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Exploring experiences of non-South Africa social work students in field work placement

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CHAPTER 1:

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

Field work placements in social work connect theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom with field practice. It is a strategically designed, supervised, coordinated and evaluated setting, based on the criteria that students should demonstrate their competencies (CSWC, 2008). Through field work placements students are exposed to a broader understanding of the social work profession and the nature of the problems the profession addresses itself to and learning which takes place at various levels, that is, intellectually, emotionally and practically (Bogo, 2006).

Though field practice is appears to be a very crucial learning process in Social work, literature and previous research studies has confirmed that international students do encounter supplementary problems compared to host or local students (Wards, 2001; MacGregor, 2014 & Diana, 2016). This research study seeks is to explore the experiences of non-South African Social work students in field work placement.

This chapter briefly highlights the statement of problem and the rationale for the study, along with its aim and objectives, a basic description of the research design and methodology as well definitions key concepts is also provided in this chapter.

1.2. Statement of the problem and rationale of the study

As the signature pedagogy of the social work profession (Maynard, Mertz & Fortune, 2015), field education provides students with a real world opportunity to begin to develop their professional identity. In field work placements students learn through hands-on experience.

Field placements require students to grapple with different needs of their clientele (Dhemba, 2012). In the past two decades of democracy in South Africa, the area of experiences non- South African students in field work placements has never been directly tackled. Previous studies were on experiences of students doing field work generally (Mamabolo, 2013; Mangena, 2015).

A qualitative research study that was conducted at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) also demonstrated that international students do encounter difficulties during practice

(Mamabolo, 2013). Another study that was conducted four years later in South Africa in the same way confirmed that feeling overwhelmed during field practice, trying to locate resources for impoverished clients during a time of fiscal restraints and cutbacks is a commonly shared issue for both American and other international social work students in South Africa (Diane, 2016). The consistence in the findings suggests that there is evidence to believe that social students face challenges during field work.

Fieldwork synonymously known as field instruction, field placement, field education, practicum or internship is an integral component of social work education. Bogo (2006) outlines field education as a component of social work education where students learn to practice social work by delivering social work services in agencies and community settings. Dhemba (2012) adds that field internships ensures that students engage in supervised social work practice, facilitates the development of an awareness of self in the process of intervention, provides opportunities to apply classroom learning, and allows them to practice skills and to learn the values and ethics of the social work profession while enhancing the well-being of people. These include respect to the fundamental human rights, dignity and worth of all human beings, the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, self- determination and autonomy (South African Council for Social Service Professions).

Non-South African students are part of the South African student community. MacGregor (2014), in the annual publication of International Education Association of South Africa argues that the number of international students in South Africa has grown dramatically since 1994. Ayliff and Wang (2006) confirms that in 1996 South Africa had around 13,000 international students enrolled in South African universities, increasing to over 53,000 in 2007. Demographics demonstrate that there is an increase in the numbers of non-South African students pursuing their studies in South Africa since democracy, from 12,600 to 72,875 on 2012 (MacGregor, 2014). Due to a significant proportion of international students coming to South Africa to study, and contributing to the South African education system and economy (Ramphele, 1999), it is essential to understand their experiences.

Studies have found that international students encounter more problems than host or local students. Wards (2001) reiterate that international students do face different forms of challenges in their host countries. A study by MacGregor (2014) reports that international students list

accommodation, financial pressures, language, support and adjustment challenges, lack of local friends and xenophobia among the challenges they encounter while studying in South Africa. Some of these issues could impact on an international students' practicum experience. This study builds on previous studies by Mamabolo (2013) who looked at students general experiences of field work practicums and Mangena's (2015) study which looked at experiences of international social workers in South Africa.

Against the above background, this study seeks to explore experiences of international students in South Africa. In addition, apart from the motivation derived from literature, the researcher is also interested in the study based on his personal interaction with colleagues who are international students and was compelled to explore if the colleagues experiences affects other international students. Thus, in as much as international social work students gain cross-cultural training, experience and skills, it is important to understand context-specific challenges and explore how they can be assisted to complete their studies successfully. The implications of this study may contribute to debates on internationalization specifically on social work field work placements at South African universities at an undergraduate studies level.

1.3.Research question

What are the experiences of international social work students, registered at a South African university, on field work practicums?

1.4. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to explore experiences of non-South African Social work students regarding their field work placement. In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives have been formulated.

I. To explore international students understanding of social work field work placement;

ii. To investigate challenges that the international students face during field work placements;

iii. To explore how the students can be assisted to complete placements successfully.

1.5.Brief description of research design and methodology

The main aim of the study was to explore the experiences of non-South African Social work students regarding their field work placement using exploratory research design. The reason for using this kind of research design is that it allows for "what' questions to be considered (De Vos Strydom and Delport (2012). This design assist the researcher generate new information in the relation to research subject. Henning (2004) adds that this approach is most appropriate when there is a quest for understanding and an in-depth inquiry into phenomena. Denzin and Lincon (2011) reiterate that qualitative studies involve a quest to understand a particular phenomenon in great detail using an insider's view.

The researcher made use of a semi-structured interview as method of data collection. Semi-structured interview helps to ensure that the interview flows within boundaries (Creswell, 2013). It allows the researcher to confirm in his checklist whether important themes were exhausted during the interview. Open-ended questions were used in order to participants to voice their opinions regarding field work placement. The data which was collected was then analyzed and put into themes in order show the end results.

1.6. Theoretical Framework: Systems Perspectives and Experiential Learning Theory

This study will use the eco-system perspective to understand how non-South African students adjust and adapt to their host country (South Africa) and to their field work environment. The ecosystems perspective is a way of seeing case phenomena, (the person and the environment) in their interconnected and multilayered reality, to order and comprehend complexity, and avoid oversimplification and reductionism (Lasser & Pope, 2007). The researcher will also use the experiential learning theory as a sub-theory for this study to understand how students engage with their clients from different upbringing and cultural backgrounds during practice.

Eco-system perspective came from the general systems theory. Lasser and Pope (2007) outline the general systems theory as a set of rules for analyzing how systems operate and relates to one another. In social work there are several perspectives that have emerged from the general systems theory. These include ecological perspective and the ecosystem perspective (Lasser & Pope, 2007). Hence the eco-system focuses on the person and the environment. The ecosystem model has extensive applicability in field work placements and social work field work education. It has application when studying international students in the diaspora and studying students in

general. Non-South African students in this case can be viewed as systems and their field work agencies and workload (clients) as the environment that they have to interact with.

Students' host country environment, collegial relationships, field work placements and the host countries' culture do shape and influence students and students also influence these systems in turn. The learning process of non-South African students in field placements in South Africa is contingent to all these factors (systems). These factors can impact negatively or positively to the students. Therefore this study needs to explore the experiences of these students in field work practice given the shortage of literature that speaks to this subject.

Experiential learning involves 'direct encounter with the phenomena being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or only considering the possibility of doing something about it' (Borzak, 1981, p. 9 quoted in Brookfield 1983). This theory was formulated out of four elements: concrete experience, observation and reflection, the formation of abstract concepts and testing in new situations. This theory is applicable with training programs for professions such as social work and teaching or in field study (Brookfield, 1983).

Social work requires students to grapple with practical experiences and to engage with phenomenon in natural space of interaction in field work placements. Students apply their theoretical understanding to effect change. The experiential learning theory justifies why students need do field work practice as part of the requirements of social work education, given that Social work is a practicing profession within various systems. Both experiential learning theory and the ecosystem theory will be used as they complement each other and provide systemic and contextual understanding of field work practicums. In addition, both frameworks are significant in seeking to understand the students' holistic experiences in field work placement.

1.7. Definition of key concepts

Field work placements

It's a consciously planned set of experiences occurring in a practice setting designed to move students from their initial level of understanding, skills and attitudes to levels associated with autonomous social work practice.

Non-South African students

The term non-South African students apply interchangeable with international or foreign students in the South African context. International students are those who travel to a country different from their own for the purpose of tertiary study.

Social work education

Provide a program that result in graduates who are competent, effective, skilled, knowledgeable-based, ethically aware and confident practitioners (Bogo, 2006).

1.8.Overview of the chapters

The first chapter provides an introduction to the study by also providing the reasons to the study. The second chapter provides the literature review behind the study by providing relevant theory that the study drew on. The third chapter provides a description of the research design and methodology while chapter four analyses the data which has been collected in the third chapter. The last chapter, chapter five provides a summary of the main findings, the conclusion, as well as the recommendations.

1.9.Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the details of the groundwork upon which this study was built on. The study aim, objectives and the methodology aimed to provide an insight towards the comprehension of the subsequent chapters. This chapter has also highlighted the theoretical framework that guides the study.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Field education is the signature pedagogy of the social work profession (Maynard, Mertz & Fortune, 2015). The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (2004), in its definition of social work embrace the theoretical component of social work taught in the classroom and field- based education involving integration of the academic aspect and practice. Fieldwork, which is also known as field instruction, field placement, field education, practicum or internship is therefore an integral component of social work education (Dhemba, 2012; Bogo, 2006). This chapter will address the background of field work placement, the historical overview of Social work education in general and narrow it to the South African context, international, regional and local legal frameworks, supervision of students in field work, non-South Africans students and their experiences of field work placement and the theoretical framework.

2.1. Brief overview of Social Work as a professional discipline

An academic discipline is an institutionalized representation of a combination of a certain mass of accumulated knowledge and teaching. Soydan (2011) adds that an academic disciple is often formalized by educational and research policies to develop, maintain, and sustain a domain of knowledge, skills, and teaching. In most cases perspectives, specialization of knowledge is a main driver of the establishment of academic disciplines. According to Soydan (2011) academic disciplines are also embedded in complex organizational settings, and at the core of a discipline's organizational setting are the traditional academic schools and departments, accommodated by universities. Other components include intra-academic rules and ethics, teaching methods, diplomas for various types of accomplishments, criteria by which quality of scholarly outcomes are assessed, accreditation systems (Soydan, 2011). Therefore, Social work as a professional academic discipline also shares these features.

The Social work profession is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for

diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (International Federation for Social Workers (IFSW); International Association of Institutions of Social Work Education (IASSW), 2014). The profession of social work was developed partly with the developments in humanitarian welfare. In 1898 the first school for social workers was established. The New York School of Philanthropy (later to become the Columbia University School of Social Work) grew out of a series of summer workshops and training programs for volunteers and friendly visitors and offered a one-year educational program (Mason, 1987).

In the 1900s instructor Simon N. Patten coined the term "social workers" and applied it to friendly visitors and settlement house residences (Mason, 1987). Simon and Mary Richmond disputed on whether the major role of social workers should be advocacy or delivering individualized social services. In 1910-21 Jane Addams and Mary Richmond occupied leadership positions in the National Conference of Charities and Corrections (NCCC), which was later renamed to National Conference of Social Work.

Great Britain passed the National Insurance Act, which organizes a health and compensation program paid for by contributions from workers, employees, and public. In 1914 Canada opened its first school of social services at the University of Toronto, the emphasis of first curriculum on social economics, social psychology and social ethics theories; practice emphasis on social settlements and community work, penology, medical social services, recreation, immigration, labor, and child welfare.

At a National Conference on Social Welfare, Abraham Flexner declared that social work had not yet qualified as a profession, especially because its members do not have a great deal of individual responsibility and because it still lacks a written body of knowledge and educationally communicable techniques (Mason, 1987). Mary Richmond then published the *Social Diagnosis.* Social workers used her book as a primary text and as an answer to Flexner (Mason, 1987).

In 1919 seventeen schools of social work that existed in the United States and Canada form the Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Work to develop uniform standards of training and professional education. This group was later renamed as the American Association of School of Social Work (AASSW), eventually becoming the Council on Social

Work Education (CSWE). The Charity Organization Societies (COS) becomes oriented increasingly toward helping families. 1937 The AASSW declares that beginning in 1939 the requirement for social work accreditation will be a two-year master's degree program. The MSW then became a requirement to be considered a professional social worker.

In 1939 the American Association of Schools of Social Work, the accrediting body for social workers, declared MSW degree as the minimum requirement to be a professional social worker. In 1983 the NASW established a National Peer Review Advisory Committee and trained social workers to evaluate the work of other social workers to promote accountability and to meet quality control requirements of government and third-party funding organizations. The CSWE then issued a Curriculum Policy Statement for baccalaureate as masters' degree programs in social work education. BSW education was then recognized as the first level of professional social work education. The degree that is offered in social work today came from these developments.

2.2. Background of Field work Placement

Field work placements forms a fundamental part of social work education, Bogo (2006) noted that field work placements are a component of social work education whereby students learn to practice social work by delivering social work services in agencies and community settings. Field work practice ensures that students engage in supervised social work practice, facilitates the development of an awareness of self in the process of intervention, provides opportunities to apply classroom learning, and allows students to practice skills and to learn the values and ethics of the social work profession as they are enhancing well-being of people (Moorhouse, 2013).

Fieldwork placement is defined as a consciously planned set of experiences occurring in a practice setting designed to move students from their initial level of understanding, skills and attitudes to levels associated with autonomous social work practice (Hamilton & Else, 1983 in Dhemba, 2012). Kaseke (1986) also observes that fieldwork is an instrument of socialization since it prepares the student for a future role as a social work practitioner. He further asserts that, a meaningful fieldwork placement is one that enhances the students understanding of the social work profession and the nature of the problems the profession addresses itself to and learning therefore takes place at various levels, that is, intellectually, emotionally and practically.

Field education connects theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with field practice. The educational system is strategically designed, supervised, coordinated and evaluated based on criteria that students in which demonstrate their competencies during field placement. It equips students' with skills and knowledge as part of a learning process on how to practically apply theory in real life contexts (CSWE, 2008).

