Women's identity in management:
A qualitative study on non-academic women in New Zealand universities

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A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

2020

Faculty of Business, Economics and Law

Abstract

Neoliberal reforms in the 1990s have changed the way universities are managed. A more corporatised structure has impacted on the professional identity of both academic and non-academic staff. Boundaries between administration and academia have blurred as management, once seen as the domain of academics, has now shifted to the control of administrative managers (McInnis, 2012; Olssen & Peters, 2005). Extensive research has been undertaken to examine the effect these changes have had on academic staff in universities (Henkel, 2005). Over the last decade, there has been a growing interest in non-academic staff and the importance of the need to establish their professional identity (Gray, 2015; Lewis, 2014; Whitchurch, 2008a; 2008b). However, these studies have mostly explored non-academic staff as a homogenous group.

Over half the staff in New Zealand universities are non-academic staff (Ministry of Education, n.d.-a) and a large proportion are female (Ministry of Education, n.d.-b, see Figure 1). In spite of this, there has been very little research on non-academic staff in New Zealand universities and no research specifically on the identity of non-academic women managers in academic units. This thesis aims to address this gap and gain an understanding of how non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their identity and perceive their career opportunities in the New Zealand university environment. The study uses a hybrid approach informed by van Manen's (1997) hermeneutic phenomenology. Tajel's (1974) social identity theory was an overarching theoretical guide. A hybrid approach brings a 'hue' of

phenomenology to the sociological concepts of professional role and identity rather than the strong focus of lived experience that underpins a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data from 20 participants within four New Zealand universities.

The findings were conceptualised in a model (Figure 3) showing how the participants spatially, relationally, corporeally, temporally and materially experienced their professional identity. This thesis shows how the participants proudly enacted their roles with a management style known as *doing gender*, using feminine attributes. The lived space the participants were positioned in had a significant influence on their everydayness of being-in-the-world. There is still evidence of the binary divide between academic and non-academic staff in New Zealand universities. Findings suggested that validation of the participants' roles by their academic-manager and the university would lead to more credibility and a stronger professional identity.

This thesis makes a significant contribution to scholarship on women in universities, providing educational policy makers and tertiary institutions with a greater sense of how professional identity and career progression of female non-academic staff in New Zealand universities can be enhanced. This thesis also contributes to the body of knowledge on professional identity of roles predominately undertaken by women and also a deeper understanding of power imbalance between intra-groups in organisations.

The caring aspects of *doing gender*, such as supporting, protection and adapting behaviour, could be considered a positive asset to the future management of academic units. A key recommendation from this thesis is for universities to strategically develop their female non-academic managers with

the potential of developing a management model based on collaboration as an

ethic of care where academic and non-academic managers work together.

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgement), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed: _____

Nonie Kirker

16   July   2019

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I want to thank my supervisors Professor Edwina Pio and Professor Judy McGregor for their invaluable guidance, expertise and support during my PhD journey. I am sincerely grateful to you both. I also acknowledge and truly appreciate the contribution of the 20 women who gave their time to meet with me and share their stories – without you this thesis would not have been possible!

Thank you also to my academic colleagues and other colleagues who have supported me throughout this process. I am grateful to have been working closely with people who have been willing to listen and understand. In particular, I want to thank Jane Morgan who has been there for me all the way through, encouraging and reassuring me that I would get there in the end.

Finally, to my family and friends, I am extremely thankful for your constant support and patience. It's been a long four and a half years for all of you as well.

I acknowledge Academic Consulting for the proof-reading of the first draft and Elizabeth Ardley for the final proof-reading of this thesis. I also thank my friend Sue for her support and proof-reading of the last chapter.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my grandchildren, Emma, Mandy, Aimee, Charlotte, Billy and Rose – you make it all worthwhile.

1 CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Changes in the tertiary education environment worldwide over the last several decades have had a significant flow-on effect of workload challenges for all university staff (Kimber & Ehrich, 2015; Szekeres, 2011). The changing dynamics have resulted in role ambiguity for both academic and non-academic staff and had a significant impact on their professional identity (Whitchurch, 2007). Much has been written about the impact on academic staff and their identity (e.g., Billot, 2010; Deem, 1998; Henkel, 2005; McInnis, 1998) and there has been a growing interest in the identity of non-academic staff by scholars in the United Kingdom and Australia (Gray, 2015; Lewis, 2014; Whitchurch, 2008a, 2008b).

An increase in many different types of professionals, such as IT specialists or marketing professionals, has also added to the complexity of identity within the university sector (Clarke, Hyde, & Drennan, 2013). However, Bacon (2009) suggests there is "a crucial distinction" (p. 10) between those non-academic staff working in the central university with professional identity outside the university environment and those working as generic (non-academic) staff with transferable administrative skills.

Chapter 1 begins with a brief background outlining the changes in the tertiary education environment context and the effects these changes have had on both academic and non-academic staff. This is followed by the rationale and aim of this thesis. This chapter also outlines the issue of inconsistent terminology used in the literature and the motivation for undertaking this thesis. The last section

of the chapter discusses the history and context of New Zealand universities, ending with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background

In an era of global neoliberalism, with a focus on economic viability, the role of higher education has undergone a fundamental shift towards "initiatives to promote greater entrepreneurial skills" (Olssen & Peters, 1998, p. 313). The traditional university, with a professional culture of open intellectual enquiry and debate (McInnis, 1998), has been replaced by an emphasis on strategic planning, performance indicators and academic audits. There is greater focus on efficiency (Shore & Taitz, 2012) as courses are viewed in terms of productivity and competitiveness, and the student identified as a customer (Lewis, 2014).

Previous boundaries between administration and academia have become blurred and identities less easily defined (Whitchurch, 2006). It is predicted that the boundaries between lecturers and administrators will erode further in the future (Middlehurst, 2010). Moreover, for those working in middle management positions, the issue of their professional role and identity is less clear than it is for those at senior management level in universities (Bacon, 2009).

1.2 Rationale and significance of the thesis

Despite extensive research focusing on academic staff and their professional identity (Henkel, 2005), there has previously been limited attention paid to non-academic staff (Strachan, Bailey, Wallace, & Troup, 2013; Whitchurch, 2008a). There has however, in the last two decades, been a growing interest in the effect of changes on non-academic staff and a body of research has been

undertaken in the United Kingdom and Australia (Berman & Pitman, 2010; Conway, 2000a; Dobson, 2000; Graham, 2010; Lewis, 2014; Szekeres, 2004, 2006, 2011; Whitchurch, 2009). While these scholars have gone a long way towards bringing the issue of the identity of non-academic staff to the fore, progress has been limited. Some previous studies have focused on the invisibility of non-academic staff (Szekeres, 2004, 2006, 2011) and others on the tensions and relationships between academic and non-academic staff (Conway, 2000a, 2000b; Dobson, 2000; Gray, 2015; Kuo, 2009; McInnis, 1998; Wohlmuther, 2008). Further interest has been in the career development of non-academic staff (Graham, 2009, 2010, 2012), while other studies have highlighted the lack of attention paid to career aspirations of women in non-academic roles (Ricketts & Pringle, 2014; Strachan et al., 2013).

Whitchurch (2006, 2008a, 2008b) focuses on the changing identity of non-academic staff in management roles, referred to in her studies as *professional administrators* (2008, p. 376), and the emergence of hybrid multi-professionals who are working across both academic and administration boundaries. Similarly, Bacon (2009) and more recently Lewis (2014) focus on the professional identity of administrators in tertiary organisations. Whitchurch's framework for professional identity seeks to capture the growing hybrid group of staff who are hovering between academic and non-academic spaces. However, little or no progress has been made in the New Zealand environment in terms of research concerning non-academic staff in academic units, and in particular women managers working in academic units, the topic of this thesis.

Non-academic staff make up over half of the workforce in New Zealand universities (Ministry of Education, n.d.-a) and a large proportion of these staff

3

is female (Ministry of Education, n.d.-b, see Figure 1). The purpose of this thesis is to add to the body of research on non-academic staff and address the gap pertaining to non-academic female staff in New Zealand. It aims to provide an insight into the identity of 'non-academic' women working in management roles in academic departments to gain an understanding of how they experience their role and perceive their career aspirations in the New Zealand university environment.

To address this gap, the following research question was formulated:

- o How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their identity in university environments?

The following sub-questions were also formulated:

- o How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their professional role?

- o What do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments say about their future career aspirations?

The study uses a hybrid approach informed by van Manen's (1997) hermeneutic phenomenology. The hybrid approach brings a 'hue' of phenomenology (Sandelowski, 2000) to the sociological concepts of professional and role identity, rather than the phenomenological notions of hermeneutic phenomenology in its pure sense.

The outcome of the findings is conceptualised in a model highlighting how the 'lived space' in which the participants are positioned and the validation of the

participants' role by their academic-managers has a significant influence on their professional identity. These findings provide educational policy makers and tertiary institutions with a greater sense of how professional identity can be enhanced. The insights from the thesis will also catalyse thinking about ways of developing future career pathways for non-academic women managers in New Zealand universities.

When reviewing the literature for this thesis, it became apparent that the terminology used by scholars around the topic was inconsistent and at times confusing. To date, there is no common term used across New Zealand universities and 'non-academic' encompasses allied staff, general staff, professional staff, support staff, functional staff and administration (or administrative) staff. For clarity, in this thesis the terms 'non-academic' and 'academic' will be used regardless of the terminology used at the participants' universities or terms used by scholars in the literature reviewed.

The following section will discuss and clarify the terms used in this thesis.

1.3 Clarifying terminology

The shifting nature of the identities of university staff responsibilities and roles has increased the need to develop and clarify the terminology (Sebalj et al., 2012). Even though nearly half of the total university staff are non-academic (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Conway, 2000a), the nomenclature for the group of staff not on an academic contract is variable and at times contestable. In many overseas studies on academic staff, the term 'university staff' is used with no acknowledgement that there are also non-academic staff working in the organisation. Reports from the Australian and New Zealand governments

5

categorise university staff as academic staff, research staff and professors and non-academic staff (Skekeres, 2004). The reason given is that 'non-academic' is used as a catch-all staffing category for those not working in an academic position and therefore is useful for reporting purposes (Sebalj, Holbrook, & Bourke, 2012). McInnis (1998) argues that, even though the classification 'non-academic' is a default identity, it symbolises a lack of respect for the university administrator role.

A number of scholars have highlighted the impact the negative connotations of the term 'non-academic' has on the identity of this group. Lewis (2014) argues that being defined by what a person is not is 'negative marking'. Similarly, Allen-Collinson (2009) describes the term 'non-academic' as 'negative classification'. Simpson and Fitzgerald (2014) suggest the lack of a common 'label' for non-academic staff further "dilutes and diffuses" (p. 1936) this group. Consequently, universities in both the United Kingdom and Australia have now changed the term from 'non-academic staff' to 'professional staff'. One of the motivators for changing the name in Australia to 'professional staff' was to lift the profile and enhance the professional recognition of this group of staff within the university (ATEM, n.d.).

However, while scholars agree there is a need for clarification, as Sebalj et al. (2012) argue, changing the name "may not achieve the desired fundamental shift in perception about this staffing group" (p. 467). Considering the diverse nature of this group, having one broad descriptor such as 'professional staff' in itself could be problematic (Sebalj et al., 2012) and may not be as important as ensuring a clear definition of the place this group holds in the higher education lexicon (Conway, 2000b).

Changes in the higher education sector have also seen the introduction of a new language not previously associated with a learning environment. Terms such as 'managerialism' and 'corporatisation' have been adopted into the higher education lexicon. Szekeres (2004) states that "the term 'managerialism' refers to this increased importance of senior management staff (both academic and general) and decision-making processes that shift from collegiate to hierarchical" (p.10). Corporatisation is linked to managerialism and refers to how the university is organised (Szekeres, 2004). Deem (1998) suggests the term 'new managerialism' is generally used to refer to "the adoption by public sector organisations of organisational forms, technologies, management practices and values more commonly found in the private business sector" (p. 47). While the change of language appears to be more easily adopted by non-academic staff (Bassnett, 2005), according to Churchman (2006), words such as 'accountability' and 'viability' have compromised the "creation and dissemination of knowledge" (p. 4).

