009, p.6). Deep within this macro system is the organizational meso and eso system of the fieldwork placement setting where there is a dependency on the willingness of staff in their micro system to support a social work student, a stranger to their ever changing organizational system.

Systems theory in an ecological framework assists the description and interpretation of social service organizational inter-actions and a manager's role in boundary keeping. The eco systems framework as a conceptual structure of concentric circles was originally criticized for failing to address how systemic parts related to each other or to address structural injustices because of its lack of recognition of power discourse, social location and lifestyle diversity but the framework now recognized complexity and reductionism (Healy, 2005). Ecosystems perspectives on macro, meso, micro and eso systems assisted thinking about all organizations as systems and transactions happening between and within their systems, while people "both change and are changed by the environment" (Payne, 1991, p.139). Key principles within systems theory include those about organizations maintaining a steady state by input of energy and the delivery of outputs; maintenance of purpose influenced by change or input; systems become complex; the idea that "the whole organization is more than the sum of parts" and reciprocity (Payne, 1991, p. 136). This application of systems theories is therefore deductive in nature where inferences can be made. Social work students within one bounded micro system were viewed as moving across open agency system boundaries and experiencing different roles within them, or alternatively interchange denied by a closed system. Students must try to maintain a "good fit with their environment" (Payne, 1991, p.139) whilst on placement. Their supervision could be seen as throughput within the social service organizational

system and co-ordination from education could be viewed as meso systems input into the organizational system.

Eco-systems theories enhance understanding of the epistemology or scope of how purpose and process in one system may or may not affect the process of change in another. These theoretical ideas suggest that as well as patterns and forms of circularity in interactions between formal organizational structures may be evident or desired, it has to be questioned as to whether policy in the social work educational sector affects or influences another system, the non-government social services where agency policies on social work education and student placement may barely exist.

Further, social services agencies appear to be legally positioned by the (NZ) Social Workers Registration Act (2003) to sit within the educational system and policies commit social services to support it through placement provision. This places schools in positions of high dependency upon agencies to extend goodwill in what appears to be a highly competitive market. Finding meaning in such a conceptual framework of manager-in-situation in a global world was seen as critical to the study questions as this fieldwork education context traditionally relates to other key players besides the social service agency manager.

This analysis is influenced by management theories of organizations which could be viewed through various lenses of “culture, communication and decision theories” or “constructions (interpretive and inter-actionist theories) and as flux and domination (critical theories),” (Hughes & Wearing, 2007, p.35). Management theories such as exchange, economic, resource dependency and functionalist organization theory (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) have a part to play in orientating this study. Whereas social constructionist ideas suggest that social service agencies are socially created and are influenced by global, social, cultural, technological and political factors from the world around us as this study identifies. Duff in Hughes and Wearing (2007) also saw organizations as “living organisms” (p.35) while others state that such

environments have rapid and continuous change (Beddoe, 2000; Emery & Trist, 1965; Hughes & Pengelly, 1997). Continuous change appears to be indicative of local and internationally located social and human services. In order to examine the findings it was important not only to keep all these theories in mind but to examine the macroeconomic influences on the organizational context of the social/human service sector and interpret the data whilst aware that macro influence are also driving rapid, unclear changes which lead to uncertainty of direction of these services.

4.2 Global influences on social service organizations

Global market trends and constructions such as globalization, managerialism and neo-liberalism, funding and legal structures have an impact on non-government social service organizations in a sea of constant change, scattered with moments of uncertainty about their sustainable future. Globalization sits in the macro system (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), but influences all systems.

“Globalisation means the flows of capital, commodities, ideas and people across borders. Popular and dominant perceptions of globalisation often elucidate the novel view that the world is now a ‘single place’.”

(Enrile & Nazareno, 2011, p.173)

This idea of globalisation introduces a range of socio-economic issues and problems as well as opportunities for positive change in this worldwide way of doing things. . It represents the cultural setting of thoughts, ideologies, values and beliefs and a broad social, economic and political context of structures and cultural, legal and funding systems. Therefore a process of changes in organizations, cities, societies, countries and the world economy is created that influence various aspects of their development with downstream impacts on social work education and social services.

Through international social work fieldwork placements this globalisation process has opened up the opportunity for positive change for social workers and enables students to discover other cultures and cultural perspectives on well-being and suffering, social needs and exposure to other ways of social working. Globalisation has assisted the expansion of opportunities and greater freedom to develop cross-cultural skills, share application of theories and research and the broadening of knowledge bases. This can happen through the use of technology, improved transportation and new communication web sites and methods of across-the-world instant communication, such as student supervision conducted via a satellite cable transmission. While viewing globalisation from an economic viewpoint, Enrile and Nazareno (2011) suggest it exposes the free market of universal availability of consumer products and the capitalist trade for profit as well as democracy in action, along with the creation of wealth and prosperity.

There is no doubt that globalisation has heightened awareness about others beyond our own local borders and boundaries and the nature of social work education and social work is influenced by economic trade and agreements, the various media, information technology and cultural and scientific exchanges and events, ideas and knowledge exchange as well as increased understanding of social problems. Globalisation is said to open up greater respect and understanding for social workers of the needs of others in various cultures and increases “empathy for the plight of others and make us critically conscious of the impact that we have on each other,” (West & Baschiera, 2011, p. 92) so it could be argued it has positive implications for social work and fieldwork practice. Although globalization has opened up greater opportunity for students to undertake international fieldwork placements this likely impacts on increased competition for placements at a local level.

However, liberal ideas about globalisation of the economy assume that benefits of increased efficiency, productivity and profitability will result in and have “trickle-down benefits for a world economic recovery”, but these have proven to be unfounded (Kelsey, 1993, p. 110). Globalisation has an obvious down side in that it has created greater vulnerabilities for the social realities of many, such as those with

housing issues, possibly created by unemployment. A woman manager in a provincial city identified the complexity of social issues and the struggle agencies such as hers are faced with, which may influence the opening of the fieldwork placement door:

“I don’t think anybody can prepare students for the complexity of people issues – it is unbelievable – even people like the CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau) are saying this about lots of social issues and it is getting worse – homeless people are so desperate they ring...we don’t want to pass the buck...lots of passing on issues in the ‘too hard basket’...passing on risky people and lots of agencies are being selective as to what they do..... Lots of social issues in our community stem from debt.”

(Pākēha community centre manager)

The quantity of social issues referred to above suggests that this manager feel that their organizations was under siege and social problems were getting worse. Also, the social issue of housing, particularly emergency housing appeared to create a crisis for this agency manager with the above quote suggesting that housing services or resources are lacking in her city, which in itself may make life difficult for the agency and reduce the amount of time available to accommodate students on fieldwork placement. Furthermore it may be that the side-lining of difficult issues by some agencies may reduce the options for interventions for such complex issues and reduce student learning. As another manager said: *“we are a warship not a passenger liner so to speak.”* This metaphor illustrates that the organizational placement was not to be considered a holiday destination for the student but a place to pull their weight, contribute, participate and work hard. Another male manager felt any students that came to his community centre –

“had a double responsibility to look after Māori and that a student’s economic view was important [to their student selection] as people in poverty need better access to jobs, so poverty is not entrenched, but work

was not the only perspective ...self-esteem and communication are integral [to the work students do].”

(Maori community centre manager)

This manager appears to wish to open the door to students who understood the needs of Māori clients and the inequities they may face, such as difficulty in finding work. It could be said that globalization has created inequities with “gender, class, race, ethnicity, histories, wars, nationality and citizenship” (Enrile & Nazareno, 2011, p. 174). Further, it could also be argued that such inequities have already existed for many vulnerable groups worldwide, such as Indigenous peoples and that advanced technology has highlighted such inequities through job displacement and that technology has replaced people in previous held jobs. As a consequence it may have indirectly influenced the nature of and broadened the complexity of work of social workers into expanded political, environmental and social realms. Furthermore, vulnerable groups include women who “continue to make up the majority of low wage service workers, exported labour, and carry the main burdens of poverty” (Enrile & Nazareno, 2011, p. 175), which compounds on the lives of their vulnerable children.

Critical comment on globalisation would postulate that rich nations, political leaders and corporations have created a neo-liberal world economy through exploited labour and resources of poorer countries and retained economic domination and greater profits (Portes & Borocz, 1989; Sassen, 2008; Wallerstein, 1974). Enrile and Nazareno (2011) suggest that the gap between the richest and poorest people in the world has increased by approximately four times over the last century which must impact upon vulnerable populations who are often exposed to oppressive and discriminatory practices. In turn such macro level issues must compound the nature and need for social work students gaining an understanding of such global processes and economic systems (Enrile & Nazareno, 2011). This in turn must present an impossible challenge to social work educators to lay the educational groundwork for students in the classroom. Not only has globalization created a neo-liberal economy

in western countries and the need for students who understand economics and a diverse range of skills it has brought increased competition for student placements.

4.3 The impact of fieldwork placement competition

One of the most important findings in this study is the impact of competition for student placements which provides opportunity and flexibility of student choice for managers. As was identified by a community house manager, “*managers have to decide which school to give priority to.*” The managers in this study were asked at the first interview the total number and source of requests for practicum provision they had received in the previous six month period prior to the initial interview. The total number of combined requests received by these managers in the six month period totalled fifty one requests. Twenty two requests were received from Polytechnics with ten received from an institution teaching counselling by distance education to students located around *Aotearoa* New Zealand. There were eight requests from *Wananga* (literal translation: university); seven requests from overseas; two from early childhood training programmes, one request from a university social work co-ordinator and one from the health sector, which suggests that other disciplines are facing placement shortages as well and crossing traditional boundaries. Placements requests averaged four for each manager during the six month period prior to the first interview, which potentially could be an annual average of eight requests. The managers themselves were surprised about the number when asked to consider this question about volume of requests.

Reflections on these managers’ experiences indicate that competition from inside and outside of social work will lead to some groups being excluded. Given that placement periods are usually three months duration in *Aotearoa* New Zealand and four requests were made on average to these managers over six months, even if two placements were provided, two would be excluded. As one male Māori manager of a youth service said “*we have received requests from a 1st year degree student; two 3rd year degree students; one Diploma student and three certificate students,*” while another agency manager had received one request from an unidentified source. A

male Māori manager, a prominent leader and a chief, said he had received two recent requests from Scandinavian countries and from an Indigenous group from Canada.

“We had five placements from indigenous people from Canada for 5-6 months, we had one failure because of drinking...we had one visit from a supervisor. The Indian Reservation gave us an invitation [to visit], but we gave this to our local Polytechnic and they went over.”

(Māori chief and social service manager)

Accommodating this number of placements appeared not to be a resource issue for this manager of a large community service as financial resources were contributed to this social service for the hosting of these indigenous people. Support for such a number would possibly mean that local social work programmes would be less likely to receive placement allocation concurrently with the agency, but alternatively compensated for. A few managers received requests from overseas for placements, as well as local ones, which suggests an increasing global impact on provision in provincial centres in *Aotearoa* New Zealand. The quote above also suggests that inter-country culturally focused student placement exchanges were based on reciprocity. Further, the findings indicate that the majority of managers received requests not only from social work education providers but also other professions locally and nationally, such as counselling and early childhood education. A number of roles, barriers and situations influence provision of fieldwork placement, for instance a student may not realize that they are facing competition for fieldwork placement and that such competition is a major factor influencing managers' decision making. It is unclear in these findings as to whether placement provision was made on a 'first come, first served' basis, although one student at a time seemed to be the norm, because of resource capacity, if provision was offered. As a *pākēha* (broadly means other than Māori) woman manager of a social service in large provincial city said:

“We sometimes get requests for student placements with our social workers in schools [programme]. This happened recently and we were unable to do this as one of the social workers already had a student in place and the second social worker had only been in the job a week so it was not suitable.”

(Pākēha social service manager)

This quote implies that not only is there competition, but that the social workers in school programme had staff turnover which influenced fieldwork placement availability. This manager of a large agency with multiple contracts and over twenty staff was committed to fieldwork placement provision, but was limited by capacity. The competition for a social work placement working with children in schools may suggest this is a popular area for students and the quote above suggests that willingness was afforded the first request, but additional request could not be agreed to because of an inexperienced social worker, who may have been available given a different tenure in the organization.

The above quote is an example of how boundary concepts of systems theory aided understanding from a structural view, because this manager talked about legitimate decision making to control her environment, the need to make choices between competitors, staff capability and student compatibility, that is being a ‘level of fit’ (Gitterman, 1996b) with the agency and the nature of the work. A utilitarian manager may argue that the school that gets in first receives the place, those who come later are left out, even though the student may be considered to be more desirable, suitable or more deserving. As a community house manager said, *“yes we have refused one already as we have one already on board”*. Although it is unclear whether or not a ranking or preferential system might operate, a few managers mentioned that they were aware of upcoming requests for other student placements, from institutions they were loyal to, possibly prioritizing their choice, without closing their options too soon. A Māori manager indicated he had tried to accommodate three students from more than one institution simultaneously in the past as he needed the workers, but this had made his job difficult in terms of

allocation of suitable and sufficient work and his supervision time. Further, their presence placed “*a stretch on resources*”, so he had concluded that “*this was a mistake*” he would not repeat.

Credibility of schools of social work and power relations emerge from the findings on competition because managers could choose who to support or decline. Some managers wished to support local credible educational institutions, but if they felt the school was less likely to support the student or provide what one described as a “*rubbish student*”, they made the decision to say ‘no’ which suggests that managers were keen to be associated with schools with a good reputation, a school who looked after their needs and provided work ready students. Judgements appeared to be made based on perceived school and student ‘quality’ and experience of the school relationship (examined in chapter nine); therefore credibility and trust had to be earned. Schools could help or hinder, enhance or damage the invisible ranking process through their organizational culture, team, or co-ordinator. One manager said “*tutors can get high and mighty about what students should learn*”, which suggests that pressures may have been felt with the imposition of additional agency work.

Such manager’s positioning in decision making around the type of student chosen, if any, may have a disheartening effect on placement co-ordinators who may feel they have made the right choice or match of agency for their student. Likewise students may have thought long and hard about their preferences only to find their plans thwarted until another site is found for them in a market place of competition. However, the findings suggest that if there was willingness, there was a need to be honest with a student about agency fallibility in that “*no agency was perfect*”, so it was seen as important that “*the students saw warts and all*”. These quotes suggest this manager knew they were being put under the efficiency micro-scope by opening their doors to students with enquiring minds, posing a possible risk to themselves. But it could also mean at times there could be an unwillingness to expose organizational or management flaws to students. There was also a subtle suggestion that a successful placement would mean the student later talked about their good experiences on placement which had reciprocal marketing benefits for agency

credibility, as well as beneficial learning opportunities for the student and the school of social work programme.

Although competition between social work education providers is not a new finding, a picture emerges of a highly competitive market in the provincial cities and towns in a sea of competition for placements not only from social services, but also from other sectors. This positioned these managers to juggle a multiplicity of loyalties, availing them with multiple choice or alternatively withdrawal from availability. With managers required to manage competition, make decisions about resources, follow service delivery contracts, the level of placement demand appears to exceed capacity to provide in this context. These findings on volume and direction of competition for placements increases understanding because many other writers thought competition was only coming from other schools of social work and human services and counselling (Buck, Bradley, Robb & Kirzner, 2012) whereas this study identified rivalry from other disciplines as well. This additional pressure on social services could mean that information technology has presented other possibilities for placement to other disciplines or that there is a shortage in other areas for placement, such as early childhood education, or alternatively other disciplines have identified a role for themselves in social services or alternatively viewing social services as multi-disciplinary in nature.

Managers and supervisors may decide to give preferential treatment to certain disciplines. Conflicting loyalties positioned managers to consider institutional favourites and total numbers of students to accommodate over a predetermined period. This situation may mean a considerable number of exclusions and placement difficulties and creative challenges for co-ordinators of social work fieldwork education. For many years the social work fieldwork placement literature has indicated an increasing competitive market providing a challenge to fieldwork co-ordinators to satisfy enrolment demands for fieldwork sites suitable for practice, appropriately matched with student's educational needs and possibly increasing demands as education consumers. Although the nature and extent of the competition from disciplines outside of social work are new findings, they added to what Fook

(2002); Hay and O'Donoghue (2008) and Healy (2000) suggest, in that scarcity of placements was influenced by competition from other schools of social work. Wayne, Ruskin and Bogo (2006) and Zuchowski (2011) thought it was the proliferation of social work programmes that impacted on agencies. Schools of social work in the student market place in *Aotearoa* New Zealand, was seventeen (NZ) (Social Workers Registration Board, 2012), but two years later it reduced to sixteen (NZ) (SWRB, 2014), compared to twenty nine degree programmes in Australia, accredited by the Australian Association of Social Work (AASW), (Cleak & Fox, 2011).

It could be argued that social work shortages and the aging social work workforce in many countries demand more education programmes and likely more pressure on agencies to provide placements. There has been a significant increase in social work programmes in the Asia-Pacific region despite lack of resources and stable governments (Zuchowski, 2011) with these are likely to expand in size in the Asian-Pacific context (Townsend, Long & Trainor, 2011). Likewise international studies such as those by Bogo, Globerman and Shekter-Wolfson (2002) and Healy in Camilleri and Humphries (2005) identifies that agencies were facing market competition and that these too are on the increase (Bartlett, Heycox, Noble & O'Sullivan, 2004). Similarly Hay, O'Donoghue and Blagdon (2006) found in an *Aotearoa* New Zealand study that 51.8% of supervisors and students strongly agreed or agreed that there was a high level of competition between tertiary providers for placements. The study did not capture data as to whether each manager accommodated more than one student in the study period, although research in 1997 identified competing influences from social work only, reporting that they found 30% of agencies "served as field-instruction sites for more than one school of social work" (Miller & Rodwell, 1997 pp.72-84). Whereas Noble, Heycox, O'Sullivan and Bartlett (2005) stated that in the light of competition, there was a need for lobbying for more innovative responses away from the traditional placement model, to stimulate the location of sufficient and appropriate placements.

Competition for resources is increased by global forces as de-professionalization escalates and organizations too need to compete in the market, as do schools of social work (Dominelli, 1996). Increased competition may account for Wayne et al. (2006) insisting that there is a rush on by placement personnel to contact agencies before the agency accommodates other students from elsewhere. It also means schools are going to have to promote the value that their students adds to the agency's purpose, over and above other students, which may be their work readiness and competence base. Along with an emphasis on management ideas of efficiency and effectiveness, managerialism and economic rationalism have influenced a shift from a culture of service to a culture of production in the social services according to O'Donoghue, (2003). These ideas were introduced into *Aotearoa* New Zealand in the period 1987-1995 (Nash & Munford, 2001), which they believed shook the traditional philanthropic or altruistic approach to fieldwork placement and notions of generosity. One can imply from this literature and findings that the fieldwork placement pool relied upon in the past is continuing to fail to keep up with demand for 'quality placements' (Cooper & Crisp, 1998; Doel & Shardlow, 1996a; Hay, et al, 2006) and the proliferation of programmes is putting continual strains on the sustainability of the voluntary market place.

The findings support Torczyner's (2000) ideologies of globalisation in as far as that it brings competitiveness and selectivity and is likely to bring about a degree of exclusiveness and predetermined choice in fieldwork provision. Increasingly global relationships of ideas, culture, languages, people and economic interaction have rapidly spread between countries around the world, largely through the event of advancing technology and web communication, so it is hardly surprising that students are increasingly desirous of international placements, assisted by technological advances. There are many social work programmes in the United States accredited to have students in international placements (Panos, Cox, Pettys & Jones-Hart, 2004) whilst Dominelli (2009) argues for the production of the capable student who can engage with international issues.

Neo-liberal thinking and action, an alternative interpretation for globalisation, is a trend that influences competition for placements, while advocating for the advancement of economic wellbeing of individuals, groups and societies. Aimers and Walker (2008) describe neo-liberalism as (1) the withdrawal of the state from economic production; (2) the extension of marketization and neo-conservative social policy and (3) a partnering ethos and social investment. Furthermore, the core technology within such market forces is perceived as management knowledge, rather than professional knowledge or societal or local community knowledge (Tsui & Cheung, 2004), which suggests risk for the profession of social work. In turn the integration of local and global markets influence competition, the role of technology and transmission of information, education, social work jobs (Dominelli, 1999) and organizational networks. Non-statutory social service organizations may become more effective in their work with their clients through the application of new ideas from other countries and oversight by funders wishing to make efficient use of financial and other resource provision, which may include a student's contribution. In addition, globalization and market forces demonstrate some economic benefits to provision if managers favour a low cost injection of students to train as staff for their workforce.

On the other hand, pressured social service environments and the effects of new managerialism and economic rationalism on student supervision was noted (O'Donoghue, 2003) which likely effected the ability of agency staff to accommodate a student as did the pressured effects of change from globalisation on the environment of social work and the social work student (Cleak & Fox, 2011). Themes within the literature discuss the macro forces of marketization which have brought competition, productivity and efficiency with agencies "which in turn leads to a reduction of the number of placements on offer" (Barton, Bell & Bowles, 2005, p. 301). It would seem that there has always been a wind of change in both the social services and social work education, so it is plausible to assume there is also a worrying wind of change in the nature of competition between institutions for fieldwork placement with probable oversupply of students in what appears to be a shrinking market, tempered by reduced funding arrangements. At a micro and meso level between systems, managerialism has strong links to staff performance

management and accountability to key stakeholders, principally funders. Despite dissatisfaction with the contracting process for social services and destructiveness of competition in this country being well documented (Aimers & Walker, 2008); managerialism discourses presuppose a dominant position within social service management (Sanders & Munford, 2010) because of the political, economic and financial pressures on organizational thought.

4.4 Funding arrangements, financial disparities and incentives

The participants were asked a question as to whether they saw funding arrangements or resourcing as an organizational factor influencing provision of a fieldwork placement. Financial resource disparities and lack of sufficient incentives were recognized and are put forward as part of an argument that challenges manager's goodwill at an eso systems level. The first level of economic disparity identified by male managers in this study was the lack of financial compensation, or monetary incentives or resource reciprocity for expenditure, for the use of agency resources. For a few managers lack of financial support was seen as an issue "*as we know the local students pay fees [to Polytechnic and other institutions]*" so he thought the situation was unfair and queried as to what happened to that funding source. As one Māori manager identified local students paid a large amount of money for placements which he stated "*is never passed on to agencies and there is quite a financial cost to our organization for students as they are given resources, for example, time, manuals, supervision: all free at the moment*" so students in general were seen to generate costs to the agency. One manager made a comparison with students of teacher training where "*compensation to acknowledge extra effort*" was received and compared unfavourably with social work, "*who offered less*". It was stated by a *pākēha* woman manager of a community centre that ran a crèche that:

"We have had two early childhood students training to be teachers from Polytechnic and we were paid for it. We appreciated this input as it was nice to get something in recognition, something like \$100 for what their agency

saw as a *'thank you'* and as another manager said - *signs of appreciation were important 'for growing the person'.*"

(Pākēha community centre manager)

On the other hand, a comparison was made with a group of early childhood education students on placement from the University of Waikato, where it was revealed that although a "pitiful amount of money changed hands, it was increasingly difficult to find placements because of teacher workload" (Claire Davidson, programme convenor, personal communication, April 29, 2011). This statement may suggest that workload also affects the early childhood teaching profession. Coupled with these differences in gestures of appreciation, is the issue of economic disparity with internal and external supervisor payments. Neither the supervisor within the agencies nor the agency was funded for their student work, but external supervisors brought in to the agency, were paid for their role. However, these findings suggest that the recognition for services rendered appeared not to be about the amount of money that changes hands but rather about a demonstration of tangible recognition and gratitude for the time and work expended on the student. These espoused partners of the schools of social work may consider themselves disadvantaged by the knowledge that student fees do not translate into income or financial acknowledgement for their role in the student's education and learning, hence possibly creating some disenchantment about lack of acceptable financial or social incentives. Although these are very limited findings they do suggest a tone of resignation in that nothing ever changed, nor was likely too on a financial front and that funding was not part of the 'good will' equation. The fall-back position appeared to be the seeking of tangible support such as the provision of professional development for staff. In answer to a question about whether there was the need for more mutually beneficial and reciprocal inter-organizational relationships one male manager was suggesting recompense such as "*financial or professional development support for organizations so they are recompensed for the extra time required in managing students.*" The tradition of 'good will' or 'doing a favour' still appears to hang over the traditional placement model in *Aotearoa* New Zealand, and it seems

that female managers do not like to discuss money when past patterns of inter-organizational exchanges appear not to have included any discussion.

New understandings suggest that it is tangible appreciation of various kinds that would be welcome in exchange for the time and a resource expended on students and the notion of exchange is discussed in chapter ten. A general acceptance by managers of the economic status quo with some noting a disparity in financial incentives or payment between different local professions and people internal and external to the agency has brought limited understandings. These findings are useful in that only a few managers were interested in financial incentives to encourage goodwill, but rather women managers and supervisors needed to be noticed and appreciated for their willingness towards provision. As one Maori manager said: “*a carrot cake is all we require,*” which would be shared with agency staff.

It could be argued that only the supervisors need be acknowledged, but the managers provide the support, safety, material and personnel resources. Lack of appreciation for placement resources may contribute to the unavailability of people and time resources towards students learning on placement. On the other hand, incentives negotiated with managers that meet their needs, could raise the level of ‘quality’ supervision for fieldwork placements which the literature suggests social work education is seeking.

A second level of economic disparity was found in the data in that local students brought in no funding, compared with international students who brought in large amounts of money, which again might place a manager in a position of choice. As a male manager said international students came with funding and “*they pay us really well and we get nothing in New Zealand - no contribution*”. Another woman manager of a large Christian social service agency said that in answer to the question about organizational factors influencing decisions making on student placement that:

“We have had students from a vast range of cultures, including ones who have come from overseas just to do a placement with us. I have to say that these students come with funding from their schools to do their placement which does not happen with New Zealand schools.”

(Pākēha social service manager)

Although only a few managers had experienced overseas students, the implication is that given such competition, managers are likely to choose those that offer the most reward. Cost/benefit analysis is not a new idea to managers of social service organizations as they have always had to guard expenditure along with weighting up the use of resources. Further, consideration given to the costs and risks to service delivery by taking a student on placement needs to be taken seriously (Held, 1999). If the future focus of managers becomes essentially an economic decision, what happens when the costs of opening the student door outweigh the benefits? Financial inducement was not necessarily the issue, although Cleak, Hawkins and Hess (2000) say inducement in Australia is necessary to attract staff commitment to placement provision. It would appear that there is insufficient evidence in this study for the need for monetary inducement. International experience does not provide any solution to the issue in terms of funding for placement. Dominelli (2009) lamented that in England, the lack of government funding to provide sufficient high-quality placements, contributed to practice teaching (supervision) being no longer compulsory. She also identified that the voluntary sector was unable to provide sufficient supervisors for students. Also in the United Kingdom attendance at the required supervisor training was seen at risk unless additional funding was provided for travel, training and time costs. It seemed both “unacceptable and unrealistic to ask them to commit themselves to what is an appropriately demanding process” (Furness & Gilligan, 2004, p.471), therefore one problem was replacing another.

This study does not fully support Hay, et al.’s (2006) study which found that 42.9% of supervisors and students thought that financial incentives affected agencies taking students. It could be argued that the students in particular were not in the best

position to answer such a question. The manager, the holder of the information, appeared to be left out of the equation in Hay, et al.'s (2006) study, although these educators suggest that further consideration be given to the lack of financial incentive to agencies or field educators/supervisors as they would likely be interested. On the other hand, Shardlow and Doel (2002) found that when voluntary agencies in the Asylum seeker project were paid a daily rate as an incentive to increase commitment, there was sustained interest and commitment to provide students with learning opportunities. These writers said this was partly because agencies had recognized the student contribution to practice and policy, knowledge contribution, fairness and neutrality. Even if non-statutory agencies appealed to the government to cover fieldwork placement costs, it will be difficult for them to argue for support for an education activity, which normally would come out of an education budget. As it is, social work education also suffers from cross discipline discrimination in that:

“...social work education has historically been funded at the lowest level of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) funding categories, (Category A), which is aimed at non-professional education with mass lectures and minimal small tutorial support. By comparison the category rates for teaching programmes (Category I) and Nursing programmes (Category L) have exceeded Category A by 42% and 71% respectively.”

(Palmer, 2008, p.5)

For some years, the Council for Social Work Education Aotearoa New Zealand (CSWEANZ) has been concerned about this inequity of poor funding for placement papers and has advocated unsuccessfully for change in government education policy with TEC (Lynn Briggs, personal communication, June 2011). Welfare education and services have been marginalized as a result of economic rationalization (Maidment, 2002b) and she believed schools of social work operate in a climate of scarcity of resources and support. There is inadequate preparation and understanding of programme providers and of expectations and there is a superficial division of

labour between schools and agencies along with a non-user friendly environment, a sense of isolation and lack of recognition (Maidment, 2001). This suggests that such resource scarcity possibly confines the nature of fieldwork placement contracts negotiated between schools of social work and social services.

4.5 Government funding and social service contracts

Government contracts are closely linked to economic rationalism and managerial and market approaches (Harris, 2003; Jordon, 2000; Maidment, 2002b). In *Aotearoa* New Zealand, the Ministry of Social Development partially fund non-government social services agencies on contract for selected service delivery through key performance indicators without fully funding the performance measures set, let alone the development of the profession. As was identified “*government contracts barely cover more than 70% of income needed to sustain current social services, with no room to grow*” (Wendy Cruse, manager of a large foster care agency, personal communication, 12 November, 2010), so the question of resourcing for fieldwork placement does not come from wider political systems and possibly presents a complex situation for education to solve. Further, in 2007 a New Zealand government strategy aimed to strengthen and build effective community-based social services using partnering arrangements and an outcome based funding model as a re-configured contract process which Aimers and Walker (2008) suggest is problematic because the contracts excluded accountability relationships to the communities that social services serve. Economic globalisation and market activity with contracts for social services was said to be a one way process that placed social services in danger of losing contact with their traditional local community along with their own autonomy (Aimers & Walker, 2008). Also Birkenmair and Berg-Weger (2011) believe that not-for-profit social services had unsteady funding compared with statutory government organizations and therefore need a diverse funding base, but where does this come from? This suggestion in effect, must demand more time and energy expended by the organization in its search for funds or benefactors. Contracts contain no funding allocation specifically for fieldwork student training, although the agency is potentially providing workforce development as well as providing

information for social policy direction, through contract accountability mechanisms and network systems.

Although not directly related to the stem question, it would appear that some agencies were in financial survival mode and therefore under economic competitive pressure possibly spending time searching, applying and accounting for funding. As a South Island woman refuge manager said:

“While the experience gained in non-government groups is important for students many of these groups are at a disadvantage when trying to manage student placements. Non-government organizations are often underfunded, have less staff available and have less space and resources to accommodate student placements.”

(Pākēha crisis service manager)

Underfunding may mean managers are constantly seeking funding from multiple sources to ensure the survival of the agency in a competitive funding environment. The contract culture of strictly defined service contracts (Beddoe & Maidment, 2009) has likely resulted in agencies needing multiple contracts and resultant accountabilities to survive and therefore this appears to have a powerful influence on their financial stability, survival and staffing resource. As Aimers and Walker (2011) found in their 2010/2011 survey of non-profit community and voluntary sector organizations in New Zealand, funding in some form or other was their most pressing concern including government actions and its effects on funding. Factors stemming from government contractual arrangements also identified that *“funding applications do not include funding of supervision”* [of students]. Further, lack of funding can result in reduced staff numbers as well as stressed staff, greater workloads with less resources, less job satisfaction, a climate of concern about the future, along with uncertainty about contracts and staffing anxiety, let alone the increasingly difficulty nature of social work, illustrating the challenges and

complexities of service delivery in this country. This factor alone likely affects the decision to accommodate a student on placement. Likewise it is not surprising that any imposed obligation to provide for students in pressured complex organizations is a test of patience, resolve and resilience for managers and fieldwork placement supervisors, struggling in environments where service delivery must take precedence.

It is hardly surprising that social worker willingness to supervise a student's learning in such a difficult organizational context is compromised (Maidment, 2001). Social service delivery and the nature of government contracts appear to influence manager's decisions either way as to how social work education and students can assist their needs. As a woman manager of a large non-sectarian agency said "*placements depend on what contracts are out there – we do social work in schools – partnership depends on contracts out there - such as youth worker contract*" which appears to indicate that the nature of the contracts dictated the nature of the student resource required by the agency manager. On the other hand, the focus and nature of some social service contracts may also work against fieldwork provision as the type of work may make some agencies unattractive to schools of social work or their students. *Shift work, after hours work, students untrained in specific services, e.g. counselling or budgeting; long term interventions or Court work, or a required physical fitness level* were various factors identified in this study which were seen as reasons for unwillingness. Constant changes of tempo and direction stemming from the macro socio-political environmental system could lead to organizational restructuring and repositioning of social services via the influence of a government's social policy wind. Such changes and the constancy of underfunding, workload pressures, understaffing, were indicated in this study, along with the challenges presented by the ebbs and flows of a sea of service, funding needs and competing priorities. Organizational restructuring and retrenching practices are likely to continue particularly if funding contracts continue to be based on economic and efficiency principles, rather than the more difficult to prove notion of effectiveness with client work. Furthermore, managerialism repositions social work and social services as "guardians of the public purse who had to prove to government regulators that they were delivering 'value for money' " (Humphrey, 2011, p. 159) for the tax payer dollar received.

4.6 Organizational practicalities, capacity and resources

Linked to these economic issues that affect willingness or unwillingness to provide for students is the influence of the time, resources and policy required for hosting of students on placement. Questions were asked of managers about organizational practicalities, capacity, resourcing and timing of placements and what internal or external organizational factors influenced their decision making on the student placement question. Difficulties in contacting social services for this study suggests that technology can also be a gatekeeper of communication for agencies perhaps under pressure or the use of a deliberate strategy to reduce workload. Of the remainder contacted they were either “*too busy*” to participate or “*too busy with audits and conferences*” or alternatively did not respond at all to the invitation.

Over-work, staff changes, staff shortage, part time workers, audits, conference attendance and restructuring were identified as organizational reasons why managers did not have time to involve themselves in this study. Such staffing, workload, reporting requirements and just being “*too busy*” to respond to communications, is in keeping with Connolly and Rathgen’s view (2000), that in an entrenched environment agencies are too busy to take students on field placement. This potentially could suggest possible work overload, a quest for self-preservation or disinterest in responding to the invitation. In answer to a question about capacity or resourcing factors influencing ability to take a student on placement, the response from a male *pākēha* manager was that although he may be willing, because of “*staff shortages or full caseloads...so no capacity to mentor a student,*” while another manager said that in order to provide fieldwork placement “*the current workload has to be the major consideration.*” Lack of funds to pay for staff needed and non-statutory social services struggling to keep up with demands for this service was also identified by Globerman and Bogo, (2004). Time was a resource identified that was stretched for orientation and induction, time availability for the student and pressure of time working to deadlines for contracts or staff away from the office or with part-time work hours. These situations left some managers to cover for lack of staff and as one full-time *pākēha* woman manager of a community centre with part-time staff said:

“I am the thread that ties everything together...short staff, covering when staff on leave and we are dealing with the most vulnerable people – we need lots of give and take as a team”.

(Pākēha community centre manager)

It is not surprising that situations like this leave such a manager feeling that a time consuming student was an annoyance they would avoid, as it impinged on the work of the agency and potentially their own workload. Part-time or staffing shortages might mean complicated arrangements for student support which could likely lead to unwillingness to commit to student training involving additional work on top of part-time work. Irregular staff could lead to confusion and concern for the student who may receive inconsistent or mixed messages from multiple supervisors. This same community centre service manager said her social worker staff member was also a family budget advisor and *“would be pushing it to devote time to a student.”* Other reasons for managers leaning towards unwillingness were staff shortages where remaining *“social workers were being stretched”*. Full case loads, staff going on leave, other students on placement, were factors which reduced the agency capacity to supervise a student. Whereas lack of workload relief, sickness, low morale and staff shortage were reasons for non-support of fieldwork placements (Furness & Gilligan, 2004). Given the current socio-economic climate it is suggested that non-government social services not only have difficulty retaining qualified social workers but struggle with relieving their overwhelming workloads and associated pressures coming not only from the complex nature of social work issues but the down-sizing of government welfare services and other government services.

Furthermore, social workers in Britain were reported to be leaving the profession for other more rewarding occupations with retention being particularly difficult for non-government welfare agencies because career pathways are lacking (RDS Business Suite, 2004). Another social service manager said her role as a Māori counsellor specializing in mental health, meant the nature of this work alone drained her time and energy away from placement responsibilities. Social services with less than

fifteen paid staff, where managers may cover for other roles or because of the nature of the work, may lead managers to suffer from burnout. Signs could be seen as resistance, despair, exhaustion and possibly anger (Healy, 2000). Pressures from a heavy workload was described as constant by a pākēha male manager of a foster care agency, stating that provision would be made only under certain circumstances.

“If I have staff who can supervise and the student is able to co-work cases. They would have to be a 2nd or 3rd year student. If they are only requesting to do a field work assignment about the agency etcetera, then I am not interested. A student placement only works for me if they are of practical use, that is, able to work. We are a battleship not a passenger liner so to speak.”

(Pākēha Foster Care agency manager)

Work ready students appear to be an influence on the response to the research question. Such a quote suggests that work pressures leaves no time for students to relax on the deck chairs as a tourist because of the work load. Despite these meso level findings, which arguably relate to macro level societal changes, the majority of managers were prepared to treat any students they allowed onto their ship, as if they were staff. Although these participants were aware of the dependent nature of schools of social work upon their goodwill to contribute to social work student training through fieldwork placements, their own needs restricted their generosity. All students had to prove their worth by making a beneficial contribution in exchange for their berth allocation. It is suggested from these findings that students must be able to undertake a significant amount of work to be beneficial to the social service organization and therefore influence future willingness responses. On the other hand, a woman pākēha manager of an agency with over 10 staff members explained that *“at the beginning of the year we agreed that we would not take a student for the first part of the year due to a lot of [staffing] changes that were occurring for the team”*. While a Māori male manager of a community centre said:

“A student placement in an office as small as mine is not practical, unless the student is able to carry out or co-work cases, they are an inconvenience. It’s like the analogy of a construction firm who have carpentry apprentices who were not allowed to use their tools but could only observe – it wouldn’t happen! This is largely because a social service is a ‘business’ and needs to be managed as such, so having a ‘non-contributor’ is nonsensical.”

(Māori community centre manager)

His second interview confirmed that fieldwork placement *“is a pure business decision. How the clients exit the service is important, the other is peripheral,”* clearly stating his priority was for their clients and the nature of the service they receive, which could be construed as a business or managerial style of decision making with clear rationale and a focus on an efficient service outcome. A question in the study centred on the availability of a fieldwork placement agency policy and as to who made the decision around provision. Some managers gave consideration to availability of staff for the duration of placement as a community service manager said *“decision making is really based around the timing factor; a large agency I think there would not be such a big problem.”* As a manager of a foster care agency said *“yes it is my decision, no policy other than the student complying with ANZASW [Code of Ethics], internal policies and Privacy Act.”* The majority of participants stated they were autonomous decision makers. *“It is up to me as to whether or not a student is taken but I let the Governance Board know; [our] current workload has to be first consideration”.* A female community centre manager said we have *“no policy”* and she asked if others had them, perhaps feeling she needed to have one or her national organization needed to develop a policy.