Field work placemats requires students to grapple with different kinds of needs of their clientele, and non-South African students are no exception to these requirements (Dhemba, 2012). In the past there was more interest in studying the experiences of local students in their field practicums or students in general (Diane, 2016). Less attention was directed to non-South African students specifically. This breach in literature speaks precisely to the unexplored experiences of international social work students in field placements which establish the intentions of this study.

2.3. Historical overview of social work education internationally

According to Nicholas, Rautenbach and Maistry (2010) social work education emerged almost simultaneously in Britain, the United States, and the European continent, Asia (India), South America and in Africa at the turn of the century. It was quickly progressing in each location from lectures to full-time training. Generally, the 1920s marked the genesis of Social work education in the United States (Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004). The employment of paid staff and their training by Charity Organization Societies (COS) facilitated a shift from the unorganized charity and social service to the beginning of an organized and systematic social work. The first training centre was organized by New York Charity Organization Society (NYCOS) in 1898 currently known as the Columbia University.

Hospital based training and social work services were also initiated around the same time at Boston Hospital. The First World War increased the casualties among the poor, consequently various wartime charity programmes were initiated and Welfare Acts were passed. World War I provided unique opportunities for social case workers to prove the necessity of their skills. Thus the prestige of social work rose up in war related activities such as the Red Cross home services.

Mary E Richmond is considered the first professional social worker in the US. She became the assistant treasurer of Baltimore Charity Organization Society. Later on she became practitioner, teacher and theoretician of the Charity Organization Movement. In the National Conference on

Charities and Corrections held at Toronto, she also advocated the establishment of training schools for professional social workers in 1897. The other group of social workers like Hane Addams, Florance Kelly, and Edith argued for bringing of legislation to improve the working conditions of neighbourhood organizations.

The book 'Social Diagnosis' by Mary Richmond in 1917 is considered as the foundation for the theoretical basis of social work. Chicago School and Boston school formed the second and third schools of social work in the USA respectively. The American Association of Schools of Social Work was founded in 1919 to facilitate communication among the schools.

In India the formalisation of Social Work education emerged out of a settlement house-like agency, the Nagpada Neighbourhood House was founded in 1926 in the slums of Bombay, India by Dr Clifford Manshardt-an American missionary. From the experience he gained in the settlement, Manshardt was very convinced "that the standard of Social Work in India could not be raised appreciably until a permanent School of Social Work was set up to engage in a continuous study of Indian social problems and to offer training for Social Work on a graduate basis". Clifford Manshardt sought the help of an Indian industrialist for finance and opened the first professional Social Work school in the name of Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work in Bombay in 1936.

In Africa, South Africa was the first country to offer social work education courses. Sakaguchi & Sewpaul (2009) further point out that the scope of social work education in South Africa initially adopted the European method of practice. The focus was more on casework. Hence, the intervention was directly concerned with individual. According to McKendrick (1990), the National welfare Act in 1965 also contributed to the development of social work education in South Africa.

2.4. Overview of Social work education in the South African context

The origins of social work in South Africa are found within the forces of racist capitalism, social conflict and unequal power relations - shaped by the hegemonic ideologies of the various eras during the 20th century and even earlier colonial and imperialist origins (Smith, 2014). The history of social work education in South Africa goes back to the 1920s, the Carnegie Report contributed to its formalization (Seekings, 2008). Social work was first offered was at the

University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1924. Founding figures of social work education were Professor Bateson of UCT, representing liberalism and Professor Verwoerd of the University of Stellenbosch, representing Afrikaner nationalism (Seekings, 2008). Smith (2014) adds that other training institutions were then established, like the institutions of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Minnie Hofmeyr College for "colored people" women and the Huguenot College for "white people" women (previously Friedenheim College) in 1931, the Transvaal University College in 1929, the University of Pretoria (UP), the University of the Witwatersrand in 1937, Jan Hofmeyr College for "black people" doing social workers in 1941, DeColigny Training Institution (Dutch Reformed Church Seminary in Transkei), and the Strydom College Training School (Ntusi, 1997; Van der Merwe, 2011 in Smith, 2014).

Smith (2014) adds that the curriculum content of Social work was based on British and American models, with a clinical approach inhering in the philosophy of personal responsibility. The basis for training was the welfare system of the day, with therapeutic and restorative approaches (Lombard, 1998:17), with a strong focus on the hegemonic discourse of the Carnegie Report. Social work education in South Africa was not immune to policies such as separate higher education institutions and services according to racial categorization (Social Welfare Post-War Planning Conference Proceedings, 1944).

McKendrick (1990) points to the early moves stimulated by a genuine desire to train black social workers to work with the problems experienced by black people. A prominent institution at the time to train black people was the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work in Johannesburg, opened in 1941 by Rev. Ray Phillips and supported by, among others, Job Richard Rathebe (trained as a social worker in the USA and member of the South African Institute of Race Relations) and A.B. Xuma (President of the ANC in 1940) (Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work pamphlet, 1940). Some well-known graduates from the college included Ellen Kuzwayo, Joshua Nkomo, Winnie Mandela and Gibson Kente (Smith, 2014).

In Africa, South Africa was the first country to offer social work education courses (Sakaguchi & Sewpaul, 2009). Services were more focused on casework**,** Sakaguchi and Sewpaul 2009) also notes the National welfare Act in 1965 as another factor that contributed to the development of social work education in South Africa.

Social work evolved after 1994 within the neoliberal context. By 2001 approximately 27 laws administered by the Department of Social Development were amended or repealed, and new laws adopted by the legislature (Patel, 2005). The White Paper for Social Welfare (Department of Welfare, 1997) outlined broad policy guidelines with principles such as democracy, equity, Ubuntu, non-discrimination, human rights, people-centeredness, human capital, sustainability and partnership. Hence, Social workers were then required to depart radically from the forms of intervention and service provision of the apartheid era (Smith, 2014).

Community and social development, as promoted in the White Paper for Social Welfare (Department of Welfare, 1997), became the urgent project of social work education. For example, at the conference on the transformation of social work education in 1998, Lombard (1998:18) made a plea for a paradigm shift beyond the casework-community work dichotomy towards social development. This shift focused on empowerment; non-remedial intervention; participation and networks; and concern with economic development (Gray & Simpson, 1998), although neoliberal capitalist discourses remained dominant. To some extend social work has acknowledged the destructive and oppressive nature of its past and the imperative for a critical perspective (Smith, 2014).

2.5. Legislative Background of Social Work Education

The Social and Associated Workers Act 110 of 1978 currently known as Social Services Profession Act 102 of 1998 made provisions for a statutory council that is known as the South African Council for Social Services Profession (Social Services Professions Act 110, 1098).

The South African Council for Social Service Professions is the guiding body which has the primary focus of developing as well as protecting the integrity of the social service professions as well as the interest of the public at large. One of its objects as outlined is to determine the standards of professional conduct of social service professions namely social workers, student social workers, social auxiliary workers and persons practicing other professions. The SACSSP has developed the ‘Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct and the Rules for Social Workers’ to consolidate professional ethics. This document is a valuable and comprehensive document which serves as a guide to practitioners in the social services sector.

One of the functions of the Council as a statutory body is to hold disciplinary proceedings against members who contravene the Rules.

Social work education, training and practice require that students must be registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions. Students register as students' social work in order to render their services to their clientele systems. After completing the degree they register again as qualified Social workers.

Social workers recognize the fundamental principles of human rights and equality, and that these are protected in national and international law, conventions and policies. These principles underpin Social work practice and the Social workers' applicability of law to their cases.

2.6.Overview of Field instruction Program at the University of the Witwatersrand

The department of social work at Wits University offers field instruction practice tutorials from first year to fourth year of study (Smith & Dube, 2013). Several objectives have been identified as guiding principles of the course. Placements are arranged for appropriate organizations/agencies accredited by the university of Witwatersrand department of social work. The Field instruction is designed to build on generic knowledge and skills acquired during undergraduate study (Smith & Dube, 2013).

The program is based on a reflexive cycle of learning, implementing, reflecting and gathering feedback in cooperated to further learning. Students are also required to develop critical consciousness in their encounter with the realities of the South African context (Mamabolo, 2013). In first year students are required to spend only five days in an agency to get a feel of what social work is about. During their second year students are then placed at schools and agencies, and assigned a supervisor and a contact person.

In their third year, students are placed to agencies and organizations based on the placement criteria. Third years are required to spend at least 360 hours at agency. In their fourth year of study students are also required to do fieldwork, and a total of 450 hours is expected from them in the agency. During field work students are required to adjust and develop different problem strategies that are tailor made for resolving South African problems. Students also get assessed from the manner in which they have managed to carry out the instruction from class lectures to

the field. Students keep records of their field work placement in a file and submit it to the social work department as part of their assessment twice in a year. The field instruction coordinator, supervisor and the student form part of the assessment. Throughout the year students attends tutorial classes and share their experiences of field work practice.

Exit Learning Outcomes

The course in Social Work Practice aims to facilitate the achievement of various exit level outcomes as identified by the Standards Generating Body for Social Work (2004). In total, there are twenty seven Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs), however the fourth year Field Instruction program intends to achieve 19 of them. ELOs in social work practice aims to enable the achievements of numerous results. During field placement at Wits University students are also expected to write a report to demonstrate how they have achieved these ELOs. ELOs are fundamental to ensure that students qualify to move to another level. Hence, Supervisors are required to be knowledgeable about ELOs as well.

2.7. Fieldwork placement Supervision

The history of supervision goes back to the very beginning of the profession. The historical development of the social work profession is inextricably linked to the advancements in supervision. Tsui (2005) argue that field work supervision was more of educational processes to impart required values, professional knowledge and practice skills in social work's perspective. However, as times goes on the administrative and supportive functions were added into the picture.

According to Munson (2003), supervision is an interactional process in which a supervisor has been assigned or designated to assist in and direct the practice of supervisees in the areas of teaching, administration and helping. According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the exchange of information between the supervisor and supervisee during supervision is intended to promote professional growth and development. In Social work, supervisors provide administrative, clinical and supportive supervision to less-experienced social workers. Supervisors are qualified and licensed social workers who have several years of experience and expertise in supervision.

The uniquely value of the supervision functions does not lie in any of the functions in particular, but in the combination and integration of these functions into a meaningful whole. The administrative function's primary focus is on the correct, effective and appropriate implementation of agency policies and procedures. The primary goal is to ensure adherence to policy and procedure (Kadushin, 1992:20). The supervisor carries the responsibility to ensure that organization's policy is implemented (Tsui, 2005).

The educational function according to Kadushin (1990) is on the social workers ignorance and or ineptude regarding the knowledge, attitude and skills required to execute the work. The goal is to assist the supervisee to improve his or her knowledge, attitude and skills so that they can perform to their optimal level when executing their duties (Tsui, 2005). Supervisees must be empowered to intervene in various situations on different levels, and the content of educational supervision shifts in focus depending on the education, competencies and experience of each worker (Kadushin, 1990).

The supportive function is about the worker's morale and job satisfaction. The objective is to improve morale, job satisfaction and the quality of work (Kadushin, 1992). A supportive environment is ensured to enhance efficiency; this is seen more specifically as a resource to help the supervisor and supervisee to deal with job-related tensions and stressors which may, if unattended, impair on the work to the detriment of service delivery (Tsui, 2005).

A supervision contract should be negotiated by the supervisor and the supervisee; and signed as a written agreement which classifies the terms of the supervision relationship. A supervision contract is a written agreement between the supervisor and the supervisee which stipulate their working plan. At WITS University Social work students during field work are expected to have at least one supervision meeting every week and report reflecting on the outcome of the each meeting (WITS Field Instruction in Social Work Practice IV Manual 2016). The Social work department at WITS mostly uses individual and group forms of supervision.

2.8.Non- South African students studying in South Africa

South Africa is emerging as one of the world's most exciting study destinations. This is demonstrated in the rapidly increasing number of international students. This is also because of international exchange rates; South Africa offers real educational value for money. There no

previous studies which indicates where most international studying in South Africa comes from, but looking at the statistics of each university in South Africa it is clear most non-South African students in South Africa comes from the Southern part of African countries. In the Social work department, majority of international students are from Zimbabwe. Basically, there some international students who do a BA degree and others do professional degrees. The differences here is that BA degrees are three years and are not structured (students chose modules) whereas with professional degree, the course is structured.

The term non-South African students apply interchangeable with international or foreign students in the South Africa context. According to Ward (2001), international students are an integral part of many higher learning institutions in the globe. Ramphele (1999) agrees that international students can be found in most countries' higher learning institutions around the world, and are a vital part of any internationally recognized institution. Though there are no recent figures on non-south African students in South Africa. Previous studies demonstrate a significant proportion of international students coming to study in South Africa after democracy (Ramphele, 1999). MacGregor (2014), also confirms that the number of international students studying in South Africa has been increasing.

Research studies have found that international students encounter more problems than host or local students (Wards, 2001; MacGregor, 2014 & Diana, 2016). Wards (2001) reiterate that international students do face different forms of challenges in their host countries. These also apply to non- South African students studying social work in South Africa.

Studies have also indicated that international students list accommodation, financial pressures, language, support and adjustment challenges, lack of local friends and xenophobia among the challenges they encounters while studying in South Africa (MacGregor, 2014). In many cases international students are overcrowded together – as it happens in some other countries.

On campus students feels treated fairly by their classmates and this was the case even more for professors students were also treated the same by administrative and other people in the university (Macgregor, 2014).

Off-campus, though, was different, with only few students feeling they were treated better because of being foreign and the rest evenly split between being treated 'about the same' or worse

and Some respondents said that international students from outside and inside Africa were treated differently, with the former treated better (Macgregor, 2014).