The array of titles used for non-academic staff managers working in academic units is another confusing issue within the university sector that is highlighted in this thesis. A recent survey undertaken by Szekeres and Heywood (2018) to explore the role of the faculty manager role in Australia and New Zealand, noted that there were more than 30 different titles used for this position. They refer to the faculty manager role as "generally the most senior professional staff member in the academic unit" and suggest that they are the least specialised role of the institution but the closest to the real life of the academic unit (Szekeres & Heywood, 2018, p. 2).

Furthermore, concerns about the terminology used for university administration have been discussed in the literature for over a decade (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Lewis, 2014; Norzaini, 2010; Szekeres, 2004, 2011; Whitchurch, 2006, 2009). The terms 'administration' and 'management' along with 'administrator' and 'manager' also need clarification, as they are used interchangeably in some of the literature (Lewis, 2014; McInnis, 2012). Lauwerys (2002) maintains that the dual coupling of the terms 'administration' and 'management' has resulted in an ambiguity in the role of the professional administrator. On the one hand Hogan (2014) argues the term 'administration' is devalued because academics associate it with more work they are responsible for. On the other hand, 'administration' is often used to refer to support staff who are administrators (McInnis, 1998), with the inference of it being women's work. For example, Wieneke (1995) reported that women non-academic staff in Australian universities were classified as doing clerical, keyboard or administrative work. In other studies, administration refers to senior management who are largely made up of academic staff (Szekeres, 2004) and covers a responsibility for both management and leadership (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998). Hogan (2014) also suggests the phrase 'university administration' is sometimes used to describe "the system of governance" or the "staff who work in central administration" (p. 76).

The term management is "loaded with meaning" and not always viewed in a positive light (Hogan, 2014, p. 760). Furthermore, the term 'managers' can also apply to both academic and non-academic managers, adding even more obscurity to the role. The level of power and responsibility of these roles also varies, depending on whether the role refers to academic or non-academic

positions. For example, as the literature does not distinguish between the hierarchical level, 'manager' can refer to a person in top management, such as a Vice Chancellor (Norzaini, 2010; Simpson & Fitzgerald, 2014), or to middle or departmental managers. Other literature provides a distinction and uses the term 'academic-managers', but again without any acknowledgement of the fact that there are also many non-academic managers (e.g., Deem, 1998). For this thesis, the term 'manager' will be used to embrace all those working in management roles, unless specified as academic or non-academic. Further explanation of terms used in this thesis can be found in Table 1 (Appendix A).

The next section will discuss the motivation for undertaking this thesis and the reason for choosing this topic.

1.4 The impetus for this thesis – my personal journey

When beginning this thesis, I spent some time reflecting on my own identity and became mindful of how my historical background and previous life experiences have strongly influenced my interest in this topic.

I grew up in a middle/working class family on the North Shore in Auckland, New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s, post-Second World War. Society was very different than it is today. It was uncommon for women with children to have a career. There was no maternity leave, paid or unpaid, and very little support for women to return to the workforce. After leaving school, I started work as a booking clerk. I left that role after six month and went to work as a typist clerk in a large corporate organisation. The managers were all men and most of the women were young, single and working in typing or secretarial roles. In the early 1970s, I left my job to get married. This decision was not from choice but at the

time, it was the policy in that organisation that married female staff could not be employed on permanent contracts. Having no job was not an option, so I found work in a warehouse/factory to earn money until my first child was born and then became a stay-at-home mother. There was very little choice for women to return to the workforce as there were few childcare facilities and no support for working mothers. When my children were all school age, I decided to return to the workforce and looked for part-time work to fit around my family responsibilities. This was not easy as interviews routinely involved questioning candidates on how they would manage their children as working mothers. I felt vulnerable and perceived that because I was a woman and a mother I must be less valuable to an employer.

As my children grew older, I returned to full-time employment and eventually began working in the tertiary environment. Working within this environment, I observed the strong identity of my academic colleagues and the esteem and respect associated with being part of that group. I perceived that my academic colleagues must be more valuable than others like myself who were 'not' academics.

I continued to spend many years working in a tertiary education environment in both central university units and academic units as a non-academic staff member. I have had a variety of roles at various levels with titles such as secretary, personal assistant, administrator, co-ordinator, management support and manager. I have worked in departments, units, divisions, schools, faculty and campuses. Over this time, I have gained experience, tacit knowledge, system skills, people skills, financial and business acumen, along with formal qualifications equal to those of many of my academic colleagues. As my title

changed, along with the different roles and positions I undertook, I thought about my career and where I was going. This is continually highlighted when people outside the university ask me what I do. My normal response is, "I work at the university." They usually reply with, "What do you teach there?" I have often pondered this question over my time at the university and thought about the lack of identity or the invisibility of non-academics and their roles to people outside the university sector and whether there is a career pathway for those in non-academic roles. These unanswered questions were my motivation for undertaking this thesis.

The next section will give an overview of the historical beginnings of New Zealand universities.

1.5 Background of New Zealand universities

The University of Otago is New Zealand's oldest university, founded in 1869 and opening in 1871, after three British professors arrived from England to teach. Instead of having provincial universities, the government passed legislation for one central university to grant degrees and, in 1870, the New Zealand University was opened. At the time, the University of Otago was permitted to keep the title of university but was not authorised to grant degrees. Subsequent institutions were known as 'colleges' and affiliated to the New Zealand University. Canterbury College was established in 1873, Auckland College in 1893 and Victoria College in 1899.

By 1900, there were 805 students enrolled, of which 305 were women. Most academics came from overseas and, until 1939, examinations were marked in the United Kingdom. Continued growth in enrolments put pressure on the

existing structure so, in 1961, the New Zealand University was dissolved, and the colleges became universities (Pollock, n.d.). In 1964, the University of Waikato was established in Hamilton. New Zealand's newest university, AUT, grew out of a polytechnic that had been established in 1985, the first polytechnic to be granted university status in 2000.

The late 1980s saw New Zealand undertake an overhaul of economic, social and political thinking, structures and processes. The role of government changed in the years between 1984 and 1999 to become more in line with other Western countries (Harland, Tidswell, Everett, Hale, & Pickering, 2010). Both Labour and National Governments aggressively pursued corporatisation, referred to as neoliberal reform, implementing policies of user pay in health, education and other sectors (Roberts, 2007). In 1988, a working group on tertiary education made recommendations to include decentralised decision-making, more accountability and more effective use of resources (Ministry of Education, n.d.-a). Tertiary education shifted from being an "elite system" (p. 13) to include a broader participation of students, as the New Zealand Government commissioned reviews known as "learning for life reforms" (Ministry of Education, n.d,-a, p. 13). At this time, there was a concern from the academic community that universities would lose their power to be able to speak the unbiased truth freely and democratically as they became more controlled by government money and political influences (Grace, 2010). After much debate, the Education Act 1989 included a statutory provision that one of the purposes of universities was to "accept the role as critic and conscience of society" (NZ Education Act, 162.4 [v]). There appears to be a consensus among scholars that there has been a significant impact on academics' identity and the

tensions they experience between their sense of purpose and the demands for accountability and efficiency.

A more radical rethinking of New Zealand universities led to a move from free tertiary education and student allowances to a 'user pay' model. Subsequently, education institutions became 'providers' who were expected to respond to the demands of 'consumers' (Roberts, 2007). In 2000, the Labour Government established the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) to devise a long-term strategic direction with an aim of providing all New Zealanders with life-long learning and making New Zealand a world-leading knowledge society (McLaughlin, 2003). A framework for the new tertiary system was created, with both regulatory and funding policy changes, and the new Government established the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to administer all funding (New Zealand Government, 2002). In 2004, a Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) structure was introduced, which incorporated three main areas: research, peer esteem and contribution to the research environment (Meyer, 2012). The change in the funding system to PBRF placed additional demands on academic staff to undertake research (Baker, 2012).

The major reforms of the tertiary education system were based on the philosophy of improving the economy through improving education and adopting the ideology of a knowledge economy (New Zealand Government, 2002). This has meant New Zealand universities have moved away from privilege and protection (Larner & Le Heron, 2005) towards economic competitiveness. Not only are universities in competition with each other for funding but also faculties and departments are competing for resources. Academic units are under pressure to develop new income streams, build

13

relationships with external organisations and engage in research-based activities in order to find non-traditional sources of funding (Larner & Le Heron, 2005).

In sum, this section has given an overview of the context of this thesis, outlining the historical background and some of the challenges the New Zealand tertiary environment is facing. The next section outlines the structure of the thesis and presents a brief overview of the content and structure of the chapters.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is presented in eight chapters. Chapter 2 presents the literature drawn from scholars of management, identity, gender, higher education and career development. The chapter begins with an overview of the impact the global changes have had on the identity of both academic and non-academic staff in universities. This chapter reviews literature on the tertiary education sector in Australia and the United Kingdom, Commonwealth countries with similar political systems to New Zealand. The following sections review previous studies on non-academic staff, identity, women in universities, career theories and women's career pathways.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of scholarship on identity relating to the thesis topic. It is divided into sub-sections, including social identity theory, professional identity, role identity theory, gender identity and identity work. The chapter concludes with a section on career theory.

Chapter 4 outlines and discusses the methodology employed for the thesis. This chapter is divided into five sections beginning with the rationale and aim of the study, and the insider position of the researcher. The second section presents

the design of the study, outlines the research paradigm, the axiological, ontological and epistemological perspectives taken and the justification for the methodology chosen. The third section gives an overview of the background of hermeneutic phenomenology and its relevance to management studies. The fourth section outlines the methods used, and describes the recruitment, interview, data collection and analytic process. The final section discusses the ethical considerations and limitations.

Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the findings from participants' interviews. The chapter is divided into sections, beginning with an outline of the main themes. The subsequent sections present the five main themes using van Manen's (1997) existential themes as a framework. Through drawing these main themes together, an understanding of how the participants in this study experience their professional roles becomes clearer. The final section of this chapter presents a model developed from the main themes conceptualising non-academic women managers' professional identity.

Chapter 6 is divided into four sections and discusses the findings in relation to the two sub-questions, drawing on previous studies and scholarship on non-academic staff, women's career trajectories and career theories outlined in Chapter 2.

Chapter 7 discusses the findings in relation to the main research question, drawing on previous scholarship on non-academic staff identity in the literature review and drawing on the university context discussed in Chapter 1 and identity theories outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 8 summarises the overall findings and concludes the thesis. The chapter begins with revisiting the aims and rationale for the study with reference to the previous seven chapters. The next section identifies limitations of the study. The following section presents the implications and recommendations, highlighting the key findings from the thesis and suggests areas for further research. The chapter concludes by emphasising the key findings from the thesis.

2 CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to the literature review

Research on non-academic staff has increased as the dynamics of universities have changed. Traditional academic management has been replaced by control of administrative managers (McInnis, 2012; Olssen & Peters, 2005), which in turn has added more accountability and pressure on non-academic staff (Wallace & Marchant, 2009). Changes requiring economic viability and a more corporatised structure have impacted on the professional identity of both academic and non-academic staff.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature relating to the topic of the identity of non-academic women staff in higher education institutions. The review draws on scholarship from management, gender, higher education and career development. As part of the Commonwealth, New Zealand and Australian universities have similar political systems based on the system of the United Kingdom. Therefore, most of the overseas literature pertaining to universities and higher education is drawn from Australian and United Kingdom scholarship using the university electronic library with search parameters including peer reviewed articles with dates from 2004 onwards. The main search engines; EBSCO (Business Source Complete); Google Scholar; Scopus; Emerald Fulltext and JSTOR. Advanced search criteria included journal title or source from; Journal of Management; Academy of Management Review; Journal of Management Studies; Studies in Higher Education; Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management; International Journal of Human Resource Management; Human Resource Management Review. The keywords

used for searches; 'professional identity' and 'organisations/organizations'; 'non-academic staff' and 'higher education'; 'women in management'; 'career development' and 'women's career theories'. Snowballing was used from articles that identified other relevant studies and authors.

This chapter is presented in four main sections, beginning with an overview of the global changes in the higher education environment. This is followed by a section outlining the effect of neoliberal political reforms and the continuing impact on the role, identity and administrative responsibility of academic and non-academic staff in universities. The third section provides an overview of previous studies on non-academic staff, including overseas research on professional identity. The final section outlines career theory and examines the literature on career pathways, with a focus on women's careers and women in universities.