A few managers mentioned that although they were autonomous decision makers, they did talk with other staff about the decision on student provision. This was evidenced by a non-Māori manager of a large social service who said *“yes [fieldwork happens] in consultation with my fellow co-ordinator, the decision remains totally with me.”* While another said she made the decisions about placement provision and

then a committee of six considered her decision about the person she had chosen, therefore ratification lay with the governance committee.

The majority of managers in this study indicated that ultimately student placement in their organization was a decision for them to make, even if their staff as supervisors had informally agreed upon provision. Therefore the final decision making act appears not to be dictated by fieldwork placement policy or detailed strategy but rather by knowledge of organizational pressures, workload and staffing situations, other students on placement and by using their position to finalize such a choice. If neo-Marxist theorists are drawn upon, disinterest or saying 'no' to placement provision may suggest a form of resistance to any suggestion of outside control. These managers with legitimate authority to decide a response may have striven to retain an area of their sole responsibility to guard and manage what happens within their system without being governed by contractual obligations. The fieldwork placement literature suggests that unwillingness may be because of the lack of material resources and small premises that are de-motivating (Globerman & Bogo, 2004; Hay, et al., 2006). However although there was some mention of lack of office space and car park for a student, it seems that some managers in this study were prepared to offer what they had, but leaving it up to the discretion of the co-ordinator to accept or decline their offer when asked 'will this do?'. Extrapolating data from this study, suggests that the decision to 'take' a student, appeared to be made first, with material resources given lesser attention. This suggests the student hosting commitment itself is considered more important as a response to the placement question than are the resources to support it. Lack of material resources was not a strong reason for their unwillingness to accommodate a student, although the study identified resource poor staff and material environments for service delivery.

4.7 Significance of findings

These findings suggest that organizational factors are significant findings in relation to the stem question on manager's view on fieldwork placement and factors which influence their willingness or unwillingness to accommodate students.

At a macro systems level, globalization and the advancement of electronic communications and technology providing dense and immediate connections is likely to reduce face-to-face personal contact between managers and schools of social work. Simultaneously it may advance opportunities for various mediums of effective communication between groups such as students and supervisors, provided they do not upset cultural sensitivities. The impact of global market pressures on the macro and meso organizational systems, socio-economic and cultural contexts, compounded by unstable influences such as government contracts, fluctuating staffing availability and financial restraints in such politically dependent relationships cannot be ignored in relation to organizational factors influencing provision. The literature on social service organizations in the economic market context of managerial and market approaches, demonstrate that the restructured welfare state and global forces creating important challenges to fieldwork education in its current form, particularly in western countries. The macro organizational context of both Māori and non-Māori social services appear to be under increasing pressure to do more for less funding along with increased accountability for use of resources.

At a meso systems level, it would appear that financial disparities have a flow on effect on social services which possibly have left social services managers feeling disenchantment with social work education. The financial disparities and lack of incentives in social work fieldwork provision would require government funders to give attention to workforce development by either direct placement funding via contracts and policy direction, via discussion with managers. Notwithstanding the fact that little or no money changed hands with a few exceptions, either from Government funding contracts or from the social work education sector, it is concluded that tenuous goodwill existed, tempered with expectations of appreciation, feeling valued and understood. It would appear that more visible work needs to be carried out by social work education to bring about a tangible contractual balance between education, funding providers and social service management if the traditional fieldwork placement system as articulated by international guidelines is to survive. Moreover, it could be too easy to conclude from the literature that financial

incentive or funding for placements or changes in social policy direction would solve the problem of fieldwork placement scarcity.

From a micro level perspective of organizational factors influencing manager's responses towards student placement, positive responses to the research question of provision cannot be relied upon. The nature of the response is dependent upon timing of competitors' requests, the staffing situation, workload and workflow pressures on service delivery and other internal or external factors affecting the organization. Some findings that appear to influence the opening of the agency door to students may be the volume, source and extent of competition which in turn likely results in selectivity and exclusion practices. Willingness or unwillingness towards fieldwork placement provision also appears to be dependent upon the organizational climate of uncertainty, organizational contractual stressors and funding which imply constant change and financial pressures on managers of non-statutory social service organizations. In addition, as an increase in schools of social work add to competition such combined pressures on busy social services pose the potential for placement systems to entropy or shrink even further.

The findings appear to show an awareness of how much extra time and work a student entails in addition to heavy workload for themselves and staff in an organization described metaphorically by one manager as under the organizational pressure of a '*battleship*'. Staffing needs of the agency manager, rather than the needs of the school to find student placements, appears to be a factor that significantly influence managers' responses to the question of fieldwork placement provision. Managers have organizational goals to achieve in their legally constituted agency which they endeavour to accomplish through working with staff and others. They have the responsibility for the health and safety of staff and clients and this becomes an inherited responsibility for students too although students may or may not be covered by various types of insurance policies. Shared understandings about organizational needs and manager's views has much to do with understandings gained as interpreted from the data in this chapter.

Assumptions can be drawn that at some stage in the fieldwork placement process, the manager, arguably the gatekeeper of provision, would be consulted about any decision or commitment made by social workers towards student fieldwork placement supervision. Requests made for resources and work suitability for student education and learning is a factor influencing manager's decision making.

The following chapter examines a second theme to emerge from the findings on managers' expectations of the nature of information provided them prior to a student entering their organizational environment, if willingness towards placement is accorded them. In relation to the stem question, this chapter describes Indigenous imperatives in bi-cultural social work practice, pre-placement connections, whānau and whakapapa knowledge in the pre-placement process and learning opportunities for social work students on placement. Manager's expectations of students to work with disconnection and reconnection and their ability to network and demonstrate cultural competency are further contributions from experienced Māori and non-Māori managers in provincial *Aotearoa* New Zealand.

CHAPTER FIVE

INFORMATION FACTORS, INDIGENOUS IMPERATIVES AND STUDENT LEARNING

“Prior information provision is important at first meeting”

(Interviewee: Māori community centre manager)

5.1 Introduction

Just as the previous chapter examined the theme on organizational influences and economic ideas that can have global effects on non-statutory social services and manager’s decision making around fieldwork placement, this chapter examines how informational factors influence managers’ responses to the fieldwork placement question. The findings suggest that exposure of students to professional social work practice through the allocation of a fieldwork placement is precariously dependent upon pre-placement information, goodwill, appropriate work, time allocation and willingness of the manager to supply physical, material and technological resources to enhance student learning.

In this study managers were asked as to what information they needed to inform their decision making when approached by a fieldwork placement co-ordinator with a student placement request. This chapter brings to the surface Indigenous manager’s views on what best serves them in terms of accepting students on placement and their expectations of them. Pre-placement information particularly on the genealogical background of a potential *tauirā* (student) is of central importance to Māori managers, as the above quote indicates. Although Indigenous ideas are interspersed throughout this thesis, six key elements significant to Māori managers are examined here. Māori managers intertwined cultural practices with their management style and organizational culture. This chapter considers responses to the stem question about my interest in managers, and factors that influence their response to the question of student placement provision. These findings in this chapter are also applicable to the subsidiary question. The subsidiary question seeks to understand how arrangements

could enhance and mutually benefit exchanges between schools of social work and agencies involved in provision. The research objective was to describe and understand how existing fieldwork relationships or connections could be developed, maintained, strengthened or transformed.

The findings are woven into strands of influences in responses to the research questions, such as the application of bi-cultural social work and the importance of *whakapapa* (genealogy, ancestry) and *whānau* (family including extended family) in fieldwork practice pre-placement processes. The working in a face-to-face traditional way and Māori approaches to social work are elements explained and interpreted here for greater understanding about relationship and the development of connections. Sub-themes in this chapter also includes manager's expectations of students working with clients facing disconnection and in need of reconnection. Māori approaches to students helping through inter-agency connections, networks, reciprocity, *tikanga* and *kawa* (customs, rules and protocols) as well as examining understandings about competent bi-cultural practice from a collective worldview, unfold in this chapter.

Just as culture and cultural practices shape social work, it can be assumed that managers' decision making towards student provision is also shaped by culture. So too I was mindful of my need, as a non-Māori *pākēha*, to receive cultural advice from my cultural supervisor and colleague, Emma Webber-Dreadon and other Māori colleagues at *Te Wananga o Aotearoa*, before and during the research process as required. I was mindful of the importance to create space in this study for all randomly selected and purposely selected Māori managers. I was particularly vigilant to not "trample the mana of the people" (Cram, 2001, p.47) as an 'outsider'. Practical preparation pre-interview was required as ethnicity of the participant was not necessarily known until I arrived at their location. I made allowances for Indigenous protocols, for example, wearing dark clothing as a mark of respect for those passed away, particularly as some *Iwi* (tribal) social services could be or were located at or near a *marae* (meeting ground). Food for sharing before or after the interview was taken there as part of bi-cultural practice and extra time was allowed for cultural

protocols of introduction and relationship building. Although Māori cultural protocols and lore are well documented, it is important that such practices, protocols and values are acknowledged at the outset as they influenced the way the research was conducted.

Māori cultural influences in the meso system of inter-organizational interaction, stem from the macro system, but they are seldom addressed in the field work placement literature, so these findings may be applicable to social work education and those in a non-statutory social services context. Ideas from systems theories (Healy, 2005; Payne, 2005; von Bertalanffy, 1972 and others) can help explain organizational interactions during the pre-placement negotiations and the roles that managers play with *tauiira* (students) crossing into their organizational system. The meso system of processes, relationships and individual person transactions carry information between two systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). These are vital to fieldwork placement provision particularly for Māori managers and that information provision shared through a face-to-face relationship is the recipe for keeping such a system going. It is assumed that managers in this study constructed their own knowledge and one premise of social constructivism is that a participant's reality is based on social interactions within cultural contexts which have an influence on how managers might interpret their need for information. To understand and clarify the manager's social reality about the possibility of students crossing boundaries into their organizational and environmental system, constructivist-interpretive methodology is appropriate to aid considerations of how these transactions influence fieldwork placement decisions because it is about listening to voices of those seldom heard.

5.2 Bi-cultural social work practice

Social work in a bi-cultural environment or setting is about historical and structural analysis, identifying power inequalities, assisting self-determination and empowering Māori to claim their own space. Cultural imperatives in an *Aotearoa* New Zealand fieldwork placement context are complex as it presents as having both protective influences and obligations to observe in such an environment. Within this social

services context, social work professional obligations and ethical edicts of ANZASW and the (NZ) SWRB flow from three ethical principles of the foundation *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (the Treaty of Waitangi) claims. These are predominantly those of endeavouring to create equal partnership between Māori and non-Māori, and the protection of treasures such as the environment, forests and rivers and *te reo* (the Māori language). Participation in decision making, such as in Family Group Conferences, is also another key principle. As Ruwhiu (2001) says, the role of cultural processes in *whānau* decision-making is central to the facilitation of healing and well-being. These three key principles of partnership, protection and participation are just some of the many principles that have emerged from Treaty Tribunal claims made on the Government of New Zealand through non-binding constitutional arrangements.

Social work pedagogies incorporate cultural pedagogies as protectors so there is a requirement that social workers and students on placement are competent to operate in a bicultural and non-discriminatory way. These points are relevant to the research questions and the research process.

“Bicultural social work practice requires social workers (and students) to understand and recognise *tangata whenua* status of the indigenous Māori people of *Aotearoa* New Zealand. Social workers need an appreciation of *Te Taha* Māori (things Māori) aspects of Māori culture and protocol and an awareness of racism at personal and institutional levels in *Aotearoa* New Zealand. Being bicultural means that you are ‘at home’ in two cultures and you acknowledging that you have a culture and so do others. [It requires] sensitivity to aspects of the Māori culture and protocols of *Te Iwi* Māori and the *tangata whenua* (people of the land) of the area; the history and significance of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*; and upholding the Māori people as the *tangata whenua* of *Aotearoa* New Zealand.”

(*Aotearoa* New Zealand Association of Social Workers, 2008, p.63)

Professional and registered social workers are required to support things Māori, acknowledge the status of *tangata whenua* as custodians of the land and the advancement of Indigenous development. The terms *tangata whenua*, (sometimes interchanged with Māori) “articulates coverage of a wide and diverse range of cultural/ethnic experiences” and *pākēha* (‘being only one’ but also ‘white people of Western Eurocentric origin’) are also important to social work” (Ruwhiu, 2001, p. 62). Bi-cultural social work practice taught to students must enhance existing fieldwork relationships to developed, be maintained, strengthened and transformed.

However, one Māori manager expressed disappointment when students lacked understanding of bi-culturalism in practice in her community development setting and this was a challenge for her if the student was not *tangata whenua*. As she said “*people can be a bit wobbly on the bi-culturalism thing because it is not communicated or taught well, yet people have experience of being taught.*” She also felt some indigenous managers carried a great weight of responsibility on their shoulders to look after *tangata whenua* (people of the land) particularly if working in a predominantly Māori community. She expected all students to be honest about not understanding what was meant by bi-culturalism, open to discussion about it or debate their position about not knowing enough about working in a Māori community. This relates to student truthfulness as well as their upbringing, opportunities in life and education. The above quote suggest there was a lack of classroom challenge to this student in thinking about bi-cultural practice and what knowledge and skills were needed, particularly when working with Māori clients.

Similarly students without Māori cultural experiences “need to know their own cultural roots within a bi-cultural framework and feel part of the cultural fabric of *Aotearoa* New Zealand” according to Ruwhiu, (2001 p. 62). Furthermore, the quote below from a Māori manager suggests he perceived students as having educational gaps in theoretical, ethical and practical areas of application. As he said:

“They need to know about ethics. The real stuff - the stuff in the middle – Treaty of Waitangi...indigenous rights, biculturalism, social justice, community development, human rights, all those things. This manager thought these were “an esoteric mess... that we put on the edge of qualification, such as the concept of social justice. How does it hold together when someone comes through the door, when they are struggling with Housing New Zealand because they are about to be evicted from their home? That is the real stuff. I think schools try to communicate that to students, but it is the agencies that can provide the real substance to communicate it.”

(Māori community house manager)

There is an expectation in *Aotearoa* New Zealand that all students are able to work bi-culturally, with knowledge of things Māori. Although ethics and moral purpose are important to students to help them think critically about issues, this manager appeared to be disenchanted about his experience of students who lacked understanding of social justice in action. Lack of social work knowledge and advocacy skills on what was required to influence social policy on social justice issues, as a result of understanding client struggles, appeared to be what he was looking for in students. Social justice is seen as separate from but also overlapping with the formal justice of the law and material justice of morality and politics and it is to do with the allocation of resources (Marshall, 1998) and other benefits often distributed by social workers.

5.3 Pre-placement connections

The findings suggest that the majority of the respondents wished for greater rigour to be put into a pre-placement connections such as a meeting with the student, in order to amplify agency and role expectations. The findings suggest that in the past some managers experienced limitations to cultural considerations in pre-placement processes of placement arrangements. For one it was experienced as a student “*just arriving on the day placement was due to start*” without a meeting taking place prior to fieldwork placement. It was “*important students [provide] information of their*

history [this] is critical”, which suggests that pre-placement information did not always happen. Relationship building appears to be an essential part of a student’s selection process, particularly accentuated as a need of Māori managers but not exclusively.

Māori managers expected that connection making involved the sharing of *whānau* (extended family) information with their staff members at a meso level of individuals and family to allow for such development within the organization. This indicates the notion of information reciprocity within the organization. Reciprocity is an important cultural norm, obligation or gift exchange expected of the student in the lead up to and during any fieldwork placement. It would seem that for Māori managers the whole process of connecting and staying connected is reciprocity in action. Inherent in the process was the expectations that staff would be willing to help the *tauirā* (student) make further connections and discover unknown cultural links. But this is something that schools of social work could also do for or with students of all cultures who have lost their links.

It is unclear from the findings as to whether Maori managers had a preference for Māori *tauirā* (students) or not, but willingness to learn about *whakapapa* (their own and that of others), was an attribute sought from students of social work. Māori managers wished to firmly focus on a student’s ability to make the connections with *iwi*, *hapū* and *whānau*, and they were looking for students who were comfortable in establishing these links through use of *te kano hi ki te kano hi* (the face-to-face) communication. Likewise, the value of traditional “*whānaungatanga*” (relationship building or connectedness) which offers “respect for identity, language or religion, related to individual and group well-being and cohesion” (Walsh-Tapiata, 2008, p. 112) appears to be an important aspect of the pre-placement process to managers in this study.

5.4 *Whānau* and *whākapapa* knowledge in pre-placement process

Throughout this study, an important reference is made to *whānau* (extended family, which includes non-biological kin) and Māori culture with Māori acknowledged as the *tangata whenua*, the people of the land. However, although the word *whānau* means ‘to be born’, “a set of siblings born of the same parents” (Metge, 1995, p.16) and comes from pre-European ancestors, its meaning has changed in function and membership and “descent-based *whānau* has ceased to be universal”. It has “become a matter of choice”, according to Metge (1995, p.17), and today *whānau* have become a more widely spread dispersed group, settling in countries such as Australia.

Firstly, whether managing Māori agencies or not, most managers in this study indicated the importance of pre-placement viewing of a student’s curriculum vitae and meeting the *tauirā* (student). The findings suggest that this meeting was likened to a job interview process. Prior to placement Māori managers in particular sought an early opportunity to ask about family and *whānau* (extended family) connections and to identify whether the student was personally aware of their own cultural identity and heritage. Time was needed for the drawing in of *tauirā* (student) locating them in the wider system of *whānau*, the extended family and the establishment of links. Such establishment of linkages would likely include other staff working in the service. Work colleagues are considered extended *whānau* or family, where information and *kai* (food) is shared. There was an expectation that such shared preliminary information contained *iwi* (tribal) affiliations of those who considered themselves to be Māori. It is likely students may list their *whākapapa* (genealogical links) of male and female lines by way of introduction to their curriculum vitae and orally. As a Māori woman manager of a counselling and social service in a provincial city articulated:

“To make decisions I need to know who they are, [their] whakapapa (genealogical links) – Tainui, Ngapuhi, Ngatiporou (tribal groups). I have

wide understanding of [tribal] links. They must be willing to learn, willing to participate in all sectors [of our work].”

(Māori counselling/social service manager)

Information gained about a student's connections coupled with what other staff knew about a student's family connections also enhanced the interconnectedness of the work of the agency. There appears to be an expectation of information provision of a student's genealogical links as it is likely some of these relatives are known to staff in the agency or have knowledge of other close or extended family members, as *Aotearoa* New Zealand is a small country. These managers indicated how important it was for students to have or were willing to extend *iwi* (tribal) affiliations and *whākapapa* (genealogy) linkages and able to make relational connections.

Whether a student was local or from the local *rohe* (district or region) or not, it was the attitude and value placed on connections that mattered, as a significant decision making factor about the nature of the student. It was indicated by a Māori manager that it was essential that students were prepared by the schools of social work for such protocols and had a willingness to learn about the importance of connections. As Ruwhiu (2001) says *whākapapa* (genealogy) is about the *whānau* (extended family) who are traditionally part of the wider macro system. Even if the student's knowledge was limited perhaps because they were not from the local *rohe* (district or region), or for other reasons such as adoption or *whangai* (to foster, to nurture, to care for a child) this knowledge shortfall appeared acceptable to Māori managers, as long as the *tauirā* (student) was willing to learn what they could about *whānau* connections and assist others with this. As Hancock (2008) stated the establishment of cultural connections is the basis for positive Māori development. Ruwhiu (1994) said he has no hesitation in arguing that the Māori *whānau* structure had proven itself to effectively meet the needs of its members, although Pere, (1991) in Ruwhiu (1994) said a framework must correspond with an understanding of and positive feeling for things Māori.

Further there is little separation between ties to land and social relationships, people or time or the past, present and future, whose intentional system (Pincus & Minahan, 1973) is *whānau* (extended family) well-being. Furthermore, it is the shared experiences of *whānau* and their common interest in the family land that makes Māori shareholders in common (Durie, 2001), although this task may be difficult for an individual student who has suffered disconnection. However students are required to be aware of professional expectations such as ANZASW's Code of Ethics (2008) which states the importance of preserving integrity when working with a client's cultural identity. .

5.5 Learning opportunities for social work students on placement

It also appears to be important that students are well prepared by the schools of social work for understanding Indigenous protocols such as those at the commencement and closure of a fieldwork placement. A Māori manager described the process of welcome for any student as including having “*a whakatau (welcome) and morning tea at start of placement with a poroporaki (farewell) when they left. We have karakia (prayer) and waiata (song) led by the men during the day*”. *Karakia* is an important spiritual acknowledgement of the gods and gifts of the environment. This finding relates to what Walker (1996) stated when writing about fieldwork in that it is Māori processes and practices that are taught on placement.

Some Māori managers thought it important that students had had prior attendance and experience of a *noho marae*, (overnight stay at a meeting ground, sleeping in the whare on the marae) and had learnt some marae protocols. Apart from the rich cultural experience itself this was seen as a way of saving embarrassment if a student did not know their *whakapapa* (genealogy) and/or unable to recite their *pepeha* of family connections, or name their mountain and river of their home ground at their first meeting (whakatau). Furthermore, to strengthen such learning one Māori woman manager suggested that “*placement gets more taha (things) Māori than [educators] trying to fit it into various models in the classroom*”. While another male Māori manager and chief said he prefers that students consider integrating new learning into

practice as their agency worked on Māori ways of doing things, knowledge which they may not have necessarily learnt in the classroom. He felt students with pre-conceived or inflexible ideas about what they were required to do whilst on placement could be difficult to accommodate. As he said: “*my preference is that all students are flexible and willing to learn, with models left at school.*” He pleaded for the students to “*be flexible without pre-conceived ideas, but be willing to mix different models together*”, which suggests that perhaps western and Māori models need to be more integrated into the curriculum or perhaps there is an imbalance in the source of such models. He also stated that a popular Māori health model named *Te whare tapa wha* (the four corner posts of a Māori meeting house, signifying well-being), (Durie, 1994) was “*not so useful for social work, whereas Te Wheke [Octopus] model of social work (Pere, 1991) was better for students to learn about.*” This quote may suggest that placement is not seen as being about transferring learning from the classroom to practice, but rather integrating learning from practice, back into the classroom and the community in a reciprocal way.

However Smart and Gray (2000) argue that the four major dimensions for Māori health in Durie’s *Te whare tapa wha* model is essential because it introduces an appreciation of the spiritual dimension of different cultures. The four corner posts are *taha wairua* (spirituality); *taha hinengaro* (thoughts and feelings), *taha tinana* (the physical aspect) and *taha whānau* (the family). Whereas this Māori chief argues for greater learning from Rose Pere’s (1991) health model of *Te Wheke* (octopus) with the *whānau* as the body, the eyes as *wairua* (total well-being) and tentacles of *wairuatanga* (spirituality), *mana ake* (self-respect and uniqueness), *hinengaro* (thoughts/mental understandings), *whatumanawa* (emotional aspect), *mauri* (life principle, life force, ethos) *he a koro ma a kui ma* (the breath of life from forebears), *taha tinana* (the physical side) and *whanaungatanga* (the extended family, kinship and group dynamics). It is important to note that both models used in social work and social work education, include the spiritual dimension to health and well-being which appear to be missing from western models useful for social work. Although a wide range of understandings about spiritual well-being may make this dimension difficult to work with, nevertheless the well-being of the spirit or the mantle of

ancestors, the essence of the person, or healing and comfort from religion are important areas to explore in social work education and practice.

These findings suggests that a rich benefit would be gained by all students being placed with an agency with a Māori philosophy because it would provide an opportunity for immersion in Indigenous culture. Environmental systems with considerable cultural content may change a social work student's knowledge base, social work practice and professional and personality identity through critical reflection (Garrity, 2011) and influence their thinking and professional development. However such an idea of cultural immersion might place an unfair burden on willing agency managers who have cultural focus or philosophy. It is suggested that reciprocity of teaching and learning of these dimensions in relation to the subsidiary question, is something for schools of social work to further develop as this exchange would likely enhance, develop and strengthen existing fieldwork relationships.

This theme as it relates manager's willingness towards students, has a focus not only on student learning but on what *mahi* (function, practice) the students can undertake. A Māori chief indicated there was a range of practical skills required of students in his agency which he considered as necessary aspects to learning social and community work:

“In terms of practicality we offer a diverse range of training methods, work ethics, office administration, participation skills, oral presentations, food preparations and presentations, planning events, driving and towing skills and institutional knowledge and it is convenient to have students come on board at any time throughout the year. Work content can be developed to suit our organisation, the student and visiting supervisor. Supervision is weekly plus de-briefing daily to prepare students for reflective practice.”

(Māori chief, youth programme manager)

This manager had expectations of students to fully participate in all aspects of the agency's work by contributing to whatever the agency need is. Cultural practices of food preparation, helping out with the outdoor adventure therapy programme for youth, and by driving transport vehicles were expectations of students at this location. This suggests that versatility and adaptability are sought after student attributes for this field of practice. It is likely students gain an added bonus of going into the bush for overnight camps and learn survival skills, bush craft and water safety. This field of social and community work practice would likely involve youth in unfamiliar environments, with the work likely aimed at building self-knowledge, self-esteem and cultural identity in clients, possibly with similar benefits for students. There was an expectation of students' adherence to cultural observances and protocols, whether or not the student was Māori. Further, all managers were expecting students to have the social skills to work with difference, make connections with staff, clients and the wider community, other social services and particularly with *iwi* groups with whom they primarily worked.

Generosity and team support for learning appears to be particularly important to Māori managers as this quote suggests: "*we need to awhi their learning and this goes back to [my] own experience when we had the awhi in our own supervision.*" A generous spirit was particularly noticed in most Māori managers who appeared happy to receive and work alongside Māori students, while others were interested in a student's attitudes towards learning about Maori culture. Either way the findings suggest Maori managers were keen to develop a culturally knowledgeable student as a gift to be returned back to their own people.

"We see ourselves as having responsibility to take student – fulfilling relationship to teach people what we do and they in turn pass it on to the community." In his second interview it was clear that his response to the fieldwork placement question was "*always in the affirmative providing the students are willing to learn and are flexible to changes and take other opportunities available here*".

(Māori chief, youth programme manager)

This *aroha* (respect, love) and *awhi* (support) implies generosity which links to the Indigenous principle of *manaakitanga* (sharing and caring) which is connected to the importance of building relationships with students based on the principle of *whanaungatanga*. “*Whanaungatanga* is the process by which whānau ties and responsibilities are strengthened” and the process involves “active planning, economic contribution and redistribution of resources ...if whānau are to be strong and meaningful forces for the future development of Māori” (Durie, 1997, p. 2). In 1996, by way of acknowledging cultural norms such as *whanaungatanga*, the (NZ) Department of Social Welfare expressed “a commitment to social service delivery by *whānau*, *hapu* and *iwi* structures” (Connolly, 2001, p. 232) as a way to strengthen Indigenous approaches to social work.

Māori managers appear to value the opportunity to teach cultural practices and protocols of collective identity within the fieldwork placement process where the different parts of the relationship appear to be interdependent, which is about reciprocity of information and learning. The sharing of knowledge could also be seen as a protective and restorative element which aids the return of what may have been lost by some clients, such as cultural identity. Although writing about education in schools Durie (2001) states that “knowledge belongs to the group, the whānau; pedagogies incorporate whānau values such as *manaakitanga* (sharing and caring), and *aroha* (respect); discipline is based on the authority of elders” (p.193). The leadership of such cultural transactions as those discussed here suggest the presence of *kaumatua*, (wise male and female elder) as leader(s). Pani in Maidment (2002b, p.16) indicates anecdotal evidence exists from Māori students (*tauiira*) working in a Māori agency with a Māori *kaupapa* (philosophy) helped their learning, coupled with presence of the *kaumatua* and *kuia* ensured that the spiritual dimensions of assessment were not overlooked. McCarthy (1997) who wrote of the importance of *te taha whānau* (the family component) of wellbeing and healthy childhood development considered that elderly people were the repositories of cultural knowledge and they willingly shared this knowledge. Such knowledge was said to

extend beyond knowledge of one's own genealogy but to knowing history as told by one's own people, having language skills, recognising cultural nuances and "owning a world view that is distinctively Māori" (McCarthy, 1997, p.29). A student being exposed to such rich cultural learning from inter-generational vessels of knowledge would receive rich benefits to their learning and possibly full emersion in Māori social work practice, with an obligation to share.

5.6 Expectation of students to work with disconnection and reconnection

Acceptance of a social work student on fieldwork placement is not only about a student's working ethically to respect indigenous practice in a collaborative way, but to work with disconnection, difference and exclusion with the aim of reconnection.

"The children we work with have little knowledge of their whakapapa; they are Child Youth and Family children whose parents often were Child Youth and Family children, who have lost their links. Parents are usually between 20-38 years – these are the people no one else will work with. What we need from students is 'respect for differences' willing to work in a respectful way with people who are different."

(Māori counselling/social service manager)

This quote suggests that these Māori children and their parents can be disconnected from their own people, marginalized by society and there are professionals who are either unwilling or unable to work with them, whilst they are in the care of a government social work child protection and youth justice agency. Interpretation of the data suggests that some managers expected the student to aid re-connection and re-developed extended family links, tribal and societal links. It was expected that such action would follow community/*iwi* development principles of social inclusion, participation and reconnection. It could be said that student social work is also about doing the work no one else is willing to do or capable of doing, perhaps because of its complexity. This Māori manager recognized that reconnection and relationship

rebuilding is important work and students need to understand this role as an essential first step. Children and their parents coming to her social service were identified as stemming from other *iwi* (tribes) but such work was enhanced by contacts with other *iwi* groups to hasten the re-establishment of connections in broken family systems. Such inter-tribal relationships were considered important to the manager, not only for the client's benefit, but also essential to the student's learning. Ruwhiu (2009) suggests the "concepts of *wairuatanga* (encompassing spirituality, ideology, paradigms, perspectives, values and beliefs) and *whakapapa* (encompassing ancestry and connectedness)" (p.60) are important guiding concepts for social work practice.

In relation to willingness factors influencing a decision towards fieldwork placement provision, there was an expectation that students were tolerant towards *whānau* who have lost cultural connections or extended family links. Ruwhiu (2009) points out that Māori who have experienced losses, separations or various traumas are often clients of social service. Further, high needs families are likely linked to disadvantaged group such as Māori who:

"...experience higher levels of unemployment, are more likely to leave school with no qualifications, have lower standards of health and housing, lower incomes, higher suicide rates, higher adolescent pregnancy rates, higher conviction rates and a higher likelihood of joining gangs."

(Durie, 2003 in Walsh-Tapiata, 2008, p. 110)

Such a quote suggests these families are disconnection from society. Disconnection from tribal affiliation was identified by Durie (2001) who said that twenty percent of Māori were outside *iwi*, and *hapū* (tribe and sub-tribe) networks in the 1996 census as Māori respondents could not state their *iwi* of origin and he suggests that *iwi ngaro* (the lost tribe) could be a description for this identified group. But he goes on to say that it could be argued they were not feeling any loss nor searching for their wider *iwi* connections as "meaning revolved around the province of *whānau*" (Durie,

2001, p.189). Durie (2001) suggests that where cultural ties have been lost a community development approach is appropriate where the group connections are based on interests in common, locality, urban *marae*, schools and workplaces where aspirations and experiences are shared. With the existence of strong *iwi* and *hapū* groups in contemporary *Aotearoa* New Zealand, it is now likely that the 'lost tribe' is now small in this country, although emigration may weaken such ties.

Liu (2007) offers an explanation for disconnection by suggesting that a loss of *iwi*, *hapū* and *whānau* involvement in traditional problem solving methods is because of urbanisation of Māori, but it is contended here it is also about global trends of geographical re-location in pursuit of employment and other issues beyond the scope of this study. Importantly, Pohatu (2003) takes a broad approach in believing that the utilization of Māori helping approaches could create positive changes to counter the negative effects of western culture generated by such practices as marginalization and disempowerment. Work with social issues and tribal disconnection, reconnection and well-being appears to be a major role of *Iwi* and Māori social and health services developed in this country over the last few decades, although other organizations, such as the Maori Women's Welfare League have quietly provided care since the 1960s.

5.7 Students able to network and demonstrate cultural competency

The benefit of local and professional knowledge, skills, abilities and practices students bring to placement appear to be important factors influencing student selection and success. The managers quest for pre-placement information in this study was not only about their need to learn about student relationships and their *whānau* (extended family) links or their willingness to work with disconnection, or with other staff, it appears to be about ascertaining a student's ability to form inter-agency relationships and build networks. The findings suggest that it was important to these managers that the student was able to contribute information and build relationships at a meso systems level with other agencies that provide client services as well as client and client groups. Self-confidence appeared to be a valuable

attribute sought in one particular field of social work practice. As was indicated by a manager who worked with prisoners and people newly released from prison: “*tauira are given caseload, but they must be feeling confident with whānau – we have very volatile whānau here – so we don’t give them high needs ones*”. Although the risk to *tauira* (student) was possibly seen as coming from the clients, the protective cloak appeared to flow from the manager’s or supervisor’s judgement of the student’s ability to cope with challenging clients.

It would appear that students entering fieldwork placement not only use the genogram tool of assessment but also understand the importance of oral or written *whakapapa* (female and male genealogical links). Such tools could encourage students to discover lost links of their own, particularly if they come from itinerant families, or they live away from tribal lands and connections. Such learning will likely increase empathy for clients in similar positions of lost links and genealogy research skills learned in the classroom could be shared with clients to discover their own identity and background lineage, health and wellness and other familial patterns.

“There is a need for Māori to access a change process – now Māori are lost in terms of management and relationships – the extended whānau used to care for the children. Tikanga and kawa are the prime reason. Māori lore obligations [is our] focus and concern as whānau are lost in their relationships – the whānau are not strong now.”

(Māori counselling/social service manager)

This quote from an experienced mature manager suggests there is a need for a student to be able to instigate change and improvement in *whanau* connections and relationships, as tribal connections could be splintered. This *whaea* (mother, guiding and leading from behind, respected woman) suggests that a student, particularly a Māori *tauira* (student) needs to understand the importance of the *tikanga* and *kawa* (customs, protocols, structure and order) as a way of healing the disconnection.

“*Tikanga and kawa* (encompassing customs and protocol, ways of doing and engaging-(Mead, 2003) and *mana* (encompassing power, prestige, authority and humility-(Barlow, 2005), help with the navigation of the complexities of culturally responsive social work practice to enhance Maori well-being” (Ruwhiu, 2009, p.113). Māori and iwi social services are in a prime position to provide rich culturally enhanced placements to students of social work. Just as *whānau* hold Māori culture together with established values, *tikanga and kawa* (protocols and laws), cultural norms become internalised and a sense of identify and stories of shared history emerge (Ruwhiu, 2001).

Such understandings can expand the student’s learning and knowledge about having personal, social and professional networks which are so important for Māori and non-Māori social workers, by not only knowing their own genealogy and *whakapapa* but knowing who does what; who is related to whom, by blood or kinship, as well as the importance of cultural traditions and Māori lore. “Many of our clients who are Māori do not come with that cultural wisdom imbedded in their psyche” so “the mahi (function/practice) involves drawing those threads back together”(Ruwhiu, 2001, p.69) through culturally responsive social work practice aimed at building strong cultural identity. Māori knowledge and wisdom contains solutions or resolutions to Māori welfare concerns (Ruwhiu, 2001), but it seems cultural identity is seen as a starting point for the disconnected for most of these managers. Fundamental to students being conversant in social service work, are concepts such as *mana* (power or prestige) which is “either inherited or bestowed upon individuals, environments, groups, interrelationship roles” (Ruwhiu, 2009, p.60). Writing in the social work literature Ruwhiu (2009) says that mana-enhancing behaviour is about ensuring interrelations between people, the gods, and nature brings benefit to all, by sharing resources, time or knowledge and these gifts need to be encouraged in fieldwork. Ruwhiu (2009) states they must be dealt with by *mana*-enhancing practices to restore health, well-being and the cultural adhesive that has been lost. Although *mana* has many meanings and is intangible in nature, it is to do with the spiritual realm which can be regained by respect and changed environments according to Ruwhiu, (2009). This writer believes that lives can be improved, nurtured and strengthened by giving

attention to a person's history, by valuing their stories and understanding the importance of cultural well-being.

Not only was knowledge to be exchanged pre-placement and shared collectively there was an expectation that the *tauirā* (student) fully participated in the life of the organization. Moreover Māori managers appear to have had a preference for local students who would be giving back to the local community post placement. Not only are Māori students seen as entering placement wearing an Indigenous cloak of knowledge into a new organizational system, they are expected to depart and share the knowledge gained from fieldwork placement wearing a heavier but rich cloak back into the local community, feathered with additional responsibilities to share.

A few managers did require *tauirā* (students) to be familiar with *kawa*, which is the rule of unchanging Māori custom law applied mainly to formal process and procedure such as males making speeches on the *marae* and *wharenui* (Durie, 1994 cited in Ruwhiu, 2009). The findings suggest there was an expectation that *tauirā* (student) were willing to participate in *tikanga* (pragmatic, flexible and open ended ways of doing things, customs and procedures), according to circumstances. Although being comfortable with or having an attitude of willingness to learn or deepen cultural knowledge were required of students by some Māori managers, conversational Māori language was not identified as a placement requirement but the learning of basic Māori language appeared to be available if required.

Knowledge of cultural practices such as the formal and informal process of a traditional welcome and farewell of the student mattered to Maori managers, although this may not have influenced placements decisions, but willingness to learn did. The interconnection between oral cultural requirements suggest that student participation in cultural practices would be expected as part of their integration, particularly into a Māori health and welfare agency. Further, Walker (1996) was of the view that Māori were expected to know processes and customs while on placement, as well as “theories and social work processes of pākēha” (p.66),

although he thought Māori were subject to additional scrutiny than *pākēha* (non-Māori) students were. However, it could be argued that greater understanding and participation in Māori culture is a student function as expected of members of ANZASW for many years, and more recently mandated by the (NZ) SWRB. Evidence of bi-cultural practice and working with other ethnic groups is a competency requirement of both organizations.

Some would argue that non-Māori cannot work with people of Māori ethnicity, but in a profession where Māori social workers or students are relatively small in number and the client base is disproportionately Māori, with Māori social workers often unofficially on call by local communities, cross-cultural (bi-cultural) practice is necessary to avoid burnout of Māori workers. It is a matter of fairness of work distribution, even if Māori would prefer to work with other Māori and clients may wish this. However, it can also be argued that people are people, whatever their culture and all peoples should be respected in culturally appropriate ways by social workers and students of social work. This cultural imbalance may change in the future with more recent social work programmes provided by two different *Wananga* (translation meaning university) tertiary institutions that attract a large proportion of Māori students, with cultural reality as a programme foundation. Interestingly, the Joint Working Party (2008) identified that the students enrolled in recognised social work programmes were twenty nine per cent Māori, sixteen percent Pacific, four percent Asian, while the remaining fifty one percent were European students of social work. Perhaps this suggests that social work is an increasingly attractive profession for Māori in *Aotearoa* New Zealand, who are approximately fifteen percent of the population. The findings on organizational factors affecting provision in the previous chapter suggest intense individual competition and a shortage of fieldwork practicum places, so any increases in student numbers is possibly going to affect willingness attitudes toward student placement provision.