2.9.Global and Regional studies on Students Experiences on field work placement

Hemy, Boddy, Chee and Sauvage (2015) at Griffith University conducted a study using evidence gathered in preparation for a doctoral research about social work students' experiences of juggling multiple roles and responsibilities to demonstrate that field work present challenges to students who have multiple responsibilities. The study proved that social work students who have multiple responsibilities in field placement do present considerable challenges. The study also indicates that students make major adjustments and juggle priorities to attend the placement for a significant length of time. Situational, institutional factors and personal attributes influence students as well as their personal attributes. Students have applied problem-solving, engaging support to manage the overwhelming responsibilities.

Other findings of a research piloted to examine the experiences of social work students and the challenges of social work field training in Lesotho also indicated overwhelming challenges facing fieldwork training in Lesotho. This included a paucity of social welfare agencies and poor preparation of social work students and supervision of students by non-social workers (Tanga, 2012). The cause of the challenges was linked with the attempt of the country to meet the global standards for social work education and training with the limited resources and infrastructure.

Literature on international students and their experiences on field work in the University of Queensland in Australia specified the lack of attention to the learning experiences of international students on placement is of some concern given the expansion of international students in many higher education institutions across the world (Harrison & Ip, 2013). Potential challenges and issues faced by international social work students were identified. In the findings it evident that there is very little in the way of training programs aimed at preparing field educators to supervise international students (Harrison & Ip, 2013), language skills and cultural awareness were also pointed to be necessary for international students to survive their placement.

In the University of Hong Kong, the SARS applied a quantitative data collection tool to measure the impact of the sense of risk engendered by the SARS crisis when the students were in their fieldwork placement (Ching, Hung and Terry, 2006). They also used four focus groups (with a

total of twenty-three informants), and gathered data on the participants' experiences as social work interns during the SARS crisis. The findings revealed that there is prevalence of negative emotions such as distress, frustration, bewilderment, disappointment and fear during their fieldwork encounters (Ching, Hung and Terry, 2006).

Griffith University also conducted a research study to determine the perceptions on the contributions that the learning contexts of university, work placement and post-graduation employment made to the development of their generic skills, which involved graduates in the project had experienced work placement as a formal part of their undergraduate studies. The findings showed that while graduates recognized the contribution university had made to their generic skills development, they greatly valued the experience of learning in the workplace during placement and subsequently in employment (Crebert, Bates, Bell, Patrick, & Cragnolini, 2004). Cooperation (teamwork), being given responsibility and collaborative learning emerged as important factors for effective learning.

Cleak, Anand and Das (2014) also explored the relevance of international field placements for students. They sampled students who have graduated, previously placed through the program of international placements. Findings displayed that international students seem to have has a profound impact on some students and, while this study does not compare local placements with international placements, it proves a positive contribution towards the learning experience of students. It allows students to be not bound by their local cultural lens during practice and assist them to attain cultural competency.

Raschick Maypole & Day (1998) exploring ways that the application of David Kolb's learning style model can improve the quality of field education finds that preferred learning styles of students and supervisors, along with variables that affect learning styles and student satisfaction with the field experience, have already improved student-supervisor relationships locally and have implications for social work field programs elsewhere.

Another study was conducted with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) officials; and practitioners representing various fields of social work to examine the implications of the trends on field instruction and presents recommendations to strengthen social work education and practice; also revealed that practice and managed care environments are rapidly changing. In the same search, the faculty of Social Work in the University of Toronto used

reviews of 40 studies on field education undertaken in the past five years, and the findings demonstrated a number of relevant themes emerging from the context of field education, processes of field instruction, assessment of student learning and competence, training field instructors, and international practicum (Bogo 2006).

These studies display evidence that students do face challenges during their field work placements. Although they speak to different challenges but they all concur with each other about the fact that students encounter different challenges. Among these studies there is no one that specifically speaks to non-South African Students in field work placement.

2.10. Challenges of Social work students in field work placements

Challenges that are encountered by students in field work placement can be divided into two categories, namely positive and negative challenges. Positive challenges are challenges that stimulate students learning abilities and growth. Negative challenges thwart students learning and expose them to stressful experiences. South Africa has very diverse populace, with diverse challenges and social problems. Field work placement then expose students to various real life situations of their clients during field work practice. As Dhemba (2012) put it; field placements require students to grapple with different needs of their clientele.

During field work students have to adjust and adapt to the working environments in the agencies. A study conducted by Mamabolo (2013) with Social work students at Wits demonstrated that students have mixed feelings about their field placement experiences. The study identified that students had to travel long distances to field placements, some complained about being not recognized as part of the agency's stuff, some had problems with their supervisors and others struggled with getting clients for university's required reports. These were features that defined their experiences of field work placement.

In previous studies students also highlighted language as part of the negative challenges they face in field work placement. Non-South African students work with diverse clients during field work practice. Most of their clientele are the local people and they use colorful indigenous languages. This affects international students because they find it difficult to render services because of the language barriers.

The other problem is that students on fieldwork experience acute financial hardships as they do not get adequate financial support from government or bursaries. In a research study conducted by Dhemba (2012) one student summed up the problems pointing out that they endure so many hardships as a result of inadequate financial support when doing fieldwork. Students struggle with financial support for their maintenance and transport (Dhemba, 2012). On this basis of financial difficulties students wondered how they were expected to apply themselves seriously "on an empty stomach" (Dhemba, 2012). The support levels for social work students' are the same with students in purely academic programmes without a practical component. This is also an anomaly, if one considers that the academic year for social work students, unlike students in other programmes students also have to contend with transport and subsistence costs while on fieldwork.

Students are placed in a wide range of agencies including but not limited to government departments, local authorities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), indicating flexibility in the criteria used to select fieldwork agencies. As most students did not get allowances for fieldwork, the need to minimise costs on transport and other expenses prompt students to choose agencies within close proximity to their places of residence and not necessarily those with the greatest potential for provision of learning.

Majority of the agency supervisors are just groping in the dark as they did not have a clear understanding of the nature and type of learning to provide students on fieldwork (Dhemba, 2012). This supports view that some non-social work agency supervisors experience problems completing students' assessment forms at the end of the placement as some of them are not social workers and they also do not understand what is expected of them. Despite IASSW emphases on the need for training institutions to capacitate agency supervisors, and the efforts by the Schools of Social Work having a fieldwork-training manual, previous studies still indicates the lack of preparing supervisors for taking on the task of supervising students.

2.11. Theoretical Framework

This study will use the eco-system perspective to understand how non-South African students adjust and adapt to their host country (South Africa) and to their field work environment. The ecosystems perspective is a way of seeing case phenomena, (the person and the environment) in their interconnected and multilayered reality, to order and comprehend complexity, and avoid

oversimplification and reductionism (Lasser & Pope, 2007). The researcher will also use the experiential learning theory as a sub-theory for this study to understand how students engage with their clients from different upbringing and cultural backgrounds during practice.

Eco-system perspective came from the general systems theory. Lasser and Pope (2007) outline the general systems theory as a set of rules for analyzing how systems operate and relates to one another. In social work there are several perspectives that have emerged from the general systems theory. These include ecological perspective and the ecosystem perspective (Lasser & Pope, 2007). Hence the eco-system focuses on the person and the environment. The ecosystem model has extensive applicability in field work placements and social work field work education. It has application when studying international students in the diaspora and studying students in general. Non-South African students in this case can be viewed as systems and their field work agencies and workload (clients) as the environment that they have to interact with.

Students' host country environment, collegial relationships, field work placements and the host countries' culture do shape and influence students and students also influence these systems in turn. The learning process of non-South African students in field placements in South Africa is contingent to all these factors (systems). These factors can impact negatively or positively to the students. Therefore this study needs to explore the experiences of these students in field work practice given the shortage of literature that speaks to this subject.

Experiential learning involves 'direct encounter with the phenomena being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or only considering the possibility of doing something about it' (Borzak, 1981, p. 9 quoted in Brookfield 1983). This theory was formulated out of four elements: concrete experience, observation and reflection, the formation of abstract concepts and testing in new situations. This theory is applicable with training programs for professions such as social work and teaching or in field study (Brookfield, 1983).

Social work requires students to grapple with practical experiences and to engage with phenomenon in natural space of interaction in field work placements. Students apply their theoretical understanding to effect change. The experiential learning theory justifies why students need do field work practice as part of the requirements of social work education, given that Social work is a practicing profession within various systems. Both experiential learning theory and the ecosystem theory will be used as they complement each other and provide

systemic and contextual understanding of field work practicums. In addition, both frameworks are significant in seeking to understand the students' holistic experiences in field work placement.

2.12. Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the background of field work placement and the historical overview of Social work education in general, and has harnessed it to the South African context, international, regional and local legal frameworks, supervision of students in field work, non-South Africans students and their experiences of field work placement and the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

On the basis of the literature search undertaken to advance insight into this research study, an exploratory qualitative study was conducted.

This chapter outlines the research methodology that was employed in conducting this study. The chapter specifies the research approach and design of this study. It highlights the sampling methods and instruments used for data collection. It provides in detail the ethical considerations applied in this study, limitations of the study as well the trustworthiness of the study.

3.2. Aims and, objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to explore experiences of non-South African Social work students regarding their field work placement. In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives were formulated:

I. To explore international students understanding of social work field work placement;

ii. To investigate challenges that the international students face during field work placements;

iii. To explore how the students can be assisted to complete placements successfully.

3.3. Research approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach. According to Bryman (2016), a qualitative research approach is a broad approach in social sciences that is based upon the need to understand human and social interaction from the angles of insiders and participants in the interaction. Greenstein, Roberts and Sitas (2003) also reiterate that qualitative research is an extensive approach in the social research that is based upon the need to understand human and social interaction in the perspective of the insider and participants in the course of interaction. The qualitative approach is most appropriate when there is a quest for understanding an in-depth inquiry into phenomena (Henning, 2004).

Denzin & Lincon (2011) stated that qualitative studies involve an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. The investigator is preoccupied with the quest to understand a particular phenomenon in great detail; using an insider's view as opposed to an outsider's view. Qualitative approach studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of interpret and phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincon in Creswell 2013). It uses a small number of participants for its sample to understand social practices and meanings attached to participants. This makes it impossible to generalize findings.

The need for qualitative research often arises when there is a gap in literature with regards to a particular phenomenon or when theory fails to adequately explain a phenomenon or sound theories are yet to be put forward**.** In relation to this study, the approach seeks to enable the researcher to obtaining an in-depth rich understating of students' understandings of social work placements, challenges that students faces during field instruction internships and how they have been able to cope with the placements.

The significant reasons to use this qualitative research approach as it gave the researcher an opportunity to explore the lived experiences of the participants and create meaning in order to answer the research question. This harnesses with the endeavor to exploring an area of study of which there little known about. In this case the experiences of non-South African students in social work field placements are not well documented. Lincoln and Guba (1985) add that naturalistic investigation is what the natural investigator does, and the two tenets are the premise directives.

Patton (2005) argue that qualitative approach gives the interviewer insight as to where a subject is coming from rather than getting a yes or a no response which provide incomplete feedback. Qualitative studies give the researcher an opportunity to collect complex and in-depth data that is not easily obtained through the use of questionnaires. In many instances, a primary question leads to the interviewee to discuss other related issues that the interviewer can probe on. Researchers have the flexibility to use their own knowledge, expertise and interpersonal skills to explore interesting or unexpected ideas raised by participants.

3.4. Research design

The research design that was used in this study is an exploratory approach. The research design is the master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing the needed information. The research study here is an argument of conditions for the collections and analysis of data that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. research design stand for advance planning of the methods to be adapted for collecting the relevant data and the techniques to be used in their analysis, keeping in view. The plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and control variance.

Basically an exploratory design is conducted about a research problem when there are few or no earlier studies to refer to. The focus is on gaining insights and familiarity for later investigation or undertaken when problems are in a preliminary stage of investigation (Haverila, 2011). Exploratory research is to gain background information, define terms, clarify problems and establish research priorities to develop questions to be answered. “Exploratory research tend to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done” (Brown, 2006, p. 43). The reason the researcher chose this design is because there is no enough literature that relates to the study. This design will assist the researcher generate new information in the relation to research topic. The findings of the study will be less conclusive because this is an exploratory study.

Exploratory research is most commonly unstructured, informal research that is undertaken to gain background information about the general nature of the problem. It is usually conducted when the research does not know much about the problem and needs additional information or desires new or more recent information.

3.5. Population and sampling

It is not feasible to study the whole population of social work students thus, this research adopted a non- probability purposive sampling. Creswell (2013), states that through sampling the enquirer selects individuals and sites for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study. In addition, snowball sampling was applied in order to access international social work students to reach data saturation.

Purposeful sampling is a non-random method of sampling where the researcher selects "information-rich" cases for study in depth (Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling takes place when the researcher selects a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998). It is the most common sampling strategy in qualitative research and seeks cases rich in information which can be studied in great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. The benefit of purposeful sampling is that, as Patton (2002) puts it, any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experience and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon.

The selection criteria used during data collection include: current international students in social work, aged 19 years and above. The students needed to be willing and available during data collection. Any person under the age of 18 was excluded from the study. Eight (8) Wits social work students in 3rd and 4th year of study were approached to take part in the study.

Olsen (2004) defines triangulation as mixing of data or methods so that diverse view-points cast light upon a topic. In this study triangulation of data sources was be applied to capture different angles of the research subject and ensure credibility and transferability of the research findings. Triangulation of data sources was also applied and one Field Instruction coordinator was interviewed as a key informant, i.e. a person who is well versed in the area of the studied phenomenon.

3.6. Research instrument

The instrument used in the study to collect data is a semi- structured interview schedule. A semi-structured interview is a set of predetermined open-ended questions to guide but dictate the flow of the interview (Greenstein, Roberts & Sitas, 2003). This instrument was chosen to ensure that that the researcher focus to the aim of the study and also be able flexible at the same time. Semi-structured interview schedule will help to ensure that the interview flow is within its boundaries. It also assist the researcher to also confirm in his check list whether important themes were exhausted during the interview, as Paton (2002) restate that semi-structured interview provides the researcher with a checklist ensuring that important aspects were covered.