2.2 Overview of changes in tertiary education

The worldwide impact of neoliberalism in developed countries, combined with enhanced managerial technologies, has been universally felt across higher education institutions. Consequently, this has led to changes in education policy. Corporate practices have been introduced requiring universities to operate in a more business-like way to ensure more accountability and efficiencies. As Olssen and Peters (1998) explain, from the 'neoliberal' perspective:

> The end goals of freedom, choice, consumer sovereignty, competition and individual initiative, as well as those of compliance and obedience, must be constructions of the state acting now in its positive role through

the development of the techniques of *auditing*, *accounting* and *management*. (p. 315)

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the effects of the policy changes in universities. A body of research in higher education in the United Kingdom and Australia has highlighted how the structural, organisational and cultural changes have affected both academic and non-academic staff (Deem & Brehoney, 2005; Kimber & Enrich, 2015; Preston & Price, 2012; Saunders & Sin, 2015; Szekeres, 2011). Thirty or forty years ago, the higher education system was managed in a much simpler way with less obligation to comply with the reporting and accountability that is now externally imposed (Lauwerys, 2002). This has meant a "shift from an environment that was secure and low maintenance, to one that's increasingly high maintenance and high risk" (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2007, p. 6). This suggests, as Blackmore (2014) argues, that managerialism and marketisation in the university has "changed the rules of the game, the language and structuring of relationships" (p. 86). Other scholars point out universities have been slow to respond and adapt to the corporate culture (Christopher & Leung, 2015).

Studies also show the impact of corporate policies and practices in terms of ongoing negative experiences for academic staff (e.g., Blackmore, 2014; Sutton, 2017). More concerning, however, is Kimber and Ehrich's (2015) claim that the effects of managerial policies and practices over the past few decades have weakened Australian universities. Above all, the changes have had a marked effect on the belief academic staff hold of the purpose they serve. Sutton (2017) argues that performance assessments, based on quantitative measures of academic labour rather than measuring its quality, excludes

complex human processes. For example, from an academic perspective, external changes have impacted on the notion of professionalism, where once academics were heralded as being expert in their field, they now need to be multi-skilled, transparent and accountable (Middlehurst, 2010). The change has involved shifting from the previous perception of a university as "communities of scholars" (Deem, 1998, p. 47) to a focus on ensuring value for money. Blackmore (2014) argues that by moving from "public good/knowledge/learning regimes to market-oriented entrepreneurial activities" (p. 87), academic staff have become de-professionalised.

A lack of job security for casual and fixed-term academic appointments has resulted in an eroding of the academic freedom to critique and speak out (Kimber & Ehrich, 2015). Not only has casualisation impacted on the general labour pool, there has been a further detrimental effect on the progress of women, specifically the pipeline for female academics' leadership careers (Blackmore, 2014). While casualisation has endeavoured to address the need to improve efficiency, it has had a negative influence on the notion of equity. For example, some staff have been marginalised through short-term contracts, such as women entering academia and those with family responsibilities (May, Strachan, Broadbent, & Peetz, 2011).

Fredman and Doughney (2012) suggest a major disconnection between academic staff satisfaction around increased workloads with a perceived lack of control, and the views of university management around the promise of freedom and flexibility. Conversely, an Australian survey undertaken to measure work stress in universities found that non-academic staff had greater commitment and perceived they had more autonomy than previously

(Winefield, Boyd, Saebel, & Pignata, 2008). More recently, a survey that included both academic-managers and non-academic middle managers from a healthcare school in a United Kingdom university found that those participants whose personal qualities were closely aligned to their role had more satisfaction and enjoyment in their everyday work (Thomas-Gregory (2014). In comparison, participants with greater distance between their personal qualities and their role were found to be more disillusioned.

Academic leaders are now referred to as academic-managers responsible for managing resources and budgets for which they are accountable, an idea that Deem (1998) asserts would previously have been seen as profane.

The main motivator for taking on a management position for many academics is the idea of being able to provide an academic perspective on the policies and procedures in the corporate-like environment (Christopher & Leung, 2015; Preston & Price, 2012; Saunders & Sin, 2015). In undertaking these roles, the academic-manager becomes the interface between their academic colleagues and senior management. While there is an assumption that a person in a management role has power or influence, Kanter (1979) argues it is the position that has the power and not the person. In this respect, a person can be either productive or oppressed depending on the middle managers' power conditions within the organisation. Even though academic-managers are still members of the academic community they are often seen by their colleagues as having a privileged position with access to information that is only available to those in management roles (Preston & Price, 2012). However, the reality is that, instead of having an influence on academic policy, they are involved in operational issues and deal with difficulties concerning their colleagues. For example, in a

Scottish study, Saunders and Sin (2015) found that one of the struggles related to being in the role of academic-manager is dealing with "tensions and challenges of middle manager practices" (p. 136) as they "embody a culture clash between managerialism and collegiality" (p. 147). Tight (2014) argues that the belief that universities previously operated in a collegial environment is more likely a perception than reality, and true collegiality was only experienced by a very few in much smaller institutions where the staff identified as a community.

Those in management roles, such as heads of department or heads of school, have been appointed into the position because of their academic leadership, not their ability to manage staff (Christopher & Leung, 2015). In some cases, the academic-managers had little or no training in regard to managing staff and lacked the skills necessary to do the role (Christopher & Leung, 2015; Preston & Price, 2012; Saunders & Sin, 2015).

The scholars above highlight how the academic perspective of being a critic of society has been dominated by the management focus on value for money in a competitive environment. At a higher level of management, however, the community of purpose is deemed to be clearer as senior managers have become the decision-makers who are accountable for organisational activities (Bacon, 2009; Deem & Johnson, 2000). However, taking into account all the issues that have been raised, it is worth considering Bassnett's (2005) question: "Are the structures still fit for purpose?" (p. 99). Where once there were two categories of academics split between teaching and research, now these are split between "management skills and research productivity" (p. 100).

Deem and Brehoney (2005) argue that managerialism in universities is clearly an ideological reform based on interests concerning relations of power and dominance, and they highlight the increase in the proportion of managers as amongst the most evident features of managerialism in the United Kingdom. As Kimber and Ehrich (2015) point out, those with managerial values will prosper in corporate environments as they strive to respond to market demands and focus on consumers, products and profits. This will mean a further widening of the gap between academic-managers with managerial values and those with traditional academic values (Kimber & Ehrich, 2015).

Similarly, Baker (2012) argues that academic staff are now under more pressure to perform administrative tasks that were previously the responsibility of administrators. In many respects, the skill set required and the day-to-day experience of senior managerial academics, such as heads of schools, deans and vice chancellors, are similar to those required for senior administrators working in non-academic management roles (Hogan, 2014). In this sense, at a very senior level, academic-managers may have more in common with non-academic managers than with their academic colleagues (Deem & Johnson, 2000). This resonates with Deem's (1998) analogy of transitioning from Fordism to post-Fordism as the workforce becomes more flexible, multi-skilled and team-orientated, management teams and quality managers work together side by side. However, to achieve this requires a "compromise of some long established administrative and management regimes alongside the new ones" (Deem, 1998, p. 51). It would make sense, therefore, to re-examine the responsibilities of academic and non-academic managers and utilise their skills in the areas in which they are experienced and qualified. However, taking these studies into

account, it appears that this is not necessarily happening in academic units, indicating that it takes time for longstanding and ingrained ways of working to change.

The growing complexity within the higher education sector means more importance needs to be placed on networking and managerial requirements to initiate strategies that will break down barriers (Middlehurst, 2010), particularly between the non-academic and academic groups. Without a stable and collaborative relationship, Marginson (2004) suggests, one group will try and control the other's function. Therefore, both academic and non-academic staff need to work together to build collaborative relationships where both groups are respectful of each other's contribution. However, even though the literature highlights that "collaboration is a modern mantra of the neoliberal university" (Macfarlane, 2017, p.472), to implement a collaborative model could be challenging. MacFarlane argues that collaboration is a complex and paradoxical concept where individual and collective goals can at times come into conflict. He refers to this as the moral continuum and suggests at one end are the positive aspects, such as collaboration-as-mentoring, where less experienced colleagues are nurtured, or collaboration-as-communication where knowledge is shared and communicated for social good. At the other end of the moral continuum, the more negative aspects of collaboration are positioned, where power and seniority over-ride the balance of equal collaborative practice.

A more optimistic view by Chrislip and Larson (1994, cited in Macfarlane, 2017) defines collaboration as a "mutually beneficial relationship between two or more parties who work together toward common goals by sharing knowledge, learning, responsibility, authority and accountability for achieving results"

(p.473). Prentice and Brudney (2016) suggest that collaboration through shared decision-making leads to increased efficiency and collaboration through shared power leads to greater coordination (p. 195). Furthermore, Kawamura (2018) states that "caring decision-making is grounded in respect of self and of the other" (p.109); therefore, using collaboration as an ethic of care for managing and decision-making could be a positive way forward.

In sum, scholars highlight the negatives and positives of the policy changes, with the negative effect on the academic sense of purpose as a critic of society being strongly argued.

The overview of the changes in the tertiary education sector highlights the consensus among scholars that these changes have had a marked effect on those working in the tertiary environment. The neoliberal approach has required more accountability, efficiencies and responsibilities for academic staff, and scholars have lamented the effect these changes have had on academics' sense of purpose as critics of society. In addition, there has been an increase in academic-managers who are expected to take on management roles without sufficient training. The neoliberal university encourages the concept of collaboration for academic staff, however scholarship argues it is a contested concept. The next section will discuss the impact of these issues in more depth, looking at the negative and positive effects of policy change on the identity of academic staff.

> At times of change and turbulence, each of the many groups has been trying to define itself, its role, its domains and boundaries in relation to the others…. The overall identity of higher education today seems therefore to be a patchwork of communities of identity. These

communities are by no means fixed. On the contrary: a continuing but arguably new process of identity construction is under way within higher education. (Barnett & Di Napoli, 2008, p. 5)

2.2.1 Identity of academic staff

Policy changes have led to new perceptions of professional identity for all staff working in the university environment (Clarke et al., 2013). However, the notion that identity is difficult to define is largely due to the environment the individual is in at the time and his or her concept of self (Feather, 2016). Formal organisational hierarchy, with distinct communities and functions, can be central to the regulation of identity (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). The impact of the complex model of the university in today's world, with developments such as student support, welfare, human resources and business development, has changed how the university operates (Whitchurch, 2006) and also led to the emergence of new identities within the university environment. These changes challenge the identity of having special privileges and status as an autonomous professional (McInnis, 2012) and little has been done to prepare academics for the change of expectations within their role (Billot, 2010).

Scholars highlight how an academic's notion of their professional self has not necessarily developed in line with the responses to the external changes and the strategic directions that the higher education institutions have taken (Billot, 2010; Kolsaker, 2014; Sutton, 2017; Winter, 2009). Furthermore, the sustainability of an academic's core values, underpinned by a tradition of autonomy and self-regulation, is at risk because of external regulation (McInnis, 1998). This is due to the fact that the values and goals of the academic are incongruent with corporate managerialism. Kolsaker (2014, p. 131) states that

26

the "traditional view of professionalism denotes a sense of power, privilege, status, elitism and exclusion" and suggests there is a probability that some academics feel they are being de-professionalised.

The expectation instead is for academics to continually strive to improve economic efficiency and effectiveness, thus changing an academic's experience of academic judgement through regulations and systems (Sutton, 2017). Sutton (2017) refers to this as wreaking "terror in the academic soul" (p. 625), conceptualising soul "as the moral energy that gives purpose central to social labour" (p. 625). Sutton argues that "the soulfulness central to the social relations of academic production and the moral economy of the university as a public good are not measured and thereby are not valued in performativity" (p. 634).

Van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croist and Beishuizen (2017) agree that the university environment can also either constrain or strengthen the university academic identity. The collective regard people have of the university teacher's role also impacts on their identity construction and therefore they need to build communities to empower academics. Findings from van Lankveld et al. (2017) report there are five contributing psychological factors that impact on a teacher's identity in a university setting: a sense of appreciation; a sense of connectedness; a sense of competence; a sense of commitment; and imagining a future career trajectory (p. 1469). Similarly, in a study on early career academics' identity, Fitzmaurice (2013) found values and beliefs have a significant effect on an academic's identity construction as well as the influence of peers and the institution, concluding that the experience of becoming an academic is both a "cognitive and emotive process" (p. 621).