Finally, it appears that it is very important to Māori managers that bi-cultural competence is not just rhetoric. Cultural competence in working successfully with dysfunctional *whānau* was considered to be highly valued by all Māori managers in

this study, managers who were likely selected by their tribal elders for their educational abilities and ability to impart baskets of knowledge. A student's cultural competence includes increasing personal awareness of one's personal values, biases and heritage; the ability to work with diversity, valuing the heritage of another culture and working with different socio demographic groups with the ability to apply knowledge and ideas at an individual, professional, organisational and societal level of functioning (Maidment, 2009). However, the need for cultural sensitivity or competence was rarely mentioned by non-Māori managers, although government contracts would require social service staff to work with all cultures in keeping with human rights legislation and working to ANZASW's Code of Ethics, which includes a commitment to bi-cultural practice. Cultural competence is a requirement in the curriculum of social work programmes in *Aotearoa* New Zealand (NZ) (SWRB, 2012). Furthermore cultural competence is more than awareness and sensitivity to cultural settings but a person's actions demonstrate knowledge, sensitivity and awareness of differences. It incorporates a specific attitude and skills in social work practices and research while demanding more than sensitivity. These findings suggest that a student's cultural competence achieved during a student placement has also a macro purpose to serve, particularly towards the preservation of cultural protocols, *tikanga* and *kawa*.

5.8 Significance of the findings

This research is valuable because of its Indigenous contribution to understanding some cultural dimensions of non-statutory social services manager's role in fieldwork placement and factors that influence willingness towards provision. The importance of "He reo e rangona, engari, he kanohi (a voice may be heard but a face needs to be seen)" (Cram, 2001, p. 43), is not only an important part of this research process but it relates to the subsidiary question of how inter-organizational relationships and connections can be maintained, developed, strengthen and nurtured.

Māori manager's involvement and teaching in fieldwork placements aid the preservation of Māori culture through provision of learning opportunities for

students, be they Māori or non-Māori. However, the offer of cultural learning embedded in social work practice was certainly a strong factor influencing willingness towards student fieldwork placement provision. Māori managers appear to feel the responsibility for the placement fell on their shoulders whilst viewing placement as a process for preparing and returning students as a cultural gift back to their indigenous and wider community.

A student's cultural characteristics such as tribal affiliations were deemed important and necessary pre-placement information to managers for *whakapapa* (genealogy) purposes as was a *tauirā* (student's) interest in the work of the agency and their willingness to learn. Students knowing their own cultural identity and able to draw upon family history and cultural custom, or pursue this, may indicate to managers during pre-placement information sharing, that they would be receptive to learning and working with difference in a collective way. Gifting cultural and other knowledge back to students and to the community relates to the circularity concept from systems theory whereby the interaction of returning the student back to the community may be considered a way to maintain the value of social and cultural training and connectivity. It also relates to the notion of co-operation, reciprocity and obligation which are guiding principles in the workings of *hapū* and *whānau* and *iwi*.

As is argued earlier any understanding of placement decision making in field education would be in deficit if it excluded Indigenous voices and the reciprocation required in a relationship of exchange, tied to the equal partnership principle of the Treaty of Waitangi. The unique contribution of managers for their altruistic role as guardians and for their contribution to the sustainability of a profession under pressure needs further acknowledgement in the literature. Students were seen as a support for the development of *iwi* (tribal) and Māori organizations, bi-cultural social work practice and Maori models of practice.

Further, an ecological framework in which fieldwork placement is embedded, suggests the opportunity for interconnectivity between different Māori models,

concepts and systems and opportunities for equal validation with western models. Although Māori cultural knowledge is important for students and graduates in this country and perhaps other countries such as Australia, multi-cultural knowledge is also needed to address the changing cultural demographics and enable graduates to work outside their country of origin. One of the strengths that the ecological perspective applied to this analysis brings, is the view that actions do not happen in isolation and cultural actions of willingness can change the way the world is viewed (Ife, 1999). Changes in one part of the educational, social service or student's micro system will effect changes in the meso, eso and macro systems.

Just as a student's cultural background and willingness to learn is important information for managers, so too are the pre-placement transactions instigated by schools of social work to facilitate student practicum. Information exchange allows managers to weigh up benefits and risks to the agency and to make safer and protective choices about the students they may host. Chapter six considers how managers viewed the importance of choice of placement and allocation, the establishment of a student's good character, safety assurance, educational attainment of students and concern that student issues would "pop out" during placement as factors influencing student placement provision. As uncovered in the following chapter most managers had experienced social work students with two years social work training. A transactional process between fieldwork placement co-ordinators, students, managers and supervisors is an important element to the central tenant of this argument in the following data interpretations in chapter six.

CHAPTER SIX

PRE-PLACEMENT TRANSACTIONS

TOWARDS SAFE CHOICE

“My role is to protect the agency, so safety issues are important”

(Interviewee: Community house manager)

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter information factors, Indigenous imperatives and student learning were important factors influencing management decisions towards placement provision. This theme continues here on the importance of manager's inclusion in pre-placement transactions and what information is important to them. This chapter examines how a student's 'good character' status was viewed by managers, coupled with how a student's choice of placement and how allocation uncertainty may influence the placement decision. Further, managers' views on safe choices and unidentified issues influence their responses to the placement questions is examined here. These findings suggest that robust information provision to managers, key staff and students, was required before fieldwork placement negotiations were completed. Safety assurance was seen as an important issue not only for the manager and staff but for the well-being of students, clients and those associated with the social service. Managers in this study were asked about whether the amount of education a student had had before placement influenced their decision to open the agency door to fieldwork placement. The findings suggests that it does.

Social constructivism aided thinking and organizing epistemology about the construction of pre-placement transactions and processes as I attempted to understand this given context of interaction and how manager's reality was constructed around the stem question. It fits well with social systems theory and an ecological systems perspective as roles and relationships influence whether student

transactions into an agency and how well a 'person-in-environment' fit happens or are avoided.

As the data suggests, pre-placement student informational transactions effect choice of student. It was useful to consider ecological concepts from Germain and Gitterman's (1996) life model of systems such as the concepts of transactions, person-in-environment fit, power and vulnerability and human habitat. Systems concepts of human relatedness, stress and coping were utilized to enhance understanding and to guide this interpretative study. The idea of interconnectivity between macro, meso, exo (or eso) and micro systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) suggests another step towards integrating the student into a different educational system, where information for fieldwork placement depends on roles and relationships within structures that shape the process. As the above introductory quote suggests protection, safety and a sense of duty to protect the vulnerable clients are issues for social services, so coping with an unsafe student is likely something to be avoided. However, according to Elpers and Fitzgerald (2012) of a group of students, of which twenty per cent were international students, there was a lack of "fit" between agencies and students, reported by field educators.

6.2 Information exchange, student choice of placement and allocation

These managers expected full detailed personal information from the placement coordinator and student particularly that which could compromise safety of all concerned. The majority of managers believed it was important that they received information showing *iwi* (tribal) affiliations and student's contact details and educational background, preferably before their arrival at the pre-placement interview. Information exchange about a student's attitude to what may be offered for their learning, choice of placements, allocation and information uncertainty are factors which related to the stem questions. It could be argued that the interview process is not only about two-way information sharing process between organizations, but it is also about a student's decision making to share information about themselves and previous learning in the context of information exchange. One

manager had expressed a need for “*some rigour put into pre-placement meetings, similar to job application to amplify agency, role expectations etc.*” The data analysis suggest that this was seen as necessary to ascertain what qualities students might bring to the potential placement agency. Students presenting at a pre-placement interview sharing their educational achievements may sway a competitive interview process. This information could be the very point that swings managers away from or towards provision. These findings indicate an obligation on students to share information that will enhance their learning which meets the needs of an agency manager and supervisor and other appropriate stakeholders. As one woman manager of a community centre in a provincial town reflected:

“I don’t want to waste days, trying to discover learning style and learning difficulties [although they] are important, but [I want to know] what they are capable of. One placement co-ordinator, said ‘she does not do that...’, so it was good to know that. I will go for what is easiest for the organization....if three days of reading documents is not going to work for the person....we are happy to work with that.”

(Pākēha community centre manager)

This manager’s quote suggests that she valued and expected information about a student’s specific attributes, capabilities offered and deficits identified; about how a student may learn; what a student can or can’t do and what they wanted to learn. This suggests lack of opportunity for her to carry out a pre-placement interview. The findings indicate managers needed reassurance from the fieldwork co-ordinator about the student’s learning style and whether a student had fixed ideas or learning difficulties as precursors to influence subsequent decisions on placement provision. Some managers were looking for additional information such as previous work experience, signs of student maturity and locally based students. Lack of or gaps in information about student personal details, background and characteristics had previously placed some of these managers in positions of hesitancy, pressured to act with caution or alternatively withhold fieldwork placement provision.

Uncertain information from the school of social work also impacts on the student waiting for fieldwork placement allocation. Until the pre-placement information provision process is completed it may create a crisis in confidence in the student until they feel they are one step closer to achieving an allocation and being valued for their free fieldwork contribution. For some students their whole motivation to study, might hinge on a desire to work with a particular client population which they are likely to indicate as desirable for their placement or placement might be based on need. The empirical evidence from this study suggests there is a need for a robust selection interview as a way for managers to choose students and gain understanding of their background. As one pākēha woman manager said:

“Ideally [I] get to know at interview stage, through gut feeling and body language, but I worry about it all the time, as I try to protect my organization.”

(Pākēha community house manager)

There is also an ethical challenge to co-ordinators in the matching process with the allocation of ‘less than best’ placements, the rationing of highly desirable placements and balancing the needs of less able students, with those above average (O’Connor, Wilson & Setterlund, 2003). These writers claim co-ordinators must take into account the vocal assertive student with those less so, who may need specific consideration for special places. It is at this point of managerial decision making, such as the unavailability of a desired place that a student’s ‘wish list’ is often demolished according to Hicks and Maidment, (2009). Evaporation of student’s preferences is likely to create additional anxieties for students already apprehensive about their own preparedness, skills, knowledge and ability to make an impression and do well on placement. Any subsequent bids for places may negatively colour student attitude towards future learning opportunities, by perhaps feeling they have been assigned to second or third best places, especially when they are aware of peer competition which may increase their fear of failure. Further, it is said that students may perceive themselves as customers of education and demand specific types of

fieldwork placements, in particular geographical locations and requirements that fit in with their schedules (Buck et al., 2012). However giving students too much choice, may mean students chop and change their minds and never accept anything but what they may consider ‘the perfect placement’ and create an impossible situation for the already difficult task for the co-ordinator. Such tensions may lead to unpredicted, unexpected student placement breakdowns (Maidment, 2001a). To counter these, it is likely students need information about placement risk to their individual health and personal safety they may encounter whilst on placement.

“Failure to provide some types of information may not only adversely affect the student’s learning opportunities during fieldwork, but could lead to student or client liability actions against the fieldwork agency and university...students may be physically assaulted, sexually harassed or verbally abused. They may be subject to threats of personal abuse or violence or harassment from clients, or may actually be the victims of assault, harassment or abuse.”

(Shardlow, 2000, p. 122)

Such lack of feedback about the quality of an agency and supervision from the student was perceived by Moore (2000) as a weakness in the process and the school of social work’s ability to maintain quality control over fieldwork. As Shardlow (2000) said schools of social work have a responsibility to minimize risk to the student, which suggests there needs to be robust information exchanges between the two organizations. It is only fair that the nature of the work is clear to a student when accepting what placement is offered, or allocated and risks are identified.

6.3 Establishment of a student’s ‘good character’ pre-placement

Not only did managers need reassurance about knowing a student’s cultural and educational details, they need reassurance about organizational and client safety. As one pākēha woman manager said:

“Sometimes I say ‘no’ because of our policy around criminal conviction” and “I would want to look at the nature of convictions, how long ago they were, whether the issues had been addressed and how they were addressed.”

(Community house manager)

This quote suggests that information on a student’s criminal record may be a crucial factor influencing manager’s response to the research question. The process initiated by the schools of social work into checking of a student’s Police record clearance document appeared to generate confusion and cause repetitious practices which irritated some managers in this study. Safety uncertainty was created when it was unclear in the pre-placement information whether the student had been vetted for a criminal record by the school or not. Eight out of thirteen agencies in this study carried out Police checks upon the arrival of the student for this reason. Some managers resented having to carry out an additional administration task for the limited time the student was with them, particularly as they knew there would be a considerable delay in receiving the results which could result in potentially embarrassing consequences for them. Some managers said they presumed that schools had recently conducted satisfactory checks on students. There was some uncertainty about whose responsibility it was for this process. It would appear that to gain peace of mind they had followed agency policy for staff recruitment and carried the checking out. The findings suggest a double up on this procedure involving student’s agreement. These new understandings might mean that both institutions are carrying out the same process for the same purpose in the same year which suggests an inefficient use of time and the free service provided by the New Zealand Police. This could place such delicate relationships in jeopardy and may create negative attitudes towards schools of social work. The data interpretation suggests that the agency management has a right to be informed of potential risks either by the school or the student, prior to placement decision. In fairness to the agency managers concerned about the criminal background of strangers working in their agency, or the existence of various Court orders, appears to be in need of change to avoid agency

reluctance to engage in a workable relationship with the co-ordinator of social work fieldwork placement. If a student has criminal activity on their record they are ashamed of, their learning is likely hampered by anxiety until the results come back, particularly if they have chosen not to share pertinent information with the manager or their supervisor. These new findings add significantly to the suggestion by Furness and Gilligan (2004) that sensitive personal information should be shared about issues which will impact on placement work, but they also believe information sharing must have the student's permission before selection takes place. However, it is likely most Tertiary Institutes now have policies on what degree of personal information is shared.

Although it is not mandatory for social workers to become registered social workers at this time, the (NZ) SWRB requires applicants for social work registration to be a 'fit and proper person'. In order for a person to be of 'good character' information is sought by the SWRB regarding "previous convictions and any protection, non-molestation, non-violence, restraining or trespass orders taken out against the applicant." There is also a requirement of applicants for registration "to provide a New Zealand Police Certificate" (NZ) (SWRB, Fit and Proper Person Policy, 7, 2009, reviewed May 2013) and to provide other relevant information to the (NZ) SWRB. A person is considered not to be 'fit and proper' to practice social work under S47(1) of the Social Workers Registration Act, (2003) if they are convicted for offences of this nature: "Homicide or manslaughter; sexual offending including pornography; violence against a person or persons; fraud or dishonesty; offences towards children or other dependant persons; serious alcohol and drug-related offences; weapons or firearms offences" (SWRB, Fit and Proper Person Policy, 7, 2009, reviewed May 2013). The (NZ) SWRB may make further enquiries and take into account other factors, including fitness to practice on grounds of physical, mental and social conditions.

Likewise, the disclosure of student information to the placement agency is the duty of the school, (Hicks & Maidment, 2009) although it has privacy implications for the co-ordinator, the school and the student. It could be argued that this creates

challenges to educational institutions to manage student's right to privacy. Yet it is the manager and governance body that carry the responsibility for the student's behaviour and their health and safety. It is therefore argued that a co-ordinator of student placement would likely enhance the likelihood of positive decisions towards provision if such relevant information is provided, prior to placement commencement. A dilemma may arise for co-ordinators in deciding what student information to provide to potential field educators/supervisors or managers given that sufficiency is questioned and some information may be sensitive. Information from the school that was screened, interpreted and evaluated for its relevance to the decision making process and needs of the agency, with any 'red flags' for possible alerts to criminal convictions or unsafe behaviour appeared to be in need of greater clarity for some of these managers. The (NZ) SWRB Practicum policy requires that placement are allocated by a fully registered social worker and that placement supervision is provided by a registered social worker (NZ) (SWRB, Practicum within a recognized social work qualification, Reviewed May 2013).

Unsurprisingly, Brodersen, Richman and Swick (2009) in considering risks and mitigating factors in decisions to accept students with criminal records, found that students would be rejected for a variety of crimes. Crimes committed by students such as homicide (93.8%); child molestation (93.8%); forcible rape (89.9%) and other serious crimes were likely to be rejected. Whereas underage drinking (3.6%); driving under the influence (19.3%), possession of stolen goods (30.6%) and other less serious crimes by students were less likely to be rejected by the 280 field supervisors in the Brodersen, et al. (2009) survey. These researchers also found that criminal records were more likely to take precedence over students' personality characteristics in acceptance or rejection of students, therefore managers knowing about a criminal record is vital information needed before acceptance takes place.

6.4 Safety assurance and placement readiness

Trust is central to the pre-placement process and information exchange; if this process fails to achieve equilibrium in the transaction between two systems, it will

damage a number of relationships, student's decision making about their future and manager's views of fieldwork placement. As one pākēha woman manager of a social service purported about selection and employability of students:

“I think they need to do something about their screening processes as some people will not get jobs because of their backgrounds, unresolved issues of their own and [are not] really employable.”

(Social service manager)

This manager appears to be concerned about the unsuitable students arriving at a placement when it becomes obvious to them that the student will find difficulty in gaining employment as a social worker. There is no doubt that time spent on students and placement safety is a managerial responsibility. Provision of safe choices for managers could be seen as incremental steps taken by the school of social work through student programme entrance criteria as well as pre-placement information provision. In a study by Cowburn and Nelson (2008) into safe recruitment practices of social work students in England they concluded ethical decision making was involved in the selection of and admitting students to training programmes. However these writers also believed there was a need for educators to avoid putting social work agencies and clients in any danger through recruitment selection procedures that were negligent by admitting students who may pose a risk, particularly to children and vulnerable adults. On the other hand they warn against social exclusion processes that marginalise oppressed groups of people which could lead to recruiters having to choose between Kantian (individual change) and utilitarian (greater good) moral principles. However it is not altogether possible to ensure that recruitment practices could guarantee safety for the agency or its clients (Cowburn & Nelson, 2008), as tertiary institutions also do the best they can with information provided.

Further, Elpers and FitzGerald (2012) believed that placement readiness was based on a student's academic, professional and personal indicators, such as the student

being capable of interacting with clients, colleagues and the community in an ethical, competent manner (Egan, & Hicks, 2012). Elpers and FitzGerald (2012) indicated that there were issues and challenges in gatekeeping students who were not ready for placement. Egan and Hicks (2012) believed that gatekeeping should take place throughout each course and students should also be presented with the opportunity for self-assessment prior to their fieldwork experience. Their on line survey explored the notions of confidence, supports required, placement planning, their sense of readiness and how this was defined, with a focus on personal and academic readiness. Their preliminary findings included the effects of delayed placement upon a student, not being accepted for placement, student who were not yet ready, with some students reporting they wished for more information about agencies while some students reported concerns about writing skills and anxiety about the social work role and social work context.

Tertiary institutions in *Aotearoa* New Zealand Placement have contracts which spell out legal responsibility and liability issues pertinent to the agency, the student, and the social work supervisor and education provider whilst the student is on placement. In *Aotearoa* New Zealand health and safety of the student is the placement provider responsibility. Therefore it is argued that in this context pre-placement student information must be precise, truthful, relevant and judicious for its contribution towards placement provision decision making by managers. It can be viewed that “the agency will have sole responsibility for satisfying itself about student suitability and sole liability of all aspects of the fieldwork experience” (Shardlow, 2000, p.119), which brings us back to safety issues for an agency manager to consider pre-placement and the level of liability they are willing to accept in such a transaction. It does appear that difficulties will arise when the school of social work or the student decide not to share information that could compromise the safety of others. The decision to disclose sensitive or incriminating information to managers falls on the shoulders of fieldwork education co-ordinators working in conjunction with a student, where the possibility of risk to the wider community does not succumb to the risk of losing the placement.

6.5 Does a student's educational attainment influence choice?

Participants were asked as to whether the amount of student's years in a (full-time) social work education programme influenced willingness towards fieldwork placement. Overall, manager's responses to this question appeared to indicate that by years two, three and four, social or community work students were more likely to support organizational work and able to demonstrate application of a range of approaches, models and skills. Two Māori managers were prepared to accommodate first year students because they were seen as ready for "*shaping*", ready to "*soak it up*", motivated to learn and mouldable into the ways of the agency.

Such experiences of beginning students of the past may have left these managers (some as supervisors) with feelings of reward for developing the *tauirā*'s (student's) personal and professional attributes and gained supervisory satisfaction. This may have been during day to day, rather than formal supervision periods. First year students likely fall into the category of '*observer*', terminology stemming from the traditional model. This types of student might be seen as what was described as a 'burden' to the organization (Maidment, 2001).

Data interpretation suggests that beginning students required intensive work to overcome their lack of knowledge of local social services and *iwi* (tribal) networks, connections which take time to develop. As one manager said "*we are a business and as such it needs to be managed as such, so having a 'non-contributor' is nonsensical,*" while another said "*first year students provide 80% benefit to the school and 20% benefit to the agency and of little use*". Such quotes might mean that benefit to the agency is seen as minimal, with little 'value added' by the student to agency work, to use a management term. Although a first year student placement releases the school from educational provision it transfers the near full load of educational provision onto the agency. This may distort the educational equilibrium with little identifiable benefit to the host agency. According to Humphrey (2011) only a few students display any practice wisdom during their first placement. It would appear that a students' profundity of theoretical knowledge, values or social

work skills beyond the basic are likely to be shallow. The student will likely be out of their depth, not understand the agency structure and unprepared for the challenge of social work. This limited finding indicates that generally first year students on these programmes were not able to do the “*mahi*” (work, process) that is, casework. Such a position may leave supervisors and or managers of smaller agencies feeling as if they had to find things to do to fill the student’s time, such as administration tasks.

Although two managers of agencies said a reason why they would not offer a placement was described as “*down time in their agency*” but if they did, students were asked to do administrative tasks or “*work on reception*”. The filling of an administrator role may be quite helpful to managers, but this is not the purpose of practicum and students may feel they are wasting time along with resenting payment of fees for the fieldwork placement paper. Agencies with “*down time*” may not suit mature students with life and work experience as they will be demanding hands-on challenging work (Connolly & Rathgen, 2000). This could be partly right, although young people with lesser life and work experience might also demand challenging work because of undaunted idealism, enthusiasm and energetic personalities. Information sharing about the fact there could be limited work available is important information for the co-ordinator and the student to know, as unstructured time such as this may not suit some student’s personality or skill level. It may also result in a student deciding social work is not for them, or generate envy of other student’s placements with richer learning experiences. On the other hand, during a time of placement shortage in England securing successful placements for first year students was found to be difficult and it was felt students ended up being un-prepared for the workplace (Taylor, 2010). It is interesting to note that in a British study four out of ten students felt the lack of relevance of learning on placement and felt let down by the system (British Association of Social Workers, 2011).

In relationship to the stem question, the remaining managers believed that students in their first year of study and possibly their second year, were less attractive for selection purposes than students advanced in their social work education programme. Some managers thought second year students were acceptable, while one thought

they were “*not useful for the allocation of case work, but suitable for specific projects e.g. supervised access, networking and parenting programmes.*” One community centre manager indicated that he thought “*second year students contributed a 50% benefit to the school and 50% benefit to the agency,*” which in itself suggests a half-hearted degree of willingness towards placement provision.

A possible reason for variability in responses may be attributed to reflections on the usefulness of second year student’s contribution to the agency. Social work Diploma programmes were prevalent in the provinces for a few years after the event of the (NZ) Social Workers Registration Board policy requirement for a three year degree qualification requirement for registration purposes. At the time of this study Polytechnics in *Aotearoa* New Zealand were moving from two year Diplomas to three year social work degree programmes. This may mean that some participant managers had only experienced first and second year Diploma of Social Work students on practicum. Managers who had experienced third or fourth year students identified that “*the year three students have advantage of knowledge and skill and would have enough skills for client work,*” that is case work. Educationally advanced students appear to be seen as beneficial, able to prove their worth by demonstrating a wider range of skills and knowledge as opposed to those with lesser abilities and education, draining time and energy from the organization.

A study into newly qualified Diploma and Certificate social work graduates in Scotland found 90% of graduates agreed or strongly agreed that they were well prepared to practice but “less prepared to work with people with learning difficulties, disabilities, offenders, ethnic minorities and those with mental health problems” (Marsh & Trisellotis, 1996, p.2). As identified by Humphrey (2011), the practice wisdom for such specialist work will likely be a result of prolonged study, practice and reflection in social work. Olson (2014) viewed field placement as an ethnographic opportunity for students to value the newcomer or outsider perspective by capturing early fieldwork site observations and recording them from an anthropological perspective, before assimilation made these new learnings ordinary. This writer thought journaling of cultural observations would enhance use of herself,

her knowledge, her micro clinical work and interventions and provide her with more authority and social impact. Further, West and Baschiera (2011) when discussing the impacts of globalization, suggested that agencies have started to respond to such complexities created by global change by requiring advanced student training levels and are seeking out those with social work and psychology skills along with those with humanitarian ideals and democratic standards. This suggests that educational standards required of social work students need to keep abreast with changing social problems and their increasing level of difficulty.

These findings may have implication for the timing of fieldwork placement in the professional social work programme, the design of a social work education and the degree of competition. The emerging picture suggests that placement challenges stem from students with the least education, who require more time intensive attention in agencies under workload pressure. So it appears that educationally advanced student are more likely to contribute to the fulfilment of agency service contracts and therefore more likely to influence a manager's response to the fieldwork placement research question. Students with advanced education are more likely to be prepared, confident and intrinsically motivated to demonstrate their educational knowledge, skills and competencies. The (NZ) Social Workers Registration Board now requires at least 100 of the required 120 placement days within a recognized social work qualification "to be undertaken across the final two years of a undergraduate degree" (SWRB, 1.14, 2013), which will go some way to ensure students are able to contribute more fully to the work of the agency.

These findings suggest that care needs to be taken by co-ordinators to place students in agencies where they can successfully integrate themselves and develop their energy, initiative, use knowledge and social work skills and contribute significantly as a worker rather than a bystander or observer.

As well as these managers requirement of assurance about cultural ability, sensitivity and willing to learn, as well as competent students and advanced in their social work

education, the findings suggest that these managers needed “workers”. This term was used by participants to identify a student role, that is, students who could help alleviate the workload pressures on the agency. Social constructivism suggests that as language is an attempt to explain reality, equally constructed by people and social factors (Teater, 2010), the word “worker” carries a heuristic interpretative meaning in this discourse about the type of student managers were willing to accommodate. These managers appeared to need reassurance about the worker’s satisfactory completion of criminal record and safety checks to aid their understanding of their character in the important pre-placement process.

6.6 Student issues will “pop out” during placement

The findings suggest that students were expected to attend selection interviews which involved a search for additional confirming information for managers, such as a student’s life experiences, their interests, attributes, attitudes, learning style, preparedness for placement and a chance to discuss any safety risks they might bring. One community house manager was concerned to know if there had been issues with classroom behaviour or the wider environment, because if such things were not revealed pre-placement, she said these matters would “pop out” during placement, which had the potential to compromise relationships and safety for all concerned. It was also said that schools did not want to “*share information that put students in a negative light, because they wanted the placement.*” Another woman manager said that although she wanted “*to help education out she had to know up front that the student was going to be difficult to manage*” which may mean she would do a favour for education but she needed to know what she was committing the agency to in terms of student management.

Interpretation of the study findings may indicate that if a coordinator was seen as less than honest about the ability of students, or did not know the student’s attributes or about past unacceptable behaviour, this could leave festering resentment. Gaps in information may cause tension and poor decision making with consequences those managers and supervisors may have cause to regret. Information uncertainty or

covert information could also create dislike for the educational institution or its staff and a reluctance to co-operate with the tertiary provider. Disharmony could close boundary lines between two systems and do harm to previously formed alliances. Scant information about students pre-placement appeared to create uncertainty for these managers and they appear to be left feeling like they were in a lottery draw with a student sent to them, where it was said that “*sometimes I only got the name*” which indicates the brevity of information received. A thoughtful student matching process between a student’s practice interests and the co-ordinator’s understanding of agency needs, prior to a request for social work fieldwork provision was important to these managers. As a pākēha woman community centre manager said she preferred to meet the student:

“I find it so stressful if it does not work, and life is stressful as it is...important that it works. I am quite fussy about who I accept. Some students are awesome; some have no or little experience, sometimes it is where they are up to in training; sometimes it is to do with personality. My decision is not about just bringing the person in; it is about bringing a person into the equation.”

(Community house manager)

Just as work pressures in the agency environment influence placement decision by managers, the bigger question is around the student who increases work and resultant stress, potentially culminating in an unsuccessful placement. This in turn likely influences the decline of future requests. There appears to be a resolve to avoid students who brought or created disruption to what was described as “*the equation.*” Management functions include decision making and managing issues between and within boundaries which means a disastrous decision could have serious implications for stakeholders. Despite some managers experiencing less than satisfactory students in the past most were confident in their ability to select students in or out. They considered their selection judgement as sound, although past mistakes, experiences, feelings and intuition may have sharpened this awareness and judgements. As one

woman community centre manager said “*it would be unwise not to let experience guide us*, which implies past willingness towards placement and experience mattered. An incorrect selection, placement breakdown or entropy in the placement system was a situation these managers wished to avoid, a situation which links with chapter eight which examines the student theme further on what was described as “*disastrous students*”. It appears that it is only fair that the manager knows about the ‘fit and proper’ person (NZ) (SWRB, 2012) status of the student as “*my role is to protect the agency, so safety issues are important*” said a community house manager.

Further the fieldwork literature indicates that it is vitally important that managers receiving students on international placements are information rich about students from other countries and cultures. The risks are likely to be broader for all concerned because of additional layers of complexity and geographical distance. There is an onus on co-ordinators to know about their students and a responsibility on managers to ensure that appropriate and relevant information is shared with supervisors, whether they are internal or external to the organization. Furthermore provision of such information may enhance relationships and alliances across and within two divergent organizational systems.

The amount of time managers take for such decisions was not measured in this study, but if such decisions are taken under pressure they may result in poor decisions which are more common, particularly when information is uncertain (Hughes & Wearing, 2007) or information is insufficient (Hatch, 1997). This may lead to uncertain results. Preliminary student information was seen as a two-step process of written and verbal information provision prior to acceptance in a climate of risk, a condition which according to Webb (2006) has come to dominate social work. Information provision is a key principle drawn from Bateson’s work on a systems approach; it is the exchange currency of interaction between organizational and educational systems to assist change and survival. Information and resources need to cross boundaries in both directions between systems (Hughes & Pengelly, 1997) as these managers needed to monitor conditions inside and outside their system. Robust information flows allows for them to anticipate the nature of their responsibility, to

ensure that collective needs are met. Students also need to know their decision and what is expected of them, and the fieldwork environmental context is informed of the changes expected from the forthcoming event of placement in their meso system. For some managers it may be more appropriate to “*say no and not feel bad about it*”, while others were very cautious about their decision.

6.7 Significance of the findings

Robust pre-placement information exchange on matters such as a student’s ‘good character’ and educational attainment enhanced goodwill responses towards the fieldwork placement question for the managers in this study. This theme on information transacted between stakeholders appears to be a significant factor influencing managers’ decision making and willingness towards placement provision.

Students sent to unknown settings or international placements initially as outsiders, can be a risky business for all stakeholders: the manager, the agency and staff, the student, the school of social work, the co-ordinator and the student educator (supervisor), not to mention clients, community, funders and other stakeholders, particularly if the student is not ready to face challenges that are presented. These agency managers needed to make safe choices in student provision in a risk averse climate which is tempered by the market driven political systems context discussed in chapter one, two, four and eleven.

Furthermore, as system theory suggests, systems are either open or closed and changes made in one system, affects those within and between other systems. The literature suggests that it is the co-ordinator; the student and the student supervisor who are the key players, with inter-organizational arrangements made between the co-ordinator and the supervisor. This is only part of the picture. This examination does not intend to underestimate the essential importance of the supervisory role of a student in the traditional model of fieldwork placement, but rather identify the views

of the agency manager on such matters in their interaction with others. Furthermore, participants had expectations that co-ordinators consider the impact of a student on the agency context, the volume and nature of their service needs, during the process of matching the student's placement wishes with theirs.

These findings may contribute to the limited social service management literature on this topic, as well as the fieldwork and student supervision literature. As these emerging factors suggest, there is a need to include the manager in the matching and selection process prior to and during placement. The data interpretation implies that the way the school performs its role in the matching of a student with an agency, information sharing about a student's culture, personal information, along with educational and legal status, will impact on willingness or unwillingness to provide the necessary resources. These managers wanted to be involved in these processes to gather sufficient information about a student domiciled outside their social service organizational system. Moreover, they wished to make safe choices and avoid regretful decisions which could lead to unnecessary changes or extra work for themselves or their staff. This chapter links safety assurance, placement readiness, and a student's 'good character' with risk management and 'fit and proper' policies of the (NZ) Social Workers Registration Board. Therefore any transfer across systems of sufficient, appropriate, relevant, timely information is about efficient and effective transactions and safe choices. As this thesis argues, agency managers are the final arbitrators of student fieldwork placement provision. As Hay, Keen, Thomson and Emerman (2011) believed, it is the personality of the student that was one of the crucial factors that contributed to successful placements but this aspect is examined in the following chapter. Managerial expectations of student knowledge, skills and attributes for social service agency work, as well as the part they expect to play towards supporting and developing a student admitted into their non-government social service organizational system, is examined next.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STUDENTS “WE WOULD WANT TO BOTTLE AND KEEP”

“I think the key issue is competency, initiative, personality and their suitability to the social work profession. Placement can either be awesome or disastrous depending on those factors...”

(Interviewee: Community House manager)

7.1 Introduction

Experienced managers were invited into this study designed to capture recent and current experiences of fieldwork placement decision making about social work student fieldwork placement provision. Chapters five and six examine data on how pre-placement information could contribute to managers’ responses to the placement provision question. This chapter firstly examines the theme on how students’ behaviours during placement influence managers’ decisions towards placement. Secondly, the desired attributes and skills of students and managers’ expectations of knowledgeable students are considered as factors that might be relevant to the stem question in this chapter. Thirdly, how managers respond to a student’s social and learning needs, their views on students as a free resource and the opportunities they offer for staff recruitment are examined. Finally, managers views on what mutual benefits presented themselves for both student and agency staff in a reciprocal learning process during service delivery were seen as enhancing willingness towards fieldwork placements for social work students. Factors influencing managers’ unwillingness attitudes towards field work placement provision are considered for their relevance to the research questions in chapter eight.

An exo or eso systems perspective offers a visual picture which aided analysis and the creation of understanding of how managers see the extent and impact of students on the internal system of the organization, the benefits they bring, expectations of staff and their adaption to students which in turn is related to the stem question.

The findings suggest that decisions about the type of student they might provide for in the future are influenced by previous experiences of students. As one manager said in her experience there was “*an incredible spectrum of student on placement in terms of ability, insight, skills and understanding. [I ask] What kind of social work student is this? This is what I look for*”, which suggests she was never sure what her decision towards placement provision would bring to the agency. Serendipitous findings uncovered that six or possibly seven managers in this study had also provided social work supervision of social work students on fieldwork placement. This suggests some managers had additional first-hand experience of students through supervision and additional knowledge about the value of student placements.

7.2 How do students’ attributes and skills influence placement decisions?

Managers in this study were looking for students who were confident enough to articulate a social work perspective, those with inter-personal communication skills, and the ability to work in collaboration with other staff, with clients and other agencies. One pākēha male manager of a Christian social service said provision is partly about the student bringing life experience, their meeting agency needs and their capacity to engage in the agency work.

“Student’s life experiences include any previous work experience and the student’s interest in the field such as care and protection or foster care in my case...and capacity to engage in the work.”

(Manager of Christian social service)

Life and work experience, interest in the field of social work and capacity to assist social service delivery does suggest that the student needed to be personally suited to working with and caring for a diverse range of people, including children in this instance. This quote also suggests that to meet agency needs, the student requires a degree of maturity gained from life experiences and previous work experience. As a community house manager said, “*I think the key issue is competency, initiative,*

personality and their suitability to the social work profession”, which proposes that a student’s skill level, attitude, personality type and competence has a significant part to play towards the placement being either “*awesome or disastrous*”, that is, between splendid students and a less than best student or a placement that is expendable. Desirable attributes sought of Māori students was described as those of someone “*who is loving, kind and firm*” which relate to the notion of aroha, compassion, respect or empathy as traditional Maori concepts (Hollis-English, 2012) and social work imperatives. The data interpretation suggests that various managers had an expectation that students would be those who could demonstrate not only care for others but have the confidence to help clients by being “*passionate about their work when trying to help people and confident in their own abilities.*” Students able to show care, respect, and encouragement and with the ability to make confident mature judgements were desired by both Māori and non-Māori managers in this study. Although these are not new findings they capture attributes of some characteristics of “*awesome*” students.

As examined in chapter five Māori managers were particularly keen to accommodate students who could assist with linking clients back into *whānau* (extended family) connections, through knowledge of *whakapapa* (genealogy), aided by agency staff.

“staff need to take the opportunity to help them...connections are very important...it is not just about whānau and interagency relationships, manager, or other agencies, it is attitude – [the student] willing to ask, [it is] okay to ask, to know about whānau links....if they don’t ask – what does that say?”

(Iwi social service manager)

The making of connections with and for clients and re-connection broader than agency networks and the ability of students to learn and seek help from staff about their own and a client’s extended family appears to be vital student attribute sought

by this manager. Hollis-English (2012) identifies this cultural practice as a rituals of encounter with *whānau*, *whakapapa* and *whaka whānaungatanga*. There may be a “*need to get whakapapa... who are often from other Iwi, not from here...we have contacts in other Iwi, and this is reciprocal too*”, which refers to *whānau* (extended family) information exchange with other *iwi* information sources. As discussed in chapter five information exchange and networking is highly valued for making a difference to lives of Indigenous peoples. It is a professional expectation that all students in this country would be able to gain such knowledge of and participate in cultural practices such as *tikanga* and *kawa* (customs and protocol) to meet the curriculum requirements of social work education, ethics and professional competency.

In this study the value of well-trained students was recognized by participants. As one Māori male chief and manager said “*we learn a lot from overseas students. [We had] one from Sweden last year – 3rd year top notch, one from Norway this year. Great training of overseas students – she was one we would want to bottle and keep.*” This suggests that these particular students had many acceptable attributes, were ready for international placements and were a pleasure to host and learn from a culturally rich setting. It may be that international students have a strong thirst for learning about Māori culture in a single opportunity, from this Indigenous manager’s willingness to share widely across cultures. Further, consciousness raising, building relationships and networking are some of the many attributes and skills that are required of social work students placed in various cultural settings which may be different from their own.

Furthermore, another cluster of desired skills identified by one manager included the ability to “*co-manage cases, or participate in assessment [with] recording and networking*” [skills], which does not seem an unreasonable expectation of a student, skills well beyond observation skills. Commitment by students to attend and respond to an induction process, learn about agency policies and procedures, attend and participate in staff meetings and training were managerial edicts identified by various participants. Therefore students with personal and professional maturity, active

cognitive processes that demonstrated their ability to show initiative, independence, adaptability and interest in the work were seen as important attributes desired by managers in this study. As was stated:

“I want to know the character and maturity of students, their thinking processes, but not their age, [rather] the way they cope with life, their ability to use their initiative and work independently sometimes, their ability to adapt to the team; their interests.”

(Pākēha woman community house manager)

This quote raises the question as to whether it is realistic for managers to expect the student to come with all these attributes and to be a team player when they cross boundaries into a non-statutory organizational domain as a student in training. Nevertheless, findings in this chapter indicate that student provision is more likely to be favoured and accorded a fieldwork placement when a student is deemed by the manager to have what Gitterman (1996b) describes as a ‘level of fit’ in the social service organization.

Further, a participant identified that *“another person created a buzz, a relationship to engage with”* with a few managers seeing youthfulness as being beneficial to the agency climate because of *“an air of eagerness and a fresh outlook that could enliven agency life”*. Enthusiasm too was a social skill identified by Maidment (2001), which must increase all round motivation in those it touches.