3.7. Pretesting the instrument

Before the actual interviews were conducted a pretest was conducted first with the first participant who agreed to take part in the research study. Pre-testing involves testing the research instrument in conditions as similar as possible to the research questions to check for problems in the wording of questions, lack of clarity of instruction etc. (Alderson & Morrow, 2004). One non-South African student currently doing practicums or a previous international social work student was interviewed before interviewing the actual sample. Pretesting for this study was done with participants that will be not part of the real data collection. For this study pretesting was conducted to ensure that there is simplicity and clarity in the way questions are asked to participants. If there be any vague information, the researcher then rephrases that particular question to ensure that participants understand what they are actually being asked.

After the pretesting, I realized that there were instances where I should have applied probing in order to get more information from the participant but I didn't. As a result I did not get enough information from the pretest-interview; this taught me to jot down key points during the interview that will be cues for probing.

3.8. Data collection

A semi – structured interview was adopted as method for data collection. Semi- structured interview helps to ensure that the interview flows within boundaries (Creswell, 2013). A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a pre-determined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further (Barriball & While, 19194). It allows the researcher to confirm in his check list whether important themes were exhausted with during the interview. Paton (2002) reiterates that semi-structured interview provides the research with a checklist ensuring that important aspects were covered.

The semi-structured interview, not only gives interviewers some choice in the wording to each question but also in the use of probes (Hutchinson & Skodol- Wilson 1992). Probing, in particular, can be an invaluable tool for ensuring reliability of the data as it; allows for the clarification of interesting and relevant issues raised by the respondents. Probing also provides opportunities to explore sensitive issues and can elicit valuable and complete information. It enables the interviewer to explore and clarify in- consistencies within respondents' accounts. Patton (1990) also adds that probing maximizes the potential for interactive opportunities

between the respondent and interviewer which helps to establish a sense of rapport and reduce the risk of socially desirable answers.

Individual interviews were conducted face-to-face and each interview lasted approximately to 45-60 minutes. The interview schedule consisted of nine questions which can be found in appendix D**.** It is out of these questions that other questions arose depending on the answers that the participants were giving. At times the participants talked about things that the researcher was still going to ask. The researcher was aware of that at times participants can end up addressing some of the questions and themes that he was still going to ask; hence the semi-structured interview allows this. Additional interviews were also conducted until saturation of data is reached. The interviews were audio recorded with the participants' permission to prevent the loss of information and the researcher also took notes to capture non-verbal communications. Data collection started after the researcher received the ethics clearance certificate. The interviews were conducted at a time and a place that was convenient to the study participants.

The use of audio tapes in this research study has ensured that an identical replication of the contents of each interview is available which will facilitate analysis. May (1989) has argued that given the dynamic nature of interviewing and the subtle problems of topic control and data interpretation, the procedures used to log data must be given considerable attention. Audio taping is frequently the method of choice, as it provides a detailed insight into the performance of both the respondent and the interviewer. Further, access to the nuances of the interactions between respondent and interviewer (e.g. Intonations, pauses) help validate the accuracy and completeness of the information collected. Audio taping also reduces the potential for interviewer's errors, for example, recording data incorrectly or cheating by logging an answer to a question that was not asked.

The researcher informed the participants that the data will be kept for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study. The researcher gave the participants the participants' information sheet and explained it the content to them individually before requesting the participants to sign the consent form for participation in the study as well as consent for audio tapping. Most scheduled interviews with the participants were delayed because of the fees must fall protests on campus. This was to ensure safety of the participants. In case participants are in need of counselling, the researcher made arrangements with a Social

worker in practice. It was also made clear that the participants felt uncomfortable answering any questions, they were free to communicate that with the researcher at any stage and the researcher will stop immediately.

3.9. Data analysis

This research study used thematic analysis to analyze the data. After collecting the data, emphasis was on pinpointing, examining and recording the themes that stand out. A theme is a category identified by the analyst through his or her data that relates to his or her research focus which builds on codes identified in transcripts or field notes and it provides the researcher with the basis for a theoretical understanding of his or her data that can make a theoretical contribution to the literature relating to the research focus (Bryman, 2016). In this research study, the researcher has identified the main themes from the transcribed data that were collected from research participants. Bryman (2016) went further to argue that themes and subthemes are essentially recurring motifs in the text that are then connected to the data. Themes and subthemes came as a result of reading and rereading of the transcripts or filed notes that make the corpus of the data. The researcher also go further by showing how the themes identified were significant by demonstrating how they relate to other themes, their implications and how they relate to other previous research studies and literature. These give a justification of how the researcher arrived at selection of the themes.

Thematic analysis is a general approach to analyzing qualitative data that involves identifying themes or patterns in the data (Wagner & Kawulich, 2012). Thematic analysis is mostly used to understand some phenomenon by looking at how various participants experience that phenomenon. This type of data analysis was chosen because it will assist the researcher in exploring the experiences of non-South African Social Work students in field work placement. Basically the researcher seeks to understand how international students studying in a South African University experiences doing field work in South Africa. Creswell (2009), observes that data analysis is an ongoing process involving continual reflections about the data, asking analytical questions, and writing memos throughout the study. Data analysis involves an attempt to generate a deeper understanding and interpretation of the data. In qualitative research data analysis involves aiming to uncover and or understanding the big picture by using the data to

describe the phenomenon and what it means. It involves labelling and coding all of the data in order that similarities and differences can be recognized.

The researcher formulated sub questions which will help him identify units of analysis through labeling those units as codes. The researcher will proceed with coding data in the interview, compare each new piece of data with the previous codes until a coding scheme is created, and the process is called constant comparative method (Wagner & Kawulich, 2012). Thematic analysis follows a six stages process that includes familiarization with data, generating initial codes, combination of different codes, comparison of themes definition of each theme, compilation of data (Neuman, 2009).

In the first stage (familiarization), the researcher ensured that he was well acquainted with the data collected in order to identify themes. This can be achieved by going over and over again to the data collected and pay special attention to the patterns emerging. The researcher then dedicates a chunk of time going through the recordings and transcripts as well as notes made during the course of the interview.

The second phase involves generating the initial codes by noting down where and how patterns occur. The most important themes that the researcher focused on was from the aims the researcher initially put. It is during this phase where data reduction occurs and raw data is processed and then identified by labels for categorization. Codes are then given meanings in order to make and formulate themes.

In the third phase, different codes are combined to themes. Themes were defined and given meaning even those that seem to do not fit were recognized. The researcher also took this stage very serious because of its ability to set the basis of making future recommendations for future studies.

The fourth stage makes a comparison between the themes and the theoretical perspective. This where the researcher also figures whether there mistakes and try to rectify them. The fifth stage involves definition of what each theme mean and entails. It will also include the different aspects of data captured and what is most interesting about the themes identified. The final stage includes compilation of data into final report. It also crucial to decide which theme will make the useful contributions to the already existing body of knowledge.

3.10. Ethical consideration

Researchers need to anticipate ethical issues that may arise in their studies (Creswell, 2014). Ethical issues are "the concerns, dilemmas and conflicts that arise over the proper way to conduct research" (Neuman, 2005, p. 90). Creswell (2013) argues that ethical guidelines apply to every step of the research process. The involvement of human being in this research necessitates that the researcher ensures that their interest are prioritized. The researcher ensured ethical guidelines by doing the following:

3.10.1 Voluntary informed consent

Informed consent is a crucial part of the research process. Wagner and Kawulich (2012), argues that an informed consent document should adhere to three general principles; the participant's right to withdraw from the research at any time, participation is voluntary and lastly participants must understand whether the research was to have an effect to their emotional or physical welfare. All these three have been addressed in the consent form.

All participants were requested to sign a voluntary consent form, demonstrating their willingness to participate in the study. Prior to signing consent forms, participants were given participants information sheet that clearly explains the purpose of the research and how participants are required to be involved to the study. Consent forms give the participants the opportunity to be fully informed of the nature of the research and the implications of their participation at the outset (Bryman, 2016). Durkheim and Wassenaar (2002) reiterate that obtaining informed consent should not only mean that participants sign the forms but a vivid explanation of what the study requires from them is fundamental. The participants information sheet clarified about time, duration of the interviews, and the right of participants to withdraw at any stage should they wish. It also explained confidentiality and the right to anonymity.

3.10. 2. Avoidance of harm or non-maleficence

Harm involves both physical and emotional events that poses danger to participants or triggers emotional distress. The issue of harm to participants was further addressed in ethical codes by advocating care over maintaining the confidentiality of records as Bryman (2016) reiterate. Pseudonyms were also used in order to eliminate entirely the possibility of identification. The researcher used false names in the research to ensure that personal details of research participants

were identifiable in data and research report. Informed consent then ensures that participants get a clear understanding of this section. There was no deception of participants either by withholding information or offering incorrect information to ensure their participation as (Neuman, 2000) reiterates. Codes were used in the report to prevent revelation of participants' real names.

3.10.3. Anonymity and confidentiality

Rogers (2006) argues that participants are entitled to privacy and confidentiality, and even their shared responses needs to be handled with confidentiality. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed by eliminating all identifying information from the reports, and other communication relating to participants. Issues of ensuring confidentiality and anonymity in relation to the recording of information and the maintenance of records relates to all social research (Bryman, 2016), and that's why it remains the duty of the social researcher his or her collaborators not to pursue methods of inquiry that are likely to infringe human values and sensibilities. To ensure confidentiality, tape recorded data would be kept in a password locked computer. The data will be destroyed after six years. Careful efforts were be made by the researcher not to engage socially with participants outside of his professional capacity compromising validity of the study in exchange for good rapport with participants. This also helped avoid breaching the ethical considerations.

3.11. Limitations of the study

This study sampled only eight participants; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to a broader population. However, certain aspects of this study can be of relevance to future studies conducted on the area of non-South African Social work students in field work placement, if similar procedure is followed.

3.12. Trustworthiness of study

Trustworthiness of qualitative studies is a problematic issue. Babbie and Mouton (2011) argues that trustworthiness refers to how the researcher can convince the audience that the findings of the study merit their intention. The researcher ensured trustworthiness by ensuring the creditability, transferability, dependability and conformability of the study.

Credibility: This refers to the degree to which the findings correlate to reality (Creswell, 2013) and to accuracies descriptions. According to Merriam, the qualitative investigator's equivalent concept, credibility, deals with the question, how congruent are the findings with reality? Lincoln and Guba argue that ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. The researcher applied triangulation of data sources to ensure that the findings of this study are credible. Spending sufficient time in the field to learn or understand the culture, social setting, or phenomenon of interest.

The researcher has also ensured credibility through prolonged engagement. Prolonged engagement involves spending adequate time observing various aspects of a setting, speaking with a range of people, and developing relationships and rapport with members of the culture (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Development of rapport and trust facilitates understanding and co-construction of meaning between researcher and members of a setting. The observer should be there long enough to become oriented to the situation so that the context is appreciated and understood be able to detect and account for distortions that might be in the data (e.g. researcher begins to blend in; respondents feel comfortable disclosing information that no longer 'tows the party-line') The researcher can rise above his or her own preconceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This helps the researcher builds trust to the participants.

Transferability: This refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts (Greenstein, Roberts & Sitas, 2003). The researcher has applied thick description to ensure transferability of this study. Thick description is described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a way of achieving a type of external validity. By describing a phenomenon in sufficient detail one can begin to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people. It is a detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context. Because of its limited sample, this study was not be able achieve transferability through generalizability. However, given that this study is exploratory and through provision of adequate description; its findings serve as a reference and guide to future research studies on the same research subject.

Dependability: This is when the research gets the same results even when study is repeated in future. Therefore, thick descriptions of data were provided.

Conformability: This speaks to the neutrality of the findings obtained from data. The researcher ensured conformability in this study by being aware of his biases and attend to them prior the study through use of reflective journal. Reflexivity is an attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process. The reflexive journal is a type of diary where a researcher makes regular entries during the research process. In these entries, the researcher records methodological decisions and the reasons for them, the logistics of the study and reflection upon what is happening in terms of one's own values and interests (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Diary keeping of this type is often very private and cathartic.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) a researcher's background and position affects what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions. The researcher in this study was a fourth year Social work student, and he also undergo filed work practice training as well. This may have some impact in his approach and findings of the study.

As the instrument of data collection and analysis, the researcher, also acknowledges the challenges he went through during his data collection phase because of the students protest about fees. He then resorted to the use of a reflexive journal which is a type of diary where a researcher makes regular entries during the research process. In these entries, the researcher records the logistics of the study, and reflection upon what is happening in terms of one's own values and interests. It is often very private and cathartic.

3. 13. Conclusion

This chapter focused on how the research was conducted looking at research approach, research design, sampling, the research instrument and its pretesting, data collection, ethical considerations, limitations of the study and the trustworthiness of the study. This chapter basically provided an overview of how the research was carried out and describes every phase involved.

CHAPTER 4:

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSION OF RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the results found after carrying out a theme analysis on the data collected through semi-structured interviews in a qualitative research. The themes were identified based on the objectives of the study set at the beginning of the research and based on each of the participants' interviews. The findings will be presented using direct quotations from the participants and set against the literature previously reviewed.

4.2. Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to explore experiences of non-South African Social work students regarding their field work placement. This aim was achieved by formulating the following objectives:

i. To explore international students understanding of social work field work placement;

ii. To investigate challenges that the international students face during field work placements;

iii. To explore how the students can be assisted to complete placements successfully.

4.3. Demographic information

The study was conducted with Eight (8) Wits social work students in their 3rd and 4th year of study.