Moreover, academic identity is constantly shifting and dynamic as the need to respond to contextual changes, such as large-class teaching, combine with increased complexity in technology (McNaughton & Billot, 2016). Henkel (2005) agrees that the conditions of academic identity have changed as the communities and relationships have become less bounded and careers less predictable. Despite this, Henkel (2005) found disciplinary community membership remains strong at both macro and micro levels, even though the epistemic and organisational boundaries in academia have weakened.

Consequently, the literature shows that there has been a fundamental reshaping of academic identity (Billot, 2010; Churchman, 2006; Deem, 1998). Churchman (2006) found that academic staff in her study constructed versions of academia which were not necessarily in line with the views of management. While they had traces of the traditional academic identities, there was a compromise as "the complex nature of tertiary institutions and the nature of academic work … have fostered the creation of a myriad of academic identities" (p. 8). Similarly, Billot (2010) suggests that "how academics contextualise their identity has an impact on the way in which they make sense of their workplace" (p. 710). Clegg (2008) proposes that the new and emerging academic identities are "based on different epistemological assumptions derived from other professional and practice-based loyalties" and "not shaped with reference to a nostalgic elitist past" (p. 340).

In sum, scholars agree there has been a reshaping of the academic identity (Billot, 2010; Churchman, 2006), yet the membership of the group identity as an academic remains strong (Henkel, 2005). Other scholars allude to the blurring of roles and the increase in responsibilities for non-academic staff

(Bacon, 2009) as central university units have increased and new identities have emerged within the non-academic group (Whitchurch, 2006). The following section will unpack this idea further and discuss how the changes in policy have impacted on the non-academic group identity.

2.2.2 *Non-academic identity*

While the changing policy environment has had a notable effect on how academic work is defined, it could be argued that, as efficiency and effectiveness, accountability and productivity are more in line with the responsibility of administration staff (McInnis, 1998), it is more important to define the roles and boundaries of non-academic managers. If so, academic communities may also need to review their assumptions about roles, relationships and boundaries (Henkel, 2005). Improved quality of service does not only mean teaching and learning but also incorporates the services that support them (Pitman, 2001). The corporate structure has led to an increase in the size and power of administrative units, such as marketing, business development, human resources and IT (Lewis, 2014), as they become responsible for strategic planning, performance indicators and evaluation. This increase has opened opportunities in management roles for non-academic managers (McInnis, 1998).

As management plays a more dominant role, decisions on resources are not made in isolation and therefore functional groups have restructured. Coaldrake and Stedman (1999) refer to the unbundling of academic work and suggest there are areas that can be managed by specialist professional/non-academic staff. Consequently, the role of the administrator has increasingly become one of high-profile technical and specialist knowledge and skills (Graham, 2012;

McInnis, 1998). It is important, though, to ensure the basic sentiments and work practices of academics are acknowledged and accommodated as the role of the administrator changes (McInnis, 1998). This means while there has been an increase in the skill and expertise required of administration staff, there is also a need for clarification of their roles (Dobson, 2000) and to construct a positive identity for non-academic staff. In light of this, in 1976, the Australian Institute of Tertiary Education Administrators (AITEA) was established "as a professional association which aimed to improve the professional standards of administrators in higher education" (Conway, 1994, p. 158). Conway (1994) explains that the need arose because of the demands on administrators and also the extra administrative tasks academic staff were involved in. The name changed in 1996 to Association of Tertiary Education Managers and it now includes members from across Australasia, covering New Zealand universities, with its members committed to their careers and the development of their profession (ATEM, n.d.).

Britain and North America have similar associations to support their non-academic staff in higher education institutions: the Association of University Administrators (AUA) in Britain and, in North America, the National Association for Presidential Assistants in Higher Education (NAPAHE) (Simpson & Fitzgerald, 2014). The mission of the AUA is to promote excellence through the opportunity to participate in a professional development scheme for non-academic or professional staff (Whitchurch, Skinner & Lauwerys, 2009). Similarly, the NAPAHE "enhances the profession of its members through programs, networking and information resources" (NAPAHE, n.d.)

Yet, even though these professional associations were established to increase the standards and professional development for non-academic staff, the construction of the professional identity of non-academic staff remains a challenge. This said, in response to the influence of managerial policies, there has been a growing interest in the identity of non-academic staff. Whitchurch (2008a) discusses the shifting roles of non-academic staff in management in the United Kingdom and has conceptualised a 'third space' which has evolved alongside more familiar academic and administrative areas. Her study included general managers in faculties, schools, departments and functional areas; specialist professionals with qualifications such as finance and human resources; and specialists in "niche" areas, for example, research management or auditing within higher education. The range of participants included those in senior and middle management positions.

Whitchurch's (2008a) 'third space' encompasses 'cross boundary professionals' or 'hybrid multi-professionals' working across both academic and administrative spheres:

> While identities have been defined traditionally via structured domains such as professional knowledges, institutional boundaries, and the policy requirements of the higher education sector, an emergent project domain has fostered the development of an increasingly multi-professional grouping of staff, with implications for career futures. (Whitchurch, 2006, p. 159)

Utilising contemporary notions about fluidity of identity (Delanty, 2008; Taylor, 2008), Whitchurch (2008a) developed a contextual framework categorising non-academic staff into three groups: *bounded, cross-bounded* and *unbounded.* The bounded group are defined by functional or organisational

location. This group maintains processes and structures and are governed by rules and resources, whereas the cross-bounded group use their understanding of rules and resources and institutional knowledge to construct their identity in more than one space. For example, the group uses this knowledge and negotiating and political skills to interact with those outside their own boundaries to form their identity. However, similar to the bounded group, they remain conscious of the boundaries around the way they operate. In contrast, the unbounded group are involved in broader projects with a focus on institutional development and draw on their experience and contacts, with a disregard for rules and resources (Whitchurch, 2008a). The notion of fluidity raises questions on "the continuation of professional identity in the present university environment" (Kolsaker, 2014, p. 131). This would mean that as the university environment continues to change, the professional identity of both the academic and non-academic staff in the university will also continue to evolve.

The concept of the third space was further developed by Whitchurch (2009) in a comparative study between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. In this study, Whitchurch discusses the idea of the *blended professional*, someone who crossed the boundary of both non-academic and academic domains found that this group did not entirely belong "to either professional or academic constituencies" (p. 409) which could have a direct impact on their identities. Moreover, the study found that some blended professionals were working towards moving full-time into the academic domain, which would indicate that, for this group, moving into the third space was a stepping stone into academia rather than a way of constructing a positive professional identity as a non-academic staff member. Whitchurch (2008a) also noted that those in

academic departments could become "locked in" (p. 383) involuntarily, and therefore were *bounded* with no scope of cross-boundaries.

Other scholars also have looked at the identity of the new roles that are emerging that work across both academic and non-academic areas. A study by Allen-Collinson (2006) utilised a symbolic interactionist perspective to examine the identity of a group of research administrators and the interaction between them and their academic colleagues. Concepts of self and identity were used to theoretically ground this study, linking social structures to people. Findings identified the gap between self and role is not as large as some previous studies have suggested (e.g., Smith, 2005) and this could be due to a true affinity with the role.

Allen-Collinson's (2006) findings highlighted that there are a complex range of circumstances involved in the development of middle managers' professional identity and influences such as social processes, opportunities and other people also have a key part to play in how identity is formed. Many research administrators in the study felt they had a dual identity as they were cast into the role of administrator one minute and the next, they were required to participate in academic affairs. Depending on the changing context of their roles, they identified both with and against their academic colleagues (Allen-Collinson, 2006). This shows similarities to Whitchurch's boundary-crossing where administrators cross boundaries to varying degrees. However, having a dual identity could mean a lack of belonging to one group, which would weaken their professional identity.

With the evolution of new hybrid roles, there is a concern that the blurring of boundaries and convergence of work could represent a danger for the profession of non-academic staff, as the role of university administrator could lose its own identity (Conway, 2000b). This concern is not the same for academic staff who define themselves as teachers whose "professional identity is strongly bound through their shared background" (Calvert, Lewis, & Spindler, 2011, p. 26). As previously highlighted, academic staff have a strong sense of belonging to a profession, unlike non-academic staff who claim many professional characteristics, but whose sense of professional affiliation is limited. Kolsaker (2014) states that "the professionalised administrator is carving out 'space' in university hierarchies, often in places formerly reserved for academics" (p. 129).

From another perspective, Dawkins (2011) maintains that while Whitchurch's framework "attempts to make sense of the range of non-academic professional identities" (p. 57), his reflective analysis of his professional identity as secretariat staff in higher education "resists a singular definition or stable status influenced by institutional context and interactions with others" (p. 57). This reflective approach made it possible for him to "provide a grounded interrogation of this model through his own professional identifications" (Dawkins, 2011, p. 57). Using a reflective approach to ascertain how non-academics experience their identities would not only identify aspects that all have in common, but also provide an understanding that one size does not fit all.

Similarly, Bacon (2009) points out that Whitchurch's definition of professional staff includes both generalist and specialist roles and does not differentiate between these two groups. Bacon (2009) suggests categorising non-academic

staff identity into two types, similar to the academic identity framework, to distinguish between these two groups. Firstly, there is an *essential* identity, which refers to those with an external, professional identity, for example, those working in management in central university areas, such as human resources or finance. Secondly, those working in a department are categorised as having a *situational* identity, which refers to their identity within a specific department within the university. However, Bacon (2009) maintains that while the identity of these specialist managers lies with their specialist profession, the longer these professional specialists work within the university sector, the more this link fades.

A further distinction between the identities of non-academic staff groups has been highlighted in the literature, where similar to academic staff, non-academics have an affinity to their work units. Bacon (2009) proposes that those with specialist identity in central units such as accountants are likely to have an identity outside the university structure, whereas generic administrators are not. This highlights a need for this group of non-academic staff to construct a professional identity which encompasses the unique experiences, skills and knowledge that they bring to the university sector. Furthermore, the tacit knowledge that non-academic staff gain through working in this environment is part of their identity, referred to by Whitchurch (2006) as the *knowledge domain,* representing "the knowledge and skill base associated with academic administration" (p. 163).

Lewis (2014) agrees that there is a divide between those working in central university units and those working in academic units, such as schools or departments, whose primary role is to support teaching and research. He

suggests that the increase of managers in central university units could add another hierarchical layer amongst non-academic managers. In addition, the pressures from these central university units for compliance, reports and accountability might create a "them and us" attitude between those working centrally and those working in schools and academic departments (Lewis, 2014).

In sum, the role of the non-academic administrator has grown and, in some cases, evolved into a role where specialist expertise is required, particularly with the emergence of new central university units. In contrast to their academic colleagues, non-academic staff do not have a sense of community as a professional group. Overall, scholars agree there is a need for more visibility and understanding of the identity of non-academic staff and more clarification of the boundaries of both academic and non-academic roles. There has been a growing interest in this issue of professional identity for non-academic staff amongst scholars, reflected in Whitchurch's (2008a) 'third space' and the development of a conceptual framework for *bounded, cross-bounded* and *unbounded* groups, later extended to include a *blended* group, and Bacon's (2009) ideas of situational and essential grouping. Although previous studies undertaken have considered non-academic staff as one group, several scholars (Bacon, 2009; Gray, 2015; Lewis, 2014) highlight a difference between the identity of those working in central university units and those in academic units, an area that has to date not been researched. These studies highlight the need to examine non-academic staff working in academic units as a separate group, rather than all non-academic staff as a homogenous group, in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of their experiences.

36

Furthermore, it is evident that to understand how non-academic staff can construct an identity, there is the challenge of clarifying boundaries and responsibilities, and addressing the binary divide between academic and non-academic staff.

The next section will examine the issue of this divide in more detail and how this has an effect on the professional identity of non-academic staff.