In response to the stem question, provision appeared to be more likely if the students had a range of communication skills such as the ability to question and seek learning, to contribute to the life of the organization, be a team player and have the ability to work with people different from themselves. A picture is built up of managers’ expectations of what was described as *“quality”* students or *“quality and nothing*

less” might look like. Although ‘quality’ is difficult to define it may mean work ready students, although the word ‘quality’ has come to mean “good quality” to many people, which is still vague. Further there is a lack of standardised criteria to assure ‘quality’ of social work practicum students according to Tam, (2003). This finding for managers wish for ‘quality’ students, is opposed to the need for “good quality” placements (Cooper & Crisp, 1998; Doel & Shardlow, 1996a; Hay, O’Donoghue & Blagdon, 2006) as identified in the literature. It would seem there is a need for more research to discover just what ‘student quality’ might mean to agency managers and what attributes and level of skill is realistic for students going on placements of length, such as 60 days

Hay, et al.’s (2006) survey identified a 31.3% lack of skill base within the student population in *Aotearoa* New Zealand, but did not elaborate on what was expected or desired.. Further research is needed into which cluster of skills are most needed to benefit agencies in various fields of practice as it seems that different fields of practice require different skills as well as broad clusters of theoretical knowledge and practice approaches.

It is likely that core skills needed for a first placement will be developed in a second placement and if social work programmes require fieldwork placements early on in the study programme, a criterion for such skill levels for such students would reduce manager’s anxiety about accepting a student and provide clarity around expectations. Preparation of students for different fields of practice, may pose challenges for social work educators in the classroom as social work covers a wide range of settings and requires a broad a range of skill sets. For example a survey by Testa (2011) found that a school-based field placement aimed at student wellbeing which emphasised mainly primary prevention and early intervention, required a range of interpersonal skills, advocacy, negotiation, conflict resolution and communication skills practice (p. 21). This survey was conducted in Melbourne, Australia. It is also suggested that in different countries, different skill sets will be required, which supports the idea of close relationships between schools of social work and fieldwork placement providers, government and non-government sites. However non-verbal, verbal and

written communication skills and relationship building skills, the use of basic micro-counselling skills, such as active listening, responding, questioning, paraphrasing, summarizing must be relevant and necessary skills for any student allocated to their first placement. Assessment and intervention skills are likely to become more developed the more advanced the student is in their study programme. The (NZ) SWRB policies are silent on this question of skill set requirements for a first placement, but it is a question that needs serious consideration, given that unskilled and unprepared students could jeopardize future placement for schools of social work. However skills have a relationship to competency requirements of the SWRB.

This study appears to identify that there is a need for broader social skills required of students than those qualities recognized by Maidment's (2001b) work. These were listed as initiative, enthusiasm, flexibility, and open to learning and constant feedback, as being critical to productive learning relationships with the supervisor. We also know that Sutton (1994) thought students on placement brought creativity and stimulation to social services organizations. These findings are different from those identified in an Asylum seeker project. Desired attributes were for students with "motivation, maturity, adaptability and a commitment to the work of the project" (Shardlow & Doel, 2002, p.90), with students bringing attributes such as impartiality and neutrality (Shardlow & Doel, 2002), but impartiality and neutrality were not mentioned by Maori or pākēha (non-Maori) managers. This suggests that different fields of practice may require students to possess different skill and sets of attributes matching the agency needs.

We also know from the work of Studdy (2003) that there was an expectation that students are able to present to a large group, assert a viewpoint without feeling threatened or overwhelmed and be able to label a social work intervention as the mark of a 'professional'. This may be too high an expectation for students less advanced in their education. Humphrey (2011) thought students on their initial placements needed to demonstrate competence with assessments and planning, work in partnership, be accountable and able to review and carry out evaluation in fields such as child and community care. Relationship based social work was about

partnership, engaging and disengaging strategies with an ability to work in advocacy-based services with clients and carers (Humphrey, 2011), but it is questioned whether advocacy, a high level skill, should be an expectation of initial placement students. It is unlikely they have developed such a skill, because of the specialist knowledge component which drives most advocacy. It is likely however that students on their final placement are able to carry out educational, legal and therapeutic interventions, assess risk and be able to evaluate practice with families, groups and communities as well as network and raise consciousness in communities (Humphrey, 2011). Students must be able to complete “genograms, chronologies, ask circular questions, hypothesise about problems and imagine positive outcomes and setting clients’ homework to rehearse new learning” (Humphrey, 2011, p.139) when working with families in final placements.

It is interesting that twenty seven behaviours were grouped under six areas of skills by Middleman and Goldberg (1974, p.84) for social worker behaviour, which no doubt are minimal requirements now. However, when high expectations of social work students are not met this could influence managers’ willingness attitudes towards opening the agency door to future placements. On the other hand, failure to meet expectations set beyond a student’s educational level could spark a crisis in a student’s confidence, disillusionment about the social work profession, which may led them to the conclusion that social work practice might expect too much of them.

7.3 Managers’ expectations of knowledgeable students

A student arriving with a basic knowledge about the agency’s particular field of practice appears to be an expectation of some managers, particularly those working in specialist areas such as crisis work. Students with “*prior interest in the work*” or “*the ability to cope with crisis*” and the capacity “*to complete additional sexual abuse/rape training*” and “*Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) counselling referral process for sexual abuse work*” was knowledge sought by some during the selection process. One manager thought that the knowledge, skill and fortitude required for feminist crisis work was rare, as “*we need people who like crisis work to*

be of any value to us, but social workers are not able to do much of our type of [refuge] work.” Another manager felt strongly *“that all social work and counselling students needed to be trained in rape and sexual abuse issues and have networking skills”* which she said was *“not necessarily my experience with previous counselling or social work students.”* This suggests there may be a gap or variability in this area of social work education curriculum in parts of *Aotearoa* New Zealand.

As much of the fieldwork placement literature states the purpose of fieldwork placement is about integrating theory into practice, it is interesting that theory based knowledge and the role of assisting a student to integrate theory into practice was seldom mentioned by managers in this study, but training students to deliver a social service was. Learning to integrate theory into practice may be something managers as supervisors believe is the responsibility of the student rather than the task of others. As one Māori chief said *“students should leave their theories in the classroom until later on in the placement”* believing that local and Indigenous traditions should be the dominant basis of a student’s learning whilst in his organization. This suggests that this manager thought there may be a need for modification in social work education to include more cultural knowledge. In contrast, Colvin (2013) suggested that to build culturally competent students working with diverse populations, cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural encounter and cultural desire is integrated with knowledge, values and skills for skill-based interventions in student preparation for professional social work practice (p.1).

Further, another Māori male manager also thought social work qualifications were too theoretical for practice.

“I would like to think agencies would be more involved in helping schools in designing their curriculum and making qualifications more practical. Don’t get me wrong, I don’t mean qualifications just aimed at a workplace as this is the tragedy in tertiary education. Qualifications should be about higher learning but there are concepts and ideas that we would like students to

engage in. They need to understand the ideas they gain their qualification from.”

(Māori Community House manager)

It would appear from this quote that this manager was aware of programme content with a contribution to make towards the integration of practice with theory in a student's education, before the student receives the placement opportunity. Thus the student would become more useful in the interpretation of ideas into practice. It would appear he supports generalist rather than specialization qualifications in initial social work education as well as sound conceptual and theoretical bases taught to students that “*we would like students to engage in,*” which appears to relate to reciprocity of knowledge exchange. As Coll and Eames (2000) suggest forging strong links with employers can lead to collaboration in other ways, although this can be very time consuming.

A few managers in this study required students with prior knowledge of “*the strengths based perspective*” while another said “*we no longer require people to understand strengths-based practice as we have moved away from this.*” Others required students to connect with the agency's philosophical base, for example, Christian or *kaupapa* Māori (things Māori). Two community centre managers were reluctant to select students who had little knowledge of the local geographical community nor had networks within it as “*this lack of understanding created a stumbling block to success for this type of work.*” These variations in knowledge expectations of students suggests that some agencies may have specific requirements. This may be useful information for placement co-ordinators to gain for better understanding of the agency needs and enhancement of matching of student and agency (Coll & Eames, 2000). Although I would agree with Humphrey (2011) who suggest that task-centred, person-centred, crisis intervention and anti-oppressive practice are approaches that are easily transportable across fields of practice. These approaches are currently useful and relevant educational components of social work education in this country.

Two managers expected students to know how to carry out research and evaluation projects although this type of work in my experience, seems to be an unrealistic expectation of most undergraduate students, such as the Diploma students experienced by these managers. This expectation may mean there is a need by managers for such research or programme evaluation work to be carried out without cost, because it is very difficult to gain funding under social service delivery contracts in this country. Toward the end of their undergraduate qualification some students with research experience may be able to gain ethical approval for such work prior to fieldwork placement. Indeed research skills are developed during their education and are important skills for social work under and post-graduates. Humphrey (2011) also thought students could carry out evaluation research to enhance service provision. This writer saw students acting as “consultants to the agency on matters of their greater expertise” (2011, p. 128), which again suggests a high level of experience and expertise, perhaps from post graduate social work students. Just as various participants expected a student to arrive knowledgeable and skilled in different areas, it appears these managers sought students who would ultimately bring some credit, to use a management term ‘add value’ to the organization, by their work contribution, as well as to re-invigorate, refresh and boost the passion in the agency and its work.

“Because of the size of the team (small) another worker infuses the dynamic and may have fresh perspectives on theory and practice. It is an opportunity for the student to reflect and streamline their passion and specialise and help us clarify and reinforce why we do what we do.”

(Pākēha social service manager)

This quote suggests student knowledge and interest is important to re-motivate and re-energize staff for the work they do. These findings also appear to suggest that students would be considered more likely to embrace the organizational ethos if they come with passion for the work. On the other hand, learning expectations of students by various managers in this study included the completion of an agency orientation

and induction process; learning about agency policies and procedures; health and safety matters; and attendance at additional training if it was offered. Expectations included attendance at supervision and staff meetings along with the student's educational plan completion and the keeping to the hours of work contracted for, which suggests this has not always happened in their past experience with students.

Learning activities have implications for managers, supervisors and others in terms of organizational plans and for some there was the expectation of having an interactive teaching role during placements. One Māori woman manager articulated her inter-active teaching role in this way:

“I work with Māori from a Māori framework and work with pākēha using pākēha concepts...as Māori look at one's self from a Māori worldview; but understanding yourself first is so important for students.”

(Maori woman manager)

The Maori framework suggested here for rituals of encounter appears to be about getting to know the person first and finding out about their troubles later (Hollis-English, 2012). This quote suggests that this Māori manager as a supervisor could work bi-culturally and cultural teaching was valued as much as non-Maori ideas by her, a view which may have implication for social work student supervision policies of the (NZ) SWRB, where consideration might be given to the value of non-registered cultural supervisors or teachers. Students learning about themselves and cultural applications also appear important to this manager as she links student knowledge to the importance of knowledge of one's own cultural identity, the connections from the past linked to the future and holism.

The findings here appear to suggest that some agencies may be working to a favoured model or approach which may affect manager's choice of students. One

manager mentioned that a student brought fresh theoretical perspectives and another thought new ideas were important. These findings may suggest a possible lack of student confidence in articulating or sharing the application of theories they knew or alternatively they lacked clarity around application of a pocket full of theories they had likely learned. Alternatively they may not have known how to apply appropriate theoretical knowledge to particular fields or perhaps they may not have seen their relevance to practice. A few managers mentioned their responsibility was to ensure students were learning about practice through the production of quality work following the agency system, approaches and models and utilizing skills and relationships, rather than favouring application of theories from the classroom.

Although this group of managers may appear not to favour theories over approaches or models this finding might relate to personal preference, their inability to articulate them, their own training or agency practice, or a funding contract focus, or lack of social work background. Alternatively, some managers might not have noticed previous students apply theoretical understandings to their learning, or not involved in student supervision to recognize this. Supervisors may give a stronger emphasis to theoretical matters as the student fieldwork supervision literature suggests.

On the other hand a College of Social Work poll in Britain found that four in ten student respondents to an online survey found they were disappointed by their placements and many cited the failings of supervisors (British Association of Social Workers, 2011). Further, during the participant selection process, a manager said she did not provide placements for students because she “*was trained in Australia and did not know local theories*” which suggests that she too saw cultural ideas and knowledge as important learning for students. Perhaps a debate needs to be held as to the appropriateness of various philosophical paradigms taught in social work education for utilization in fieldwork placement. These findings do not entirely support Cleak and Wilson’s (2004) view that staff is kept in touch with theoretical developments as only two managers mentioned this. Although students “need to become better acquainted with the theoretical foundations of practice” (Humphrey, 2011, p.81) these findings suggest are either not known or are not visibly applicable.

In a comparative experience between Australian and Swedish students it was found that there was a separation and difference between university learning and placement learning (Goldstein, 2001). The literature on fieldwork separates out 'theory' from the classroom, from 'practice' in the field, with an expectation by educationalist that students will integrate theory from the classroom into fieldwork social work practice. But do the theories taught in the class room complement agency social work need? Healy (2005) examined student experience of the process of learning and translating theory into practice in the agency on their first practicum and its relationship to university based learning and was not surprised when Fernandez (1997) established that students out on practicum required university staff assistance to help with the integration of theory into the practice. Could this be because too much emphasis has been placed on classroom theory rather than evidence based research or cultural knowledge integration with practice in the classroom? Has insufficient attention been given to the skilfulness and competencies of the student who is drawing on theoretical memory whilst contributing to client well-being? Or could it be that students are not intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to learn and retain it either in the classroom or in practice? Unless student placement is managed well this expected integration may not happen. A manager and/or supervisor may develop a fear of being found wanting in what they provide or embarrassed by lack of staff knowledge to sufficiently support the placement, which might relate to the stem question response of not wishing to provide a placement. On the other hand, another element of this student theme towards willingness is about contributions students make to the agency workload.

7.4 Managers consider students social and learning needs

A factor influencing a response to placement provision appears to be a 'feel good' feeling of satisfaction that increases a manager's intrinsic motivation to support students. There was preparedness by managers to assist students with socio-economic issues and family responsibility such as childcare friendly hours of work. This managerial contribution to placement provision, applied particularly to the smaller agencies and those with shorter opening hours and part-time staff. Some managers expressed empathetic understanding to the needs of students with family

responsibilities. They perceived that such issues affected a student's attitude toward placement. Their position allowed for the reduction of student anxiety such as that for a parent who needed to leave early because after school childcare was unaffordable. One went as far as to ask a student *"to pay attention to her child's schooling"* whilst accentuating *"the importance of having babysitters she could trust."* Further this Māori woman manager felt *"non-government organizations were more flexible than government organizations on such issues as hours students spent at placements"*. Satisfaction appears to be gained from influencing a student's life direction and the sharing ideas about parenting. This comment may also relate to students trying to manage complex care giving responsibilities with the time demands of unpaid placements. As the literature suggests that *"students in higher education are increasingly balancing work and care-giving obligations"* (Buck, et al., 2012, p.3) which is unsurprising.

Further, there was a wish to ensure students were encouraged about a future in the profession and *"did not receive a negative experience, along with avoidance of disheartenment or discouragement about social work"* said a pākēha woman manager about her attitude to students her agency had committed to. Such findings suggest that students, possibly sole parents, would appreciate such consideration and encouragement to fulfil parental responsibilities and possibly try to respond in some reciprocal way. This manager recognized that *"social workers were few and far between"* where a *"bad experience could spoil it for them"* so their role was to ensure the system did not interfere with their experiential learning.

Such willingness factors influencing placement provision may be useful to the literature because they indicate ways managers are prepared to contribute to the sustenance of a fieldwork placement and student learning of life skills. It would appear from the data interpretation that particular managers relished an opportunity to role model, educate and provide social support to students, as a reciprocal benefit to students, whether or not they were student supervisors. They enjoyed shaping and adapting their systems and processes for a student's integration into placement and their learning experiences.

Management role modelling was considered an important contribution to fieldwork placement of students because it required “*patience, encouragement and understanding*” while recognizing that “*some students needed extra help with their adjustment and learning struggles,*” said a Māori woman manager. It appears that managers generally relied on modelling and support for the student’s learning to come not only from themselves but from all their staff, in addition to student educators/supervisor contracted time. Some writers saw staff enjoyment of sharing expertise, knowledge and experience as some influence on agency willingness to provide placements (Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, 2011; Hay, O’Donoghue & Blagdon, 2006; O’Connor et al., 1998). Furthermore, Fortune, McCarthy and Abramson’s (2001) study found that students responded positively when professionals modelled learning activities. However, Olson (2014) believed that placement settings as sites of culture were not adequately processed in the supervision context or reflective writing by students and suggested tools from anthropology be utilized to improve the educational value of the fieldwork placement. This interpretation suggests that when fieldwork placement was agreed to, it was a collaborative commitment by the agency members.

7.5 Managers appreciate a “*free resource*” and potential staff recruitment

Students able to achieve set organizational tasks appear to benefit agencies and influence future decision making to accept a student for a set period of time. Further this free resource provided managers with the opportunity to survey the potential workforce and to gauge the quality of students as potential staff. Firstly one male manager thought that “*students also add value of a resource for some of the more menial tasks initially but also as they are trained up and prove themselves capable as another staff member.*” This process was seen by Olson (2014) as one of transition whereby the student moved from being an outsider to an insider. While another manager seemed resolute in bringing a student inside when she “*treated all students as a staff member*” and another said it “*was expected that students carry out duties as all other staff members did,*” These quotes indicate that students were thought of as staff members and treated as such.

Furthermore, students as a “*free resource*” brought other benefits:

“The benefits are that future staff is often employed from the student pool we have had in the past. This gives us a good opportunity if they are here for long enough to see how we work. We currently have three full-time workers who have been with us for a few years now who came from this source...” and in the second interview she said *“they often become an employee which is wonderful really.”*

(Māori community house manager)

This quote implies that this manager had relied on a student placement stream for staff recruitment purposes affording the tangible benefit of being in a position to scrutinize the student’s work over the placement period. Social worker shortage was referred to by some managers so an opportunity to choose staff from a student placement pool was welcomed and recognized as being mutually beneficial. Students too would want to impress potential employers. Such a student may not have to go through a harrowing and possibly highly competitive job interview for a position. Fieldwork placement could be seen as a ‘student probationary period’ which means that in exchange for training a student, a manager could avoid the expensive and laborious recruitment process. Some of these managers appeared to value the opportunity to select students as future employees, which may in the long run reduce time and costs of recruitment particularly if they were not bound by Equal Opportunity employment practices with the requirement to advertise vacancies. High staff turnover places managers in difficult positions. As one Māori woman manager said: *“four staff left at once, which unsettled staff and we had a hui (meeting) to sort it out...but life goes on.”* Such difficulties may mean that the placement may serve a dual purpose of training a person in agency policies, processes and practices and utilize free student labour; hence robust student interviews appear relevant to this situation. Given these staffing restraints a placement may bring cost savings for employers (Coll & Eames, 2000). Further, Troughton (2010) identified that staff turnover included newly qualified social workers, while factors such as heightened

competition, high levels of workplace stress and the ageing workforce, contributed to social workers leaving the profession, which coupled with financial constraints, may account for this employee recruitment practice. Placement may also provide the opportunity for students to gain work of their choice and employers to have ‘first choice’. As a Māori male manager explained:

“... like many ‘not for profit’ businesses before us, getting into the schools of learning to ‘fly the flag’ and ‘head hunt’ and be the ‘employer of choice’ is now imperative in my view before the students are seduced by the ‘big’ money [that] statutory organizations [offer] or they head off overseas.”

(Māori community centre manager)

This finding proposes that this manager recognized the need to establish a position of advantage in choosing from a pool of students, particularly through exposure to those nearing graduation. There seems to be an acute awareness of sector positioning on the margins of attractiveness when it comes to staff recruitment. Non-statutory social services barely surviving on government contracts, are also positioned by funding structures of pay disparity between the statutory and non-statutory sectors. Non-statutory social services are also positioned on the lower rungs of the market place ladder where there is competition for social work staff both locally, nationally and internationally, particularly as countries such as Australia and Britain offer *Aotearoa* New Zealand graduates higher salaries than received locally.

Alternatively, a double bonus could present itself as a reward for an investment of time and energy in a student if they prove suitable to fill a current or impending employment gap. Social work fieldwork final placements can raise hopes for students when they have worked hard and enjoyed the agency work, but find their hopes dashed when there is no job for them, although the work availability is evident. If paid work is available and the student provided is well advanced in their training the placement may supplant as a free probationary period and provide a

bonus for the agency management. It can be assumed that such a free resource is not contentious, but of great benefit to the organization as it allows for a free viewing of a range of students on placements and the gaining of new knowledge about the nature of student 'quality' coming from various institutions. Although staff turnover was not a study question, it may be a pressing issue influencing willingness towards fieldwork placement provision. The majority of managers in this study were unambiguous about staff recruitment agendas, which does not support the view that student placement had a "hidden agenda", (O'Connor, et al., 2003, p. 211) of disguised recruitment. It is clear these managers were open about the possibility of future staff recruitment. This throws light on the idea of Howells (2004) that staff recruitment was a possible motivation of placement provision. There was no secret that placement provision served recruitment purposes, for potential or intentional vacancies in the future.

Although students were viewed as a staff resource to be considered in their decision making toward provision, a manager believed their role was "*part of the filtering process*" for a future social service workforce, which also may be seen as gate keeping for the profession by identifying student unsuitability. How that student role is viewed may influence how others see this role. The presence and purpose of a student in the agency, clarified from the start, with "*no surprises*" would likely create less likelihood of conflict. Further, in the agency funder's eyes a student contribution appears to be an invisible commodity in contracts for service, or the student is caste in the volunteer category.

7.6 Mutual benefits: Reciprocal exchange

Student learning appears to be seen as an exchange process where "*we kind of help each other*" where "*it gets work done they would like to do but don't have the time*", and "*students pass on information to staff too*". Such reciprocal exchange is in addition to the benefits of the physical presence of the student who is expected to take on a workload in their newly found environment. Not only is a relational experience offered but the learning is seen as reciprocal for other staff as they also

gain from the experience. Indigenous views on reciprocity and “*mana* (prestige, spirit, status) *enhancing*” actions (Ruwhiu, 2001 p.60) are part of *tangata whenua* (people of the land), *kawa* (custom) of relationship engagement in this context of the traditional fieldwork placement model. As this Indigenous writer says *mana* “is either inherited or bestowed upon individuals, environments, groups, interrelationship roles, and so forth. It acts as the cultural adhesive that cements together those various dimensions (spiritual, natural, and human) of Māori culture and society” (Ruwhiu, 2001, p.60).

These Māori managers believed that accepting a student into their organization gave them a sense of responsibility to “*integrate them and include them into their work plan*”, which implies an open system and permeable boundaries. Student management was seen as “*planning, self-discipline, patience, concentration and role modelling to the student*” as articulated by a mature female manager:

“You learn how to weave things; whatever plan you have that day you learn to weave what is needed in. They come from a culture that they learn from doing.....the discipline comes with the culture...to be patient....because when you are doing something.....you don’t go off and do something else, not when you are really ensconced in it....”

(Māori social service manager)

This manager appears to suggest that agency managers, staff and clients are all part of how the agency culture unfolds, how it informs, shapes and accounts for the day-to-day activities and influence on student learning. A process of making a *kete* (woven basket) where each piece of support and learning contributes to the strength of the whole basket can be implied from this quote. This *kete* metaphorically suggests that handles for support are provided by a supervisor who is patient and generous with time. Not only is management planning to ensure student active integration into the organization important, but dedication and persistence in teaching

a *tauirā* (student) was considered necessary to achieve an “*awesome*” experience for all parties and to teach social work in a culturally safe way. Furthermore, Walker (1996) emphasized the importance of supervisors giving continuous student affirmation to assist Māori students to feel culturally safe while they are supervised and the importance of working with people from their own cultural groups, without feeling inferior. Group work for Māori students on fieldwork placement was considered important (Walker, 1996). However, it is argued that the role of the coordinator, the student and the supervisor is insufficient input in placement sustainability. The manager is in a prime position to encourage role modelling and to achieve wider staff support for student learning. After all, achievement motivation is seen as the foundation quality that facilitates adjustment to organizational demands (Etzioni, 1964) and student need.

A manager identified faults in the agency system whereby students were poorly treated because of a perceived status of subordination; such treatment was averted by his intervention. This manager saw it as his role to protect the student from exploitation and to ensure they were not exposed to unauthorized staff demands. Just as a student’s introduction into an unfamiliar and perhaps frightening anxiety provoking organizational system can bring intricate dynamics, student role protection was identified as part of a management responsibility. Two managers believed students could be in need of their protection against being treated by other staff as ‘lesser than’ or as described by one manager as the “*fill the hole person*” or a person “*who buys the coffee*”. It could be difficult for a student to respond assertively when they are asked to do menial jobs by other staff members. Although revitalization may result from a student’s presence, issues of power and misuse were recognized from systems and critical theory as there was a “danger of exploitation” (Shardlow & Doel, 2002, p.15) of a student, which may possibly be generated from a sideways or downwards shift in power base to accommodate a student, possibly considered as having unequal status. Such misuse of professional training by managers or staff could be seen as a subtle form of de-professionalization, prejudice or classism to be recognized and eliminated through managerial intervention.

On the other hand, connectedness, interdependence, energy and Indigenous cultural practices emphasize how important interconnected ecology is to Māori who cannot and need not separate connections with and between systems. There are similarities with a Māori world view and systems theory in that individuals are seen as part of a wider extended and interconnected *whānau* (extended family) system and that each individual holds a special place within the system. On the other hand, intergroup reciprocity can be seen as behaviour of one group reflecting and determining the behaviour of another and it has not been extensively studied, unlike reciprocity itself (Doosje & Haslam, 2005), but these writers may have overlooked Māori interpretations of inter-group reciprocity. Further, some groups such as Indigenous peoples are likely to be marginalized and asked to compromise their organizational culture to meet the increasing demands of the central body (Gibbs, 1997, 1999). In addition, it has been questioned why communities, especially Indigenous ones and other disadvantaged communities would agree to work with institutions such as academic ones (Sandy & Holland, 2006). Despite the views of these writers, Indigenous generosity towards student placement is evident in their responses to the research question.

Some pākēha managers saw benefits to the organization as students acting as catalysts for change by asking challenging questions, such as questioning the value and benefit of routine work. It was said that staff sometimes found it difficult to change but students “*challenged old ideas and posed new ones*”, which appeared to be more acceptable if coming from an ‘outsider’. When a student challenged taken for granted pre-determined ways of delivery this appeared to create a snowball effect prompting management to question why they do what they did and to consider improvements to services. A student was said to provide the agency staff with a “*fantastic*” opportunity to change or influence someone else’s life, direction and ideas. This was perceived as happening with well-matched, well-trained students who could work with and encourage clients. Furthermore, students were seen as valuable “*for keeping practice sharp and clarifying social work matters*” in reciprocal exchange for learning opportunities.

It is assumed from the findings that some managers wished to ensure that students worked well alongside staff from the outset. Some managers recognized that happy fieldwork placement students contributed to improved service delivery, marketing of the agency, education and the professional development of their staff. Although fieldwork was seen as an opportunity for students to reflect and streamline their passion and specialise, shared activities were needed to assist such students to connect and relate to others. Moreover, the provision of positive and encouraging placement experiences along with the socialization into the agency culture may have been significant as one pākēha community centre manager said: “*it was important to give a student a positive experience and all flows on from this...*” Such a preparation and welcome is likely to settle the student and encourage and inspire them to enjoy learning from their placement. This suggests the student may also see the agency in a positive light which may have flow on marketing and networking effects or the student may aspire to future work in that particular field of practice.

7.7 Client continuity and “*it gets work done, the work we would like to do...*”

Managers in this study were asked about the practicality of a placement period of approximately sixty days for a student on placement as it relates to the stem question. There was not a preference for shorter fieldwork placement periods because it was felt benefits to the agency were reduced. This length of time allowed for the student’s education plan to include satisfactory client contact. There was a need to avoid what was described by a woman manager as “*pass the parcel*”, meaning the client file, from a student back to another worker as it was “*disruptive for the client.*” Therefore allocation of client work was measured for the student to ensure it was concluded by the time the student finished their placement, so as to avoid the client being “*dropped*” or ‘passed on’ when the student finished their placement. A manager said he tried to avoid clients having to adapt to new workers when a student started or finished placement, therefore wishing to avoid changing client work mid-stream. While another manager of a large agency said “*it [60 days] allows us to place them for two weeks in each area*” which likely enhances the student learning although possibly disjointed, and it may make it more difficult for the supervisor to monitor the education plan or the student to provide continuity of client work. Whereas a

male Maori manager said he “*prefers students for the 3 month block and dislikes the odd days per week as it does not work;*” which appears to be because of the student coming and going disrupted responsibility. While another manager commented on placement duration in that “*it can’t be made any shorter*”. These views indicated satisfaction with a block of 3 month placement duration. A shorter duration may possibly influencing willingness towards fieldwork placement provision.

In answer to the stem question data interpretation suggests that students were seen as valuable contributors for the completion of tasks already started; commencement of new projects and “*picking up extra jobs that more senior staff would not do, did not like doing or did not have time to do,*” the possibly unpopular administrative tasks. Pride in their work contribution to students in the past and their contribution to the provision of solid training in the ways they preferred to work with clients was evident. It was suggested that if managers took time with students at the very start of the placement and explained who they were, what the agency provided for clients, “*this aided the student in feeling that they are part of the agency*”. On the other hand, it appears that students needed to be exposed to most aspects of the work, as one Māori woman manager stated, it was important to “*show warts and all*” and let the student know about the agency shortfalls, as “*it is not perfect here*”. This may indicate that there had been a past experience of a student wearing rose tinted glasses and arriving with unrealistic expectations about organizational capacity and expertise.

As Germain & Gitterman, (1996) said: “where there is a good fit, person and environment both flourish” (p.52). An identified common theme centred on socially competent students able to demonstrate compatibility with staff which could offer an “an adaptive balance” (Miley, O’Melia and Dubois, 2007, p.36). Part of the adaption to the system and cultural applications will likely enhance willingness and relational well-being where the aim would be that all fieldwork participants’ prestige and status is held in balance. This idea of adaption links back to systems theory, in that the whole of any group is more than the sum of parts and changes that students may

bring can change the entire meso system, as well as the student changing personally and professionally at a micro level as they adapt to the challenges of practicum.

The sharing of knowledge within the agency system, appears to help students to produce 'quality' work and enrichment of their learning, while at the same time "*it gets work done*". Nevertheless, if students are not up to the invisible 'quality' mark, their role, status and function may change during their placement and leave them and other staff disappointed. A recent report by the Department of Health (2009) in Britain identified that students not only needed 'quality education', they also needed 'quality placements'. Understandings from this study suggest that 'quality students' and 'quality placements' (Cooper & Crisp, 1998; Hay, et al., 2006) may make a difference to sustainment of the profession, workforce development and social work students doing something else with their lives. The Department of Health (2009) report from Britain argues for universities to change their fieldwork placement practices if the social work profession is to be saved. This view suggests widespread concern about professional survival. It is contended that there is a need to include another player into the mix of roles, as the survival of profession depends not only on the 'quality' student entering into the placement but as this study suggests, 'quality' out of the placement is more likely to result if the social service manager is involved.

7.8 Significance of the findings

In this chapter we have sought an understanding of how students' attributes, skills, and knowledge base may affect current and future placement responses and their search for a student "*we would want to bottle and keep*". Conversely how managers respond to student learning needs, how the work gets done, the potential for staff recruitment and the interest in reciprocal exchange contributes towards willingness to provide placements.

The findings are significant because these managers valued having a part to play in fieldwork placement provision. They wished to take responsibility in ensuring a

student adapted well into an unfamiliar environment; that they were treated well akin to that of a staff member. These managers appeared prepared to ensure supervision and learning opportunities were available for students, whilst hoping that students could bring them and their staff intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. It appears such activity brought a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that contributed towards their willingness to provide placements in the future. Some managers wished to offer reciprocation by accommodating a student's social needs while endeavouring to make their placement a successful and worthwhile educational experience. There were no hidden agendas on the matter of recruitment scouting by many of these managers, who appeared to be consciously aware of the possibility for using placement for prospective staffing purposes.

On the other hand, they expected a student to have well developed social skills with an ability to 'fit' into the agency culture. This research increases understanding about these manager's need for 'quality' students as vehicles for new knowledge, a refreshing tonic for the organization, relationship building catalysts, information carriers and knowledge sharers who brought benefits to their organization. Although the yoke of 'quality' essentially lies with the student to demonstrate through their adaptation to a new setting and appropriate responses to cultural, organizational and social systems.

A significant finding gives rise to the understanding that a student's attitude to learning and to relationships during placement could influence manager's willingness towards future placements. Future willingness responses to the placement question appears more likely if the student had the ability to adapt to the agency system and its flow, participate and co-work with staff, and maintain internal relationships and extend their external networks. It appears that such attitudes during placement also encouraged managers to ensure they provided 'good quality' placements (Doel & Shardlow, 1996a), which the literature suggests is required. This finding relates to the concept of system interdependence from systems theory. Writers on fieldwork placement suggests educators are still looking to the agencies for 'quality placements' (Cooper & Crisp, 1998; Hay, et al., 2006), whilst managers in this study

were looking for 'quality' students, which suggests rigour is needed for 'quality in and quality out' as a student factor influencing willingness.

Various fieldwork placement literature deposits suggest that placement provision, learning opportunities, staff interaction opportunities, work commiserate with student abilities, placement supervisor availability, and exposure to local community are all requirements of a 'good' quality placement. Such 'quality' as discussed in this study may mean that a placement is of a distinctively high standard that there is agreement from all parties that it went well and was successful. But as Coll and Eames (2000) indicate such success may depend upon "the administrative structure of the programme and the position of the co-ordinator within it" (p.9). Yet, at the same time it must be acknowledged that total 'quality' is unachievable with neither organization being able to guarantee such 'quality'.

Data interpretation at this point paints students in an ideal light. Whether the managers in this study were willing, willing but unable, or at times unwilling to provide placements, they had to consider benefits, risks and other factors as this decision involved months of staff commitment. In this mix of factors, an altruistic commitment towards the development of the social work profession does emerge.

So what did these managers view as drawbacks, student deficiencies or costs that may contribute to unwillingness towards provision? The following chapter discusses managers' cautious attitudes to students "well below par", their views on students with violence issues and unaddressed child abuse history, experience of being "*stuck*" with unsuitable students and how difficulties can tell a tale along with their views on unethical students. The chapter finishes with new understandings about managers and supervisors gatekeeping role in fieldwork placement and the development of risk adverse management strategies to minimize loss to add to this student theme which appears to influence caution in opening the agency door to student provision.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CAUTIOUS WISH TO AVOID “DISASTROUS STUDENTS”

“Yes we have the resources. The issue is the calibre of the student.”

(Interviewee: Christian social service manager)

8.1 Introduction

Student placement can be stressful for all concerned when it fails to work well in an agency. Any transition of social work students from familiar structured educational settings across boundaries into a new learning environment relies upon a management decision, inter-agency and inter-personal connections. Such transitions have implications for a multiplicity of stakeholders along with the potential for misunderstandings and disappointments.

In relation to the stem question, managers in this study were asked if there were times they were unable or unwilling to provide a student placement. The decision not to take a student and reasons why they might be cautious towards placement are examined in this chapter. Firstly, consideration is given to findings on how past experiences of student had built up a cautionary attitude towards placements. Managers’ decisions appear to be affected by past experiences of students which had generated caution about the acceptance of students and awareness of the limitations that student’s bring to the achievement of successful placements. They was vigilant about those experiencing difficulties with violence issues, unaddressed child abuse histories or students involved in child abuse. Secondly, a vignette tells a tale of one manager unwilling to provide student placement. Other manager’s experiences of being involved with less than ethical students, the role of gatekeeping and the development of risk adverse management and strategies to minimise loss is examined in this chapter.

As this chapter will show, a student's introduction into a new non-statutory system can bring intricate complexities, which bring into play risk and business management principles in relation to use of resources, professional and reputational capital. Risk in this context is about an uncertain prediction about the behaviour of a student accepted onto placement. This chapter examines risk management in the social work fieldwork context and how organizational losses could be associated with unwillingness to provide fieldwork placements for students. The protective strategies these managers developed for their agencies to mitigate identified risks from student are demonstrated. Therefore student placement hosting requires managers to be cognizant of the fact they have to live with the consequences of less than wise decisions (Fineman, Sims & Gabriel, 2005).

Manager's experiences of student over a six month period prior to the first interview and the subsequent three months before the second interview contributed to the data gathered, from which interpretation and understanding was drawn. Social work and postmodern thinking recognises the reflective nature of knowledge production (Fook, 1996), intellectual and reflective activities. Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) fifth moment of postmodern thought of experimental, ethnographical and cultural writings refers to the importance of reflection on decisions and actions. This reflexive action relates to circularity of information in an eco- system, and as the findings suggest this influences future decision making towards provision.

8.2 Caution with students “*well below par*”

The findings suggest that there was caution exercised about the unknown quality of students offered in twelve of the thirteen agency responses from fifteen managers in this study. This links to pre-placement informational factors, transaction factors influences managers response to the fieldwork placement question as examined earlier in this study. As discussed in chapter seven, students who were active learners, workers, culturally astute and compatible with the agency philosophy and social service delivery were more acceptable than those who were not. As was indicated “*in terms of capability – some are naturally good with people, but it is*

good to know at the outset if they are not". Even on fieldwork placement it could be difficult to change a person's behaviour in the few months. But it has to be asked as to where students who are not good with people are on the best career path.

A Māori woman manager said she "*took a student that the tutor had difficulty placing*", which may have signalled a potential element of risk with her response to the placement co-ordinator or her wishing to assist the co-ordinator out of a difficult position of shortage. Another Māori woman manager expressed the difficulty of working with students who were well "*below par*" or parity, as "*students need to work unsupervised as I cannot afford to be student sitting, nor do I work with ditzzy students—those that can't be left*" [on their own]. This manager did not wish to be considered as a person similar to a baby sitter of students with limited abilities. As the word "*ditzzy*" was not in the New Zealand Oxford Dictionary (2005), it was interpreted to symbolize 'not with it' or 'fuzzy or woolly headed' supposedly less able to learn and possibly unsuitable for placement. Student provision for this manager would appear to be a 'lucky dip' without a pre-determined choice. Another Māori woman manager who came from an area with a high Māori population felt she shouldered a parenting role with some needy students and expressed the difficulty of being "*caught in the drama of trying not to be whānau* [extended family] to the student, rather than a social service manager supervising a student on fieldwork placement. In her second interview she said she felt she carried out more than one role at times with Māori students, such as the "*nanny*" or 'aunty' role of sharing cultural information on customs and history which *whānau* (extended family) would normally do.

"It was amazing how much they did not know about tikanga [indigenous knowledge/practice]; whakapapa, [ancestry, genealogical links]; their marae [meeting ground, traditional infrastructure]" leaving her feeling "quite sad, with many tearful moments."

(Māori Counselling social service agency manager)

Although this Māori social service manager said she was aware of “*crossing borders*” into other roles, students had “*drained*” her in her role “*as the only Māori mental health counsellor in the city and as a Māori, all I could do is make a joke of it.*” Such a situation suggests that she was prepared to allow for these additional role as part of her responsibility to prepare and enrich the cultural learning of students in her care and as Walker (1996) identified, humour was one of the positive aspects of Māori placements.