Table 4.1. Demographic information

Demographic factor	Sub-category	Number
1. Gender	Females	3
	Males	5
2. Race	African	8

3. Nationality	Zimbabwe	6
	Malawi	1
	Zambia	1
4. Age group	19- 22	2
	22 – 25	6

4.4. Presentation of Main Themes Arising from the Study

Table 4.1 shows the themes and subthemes that emerged from the study conducted with eight participants (students) from third and fourth of study in Social work at WITS University. The themes identified were in relation to the aim and objectives established for this research study. The themes that emerged associated with the initial aim and sub-themes that arose under each theme.

Main themes	**Sub-themes**
1. Students' understanding of social work field placement.	**Defining Field work placement** • Social work in practice • Putting theory into practice **Structure of field work placement** • For 3rd years; Tuesdays and Wednesdays. • Also depends on the flexibility of your timetable and the nature of your agency. • Supervision occurs once a week for an hour. **Purpose of field instruction to Social work students** • Prepares students for the real world. • Prepares students for work environment. • Introduce professionalism to students.

2. Challenges students face during field work placement.	**Challenges** *Positive challenges* • Basic integration i.e. culture and language *Negative challenges* • language barrier in practice • Practice based costs i.e. transport to agencies and reports printing. • Safety i.e. Xenophobic attacks • Communication gap between the department and the agencies.
3. How students can be assisted during field work placement.	**Support available** • Supervision • Field instruction tutorials **Additional support needed** • Add a language on the Social work course during 1st year, mainly the most spoken local languages. • Transport fund for students/allocate a bus for students. • Improve communication between agencies and the department.

4. DISCUSSION OF MAIN THEMES

Introduction

This section presents a discussion of the main themes and subthemes that the researcher has identified from the transcribed data.

5.1. Objective number one was to explore international students understanding of social work field work placement.

In order to achieve this objective, participants were asked to provide their understanding of Social work Field Work placement, to describe how their field work placement is structured, to explain the purpose of field instruction to Social work students and to share some of their positive experiences of field work placement.

5.1.1. *Defining Field work placement*

Most participants defined field work placement as practice, where you are placed in different agencies and you get to apply whatever you learn in class, putting theory into practice, and a setting of the practical component of social work course. These perspectives were very significant given that during field work placement, social work students are placed in different agencies to carry out their professional duties, attends to cases that require counselling expertise, group facilitation and community work to name a few. During this period students are expected to integrate all that they have been learning in classrooms to practice realties in the field. Bogo (2004) explains it better, to say that integration of theory and practice is a unique and intuitive process, but the social worker must be articulate about the problems and about her or his own thinking, citing the specific from the general. The worker uses theoretical knowledge, not to apply formulae, but to construct coherence from immediate complexity. The following responses illustrate the students' understanding of field work placement:

"To my understanding, field of placement is basically practical where you are placed in different agencies and you get to apply whatever you learn in class, you get to apply the theory that you learn in class to your practical so basically field of placement is the practice part of social work" (Participant six).

"*…basically when we go out into the field and ... practice, we see clients and then use clients to practice what we have learnt in class, so all the interventions, all the theories, and everything that you learnt in class" (*Participant six).

"generally for me, field of placement … it's sort of … the practical component of the social work theory practice so the placement becomes sort of a complementary element of what they learn in class because I think that as a social worker, because it's a professional course … you have to learn theory yes but that theory must be informed or, theory mustn't form practice and practice form theory so you cannot just go theory, theory, theory without having to go out and practice

what you are taught in class so that field work placement becomes an area or a setting or organization where you put your theory in to practice. …you have to be in that particular organization" (Key informant).

According to Bongo (2006) field work placement is a component of social work education whereby students learn to practice social work by delivering social work services in agencies and community settings. Moorhouse (2013) suggest that during this period students engage in supervised social work practice. These research findings are in agreement with the manner in which the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) defines field placement as "signature pedagogy," and an integral component of the socialization of students in to the social work identity and profession (Wayne, Bogo & Raskin, 2010). Indeed field placement does allow students to put their theoretical knowledge and the skills they have learned into practice. This is because the ability of students to integrate theory into practice is central to demonstrate students' professional preparedness for practice and assessing field instruction program's achievement of its goals, objectives, and competencies.

Structure of Field work placement

Depending on the year of study, third years student goes to their agencies/placements on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Fourth year students go to practice every Mondays and Fridays and are expected to cover eight hours each day. There is flexibility also; this depends on one's timetable. Some students do go to their agencies on other days beside the stipulated ones in the field instruction manual in order to cover their hours and adhere to their agreements with clients. Bogo (2004) also point out to a learning climate that is informal, mutually respectful and collaborative. Flexibility here happens through a mutual process, where the student and the instructor diagnose learning needs, formulate learning objectives and plan, conduct and evaluate the learning. In field work the educational process is determined by the learner's readiness and results from active involvement in experiential activities (Bogo, 2004). These goes hand in hand with experiential learning theory which argue learning occurs through reflection and hands-on experience. The following quotations demonstrate the participants' explanations of their structure of field work placement:

"...in second year you need to go into a formal arranged organization arranged by the school institution you see that and then you are given a supervisor" (Participant seven).

"I had to go on Wednesdays and Thursdays…, supervision was supposed to take place once a week but that didn't take, that didn't happen" (Participant three).

"...formally you are supposed to attend Mondays and Fridays from 8 am to 4pm but in my placement it was not an issue because it is a children's home" (Participant six).

From the above statements, fourth years attends field work placement on Mondays and Fridays whereas, third years go to practice on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Field placement students are also given a field placement application prior practice to select their suitable agency of choice and provide reasons for their choices. Students also receive a manual or study guides that outline the requirements, times of attendances and responsibilities of field placement in detail.

Supervision

With regards to supervision all students attends supervision once every week for an hour. Students also arrange with supervisors when there is a need for extra support. Supervisors also saw the need to provide educational support to students and then arrange with them. Reports also serve as another way of ensuring administrative part of supervision. Students are expected to write a report after providing services to each client. They are expected to submit at least two reports every week. Students are not allowed to progress to the next session with clients without receiving feedback from their respective supervisors.

"... Supervision, [he] is an internal supervisor; he is always there so he had an open door policy. If you had a problem you could just consult there and then and the way he marked our reports was another way of giving us supervision because he would give comprehensive comments" (Participant six).

"And then at the placement, what my supervisor did was that we would have supervision depending on what you want to do, it's more like a guideline, the supervision was more like a guideline on what you are supposed to do in that time so we would have supervision and then we write reports but then we wouldn't write any reports without supervision, so it was more like a guideline" (Participant four).

"She wouldn't set an appointment for supervision and you'd fall behind and if you did end up having a session without supervision she would get very angry" (Participant three).

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) argues that the exchange of information between the supervisor and supervisee during supervision is intended to promote professional growth and development. From the above responses it is clear that students had different views about their experience of supervision. Some students benefitted from their supervisors and others did not benefit. Most students reflected on their experience of supervision as it was more of a guideline in what you were supposed to do. In Social work, supervisors are expected provide administrative, clinical and supportive supervision to less-experienced social workers and these supervisors have to be qualified and licensed social workers who have several years of experience and expertise in supervision (Tsui, 2005). These functions of supervision appears during the engagement with non-South African students, however not all students were happy about their experiences of supervision. Dhemba (2012) in a study conducted I the National University of Lesotho that focused on Fieldwork in Social Work Education and Training: Issues and Challenges in the Case of Eastern and Southern Africa. The study found that all agency supervisors had not received any training or orientation prior to the commencement of fieldwork. Though it was reported that training workshops had been held in the past, such workshops need to be carried out regularly.

Purpose of field instruction to Social work students

When asked about the purpose of field instruction, participants expressed that the purpose that field instruction serves to social work students is to prepare them for the real world. This means that it equips students for work environment. Through field instruction students get introduced to professionalism. Field practicum that focuses on generalist social work practice arrive in an understanding and acceptance of social work values and ethics, and with well-developed skills related to beginning social work practice.

*"Is to measure your personal (growth), like your professional" (*Participant six).

"it aims to teach us how to work with clients and to use theories and the interventions that we learnt in class in the outside world, so it's basically for us to learn and to grow so that when we

*go into the field after we've graduated we know what to do when we want to tackle certain situations" (*Participant three).

*"Its purpose is to equip them (social work students) with all the know knowledge, real experiences as I said before and to prepare them to be ready for the work" (*Participant Seven).

"…the purpose is to make sure that students are kind of orientated into the profession and to also enhance their practical skills in different areas working with individual groups and families and also communities and also the other purpose is to make sure that, because social work is kind of a rigorous you know practical based course so the purpose of field work is to make sure that, you know that rigor that is required for a social worker to be you …must be informed the kind to adhere to. Because when you look at … most of these organizations …, especially at fourth year level that I co-ordinated, they have to do all the three methods so the purpose of that is to make sure that when the student graduates , he/she is well … and well equipped to kind of meet the requirements that a social worker needs to practice in all the three different levels, so the purpose is to make sure that the student is …, has enough skills, is equipped to deal with individuals across races, across different sectors and also has enough information to intervene in communities through maybe community projects and also to work with groups so the main purpose is to make sure that, that theoretical training is put into practice within the practical setting where that person does sort of a hands on training for practice" (Key informant).

These responses aligns with how the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (2004) explain the role of field instruction as embracing both the theoretical component of social work taught in the classroom and field- based education involving integration of the academic aspect and practice. Indeed, the purpose of field work placement in social work is to provide students with an opportunity to learn hands-on through an internship work experience.

5.2. *Positive associations during field work placement*

With regards to positive experiences of international students during field work placement, some students reflected on the support, welcoming agencies staff and the good relationship they had with their supervisors.

"I was placed at Randburg clinic school last year and I think that it's a great school, the teachers are great, the principals are great, they really support you and it's just a great school

that has many events taking place which involve us and it's just a good environment that helps you grow (Participant three)".

I had a good relationship with my supervisor and that kind of relationship helped a lot because I was able to express my challenges, all my difficulties and in all the areas. And she could also help me a lot and then because of that good relationship, I am telling you I had very few challenges and I did pass well, just because of that relationship (Participant seven).

"I had a lot of complications with my field instruction placement last year so sometimes she would be told that we are not allowed to see a client without having supervision however she wouldn't set an appointment for supervision and you'd fall behind and if you did end up having a session without supervision she would get very angry and she would make it seem like it's your fault however you did initiate to have your supervision however she did not respond "(Participant three).

Students had different opinions to convey about their experience with supervisors. Some pointed to have had a good relationship with their supervisors as participant seven articulates in the above statement. And others had misunderstandings and in fact an undesirable relation with their supervisors. Along with this response Wards (2001); MacGregor (2014) & Diana (2016) reiterate that international students do face different forms of challenges in their host countries. Therefore, such comments provide a detailed explanation of the way students have experienced their field work placements, specifically with regards to their relation with supervisors. Students' experiences also vary from one year to another and depending on the agency they are placed in and with their adaptability skills. Harrison and Ip (2013) in a study about international students in the University of Queensland in Australia also discovered similar finding, their study argued that there is very little in the way of training programs aimed at preparing field educators to supervise international students. Hence, it is true that when supervisors are not well equipped and supported, students are likely to experience negative challenges during field work.

5.2.1 Objective number two, was to investigate challenges that the international students face during field work placements.

When asked to talk about the difficulties that non-South African students face in the field, positive and negative challenges emerged. Positive challenges are types of challenges that

stimulate your growth. Some of the positive challenges that emerged from the responses is basic integration i.e. culture and language in this research study. Students were also asked to talk about the difficulties that students generally encounter.

5.2.1.1. Challenges students encountered during field work placement.

Due to the differences in the difficulties that the students discussed, other subthemes emerged in order to group the challenges based on their impacts on students. There were difficulties that counted as both negative and positive challenge depending on the willingness of the student to learn i.e. language.

Language barrier and basic integration (i.e. language and culture) as both positive and negative challenges

Two out of eight participants pointed out that being in a country that does use your own mother tongue has encouraged them to learn the basics of local languages, and some reflect on how it made them to form bonds with local students. Harrison and Ip (2013) argue that language skills and cultural awareness are necessary for international students to survive their placement. MacGregor (2014) indicated that international students list accommodation, financial pressures, language, support and adjustment challenges, lack of local friends and xenophobia among the challenges they encounters while studying in South Africa. The following responses illustrate the participants' views on Language barrier during practice:

"I will speak for international, I don't know about locals but language is one of the barriers, if you are placed in children's home, not all the children are able to communicate in English, even the elders so language can be a barrier" (Participant six).

"..the thing is I am from a different country, I speak a different language hence is not common to where I am right now so the only … communication that is common to us is English but now English is not a problem, speaking English with colleague is not a problem. You will find that there are some clients that cannot speak English properly so to grasp their message might be difficult therefore the assessment will be difficult and then there are some other clients that are just stubborn, they don't want to speak English because it's not their mother language, they want to speak in their tongue a and like I am saying right now I am working at a Refugee children's centre and most of the clients that we work with from there are from GRC and they speak French

and they only learned English when they came this side, English is new to them so it is difficult for the both of us, for the client and for me as well because I don't speak French, they don't understand English" (Participant one)

"…the positive challenges is that it broadens their horizon I think for me especially this practical training because for the year they are placed or for the years they go to different organizations, they tend to end up having grasped a few words on how to communicate, how to greet, how to do this, that's a few things in terms of language" (Key informant).

The above responses suggest that language barrier is a huge challenge that students encounter during practice, as Dhemba (2012) put it that field placements require students to grapple with different needs of their clientele, this becomes difficult if you cannot understand each other in terms of language. Participant one put very clear that there no extensive assessment without language. Students then are expected to adjust and adapt to these working environments that disadvantage them and their clients. A study conducted by Mamabolo (2013) with Social work students at Wits demonstrated that students had mixed feelings about their field placement experiences. International students in the diaspora and non-South African students, specifically in this case can be viewed as a system and their field work agencies and workload (clients) as the environment that they have to interact with, hence the challenge of language barrier negatively affects their performance in the field.