2.3 Academic/non-academic divide

There has been much written about the tensions between academic and non-academic staff in universities. The hierarchical attitude hinders the relationship between the two groups, which scholars refer to as the 'binary divide', or "them and us". The changes in the university sector around productivity and accountability and the view of students as customers has further impacted on how academic and non-academic staff perceive each other. While both the academic community and the non-academic community are aware of the dependencies on each other, their priorities differ (Whitchurch, 2008a). Scholars propose that non-academic staff carry a broad map of how the university operates (Bacon, 2009; Eveline & Booth, 2004), whereas an academic's primary loyalty is to his or her subject or research interest (Bacon, 2009; McInnis, 1998).

Allen-Collinson (2009) found that the research administrators in her study felt they were seen as being peripheral to the core of the academic world and used their social agency to contest exclusion and negative labelling. According to Pitman (2001), while administration staff closely relate to students, they are ambivalent in regard to how they perceive their academic colleagues. However,

in a comparative study on academics' opinions towards non-academic staff in different areas of the university, Gray (2015) found that non-academics working in central university units and those working in academic units were perceived differently by academic staff. The results showed that the academics held their non-academic colleagues working in academic departments in high-esteem yet they did not have the same regard for those working in central university units. The reason could be because those in central university units may have less understanding of the priorities of academic staff than their non-academic colleagues who work more closely with them.

The authority and structure of administration can often frustrate academic staff when administration staff make decisions that are seen by their academic colleagues as working against them rather than supporting them (Kuo, 2009). Non-academic staff are perceived by their academic colleagues as "minions from management" (Kuo, 2009, p. 950) as they must ensure deadlines are adhered to and rules and regulations imposed by senior management are followed. While centralised control is deemed necessary in an environment where there is a need for higher accountability, compliance and meeting targets (Lewis, 2014), it also puts a strain on the relationships between the two groups (Kuo, 2009). As Gray (2015) proposes, if top management want to break down the barriers between the academic and the administrative coalface, they need to look at ways to "ensure professional staff are recognised as colleagues in a professional community" (p. 553). Furthermore, a more holistic approach involving all parties invested in decision-making processes would create a sense of ownership (Bassnett, 2005), for both academic and non-academic staff.

2.3.1 Invisibility

Other studies have focused on the invisibility of non-academic staff (e.g., Szekeres, 2004, 2006) and have highlighted the change of identity of this cohort who possess transferable skills that cross the boundary between the academic world and the administrative world in universities (Berman & Pitman, 2010; Whitchurch, 2006). Even though there have been many changes around the way the university operates in the last 20 years, it seems little has been done to rectify the invisibility of this group, described by Eveline and Booth (2004) as the "invisible organisational and social glue" (p. 244). Moreover, Allen-Collinson (2006) notes an "invisibility of the role in relation to academic colleagues, particularly when the role was performed effectively and efficiently" (p. 282).

On the other hand, McInnis (1998) suggests that, previously, "administrative staff were considered powerless functionaries" (p. 166) and with increased visibility, they now are perceived to have more power. However, this is not necessarily the reality. Non-academic staff are barely mentioned in the strategic goals of many universities (Gray, 2015), highlighting a need to create a shared direction where all the organisation is working towards shared goals (Lewis, 2014). Gray (2015) suggests further that, as well as looking at the future requirements to shape the academic workforce, universities need to also include how to shape the professional workforce to meet and support these goals.

Overall, the non-academic career still has limited understanding and remains invisible within and outside the university sector (Lewis, 2014). Conway (2000a) states that "all non-academic staff share two things in common: they work in universities and they provide support services for the organisation and its

primary tasks" (p. 201). However, Lauwerys (2002) questions why "bright young people wish to remain in a career area where the role is characterised as a support function" (p. 96). Those working in administrative roles need an academic benchmark to define themselves (Conway, 2000b). Lewis (2014) proposes that promoting the role of a professional administrator and increasing visibility, not just within the sector but in society, will instil the necessary self-confidence to define university administration as a profession.

Therefore, it is important for universities to raise awareness of the attractiveness of a career in professional administration management and provide opportunities for development (Whitchurch, Skinner, & Lauwerys, 2009). The more non-academic staff "remain invisible in the literature and workplace, the less progress will be made in advancing administration as a chosen and valued career" (Ricketts & Pringle, 2014, p. 506).

2.4 Career theories

Along with the complexities of globalisation, the traditional career has been replaced as people are not necessarily starting in one organisation and working their way up throughout their working life. As organisations change and become more complex, the complexities in regard to how a person's career is shaped also increases (Schein & van Manen, 2016). Early theories, such as Erikson's (1968) theory of life stages, were based on how people developed as they progressed through life, and Super's (1957) theory was built on the way a person's career moves through cycles. However, while they were not linear, they still had an upward progression. Rather than a life-long series of development stages, Hall (1996) proposes that "the career of the 21st century will be protean, a career driven by the person, not by the organization and that

will be reinvented by the person from time to time, as the person and the environment change" (p. 8).

Unlike the traditional career, which was about making money and climbing the corporate ladder, the protean career (Hall, 1996) is driven by the individual's own intrinsic motivation and value system. This meant a change of contract, from being loyal and committed to one based on "continuous learning and identity change" (p.8) where "know-how would be replaced by learn-how" (Hall, 1996, p.10). Hall (1996) refers to the goal of psychological success as being a change from the traditional "pact with the organisation" to an agreement with one's self and one's work (p. 10). Primarily, the protean career requires the individual to improve their performance and change their attitude in the short term and to improve adaptability and develop and extend their identity in the long term. In the future, individuals' decisions and the meanings they give to their work will determine careers, rather than the financial rewards or other organisational incentives. Learning is experienced through relationships and adapting to the changes based on growth through individual, mutual and reciprocal learning and through valuing each other's differences (Hall, 1996).

However, Clark (2013) argues the organizational (traditional) career is not 'dead' as Hall claims, rather it is "in need of redefinition" (p.684). Over time the traditional career has adapted and evolved in response to changing external and economic context. While some aspects of the protean behaviour have emerged, there is still evidence that employees are pursuing satisfying careers within the same organisation.

41

The traditional career still incentivises and rewards those who follow it, therefore making it difficult to move away from the concept of a linear career pathway. Overall, traditional career models are developed according to the working pattern of men and do not distinguish between different trajectories that the working lives of men and women can take. Stills and Timms (2013) also argue that career models that do recognise women's different life stages assume the career paths of professional women over 50 will be similar to men. A woman's career pattern may be more 'holistic' with diverse experiences and social roles that are interdependent and fluid; therefore, there is a need to develop flexible career models to account for this (O'Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2008; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003). Careers are significantly influenced by people's social identity and how they position themselves in the social context (Mayrhofer, Meyer & Streyrer, 2007). People compare and measure themselves against other social groups. Therefore, the social environment a person works in plays a major part in how s/he's career develops. Schein and van Manen (2016) propose that the concept of 'career anchors' "describes and categorizes multiple ways people respond to their work situations" (p. 166) and is made up of both external careers and internal careers. An external career is the actual occupation and the requirements needed to acquire the role. However, even when people are in the same occupation, there are internal influences that create the differences in how their career may develop, referred to as a person's 'internal career'. An 'internal career' is the person's self-image, subject to a self-concept of self-perceived competencies, career motives, personal values and development. Once individuals have defined themselves, this self-concept (or anchor) tends to give them stability and they avoid working in areas where personal values are compromised. If they find themselves working in an area

42

outside this, they will be "pulled back to circumstances more congruent with their personal values, motives and beliefs" (Schein & van Manen, 2016, p. 166). In this sense, a person's stability or career anchor is developed through their self-image and identity.

2.1 Women's career pathways

Women's career development is closely linked or embedded in the context of their personal life as they want to succeed both professionally and personally (O'Neil et al., 2008). Women also experience conflict between work roles and parenting (Kirchmeyer, 2002). Family commitments, such as caring for children and older parents, have a negative effect on women's careers as they were more likely than their male counterparts to be the carer (O'Neil et al., 2008). Consequently, flexible and part-time positions are important for women (OECD, 2012) as they are more likely than men to spend a greater proportion of their time working in unpaid and caring work (Statistics NZ, 2015). However, Kanter (2003) argues there are "shorter chains of opportunity" (p. 64) for women, who often work in part-time roles and therefore have less opportunity for advancement.

The findings from a recent study of professional (non-academic) women in Australian universities (Bailey, Troup, & Strachan, 2017) found that part-time work impedes women's progress except when they transition into full-time work. Higher management positions usually require full-time employment with less flexibility than lower level positions, which limits opportunities for women who require flexible part-time roles (Sin et al., 2018). This results in interruptions that have an influence on income level. When returning to work, women often re-enter at a lower level with lower pay (Sin, Dasgupta, & Pacheco, 2018). There

is sometimes a perception of a lack of up-to-date skills (Shadbolt, Brunetto, & Nelson, 2009), which can disadvantage a woman's re-entry to work in a position at the level previously held. Furthermore, in relation to progression, women are less optimistic than men about receiving a promotion in the future (Kirchmeyer, 2002). Eagly and Carli (2007) propose, marriage and parenthood can be seen in a positive light for men and lead to higher salaries and promotion. Similarly, Tessens, White, and Webb's (2011) study found that some of the women surveyed perceived that men received more support in their careers than women. The study also found that women were expected to take on multiple roles while men were able to concentrate on their leadership role.

Hurst, Leberman & Edwards (2016) highlight that given women's careers have a more opportunistic ad-hoc approach, rather than follow a traditional linear pathway, they have still gained experience beneficial to the organisation. However, as the benefits are not necessarily valued by the organisations this excludes them from more senior management roles.

In order to propose a more realistic framework for women's careers, Pringle and McCulloch Dixon (2003) created a heuristic career model with four facets encapsulating women's experiences and stages: Explore, Focus, Rebalance and Revive. As a woman's career follows a natural process, this career model is circular with blurred boundaries based on reassessing and choosing whether to move on or stay in one stage for life, rather than a linear model moving in one clear direction.

In a similar study, examining women's career paths over their life course, O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) framework shows how women's careers develop in three

age-related stages. They suggest younger women have more ordered patterns, which change in mid-career to a mixture of ordered and emergent patterns relating to external influences, such as marriage and family responsibilities. As they age, they move into the third stage where the patterns become more orderly again. From their results, O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) concluded that organisations need to support ongoing coaching and mentors for women to support them through their careers.

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) developed a kaleidoscope career model to reflect the unique patterns of a woman's career. The kaleidoscope model has three parameters; authenticity, balance, and challenge. These three parameters combine in different ways throughout a woman's life, depending on priorities and direction, at various points throughout her career. Findings from the study highlighted how men's careers are more linear than women's as men tend to focus on challenges earlier in their career, and balance later. Women, on the other hand, consider relationships before making life-changing decisions. Furthermore, Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) propose that organisations can create kaleidoscope workplace options where work/life balance is truly supported, and managers who support the development of their female staff are rewarded. These workplace options would also benefit organisations in recruiting, retaining and shaping talent.

In the New Zealand environment, Statistics NZ (2015) reported that there was a steady growth of women in managerial positions between 1991 and 2013 and the representation in clerical occupations is greater for women than men. Furthermore, within the education sector, 69 percent of managers are women (Statistics NZ, 2015). Even with this increase in women managers, there

remains only slow progress for women reaching top management positions (Statistics NZ, 2015). This confirms that the "glass ceiling" is still in existence in New Zealand. Yet while the metaphor of a "glass ceiling" has been used in management literature since first being coined by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhardt in 1986, Eagly and Carli (2007) suggest a woman's career progression is more in line with the analogy of a 'labyrinth'. Their rationale is that women face many barriers and obstacles they need to overcome throughout their career through different stages, similar to the twists and turns as one moves through a labyrinth. Eagly and Carli (2007) also note that women who do progress to a higher level sometimes struggle to find an effective leadership style because when they adopt a style similar to that of their male counterparts, they can be seen as aggressive and abrasive. On the other hand, if they are more helpful, friendly and soft-spoken, they are seen as "highly communal and they may be criticized for not being agentic enough" (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 66).