It is interesting to note that Māori managers were more likely to take on students they had doubts about and were more likely to develop special support plans to address identified personal and social issues in the placement context. This is not to say that other managers would not. It would appear that Māori managers were generally happy to “*mould what we got*”, which suggests there was a wish to ‘*awhi*’ (support) students regardless of their limitations in order to contribute to their learning especially from a Māori world view. Another believed there “*was no such thing as a ‘bad’ placement if each party looked after each other*” thus indicating a display of management attributes of care, generosity of spirit and patience in the meso system which is not to say other managers do not have these attributes.

Cultural practices give emphasis to an interconnected ecological system, which for Māori ideally cannot be separated. The application of bi-cultural frameworks and theories challenge students to increase the prominence of *tangata whenua* (people of the land) and cultural knowledge as a fieldwork placement imperative. But as these findings suggest, the role of Māori managers could have additional responsibilities and challenges when students arrive with limited cultural knowledge and identity.

8.3 Students with violence issues and unaddressed child abuse history

Students with unresolved child abuse histories, student involvement with violence issues and other problems happening in their lives alerted the majority of managers to be cautious about selection of students on placement in their agencies. Fieldwork

placement provision was influenced by previous negative experiences of unresolved and unaddressed social histories resulting in reluctance to take on students, because these appeared to be incompatible with the social work learning experiences offered.

The findings are mixed as to whether or not managers would make provision for students with domestic violence issues happening in their lives, but a few Māori managers appeared to be more accepting of such distractions particularly if the student was being victimized. As one Māori woman manager said “*I am a fighter for the underdog, so will probably take another student*”, which suggests that although she may know the student requires additional help she had “a ‘*give-people-a-go*’ philosophy, and will give the student a chance” she said. On the other hand, another Māori woman manager said she would preclude students with a history of unaddressed social issues, as her work at the prisons was specialist work.

“Many students have abuse history – I won’t take them with unaddressed history, this makes them unsuitable to work with our people. How can they be effective? There are 100s in prison with unaddressed abuse histories”.

(Māori Iwi development agency manager)

She wanted “*students to pass on the passion to keep people out of prison as there were too many men with unaddressed issues.*” This raises the question she asked as to “*why have social workers let them down?*” This question suggests that this manager thought that social workers could do better in their work to prevent imprisonment of offenders, starting with social work students addressing their own issues. It is clear that objectivity was required of fieldwork placement students to be effective with prison work and this manager was adamant she would not provide placements for students’ incompatible with the nature of social work in prisons and with ex-prisoners.

Others felt students embroiled in domestic violence disputes, either as victims with Court protection orders, or perpetrators, were less than ready for such an undertaking of social work fieldwork practicum. As was stated by another manager: *“they cannot come with a Protection Order against them unless they can demonstrate change.”* Another influence on this manager’s decision not to provide for a student was *“when she knew there was child abuse in the family and if this was unacknowledged, this influenced the way they worked.”* While another Māori manager stated that she *“knew students came with personal problems”* but later on in the interview said that they *“must graduate without personal problems.”* Related to violence and abuse issues, concerns were expressed about students who had either *“legal matters or illegal stuff going on”* or *“involvement with or connections to gangs.”* These findings suggest that such students were possibly seen as unable to protect themselves as well as posing a safety risk for themselves, the agency and others. These managers need to know about such matters before or at the time of selection interviews because they are responsible for the student and staff safety and health. But to be fair to placement co-ordinators it is unlikely that they will have knowledge of such information and there are issues of a student’s privacy.

A reluctance was expressed about provision for a student with an unaddressed child abuse history because an *“emotionally distraught student can be a risk to clients”* and if this came to the surface it would likely effect learning and contribute to a drain of time and energy on the agency. Another manager was concerned about students with children in statutory care or with (NZ) Child Youth and Family Services involvement with the family. It was thought that this information influenced how staff worked *“less positively”* with such a student. This situation is not likely to generate client confidence in the social service agency either, particularly if a student’s parenting is under question or thought to be seriously inadequate.

Another contribution from a Māori woman manager who worked in a specialist area of mental health and counselling identified the value of a close team relationship picking up student issues quickly as a protective factor for the agency.

“[I] would be watching out for psychological pressures, emotional distress. I would review it. [We have] more counsellors than social workers on staff so pick things like this up early and report it back to others...this agency is in a position to provide them with tools to change.”

(Māori social service manager)

But is this the role of the agency to address a student’s personal issues? This is clearly problematic and one could argue that this is not the core role or responsibility of the agency to address. This manager acknowledged that in the past she had offered the student permission to hold the dual role of student whilst receiving counselling from the service. This revealed situation would likely pose a dilemma for the manager, which is less than ideal for all concerned and it suggests the student was unready for placement. A student may gain an advantage of doing the *mahi* (work) while addressing their own issues, but it is questioned as to whether such a dual focus can achieve a student’s educational goals or result in a successful placement for all stakeholders. Moreover, it is likely that serious issues impacting on a student’s life are likely to affect all forms of their development. But dysfunction can be relieved by (a) “changes in the person’s perception or behaviour (b) environmental responses to person or (c) quality of exchanges between person and environment” (Gitterman, 1996b, p.39), which may happen with a fieldwork placement. But is it the function of placement agencies to change unacceptable behaviour or to ‘heal’ a student on fieldwork placement?

It could be argued that students come with “inherent deficiencies” according to Schermerhorn, (1993, p.14) or with problems to be solved. Serious problems are likely to influence managers and supervisor’s attitudes towards them in a negative light perhaps seeing them as an unnecessary “burden” (Shardlow & Doel, 2002, p.15.) which may produce feelings of regret. Identification of such deficits in students could possibly link to future unwillingness towards fieldwork placement provision. As understood from the findings, serious concerns were expressed in that students entered into placement with unaddressed, unresolved abuse issues or

involvement in abuse issues themselves, or unaddressed child abuse history or involvement in abuse issues which have not shown up pre-placement. Although the student is required to adhere to academic standards of behaviour it is apparent that whilst the student is out of sight of the school of social work, their behaviour reflects back on the placement agency. This also brings up the question as to whose assessment standards are considered when it comes to educational progression and what weight is given to a staff member's judgement of unacceptable student behaviour.

It is disturbing that such concerning or unaddressed issues can arise during placement, positioning managers to develop a social work or counselling intervention or challenging them to provide a response to such student issues. These student problems may reflect negatively on the school of social work selection and teaching processes. This leads to the vexed questions for placement co-ordinators of how to delay placement, or deny entrance into placement, at the risk of being considered discriminatory, or alternatively hope others will consider the student unsuitable during other parts of the education process? The social work supervision and fieldwork literature appears to suggest that it is the co-ordinator and the supervisor who are responsible for student safety and contribute to the gate keeping aspects of restricting students not yet suitable for fieldwork placements. Alerts or disclosures from a student whilst on placement will likely result in managers and supervisors keeping a vigilant eye on them, the development of protective factors and cautious identification of emotional states of the student on placement.

In a discourse on ethical considerations, Barter, (2003, p.127) pleaded for open honest communication as being vital for clarity about personal vulnerabilities of social work students with personal experience such as sexual abuse. Tomlinson and Corcoran (2008) found evidence to suggest that even when helping professionals were experiencing personal stress; they too were less psychologically available to assist other people, so this likely also applies to students, if not more so. However, is this fair position to put an agency in? Also graduates were not well prepared for child protection work and that their training on child abuse was minimal (Dearsley, 2000).

This supposed lack of child abuse training may provide a conduit for a student with unaddressed child abuse, to avoid addressing such an issue or finding a road towards healing. A student practising on clients was disliked as their inexperience and curiosity might add to the client's personal burdens (Napan, 1997). However, such sensitive student information would likely collide with student confidentiality (Duncan-Daston & Culver, 2005) generating a complexity and ethical challenge that co-coordinators needed to resolve. The supervision literature indicates that information such as domestic violence is only likely to be shared with supervisors or practice teachers when the relationship is positive, (Furness & Gilligan, 2004). These two writers state only the students who have resolved their past ordeals and are coping again after their turmoil and trauma, are more likely to share such information. These authors indicate that it is the students still involved in emotional turmoil that supervisors need to be aware of and ideally be experienced in making appropriate responses.

A participant said that "*having to make a fuss about a student's behaviour*" had the potential to influence future decisions on student provision but they should not have to gain the school's attention in this way. Furness and Gilligan (2004) suggest it is up to the supervisors to create the necessary safe environment so that such admission is possible, but is this fair on supervisors? However, these writers also argue for supervisors to operate within the context of the agency which values what they do and resources their role, which in effect means there is an expectation that the manager supports and resources the placement; a main tenet of this thesis argument.

It appears that unwelcome issues such as personal relationships and drug and alcohol misuse arose in many student placements for various managers in this study. Such a finding may suggest that more than one consecutive "*disastrous*" placement will generate a definitive 'no' response to requests for student fieldwork placement provision. It is argued that it is these very students, who have unaddressed issues, who become the catalyst for manager unwillingness in the future, particularly if such issues are experienced too often or consecutively, which could likely lead to accumulated disenchantment with schools and their students. If such situations are

left to fester, the findings suggest this generates long term unwillingness towards provision, even if there is a change of manager in an agency, as such a story may likely get passed on and around the social service community. Management and staff were disappointed to find out such things in the course of the placement, but is it realistic for students to disclose such things? So where does such new information leave the manager? The findings suggest that there are various levels of less desirable characteristics ranging from those that are definitely 'no go', to those that can be managed if the staff are fore warned about such known student deficiencies that could make life difficult for those caring for and shepherding the student's learning.

However it would appear that students do need to take some responsibility for their own decision about readiness for placement and to be honest about their position if shortfalls in ability are going to impact upon their learning and other people's welfare. Fieldwork co-ordinators are not likely to know the students well enough to make judgements about which aspects of their behaviour may be revealed on placement.

Some managers felt visible issues should be addressed earlier in a student's programme of study, or alternatively students precluded from the course of study. It would seem that such issues discussed here do not arise until the student transited into the agency with these managers faced with addressing them, although reluctant to do so. It can be deduced that students with personal issues, unaddressed abuse history or emotionally unstable students possibly with mental health issues were of concern to managers, not only because of a potential risk to all, but as a source of worry for the manager about the unexpected. It appears that some managers were often torn between taking up the challenge of a student with identified social problems, who needed character moulding, or alternatively gate keeping them out of the agency, so they will not have to salvage any ensuing situation.

8.4 Managers “*stuck*” with unsuitable students

It is not surprising that previous unresolved or new difficulties with students do arise during placement, given the complex, unknown and diverse environments students are exposed to. Unsuitable students appeared to be those who arrived with personal problems and one manager said she felt “stuck” with them. Manager’s unwillingness was evident where the social problems were considered too great, such as those not able to learn, because of “*drugs, or alcohol issue [affecting] their inability to follow instructions*” which may make them cognitively and socially unavailable. However, this study did not highlight major alcohol or drug issues with students.

Although the supervision literature refers to mental illness as a difficulty on placement, (Jarman-Rohde, McFall, Kolar & Strom, 1997) not one manager specifically named this as a factor influencing their decision or experienced this as a problem, although as identified above, one said she “*would be watching out for psychological pressures and has had two with emotional states-affected by what is happening for clients*”. Managers may not have recognized or experienced a mentally unwell student or perhaps preferred to keep silent on this matter. Lager and Robbins (2004) identified challenges from students with serious psycho-social problems in schools of social work with unresolved issues such as “substance abuse, childhood victimization, mental illness and other personal difficulties” who, this writer said, could complete pre-requisites to practicum, but were likely to run into difficulties during practicum.

The importance of the need for students to be skilful, team members and self-aware and socially, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and culturally well rounded and “*whole enough*” to train as social workers appeared to be an expectation of an experienced manager.

“Placement can either be awesome or disastrous depending on those factors – their skill as a team player or their skill as a social worker. Several of [my]

staff has expressed concern about some people training to be social workers. My suspicion is if someone is not a team player or someone has not dealt with major issues, the placement is not going to be easy for them either. Social workers deal with the most vulnerable people in society for a start, being whole enough in self, to [be able to] separate client issues from personal issues.”

(Pākēha community house manager)

Students with unaddressed personal issues have left their mark. This quote and other findings suggest that it was common for agencies to experience people trying to heal themselves and this was demonstrated by their behaviour on placement. There appeared to be a level of behaviour that unexpectedly appeared as a nuisance and disruptive posing a challenge for managers or staff. A Māori woman manager of a social service in a large city articulated how she saw her role with such students:

“As a manager I need to know if the student is likely to cause disruption – I have to fix it up if it goes pear shaped....it’s my baby and staff will look to me to sort it out.”

(Māori community centre manager)

This quote of a metaphorical description indicates how a manager felt about practicum students who were less than professional, disruptive and time consuming and she felt the staff were looking to her to fix a situation she had instigated by accepting the responsibility of a student onto placement. Disruptive behaviour was seen as a management concern, whether or not she was supervisor of the student.

Furthermore a few managers believed that cultural or religious reasons were not sufficient reasons for students to be admitted into social work programmes or sufficient to sustain their commitment to social work. Distilled from experience of an unsuccessful placement a woman community centre manager identified a student

who had chosen social work for cultural and religious reasons to “*guide others*” in religious matters who unfortunately “*could not be left with anybody because preaching to clients was not compatible with social and community service work.*” This manager from a Christian agency believed students who stay confused about their roles could make unsuitable workers if social work was not their prime motivation. Such a situation may likely create supervisory issues and result in the limiting of client contact time for the student. The same manager felt she needed to be guided by her own intuition, perceptions and make her own judgements about student suitability, but she did like to check with staff to find support for her judgement of accepting, declining or managing a student’s behaviour such as this. She indicated that a student’s “*true character just popped out*” during placement with their sometimes showing behaviour that would not be tolerated. So no matter what amount of pre-placement work is undertaken to protect the stakeholders the nature of social work placement may still bring about new unwelcome disclosures.

Further, an increase in the numbers of students with problems parallels increased enrolment numbers (Koerin & Miller, 1995) both locally and internationally. This may mean systems overload and homeostasis needed. Or has the horse bolted? Koerin and Miller (1995) identify that students of social work should be accepted if they relate to social work values and ethics, have emotional and mental health fitness, and are able to respect personal and cultural differences. Some of these findings are similar to the results of a survey of university staff in Australia and New Zealand who most commonly identified learning difficulties, inability to conceptualize, poor communication and inter-personal skills, lack of awareness of personal behaviour and how it impacted on others and personal issues interfering with student learning (Hughes & Heycox, 1996). These results might have been connected to part of a wider study by Doel and Shardlow (1996) of nineteen schools of social work who showed the same results. However, this current study has identified specific personal issues with students that likely influence manager’s future decisions on placement provision. Agency managers have the authority to make decisions to ensure safety and reduce risks or to refuse or withdraw the hosting of the student.

These social and personal factors influencing manager's decisions could place a fruitless burden upon them and consequently may increase awareness of risk and heightened carefulness about future fieldwork decision making. Given that a few managers identified that serious student issues can arise during placement and these just appear, it seems logical that liaison emphasis is given to the early weeks of placement when problems surface and decisions need to be made. Therefore the placement co-ordination role as trouble shooter and mediator is an essential first respondent to prevent long term disenchantment and residual ill feelings through damaged social relations and unacceptable student behaviour in the social service or in community. As Gitterman (1996b) suggested, dysfunctional personal and environmental exchanges damage or oppress potential personal development as this vignette tells.

8.5 Vignette: How student difficulties can tell a tale

The vignette below is one illustration of how difficulties can tell a tale and it relates to my continuing effort to interpret a manager's perspective correctly as in Denzin's (2001) seventh moment of interpreting sufficiency of depth, detail and emotionality. In this study a community agency manager in a rurally located town experienced a series of unsuccessful student placements. She was not told about a student's previous failure of a placement; she lacked support and visits from the co-ordinator and was promised a research article which failed to materialize. Lack of an apology for what she considered "*a poor Diploma student*" after the damage was done resulted in unwillingness to cater for future students from any institution. She had experienced former students, who had not presented a professional attitude or suitable attire; who took unnecessary days off and lacked a work ethic. Another woman manager identified risks to others and potentially risk to their learning as stemming from social relationships:

"Risk of whānau [extended family] they bring with them. Families may be closely connected with gangs, for example the 'black power' and [students] can bring these in, such as [our working] in a 'mongrel mob'

neighbourhood...if supposed the student came from such a neighbourhood...”

(Pākēha community house manager)

Experience and local knowledge such as this, will likely generate worry for management, as it is unlikely that personal information such as a student’s gang connection would come via formal means of information exchange, nor is it likely to be shared by the student with the manager. This situation may be revealed once a workable relationship has been built up within the agency staff, but is this fair to agency staff? Fear or intimidation by gang associates could certainly interrupt student learning and leave residual feelings of resentment and perhaps hesitancy by managers about future placements about any such unwelcome intrusion. It could also raise the question about the nature of any agency social work with such groups, families and *whānau* (extended families) and its effect on such students themselves, where there could be expectations of privileges from the student’s associates, especially if the agency ran services such as food or clothing banks.

Students had brought personal issues to the agency, one requested food items from the food bank and had been given clothing, while another had used the agency address as a postal address for someone just out of jail, contributing to the manager’s distress and future unwillingness towards student placements. Furthermore, this manager had also experienced some students in the past wanting their assignments written for them, students paying someone to write essays, or borrowing other’s work to plagiarize, while another student was thought to have stolen intellectual property from the agency. The same manager who had had all these negative experiences had also previously cancelled a placement because two students failed to declare a romantic attachment to each other, which interrupted their learning and work in the agency. Further, this same manager said she was irritated by a less than professional student over poor relationships with supervisory staff in the agency with the same student giving unsafe advice to a young client. One student had written about the manager on the internet, causing:

“such upset that it affected my university exams” and “my whole life...it was the worst two years of my life...and I am still left with memories of tutors...I tried to address it...the student turned on me...had to get lawyer involved...it affected me and my family and the issue was never followed up for a long time afterwards...some tutors are useless as far as support goes, others are not”.

(Pākēha woman social service manager)

It appears that such an experience has not only caused irretrievable damage to the life of this manager and her willingness to provide for students on placement, it affected others in her family systems as well. Such experiences appear to have left lingering hurt and appear to have had a cumulative effect on her feelings towards students and schools of social work and their selection processes. This manager said she was working hard to regain lost status in the community, by choosing not to provide fieldwork placements.

It would appear from the findings that it was not until the student had started placement that unpleasant characteristics such as *“disruptiveness, inability to follow instructions, inability to get on with others and the use of ‘bad’ inappropriate language”* were discovered. Such students would be a detraction from the work of the agency.

Although these individual issues were remembered from the past, individually they possibly were not sufficiently serious to warrant closing down a placement, but it is evident they placed additional work on the manager as supervisor. The behaviour of a few students experienced by one manager had likely damaged future relationships with all schools of social work, their students and educators and possibly the profession. However, the process of termination of unsatisfactory students from a course of study was considered complicated, difficult and painful (Ryan, Habibis & Craft, 1997), On the other hand supervisors or managers may build up compassion

for a student over a period of time and wish to avoid being identified as the person that recommended 'failure' or alternatively asking for the student's removal from the agency, which may suggest to others or themselves, personal failure to manage the situation. Such a role might reflect on the good name of the agency, the manager and the staff, even when the student action is justified. The concept of circular causality from ecological systems theory is useful here to enhance understanding, as less than "quality students" may affect the supply of "quality placements" (Hay, et al., 2006) placements with resultant feelings subsequently leading managers to avoid repeating the same mistake. However, some students are unsuitable for the profession (Lamb, Cochran & Jackson, 1991), while gate keeping in social work education was problematic, unpleasant and a challenge (Tam, 2003).

This vignette could be related to system theory and the idea of thermostat where the system gets too hot to handle and the system becomes unbalanced. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that an accumulation of unsatisfactory placements consecutively with one agency might lead to unwillingness, but it is purported that such experiences must influence management de-motivation and subsequent decisions to avoid fieldwork placement provision. However, unsatisfactory student behaviour appears to generate uncertainty, vigilance and caution with future student receptivity. Such experiences appear to develop negative feelings about a manager's personal abilities to manage and unwelcome feelings towards student provision and schools of social work, therefore there was wariness, carefulness and in this particular case, entropy. However, later feedback on this chapter to the researcher from this participant indicated "*this must have been before I got a good one*" [meaning her current student] which means that her willingness to provide placements did not entropy after all!

8.6 Management difficulties with unethical students

Responses to a question about reasons why they would not take students on placement included ethical concerns about students and professional suitability. The scope of social work ethics is broad and found in table 4.1 of the IFSW document

under themes of respect, responsibility and ethical behaviour (Bowles, Collingridge, Curry & Valentine, 2006). The findings suggest that these managers, situated in provincial locations, had strong personal and professional values; hence there was a wish to recruit students with similar values and ethical behaviour, which does not mean that other managers do not. As social work is a values based profession, it is not surprising that various managers named ethical considerations as important to them, given their anxiousness to preserve the agency's good name. Behaviour such as cheating, dishonesty; racial intolerance or unprofessional behaviour appeared to be placement concerns.

The study findings suggest that the keeping of confidentiality and compatibility with the agency values and philosophical system were valued by the managers in this study. The ability to work with different people and do the morally right thing in any given situation was seen as a desirable attribute in a student.

The data interpretation suggests that the keeping of confidentiality was a significant ethical issue to these managers. Some managers indicated an acute awareness that in smaller towns or cities more damaging potential risks were likely to surface than in larger population areas, such as student breaches of confidentiality or students becoming "*the loose cannon*", probably meaning the inappropriate sharing of client information. Half the managers in this study said they required the student to sign their agency Declaration of (client) Confidentiality form, agreement or contract either before the student started or on the first day. One agency utilized volunteer forms, "*which include a confidentiality statement as they are working with whānau*". The amount of documentation required varied between managers. One required a "*Declaration of Confidentiality plus Declaration of Criminal Convictions and Police Vetting forms and emergency contact sheet*" as necessary initial documentation. One manager believed hazards presented themselves to the agency situated in a small semi-rural location because the risk of client recognition by the student was higher.

Further, an *Iwi* social service manager described how “*their workers gathered extensive and inherent knowledge about a student’s family or another family that may bring discomfort to staff in sharing it with the student,*” so this had to be managed. Breaches of confidentiality may affect client willingness to trust the service, as well as impact on social service market share and may endanger further government contracts with government funders for service provision. The finding relates to Walker’s (1996) warning that there is a danger of a student being judgemental about agency clients, as agency clients might be related to staff or colleagues. Likewise this could raise a conflict of interest if a student had a pre-existing relationship with a client.

However, it would seem that people with personal problems may prefer to go to strangers for assistance and perhaps travel to other nearby towns or cities, where the risk of family members or cultural connections hearing about personal issues is perceived as less likely. One *pākēha* manager recognized that some Māori appeared to be more comfortable talking to non-Māori about pressing social issues, as she believed relationship connections could be more distant where there were independent relationships. A community centre manager described how “*people self-refer. Clients come here including Māori, because of confidentiality [concerns]*”, that is, that their issues will not be talked about outside the service to others or the collective that know them. Another non-Māori manager indicated that ninety per cent of their client base was Māori but she believed they came to the agency because “*confidentiality is offered because they don’t want to be talked about in a hui* (meeting), which suggests people seek out privacy around their personal problems. Also a Māori male manager commented on confidentiality as an issue with some Māori organizations, possibly because of the often strong familial bonds in local communities where concerns may at times be shared with the *whānau* (extended family) group out of concern to share the load, raising concerns for some Māori, as sharing more widely may cause them to feel *whakama* (shame). He said therefore the nature of an agency may influence client’s choice of a *pākēha* (non- Māori) agency over an agency working from a Māori *whakapapa* (philosophy). The idea that such issues were being shared with a wider group within or outside of social services is a matter for further research in this context.

It would appear that half of these managers needed to be reassured by the school of social work that the student was honest, trustworthy, and ethical and would not bring discredit to the agency, a factor which may also impact on work allocation for the student or affect manager's response to the research question. Some of these findings are related to a study of social workers in managed care situations, which established that the three most common ethical issues were "(a) conflict of interest, (b) confidentiality, (c) informed consent..." (Lager & Robbins, 2004, p.6). However informed consent was not identified as an ethical issue of concern in this study. Further, Koerin and Miller (1995) were of the view that if students behaved in ways inconsistent with professional values, they should be excluded from the programme in order to reduce harm to the profession (and clients!).

These manager participants were identifying perhaps a lower level of problems than the ethical violations, illegal activities and substance abuse problems, to what Jarman-Rohde, et.al. (1997) found as reason why master of social work students had been terminated from a programme. Despite difficulties with students, the literature identifies that small numbers of students fail the practicum (Staniforth & Fouche, 2006) which may suggest a good deal of student learning and maturation occurs during practicum.

Conversely evidence based internship literature identified that students whose behaviour was unprofessional or unethical, or both, will be linked to unfavourable assessments, while those with interpersonal difficulties will hinder their social work practice decisions (Tomlinson & Corcoran, 2008). These writers also indicated that this is a time when students should have time off from the programme although it could be a challenge to persuade a student to do this. These findings are not inconsistent with a study on non-conformity to social work values and inconsistent personal values by students, which included disrespect for diversity, students with emotional and mental troubles and lack of commitment to the social work role of helping (Ryan, et al., 1997). Again mental health troubles were not identified as such by the participants in this current study. On the other hand, Barter (2003) suggests that legal accountability belongs to the schools for the placement of risky or

vulnerable students in unsuitable placements. It is suggested that schools sending students out without the necessary supports for the student, the client or the placement staff, they are posing a risk for which the school is responsible. Such a situation has implications for fieldwork placement policies. There are human rights considerations with any course of action requiring evidence and perhaps legal advice. This responsibility and accountability may be even more so for international placements. Checking on the behaviour of students early on in the placement could explain why Briggs and Cooper (2000) identified the need for fieldwork coordinators to act as student ethics counsellors, given that some managers fear receiving a student with character weaknesses that may be detrimental to the agency, clients and other stakeholders.

8.7 Managers and supervisors in a gate keeping role

As these understandings and interpretations unfold it appears that the student residual feelings factor has a strong future influence on manager's decision making towards fieldwork placement. Various managers in this study knew what qualities and values they desired in a student and for some, students they did not want to deal with. If students are not an "organizational level of fit" (Gitterman, 1996b) or do not achieve "an optimum match" (Coll & Eames, 2000 p. 10) either academically or personally, then it is up to the school to either withdraw them from the placement paper or transfer the credits they have earned to another programme (Tomlinson & Corcoran, 2008), although this may be a difficult task. For such students to avoid unfavourable placement reports, these writers thought the students should seek additional assistance. However, they may not do so and attribute their situation to the agency context. Egan & Hicks (2013) suggest that gatekeeping and screening should occur throughout each course and through student self-assessment and not be left to field education to carry the responsibility. While Elpers and Fitzgerald (2012) in Egan & Hicks (2013) rightly suggest that placement readiness should be based on academic, professional and personal indicators during coursework and early involvement with students, so problems may be addressed.

The social work literature on student suitability for social work highlights concerns about a mechanism for gate keeping for the profession. Social work programmes in *Aotearoa* New Zealand would endeavour to ensure suitable students come into the programmes, by such methods as reviewing of “previous grades, face to face interviews, police checks, essays, personal statements, references, employment records, voluntary work experience, literacy tests and health questionnaires” (Staniforth & Fouche, 2006, p. 13). A poor academic record was the most common method of gate keeping candidates out of Bachelor of Social Work programmes (Ryan, et al., 1997). Substance abuse issues; mental health issues and non-disclosure of information were identified in the literature as some of the central issues considered for the screening of students (Drake & Stokes, 2004). Further, the findings are not too dissimilar to Koerin and Miller’s (1995) study into eighty one students on Master’s Social Work programmes which found that field performance, mental health and/or substance abuse problems, ethical violations, illegal activities and classroom behaviour, in that order, were reasons for termination of students from the programmes. Although the findings in this study suggest that mental health issues or knowledge of classroom behaviour were not identifying factors contributing to unwillingness by the non-statutory managers in this study. However, student transgressions, risks, costs and losses are likely associated with risk adverse management and strategies to minimize loss, along with the residual effect on future placements.

8.8 Risk averse management and strategies to minimize loss

Calculations on the probability of risk, cost or losses to service delivery were part of these managers’ rational decision making when asked the question about risks that students might bring to their agency. Risk can be about prediction and it is about categories of people (Webb, 2006), so these may influence manager’s responses to the placement question. In writing about risk assessment and management Kemshall (1997) identified two categories of risk. That is those people who pose a risk to others and the risks to which people are exposed. Risk assessment in social work and other sectors is about identification of the nature of the risk, the behaviour or event of

concern, calculation about its probability, the conditions, situations or circumstances in which it might occur and the impact and consequences of such risk.

The findings suggest that fieldwork placement students as a category have to be assessed for individual risk and the likelihood of harm to clients, staff and the organizational stakeholders. Base information supplied to the agency by placement co-ordinators at the outset assists with the assessment of risk, but as Tomlinson and Corcoran (2008) warn, insufficient knowledge base about a student could lead to serious problems in decision making about placement. One manager did not want a student who was a “*surprise package*” to them or their staff. A pākēha manager named risks that students might bring to his foster care agency as those which might come with 24 hour care of children, as being a student’s “*personal injury/death*.” While other risks to the agency were given as “*undisclosed health issues; undisclosed child abuse issues; low levels of tolerance of children.*” Any work with vulnerable children suggests that student selection would need to be calculated carefully and there would be no risk taking in a high risk area of social work which is likely to involve working with volatile parents. This type of work may be more suited to a mature student who has had parenting and conflict resolution experience. Student inexperience and low level of tolerance of children was seen as a ‘nuisance’ factor and a lesser level of concern, although in saying that:

“The risk is small if there is clarity around placement parameters and either party can opt out if student is unsuitable. The placement is not to punish anyone and while the rigour needs to be applied at referral, there needs to be a release mechanism for both parties should it clearly not be a match.”

(Pākēha social service manager)

This quote suggests that there can be mismatched placements and if this occurs the extraction mechanism or education policy should not be painful or drawn out for any party, and it re-enforces the earlier findings about the importance of robust matching

and selection processes prior to commencement of placement. Implied from the findings such risk factors might resonate for managers who have strong memories of previous experiences of other risky situations, similar to the current request which possibly influenced how 'risk averse' they had become. As one Māori woman community centre manager said about recent memories of brash, unresponsive or unethical students:

“The risk is that students may be overconfident or a ‘loose cannon’ or they take too much time to assimilate into our [agency] culture or they may say yes [to a client] too willingly and not the way we would want it done. Risk too is that they may overstep ethical boundaries.”

(Māori community centre manager)

Overconfident students were identified as energy consuming because of what appeared to be anxiety about what a student may do or say through over exuberance, or their committing the agency to something they could not deliver. Under confident students or those lacking in self-esteem appeared in turn to lead to the questioning of the student's coping skills, thereby placing the agency in the position of finding appropriate work to match their abilities. Under confident students were recognized as being too shy and uncomfortable in placement *“not knowing where they fit in the plan, jeopardizing how they see placement and what it should be.”*

Although it is recognized that the student could and would make errors, the more worrying was the *“student who made wrong ethical or clinical decisions which could potentially put someone at risk”* of harm. Therefore managers were keen to be fully informed beforehand about the nature of the student risks and benefits they were taking on, which would give them the opportunity to consider strategies to overcome and plan for avoidance of identified potential risk during the placement.

Half these managers were or had been student social work supervisors who had developed strategies to manage and reduce risk if and when these arose during provision, even if they did not supervise the student. These managers also appear to have learnt from mistakes of past decisions as well as from the development of retention processes for student placement. Whether risks are identified early on in the placement or not, participants appeared to be concerned to avoid a negative outcome and avoid students who attracted complaints or risk to themselves or the agency staff. When it was discovered they had committed to 'risky' students they took steps to protect the agency, reduce risk and minimize loss. Various strategies included asking students to sign a commitment towards confidentiality about client matters; ensuring students received close supervision along with the early identification and addressing of personal and professional issues of concern. Furthermore, strategies did involve sharing confidential information about the student with supervisors and appropriate staff to enhance internal relationships and to reduce risk. Tactics included the avoidance of a student being allocated to volatile or high risk clients, ensuring they were well looked after by the school and staff and the student followed agency policies and procedures.

Kemshall (1997) identified that the desired outcome of risk management is the reduction or avoidance of risk to others while another feature of reducing risk as placing limitations on the rights of those who pose risks in the interest of protecting others. A warning is issued about the chance of a 'ecological fallacy' (Kemshall, 1997, p.127) about the chance of a mistaken belief whereby the use of knowledge about past behaviours relating to a particular group (such as students) or type of behaviour, where averse events can be seen retrospectively, as being relatively low or limited, (with the exception of prediction of child abuse and paedophilia) and possibly unfounded.

It must be agreed with Kemshall (1997) that risk assessment is now a central feature of social care, social work and probation, so too it must be part of student selection process for fieldwork placement opportunities. This writer concludes that client work is about seeing previous offending as the best predictor of future offending,

“combined with detailed professional knowledge of individuals and their circumstances” (Kemshall, 1997, p. 128). Arguably this quote from Kemshall could be applied to manager’s decision making about fieldwork placement because it is applicable to these findings about obtaining detailed knowledge about a potential placement student, to aid management focus on risk reduction and reduction of agency vulnerability.

It appears that most managers had become risk averse and cautious about risk to their service and its good name, as a result of past experiences with difficult students. Decision making in risk situations are complex because they involve “balancing different personal, professional and organizational values, as well as possible biases and prejudices” (Hughes & Wearing, 2007, p.98). In a market economy risk management is seen as an acceptable part of social service management, which includes good student management, communication, organization, safety, and student supervision. If social systems are to function effectively there has to be a relative balance between resources, opportunities and demands within and between systems, but negative outcomes can arise if risk is present (Miley, et al., 2007).

Secondly, no matter how tight the student information supply is, managers and their agencies appear to be vulnerable to losses associated with student provision. This likely includes loss to the efficient operation of the agency such as loss of both managers and their staff time and energy, which would appear to have a downstream effect on people and services. Further the student as an inexperienced worker or short on social work education, perhaps combined with unaddressed issues or the ‘wild card’ in the team was seen as bringing considerable losses to the work of the agency as time consuming units. Time consuming students straining placement sustainability appeared to be those lacking in commitment, motivation, ability, ethical behaviour or initiative. Such a lack could result in a student’s partial engagement in the work of the agency; contribute to their inability to learn and perhaps their wish to generate time consumption on assignments. This factor may cause managers to be resentful about the unnecessary loss of staff time on a student’s own individual independent tasks.

As Gleitman, Fridlung and Reisberg (2000) suggest, choices made will aim to keep losses to a minimum. Managers may choose to take a risk again with the aim to minimize the loss the next time, or will avoid taking the gamble altogether. Alternatively, placement provision may entirely depend on the situational context of the organisation or positive student information at the time of the request or pre-determined rejection. Writing in the social work literature suggests that people will do whatever is in their own self-interest and seek what they value and desire and what will be of benefit to them, as well as avoid the loss of what they value or desire (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2008). The findings appear to indicate that these participants' perceptions of risk and loss have potential to disrupt organizational life and contribute towards unwillingness to provide for student placements. As this interpretation presupposes, these managers were aware of the four typical areas of risk management: "risk identification, risk analysis, risk reducing measures and risk monitoring (Webb, 2006, p. 72). To avoid such risk, and to avoid cost and loss, the safest thing for managers to say, is 'no' to provision, as there is no penalty, punishment or negative consequence as a result of this decision.

New understandings suggest that some found placement decisions complex and challenging as they weighed up their role, resource availability, competition, staff interest, needs, capacity and capability as well as cultural, organizational and relational factors when faced with the question of provision. During the process of thinking, reasoning and decision making around the placement question some managers did not find it a straight forward process. These findings suggest the placement requests for some, posed a dilemma between taking a risk and hoping for a benefit or finding a problem student. Dilemmas appeared to be about head verses heart; generosity verses reality and workload verse professional responsibility to resource dependant schools of social work. Tensions between feelings of professional responsibility toward making a contribution to a student's learning and the work of the agency was also said to create a dilemma (Maidment, 2001). As identified in this chapter one manager's past experiences with a succession of unsatisfactory students led to a resolve never to host another student from any tertiary educational institution. Fleeting feelings about not being loyal to the advancement of the profession or supporting the needs of the school of social work at

that particular point in time may have accompany the decision, but is likely to be quickly rationalized away.

8.9 Significance of the findings

The findings increase understanding at how managers arrived at their need to be cautiousness about the calibre of students offered for placement and why they wished to avoid students who created workplace anxiety, disruption, worry or substandard additional work which may result in unrewarding encounters or embarrassment. As examined in chapter seven, new understandings suggest that the majority of managers interviewed ‘would if they could’ make provision for ‘quality’ student placements but the response was tempered with caution.

These managers were wary about accepting students well below average ability or unable to cope emotionally. It would appear from these findings that students with unaddressed social histories such as child abuse, pressing personal relationship issues; those with drug or alcohol addictions; over or under confident students, violence convictions and un-motivated or unethical students signalled caution to some of these managers. An accumulation of unsatisfactory students or experiences with less than ethical students may likely engender unwillingness responses influencing managers when questioned about opening the agency door for fieldwork placement provision. Unsuitable students for placement would likely means they too are inappropriate for the profession and are likely to diminish social work standing in the wider community. However it is significant that most managers in this study were committed to placement availability, many for cultural reasons, regardless of their situation or past student experiences. Managers were generally alert to signals as to whether the placement was going well, or not, with the help of other staff and supervisors. Various provincially based non-statutory managers felt disappointed if unpleasant characteristics or problems “*popped out*” after the student commenced placement leaving them faced with having to make the best of a situation they had not envisaged. Through trial and error these managers appear to have developed problem solving risk averse strategies involving staff. These strategies were aimed at

early identification and intervention along with tight supervision to counter risks until fieldwork placement completion. Behaviour indicators that students emitted were clues gained from staff as to progress, achievement, and success: conduct which ultimately coloured forthcoming decision making about future hosting. Past fieldwork placement processes impacted on these experienced manager's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, thinking, knowledge, feelings and attitudes towards student placement, feelings built up over time in their role and experienced during the research period.

Many of these managers wished to avoid months of disappointment, regrets, resentment, ambiguities and student mismatches, which the study suggests may have occurred in the past. It would appear that there was a wish to avoid having to admit a mistake or to justify an unpopular decision to disillusioned staff about student provision. These findings suggest that feelings associated with student dissatisfaction would likely impact upon the good name of the educational institution and possibly damage relationships with the educational provider. It may take some years for the agency 'to bounce back' to provision if previous experience of exposure to a particular student or school of social work generated negativity or perceived risks. . However if unwillingness, unavailability, incapacity or lack of capability is a rising and re-occurring factor influencing the provision of fieldwork along with the lack of qualified or registered social workers or Indigenous mentors in agencies, then the struggle with fieldwork placement sufficiency is likely to continue. Managers did at times "*say no, without feeling bad about it*" because of other priorities.

From a constructivist- interpretative approach and related to this examination of factors influencing placement decision making and the manager's role and views on fieldwork placement, is the subsidiary question on the influences of fieldwork relationships, inter-organizational partnerships and mutual benefits in an open system of interaction and interdependence. In the following chapter interpretations unfold under the headings of personal relationships and manager's role modelling, views on inter-organizational partnerships and the mutual benefits would between education and social services.

CHAPTER NINE

FIELDWORK RELATIONSHIPS, PARTNERSHIP AND MUTUAL BENEFITS

“The relationship with the school is important and their knowing our needs well.”