Practice based costs i.e. transport to agencies and reports printing

Students also talked about practise based costs, mostly transport costs as part of the challenges that they encounters during field work placement. They pointed to the facts that that some of them depends on bursaries and they do not afford these transport fees. The following responses illustrate students' viewpoints in this subtheme:

"I'll say transport most especially because some international students are on bursaries and some just for the mere fact of not being able to afford because their money is stipulated towards certain things so then it's difficult for them, some cannot even afford to go as much as they want to because of money". (Participant four)

"I think the major thing is transport, transport is a huge problem among students because we are placed in far places now every day we have to travel to that so you know money, financial

problems so it affects more students, sometimes you see them attending and sometimes not so I think that is one of it". (Participant seven)

"And then another thing is the transport system, you don't know which taxi to take and I is difficult now when you have to ask , this is where he language barrier comes in again, another thing is that going to an area where you have not been before, like the university they just say that you will be going to this organization, they don't take you there, they just give you the address, they expect you to get there, I and another thing is us paying for our transport" (Participant one).

The challenge of funds also came out in the study that Dhemba conducted in the National University of Lesotho in 2012. The study agrees with these findings in signifying that the other problem was raised by students on fieldwork experience was acute financial hardships as they do not get adequate financial support from government (Dhemba, 2012). Students have needs, especially international students as they are in a host country, if their financial needs are not met, it breaks down the system that enables them to learn and become competent. Hence the eco-system as it focuses on the person and the environment and the general systems analyzing how systems operate and relates to one another; both explain how the issue of lack of transport fees negatively affects non-South African students during field work placement.

Safety

Safety was mentioned as one of the challenges that students encountered during field work placements. Students reflected on the incidences of xenophobia and the discriminatory behaviours of some of the local people. Xenophobia is dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries. The problem of xenophobia as mentioned by most participants is multifaceted; it links with the nature of the South African economy within the Southern part of Africa and her economic position in relation to her neighbouring countries. It is also an issue of unemployment and the violent nature of the society that goes back to the apartheid era. This is what students said on this subtheme:

"and then another one if fear because you are living in an environment where xenophobic attacks are unpredictable, you don't know when I is going to happen so that fear as well is very affective" (Participant one).

"Male supervisors have been expressing those sexual feelings to the students in favor of something. If you want me to mark everything, give you a high good grade and so forth then let's exchange with sexual activities" (Participant seven).

"…based on South African context, the issue of xenophobia, the xenophobic attacks that we had, that it also put it is a huge threat to us because we failed to reach out to typical areas that need our services in fear of that if they know that I am not a South African" (Participant seven).

With regards to xenophobia, reasons for the attacks differ, with some blaming the contestation for scarce resources, others attribute it to the country's violent past, inadequate service delivery and the influence of micro politics in townships, involvement and complicity of local authority members in contractor conflicts for economic and political reasons, failure of early warning and prevention mechanisms regarding community-based violence; and also local residents claims that foreigners took jobs opportunities away from local south Africans and they accept lower wages, foreigners do not participate in the struggle for better wages and working conditions and other local South Africans claim that foreigners are criminals (Jean-Jacques, 2015). For the mere fact of being immigrants, students are also exposed to such abuses and attacks.

Communication

Students also reflected on how the misunderstanding, inconsistences and differences between what the departments' requires and that which your agency or supervisor wants leads to students being confused. One participant even mentions that this is caused by the communication gap between the department and the agencies. This is very important given that this can obstructs students' confidence in their practice, writing of reports and application of theory. Students also mentioned that this issue also comes in because of misunderstandings between the student and supervisor. These were students Reponses when asked about this subtheme:

*"I was very disappointed because I got a very low mark even though I did not deserve to get such a mark. I will say this in confidence that my reports were quite good… I had a supervisor for the whole year, she was supposed to advise me on what to do and what to change and she did not do that and at the end of the day, I would get in trouble because I used the wrong theory whereas I thought I was on the right track (*Participant three).

"There is no constant communication between the department and the organization (s), the department is always assuming that everything is going well when it is not going well, it is their responsibility to keep track of what is happening. The only time they get to know about this is on tutorials or [….] and then they will be like why didn't you say this" (Participant one).

*"… the social work department I am sorry to say this but they didn't prepare us , it's like we were just thrown into the deep, we didn't have half of what was needed like we basically had to learn […] so that was a difficult one, it was like jumping a huge bridge" (*Participant four).

With regards to communication, students voiced out their opinions and also reflected on the moments they would be told that some of their challenges would have been solved if they communicated them earlier. One participant even recalled that when they had been discussing their challenges during the tutorials, coordinators would be shocked that students have went through these challenges, yet they were never communicated. Even though the concern of strengthening communication between agencies and departments remain valid, students have a responsibility also to ensure that they inform their field instruction coordinators about their challenges in the field.

5.2.2.1. How student have managed to deal with the challenges

When asked to talk about how they have managed to deal with language barriers issues in practice, most non-South African students pointed to assistance that they have received from their local friends. Some even emphasized that shortage of trained interpreters in field placements.

"constant communication with the field instruction coordinator, I told her about the challenges I was experiencing and she changed the agency for me so I think the supervisor and your coordinator and yourself, you should be in constant communication about things that are happening, not to wait for the last minute" (Participant six).

"I tried to ignore it … I'd ignore it, I'd come home and talk to my friends, just tell them how my day was, you know just a way of venting and getting it all out. At that time, I was at CCDU so I had a psychologist for my personal things and I'd also just talk about what had gone throughout the day so basically that was about it" (Participant three).

"…especially after the xenophobic attacks, there was like a decision that was taken within the department that in order to support these students, to kind of protect them when they go out to these placements, it should be placements where sometimes English might be also used for placements that are not in remote or urban areas but within the metros" (key informant)

The student response with regards to having issues with their supervisor indicated that the type of a supervisor one have during field placement determine the experience of practice. Ching, Hung and Terry (2006) revealed similar findings that there is prevalence of negative emotions such as distress, frustration, bewilderment, disappointment and fear during their fieldwork encounters. Hemy, Boddy, Chee, and Sauvage (2015) argue that students make major adjustments and juggle priorities to attend the placement for a significant length of time. Situational and institutional factors and personal attributes influence these students and personal attributes. Problem-solving, engaging support and reframing have been used by students before to manage the overwhelming responsibilities.

5.3.1. Objective Three: To explore how the students can be assisted to complete placements successfully.

Students were asked to talk about support that is currently available to assist them during their practice. The aim of this objective was to see whether students were being supported or not in all aspects of learning by both the agencies and the department.

5.3.1.1. Support available

<u>Supervision and field instruction tutorials</u>

Out of the eight participants, seven mentioned that supervision was of very significant to their learning process during field work. According to Smith and Dube (2013), the Department of Social Work at Wits University offers field instruction practice tutorials from first year to fourth year of study and field instruction manual. This Field Instruction Manual is intended to familiarize the student and the agency field instructor with the requirements, standards, format and content of field instruction. The manual is designed to provide an initial orientation to the field experience and to serve as an ongoing reference and guide throughout the senior field experience.

"well obviously in the agency you have your supervisor, your supervisor is the person who is supposed to support you, …if you have a good supervisor then that's great, you really have a good experience, you will learn" (Participant three).

"there is because we have tutorials, they also act as a form of support, we have our supervisors they are always supporting us, we have theoretical classes which also give us the theory which we can use to apply in our practicals so I think there is a little support if you know where to look for it". (Participant seven).

"*They (the department) make sure that all international student should not be allocated in far much places, in places that they will difficulties in terms of languages and staff and I think that is one of the ways to assist" (*Participants seven).

Field Instruction is the phrase commonly used to denote educationally directed student learning in the field, under the supervision of a qualified instructor, students learn by participating in the delivery of social services to individuals, small groups, families, organizations and communities. Students are generally assigned for a designated period of time to a specific agency, program, or service and supervisor. Agency social workers supervising students are also expected to attend an orientation and training seminar prior to a student being placed with them. This training is designed to give the field instructor an overview of social work education in general.

5.3.1.2. Additional support needed

Establish transport fund for students and adding printing costs in the tuition fees

The issue of traveling to agencies which are very far from students' accommodations also came up due to the transport costs that students have to deal with. Most international students are self-funded and some are on bursaries and for them to have transport fee for field placement, it means that they have to subtract from their money for glossaries. This leads to poor attendance because if students have no money they cannot go to practice.

"I think that if they could establish a transport fund because a lot of people miss their practice because of transport money and in other terms, this issue of printing of reports, I think if they should, like sort of charge everyone a certain fee at beginning of the year and this money is loaded on to their kudu bucks, then it would be easier for students" (Participant Six).

"…they also consider our safety, they also consider maybe our transport and you know of late the xenophobic violence that has been happening so when they are placing us international students, they sort of like treat us with a kid glove, like they uhhh they place us where it's sort of like comfortable for us but it doesn't really mean that it's gonna benefit a lot of us" (Participant six).

*"Yes travelling costs when they go to their organization and we realize that yes the school has kind of a fund but sometimes because of the number of students requiring that kind of support, we end up not even reaching to them so it's something that is there even though it is really not a strong framework according to my own interpretation…and also I think within the department there was a time when we used to investigate within the school that is there a fund that can support these international students especially with transport" (*key informant).

With regards to transport, some students mentioned that placing local students together with Non-South African students in the same agency will assist when they have to go catch a taxi to field placements, they can ask for directions using local languages.

Language barriers

One participant suggested that the department should add one local language in the Social work course during 1st year, mainly one of the most spoken local languages and have a program for international students that will equip them on the basics.

"They should try to offer, maybe for first years, language classes. Yes we have Zulu and others but as elective courses but for field instruction itself, they need to come up with a program for international students of which maybe it shouldn't be a must to learn a basic language but you choose which one to learn but Zulu is what is most spoken so it should be compulsory for basics only so they can be prepared for field work… if it can start in first year because every international student in first year is eager to learn the basics" (Participant seven).

"we also encourage supervisors to kind of like encourage students to also go out, even if it is in a remote area but when they go with auxiliary social workers and all that so that you know always there is somebody with them who can understand the language and can also interpret for this particular person they are not placed where they find themselves as the only student in the

organization so they also have a partner or two so that those people become a resource to them and for support" (key informant).

"hand-out which has some history or links where you can learn some basics about the environment in South Africa and the international office also plays a role that in South Africa these are the things, like they do their own orientation for international students to learn about the dynamics of the country so that when they are confronted by different situations, they know how to respond to such situations. It is not only a departmental thing but faculty as well on the administrative level (participant five)

Most participants also alluded to the idea that the department needs to improve its communication with the agencies. This helps to track and being informed about the issues and difficulties that students experiences in the field.

5.4. Conclusion

The chapter analyzed the data which had been collected and transcribed. The themes which emerged were placed according to the objectives of the study and in terms of the objectives of the study. Among the themes that emerged were positive challenges like**,** basic integration i.e. culture and language. In same objective there were also negative challenges**,** like language barriers, communication gap between the department and the agencies, practice based costs i.e. transport to agencies and reports printing. Safety also emerged as a subtheme under negative challenges i.e. xenophobic attacks. On the last objective, transport fund for students, improve communication between agencies and the department, adding a language module on the Social work course during 1st year, mainly the most spoken local languages and adding printing costs in the tuition fees emerged as suggestion that non-South African think can assist to improve field work placement.

CHAPTER 5:

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed summary of the main findings regarding the experiences of non-South African Social Work students in field work placement. The chapter will make conclusions based on the main findings of the study. Lastly, the chapter will focus on giving out the recommendations based on both the findings and the conclusion.

5.2. Main Findings

The findings provided are based on the aims and the objectives of the study.

5.2.1. To explore international students understanding of social work field work placement

Through this objective, the researcher wanted to get students' views on their understanding of field work placement in Social Work, how their field work placement is structured, and the purpose field instruction serves to social work students and their positive associations during field work placement. In order to achieve this objective the researcher then divided these themes into the following subthemes;

Defining social work field work placement

The researcher found that most participants defines field work placement as a practical component of the social work theory in practice, so the placement becomes sort of a complementary element of what students learn in class. Field work placement becomes an area or a setting or organization where you put your theory in to practice. This definition is consistent with the literature by Dhemba, 2012; Bogo (2006), where they argues that fieldwork, which is also known as field instruction, field placement, field education, practicum or internship is therefore an integral component of social work education.

Structure of Field work placement

With regards to the structure of field work placement, the study found that attending agencies depends on the students' year of study. Third year students goes to their agencies/placements on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Fourth years students go to practice every Mondays and Fridays and are expected to cover eight hours each day. However, from the participants' responses there is

flexibility with regards attending depending on one's timetable. Some students mentioned to be going to their agencies even on other days beside the stipulated time in their field instruction manual in order to cover more hours and also adhere to agreements made with clients. Knowles, 1980 in Bogo (2004), emphasises a learning climate that is informal, mutually respectfully and corroborative. Therefore, through a mutual process, the student and the instructor diagnose learning needs, formulate learning objectives, and plan conduct and evaluate the learning. Bogo (2004) adds that students are expected to be self-directing, to take imitative and responsibility for their own learning. By ensuring that students meet their agreements with clients gives us a clear picture that students are responsible for their own learning.

Supervision

The study reveals that all students attend supervision once weekly for an hour. Students also arrange with supervisors when there is a need for extra supportive supervision. Supervisors when they saw a need to provide educational support to students they arrange with them. Reports also serve another way of ensuring the administrative part of supervision is done. Students are expected to write a report after providing services to clients. Students are expected to submit at least two reports every week. Students are not allowed to proceed with the next session with clients without getting feedback from supervisors.

5.2.2. To investigate challenges that the international students face during field work placements

Students' views differed with regards to the challenges they have experienced during field work placement. Students faced both negative and positive challenges during field work placement. Positive challenges were challenges that stimulated students growth, learning and adaptive skills. The study revealed that basic integration i.e. culture and language encourage them to learn the basics of local languages helped non- South African students to form bonds with local students.