Role models and mentors are important for women in helping them achieve their career ambitions or in helping them develop and progress their careers (Sealy & Singh, 2010). The difference between choosing a mentor or a role model is that while mentors have to agree to participate, a role model is adopted through observation rather than participation, without permission required (Sealy & Singh, 2010). Role models can be both positive and negative and a person can decide whether to emulate the behaviours or disregard them, depending on whether they want to aspire to be like them or not (Gibson, 2003). Gibson (2003) proposes that a person uses role models in different ways through their careers. In their early career, people find role models with

attributes they want to emulate and who are similar to themselves, whereas as their confidence increases, they are more inclined to look at negative attributes and compare themselves to improve and re-affirm their self-concept.

However, while the literature concurs that women's networks are a positive initiative, O'Neil, Hopkins, and Sullivan (2011) suggest that women need to take responsibility for their own career advancement and make themselves more visible. They also found that the women in their study had limited career aspirations and there were fewer women than men who had planned career paths. This could be because even though social capital is deemed more important than traditional skills associated with managerial tasks in advancing a manager's career, developing such social capital adds more pressure. Women who are already stretching themselves to manage their work, coupled with their home responsibilities, have little or no time for informal socialising and building networks (Eagly & Carli, 2007). The structure of organisations is, therefore, more suited to men who put work first and separate it from family (O'Neil et al., 2008). It is argued, that historically organisational gender systems reinforce the place men hold in management (Mavin, 2006).

There is also a link between hierarchical relationships and women's careers. Women have a strong focus on relationships, and the quality of the relationship between women can impact on the career decisions they make (Hurst et al., 2016). There is an expectation that women who are in positions of power will support other women, through nurturing them and acting as role models (Mavin, 2006). Mavin (2006) suggests that "solidarity or sisterhood behaviour assumes that women will support and align themselves with other women by virtue of their gender identification" (p. 266). However, this assumption of natural allies

47

is challenged at times. Mavin (2006) argues that once a woman moves up to senior management it "destabilises the established gendered order by moving into senior management" (p.246). Therefore, for organisations to create structures that support and enhance women's careers, there firstly needs to be an understanding of gender-based expectations women have of each other (O'Neil, Brooks & Hopkins, 2018).

Overall, scholars argue that even though there has been an increase in women managers in more recent years, there are still barriers to women progressing at the same rate and to the same level as their male counterparts. Suggestions such as mentors and role models are a way in which women can advance their careers. However, in the case of non-academic women in academic units, this may not be an option due to a lack of opportunities and career pathways.

2.1.1 Career pathways for non-academics

Despite the fact that, as Lauwerys (2002) states, universities are "organisations whose very existence is about developing and communicating knowledge" (p. 95), there is not a serious commitment to the professional development of non-academic administrative staff. Even when there is support by management for non-academic staff to engage in development activities, there is a lack of clearly defined paths (Graham, 2009; Renkema, Schaap, & van Dellen, 2009; Ricketts & Pringle, 2014). Lauwerys (2002) suggests a lack of career pathways have weakened the professional standing of this group. Graham (2009) agrees, arguing that there is a lack of commitment to early-career, non-academic administrators, particularly in relation to their academic counterparts, further highlighting the need for universities to provide a realistic career pathway in order to recruit young graduates into non-academic roles.

Even though the younger generation are more inclined to create their own opportunities (Whitchurch et al., 2009), young people entering the workforce do not have the goal of becoming a university administrator (Szekeres, 2011). Lewis (2014) describes the role as an 'accidental administrator' (p.47) suggesting that working in a non-academic role within a university is not a chosen career but rather one that just comes about. Similarly, Whitchurch et al. (2009) maintain that a career as an educational manager for non-academics is an 'invisible career' that "tends to be serendipitous rather than the result of active planning" (p. 59). Therefore, to raise awareness of a career in a university environment, senior management will need to initiate strategies to promote the attractiveness of a professional career (Whitchurch et al., 2009).

Whitchurch's (2008c) findings show that careers result from:

o part-time or vacation work at a higher education institution while a student

o a desire to stay in an academic environment after graduating

o a desire to work in a particular locality where the university is a major employer

o contact with someone who works in a university

o a belief that experience gained from another sector could be usefully extended by a move into higher education

On the other hand, Conway (2000a) suggests there is a group of non-academic staff who choose to work in a university as a career. However, this group is predominately in academic and research areas. This could be because those in academic areas, such as schools and faculties, have knowledge they have

gained over time. Non-academic staff working in academic units also play an important part in the academic community, particularly at times when academic staff are not available (McNay, 2005) and non-academic staff are there to support students in their journey. However, while this knowledge and experience is transferable within the tertiary sector, it is not necessarily beneficial outside this environment.

Berman and Pitman (2010) found that non-academic staff with qualifications (such as a PhD) have acquired skills which are beneficial to their role. By using critical thinking and an inquiring approach, non-academic staff with qualifications produce creative solutions to problems and identify inefficiencies (Berman & Pitman, 2010), have a better understanding of their academic colleagues and are more likely to engage with them as equals (Lewis, 2014). While Berman and Pitman (2010) do not suggest a PhD should be a pre-requisite for non-academic staff, they highlight how generic skills (e.g., "written and oral communication, networking, personal effectiveness, career management and emotional intelligence", p. 160) are transferable and can be used in their day-to-day work. They also note that a PhD for a non-academic staff member does not appear to hold the same value as it does for their academic colleagues and there is a dearth of support from their organisation in relation to funding and opportunities for advanced qualifications (Berman & Pitman, 2010). Berman and Pitman (2010) suggest staff with higher qualifications understand the research environment and have empathy with the frustrations experienced by academic staff, which helps them to execute their roles more successfully. Similarly, Szekeres (2006) found that research-trained,

non-academic administrative staff use their research and generic skills in management roles.

In a recent comparative study of Australian and United Kingdom non-academic staff and their contribution to the student experience, Graham and Regan (2016) found that the presence or absence of qualifications influenced the confidence of the non-academic staff. Their findings also show that there is a lack of acknowledgement of the part that non-academic staff play in the student journey, particularly in regard to their technological skills (Graham & Regan, 2016). Whitchurch (2008b) found that non-academic staff with higher qualifications also have a clearer sense of professional identity. Similarly, Rickett and Pringle's (2014) study on non-academic women in New Zealand found those with postgraduate qualifications also had a higher sense of career motivation. Yet, having higher qualifications did not mean the women in Rickett and Pringle's (2014) study felt they were more valued. Neither did it necessarily lead to career progression within the non-academic pathway.

However, while universities benefit from those who bring a questioning and inquiring approach to the management side of academia, some studies have found that non-academic staff perceive they are not fully valued (Berman & Pitman, 2010; Gornitzka & Larsen, 2004; Szekeres, 2004, 2011). As Duncan (2014) maintains, "valuing staff is a complex, multi-dimensional and dynamic issue. It is as much about behaviour and organisational culture as it is about basic terms and conditions" (p. 42). Furthermore, Graham and Regan (2016) suggest that non-academic staff undertaking qualifications could be "an important part of developing the professionalisation of these higher education

roles, as well as for promoting mutual respect between academic and professional staff" (p. 604).

Sebalj et al. (2012) propose the idea of a nomenclature ladder indicating the skill or seniority level, with the effect of building a "foundation for the developing of identity and profile of university professional staff" (p. 468). Despite this, Lewis's (2014) findings showed while administration managers possess the necessary skill and experience to identify as professional, they still lack the collective self-confidence to make university administration managers a profession. There is still some way to go before there is a 'higher education worker' profession (Szekeres, 2011), as there are very few prospects for advancement or career management for administration staff (Graham, 2009). Careers could, however, become more flexible if, as Whitchurch (2008) proposes, a more project-portfolio type of work opens up giving opportunities for people move across and between boundaries.

A recent pilot study undertaken by Michelle Gander (2017) on career pathways for non-academic staff in United Kingdom and Australian universities found that, while career attitudes were protean and boundaryless, the participants also showed loyalty and valued job security and an organisational career. A more recent study by Gander (2018a) aimed to get a clearer picture of the career expectations of non-academic staff in United Kingdom and Australian universities and to ascertain if their needs were being met. She reported that most of the non-academic United Kingdom staff in the study had qualifications at Master's level and in Australia there was an equal split between Master's and Honours degrees. In addition, Gander (2018) also noted staff in the United

Kingdom had more doctoral degrees, which could be attributed to a difference in the education structure between the two countries.

In accordance with Bacon (2009), Gander (2018a) questioned whether professional staff should be considered as one cohort and highlighted the career differences between those working in academic departments, such as faculty and registry, compared to those working in central university units, such as human resources and finance. Although non-academic women working in academic departments have less career mobility, Gander (2018a) concluded that participants had a high level of job satisfaction and there was no real difference between United Kingdom and Australian professional (non-academic) staff. Gander (2018b) noted the participants had a more hybrid attitude to their career in the way they valued aspects of the traditional career, but they also took a protean approach in regard to a self-directed viewpoint. Participants were intrinsically motivated by responsibility and interesting work; however, there was a need for promotion opportunities and a career. A lack of commitment to career pathways needs to change in order to continue to develop non-academic managers, in particular those working in academic units who appear to have fewer opportunities. Graham (2009) suggests that the use of more effective performance reviews would provide opportunities for non-academic staff to reflect and set goals for the future.

It has been suggested by Davis (2018) that in light of the complexity and uncertainty the tertiary sector is facing the challenge is to prepare ourselves, our staff and our institutions. Soft skills and knowing the self well are equally as important as technical ability. Therefore, the tertiary sector "needs to effectively harness the knowledge, ideas, and creativity to support the necessary and

ongoing service innovation and improvement agenda" (Davis, 2018, p.3). Davis and Graham (2018) highlight how the changing times have given more opportunities for non-academic managers to develop both horizontally as well as vertically. They suggest non-academic managers need to take responsibility for their own development by actively managing their own careers. However, others argue non-academic or administrative staff have to resign and reapply for a higher position within the university to progress in their career (Berman & Pitman, 2010). Berman and Pitman (2010) suggest this is a disadvantage to the university because non-academic administrators changing position can mean loss of expertise in the area they move away from. Moreover, Gornitzka and Larsen (2004) argue that non-academic staff are in an uncomfortable position and feel unsettled when the range of tasks widens and diversifies, as they are continually required to redefine their function and roles. Ricketts and Pringle (2014) suggest that while academic staff are able to move up to higher levels, they do not necessarily get increased responsibilities (Ricketts & Pringle, 2014).

Overall, the number of people with both specialist skills and academic credentials is likely to increase and the development of academically oriented project work is opening up more possibilities to develop non-mainstream careers in the future (Whitchurch, 2012). It seems, therefore, that not only is there a need to carve out a new space (Szekeres, 2011) where this group can continue to develop and operate more strategically, there is also a need for clarification of the role.

2.1.2 Women in universities

Universities have long been seen as gendered organisations with a patriarchal culture. Gender divisions operate both vertically and horizontally (Eveline &

Booth, 2004) with non-academic women working in a "culture that values masculine characteristics and behaviours in male power structures" (Wallace & Marchant, 2011, p. 577). Wallace and Marchant (2011) further suggest the competitive, performance-focused strategies within the masculine university environment do not favour the experience of women.

A more recent study by Simpson and Fitzgerald (2014) argues that while changes have resulted in women outnumbering men in non-academic positions, women have not gained any advantage in their occupational status or hierarchical level. This suggests that even though new opportunities have opened up, men are predominately in higher level management positions. Consequently, even though the higher level management has moved from academics to senior administrators, non-academic women are not appointed to these management positions and therefore not involved in the decision-making (Whitchurch, 2012). On the other hand, Currie, Harris and Thiele (2000) investigated gender and the organisational culture in two Australian universities and found the impact of neoliberal reforms had minimised the difference in female and male working environments and showed that women and men "are similarly placed in relation to these intensified organisational demands" (p. 288).

In 1998, Deem proposed that, in light of the new managerialism, the softer approaches women use in management may be adopted in an attempt to "control academic performance and culture" (p. 66). However, this does not appear to have happened. Fitzgerald (2014) argues that if women want to succeed in leadership roles, they are required to "play the game" or "learn the rules" to conform to a male worldview (Fitzgerald, 2014). Even when women are part of the management structure, they are still marginalised as they are

predominately located in housekeeping type roles (Fitzgerald, 2014). Furthermore, Deem (1998) suggested women academics are more likely than their male colleagues to take on the extra responsibility required of the new academic-manager. The reasons for this are that women are not entrenched in the traditional notions of academic freedom and collegiality as they are newer to the world of academia and may not be as attached to the notion of collegiality as their male colleagues "since they were never really part of it" (p. 52).