(Interviewee: Community house manager)

9.1 Introduction

The stem question answered in this study provided an explanation and understanding of organizational, informational, cultural and student factors that influenced non-statutory social service managers' views on willingness or unwillingness towards opening the agency door to fieldwork placement provision. This thesis argues that non-statutory social service agency managers are essential to the provision of fieldwork placement for students of social work and social work education.

This chapter now addresses the subsidiary question asked of managers as to how fieldwork placement arrangements could enhance and mutually benefit exchanges between schools of social work and agencies involved in provision. The objective was to describe and understand how existing fieldwork relationships or connections could be developed, maintained, strengthened or transformed. It would be relatively easy to argue that relationships are at the heart of all human interaction, but these eso and meso level findings focus on a particular type of inter-organizational relationship linked to manager's experience of the traditional fieldwork placement model and findings in chapter ten.

This chapter considers the findings on how personal relationships and role modelling could be of assistance with developments and how managers in this study thought inter-organizational partnerships and mutual benefits could be improved in this context. As with the findings in other chapters these were arrived at through

inductive reasoning to arrive at tentatively held interpretations from data at a particular place and time. Social constructivist ideas on how managers build relationships with other major players in fieldwork along with perceptions of partnership as influenced by cultural beliefs and the interpretation of the subsidiary question, informed the construction of this chapter. Interpretive research is about the messages in the text and data, where the manager's descriptions revolve over into hermeneutic interpretation where things may not be what they appear to be.

Understandings gained from managers of the value of inter-organizational partnerships and the mutual benefits sought between organizations within the eso and meso systems between major players in this study are examined in this chapter. The idea of open or closed agency systems within the eco-systems framework of systems and ecological theory (Gitterman & Germain, 1976; Pincus & Minahan, 1973; Siporin, 1975) was considered helpful towards increased understanding, because of its explanation towards how inter-organizational relationships are created and may change over time (Shardlow & Doel, 2002) and influenced by changes in systems.

Ecological concepts adapted from Germain and Gitterman's (1996) life model, such as transactions, person-environment fit, stress and coping, human relatedness, power and vulnerability, human habitat or environment, and life course can be deductively applied to relationships within the traditional fieldwork placement model, concepts useful for developing understanding and the application of some Indigenous concepts. Systems theories offer useful ideas about how energy can flow across educational and cultural systems into other systems, effecting patterns in inter-personal relationships and inter-organizational systems and boundaries. But ecosystems theory can also be restrictive because it is confined to geographical environments and excludes the essential spiritual dimension which for Māori (and others) the gods, cosmos and the whole solar system are part of the essence of who they are.

Furthermore, workable personal (eso) relationships and inter-organizational (meso) partnerships are indispensable to fieldwork placement provision if any fieldwork placement model is to work well. The importance of relationships between various parties has been emphasized (Ellis, 1998; Hay, O'Donoghue & Blagdon, 2006; Maidment, 2000 and others) due to placement shortage and quality, but management or employer involvement appears to be limited in the fieldwork placement literature.

Investments in relationships that lead to partnership have been a subject of the fieldwork literature for decades, but this study is about a particular type of relationship in a particular traditional context that one could argue is problematic. It is not surprising that Bogo and Globerman (1999), possibly the most prolific writers on fieldwork practicum, identified inter-personal relationships, commitment to education and collaborative reciprocal activities as important factors in inter-organizational activities. Collaboration and partnership are closely related concepts: “partnership is a state of relationship; collaboration is the active process, that is, of partnership in action” (Weinstein, Whittington & Leiba, 2003, p.31), hence the reason for the subsidiary question in this study. In 1992, Bogo and Power pleaded for universities to re-organize social work education based on voluntary collaborative partnerships. Without the development of new partnerships in collaboration with agency managers, training opportunities would erode; poorly trained students would increase and the profession would be marginalized (Jarman-Rohde, et al., (1997). A year earlier Doel and Shardlow (1996a) had challenged universities to work in collaboration with the practice community, because of the shortage of ‘good quality’ placements in the western world.

9.2 Personal relationships and role modelling

The Treaty of Waitangi principles are seen as a constructed behavioural guide and one of the organizing constructs for relationships, analysis and methodology for this research and as professional edicts. The Treaty of Waitangi key principles of partnership, participation and protection also provided understanding as to how to keep pivotal people in fieldwork placement in the communication loop. Without the

Treaty of Waitangi, the foundation stones of human rights, social justice, and empowerment, along with anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice, relationships will not succeed (O'Donoghue, 2003). Further, students on placement are charged with adhering to the Treaty of Waitangi principles that enhance relationships which are about the *mana* (prestige, spirit) and these are not to be compacted or lessened," but "preserved in partnership at the natural, spiritual and human levels" (Ruwhiu, 2001, p.60) and these are expected by stakeholders to be reflected in fieldwork placement actions.

The majority of managers appeared to favour sustainable and tangible year round contact with social work education yielding a greater amount of contact. Only two managers stated that their relationship with the school was strong. One manager considered the relationship was just "*alright even though there was not a huge amount of contact,*" as the relationship was dependent upon "*what they knew about each other.*"

A Māori woman manager of social work in an *iwi* (tribal) agency thought "*we need to show our support for each other's needs.*" She felt that such interpersonal relationships must start with acknowledging "*that everybody is well*". Another manager suggested that "*caring for each other*" is of utmost importance and this required understanding of each other's situation. There was a need expressed for willingness to learn from each other in a mutually conducive setting:

"We get panui (notices) coming in – schools need to understand we can't always come to meetings – we have few staff numbers here. Perhaps [the school] could have a Wananga (University) at a marae."

(Māori Iwi social service manager)

This quote suggests that invitations from the school of social work cannot be always accepted but meetings or learning conducted on the *marae* (meeting house) with cultural exchanges may be more reciprocal, convenient and comfortable for Māori. Such an underlying message may mean that the venue for such meetings needed to be considered by social work educators.

Māori managers in particular, but not exclusively, were asking for more effective face-to-face communication and extended co-ordination of relationship building to support goodwill and to contribute to a mutually successful placement system. As a Māori woman manager said: *“the strong relationship role modelling starts in education, but we have to show support all the way through.”* It appears that inter-organizational relationships seem to be waiting for further nurture and as the introductory quote illustrates *“the relationship with the school is important and their knowing our needs well”* was considered valuable.

“Managers have to decide which school to give priority to. Earlier contact prior to placement gives us a chance to decide [and] organise projects and longer lead in time to plan and think about projects for extra people. Setting up takes time – better outcome – makes assessment of student easier. We have three students at the moment, usually have two. It has not been working. Set up way to meet both of our needs.”

(Māori community house manager)

An increase in mutual understanding of each others' needs would appear to bring mutual benefits. On the other hand, disharmony or entropy can result if a recommendation from a manager/supervisor in relation to their assessment of the student is disregarded or unheeded. A pākēha woman manager associated with the vignette in chapter eight, remembered a recent experience of providing a place for a male student who was suspected of being a perpetrator of violence and sympathetic to local gang culture of violence. She was disappointed that the school had not

questioned the student's progression into a further year of the diploma study programme despite her recommendation of placement failure. This likely contributed to the entropy of the relationship with the school of social work. The relational glue of communication that endeavours to bring divergent organizations together, may seductively contribute to relationship breakdown at both personal and inter-agency partnership level.

9.3 Fieldwork placement and inter-organizational partnerships

A Māori woman manager of social work in an *Iwi* social service expressed disappointment in paper based models of partnership declarations, preferring face-to-face communication about fieldwork placements, as she said:

“It is not a partnership – looks good on paper – this [interview] is the way it was meant to be, kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) that is korereo (talk) - that is appropriate.”

(Māori Iwi social service manager)

This quote suggests that the partnership with the local education provider was not seen as a true partnership, perhaps because of lack of action and relationship building and she preferred verbal face-to-face communication over written documents espousing it. As Ruwhiu (2001) suggests, partnering behaviour where people share time and knowledge and are of service to others, should be a feature of fieldwork. Another Māori manager felt strongly that the notion of partnership in fieldwork placements was “*misunderstood and ignored*” in her role on a community advisory committee to her local social work programme. As “*advice was sought from the committee but then we were told an alternative way had been chosen*” which suggests that although cultural or other knowledge was shared with academia it was disregarded or at least its rejection appears to have left a message of under-valuation of what she considered was supposed to be community consultation. It may be that

educational institutions are constrained by curriculum approval processes and departure from these can be difficult to action.

Just as there were expectations of a greater partnership a Māori manager and chief sought inter-organizational partnership not in information sharing or money, but in service exchanges. He said he had certain expectations of schools of social work to exchange goods or services for the service his agency provided in training the student and he provided examples of working relationships with two different tertiary providers. In one instance he said the agency ran a *waka ama* (outrigger canoe) programme (which includes understanding of the tides and cosmos) for a *wananga* (university), using educational resources, people and equipment. In another instance another educational provider delivered sex education to clients of their social service programme. Other inter-organizational negotiated reciprocity included two staff receiving clinical supervision from school staff; abuse prevention training for agency staff; staff enrolled in a Certificate training one day a week and one staff member attending an eight day training programme in clinical supervision. He said that the Polytechnic had offered a counselling programme training opportunity but this was declined as they did not offer a counselling service. *“If an institution is offering training courses then I would negotiate a no fees or partial fees agreement”* he said as an exchange for student placement provision. This negotiated exchange appears to be an example of self-determination and exchange of practical benefits for the agency and its staff. He appears to have overcome the complexity of relationships between his organization and the educational provider. These are usually difficult and interlaced with conflicts (Lindsay, 1996).

Although this finding is limited, it demonstrates the depth of the partnership with two educational institutions, and this manager’s ability to negotiate and generate a response in a reciprocal relationship with education providers, with the result that individual staff and social service clients benefited from the negotiated arrangement. It is acknowledged that there would be a downside of such ‘contra deals’ such as the likelihood of financial auditors having difficulty accepting these as less visible economic transactions. Recognition of mutual needs was an overriding element to

these findings, with the majority of these managers expressing interest in inter-organizational partnership with the schools of social work. Inter-organizational relationships and partnerships appear to be experienced through the medium of seasonal student placement processes, which in itself restricts communications to a defined period of contact.

A harmonizing contribution to inter-organizational relationships and partnership fit in with the cultural norm of reciprocity, obligation or gift exchange aligned to Indigenous views on hosting people. Fieldwork placement from a Māori cultural perspective will always include reciprocity because it is considered important in Māori life (Ruwhiu, 2001) because favours given are to be repaid in the future with *utu* (in this context, repayment) applying both to social relationships and relationships with the gods (Ruwhiu, 2001). Social or educational policy based on the idea of reciprocity would ask what reciprocal offers could be made in fair exchange for student placement, as student contribution does not seem to be sufficient on its own. Furthermore, this strong relationship idea goes beyond the liaison and communication function to facilitate education linkages with agencies (Doel & Shardlow, 1996).

It could be argued that building relationships and partnerships is ongoing and probably impossible to achieve in such changing times, given the time it takes, particularly if face-to-face communication is preferred by Māori managers. Ishisaka, Farwell, Sohng and Uehara (2004) stated that effective, lasting partnerships were too infrequently realized or sought by universities to improve their traditional ways of relating to their communities. These writers suggested that collaboration with common concerns and addressing social ills, differences and mistrust will dissipate and positions of privilege, knowledge and skills will be moved away from paternalism. As Ishisaka, et al., (2004) identified collaboration and partnership greatly improved people's lives and it seems logical that they can move institutions such as a university, polytechnic or Wananga to a larger sense of purpose. These actions may promote greater connections to assist the opening of the agency door

towards student placement provision and it is not suggested that strong partnerships are not already sought, but rather an on-going task in rapidly changing times.

However, when inter-organizational or inter-personal exchanges are unhelpful the result is likely to be dysfunction which frustrates both the environment and the person (O'Donoghue & Maidment, 2005) and likely lead to an imbalance in the exchange system. Organizations will work together if there is a mutual gain, a common purpose with the outcome more important than the process (Martin in Aldgate, Healy & Malcolm, 2007). This suggestion may be flawed because it excludes the important cultural process of relationship building and maintenance and this idea comes from organizational economics, also named "reciprocal interdependence" (Robbins & Barnwell, 1998, p.745) where groups exchange inputs and outputs and likely excludes the wider community.

However, Lather (1991) had earlier identified this exchange as an invaluable component of fieldwork, which appears to be practical, but it also seems imbalanced. Further, Cialdini (1985) spells a word of caution about the reciprocation rule as it could lead to unequal exchanges with people feeling uncomfortable, wanting to repay the debt, with the person owing the debt of gratitude subsequently agreeing to a larger favour than the initial giver contributed. This is possibly the situation fieldwork educators are in because they may be calling for a larger favour from an agency than may be possible for them to repay. On the other hand, withdrawal from the fieldwork placement system, or system entropy could be the result of unrewarding interaction, or a possible explanation for placements scarcity and manager's unwillingness towards placement provision.

9.4 Mutual benefits sought between education and social services

Despite various expectations of non-statutory social service managers already examined in a choppy sea of complex relationships and partnerships, most managers

in this study focused on their wish to contribute to schools of social work education, expecting it to be a reciprocal two-way process.

Firstly, it was significant that it was considered important that the “*staff of schools of social work do not get out of date*” nor remain distant from the reality of social work and the difficulties faced, an activity not confined to the placement visits.

“Once a term institution should hold discussion on what clients are experiencing. Staff needed to be familiar with what is going on for example damaging influences, such as rap [music] and computers on youth; [our] staff need to keep in touch. Research is an area to be looked at. What is it saying? For example, information on young people, our major concerns is teenagers.”

(Pākēha social service manager)

This manager was interested in advancing learning opportunities for social service staff provided by social work educators. The provision of the chance to discuss social issues they are experiencing in an educational setting and the gathering of new knowledge through these discussions to assist their work was expressed as a need. By way of reciprocity, it seems feasible that educators would become more familiar with not only the work of the agency but also the gain of up-to-date information on social trends and issues of concern from those at the coal-face. The agency was seen to benefit from a different type of knowledge base gained from university staff whilst staff members from social work education contributed to organizational governance and at social service staff meetings. Such discussions could also be held in the context of community advisory group meetings hosted by the tertiary education on a regular basis. Likewise, two managers suggested that to improve linkages educators could learn about agency work through offering their services to governance committees or at staff meetings.

Linked to this finding it was suggested schools “*share research material which may benefit agency work*” as a way of them gaining help with new emerging social problems they grappled with in the field. The schools of social work education were seen as having access to up to date information and resources which smaller social services did not have the same access to. These managers seemed acutely aware that they needed access to new knowledge that educational institutions possessed. One manager mentioned a wish to access a university library without having to enrol in a programme, which suggests there was a thirst for up-to-date research material.

Secondly there was a need for the student to arrive knowledgeable about the work of the agency, although this might not always be possible because of the student’s location, lack of internet access or last minute placement. On the other hand, it is perceived that students could be the conduits for sharing their learning, possibly in a more formal way, whilst on placement, conceivably by presenting up to date research to staff, prepared as part of their study prior to placement.

Thirdly, it was suggested by various managers that schools make a commitment to monthly visits to the agency during placement, which “*include meeting with managers*” if they are not supervisors. A few managers identified that it was difficult to contact staff by telephone; but appreciated co-ordinators who checked in with them because such contact enhanced their motivation, responsibility and accountability for the student and “*the focus of a visit is as much about supporting our organization,*” as the student. Such social action is likely to reduce social distance. But despite such expectations about communications, it was identified that such visiting was “*rare*” although regular monthly visits were expected. Some managers valued and welcomed the effort school staff made by visiting them or by *regular* phone calls, whether or not they were the supervisors because it provided the opportunity to raise concerns brought to their attention. This finding appears to be similar to what Fernandez (2003) found, in that the type and amount of support varied according to the problem and that students and field teachers/supervisor also expected more input for themselves at the initial stages of planning placement and recognition for their contribution in the education of future social workers.

Fourthly, a few managers felt they or their staff should be invited to contribute to the curriculum delivery through a guest speaker invitation as they wished to share knowledge and practical application about social issues with students. Others wished to teach about the non-government sector, their local community work, introduce their field of practice to students and to encourage student placement preferences.

Fifthly, there was an edict to “*keep paperwork for placement supervisor to a minimum*”, presumably to avoid time encroachment on the prime work of the agency with its client base and the individual workload of the student supervisor or educator. Further, to enhance mutuality and reciprocity signs of appreciation were seen as “*expression of gratitude to agencies e.g. morning tea, certificate of appreciation and this becomes a networking opportunity for agency supervisors.*” It was expressed that it was “*nice to get some recognition,*” which appears to suggest a need for relationship building with and between non-government organizations by social work education. Although it is recognized that provincially situated agencies may not be able to travel to such events. The findings do suggest that schools of social work education are being looked to for leadership and as networking conduits in these provincial locations, perhaps to reduce a sense of isolation and geographical distance from tertiary institutions, such as universities.

For Māori managers such an expectation of inter-organizational and inter-personal relationship building or connectedness is known as *whanaungatanga* (relationships), the respect for identity and language, individual and group well-being and cohesion (Walsh-Tapiata, 2008). For partnerships to be mutually benefiting, it seems feasible that fieldwork placement contract negotiations need to be creative enough to ensure both parties’ needs are being met and “the needs and resources and other elements fit together in a positive way (O’Donoghue & Maidment, 2005, p.39). Importantly the linking of *kaupapa* (philosophy) with *tikanga* (customs) and face to face communications is important to indigenous partnerships (Walker, 2010).

Social service managers are relevant to fieldwork placement and they are in the prime position to negotiate resources and knowledge exchange that have the potential to offer useful mutual benefits. However, a non-Māori manager said they were required to attend supervision training, which she thought was seen by education as reciprocity, but this was not necessarily what “*she wished for, nor what was needed*” in her agency. Unwillingness to attend such mandatory training may mean her agency could be taken off the list of providers for schools of social work or alternatively it could be deduced that schools of social work are removed unconsciously from competitive lists held in the minds of managers, because of an unwelcome policy.

Given the complexities and the nature of the non-linear transactions between managers and the social service environment involved in fieldwork, and across and between systems it is not surprising that support is required for further connectedness. On the other hand, there is evidence of long standing commitment and connections to student education was found in a study by Miller and Rodwell (1997) where it was found that thirty per cent of agencies provided for more than one school of social work and agencies as a whole had long standing relationships with social work education.

In order to nurture such a “reciprocal exchange process” (Allan, 2000, p.159) between educational institutions and the potential fieldwork site, the Treaty of Waitangi principles of partnership maintenance and sustainability may appear to require greater application. Indeed, the international standards for fieldwork curricula state that inclusion and participation of field instructors is to be aspired to (International Federation of Social Workers), (IFSW), (2003), but it does not include managers. Reciprocal exchange, related to functionalism, is a necessary basis for social interaction according to Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (2000) and they say its absence leads to withdrawal from unrewarding interaction and they go so far as to say that denial of reciprocity of an equal value could be construed as demonstrating an element of social control. O’Connor et al. (1999) reasoned that reciprocal exchange or equal exchange is affected by factors such as social distance, physical

distance, economic distance and psychosocial distance, notions that are all relevant for their applicability to this study but given the breadth of this study are not discussed further here. Accordingly, ecological theory and the idea of transactions as the means by which people and material resources are exchanged, the way people are connected to the social and physical environment of the placement organization, is useful to consider, because this is a “mutually shaping process of both person-environments over time” (Germain, 1983, p.115).

As Cleak and Wilson (2007) suggest, willingness is increased by intrinsic motivational factors such as professional development provision. In considering the findings from a social work perspective of partnership and their influence on opening the agency door to placement, it would appear that a greater response of reciprocation may be needed. These findings suggest that there was an expectation of role modelling from education, *enhanced* relationships that are *mana-enhancing* relationships (Ruwhiu, 2001) through face to face communication, the sap to connect inter-organizational systems.

As the literature identified, educators need to consider ways of creating linkages to enhance university/agencies relationships (Fook, 2004; Noble, Heycox, O’Sullivan & Bartlett, 2005). These may be through face-to-face fieldwork partnerships, as these findings suggest. As Ruffolo and Miller (1994) said fieldwork involves a complex process of relationship building and collaboration which requires the university, as the lead agency, to reach out in partnership. It is important for schools of social work to instigate and maintain such partnerships with social services because of the demands of changing social, economic and education strains and shifts (Maidment, 2002a). A partnership with the profession of social work, with the social work supervisors, rather than managers is argued by Joyce (1998). This view may be restrictive because it is argued that it is the manager who holds or manages the resource allocation for student fieldwork placement.

9.5 Significance of the findings

Indications emerging from the findings appear to signpost that some managers felt there were communication gaps between organizations and their contribution to student education could be undervalued by tertiary educational institutes. Understanding from this study appear to indicate that separation of systems, largely influenced by macro level economic and global factors, contribute to communication influences and social distance from each other's needs, which in turn creates roadblocks to provision. Such social distance is created by differences in organizational purpose, which consequently affects interpersonal relationships and inter-organizational partnerships at meso and eso levels.

These findings are useful because managers valued any efforts made to build genuine inter-organizational partnerships and resource sharing in a reciprocal way and these managers were prepared to devote time to improve interpersonal and inter-organizational relationships. Cultural concepts of reciprocity and *mana*-enhancing practices, the partnership principle from the Treaty of Waitangi open the inter-organizational systems wider to creativity. There is a new finding in this chapter in that these social service managers were open to consultation by the education system about current social issues, current service trends and what they could offer schools of social work. This in itself, this suggests a way forward to influence manager's decision making about fieldwork placement and ways to strengthen the traditional placement model through reciprocity particularly of the gaining of knowledge about recent research which was seen as being held by tertiary institutions. Creative practices possibly could lead to greater understanding about non-statutory social services, burdened by the shortage and nature of their staffing situations.

For closer relationships to be built this may mean schools of social work may need to confine their relationships to a select group of placement providers, which in turn will affect the number of students that can be successfully accommodated, within available resources. This in turn will add another dimension of complexity to the

fieldwork placement issue but with managerial involvement it may improve the current situation of fieldwork placement shortage locally and internationally.

Finally, it is reasonable to conclude that the educational system is more dependent upon provision for student educational attainment, than the agency is dependent upon students to assist with the delivery of core services in the short term. The challenge to educational institutions is to 'add value' to these critical relationships which managers view as important.

Managers views on the traditional fieldwork placement model and roles within it are examined in chapter ten as it relates to the subsidiary question and the advancement of knowledge. Interpretations are discussed and explored on the strengths and shortcomings of this traditional model utilized in this country and how inter connecting roles and exchanges can strengthen relationships between agencies and social work education and educators. How managers can contribute to the strengthening of these relationships is examined, as well as their expectations of an all year round engagement with tertiary institutions they have hosting arrangements with. The next chapter ends with the question as to whether it is time for a paradigm shift in the traditional fieldwork placement model in *Aotearoa* New Zealand.

CHAPTER TEN

MANAGERS' VIEWS ON THE TRADITIONAL PLACEMENT MODEL AND ROLES WITHIN IT

“I find it so stressful if it does not work, and life is stressful as it is.... [It is] important that it works. I am quite fussy about who I accept”

(Interviewee: *Pākēha* social service manager)

10.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters I have identified understandings of how organizational, informational, student and relational factors, interspersed by application of ecosystems concepts, and might have impacted upon manager's responses to the student placement question of agency provision. In relation to answering the subsidiary question, managers in this interpretative study were asked to describe how arrangements in the traditional fieldwork placement model could enhance and mutually benefit exchanges between schools of social work and agencies involved in provision. The research objective was to describe and understand how existing fieldwork relationships or connections could be developed, maintained, strengthened or transformed.

The strengths and shortcomings of the traditional fieldwork placement model for social work are discussed in this chapter. The question of how co-ordinators, students, supervisors and managers can work together in collaboration to strengthen, maintain and develop existing relationships is examined. The question is also raised as to whether it is time for a paradigm shift in the traditional placement model along with a justification for a shift in the way this model unfolds.

Although there is a significant amount of literature on this topic and given the growing numbers of student placements required from increasing numbers of social work programmes, the traditional placement model appears not to be sustainable if the number of students of social work continue to increase with the increasing numbers of tertiary educational institutes offering social work education.

Just as social work education literature on collaboration between major players in fieldwork placement provision is considered important some new innovate models have evolved internationally in response to the scarcity of fieldwork placements (Beddoe, 2007; Noble, et al., 2005 and others). Further, educational dependency and the changing complex social/human service environment (Jarman-Rohde et al., 1997; Wayne et al., 2006 and others) have been discussed in earlier chapters here. The days of the long standing “town and gown” split (Evans, 1987) appear to be changing, with communities offering opportunities, and with the development of research integration, teaching and service functions stemming from the universities (Ishisaka, et al., 2004). The evolution of creative international alternatives may reflect practical difficulties experienced with the traditional apprenticeship model of educational dependency and scarcity of placements. Directional changes indicate greater involvement and partnership with the local community, possibly brought about through greater awareness of social justice issues, such as “a poor fit between a person’s environment and his or her needs, capacities, rights and aspirations” (Germain & Gitterman, 1996, p.8), particularly in developing countries.

Much of what has been found in the literature (in 1.3) about new fieldwork placement models could be seen as a response to Cleak, Hawkins and Hess’s (2000) call for innovative field options. As Lefevre (2005) has indicated, the challenges to the British fieldwork placement model, has results in the development of new models. It was not surprising to discover in the international literature writings on innovative field options including community development, collaboration, partnership, liaison, contact-challenge, internship, consortium, exchange and network models of fieldwork placement which may not necessarily involve social service agencies because of students direct community work and community development.

Although the search for fieldwork placement models is not exhaustive it can be inferred from the literature on fieldwork placement that the ideal placement model may contrast with the actual traditional practice. Such developments of new fieldwork processes are likely to continue in these times of rapid change, competition for placements and educational need.

The maintenance of the traditional model of fieldwork and systems between schools and social service organizations has been affected by macro, meso and micro factors which in turn affect the balance in relationships and understanding of roles that have evolved throughout the historical development of the traditional model which has strengths and shortcomings.

10.2 Strengths and shortcomings of the traditional model

Strengths of the traditional model of social work field education, could be viewed as its continuation to serve an important purpose for social work education because it provides practical components in the curriculum where students can develop their skills and integrate knowledge and ethical behaviour into their work in a structured supervised environment, which enables students to solidify their choice of profession or otherwise. The traditional model has withstood the test of time since its evolution from the apprenticeship model, where observation was originally a favoured learning method for students by educators. It provides a familiar model of social work fieldwork practice, with student learning through supervision and competency modelling and education. The (NZ) SWRB practicum policy and the traditional model assume willingness towards placement premised on the continuation of the traditional model. Schools of social work are legally bound in this country to provide supervised fieldwork placements for social work students.

The study findings suggest the spirit of altruism is still alive as some placements continue to be available from social workers willing to provide fieldwork placement supervision even though this may result in benefactor fatigue. Such altruism may

increase the managers or supervisors' feelings of self-worth and for some the intrinsic motivation may be enhanced by feeling they are helping out the school with their quest to find sufficient placements. Further, findings do suggest that students also learn from other staff members as a collective, in addition to the supervisor. Other staff members may also mentor, socialize and provide some opportunities for some integration of social work and cultural theories, and also serve as monitors of risk the student might pose to themselves or others. Supervision as a resource was also likely seen as the individual provision of student learning, support and accountability but not the only source of social work learning.

On the other hand, there are shortcomings in this traditional model. The literature suggests that the lack of management involvement or commitment can be seen as a shortcoming in the traditional model. The findings suggest that all participants saw their role as essential to resource provision and not peripheral to the conducting of successful fieldwork placements.

A further shortcoming is that agency managers "*can say 'no' and not feel bad about it*" as stated by a woman social service manager, which implies that decisions on fieldwork placement provision are made without duress. It is assumed that this means that schools of social work cannot rely on provision and the commitment of one social worker as supervisor for a student. This quote implies that there is no obvious penalty to the agency or social worker in non-supply of student places for practica. As a manager of a small agency expressed, "*the time [taken] for traditional placements is a huge one*" which suggests that decisions are not made lightly and are seen as a serious commitment.

It could be argued that placement resource shortage or scarceness is one shortcoming with this model, as is the competition for placements. As Doel and Shardlow (2005) identified a social service agency's prime role is service delivery (Doel & Shardlow, 2005) to clients, and student provision diverted agencies away from their core work (Weinstein, et al., 2003). Furthermore, a New Zealand Government department of

Child Youth and Family Services (CYFS) identified a weakness in the traditional placement model in that extra duties involved with the teaching role were not compensated for with relief from the day to day work, nor was remuneration received for the additional duties (Perry & Maher, 2003).

Another perceived shortcoming in the traditional model may be the findings about the shortage of pre-placement information from some tertiary education providers as expected by managers in this study. Pre-placement information about tribal identification, personal history, details of a student's skills, abilities, attributes and level of education, as well as professional goals, prior to commencement of placement were manager's expectations of information. Selection interviews were also viewed as a requirement, with involvement of the manager, whether or not managers were the designated student supervisor. Furthermore the findings suggest that some students were being sent to agencies with little information about the nature of the agency to enhance their "level of fit" (Gitterman, 1996b) with the agency, this could be considered a shortcoming with some schools of social work pre-placement preparation of students.

What appears to be a deteriorating situation in fieldwork placement availability, appears to create seasonal unease for students, co-ordinators and educationalists. Furthermore, decades of struggle to find social work field work placements for increasing numbers of student placements, must result in increased competition for education providers. The findings suggest these factor places additional pressure on an agency when considering a response to the student fieldwork placement question. Further, pressures and demands from students, administrators and accreditors or co-ordinators have been said to be increasing in environments that have fewer resources (Buck, Bradley, Robb & Kirzner, 2012). These writers suggest that time is insufficient for support of others but there is a demanding burden of "complex affiliation agreements/letter of understanding and increasing requirements for background checks" (Buck et al., 2012, p. 13) and other competing demands. This must place additional preparatory work for all stakeholders in fieldwork placement processes. Fieldwork placement shortage is likely to continue because there are an

increasing number of social workers retiring as a result of a rapidly aging population which suggests a crisis for future placements especially in western countries. Given many governments' fiscal direction to cut costs, social workers may not be replaced or contracts with non-statutory social services renewed. The (NZ) SWRB (2012) requirement for all student fieldwork supervisors to be registered may also contribute further to the shortage of placements for practicum as there may not be staff available to supervise students, although the policy indicates that one placement can be supervised by a registered social worker, external to the agency.

The findings indicate a need to question the socially constructed postulation and assumptions in the literature on the traditional model about the need for 'agencies' to reduce the supervisor's workload to accommodate a student's needs. This question was not mentioned by any managers that this was their practice for staff supervising students, although this was not a specific study question. The lack of reference to workload reduction in this study may support studies which found there was no effort made to reduce workload to accommodate student learning and it barely happened as intrinsic rewards were deemed sufficient (Bocage, Homonoff & Riley, 1995; Bogo & Globerman, 1999; Bogo & Power, 1992; Lacerte, Ray & Irwin, 1989; Rosenfeld, 1989; Wayne, et al., 2006). Although it was thought workload reduction was necessary to contribute fully to the placement teaching (Hay, et al., 2006; Perry & Maher, 2003). Hay et al. (2006) found that seventy per cent (70%) of supervisors and students agreed there was a need for supervisors to be released from their core duties, but this is unlikely to be in the best interests of the agency. Maidment's (1996) study also found availability and willingness to work with students was affected by workload and work pressures which likely leads to the student supervisor making compromises.

Further high-pressure workloads were considered to undermine the willingness toward fieldwork placement provision (Hay et al., 2006; Shardlow & Doel, 2002). Some writers considered it unfair to expect individual social workers to absorb the extra work demands created by a student and challenged 'agencies' to consider this expectation, along with the possibility of payment (Bogo & Power, 1992). It is

unclear in the findings as to whether there was a lack of potential supervisors on staff to reduce workload or whether this was a teaching role manager or staff enjoyed on top of their workloads. However, the expectation of workload reduction expressed in the literature appears to be based on hope rather than reality.

Further this study has identified other flaws or weaknesses in the traditional model such as the 'seasonal' nature of placement relationships and the limited opportunity for face-to-face relationship building between educational authorities and schools of social work staff. The placement 'season' may be considered to be an identifiable and sometimes variable time when the co-ordinator organizes student placements and maintains contact with agencies for a finite period. However, these relationships and the sap that nourishes them suggested a call for an unbroken rather than seasonal relationship between social work education and non-statutory social services. The majority of managers voiced their wish for greater reciprocity, acknowledgement, and exchange of resources and learning activities, at a micro, eso and meso level, not just around the seasonal placement request time, but for visible relationships and exchanges all year around. Various managers in this study asked for more regular meetings coordinated by and at the educational institutions, to work out what might be shared interests and exchanges, other than money. Ideas put forward were requests for greater cohesion, support, trust in and participation of managers; research activity related to their needs and interests; information updates; free entrance to relevant courses to their work and access to services such as a library.

Participants sought chances for professional liaison; professional development opportunities for their staff and a greater chance to contribute to teaching in the classroom and informal liaison with the schools throughout the year, rather than just during the placement season. Social networking interaction and engagement with lecturers, other managers and the educational institute itself were seen as ways for non-economic interactions and exchanges to develop, which suggests closer relationships were being sought.

Furthermore, Allan (2000) proposed that a move away from the traditional labour intensive model was needed because of the lack of opportunity for reciprocity and that there was a need for a shift in ideas, thinking and administration because the ad hoc provision of student fieldwork experiences were inadequate, which may be true given the scarcity of placements. To encourage greater willingness to take students on placement, Perry and Maher (2003) suggested a mixture of tasks that agencies and schools were expected to do. Agencies were supposed to prepare for a student and reduce staff member's workload to accommodate a student while the universities were to give consideration for accreditation or recognition by certification, financial incentives, and provision of professional development, privileges and status given by schools of social work (Perry & Maher, 2003). Years earlier, Bogo and power (1992) had asked for organizational support; time commitment; instrumental aid; teaching theory and teaching practice to be provided by the agency and in exchange, resources would be exchanged with the agency; resources such as continuing education and research consultations. It could be argued that just as social services are strong shapers of social work practice and are controllers of the resources (Hanson, 1998) such as supervision of students, access to technology, furniture and more importantly, contact with clients. Social work educators are the initial shapers of the developing student resource for fieldwork placement with transactions seeking mutual exchanges which are conducted by various holders of roles.

10.3 How interconnecting roles could strengthen relationships

This section of the thesis considers how stakeholder roles are seen as playing a part at various levels of organizational systems (Compton, Gallaway & Cournoyer, 2005) in practicum and how these may strengthen practicum practices. Placement co-ordinators instigate and shepherd the process involved with fieldwork placements for social work students. The findings in this study suggest that co-ordinators must be concerned with and connected to the management relationship before, during and after placement because the role is pivotal to the enhancement of willingness towards fieldwork placement opportunities. The co-ordinator holds the responsibility for controlling what happens between the students and 'the agency' so the personal attributes of the fieldwork co-ordinator are likely to influence the outcome of

placement requests. As a pākēha manager said: *“the integrity of the field placement person has had an effect on my past decisions”*. Integrity is a requirement in the Code of conduct of registered social workers (Social Workers Registration Board, 2005, p.4) which social work co-ordinators in this country are required to be. A manager of a large provincial social service described the role as one that required trust, ability to provide consultation while ensuring acknowledgement of agency contributions.

“We go on trust of co-ordinator re placement matching of student; they run hui at beginning of year – all agencies attend; they run meetings, consult us on how placement is going and seek out more placements. [There is] lunch at the end of the year for all supervisors and students entertain, [with] pōwhiri and speeches.

(Māori Practice Manager)

The attribute of trustworthiness is understood to be a desired quality in co-ordinators. This quote relates to the idea of the ability to plan, run meetings, consultation and more planning. Preliminary relationship building, communication, information, marketing the ‘added value’ of the student and perhaps persuasion, given placement competition and choice, appear to be indispensable functions of this role. The co-ordinator’s personal credibility and status as well as their tertiary educational institution and their interest in the work of the non-statutory agency, will also have a part to play towards managers and supervisor’s willingness. As one woman manager articulated she also considered the reputation of the institution in that:

“I would like to know if it is the best in the country and it is held in high regard. I am interested in the best outcome [for whānau] – they are going to be let loose on the community [but] do they know how to do social work? We need reassurance which is only based on students sent to us...I’m concerned there is a continuation [of placements] of course, but matters are

not being addressed...schools not recognizing concerns...with tutors, hierarchy, concern about adequacy of qualifications.”

(Māori Iwi Social Service Manager)

It is perceived from this quote that when a relationship with a particular school of social work is not close, judgements are coloured by impression gained from the students of that institution and qualification standards.

Furthermore, as a Māori woman manager said “*there are some last straw placements*” and another said her response to requests for placement were “*generally positive, although these requests often come at very short notice.*” With three exceptions, timing of placement requests appeared to be un-programmed, out of the blue, with no clear cut method of pre-set date for contact with the agency manager. When decisions are un-programmed, the costs to the social service organization may be high and these types of decisions ought to be reduced in organizations for the benefit of efficiency (Simon, 1997). Hence, it would appear that student information consistently supplied at a regular or pre-arranged point in time will move the process to a point of equilibrium in the system, from un-programmed to programmed decision making about placement. Furthermore, the co-ordination role has many challenging aspects to it; a role which needs greater clarity according to Hay, et al., (2006). From a constructivist perspective it would appear this leadership role might influence manager’s fieldwork placement choices on the question of provision and how the placement process takes place. The role appears similar to transformational leadership (Bartol & Martin, 1997) whereby co-ordinators guide and inspire others in the direction of established educational goals, rise above their own self-interest and have confidence to achieve the student supervision requirements.

The co-ordinator is in a prime position to conduct communication beneficial to all parties identified as one of mediation of student needs to the requirements of the agency, (Shardlow & Doel, 2005) which if not managed correctly could be turned

into advocacy. The co-ordinator's responsibilities are heavy, complicated, and create uncertainty for long periods of time for unrewarding unproductive work given a climate of shortage of provision. Manager's expectations indicated in this study far exceed the co-ordination of tasks with a title that fails to do this position of external engagement justice because the work goes beyond co-ordination. The role likely includes pre and post placement lecturing work with practicum students; teaching and education during the student visiting process and at times sharing of knowledge with supervisors and possibly lecturing on fieldwork supervision. There is a struggle to achieve a balance on the analogical tight rope the co-ordinator walks until placement is concluded.

There is a strong argument for a title change to reflect more closely what is required of the position as distilled from manager's expectations in this study. As coordinators are required to plan, match, promote and negotiate placements, monitor and manage complexity, educate, assess, instruct, support, mediate, advocate and resolve conflict involving students, support agency staff, managers, and supervisors at various times, a title of co-ordinating lecturer or community lecturer may be more indicative of this significant role as an alternative to that drawn from the traditional model. Furthermore there is merit in the suggestion that the low status "fieldwork co-ordinator title be abolished" as it reflects a subordinate and inferior relationship of practice teaching and learning, "as opposed to the academic, theoretical learning that occurs in the classroom" which and should be that of a "lecturer" (Joyce (1998, p.23). Just as there has been a call to consider changes in the co-ordination title, so too there has been a paradigm shift away from fieldwork places in a social service agency towards student placements directly into the community, as is sometimes the situation with international placements. This places additional responsibility on a co-ordinator in managing movement of people between systems and their destination. Given the breadth of this vital role towards placement matching and sustainability and the need for schools to connect with management, the whole system could fail without its robust overall co-ordination. This role is vital for the nurturing of the relationship with managers, supervisors, students and others who need to be involved and interconnected.