In the study, language emerged as a huge and shortage of trained interpreters in field placements as challenges those students encountered during practice. Safety also was mentioned by participants as one of the negative challenges. When asked to talk about how they have managed to deal with language barriers issues in practice and other issues, most participants pointed to the assistance that they have received from their local friends. In relation to safety students

mentioned incidences of xenophobia, robbery and vulnerability when catching transport to off campus agencies. Students also reflected on the misunderstanding, inconsistences and differences between what the departments' requires and that what your agency or supervisor wants leads to students being confused. One participant even mentions that this is caused by the communication gap between the department and the agencies.

The findings, especially the negative challenges are consistent with MacGregor, (2014), findings which indicated that international students list accommodation, financial pressures, language, support and adjustment challenges, lack of local friends and xenophobia among the challenges they encounters while studying in South Africa. .

5.2.3. To explore how the students can be assisted to complete placements successfully

On the issue traveling to agencies which are very far from students' accommodations, participants suggested the department should have a bus or a transport system that sends students outside agencies. This will assist in reducing transport costs that students have to deal with for practice. It will also deal the issue of absconding or missing practice poor due students' lack of funds. Some students mentioned that the department should start a transport trust fund for students.

With regards to direction of where to find transport when going to agencies, some students mentioned that placing local students with non-South African students in the same agency will assist when they have to ask for directions using local languages. One participant suggested that the department should add one local language in the Social work course during 1st year, mainly one of the most spoken local languages and have a program for international students that will equip them on the basics.

Most participants alluded to the idea that the department needs to improve its communication with the agencies. Some students pointed that supervisors needs to be evaluated by students.

5.4. Conclusions of the study.

Based on the findings of the research study, it can be concluded that students have a common understanding of field work placement. The challenges that are faced by non-South Africans

students varies from one agency to another, and in different years of study and depending on the support offered to students and students' adaptation skills. Students do face positive and negative challenges during field work placement. There are forms of support that are available to assist students during this learning process, however students feel that there is a need for additional support.

5.5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations for social work field placement and future studies were developed.

5.5.1. Recommendations for the Social work department

Language barriers

The department should add one local language in the Social work course during 1st year, mainly one of the most spoken local languages and have a program for international students that will equip them on the basics of integration into their host country.

Communication

The department needs to improve its communication with the agencies

Transport fund and printing costs

Establish a transport fund because many students miss their practicals because of transport money. In the issue of printing of reports, charge everyone a certain fee at beginning of the year, include it in tuition fee.

5.5.2. Recommendations for the field instruction coordinator and supervisors

The filed instruction coordinator should work with the agencies and supervisors to create a system that allow students to evaluate their supervisors.

With regards to safety, especially in events of social unrest like xenophobia, students should not be forced to go places that can result to them being attacked.

5.5.3. Recommendations for future research

From the interviews and data collection process, many topics which can be explored further emerged. One which stood out for me was the relationships between supervisors and supervisees. One participant (participant 3) mentioned to have experienced a very bad relationship with her supervisor, to the extent that she had to seek professional help i.e. counselling. Other participants even mentioned that supervisors need to be evaluated. This recommendation seeks to explore the available support programs that supervisors receive in ensuring that they contribute positively to the learning process of their supervisees.

5.6. Concluding remarks

The findings presented in this study reflect the need to support students during field work placement, especially non-South African students. It puts forward measures from students' perspectives on what the Department of social work, field instructors and supervisors can do to support international students and improve field work placements in general.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Semi structured interview schedule (participants)

Demographics:

Code: …… Country of origin: ……..

Gender: …… Year of study: ……

Interview questions:

To explore the students understanding of social work placement.

i) What is field work placement in Social Work?
ii) How is your **field work placement structured**? Explore: attendance, supervision etc.
iii) What purpose do you think field instruction serves to social work students?
iv) Share with me some positive associations you have of the field work placement.

To investigate challenges that the students face during field work placement.

i) What are the general difficulties that students face during field work practice?
ii) Which challenges impact only international students or impact them greatly?
iii) From your experience, or that of other international students, how have you managed to deal with these challenges?

To explore how the students can be assisted to complete placements successfully

i) To the best of your knowledge, what support is currently available to assist students during their practice?
ii) What additional support, currently not being given, could be provided to international students during this crucial learning process?

Is there any other information you feel is important to this study that you would like to share with me?

☺Thank you for taking part in my study!!!!!

Appendix B: Semi structured interview schedule (key-informant)

Interview questions:

i) Tell me about your role as a **Field instruction coordinator**.

ii) What is field work placement?

iii) What is the purpose of field work placement within social work professional training?

iv) From your experience, what are some difficulties which might be faced specifically with international social work undergraduate students during their practical training?

v) How are students supported in their field work placements?

Is there any other information you feel is important to this study that you would like to share with me?

☺Thank you for taking part in my study!!!!!

Appendix C: Participant information sheet

Dear Participant,

My name is Mthokozisi Mathenjwa and I am a fourth year student registered for the degree Bachelor of social work at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the requirement for the degree, I am conducting research on the experiences of non-South African Social Work students in field work placement. It is hoped that this information may enhance to debates on social work field work placements at South African universities at an undergraduate level.

I therefore wish to invite you to participate in my study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against in any way. If you agree to take part, I shall arrange to interview you at a time and place that is suitable for you. The interview will last approximately one hour. You may withdraw from the study at any time and you may also refuse to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with answering.

With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded. No one other than my supervisor will have access to the tapes. The tapes and interviews schedules will be kept for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study. Please be assure that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report.

As the interviews will include sensitive issues, there is the possibility that you may experience some feeling of emotional distress. Should you therefore feel the need for supportive counselling following the interview, I have arranged for this service to be provided free of charge by a Social worker in practice, Mr. Z.Z. Zabeko at Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital, he may be contacted at 0726566168.

Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the study. I shall answer them to the best of my ability. I may be contacted on telephone number 0763136637, or my supervisor Dr Warria. Should you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study, an abstract will be made available on request.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in the study

Yours Sincerely,

Mthokozisi Mathenjwa (Social Work Student | University of the Witwatersrand)

Appendix D: Consent form for participating in the study

Title of study: Exploring experiences of non-South African Social Work students in field work placement

I hereby consent to participate in the research project. The purpose and procedure of the study have been explained to me. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any particular items or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. I understand that my responses will be kept confidential at all times.

Name: ……

Date: ……..

Signature: …….

Appendix E: Consent form for audio-taping of the interview

I hereby consent to tape-recording of the interview. I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and that the tapes will be destroyed two years after any publication arising from the study or six years after completion of the study if there are no publications.

Name of Participant: ……

Date: ……

Signature: ……

Appendix: G

TRANSCRIPTION 1: PARTICIPANT 1

Interviewer: Hello Mr. James (Pseudonym)

Interviewee: Hi, how are you?

Interviewee: I am good

Interviewer: My name is Mthokozisi Mathenjwa, I am a fourth year student in the social work department so uhm yet or want to engage about your experiences of field work in Social work. So tell me about your… what is field of placement in Social work or your understanding of field of placement or practicals.

Interviewee: well I think it is uhm… like you said, it is practicals where now you put all the theory into practice therefore it is an opportunity for us to get to learn how apply our theories in real life.

Interviewer: oh-okay, so how is your field of placement structured? Like how is it organized in terms of attendance and supervision?

Interviewee: uhm well, we are supposed to attend on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the time table says between 12 and 4 but depending on my time, the flexibility of my timetable , I can get to go any day I wish ,I usually go on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays because my schedule allows.

Interviewer: oh your schedule allows…

Interviewee: yes

Interviewer: what about supervision?

Interviewee: uhm, supervision, basically we only have supervision when we submit our reports, she marks them, when we return those, that's when we have supervision and she tells us where we went wrong and what we did right and also educate us on what else we can do to improve our output of the session and if there are any concerns that I have, I can raise them and she help me those concerns, and if she has concerns she can also [……].

Interviewer: oh so it's sort of giving feedback and also support.

Interviewee: yes

Interviewer: oh so is there any other thing more than that, maybe emotional support if you do have anything…

Interviewee: uhhhhm, supervision , okay another thing is that I try to use as much information as I can, for example if there is a client that I want to see in an organisation [……] I will need to inform my supervisor so she tells me how to go about it.

Interviewer: oh okay, so where are you placed?

Interviewee: Refugee children's centre

Interviewer: oh in Yeoville?

Interviewee: yes

Interviewer: oh kay, it's a children's centre, what is it about?

Interviewee: We deal with Refugee children so what happens is that we are more basically into making it easy for them to get better access to education, access to food and uniforms… yah those are the main things and we also have programs, like after school programs that we run where they attend so it's like extra classes.

Interviewer: oh okay, what purpose do you think field instruction serves to social work students, like the purpose of field instruction or the purpose of doing field instruction to students?

Interviewee: uhm, I basically think that it equips you or it prepares you for the work environment when you graduate, it gives you the opportunity to really practice the theory, put it into practice.

Interviewer: o-kay, do you think it has… I mean your reflection, do you think that it has done what you have mentioned, preparing you […….]

Interviewee: yah, because I mean when you go to work, they require some level professionally and professionalism comes in that… it is not something that you are born with, it's something that you have to learn and it includes something like punctuality, uhm respect with your

colleague, how you communicate with your colleague, probably how you dress and how you handle your business so without proper training, you will not be able to obtain that professionalism therefore I think it is necessary and important that we have that field practice while we still in school, from class to filed practicing and you learn so that when you get to work, at least from there you will have some foundation of what is expected there.

Interviewer: yah, so can you share with me some of your positive associations that you have during your field placement, your practicals, positive things that you have learned during your practicals.

Interviewee: oh okay uhm obviously number one is the learnin experience from my supervisor

Interviewer: ohh the learning experience from your supervisor…

Interviewee: yes that's the most important one, like I said two weeks before we submit, she gives us feedback on how best to handle our things and how best to put in practice our theory and she also expects us to be punctual to our work place and that alone it triggers a lot and another positive experience uhm… let me think.., I don't know but just the experience I think it's the best.

Interviewer: Yha so moving on, what are the general difficulties that students face during the field of practice most specifically international students?

Interviewee: uhm obvious number one is going to be the language barrier.

Interviewer: language barrier… what do you mean by language barrier?

Interviewee: the thing is I am from a different country, I speak a different language hat is not common to where I am right now so the only […..] of communication that is common to us is English but now English is not a problem, speaking English with colleague is not a problem. You will find that there are some clients that cannot speak English properly so to grasp their message might be difficult therefore the assessment will be difficult and then there are some other clients that are just stubborn, they don't want to speak English because it's not their mother language, they want to speak in their tongue a and like I am saying right now I am working at a Refugee children's centre and most of the clients that we work with from there are from GRC and they speak French and they only learned English when they came this side, English is new to them so

it is difficult for the both of us, for the client and for me as well because I don't speak French, they don't understand English, and then another one if fear because you are living in an environment where xenophobic attacks are unpredictable, you don't know when I is going to happen so that fear as well is very affective. And then another thing is uhm, the transport system, you don't know whch taxi to take and I is difficult now when you have to ask , this is where he language barrier comes in again, another thing is that going to an area where you have not been before, like the university they just say that you will be going to this organization, they don't take you there, they just give you the address, they expect you to get there, I and another thing is us paying for our transport.

Interviewer: ohhh…

Interviewee: yah, money is another challenge.

Interviewer: okay just to follow up, you have mentioned quite a number of points, let's say in terms of language, did you have any cases whereby you experienced… and how did you manage it?

Interviewee: okay day in and out, that is the number one challenge but the good thing is that in our organization we have an interpreter.

Interviewer: oh you have an interpreter…

Interviewee: yes but she is only one so if the interpreter is in another session, I have to wait.

Interviewer: in terms of fear or xenophobia, do you h any experiences or thoughts around…it might be someone else who is an international student.

Interviewee: okay, honestly speak I have never experienced it but I know it's there, I know someone who has been affected by it and me being a student as well, international student as a matter of fact…

Interviewer: it puts you at risk

Interviewee: because now it affects them and it also affects me, the fear as well, it might also happen to me.

Interviewer: […….] in terms of the transport system, how do you get it and how have you managed to work around that?

Interviewee: obviously I had to walk with my other local friend and at times, I also relied on my uber app in cases where I had to work late because getting off at bree and then crossing the bridge is dangerous.

Interviewer: Based on the issues, what do you think the department can do or rather the field placement to try and improve the situation?

Interviewee: the medical students have a Wits bus which takes them to hospital, they can also make a provision for us as well, if there would be a Wits bus that takes us to Nored or Bree that would be perfect.

Interviewer: okay, that's great.

Interviewee: and another thing is that during orientation, they just give us an address and say this is where you are going, they must take us there.

Interviewer: to those particular places

Interviewee: yes

Interviewer: okay, in terms of language, what do you think the department can do?

Interviewee: that one is really difficult because I guess their ends might be tied enough, students must be taken to a population won't be difficult… take them to urban organizations where they can work with people who are more of a population which is more likely to speak in English, on the other hand I don't regret working in areas where [……] it's an experience to me as well, it's a challenge that puts you to a test, if I can get an interpreter that would be excellent for me but I wish I could get clients that can speak English.

Interviewer: I completely do understand, so to the best of your knowledge, what support is currently available to students during their practicals? What support that you know is there in the department

Interviewee: […….] all lecturers just tell us that if there is any issue, we must discuss them with our supervisor, so basically there is nothing either than that.

Interviewer: so you are saying that there is no support, you feel like they are not owning these issues that you guys are pointing out.

Interviewee: yah

Interviewee: so what additional support that is not given that you think if it can be given, it can assist students' crucial learning process, as you mentioned that is the important part of learning.