In a United Kingdom study on women managers in an academic institution, Priola (2004) found the women used stereotypical attributes of femininity, focusing on supporting-nurturing, multi-tasking, and people and communication skills to create a more "feminine" management culture. In an earlier study, Deem (1998) also found that a "soft" collaborative and non-hierarchical approach to management was indicated by academic women managers. These studies appear to show that for "the creation of feminine identities, a process of separation between females and males is fundamental" (Priola, 2004, p. 428). However, this alternate management style differs from corporate masculinity and represents a feminine approach where women can ''belong'' and in doing so legitimise women managers as a group (Priola, 2004). Priola (2004) also points out that some of the women involved in his study showed qualities attributed to males (e.g., control) and discarded some softer attributes stereotypically associated with being female.

Studies show women are more inclined to use internal criteria such as personal achievement or work/life balance rather than measures such as income to determine their career success (e.g., O'Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2008; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003). Doherty and Manfredi (2010), in reporting findings

on the progression of women to senior management roles in United Kingdom universities, identified the most important thing for women to progress their career is to have a key support person or mentor who can help them build internal confidence. For non-academic women working in academic units, this could be difficult due to the lack of senior positions for this group of women. Women who do gain senior management positions are in a dilemma between managing the same manner as men or in a more nurturing, caring, co-operative pattern of socialisation (Wieneke, 1995, p. 12). Similarly, some of the participants in Wallace and Marchant's study (2011) also queried whether female managers should adopt more masculine management styles. The notion of an ethic of care is derived from feminist scholarship such as that of Gilligan (1982, cited in Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012). While care has mainly been used in health and social science and feminist research, there has also been a growing interest in care within management and leadership in organisational scholarship (Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012). Lawrence and Maitlis (2012) developed a theoretical framework on how narrative practices connect to work teams, revealing that there is a number of aspects to the practice of an ethic of care, including sympathy and pity, which may vary depending on the situation. Kawamura (2013) argues that "care is required for organisations to survive and thrive" (p. 109) and Tomkins and Eathough (2015) suggest that in practice caring leadership "can be directive and transactional, as well as emancipating and inspirational" (p. 127).

Many universities have implemented formal equity policies and gender-specific mentoring programmes which appear to have helped more women attain academic jobs and gain promotion (Baker, 2012). However, in spite of equal

opportunity initiatives that have been implemented throughout many universities, there has been limited improvement in the career prospects for both academic and non-academic females (Bell, 2010, cited in Blackmore, 2014). Slow progress in women's leadership within New Zealand higher education was the impetus for Professors Judy McGregor, Dianne McCarthy and Sarah Leberman to introduce an initiative designed to address issues that have been identified as barriers for women's progression. The programme New Zealand Women in Leadership (NZWiL) has enhanced the confidence of both academic and non-academic women staff to take on leadership roles and challenge "stereotypical notions of leadership arising from the gendered culture of the sector" (Ramsay, McGregor, & McCarthy, n.d., p. 11).

A study by Strachan et al. (2013) on gender equity amongst professional (non-academic) staff in Australian universities suggests that vertical gender segregation still exists, as men are more likely to reach senior positions than women, regardless of educational qualifications. The findings showed women's first-level appointments were lower than those of their male counterparts. Women were also more likely to aspire to higher non-managerial positions, whereas men are more likely to aspire to higher managerial positions (Strachan et al., 2013). Similarly, men more likely to request a pay increase than women as they have more confidence in their ability and how they are perceived.

According to Kanter (1979), the conditions required for middle managers are various: a variety of work; being at the centre or heart of what is happening; not bound by procedures; and involved in high power decision-making. Kanter (1979, p. 66) lists the sources of power within the organisation as follows:

- lines of supply – to have access to the resources they require to do the job

- lines of information – open channels to formal and informal information

- lines of support – to be able to use their initiative and own judgement and also have the backing of those higher up

If a manager does not experience these conditions, they may feel alienated. However, even when non-academics are in middle management roles, Wallace and Marchant (2009) found that non-academic women perceived they had fewer decision-making powers than their male colleagues, particularly male academics. Yet, when the academic-manager is absent women in non-academic, low-paid positions often unofficially step in and make decisions relating to complex management issues (Wieneke, 1995).

While there has been a big increase in women working in administrative roles, scholarship on non-academic women in universities argues that the barriers for this group are even more difficult to overcome. On the contrary, in spite of the fact that females outnumber men in non-academic positions, there is no evidence to show females are advantaged because they are the majority. Being non-male and non-academic perhaps has made this group of female managers doubly invisible (Wallace & Marchant, 2011). Szekeres (2004), suggests this could be because administrative work is often thought of as menial work or "women's work". Simpson and Fitzgerald (2014) also question to what extent labels attached to a woman's role signify the level she is working at and whether her work is classified as support work.

Castleman and Allen (1995) suggest that a non-academic, feminised workforce could partly explain the invisibility of the role. Eveline and Booth (2004) use the metaphor "ivory basement" (p. 243) to symbolise the lower position of women working in non-academic positions. This phenomenon could be considered a different take on the term 'double jeopardy' coined by Duncan and Loretto (2004) where, rather than being invisible because of gender and age, non-academic women are invisible because of gender and being a 'non' academic. Contrary to this view, Szekeres (2004) points out, the "construction of administrative workers – relatively powerless women doing menial tasks – is a rather old-fashioned one" (p.17) and the administrative roles today are more complex, specialised and skilled. In addition, technological changes have meant administrators and academic staff need to learn new skills and gain expertise to do their jobs and contribute towards the student experience.

Scholarship on career advancement also draws attention to the situation of non-academic women being more disadvantaged than their female academic colleagues. Castleman and Allen (1995) also identified a "blind spot" around non-academic women in relation to their invisibility and lack of career opportunity in higher education institutions. In a New Zealand study, Ricketts and Pringle (2014) found that rather than gender discrimination, there is role-based discrimination in New Zealand universities highlighting the importance for the sector to address the role-based discrimination within university policies which, unless addressed, may lead to low esteem. The participants perceived there was inequality around salary and flexible working hours, felt their work was less valued and they had less participation in decision-making in comparison with their female academic colleagues. These findings concur with

those of Wieneke (1995), who argued that non-academic women are "considered part of the fabric of the infrastructure but never fully acknowledged or recompensed for the value of the work they perform" (p. 16).

Overall, there seems to be a consensus among scholars that women in universities still have a long way to go in order to progress at the same level as their male counterparts. Simpson and Fitzgerald (2014) also highlight how the positioning of female non-academic staff can no longer be ignored and suggest further research is needed to capture the experiences of women working in non-academic roles in universities. Bateman's (1989, p. 237) notion of women's need to identify themselves in an ever-changing environment resonates with the idea of non-academic women struggling to find a place in the university environment (cited in Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 16).

> Our lives are full of surprises for none of us has followed a specific ambition toward a specific goal. Instead, we have learned from interruptions and improvised from the materials that came to hand reshaping and reinterpreting. As a result, all of us have lived with high levels of ambiguity.

2.2 Summary of Chapter 2

In summary, the changing dynamics in the university environment over the last few decades have had a significant impact on the identity of both academic and non-academic staff (Clarke et al., 2013). The neoliberal reforms have blurred boundaries and changed responsibilities. The effects of corporatisation, marketisation and managerialism have been seen as a threat (Billot, 2010) and in conflict with academic values and moral purpose (Sutton, 2017; Szekeres, 2004).

Opportunities for management roles have increased for non-academic staff, in particular those working in specialist business units such as marketing, human resources and IT (McInnis, 1998). That said, there is no evidence that these opportunities have extended to non-academic staff working in academic units. Furthermore, while studies (e.g., Graham & Regan, 2016; Rickett & Pringle, 2014; Whitchurch, 2008b) highlighted advantages in non-academic staff gaining higher qualifications, there was no conclusive evidence their qualifications were valued by the organisation.

Despite interest in non-academic staff and their sense of identity, the literature shows there remains a lack of visibility for this group (Berman & Pitman, 2010; Gornitzka & Larsen, 2004; Szekeres, 2004, 2011), particularly for non-academic women (Castleman & Allen, 1995). The literature also highlights that there are still many obstacles for women working in universities to overcome. Studies on non-academic women show similarities to academic women; however, there are further barriers for non-academic women to face such as 'role discrimination' (Ricketts & Pringle's, 2014) and symbolism of an 'ivory basement' (Eveline and Booth, 2004) denoting the lower level of women working in non-academic positions.

To date, most studies on the professional identity of non-academic staff have categorised non-academic staff as one group (Lewis, 2014; Szekeres, 2011); however, scholars (e.g., Bacon, 2009; Dawkins, 2011; Lewis, 2014) suggest there is a need to distinguish between non-academic staff working in different university settings. The studies reviewed in this chapter show that, there has been a concentrated effort to ensure that there has been at least an acknowledgement of the issues for non-academic staff in Australia and the

United Kingdom and the developments of frameworks and models by several scholars have gone a long way to addressing them. It is notable, however, that there has not been the same attention paid to non-academic staff in New Zealand, highlighting that the progress made for non-academic staff in the United Kingdom and Australia has not necessarily filtered into the New Zealand tertiary environment. A lack of commitment towards development and acknowledgement could hinder the progress of non-academic staff and negatively impact on their motivation.

Finally, summarising the issues identified in the literature review has clarified that the shifting boundaries due to policy changes and implementation of managerial values have impacted on the identities of both academic and non-academic staff. Not only have scholars argued that the academic sense of freedom and purpose as critics of society has diminished, there is also some suggestion that non-academic roles have become more powerful. However, the latter is an area that is debatable due to limited research and therefore there is a need for this to be explored in more depth. The literature also indicates that it could be beneficial for both academic and non-academic staff to use their unique expertise and skills to create a collegial working environment for both academic and non-academic staff. Promotion of the professional identity of non-academic staff in universities may be a positive way to ensure this group are fully engaged and working to their full potential.

Taking all these aspects into consideration, the review of the literature has identified a gap which this thesis will undertake to address. By examining the experience of non-academic women working in academic departments, the thesis provides an insight into their understanding of their professional identity

and perception of their current career opportunities. In addition, by examining the everyday experiences of non-academic women working in an academic unit, this thesis aims to explore role ambiguity and the construction of professional identity for this group of workers in a New Zealand university context. The findings could lead to new ideas about how to bring about a more collaborative way of working with non-academic managers and academic-managers within academic units in New Zealand universities. The next chapter will discuss the literature on identity.

3 Chapter 3 – Identity

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 outlined the effect that the changes of neoliberal reforms and the managerial university have had on both academic and non-academic staff. Policy changes have changed the way the university operates and also had a significant impact on academic identity. It is also evident that non-academic staff are still seen as invisible both in the organisation and in the literature. Above all, being invisible is coupled with a lack of identity for this non-academic group.

Overall, individuals may have many social identities depending on the social situation (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Chapter 3 will present an overview of the scholarship on identity, including social identity theory, personal identity, gender and identity and role identity, and how it relates to professional identity, the topic of this thesis using the university electronic library with search parameters, including peer reviewed articles with dates from 1975 onwards. The main search engines; EBSCO (Business Source Complete); Google Scholar; Scopus; Emerald Fulltext and JSTOR. The keywords used for searches; 'social identity theory'; professional identity' and 'organisations/organizations'; 'role identity; and 'gender identity'; 'Tajfel' - author. Snowballing was used from articles that identified other relevant studies and authors.

3.1 Identity

A sense of Identity can have significant implications for individuals as well as organisational groups. According to Stets and Burke (2014), an individual's work identity includes personal, social and organisational aspects. However, there appears to be some debate amongst identity theorists as to whether it is

the structure of an organisation or the human agency that determines the identity of a group.