Fieldwork education is a draw card for social work students as an important higher educational contribution as a critical period for the development of their skills, attributes, competencies and the integration of social work theory with social work practice as well as supply of a valuable resource to agency work. Its value to a student's education cannot be under-estimated as it also includes self-discovery, despite it requiring a good deal of adjustment to new surroundings and people, along with personal sacrifice. It could be said that various contexts in fieldwork will challenge a student's resilience and the ability to bounce back even at the stage of placement procurement. Then as they face the knocks and difficulties of challenging fieldwork placement, there are expectations from managers and supervisors that they adapt and adjust to the strange and unfamiliar context away from the well-known structured life of their educational institute. This may be particularly challenging if the student is not from the local community. As a Māori practice manager said in speaking about her community allegiance:

“We do it for community; we are helping community – preference for local student who is giving back to community. Often they became an employee, which is wonderful really – [we look for] students hungry to learn, we get three months [of them] firing on all cylinders – they bring new learning and we kind of help each other....they must have interest in this line of work.”

(Māori Practice Manager)

A student's strong connection with the community, their willingness to learn, work readiness, energy, social maturity, compatibility with agency needs, advanced in their training with potential as an employee appear to be part of what managers call 'quality' student placements. A student's personality, skills, knowledge, competency and ethical behaviour appear to be just as important as pre-placement processes to these managers. It was not surprising that most participants preferred students who showed initiative and did not require constant oversight. A student's professional behaviour was expected to enrich the agency setting, promote change in family,

whanau and community systems and perhaps gently challenge social work practice. Further a pākēha community development manager felt “*students need to step outside their own comfort zone, the placement must be challenging and they need to be exposed to the reality*” [of the work], which may suggest that students come directly into the challenging environment of social work where social issues can be disturbing. But are such expectations too high? Just as co-ordinators are expected to do well with the matching process it appears that adaptability is needed as a student attribute. Tensions are experienced in social work field education and epistemological and emotional uncertainty encountered between what was described as ‘the high hard ground’ of education and the ‘swampy ground of practice’ (Schon, 1983) in Barlow & Hall, (2007). As the findings imply most managers were particular about the type of student they accepted into the agency. It was questioned by a pākēha manager as to whether students could be objective “*when they are coming carrying garbage*”, presumably meaning the student weighted down with social problems. This raises the question about how the co-ordinator makes judgements about the imprecise matching process, particularly when they do not know students they are charged with placing, although these managers had expectations that the school had given thought to this process. Expectations seem to be that the student had an interest in the agency work; their personality, knowledge base and skill level were commensurate with agency need. One Māori manager in the dual role of manager/counsellor said that “*this woman had a horrific life. She should never have started...enough damaged people out there...these students can create more damage,*” which suggests this student added to her workload, created anxiety about exposing an unsuitable student before a client.

It is contended that most schools of social work experience a few such students, positioning schools into arranging late placements or at risk of a failed placement. As was said “*we are dealing with the most vulnerable people*” and students with major unresolved issues “*were not going to make life easy for us*”, likely adding to rather than reducing the workload. It may require the co-ordinator to instigate a cautious repetition of promoting an unsatisfactory or failed student again to another manager and supervisor, if the student still wished to complete a qualification and educators deemed this appropriate. Apart from unwillingness as a result of experiences of

difficult students in the past, at times the managers in this study had made decisions not to provide for students for reasons such as:

“Placement period offered was too short; if we have to re-juggle tasks; there are too many staff on leave and we do not offer placements over Christmas holidays because there is no time to mentor the student.”

(Pākēha woman agency manager)

This manager of a multi-service agency in a provincial city identified short placement periods of a few weeks in her experience, re-ordering of tasks, staff on leave, and Christmas holidays as reasons for not making provision available. Willingness towards provision appears to be partially dependent upon whether there is an incoming or outgoing tide to sweep up a student or not, request to request, year by year and inability in this case, to re-juggle planned tasks. The feeling of duty to provide may be on the crest of the wave or perhaps the trough is too full with agency responsibility to allow for the required preparedness and generosity. It must be remembered that these management experiences were likely for Diploma level students from Polytechnic tertiary institutions, whose curriculum may have included first year fieldwork placements.

Much of the fieldwork placement literature suggests that supervisors are the first point of contact for schools of social work and supervisor's consent to student supervision cements the answer of fieldwork placement provision. Approximately half of these non-government managers in this study also acted as supervisors of social work students on placement, perhaps as a way of having greater control over what transpired in their organizations or perhaps out of professional obligation or professional or personal affiliations. Such supervision happened on top of their busy workloads; therefore they chose to carry the double burden of management and supervision. Student supervisors seem to have to rise to the challenge of making rapid adjustments to their work pattern, particularly if they are working with less

than enthusiastic students, who may not have received their desired placement. On the other hand, supervisory reward and satisfaction appeared to be reflected back in the work produced by their student, which relates to the feedback loop identified in systems theory (Payne, 1991). This in turn appeared to reinforce confidence in the dual role. We can assume that managers, who provided supervision, also had social work backgrounds, although they may not have been registered social workers at the time of this study. A manager hoped such effort would leave a mark on the student's learning as well as the attainment of personal satisfaction by fulfilling "*a responsibility, making a contribution and providing a quality experience.*" Whether managers acted as supervisors or not they relied on all staff to keep an eye on the student and appeared to consider these additional roles as allied student supervisors or substitutes if required.

For Māori managers, supervision was seen as a reciprocal learning experience whereby all staff provided *awhi* (support) to the student in addition to face-to-face supervision. Māori managers appeared more likely to view placement teaching as preparing a student to give knowledge back to the Māori community. The findings suggest that such a collective group process was seen as a team effort that aimed to produce work ready social and community workers or *iwi* development workers able to work with the *iwi* (tribe) or pan-tribally. As a Māori manager stated: "*we share the care of the student*" which suggests collective responsibility may be taken to ensure the student's learning. It is noted that team support, before as well as after supervision, plays a critical role in student learning which suggests that formal supervision is only a small but significant part of the student's learning, as well as the educational, developmental and support process for students. Supervisors may be keen to have assistance with this role and anxious to complete a tiring and responsible task perhaps with mixed emotions such as relief, or satisfaction with placement completion.

It could be considered that given the shortage of supervisors and agencies willing to provide placements, a team approach to student learning and supervision may ease the burden of only a one to one relationship requirement of the traditional model and

contribute successfully to sustainability of placements. It would seem that student learning is likely to be enhanced by exposure to other staff members in addition to the designated social worker as supervisor. This is an interesting and practical way to share what is otherwise an unabated professional responsibility for one supervisor. Social work teams in Britain were said to be so understaffed and stretched that supervisors did not always have the time to supervise students (British Association of Social Workers, 2011), so additional teaching support could be invaluable. Such findings might suggest that supervision can be considered either an individual or collective responsibility, although Cleak and Fox (2011) would argue much of the student's learning is mediated through the student-supervisor relationship and their knowledge of supervision aimed at excellence in education (Bogo, 1996).

Further, a Māori social work practice manager of an *iwi* social service stated: “*what is important for a student is an internal supervisor – external supervisors may not be able to relate to our organization or what the student is doing*” and because “*there needs to be an internal connection prepared to give time*” and perhaps organizational knowledge of systems, policies, practices and philosophy. Internal supervisors were seen by a few managers as being able to enrich and enhance the student's learning and internal supervisors were ‘on the spot’ when issues arose outside supervisory contract periods. As Zuchowski (2011) said, to socialize them into the profession. Some managers also saw them as useful for settling the student into the agency and as the supervision literature suggests there are intrinsic rewards for supervision (Cleak & Wilson, 2007; Kahn, 1981; Rosenfeld, 1989).

However, it could be argued that a registered supervisor independent from and external to the agency might bring additional richness in knowledge or scrutiny to the agency work and perhaps unconsciously place unwelcome pressures on staff working closely with the student, if there is differing opinions on practice. Alternatively they may challenge assumptions and bring new knowledge and objectivity. It is unlikely social service funders would contract agencies for provision of student supervision in fieldwork, because of its education function and appear to be silent on the matter. Schools of social work may also prefer internal supervisors to external supervisors as

external supervisors involve contracting cost for the social work programme. Monetary saving may in turn pressure placement co-ordinators to favour 'free' internal supervision for student placements by a registered social worker, although these are currently more likely to be found in statutory social services in this country. Given the lack of registered social workers in non-statutory social services in *Aotearoa* New Zealand at the time of this study, the student may benefit from both non-registered internal supervisors and external registered supervisors, which may or may not influence responses to the research question.

The literature and the (NZ) Social Workers Registration Board policy (2012) on fieldwork practicum indicate that there is a need for and requirement for schools of social work to make supervision training available to host agencies. Lack of training for supervisors was found to be a major factor contributing to tensions and unwillingness of supervisors to provide placement in *Aotearoa* New Zealand (Hay, et al., 2006). This could be because of the time required to train and subsequent resource drain on social service agencies. The scant reference to this topic in this study is because there were no specific questions asking about supervision training and its influence on fieldwork provision so no interpretations can be drawn from the data.

A factor from the literature relevant to this thesis is the current and predicted shortage of social workers, and resultant availability of social workers to supervise students. Also movement out of the profession in *Aotearoa* New Zealand into other occupations and the slow growth of social work jobs has been noted (NZ) Social Workers Registration Board, (2007), potentially leading to lack of registered social work staff or under-staffing. Dominelli (1996) expressed concern that managers will break down the components of the profession for manageability and hire less qualified staff at cheaper rates, resulting in indifference towards qualified social workers. Demographic and policy shifts could lead to loss of supervisory staff for students and as these findings suggest managers prefer students well advanced in their studies suitable to fill staff gaps and relieve increased workload pressures on the agency. These findings suggest there is a lack of personnel resourcing to cater for the

heavy workloads so it must be questioned as to whether expectations on social workers to cater for students is becoming too difficult a task. The findings suggest that staff resourcing for placement appears to be more of an issue than material resourcing for these managers when asked the question of student placement provision.

10.4 Manager's contribution to developing relationships

The argument has evolved in this thesis that because the manager's role is subsumed into the literature as the 'agency' this needs to surface and be recognized at least equally with other fieldwork placement stakeholder roles involved in fieldwork practicum. All managers in this study indicated they were the key decision makers who approved placement, therefore structurally posited to open or close the placement door to the student. When information is unclear about the risk in the exchange, managers are positioned with the responsibility to consider and minimize risk by decision making with "bounded rationality" (Schermerhorn, 1993, p.166), which may relate to a closed boundary.

Manager's decisions are important not only for the success of the placement, but the ongoing role of health and safety of the student and duty of care to the school of social work. It is the manager's role to respond to requests, assess and control benefits and risk, and if provision is decided upon, they are likely to legitimately sign fieldwork placement provision contracts and approve the allocation of the supervisor and tasks. Managers control the allocated personnel, the distribution and rationing of technology, material and physical resources and provide support and accountability mechanisms for the students.

However it is the staff member who provides the supervision resource, but this is in paid agency time, using agency resources, but it is the agency manager who is responsible for their employment and is employed to achieve goals and shepherd agency activities through leadership and management. Social service managers are

the designated legal and policy guardians with responsibilities delegated from governance committees, carrying the responsibility for any students in their care. As well, it is the management that orchestrates the tensions related to needs, resources, ideology and values in the social service agency (O'Donoghue, 1999). Some of these managers appeared to favour an 'agency obligation approach' (Shardlow & Doel, 2002) towards their responsibilities whilst others appear to prefer a 'cautious as we go' or a 'no go' unwilling approach to the question of fieldwork placement question, responses connected to personal and organizational relationships.

Managers who make negative responses to the placement question provides them with a safe option. Alternatively if it is a matter of agency policy not to provide for students, this leaves them in a trouble-free position. However, such policy, continual avoidance or unwillingness to host a student may consequently dilute allegiance to the growth of the social work profession and poses a challenge to social work education and tertiary educational institutions. The often part time nature of provincial non-statutory social services, where competition, choice and what appears to be un-restricted decision making by managers about provision, is in need of acknowledgement. The declining of learning opportunities for students without explanation, or excuse may become a pattern. But if the relationship with education is not close are excuses really necessary? It appears that the risk to the agency may be low in declining student fieldwork placement provision, in terms of causing displeasure for lack of cooperation, if relationships are weak or non-existent.

In consideration of any changes to the traditional model of social work education it is evident that developments in this country have already taken place through direct responses to community needs by direct community engagement. Such changes were relevant and necessary for disaster situations such as the Canterbury, New Zealand earthquakes (or Japanese earthquakes/tsunami and other traumatic events that occurred in 2011) with these tremendous responses have had serious and long-term implications for social work practice and social work education. Although such a learning environment may not necessarily be safe for students and require more work from the tertiary educational institutions, such as allocation of more than one

supervisor, the resulting social work training for students could produce more challenge and learning than traditional training in a non-crisis setting may provide. The response may be managed by multiply leaders who may find communication difficult because of time constraints. Although emergency responses to disasters is not a topic to be covered further here ANZASW Review edition (XXV, 2, 2013) documents social service learnings, and emergency responses to the Canterbury, *Aotearoa* New Zealand disaster and its prolonged effects.

10.5 Expectation of year round engagement

As a result of these findings that managers wish to be involved in fieldwork placement relationships all year round, an adaption to the traditional placement model is suggested. Inter-organizational relationships are valued by these managers and the ideas below are grounded in my understanding and interpretation of managers' experiences, expectations, needs and desire for greater connection with tertiary education providers. This idea is grounded in some components of what was described by two managers as the *Tairawhiti* model and their agency need to access relevant research. Managers are reaching out to enhance their social service delivery and improve responses to social concerns and trends they are experiencing. Expanding on the traditional model of one to one learning between student and supervisor, any adaption could incorporate information sharing and relationship building opportunities for managers, along with students, supervisors, co-ordinators and schools of social work staff, as interpreted from the data extrapolated from the subsidiary question.

The findings suggest the need for an organized opportunity for relationship building between managers and the school staff with some participants suggesting that schools host a function for placement planning purposes, to provide a networking opportunity for managers and social work education staff. Such a function could include an intention to ascertain agency manager's need for research support as a gesture of partnership. Schools of social work could do a number of things for agency staff to demonstrate reciprocity such as the development of small packages of current research literature relevant to the student's designated field of social work

practice, for presentation to staff for their professional development. With regular engagement these manager's hoped that an opportunity would arise for social work education to identify agency contributors to the programme during the year.

Although training for supervision as such was not an expectation expressed in the findings, there is a (NZ) SWRB policy requirement for the provision of supervisor training provided for the purposes of fieldwork placement. The standard for social work education programme recognition and re-recognition indicate that "5.6...the mechanism is in place for the training and support of field educators/supervisors..." (NZ) (SWRB, 2012), which for practical purposes happens pre-placement.

The pre-placement placement period or season is also a time that presents an opportunity for co-ordinators to check the completion of 'fit and proper person' requirements of students and other placement criteria. During this period students have likely completed pre-requisite papers before their practicum opportunity arises. This period is likely to be a time when students are prepared for their placement, placement supervision and pre-placement interviews. The study suggests early preparation of a curriculum vitae and the student's consent for its distribution to prospective placement provider, including managers, is important information distribution before their attendance at a selection interview. It would appear that some managers required provision of a copy of a student's current driver's licence along with other relevant information such as emergency contact details for health and safety reasons whilst present on fieldwork practicum. It can be assumed that students knew they carried a considerable responsibility to prepare for an agency placement and have gained an understanding of responsibilities whilst on practicum.

Schools may also need to cluster students in ways where co-ordinators get to know students well, prior to their first placement as advocacy for placement supply may be required. This is possibly more likely for post-graduate groups of students, because groups are likely to be smaller in number. Information supplied during pre-placement

processes contributed to the nature of managers' responses in accepting or rejecting students for a practicum.

The (NZ) SWRB encourages co-operation between schools of social work over the period of practicum student disbursement. There may be a need for flexible start date to allow an agency manager and supervisor/educator to consider the impact of student placement competition or to consider provision of more than one placement in any one year. Understandings gained from this study suggest that co-ordinators or education staff not only visit the student and supervisor/educator but also make contact with the agency manager. Not only does the co-ordination role include administration it requires "developing and maintaining relationships with employers, providing the link between cooperative education staff and faculty and promoting the professional status..." (Coll & Eames, 2000, p.9) and other tasks as discussed elsewhere in this study.

As already happens in some locations, towards the end of the year acknowledgement and appreciation of the placement provision for managers and/or supervisors in a tangible form may take place. The findings suggest that it would be appropriate for schools of social work to provide a 'thank you' function to acknowledge the contribution of managers and supervisors for undertaking the period of responsibility for a student and for student supervision. These findings may suggest that managers would benefit from an all year round engagement with schools of social work, whether or not places may not be available every year, as educational exchanges may still take place. However, as indicated by Healy, (2005), any changes to fieldwork should seek sustainability.

Should these findings be transferable, the implications for schools of social work are considerable because of the expectation of a greater inter-organizational communication system and relationship formation all year around. Any adaptations will require additional time, financial and workload costs to schools of social work and possibly these would increase the role of the fieldwork placement co-

ordinator(s), especially when there are large numbers of students to prepare for placement and reciprocal gestures such as research activity identified here.

Systems theory is also about alliances and sets of interacting and inter-dependent parts, which appear to be expectations of the managers in this study. Network theory cascades out of the ecological model (Germain & Gitterman, 1980) and these findings suggest relationship built through networking, interconnecting social systems at a meso level and face-to-face communications at a micro level are important at this particular point of time. It is suggested that an all year round system will put energy into relationship maintenance designed for an 'equilibrium state' (Payne, 2005) without changing either organization's character or core purpose. As the findings imply and some aspects of the literature have identified, hosting a student voluntarily does depend upon willing supervisors, inter-organizational relationships, cultural understandings, information sharing and understanding of non-statutory organizational contexts in diverse fields of practice.

For practical purposes schools of social work may need to compact their lists of potential providers to facilitate manageable sustainable relationships and perhaps cluster fields of practice together for research convenience. It has been identified that 100 units of social structures has the density potential of 4,950 relationships (Hardcastle & Powers, 2004, p. 298). These writers state that coordination and control of social networks need to be reachable and central with size, density and segmentation, as frequency and types of exchanges affect the function of relations and structural positioning.

This year round engagement will be difficult to sustain or may not work because senior and registered social workers may not wish to provide voluntary labour as supervisors on top of their jobs as they may feel they have already made a contribution with previous students in previous years of practice. It is also a possibility that (NZ) Social Workers Registration Board policies will unintentionally side-line the non-statutory sector out of fieldwork placement provision if the value of

registration of social workers is not actively promoted and actioned. Agency managers will be required to find additional financial resources for registration costs for potential student supervisors. At the time of writing government contracts with NGOs do not provide funding for registration of social work employees. In turn such policies have complex ethical implications and they may not only exacerbate fieldwork shortages if *Aotearoa* New Zealand social services continue to employ unregistered social workers. On the other hand, student voluntary labour in the unpaid sense may be seen as a free resource to aid service delivery with potential to fill labour shortage gaps from impending workforce shortage predictions.

Even though the traditional model may be outdated, this process may not work in all locations, because this study involved small to medium non-statutory social service organizations in provincial areas. Relationships may be physically and socially closer than in some metropolitan areas where educational dependency may be greater and relationships more distant because of geographical spread. Furthermore we still have the “entrenched environments, too busy to take students” (Connolly & Rathgen, 2000). Schools of social work that focus on on-line support for students on placement may also find it more difficult to build regular and consistent *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face-to-face) relationships with indigenous social service providers because of physical distance, unavailability, incapacity or unwillingness to use technology. Further, this year round engagement with stakeholders may not be appropriate as it may be more difficult to prepare students with local agency knowledge or provide local physical support for students on placement, particularly for distant or international placements who may need culturally appropriate supervisors.

From an eco-systems perspective the findings from deductive reasoning propose that these managers strove to improve transactions across and within the system and to promote “adaption between the person and their environment” and promote “responsive environments that support human growth, health and satisfaction” (Healy, 2005, p. 137). The state of any system is identified by five characteristics: its steady state, its homeostasis, differentiation, non-summativity and reciprocity (Payne, 1991). These ideas suggest that the fieldwork placement system in social

work education has to maintain a steady state and equilibrium, it grows more complex with time and needs different kinds of components over time, the whole is more than a sum of parts and when one part of a system changes, it creates other changes. This analysis of data implies that there is long standing problems in this fieldwork placement system created by dependency and organizations with conflicting purposes but this study also offers opportunities to schools of social work and tertiary education providers for systems change.

Given the international development of a diverse range of models, all reaching for social work fieldwork placement sustainability whilst responding to community need, these findings synthesized with the literature imply a need for continual evaluation of the traditional fieldwork model and its development in this country and internationally. It is interesting that the international literature suggests a gradual shift from agency placements to community models, inclusion of cultural responsiveness strategies, to recent developments of work based practicum and students working in developing countries, as educators attempt to solve what seems an unsolvable problem of placement shortages. As scarcity of placement has always been a weakness in fieldwork placement provision for social work students, one consideration could be that social work education expands from prime reliance upon social services as the provider of the traditional fieldwork placements to work directly with local community leaders on community and social issues.

10.6 Is it time for a paradigm shift in the traditional placement model?

The divergence of organizational purpose, as identified in the literature, appears to be an Achilles heel in placement provision, where communication gaps can widen if educational commitment to understanding the needs of agency management and the reverse are not attended to, although some similarities in purpose are found in this study. The idea of fieldwork placement division in organizational relationships has been attributed to differing expectations in an assumed partnership, dissimilarity between educational contexts and agency requirements and possibly relate back to the historical beginnings whereby formal education assumed greater importance over

less formal social work learning. Differences in organizational purposes pose an ongoing challenge to partnership building, maintenance and sustainability of the traditional placement model utilized in various countries. There are possibly differences in class, communication and the remnants of a subordinate relationship between organizations with students caught in dynamics reminiscent of the “medieval town-gown schism” (Dent & Tourville, 2002, p.33) with occupations possibly hampering dialogue. However, students, although they might not know it, may be expected by educators to fill the perceived gap between classroom education, knowledge and theory and the practice of social work. Systemic imperfections exist but the traditional major players in social work education have worked hard on all systems levels to understand and respond to disparities in organizational purposes and these differences will continue to exist as long as social work education and social services hold true to their aims. So continuing awareness of difference in organizations and their views on placement provision must be accepted, understood and acknowledged along with continued work on breaking down old and new barriers affecting all stakeholders in a period of rapid global and local change.

Māori managers in particular, appeared to view fieldwork provision as a reciprocal process, with the student seen as a conduit for making cultural connections, a gift to be returned to the community for its benefit. Two managers, one Māori and one non-Māori from one agency suggested an adaptation to the traditional model, in that the relationship should extend beyond the placement duration. They felt their local model which they quickly named the *Tairawhiti* model, worked well in their provincial city and requested its name be used in this document. “*We have hui (meeting) at beginning of year – all agencies attend co-ordinated time at Polytechnic for networking and community contacts and these are very transparent*” said these managers. The purpose of the *hui* (meeting) was said to be to check to see that everyone “*was still on board*” and information was exchanged such as proposed dates for student placement. Later, the placement co-ordinator arranged for the students to visit large individual agencies and meet the staff who made presentations to students about their work. This resulted in student self-selection and presumably further transactions via email. Managers were communicated with and related to by the co-ordinator to ensure student involvement, via technology and through three or

four agency visits. Agency visits from the school of social work education was seen as an area in need of significant improvement to enhance agency willingness and participation (Maidment, 2001). These two managers said that “*placement works brilliantly in our area and we can say no and not feel bad about it,*” which suggests that understanding of organizational context and honesty was strong between stakeholders, with organizational boundaries and decisions respected. This quote also relates to the modern philosophical existentialism view that responsibility and judgements are made freely.

Perhaps a weakness in this model is the time intensity in transporting students to various agency locations and resource commitment of the placement co-ordinator who may struggle to find time to meet the needs of all stakeholders. The benefits of this particular *Tairawhiti* model appear to be its relationship richness for all stakeholders and enhancement of student networks. Such a model may suit smaller communities where close relationships could easily be built up because social and geographical distance may likely be lesser than large cities and student numbers in provincially located schools of social work may be smaller than large cities and more manageable.

This study suggests an increased role for at least four key people, two from the university (student and co-ordinator) and two from the agency (manager and supervisor/educator). As a way to see links between ideas and roles in the traditional placement model and these findings, epistemological thinking, inductive reasoning, grounded theory, the importance of bi-culturalism, relationship building and cultural imperatives, it is not unreasonable to build on the traditional placement model.

Social work and social policy research using a constructivist interpretive orientation is concerned about achieving a more just society (Engel & Schutt, 2005) so we could ask as to how social justice may apply to fieldwork placement. As a Māori manager said fieldwork is about “*personal relationships and pulling down fences*”. Given that the issue of educational dependency arises in the use of this traditional model, it has

to be questioned as to whether it can be improved. Furthermore, the promotion of co-operation, mutual respect and justice between systems is stressed (Bilson & Ross, 1999), although I am not suggesting this does not happen but the matter is worthy of further consideration. *Tikanga* (justice or custom) is about treating or judging fairly and doing what is 'right', while social justice means fair treatment for all including creating opportunities, participation and inclusion, and making use of people's abilities. Through a dual lens, Myers (1990) theorized that willingness to help is influenced by both self-serving and selfless considerations, an idea which throws some light on these questions of fairness and justice as it applies to the traditional fieldwork placement model. Further research may throw light onto whether organizational inter-actions in fieldwork placement provision are in keeping with Māori *tikanga* (custom) and agency need.

An integration of relationship building throughout the year and the negotiation of reciprocal benefits for inter-organizational partnerships between schools and agencies and interpersonal relationships between stakeholders are signalled in this study. Also macro, meso, eso and micro systems level influence (Gitterman, 1996a; Germain & Gitterman, 1996) on the placement environment must also make it progressively harder for social service agencies to respond to hosting students. Funding restraints and constraints are continually influencing structural change and staffing demands which in turn may confine development work traditionally assisted by students of social work.

10.7 Significance of the findings

This subject matter identifies strengths and weaknesses in the traditional fieldwork placement model which suggests it may be time for a shift in the traditional model for the inclusion of managers and their views. An inductive and deductive approach to grounding of and understanding of these findings may signal an adaption to the current mode used in Aotearoa New Zealand, as it currently confines relationship building and inter-organizational relationships to a single season, which appears to be restrictive and socially distant. Furthermore, managers have not been included in

the literature as major players in such transactions. Such adaptations to the traditional model may enhance social service management goodwill towards student placement provision. This constructivist-interpretative research suggests that there is a call for inclusion of the management role and tighter responses and time given to social and human services organizational needs. Such findings appear to indicate that most managers were willing to consider how partnerships could be strengthened in the meso system.

In the fieldwork literature the traditional placement model emphasizes the supervisor, student and co-ordinator roles, and infrequently 'the agency' role. Although all these roles are fundamental to students' education and learning, it is the agency manager who provides placement material and personnel resources for student placement to happen. As an Indigenous woman manager said fieldwork placement in the social services meant "*personal relationships and pulling down fences*" which could refer to a need for more open personal and organizational systems boundaries and accessibility between organizations. It could be argued that social work education does not pay the social workers wages, or control contractual policy arrangements so it has to be questioned as to how the relationships can be improved for mutual benefit to both organizations. These findings in turn link the interpretative approach of this study to the subsidiary question and to policy issues as it endeavours to "identify strategic points of intervention" (Denzin, 2001 p. 2).

As the chapters on the study findings on complex factors influencing the traditional model of fieldwork placement provision and roles within it comes to an end, my reflections on what this entire thesis means, discourse on the study design and its caveat, reflections on the stem and subsidiary questions, residual effects left by students on placement and topics for further research is the seminal work of the final chapter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

11.1 Introduction

Provision of fieldwork placement is a critical resource needed for social work education contributing towards a student's preparation for the profession. It also adds to a significantly large component of the curriculum. The international literature on social work education identifies a shortage of agencies willing to provide fieldwork placement opportunities for students, which creates student placement challenges to schools or units of social work education. The aim of this qualitative study was to describe, explore and understand what factors influenced experienced Māori and non-Māori social service manager's decision making towards social work fieldwork placement provision. It was assumed in this study design that it would be managers who were asked the question: "Will you take a student on placement?"

These reflections on the stem and subsidiary question in this concluding chapter include the usefulness of the constructivist-interpretative study design, questions, paradigms and theories. A caveat to the study design is also provided here. This conclusion focuses not only on the stem question on factors that influenced managers in their placement decision making role, but on a subsidiary question on how interagency relationships in this context can be strengthened and maintained. Reflections on the significance of cultural contributions, student characteristics and organizational factors such as competition and supervision for placements are considered for their contribution to social work and social policy research. Considerations on relational transactions in complex inter-organizational and inter-personal processes in relation to the subsidiary question are concluding thoughts. The applicability of these interpretations internationally and recommendations for further research conclude this final chapter.

Māori and non-Māori managers in the relatively large non-statutory sector were of a particular interest because of their traditional and contemporary involvement in the sector and their obscurity in the fieldwork education literature and policy. Māori managers are relatively new to the fieldwork placement arena and there is very limited literature about their role in Iwi or Māori social services and their unique involvement in fieldwork provision. Their inclusion is one of the main contributions of this study because they have barely been included in the past. As Iwi social services are relatively new in this country, the subsidiary research question on how relationships may be developed maintained and strengthened between schools and agency management was considered essential. For any new construction to arise, various literature sources were interwoven with findings as a *kete* (basket) to offer others. Diverse repositories of organisational, social work fieldwork, cultural, student supervision and limited social work management and organizational literature contributed to data analysis and synthesis with the literature which made the study weighty. It is not easy to explain why the social work fieldwork placement literature is sparse about the management role in student practicum, although it may relate to historical practices of direct involvement with social workers in agencies.

This thesis offers a different lens to that in past fieldwork education literature which has principally been focused on the vital teaching and learning transactions for students. My focus has been more on exchanges of services, such as supervision, free labour, professional and cultural capital which it could be argued is shaped by a business management perspective. Little attention has been given to managers and the role they play in accepting, planning, resourcing, and supporting, monitoring and managing students on social work fieldwork placement. Managers take care of resource provision, student safety, legal liabilities, and provided time, social work opportunities and supervisory resources and encouragement towards completion of a student's educational needs for the duration of placement.

11.2 Discourse on design: question, paradigm and theories

In the framing and development of this study design it was assumed that managers made the decision about fieldwork placement and were arbitrators of provision, hence they were chosen as the participant group, so this assumption was checked out in the study. Interestingly most managers in this study identified themselves as the key decision makers when it came to responding to the question: “Will you take a student on fieldwork placement?”

As this description, inscription and interpretation of this study design (Denzin, 2001) the research activity emphasised management factors influencing provision, managers point of view and experiences of student placement provision decision making, the design method, methodology and theories were critical to draw out and interpret meaning from the data. To understand this complex topic, the literature review, interpretative research paradigms of ontology, epistemology, methodology and ethics helped to bring together the constructive analysis of meaning to factors, roles and inter-connections with agency management and to answer the research questions.

From a cultural and social service management perspective this dense qualitative design has contributed to theoretical development in the area of field education because it makes an examination which could be considered research into a specific management decision which is bi-cultural in nature. Attention to cultural positioning was a research imperative, given that there is a very limited number of studies on this aspect of fieldwork practicum. Furthermore, this study design was appropriate for Māori who particularly value *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face-to-the-face) methods of interaction, although this is not exclusively a cultural imperative. However, cultural practices are partly based on “*whanaungatanga*” (Walsh-Tapiata, 2008, p. 112) for the development of relationships and making connections in the traditional way.

Further, a qualitative design method was appropriate for this type of research because as a social scientist I was able to describe, examine and interpret how managers built up their own meaning and beliefs in a particular place and experiences over an extended period of six months. This interview method was appropriate to understand manager's perceptions, motives, influences, expectations as well as tensions associated with responses to fieldwork placement requests because it offered interpretive criteria extracted from Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) 'fourth moment' of interpretative research and cultural narratives. Questions asked of managers included how student information impacted upon placement decisions, whether or how organizational capacity constrained willingness and whether cultural requirements influenced their decisions and if so how. The research design and qualitative method included a dual interview process to collect data through inter-action, inductive and deductive reasoning for explanation and interpretation into robust findings. I was able to extract new understandings from the considerable amount of data gathered and synthesize it with some fieldwork education literature and the limited amount of management literature which related to fieldwork placement in social work education.

My epistemological stance in this social research was constructivism which allows for managers to construct their own reality and assign meaning to the stem question of factors influencing student placement provision and the answering of the subsidiary question. Although ground theory (Glasser, 1999; Strauss, 2000) was the basis of this methodology, constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2003) allowed for multiple social realities to emerge, an interpretive understanding of manager's meaning and it allowed for the construction of a "picture that draws from, reassembles, and renders subjects' lives" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 270) in their responses to the stem and subsidiary questions.

In addition, diverse methodological influences principally from eco-systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Germain & Gitterman, 1996, 1980; Pincus and Minahan, 1973; von Bertalanffy, 1972) made a significant contribution to the conduct of this research through the supply of conceptual ideas to increase understanding. This aided

the understanding of cultural and systems aspects of this study which allowed for deductive reasoning about 'if' and 'when' ideas. This application and its non-linear framework of concepts served the purpose for thinking about different social systems and structural layers involved in fieldwork transactions of students towards provision. These theories increased understanding of this social construction of multifaceted multi-systemic issues in the fieldwork component of social work education, and are diagrammed in the appendix of the adaption made of these theories. In my examination of this topic I have endeavoured to capture some contextual reality of the non-government sector, which could be viewed as the third sector (Lyons, 2001) or 'Cinderella' sector as it struggles in a sea of change and resource shortfalls. This term could also be applied to fieldwork education resourcing in social work education. Both sectors link into the influence of the macro system where globalization, technology and accompanied forces such as managerialism or scientific management, rationalization of tasks, performance indicators and increased productivity (Coulshed & Mullender, 2001) push for constant change and adaption to wider forces. Although multi-systems analysis made this interpretive research conceptually weighty, I endeavoured to hold together various baskets of theories, knowledge, transactions and action systems in an attempt to gain rich interpretative understanding.

Macro level system influences from the international contexts change the dynamics of organizational circumstances and as systems theory suggests, change in one system may affect the process of change in another system and roles within them. At a meso or neighbourhood level, benefits and risks identified by managers relate to qualities students brought to the agency system. Meso systems analysis aided focus on the student placement question and its source, its direction and destination and aided identification of problem points where two independent systems attempt fieldwork placement transactions. An exo or eso systems perspective on relationships offers a visual picture to the impact of students on the internal agency system, staff expectations and their counter adaption to students on practicum. A micro system data analysis aided and enhanced understanding of the individual manager with delegated authority from governance bodies to manage the agency, as a living person constantly adapting to the flow of communication into and out of the social service

delivery system and their essential role to decide on its value and when to disperse it. It could be argued that there is some delegated responsibility from managers to internal supervisors/educators to decide on provision in an open system because their role is to hold contractual responsibility for the student's learning about social work practice. Conversely, managers may also delegate authority to external supervisors to also enter their agency for the purpose of supervision of a student within their organizational system.

11.3 Caveat to this study design

Broad applicability may be tempered by some of these design features. Firstly, the findings indicate that these participants had received the majority of their requests for placement from Polytechnics and *Wananga* (Māori universities) at a time when first and second year diploma level students learned from placement opportunities. This may reduce the usefulness to tertiary educational institutes where students embark on placements at a later stage in their education programme and some educational institutions are moving towards a four year social work degree for (NZ) Social Workers Registration Board programme recognition purposes.

Secondly, broad applicability may be influenced by the sample cultural characteristics of Māori managers, as other Indigenous peoples internationally may have different characteristics. None the less as long as awareness of differences between groups the study design can be useful. Thirdly, I experienced difficulties in contacting agencies by telephone at the outset so finding a sufficient number of participants who were willing to contribute time to this study, was a slow and uncertain process. A different sample recruitment method may be required for replication of the study. The unavailability by non-participants may consolidate the findings about workload pressures participants stated they were experiencing.

Fourthly, the research design meant had that it was difficult to know before meeting the participants whether I could fully capture willingness and unwillingness factors

that might influence them towards fieldwork provision, especially from those with views antagonistic towards provision of student placements. To counter this I proceeded on the assumption that managers had experienced times when they could not or would not accept a student on placement. The hypothesis that willingness and unwillingness responses from participant managers would be available data is supported and provide a significant finding. On the other hand, unwillingness attitudes toward student placement may have affected availability of potential participant managers and consequently the findings.

Fifthly, the second interview (Appendices C) could have excluded the quantitative question about the number of fieldwork placement requests received over the last six months. I was aware of this but this question had the potential to confuse the data already gathered on that question. Sixthly, in hindsight the subsidiary question was difficult to give justice to because of its breadth; hence my early decision to contain inter-organizational partnership and inter-personal relationships to the context of the traditional model.

Seventhly, whilst working part-time on this study, with my supervisors in Australia, I may have generated irrelevant observations and vagueness in the disrupted interpretation process and the passing of time taken to complete this work. Despite this, I strove to arrive at a reasoned argument to support these concluding reflections.

Lastly, it could be argued by other researchers that this investigation would best be conducted by someone independent from both management and education. I will contest such a view because I had an equivalent number of years in social service management prior to the interviews and in social work education (lecturing and co-ordination role) at the time of the interviews. I consider these experiences provided a balanced positioning and this positioning offers credibility to this research outcome.

11.4 Reflection on factors influencing managers' decisions on student provision

Student factors affecting managers' decision making on fieldwork placement provision were prominent findings in this study in response to the stem question. Pre-placement processes of information provision and selection of students, managers' expectations during placement and how student difficulties might affect manager's future decisions towards fieldwork placement provision gave emphasis to this theme. A contribution this study makes is manager's need for detailed student information, similar to that provided by a job applicant, as well as supply of cultural information for Māori managers. Such involvement was seen as a vehicle for a preliminary assessment of safety risks, potential employees, and/or an opportunity to reduce uncertainty and avoid gambles of the past.

Competition appears to result in gates closing or opening according to what is going on in the organization, including other placements. Some managers were torn between deciding whether or not to throw out a life raft to a school of social work, while others were happy to 'pick and choose' between schools, according to their needs and loyalties. Although competition for student places is not new (Hay & O'Donoghue, 2008), the extent of competition identified in these findings is. Competition for placement creates agency choice between tertiary institutions involved in social work education and as this study found, from other disciplines. Other disciplines could be given preference, if the manager of the social service stems from another discipline or the agency is multi-disciplinary in nature. It could be argued competition places managers in advantageous positions to conduct tight student selection processes to closely meet the agency's needs. Student choice is likely expanded because of increases in social work programmes and numbers of students (Noble, et al., 2005; Townsend, et al., 2011) as well as posing a challenge to existing programmes which require agency goodwill. If managers say 'yes' to a request, it usually means that subsequent requesters receive a 'no' answer because of the likely long term commitment made to the first request. It therefore is important to be first in line, or the preferred tertiary institution of choice, signalled by an early pre-placement commitment by the manager. This may mean that schools of social

work may need to be strategic planners and relationship builders to ensure selective continuance of a supply of places for social work education.