Interviewee: I don't know how to answer that.

Interviewer: okay let me rephrase, I mean what support that is not available but you think if it can be added, I mean basically I am asking for your views on what the department can do but of course you have mentioned about the terms of language.

Interviewee: there is no constant communication between the department and the organization, the department is always assuming that everything is going well when it is not going well, it is their responsibility to keep track of what is happening. The only time they get to know about this is on tutorials or [….] and then they will be like why didn't you say this.

Interviewer: mmm, I understand, is there any other information that you feel is important for us to discuss, it can be related to international students, social work or any other information that you want to share.

Interviewee: I think it is more on clarity on the department, what they expect students to do in the course of the field because they change, in the first quarter they want this, in the second quarter they want that, they always make mistakes, one moment they will tell you this manual is wrong, use that and then again they change it so that really… I don't really want to say that they do not know what they are doing but they have to make it clear.

Interviewer: Thank you very much Mr James for partaking in the study, I cannot think of any other words that I can basically say because of the point that you have mentioned, very rich information.

Interviewee: you are welcome.

Appendix: H

TRANSCRIPTION 2: KEY INFORMANT

Interviewer: Good afternoon Mr.

(Rapport conversation for 35 seconds)

Interviewer: …so basically my name is Mthokozisi Mathenjwa, I am doing research, I am a fourth year student Social worker doing research about the experiences of Social work students, more especially international students in field work so I would like to get your views on… yah, experiences and your own experiences working with them.

Interviewee: okay

Interviewer: Yah so can you tell me about your role as field co-ordinator or field instruction co-ordinator.

Interviewee: Uhm… okay thank you so much, I think my role as a field instruction co-ordinator is to make sure that the field practice component of this social work course is properly administered, that students at fourth year level are placed at organizations where they can learn, understand the professional values of the profession, execute their… uhm, sort of uhm… integrate theory into practice and also to make sure that wherever we place these students, it's sometimes an environment that is conducive to their learning especially taking into account the international students. You cannot just throw a student into a very big remote area where he/she could have difficulties in communicating with people from that particular area and/or the people communicating with him so that can also impact on service delivery, so the role is to make sure that wherever students are placed, it kind of matches the qualities, the learning needs and also the general needs of that particular student.

Interviewer: okay, thank you so much…eeerrhm so, actually according to your understanding, what is field work placement in general?

Interviewee: generally for me, field of placement uhm it's sort of uhm the practical component of the social work theory practice so the placement becomes sort of a complementary element of what they learn in class because I think that as a social worker, because it's sort of a professional course uhh you have to learn theory yes but that theory must be informed or, theory mustn't form practice and practice form theory so you cannot just go theory, theory, theory without having to go out and practice what you are taught in class so that field work placement becomes an area or

a setting or organization where you put your theory in to practice. That is my kind of understanding in that where they complement each other; you have to be in that particular organization.

Interviewer: that's clear, that is very clear so what is the purpose of field work placement? I mean within the social work profession or professional training…its purpose

Interviewee: okay, I think that this one kind of overlaps with the other one but the purpose is to make sure that students are kind of orientated into the profession and to also enhance their practical skills in different areas working with individual groups and families and also communities and also the other purpose is to uhh make sure that, because social work is kind of a rigorous you know practical based course so the purpose of field work is to make sure that, you know that rigor that is required for a social worker to be you know more informed is kind of adhered to. Because when you look at uhm most of these organizations uhh students do… especially at fourth year level that I coordinated, they have to do all the three methods so the purpose of that is to make sure that when the student graduates , he/she is well […..] and well equipped to kind of meet the requirements that a social worker needs to practice in all the three different levels so the purpose is to make sure that the student is enough, has enough skills, is equipped to deal with individuals across races, across uhm different sectors and also has enough information to intervene in communities through maybe community projects and also to work with groups so the main purpose is to make sure that, that theoretical training is put into practice within the practical setting where that person does sort of a hands on training for practice.

Interviewer: okay-eeeerrrhhh I think that was even broad

Interviewee: it's quite a lot of things because you know it serves quite a lot of different things, because we are not only concerned about the student being equipped, just by theory no. that theoretical whatever foundation, should be used within a practical setting and you should be able to say okay, if I am intervening in this particular case, what kind of frameworks are guiding me and for you to do that you have to practice what you were taught in class and whatever you learn.. because sometimes it informs like I said each other, whatever you learn in the field that oh okay if I am doing this, how can I relate this to the theory that regulates in class so it's kind of that two way process and through that 2-way process, it then shows the rigor of the training that is associated with the profession.

Interviewer: Yah, okay thank you so much Mr Nkosi so uhm in your understanding, what do you think are the challenges that are being experienced by international students specifically during their field of placement?

Interviewee: Okay, when I look at international students uhm…

Interviewer: More especially in their undergraduate

Interviewee: Right from first year maybe to Fourth year?

Interviewer: Yes

Interviewee: uhm… I will look at the challenges in two ways, they experience negative challenges and positive challenges or sometimes not even positive but challenges that are needed for them to grow so I will start with the negative challenges that you know that affect you know the students especially when they go out into their practical training. Because theoretically in class, the medium of communication at Wits is English but when they go out to these organizations, I think that the very first thing that they… some of them encounter depending on where these students are coming from, because I can imagine somebody who might be coming from Tanzania and is placed in an organization in South Africa, there is no Swahili here and he/she cannot communicate in any other East African language but for somebody who is from within the South African region uhm, he might especially maybe let me say Botswana, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique , they might be able to communicate in some of the languages but language is a challenge for international students because sometimes these organizations are not always having people who can communicate in English and especially clients that you will be working with and the other challenge is also… that is related to field work it's uhm, some of it that I can call sort of practical based courses, you know when they are supposed to move from wherever they stay to their organizations and come back because most of them don't normally stay in residences so they come maybe from home where they stay with the brother or sister or their moms who might be working in a completely different direction so they are those course that I call practical based course that they kind of face. And uhm the other thing when it also comes to field instruction […..] basic integration within some organizations because once the student develop that sense of I can't communicate, I can't do this, he/she tends to then align to certain people.

Interviewer: ooh- yah that is true.

Interviewee: and it would be people that can understand that can understand English and through that they miss the whole lot of the rich experience that they can get because they can't partake in some of these things that are happening in a different language or different whatever cultural thing and still linked to that, it also hinder their professional development you know if you feel like you are limited in some way, you cannot spread out, you cannot show who you are because sometimes some of the things are best expressed in your own language but if you also think oh okay people understand, it impacts on your confidence level, it impacts on how you do things and uhm still maybe on the negatives that you know they are faced with in their practical experiences, is on the issue of uhm when it comes to maybe intervention within unities and within groups where you know maybe you are working with foster care mothers , you are training people for foster care. Sometimes you throw in one or two words depending on the context or vernacular words so that people can understand but for them they don't have that privilege, the have to stick to English no matter what especially if they are coming from outside South Africa so they have to stick to English and sometimes you might think that people are understanding you whereas they don't understand and then comes in a notion of interpretation so you have also to, like it comes back to those hidden course that I spoke about, practical hidden course. You have to find a qualified interpreter; you can't just expect anyone to interpret because people might interpret using their own whatever…

Interviewer: they might change the whole thing

Interviewee: because they know you don't know, they say things that the client is not saying and you won't know and so that also forces some of those who cannot really understand to have professionally trained interpreters so that at least if they are not placed with a colleague who can also explain, it becomes a challenge because it further increases the hidden course. The advantage, the positive challenges is that it broadens their horizon I think for me especially this practical training because for the year they are placed or for the years they go to different organizations, they tend to end up having grasped a few words on how to communicate, how to greet, how to do this, that's a few things in terms of language and they learn different cultures and they also teach people their cultures so that is a positive challenge that you have to teach someone but while you are teaching that particular person, that person is teaching you something

and you learn something and uhm the other positive challenge is that, you know it improves their adaptation skills or their ability to adapt to different environments because you can imagine this person is coming from a different country, maybe from Europe.

Interviewer: Complete different upbringing

Interviewee: Yes and now you are here, you have to adapt to the environment in these next 4 years to 5 years depending on the degree and through that they learn how to adapt to different environments which is quite key within social work because it's not about our values but it's about what is it that the clients are presenting, I have to fit in without having to impose […] so they learn and adapt and then learn how to execute some of those things so it becomes for me sort of a positive challenge because it also takes time to adapt, it's not an easy thing but for them, no matter it's hard but it becomes an advantage at the end of the day because most of them end up even working here so at the end of the day they…

Interviewer: It counts on the advantage side.

Interviewee: … on the advantages yes for being in this particular setting, so those are some of the things that I can think of in terms of challenges that are kind of paramount because it is practical related so you can't really talk about some of these things, we just have to stick to whatever we feel is related to practice experience.

Interviewer: Hmm-okay, yoh it was some very complex… yah rich. So just to continue, how the students are supported uhm I mean according to your experience working with students, how are they supported during this very important learning period which is field work placements.

Interviewee: uhmmm

Interviewer: ….Both in the department and agencies.

Interviewee: You know I think in terms of field work and support that the students get, uhm sometimes I think there was uhm, especially after the xenophobic attacks, there was like a decision that was taken within the department that in order to support these students, to kind of protect them when they go out to these placements, it should be placements where sometimes English might be also used for placements that are not in remote or urban areas but within the metros. Uhm so that you know, whatever happens, they are in an environment where people can

understand things differently and uhm the other thing is that to minimize in those hidden course, practical hidden course, they have to be … especially when maybe someone is travelling from Randburg or wherever, we try to say can this person be placed… is there an organization within Randburg that matches the needs of this particular student then we place the student within that particular area. But you will see that as much as that is support, it I also a limitation because it's like it doesn't allow the student to explore and to learn other ways of doing things because it keeps the student in his/her comfort zone but within social work sometimes you need to step out of your comfort zone because if you work with these other organization and it's an international organization and you have to travel to wherever, you should be able to maneuver through and learn how to work within the particular setting so that is the other part of the support. And also I think within the department uhm there was a time when we used to investigate within the school that is there a fund that can support these international students especially with transport.

Interviewer: Travelling costs?

Interviewee: Yes travelling costs when they go to their organization and we realise that yes the school has kind of a fund but sometimes because of the number of students requiring that kind of support, we end up not even reaching to them so it's something that is there even though it is really not a strong framework according to my own interpretation and uhm the other that is kind of a support uhm supervisors, we also encourage supervisors to kind of like encourage students to also go out, even if it is in a remote area but when they go with auxillary social workers and all that so that you know always there is somebody with them who can understand the language and can also interpret for this particular person they are not placed where they find themselves as the only student in the organization so they also have a partner or two so that those people become a resource to them and for support.

Interviewer: Okay, just to probe on… in terms of the placement, by partner you mean local students?

Interviewee: Yes local students, students who can understand the language, because some might not be local, somebody from Botswana can communicate in Setswana so if the organization is somewhere maybe in Katlehong or whatever, you are kind of sure that that person can be able to […..] and if it is somebody from Lesotho, they can communicate in Sotho and you know can

understand some… sometimes these local languages so it mustn't really be someone who is local, it can be sort of semi-local.

Interviewer: …uhm, is there any other information that you would like to share in relation to international students or in relation to field work?

Interviewee: I think for me the last bit that I can maybe talk about is that over the years, believe me you, I have seen international students you know, they kind of work, like do an extra mile in whatever they do, they go beyond call of duty in terms of how should I learn, how should I make this kind of a setting work for me instead of seeing it as a challenge, how can I make the best out of it because you can imagine if… it also depends on where were you placed or where did you observe in first year, where were you placed in second year, where were you placed in third year so in fourth year you do not go to similar organizations because you might find that the person is already exhausted from most of the placements that are around the […..] so that person will be forced or kind of mandated to go outside in order for him to learn different things and experience uhm different practice settings so that it doesn't become just one particular setting from firs yea to fourth year. So they are willing sometimes to take those chances but yes with departmental support, monitoring, it really enhances the experience in terms of field practice.

Interviewer: hmm okay, I wanted to probe on that but I think you just expanded it because I mean on the… especially on the support of the department in terms of ensuring… I agree with a lot of conduct you have mentioned, more especially the point that it is hard to adapt and also face the very same expectations so the hand, how…how supportive is the department specifically to international students, looking at also the South African context, one of the issues that you mentioned xenophobia and yet you are expected to go and execute your skills to the very same community. We are not saying that everyone is xenophobic but the assumption behind is that…

Interviewee: You know I think in terms of that the department, especially when those xenophobic attacks were happening you know across Joburg, there was an immediate withdrawal on our international students who were placed in organizations where there were really volatile situations, they were withdrawn immediately and communication wise uhm we met with relevant organizations to say unless dies down, we are not going to allow them to come over and there was an agreement you know, we …especially the department, they were very, very instrumental and strict about that. The head of department Prof Kaseke was like we can't allow students to go

them because it's easy for them to be victimized, it's easy for them to be assaulted so there was an immediate withdrawal of students so that was quite a huge step and a huge support mechanisms that the department pit in place and also in terms of the expectations, I understand that you are saying they are expected to really do the same thing as people who are already here while they are trying to adapt so what we also encourage them to do is that during that orientation week, those that are able to be in South Africa can start reading about the environment so that when you come here you know what to expect and how maybe to respond to that, and also to learn about different dynamics because each and every country has its own culture and whatever so some of those things will be informed by such things so it might be…it is very, very essential that during that process the.. not just the department but the faculty kind of gives, sort of like a handout which has some history or links where you can learn some basics about the environment in South Africa and the international office also plays a role that in South Africa these are the things, like they do their own orientation for international students to learn about the dynamics of the country so that when they are confronted by different situations, they know how to respond to such situations. It is not only a departmental thing but faculty as well on the administrative level.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for taking your time and for being part of the study, I appreciate it so much.

Interviewee: Thank you.