Competition may also offer the market benefit of staff selection without financial cost to agency staff recruitment. Macro level factors such as the prevalence of the market model in western economies is aimed at stimulating competition. However, marketization has a tendency to reduce placement availability (Barton, et al., 2005), which could lead to long term consequences of unsustainability for tertiary institutes and for students. Marketization likely has a relationship to the funding arrangements for social services and philosophies that create other tensions within the social service agency, which could affect competitive responses, particularly if payment is offered.

Moreover, political, economic and financial tensions appear to be also factors impacting from macro to micro levels influencing positive responses to the student placement request for provision. These managers appeared resigned to the constantly shifting political environment of market reforms, a stormy sea with changing winds and air pressures in which the organization was continually being challenged. The non-statutory organizational context which was described as a “*battleship, not a passenger liner*” by a woman manager, appeared to influence the nature of responses to the placement question. Student acceptance depended upon whether students were going to fit into the agency and its needs and competently contribute to service delivery. Metaphorically the social service organization could be likened to a ship in a stormy sea overburdened with work. Whilst an aircraft from the school is endeavouring to land on a cleared deck to disembark a student passenger, who has been anxiously waiting for a signal to land. Such an organizational context appears to require well prepared ‘sailors’ with skill, to contribute to the task of staying afloat whilst on board. Unwillingness appeared to result when transaction costs between inter-organizational systems were considered too high, outweighing known benefits of provision. Work pressures, staffing and incapacity to cope were additional contributing organizational factors towards unwillingness to the student placement question of provision, factors which the social work education sector or co-ordinator

can do little about. What I have found is that these managers weighed up organizational and risks factors involved with provision, drew on previous experience of students and other pressing matters to inform their responses on the question of provision.

These final thoughts on organizational factors link to other themes of informational and cultural factors, student characteristics and relational transaction in the complex inter-personal and inter-organizational process that influence fieldwork placement provision. Silently hovering over these non-statutory social services are economic pressures and welfare policy changes which appear to dampen the spirit of these agency managers in community settings. Financial uncertainty, the nature of complex contracts for social service delivery, the need to reduce staff with increasing workloads appear to contribute to the pressure on managers as they consider the fieldwork placement provision question. These changes and challenges must pressurize organizational thinking, management; staff and service delivery which in turn must influence student teaching and learning (Jarman-Rohde, et al., 1997; Maidment, 2001) whilst in placement.

It is assumed from these findings that managers were resigned to their position of no financial recompense for placement provision, perhaps because of past exchange patterns of provision. However economic awareness was heightened when funds for other disciplines and international placements were received by a few managers for placement hosting. Broader questions arise as to how come social work education is out of step with other professions in terms of financial incentives for service? Despite recognition of organizational disparities, the placement question did not appear to depend upon funding but on the residual feelings and memories these experienced managers were left with after a student completed their placement.

This key themes suggests another rhetorical image of non-statutory social service organizations as “walled cities, at times transacting openly with their neighbours, and others closing their gates under siege. Boundaries are patrolled, controlled, surveyed,

opened carefully at times, violated at times, re-drawn and re-negotiated”, (Fineman, et al., 2005, p. 298). This quote appears to capture some of the processes involved in organizational structures and systems concerning fieldwork placement availability. The findings suggest that managers reassessed their non-statutory organizational situation from placement request to request in answer to the question about student fieldwork placement provision.

What has been found is that placement could either be “*disastrous*” or “*awesome*” for managers or something in between. The place on the outcome continuum depended on the student’s ability to learn, their knowledge, skills and ethical behaviour along with their ability to contribute to social work service delivery. An ecosystems perspective would possibly view “*disastrous*” students as being at a level of being a poor person-environment fit in their habitat or social location (Germain & Gitterman, 1996; Gitterman, 1996b; Healy, 2005). Some of these managers also thought it was the difficult or ‘risky’ students who were more likely to be involved in unethical behaviour or disharmony. These managers appeared to be cautious about providing a fieldwork placement for students who had serious problems such as dependency issues; an unacknowledged unaddressed child abuse history; children in protective care; involvement with violence orders; serious convictions or drugs or alcohol concerns. I have found that these participants did not mention that mental illness was a reason for exclusion from placement, but the remainder of these findings do suggest a similarity to other studies on fieldwork placement student unsuitability. Such factors suggest that co-ordinators need to have a hands on role to ensure they know students well enough to perhaps delay placement for those who posed a risk to client safety and agency goodwill.

One of the key findings in this study was how the manager and staff identified warning signs in student behaviour which allowed for the development of strategies to assist failing or unsatisfactory students on placement. Staff members were depended upon to identify problems early, so prompt action could be aimed at preserving the placement and their own and other stakeholder’s credibility. It appears that manager’s confidence to cope with less than satisfactory students had

built up over time. Strategies to avoid loss or risks to the organization not only included the need for pre-placement information, monitoring and safety strategies for student management, these were implemented in addition to formal supervision. However, even if schools of social work are challenged to tighten up their matching processes, such processes do not necessarily provide any guarantee to managers of an “*awesome*” student and successful outcome. Although achieving the optimal match of student with the agency is one of the most effective methods of ensuring a good placement experience (Coll, Eames & Halsey, 1997) for all concerned.

Although this sample of managers had more than three years’ experience in their position, it seems that they had successfully taken risks in the past. They appeared self-assured in their own ability to provide close monitoring, whether or not they were the designated supervisor. Alternatively past experiences may have led them to be cautiousness about any decisions to accept students without sufficient information or an interview process to assess their compatibility with the agency’s need, before responding to the placement request. So the findings appear to suggest that unmet expectations of students by managers could potentially lead to a process of decision making which included a pattern of de-motivation, loss aversion and risk aversion (Gleitman, et al., 2000).

In a study of supervisors by Barton et al., (2005) it was identified that supervisors thought managers would view costs as being time and resources, which these study findings appear to partially support, although the greater influence was the ‘quality’ of the students, and how student experiences influenced their future decisions. Although the fieldwork education literature discourse is about ‘quality placements’ required by social work educators the managers in this study were also seeking to accommodate ‘quality’ work ready competent and confident social work students who would benefit from committed supervisors and staff. Supervisors in the study by Barton et al., (2005) thought benefits of placement would improve service delivery, project completion, and development of a student, skills and ideas brought by competent students and the student making a contribution to staff development. These ideas are supported by this study, provided the student was able to contribute

significantly to social work delivery without constant supervision. As these findings suggest student supervision depends upon goodwill and inter-personal relationships, (Maidment, 2002a) as they do with all fieldwork placements. However, these findings affirm a collective supervision model which may include mentoring processes from other staff or from older people such as *kaumatua* and *kuia* which McCarthy (1997) and Dreadon (1997) suggest could enhance student learning.

Likewise, it could be assumed that the “*awesome*” student also left residual feelings influencing future sustainable goodwill. This could relate to the feedback concept from systems theory and memory recall. These managers generally welcomed students who had sufficient attributes of intelligence, commitment and motivation to contribute to the complexities of social service delivery. In essence goodwill was generated by experiences of work ready students who were cohesive with the agency staff, culture and philosophy.

It is proposed that ‘quality’ students were sought by these experienced managers, who had experienced previous students who left strong memories of a positive experience and subsequently deciding that they were valuable assets. The words ‘quality students’ or ‘quality placements’ are difficult terms to define and from a post-modernist frame, the words will mean different things to different people at different points in time. It appears that most managers in this study had expectations that the school of social work would provide them with ‘quality’ students that they would return in exchange for ‘quality’ placement (Cooper & Crisp, 1998; Hay, et al., 2006). It was expected that student produce ‘quality’ relationships with clients, co-ordinators, supervisors, agency management and staff and those in the inter-agency and wider networks such as cultural networks. The findings suggest that these managers wished to ensure the agency staff would do their best to provide a good learning experiences for placement students which included close supervision and a variety of learning experiences, sometimes provided for by a variety of staff members.

Personal reward, acknowledgement and appreciation shown for an agency's contribution by social work education; use of the agency knowledge by educators and an ongoing workable relationships, along with more than seasonal contact from the co-ordinator, seemed to be of value and created encouragement for managers towards provision. It could be argued that some agencies are supporting the profession by their search for work ready students to supplement or replace staff in a pressured workforce. However, given that social service organizations function most of the year without students, with many not supporting placements in various locations, it is assumed that social services can function without students, unless students are their sole workforce which appears to be rare. But many schools of social work such as those based in the Asia Pacific area cannot meet their educational purpose without the provision of the mandatory fieldwork placement under standards developed to a western curriculum (Zuchowski, 2011) where cultural practices are an integral part.

If placement shortages continue the question has to be asked as to whether the social service sector is moving away from traditional loyalty? Unsurprisingly, some writers maintain that with a modern capitalist society in its quest for efficiency, the time given to principle, tradition or sentiment has been lost (Bilton, et al., 1996) which must have an impact on responses to the fieldwork placement question. Or perhaps agency goodwill is being forced away because of donor fatigue, student saturation or just work overload. However, even if these managers decided to say "no" to a student being placed in their agency because of this range of information, organizational and student factors, these managers' views were not necessarily about the permanent closing of the willingness door, but possibly about the relationships.

11.5 Students leave residual effects on manager's future decision making

Despite these reflections any placement request appeared to be considered afresh by these managers, each time a response was called for because of changing circumstances. It appears from the findings that fieldwork placement decision making is one area these managers would like to leave to their own discretion despite

educational, legal and professional influences subtly steering social work education policy. Therefore, it would seem that coordinators may need to work with a manager's natural decision making process to remind them of successful placements of the past, relating to the feedback loop in systems theory (Payne, 2005). This also relates to the literature by O'Hare (2006) and the use of the analogical system in the brain of decision making where memories of past unsuccessful or successful placements and their relationship to current situations can be useful. New understandings from this study imply that memories and residual feelings about past students linger and become more dominant in managers' consciousness at the point of the next decision making response to provision, which then may influence their willingness or unwillingness. Such reflections on past experiences can be modified according to Gray, Plath & Webb, (2009). Perhaps the existence of a social service agency managed by a registered social worker but staffed exclusively by students may avert scarcity in the fieldwork placement system, or as suggested in the previous chapter, students working directly in communities on identified social issues rather than attached to a particular social service.

On the other hand, the current social service system of erratic supply of fieldwork placement may entropy or at least some driving forces found here could contribute to the ringing of warning bells of non-sustainability in its current form. Entropy, running down and eventually dying, a concept from systems theory, suggests that this is averted by input of external energy into a system to prevent exhausting the existing energy (Payne, 2005). External energy may need to come from changes in fieldwork placement systems, funding policy which recognizes the role of students on fieldwork placement and or closer inter-agency relationships or partnerships. It could be argued that such changes are overdue and that economic rationalism is about improving the economy through political and policy means. Policy too is about improving the effectiveness and efficiency of social services where their sentiment or loyalty to social work education may not have a place.

11.6 Managers' views on strengthening relationships in fieldwork context

Meaning has incrementally been built up in previous chapters on the role of social service managers as it applies to the stem and subsidiary questions on student placement provision. Inter-personal and inter-organizational relationships with social work education, before and within the placement season were themes identified by all managers in relationship to the stem and subsidiary question. I found that managers saw their role as unfolding in continuous closely connected relationships with other important stakeholder in the eso system, such as fieldwork placement co-ordinators, supervisors/educators of students and the students themselves.

However, one of the main contributions this study makes is the contribution from Māori managers and how cultural practices are integrated into practicum relationships. The data interpretation suggests they were generally willing to provide fieldwork placements for all students and to provide rich cultural experiences and team support to the student. Although background information on students was important to all managers, Māori managers said they needed to know *iwi*, *hapū* and *whānau* (tribe, sub-tribe and extended family) connections of *tauirā* (students). Knowledge of their own *whānau* links or willingness to learn were attributes sought from students. The findings suggest that Māori managers saw student placement as preparation of a reciprocal gift for the local community along with an individual gift to the individual *tauirā* (student). The data appears to suggest that the *tauirā* (student) as a *taonga* (gift) came from the community, via the school, while managers and staff in turn would gift their *kete* (basket) of knowledge to the *tauirā* (student). In turn this was returned back to the local Indigenous community for the purpose of enhancing the lives of *tangata whenua's* (the people of the land). It appears these managers sought *tauirā* (students) who had strong attitudes towards formation, development and maintenance of relationships with the local Indigenous community. Some Māori managers expected students to be able to effect change with dysfunctional *whānau*, improve disconnected cultural linkages whilst addressing social issues.

The collective nature of all staff working with the students may be seen as *whanaungatanga* (kinship relationships and responsibilities) by collective nurturing actions and shared responsibility. Māori managers in this study indicated a strong need for a student to understand or learn about their own and others *whakapapa* (descent lines). The concept of *manaakitanga* (obligation to care for the people who are guests) (Eketone & Shannon, 2006) appears to resonate for Māori managers in this study as they worked in *Ao Māori* (the Māori world) with *whānau* (extended family) support for students. It appears that Māori managers, whether or not they managed an *iwi* or *pākehā* organization drew upon cultural norms in their interaction with students. Any developments to the traditional model may be influenced by Māori cultural values such as mutually agreed reciprocity over and above the transaction or exchange of the student resource for the placement resource.

11.7 Applicability of findings and recommendations for further research

Although this study is based in *Aotearoa* New Zealand it has broader relevance and applicability because managers are important to the wider international social work picture. This study may be globally pertinent because fieldwork within social work education is relevant globally and a highly valued vital component of social work education programmes, (Bogo, 2010; Bogo & Vayda, 1998; Doel, Shardlow & Johnson, 2011; Homonoff, 2008).

The social research intention was to collaboratively build knowledge gained from, in and for social work education and social work practice in the fields of non-statutory management and fieldwork practicum. The interconnecting roles discussed here move forward the international discourse in a small way. Endeavours have been made to contribute to knowledge deposits and these findings may be applicable to social work, social work education, the role of community or human service managers, student fieldwork placement supervisors/educators, students and coordinators and possibly other professional groups who favour experiential learning. Further, this examination of the role of managers has striven to advance understanding to the managerial, educational, Indigenous and policy development

functions of fieldwork placement. The findings are likely to be applicable to polytechnic and similar tertiary institutions, *wananga* and universities who train social work students, although these managers' experiences appeared to be primarily with polytechnics and *wananga* students

These new understandings are particularly relevant to fieldwork education transactions and relationships conducted in provincial locations, where this study was located. Adaption to the traditional model, to include the management role, may further develop eso partnerships between institutions and individuals in fieldwork education. It is intended the findings will be functional for new schools of social work on the basis of comparability of the research context and therefore possibly transferable, as well as to provide links to further research.

This conclusion cannot exclude the difficulty faced by the researcher to access direct personal contact with agency managers to seek their interest in participation in this research, which in itself suggests a topic for further research about communication conduits and fieldwork placement arrangements. Furthermore, to keep this study manageable, statutory social services managers were excluded from this study. Research into the statutory sector could provide a comparable study in relation to the influence of professional identity on fieldwork placement provision. Also a recommendation for future research may be to gain an understanding of the current trend of the merging of health services with the *iwi* social service sector and how such a trend might impact the type of fieldwork placement opportunities offered or withheld for social work students.

Also the question arises as to what part a manager's professional identity and affiliation play in decision making towards social work student fieldwork placement provision. A social service manager's personal and professional affiliations will likely affect any professional sense of obligation to a profession or institution, particularly in a competitive environment, where choices between disciplines may need to be made. This question arose during the process of this examination and new

understandings gained from further research may throw light on whether professional background, identify or affiliations of managers of social service influence provision.

Further, the study identified that some managers had divided loyalties between different tertiary education institutes when it came to making a commitment to a placement request which challenged their loyalty. An interesting research project would be to examine what contributes to making or breaking of these loyalties.

The findings in this study suggest that these managers were interested in 'quality' students as being those with desirable personal characteristics and preparedness for practice with less emphasis on academic attributes. Although the literature refers to shortage of 'quality' placements it is not clear what is meant by educators about the need for 'quality' placements. Some writers refer to shortage of good quality placements while others such as Cooper and Crisp (1998) refer to accessing of sufficient placements that provide quality learning and supervision. Are 'quality' placements defined by education through the assessment of the student's work on placement from the student's viewpoint, the weight given to supervisor's feedback, training qualifications of the supervisor, the nature of the work provided for students or other factors? Further research may clarify further the desired profile of a 'quality' student perhaps before and after placement conducted in varying fields of social work settings. New understandings gained from this study leads to the question as to how schools can avoid placing students who during the course of their study show unsuitability for available placements. Writers such as Jarman-Rohde et al. (1997) questioned whether increased enrolments boosted numbers of "problem" students creating consequences for fieldwork placement. This issue linked to legal studies into managers' responsibilities with fieldwork placement provision and its association with risk may be a matter for future research.

Relevant to the need for 'quality' students and manager's desire to ensure 'quality' placements, is the question of the need for supervisor training. Prolific writers on social work fieldwork placement suggest that supervisor training in under resourced

agencies would keep people who were pivotal to placement out of the loop (Shardlow & Doel, 1996b). Research into the views of managers on the need for supervisor training of registered social workers and the likely impact on service delivery and supervisory staff is a topic that needs further research. The need for such training from a social worker and management perspective and as an educational policy requirement could impact on the response to the placement question.

Does a student presence in an agency keep practice sharp? This question could be a future study as it is not known whether it does actually influence the work of the agency and if it does, how does this happen? Research of this nature could potentially enhance provision by agencies who are yet to see the value of student contribution to service delivery.

Finally, this study raises a number of social policy questions such as how to address greater reciprocal arrangements between the field and education and the perceived financial unfairness for placement incentives between disciplines as identified by a few managers. The fiscal imbalance created by educational institutions receiving student fees for fieldwork placement papers, was noticed in that social work students spend most of their placement paper receiving educational and developmental learning services from a social service organization. Greater funding equality could mean greater opportunities for tangible support afforded in relationship building and maintenance of this component of social work education.

11.8 Concluding thoughts

This qualitative study has gathered data for interpretation from both Māori and non-Māori managers of non-statutory organizations in *Aotearoa* New Zealand. Greater understandings have been gained about the unique cultural contributions from Māori managers because so little has been written about their contribution to fieldwork placement. This study aimed to identify and examine factors influencing their

decision-making in relation to requests for social work student fieldwork placement provision with an objective of gaining their views on fieldwork placement for social work students. Willingness to provide placement was influenced by organizational factors such as competition from social work and other disciplines, funding arrangements, organizational practicalities, capacity and resources, and student factors such as pre-placement student information, duration of student education, their fit and proper characteristics and safety assurance received by managers in this study. Of significant importance to Māori managers was the student cultural information and year round relational exchanges between field and schools of social work, which related to both the stem and subsidiary questions.

As there was an average of five requests for placement over a six month period, it allowed for managers to make competitive student choices and this will continue if the number of requests increase. Conversely, multiple placement requests would likely place increased challenge and pressure on provincial agencies to develop policies about their response to such a question. It appears that managers were resolved to ensure that students were given the opportunity of a 'quality' placement provided the selected student were willing to learn and able to contribute to service delivery. For Māori managers there was the expectation expressed that students Māori or non-Māori contributed to cultural protocols and work with whanau disconnection and reconnection. Willingness towards placement provision was significantly influenced by memories of past successful placements of knowledgeable, skilful students who could contribute to social work delivery.

Although unwillingness towards provision of placements was not high, a cautious nature towards student placement had developed in these managers from experiences of previous students with a range of difficulties, unethical practices and unaddressed abuse and violence histories. They did not wish to be "*stuck*" with unsuitable or "*disastrous students*". One of the key findings in this study suggest that managers' past experiences had led them to the development management strategies to minimize risk, cost and losses spent on 'less than best' students who may present a risk to stakeholders. This in turn may contribute to manager's reduced expectations,

future de-motivation, future unwillingness and this experience could leave residual negative memories about the value of social work students to the agency.

The views examined here have implications for social work education, robust matching and selection processes and student preparedness for fieldwork placement and the nature of their contribution to social work delivery. As the 'quality' of students and risk management was important to these managers, it is recommended that Tertiary Educational Institutions situate their placements as late as possible in a social work qualification with emphasis given to pre-placement teaching and communication. Pre-placement interviews were to include the manager where any students with a criminal record shared this information.

A third question was asked in this study with the intention to gather manager's views on how student fieldwork placement arrangements could enhance and mutually benefit exchanges with schools of social work. This subsidiary question about student fieldwork placement arrangements would enhance and mutually benefit exchanges with schools of social work, and relationships was dependent upon the strength and the nature of relationships and continual communication flow between the agency manager and social work education. The constructive interpretations in chapter ten suggests an expansion of elements in the traditional fieldwork placement process, particularly those drawn from Māori cultural concepts of reciprocal exchange and mutual benefits in inter-organizational relationships. Some managers were particularly keen to share their service delivery knowledge on social issues with tertiary education social work staff and to improve social and human service delivery through ongoing learning from tertiary staff. As a tool this research may go some way to provide further ideas to develop and enrich eso partnerships between institutions agencies and individuals with active roles in social work fieldwork education.

The intent of this study was not to undermine the value of the essential educative role of student supervisors/educators or their goodwill in placement transactions but to

make a constructive-interpretative examination of the social service agency manager's views on placement provision. As the literature suggests, supervisor's views have been well canvassed but managers' stance has not, despite continuing decades of placement shortages. The findings suggest that these managers had a different role from supervisors, although some had held dual roles of supervisor and manager, at times. Yet little research has been identified about their views or role in decision making towards fieldwork placement provision for social work students.

This research was carried out on the assumption that it was the manager who took overall responsibility for fieldwork placement decisions on student provision, therefore their views were sought. These findings on the management role in such complex negotiations for fieldwork placement may improve understanding about the benefit of their involvement and shed some light on to why agency managers do or do not wish to make a contribution in fieldwork placement provision. I have found a number of areas that raise further questions and I have provided recommendations for further research. This constructivist-interpretative understanding and reasoning was derived through an inductive approach to data analysis and synthesis with the literature and deductions made through the use of ecosystems methodology to arrive at new grounded elements to the traditional fieldwork placement model. Concepts from ecosystems theory have assisted with the analysis at macro, meso, micro and eso levels of understanding. It has been well documented in the literature that fieldwork placement involves complex inter-actions, multiple relationships, practices and policies in many western societies.

These findings on manager's views on fieldwork as a critical component of social work education and decision making around the question of student placement provision suggests that additional elements are needed to enhance the traditional model enacted in *Aotearoa* New Zealand. Provincial social service agency managers appear to be seeking further mutually reciprocal inter-organizational and inter-personal relationships to a greater extent than the period of contact from tertiary educational institutes around the student placement duration.

Social service manager's involvement in fieldwork placement and their views on how information provision assisted them with their organizational needs are findings in this interpretative study.

Further Maori managers valued the opportunity to teach cultural practices to students and placement transactions conducted through *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face-to-face) communication which is about being present with the person and listening. Cultural practices were seen as contributing to the development of inter-personal and inter-organizational relationships for all immediate stakeholders principally staff, manager, supervisor, co-ordinator and educational staff.

Fieldwork placement co-ordinators may consider how to enhance agency relationships to include the manager, with a commitment to a bi-cultural pathway for fieldwork transactions and reciprocal exchanges. This study poses a challenge to social work education to further develop bi-cultural competence, ethical awareness, knowledge and generic skills so students could proficiently contribute to social service delivery in a beneficial way whilst on placement.

As student issues were a significant component of the data interpreted in this study, it suggests that a student's personal and professional awareness, abilities and characteristics contribute to the outcome of the fieldwork placement opportunity afford them. This outcome generates memories which influence future decision making about fieldwork placement provision. Such an application of the core findings of this study offers hope for this valued component of social work education in the future. The findings identify tasks for pre-placement activities as managers consider requests for release of resources as well as strategies developed to prevent placement failure.

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APPENDIX A: Information Sheet

20 January 2008

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INFORMATION SHEET

NEW ZEALAND SOCIAL SERVICES WILLINGNESS

TOWARDS PROVISION OF FIELDWORK PLACEMENT

Kia ora koutou,

You are invited to participate in a study into decision-making of managers of social service agencies, in relation to requests for student fieldwork placements, by schools of social work education. I am also interested in hearing your views on how reciprocal arrangements may transform student placements into exchanges of greater mutual benefit to social service agencies. Your participation is completely voluntary, that is, it will be your choice as to whether or not you wish to participate. If you do

choose to accept this invitation, you are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or negative consequences for yourself or your agency. If you choose to participate you are required to sign a Consent form that is attached to this Information Sheet and return it in the stamped addressed envelope.

Study objectives

Student placement is a significant component of social work training. Much of the local and international research literature on student placement has emphasized the importance of learning in the field for social work students, but little attention has been given to those agencies that are asked to provide this learning opportunity. Placement scarcity has also been noted over the past decade. Although at times your staff may be initially approached to provide a placement, ultimately placement decisions rest with the agency manager.

The objective of this essentially qualitative study is to interview participants to explore and examine factors that influence willingness towards requests for fieldwork placements of students of social work with non-statutory agencies. This study aims to identify the informational, psychological, social, and organizational factors that influence decision-making. A second objective is to hear and tape record manager's views on how student fieldwork placement arrangements could enhance and mutually benefit exchanges with schools of social work.

It is intended that this study will provide valuable insight into the views, expectations and needs of social service agency managers when approached with the placement question. It may ultimately assist in improving the quality of inter-agency relationships.

Participant selection

Inclusion:

The sample will include between 16-24 agency managers from medium to large well-established non-statutory social service agencies.

Exclusion:

Managers from statutory social services will be excluded at this time, as are newly established social service agencies. Managers of less than six months experience who may have had limited opportunity to experience placement requests, will be excluded as are social service agencies with less than four staff, paid or unpaid.

There will be no compensation or reward paid for participation.

Where will the study be conducted?

The study will be conducted in provincial centres of the Bay of Plenty and Nelson districts. Should you agree to participate, I will travel to your location and meet with you at a venue of your choice.

How will the study be carried out?

Participants will be required to participate in one semi-structured interview taking up to 1 1/2 hours of your time. Three months later, a short interview or email communication will be sought to confirm quotes to be used in the thesis and reflections on any additional thoughts arising from the research questions. During the study these are some of the questions I would welcome your response to.

- Number and source of requests you have received for student placement in the last six months.
- General factors that influence your decision-making in relation to accepting or declining requests for students on placement
- External agency factors influencing your decision making of acceptance/decline
- Internal agency factors influencing your decision making of acceptance/decline
- Practical suggestions for fieldwork collaboration between social service agencies and social work education providers and ideas on how the fieldwork placement relationship can be potentially transformed to be mutually beneficial and reciprocal.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Should you agree to participate, your name, the name of the organization and nature of the organization will be kept confidential. Confidentiality of any information shared will be maintained unless you give written consent to release the condition of confidentiality. The researcher will take all reasonable steps to protect your privacy and each participant will be given a pseudonym. To protect your anonymity any distinguishing personal or organizational characteristics in the reporting of results of the study in published material will be changed. The principal researcher will be the only person to have access to personal or organizational information gained from the interviews.

Safety and security of data

The interview will be audio taped and transcribed verbatim by the principal researcher in the researcher's office. When the material is not being worked on it will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for security. The raw data will only be accessed by the researcher involved in this study and will not be available to anyone else. The participant can decide at the end of the study whether or not you require the interview audiotape returned or destroyed. At the conclusion of the study the transcribed data will be stored for five years in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. The Head of Department will be responsible for destroying the sealed envelope containing the data after five years. The researcher will edit the transcript for quotes and send or bring to you the quotes in their context in the thesis for peer review and to check for accuracy before the study is published. Findings of the overall study will be summarized and sent to the participant. The results of the study will be submitted to an appropriate journal for publication.

What are the risks and benefits?

I do not envisage any serious risks to you or your organization if you choose to participate. However I am aware that interviews can bring to the surface memories of difficult (and positive) experiences or relationships between some people, such as former students on placement. Should this possibility occur special care will be taken to ensure you know you can exercise the right to decline to answer any questions, and/or request the recorder be turned off during the interview. The benefits are that your views will be heard and recorded and you will receive a copy of the research summary.

General

If you require more information please do not hesitate to phone or email me if you have any questions about this study. Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

This research is being carried out in fulfillment of requirements for a Doctorate in Humanities – Social Work and Social Policy, Curtin University, Perth, Australia.

This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number HR 35/2007). If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth, 6845 or by telephoning 9266 2784 or by emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au.

This study has been reviewed and received ethical approval from Te Wānanga o Aotearoa Ethics Committee, Protocol No. RE-15-05-07-002.

Patricia (Trish) Hanlen

Ph. 07 5440920 ext. 6823 (w)

APPENDIX B: Interview questions

NEW ZEALAND SOCIAL SERVICES WILLINGNESS TOWARDS PROVISION OF FIELDWORK PLACEMENT

Semi-structured interview - List of intended questions

Thank you for agreeing to this interview.

- Generally, what is **your overall response to the request** from Schools of Social Work to provide a student fieldwork placement?
- Can you recall **how many approaches for fieldwork placements** your agency as had in the last six months? **From which School of Social Work?**
- Given the nature of the work your agency does, how **appropriate or practical** is it to introduce a social work student into your agency for **60-80 days at a time?**
- Does your agency have a policy for you to follow or is the decision totally up to you? (If yes, can I have a copy?)
- Have there been times when you have been **willing to take a student on placement but unable to (e.g. because of capacity, resources or timing)?** Could you describe the **situational context**, when you have been unable to take a student?
- If you make the decision **not to take a student(s) on placement, what would the main reasons be?**
- **What information do you need to inform your decisions** as a manager in relation to approaches made by a Placement Co-coordinator, (or Social Work Lecturer)?
- **How useful is the School's Placement Information book** for guiding your decision as to whether or not to accept a student on placement?
- Are you aware of any **major personal or psychological factors** (e.g. feelings about the person who made approach/the institution/former students) that

affect your decision making to either accept or decline to take a social work student on placement?

- What **social factors** (e.g. staff relationships, knowledge of potential student, past student performance) that influence your decision-making?
- What **internal or external organizational factors** would influence your decision making on the student placement question? (e.g. cultural factors, funding arrangements, internal supervisors, confidentiality, resources).
- Do you take **Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 or Year 4** students? Any preferences?
- Do you require students to have a **driver's licence**?
- Do you **Police check students** or rely on the school to have done this recently?
- Do you have **other special requirements** for student placements?
- How many times do you **expect the Schools of Social Work to visit**? 1, 2, 3, 4.
- What practical changes in the **traditional placement model** do you think would influence you and **meet your agencies needs around student placement** decision making?
- If you currently take students on placement, what do you think are the risks and benefits to your agency
- Do you think the agency/school relationship can be more mutually beneficial and reciprocal? If so, how?
- Would you prefer a second short interview or an email follow-up in 2-3months time?
- Any other comments you would like to make before I go?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX C: Second interview

Name:

Date:

2nd Interview – please save this and then write in whatever thoughts come into your head in response to these questions. The purpose of asking these questions again is to capture your reflections since our last interview and to ensure I have captured your thoughts clearly. Thank you.

- Generally, what is your overall response to the request from Schools of Social Work to provide a student fieldwork placement? (Express your response in whatever way you like- this is confidential)
- Can you recall how many approaches for fieldwork placements your agency as had in the last six months? From which School of Social Work?
- Given the nature of the work your agency does, how appropriate or practical is it to introduce a social work student into your agency for 60-80 days at a time?
- Does your agency have a policy for you to follow or is the decision totally up to you? (If yes, can I have a copy?)
- Have there been times when you have been willing to take a student on placement but unable to (e.g. because of capacity, resources or timing)? Could you describe the situational context, when you have been unable to take a student?
- If you make the decision not to take a student(s) on placement, what would the main reasons be?
- What information do you need to inform your decisions as a manager in relation to approaches made by a Placement Co-ordinator, (or Social Work Lecturer)? How useful is the School's Placement Information book for guiding your decision as to whether or not to accept a student on placement?
- Are you aware of any major personal or psychological factors (e.g. feelings about the person who made approach/the institution/former students) that

affect your decision making to either accept or decline to take a social work student on placement?

- What social factors (e.g. staff relationships, knowledge of potential student, past student performance) that influence your decision-making?
- What internal or external organizational factors would influence your decision making on the student placement question? (E.g. cultural factors, funding arrangements, internal supervisors, confidentiality, resources).
- Do you take Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 or Year 4 students? Any preferences?
- Do you require students to have a driver's licence?
- Do you Police check students or rely on the school to have done this recently?
- Do you have other special requirements for student placements?
- How many times do you expect the Schools of Social Work to visit? 1, 2, 3, 4.
- What practical changes in the traditional placement model do you think would influence you and meet your agencies needs around student placement decision making?
- If you currently take students on placement, what do you think are the risks and benefits to your agency?
Risks:

Benefits:
- Do you think the agency/school relationship can be more mutually beneficial and reciprocal? If so, how?
- Any other comments you would like to make. Thank you.

APPENDIX D



31 March 06

64 Taipari Street
Maungatapu,
Tauranga

E nga iwi, e nga reo, e nga karangatanga maha o nga hau e wha, tenei te mihi atu ki a koutou katoa.

To Whom It May Concern,

I have read the research proposal of Trish Hanlen entitled 'A Study into Aotearoa/New Zealand Social Services willingness towards Fieldwork Placement Provision'.

I fully support its intention and believe that all students and those involved with social work education, inclusive of Tangatawhenua (people of the land) taura (students) and Kaiako (tutors) will benefit from this study. Many of the social work taura from Te Wananga O Aotearoa, where both Trish and I are employed are tangatawhenua and often seek to be placed in tangatawhenua based organisations, whether they are iwi (tribal), hapu (sub-tribal) or pan-tribal. The lack of suitable placements for tangatawhenua and or non-tangatawhenua affects the taura and their abilities to integrate their learning (bi-cultural) with practice.

With regard to tangatawhenua matters I am prepared to act as a cultural (Maori) consultant to support Trish in matters of 'taha Maori' in her research process and or seek appropriate cultural advice when required.

Naku noa, na

Emma Webber-Dreadon (Kaiako)
Dip Soc Wk (Victoria University), Post Grad Dip (with Distinction) Soc Service Supervision (Massey University), MANZASW.

APPENDIX E:

CONSENT FORM

Study project title: NEW ZEALAND SOCIAL SERVICES WILLINGNESS
TOWARDS PROVISION OF FIELDWORK PLACEMENT

- I have read and understand the information sheet dated 20 January 2008 for managers taking part in this study designed to ascertain how student placement decisions are arrived at and ideas for enhanced reciprocity.
- I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and understand I may ask questions about this study at any time and know who to contact.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.
- I understand that I can decline to answer any particular questions in the study if I wish to.
- I understand that my participation in this study is confidential and that no material that could potentially personally identify my participation or this agency will be used in published material.
- I have had time to consider whether to take part.
- I agree to participate in the study by being interviewed by the researcher and the interview recorded on an audiotape.
- I agree to a second shorter interview up to three months after the initial interview, (where notes will be taken) or if I prefer, via email contact, to confirm my quotes and reflections.
- I understand that at the conclusion of the study I have the right to decide whether the interview tape shall be returned to me, or destroyed.
- I consent to participation in this study under the conditions set out on the Information sheet.

Participant's signature.....Date.....

Please retain one copy of this consent for your records and return one copy in the stamped addressed envelope provided. Thank you.

APPENDIX F: Glossary of terms and interpretation of Māori words

Aotearoa	Land of the long white cloud – Māori name for New Zealand
Awhi	Support each other
Indigenous	Belonging naturally to a place (as opposed to those coming later). Māori are the indigenous people, or Tangata Whenua, of Aotearoa New Zealand
Iwi	Tribe, race, people.
Hauora	Health and well-being.
Hongi	Sharing of breath.
Hui	Meeting; gathering
Kaiako	Course tutor
Kaiawhina	Mentor
Kaitohutohu	Fieldwork teacher
Kanohi ki kanohi	Face to face
Karakia	Prayer, incantation
Kaumatua and Kuia	Male and female Elder
Kaupapa	Rule; agenda; idea; philosophy
Kawa	Protocol
Kai	Food
Kuia	Elderly woman; grandmother
Mahi	Work
Manaakitanga	Obligation to care for the people who are guests
Marae	Meeting ground, traditional infra-structure
Matua whangai	To nurture, to feed, to care for
Mana	Prestige; influence; authority

Māori	Indigenous New Zealander
Mokopuna	Grandchild
Pākēha	Non-Māori New Zealander
Pepeha	Introduction
Poroporaki	Farewell
Pōwhiri	Gathering
Pūao-te-ata-tū	Day break
Tangata whenua	People of the land
Taonga	Gift, treasure
Tapa wha	Māori mental health model
Tauwi	Foreigner
Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi	Social Services Industry Training Board
Te Wheke	The octopus
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi, an agreement between the British Crown and about 540 Māori rangatira (chiefs) that was first signed on 6 February 1840.
Te Wānanga o Aotearoa	University of New Zealand
Tīaki	Mentor model
Tikanga	Traditional customs; indigenous knowledge/practice
Waiata	Song, composition
Wairua	Spirit
Waka	Canoe
Whānau	Family
Whakatau	Welcome
Whakapapa	Genealogical links; ancestry
Whakawhānautanga	Relationship building

Māori language references:

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APPENDIX G: Acronyms

AASWWE	Australian Association of Social Workers and Welfare Education
ANZASW	Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers
ANZASWE	Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Work Educators
CUAP	Council of University Academic Programmes
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
IASSW	International Association of Social Service Workers
NCETSS	New Zealand Council of Education & Training in Social Services
NZSWTC	New Zealand Social Workers Training Council
NFP	Not for profit (sector)
NGOs	Non-Government organizations
SWRB	Social Workers Registration Board (New Zealand)
TKA	<i>Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi</i>

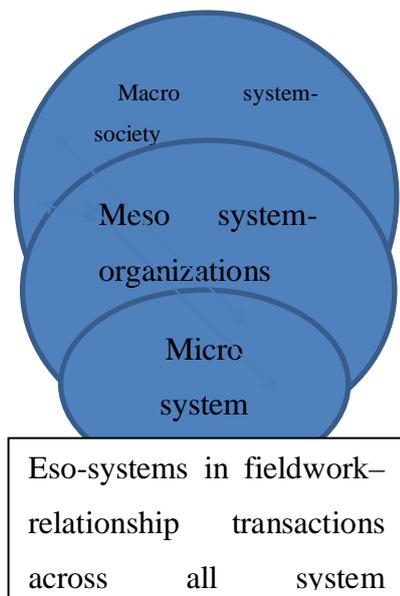


Diagram 1: **Mapping systems for fieldwork**

Placement transactions

Non-statutory social service Managers decision on field work placement requests

Factors that influence willingness response (open system)

or unwillingness response (closed system) to the request

Factors influencing provision

Eco-systems conceptual application

Organizational conditions, staff and need	Macro and meso system, structure, boundary, habitat and homeostasis
Competition, pre-placement information, interview and risk assessment	Transactions, relatedness, and level of fit, inter-connective roles, micro system, strategies for adaptive balance, student coping
Reflection on previous students contribution to service delivery and memory of previous placement experience	Student Role, micro system, student-in-environment, interconnectivity between systems, networking, vulnerability, systems change
Mutual reciprocal relationships, cultural and educational dimension unfolding with Tertiary Educational Institute requesting provision.	Reciprocity, inter-organizational transactions, eso system interrelatedness, systems function, communication, Sub systems connectivity
(Ecosystems concepts for fieldwork: Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Compton Gallaway & Cournoyer, 2005; Germain & Gitterman, 1996; Gitterman, 1966b; Pincus & Minahan, 1973, von Bertalanffy, 1968)	“Where there is a good fit, person and environment both flourish” (Germain & Gitterman, 1996, p.2).