According to Stryker and Serpe (1982), "Identities are reflexively applied conditions in the form of the question 'who am I?' " (p. 206). However, identity is not a fixed state or a static entity but a reflexive project (Giddens, 1991). Identities do not remain the same, particularly in the changing world. Over time, a person's identity is continuously being reshaped, reconstructed and redefined as the context changes (Bauman, 1998):

> The quandary tormenting men and women at the turn of the century is not so much how to obtain the identities of their choice and how to have them recognized by people around, but which identity to choose and how to keep alert and vigilant so that another choice can be made in case the previously chosen identity is withdrawn from the market or stripped of its seductive power. (Bauman, 2002, p. 477)

In pre-industrial times, a person's identity was more stable as he or she mirrored the identities of parents and grandparents; however, as times have changed and become more turbulent, a person can have multiple identities over time as occupation and status change (Albert et al., 2000). In times of organisational change, people need a strong self-concept in order to be able to cope with the identity challenges (Smollan & Pio, 2018). Organisational change brings identity challenges not only in regard to new roles and social groups but also in relation to a person's self-efficacy (Smollan & Pio, 2018).

A person's self-esteem is an important part of how they see themselves or "the negative or positive attitude that individuals have of themselves" (Rosenberg, 1979, cited in Stets & Burke, 2014). Taking this into consideration in relation to

this thesis, when a group of participants are referred to as 'non-academic', a lexicon that has negative connotations, it would follow that this could affect their self-esteem and how they self-identify. Ibarra (2004) states, "Identity encompasses what is unique about a person as well as what classifies a person as part of multiple groups" (p. 110). From a sociological perspective, identity is divided into three parts: social identity, role identity and personal identity (Turner, 2013). The following section will firstly outline social identity theory, followed by scholarship on professional identity, gender and identity, role identity and identity work.

3.1.1 Social identity theory

The social identity theory was developed by Henri Tajfel based on his early work of the integration of categorisation and social perception "to understand prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup conflict in society" (Hogg, 2016). Hornsby (2008) argues that it is "almost impossible to write or think about group processes and intergroup relations without reflecting on the core constructs within the theory, such as categorization, identity, status and legitimacy" (p.217).

Social identity theory has influenced organisation and management studies since the middle of the 1990s (Hogg & Terry, 2000). The organisation is seen as a social category in which a person searches for connectedness and empowerment (Ashforth & Mael, 1987). Verification of an identity is also important in order for a person to feel self-worth (Stets & Burke, 2014). Therefore, when a person feels they are valued and appreciated by their organisation they remain loyal (Fuller et al, 2003). However, people often have

multiple identities within an organisation, which can be conflicting at times (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Originally, theorists saw social identity as based on distinguishing between self-defined and self-inclusive identity and mainly focused on relations of intra-groups. Brewer and Gardner (1996) further developed the concept using three distinctions: individual, self or personal traits (such as being a woman); the relational self, a connection between role relationships with others; and the collective self, based on "them and us". The human motivation to identify with any target group is fundamentally to enhance an individual's social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). For example, as shown in the previous chapter (p.54) in an organisation such as a university which has historically been seen as a gendered organisation with patriarchal culture, men may identify with being "male" as it is associated with value and status relevant qualities, such as being competitive and performance-focused. Therefore, when status differences are clear, and the value system supports them, it is not usually possible to maintain positive in-group distinctiveness (Ely, 1995).

According to social identity theory, a person's identity is attached to the social group they belong to (Tajfel, 1974). "A group becomes a group in the sense of being perceived as having common fate only because other groups are present in the environment" (Tajfel, 1974, p.72). The emotional attachment of belonging to a group has implications for an individual's sense of well-being and self-esteem. Tajfel also argued that when people slide from an interpersonal to intergroup end of a spectrum, there is a shift in how they see themselves and each other (Hornsey, 2008). This is "part of an individual's self-concept which derives from her/his knowledge of her/his membership of a social group (or

groups) together with the emotional attachment to that membership" (Tajfel, 1974 p. 69).

Stets and Burke (2000) propose that social identity theory and identity theory are similar in the way that people categorise themselves because through the process of self-categorisation or identification, identity is formed. Even though group identity, role identity and person identity have different sources of meaning, they overlap (Stets and Burke, 2000). For example, gender identity which can be perceived as being positive or negative depending on the social setting. The process of social identity includes both self-categorisation and social comparison. Self-categorisation includes confirmation of the similarities people perceive between themselves and the in-group to which they are looking to belong. This means the correlation of the in-group's attitudes, beliefs, values, behaviours and styles are measured against their own attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours. Therefore, to identify with a group, people need to perceive themselves as being "intertwined with the fate of the group" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21). Through experimentation into social categorisation Tajfel (1974) explains that 'inter-individual similarities (no matter how small) "do lead the subjects in constricted experimental situations to 'prefer those' who are more 'like them'" Tajfel, 1974, p.72). Therefore, Tajfel's assumption is that there is a need for differentiation or distinction between the groups in order for "social categorization-social identity-social comparison" (p.74).

By social comparison, a person's self-esteem will be enhanced by judging the in-group in a positive way and seeing the out-group in a negative vein (Stets & Burke, 2000). Tajfel (1974) refers to groups being considered to be "superior" or better in some respects or "inferior" (p.72) resulting in the notion of an in-

group or out-group. Tajfel (1974) suggests that while one can identify between a secure and insecure social identity "a completely secure social identity is almost an empirical impossibility" (p.77). A group with a superior status can be threatened by another group. For example, in a situation where there is a conflict of values conceived by others as an unfair advantage. Similarly, where there are other injustices such as "exploitation or illegitimate use of force" which "destroys the positive contribution to social identity the group provides" (Tajfel, 1974, P.79).

Through identifying with a group, a person takes part in the successes and status of the group. Consequently, research has found that both positive and negative intergroup comparisons have an influence on a member's self-esteem (Stets & Burke, 2014).

At times, an individual may wish his or her group to be more like another group perceived to be superior or better. Tajfel (1974) suggests if the individual's own group is not fulfilling the need to contribute positively to their social identity, they may try to identify with a group that they perceive is more like them. Furthermore, the status of different roles a person assumes within a group could also reduce or increase, depending on power or status within the group (Stets & Burke, 2000), as identities are constructed and negotiated through social interaction (Ibarra, 1999; Tajfel, 1974). However, it is important for a social group to have verification of its identity in order for the group to feel a "sense of being found worthy and valuable" (Stets & Burke, 2014, p. 410). If a group does not have identity verification, this could mean a lack of efficacy for those belonging to the group.

70

A person's social identity not only derives from the organisation but also from the work group they belong to (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). It is the existence of out-groups that makes the in-group more salient (Alvesson, Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008). Scholars further argue that to understand the phenomenon within organisations, it is important to bridge the gap between both personal and social identities, as both have an influence. Therefore, belonging to an organisation may provide one answer to a person's question, "Who am I?" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). One of the most important dilemmas a person has in society is "to find, create and define a place" within their networks through a system of orientation or self-categorisation (Tajfel, 1974, p. 67). The definition of others and self are mostly "relational and comparative" (Tajfel & Turner, 1985, p. 16) as one defines oneself in relation to people in other categories (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Within organisations, there are a complex network of intra-groups characterised by the levels of power, status and prestige they are perceived to hold (Hogg & Terry, 2000). When asking the question, "Who am I?", the hierarchy and distinctions of status between different communities and functions can also be pivotal for the regulation of identities (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). It is also important for effective interaction with other entities to be able to answer the question, "Who are they?" (Albert et al., 2000); for example, as explained in this thesis, it is important for academic staff to have an understanding of the identity of their non-academic colleagues.

Where there is a power difference between two groups (Hogg & Terry, 2000), such as academic/non-academic in a university environment, another dimension is created in terms of how the verification occurs. In situations where

a person finds the group membership is not contributing to positive aspects of their social identity, but it is not possible to leave, Tajfel (1974) suggests s/he can change the "interpretation of the attributes of the group so that its unwelcome features (e.g. low status) are either justified or made acceptable through a reinterpretation" (p.70). There are two main aspects relating to the increase of group identity within an organisation. Firstly, distinctiveness, which relates to the group's values and practices and the boundaries that surround them, distinguishing them from other groups. Ashforth and Mael (1989) suggest that when the distinctive aspect is considered to be negative, the group often becomes defensive. On the other hand, if the distinctiveness is considered positive it must be preserved to remain superior.

Secondly, social identification relates to the prestige of the group and has an impact on self-esteem. Identification is also associated with the salience of out-groups, therefore reinforcing the awareness of the in-group. For example, in a university environment, the category 'non-academic staff' is meaningful when compared to the category of 'academic staff', as there is a hierarchical and perceived status difference between the two groups.

Another more holistic approach proposed by Sluss and Ashforth (2007) is to integrate personal-relationship literature and identity literature to get a better understanding of how people experience work. They believe, "It is relational identities that knit the network of roles and role incumbents together in a social system" (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007, p. 11).

3.1.2 Professional identity

Professionals are often identified by what they do (Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006). Professional identity is an "individual's self-definition as a member of a profession" (Chreim, Williams, & Hinings, 2007, p. 1515), based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences (Ibarra, 1999), or rather, "I am who I enact" (Obodaru, 2017, p. 535). However, the concept of professional identity is complex as it is shaped by contextual aspects and complicated by competing definitions (Clarke et al., 2013) formed over time.

Professional identity is a way of being (Trede, Macklin, & Bridges, 2012) where people portray images in their professional role that display qualities such as competence, good judgement and trustworthiness that they want others to attribute to them (Ibarra, 1999). People observe others and decide if they want to be like them in the future and by imitating others and trialling new behaviours, a person has an idea of a 'possible self' (Markus & Nurius, 1986). However, while the concept of 'possible selves' Chreim et al.'s (2007) can be highly vulnerable to changes in the situation or environment (Markus & Nurius, 1986), findings showed how external aspects, such as a governing body, as well as the organisation, had a significant influence on the outcome of the reconstruction of professional identities. Therefore, depending on the institutional dynamics, professionals could be more restricted within the boundaries of their roles, making reconstruction of professional identity more challenging. Obodaru (2017) proposes that even when people move on and change their professional identity, they do not have to forgo the sense of identity and values associated with it.

According to Priola (2004), "the construction of identities is seen as a fluid and continuous process of negotiation in the working environment and in society" (p. 421). For example, in a higher education or university environment, the relationships and interactions of the multiple professions within the organisation must be considered (Rhoades, 2007, cited in Clarke et al., 2013). However, in their review of the literature on professional identities in universities, Trede et al. (2012) noted that only a few articles mentioned the external context. Relationships are also important in building careers as people learn a lot through their relationships (Hall, 1996). Stryker (1980) maintains that people form their professional identity through gaining insight from varied experiences over time and meaningful feedback from others.

Professional identity is not job-specific (Weick & Berlinger, 1989). As Ibarra (1999) suggests, people adapt aspects of their professional identity to match their experience and the demands of a new role and new situations. Ibarra (1999) argues that people construct possible identities during the process of career transition through identifying role models and trying out behaviours while continuing to evaluate their progress. Building on the notion of 'possible selves', Ibarra (1999) suggests 'provisional selves' are a temporary solution to bridge the gap between current skills, values, behaviours and attitudes, and those observed to be required for the new role (Ibarra, 1999). People need time and experience to decide if they will adopt these behaviours, values, styles and attitudes or discard them. Self-evaluation and external evaluation of how others react determine this decision. Eventually, a person's feelings of what to adopt and what to discard are validated, depending on whether they are congruent and authentic with oneself (Ibarra, 1999).

74

These authors (e.g., Ibarra, 1999; Priola, 2004; Stryker, 1980) highlight how constructing a professional identity is a fluid process, developed over time, and they also draw attention to the importance of relationships in building professional identity and building careers. Contextual aspects have a strong influence in how these relationships affect a person's identity. In response to this, it would follow that in a university environment, where there are two distinct groups, academic and non-academic, these aspects would have a significant impact on those groups of non-academic staff who do not have a strong professional identity.

3.1.3 Gender and identity

Existing research on gender and career suggests that the construction of professional identity can be different for minority or disadvantaged groups (Kyriakidou, 2012). For example, Ibarra (1999) found the women participants in his study were more likely than men to find 'true to self' identity strategies, which also could suggest women may struggle to find appropriate role models. West and Zimmerman argue that gender is "the product of social doings of some sort" (p.129) portrayed through interaction. Masculine traits, such as being active and decisive; displaying behaviours that show confidence; aggressiveness and self-direction are considered to be agentic. Feminine traits, such as caring; emotional; kindness; concern for others are more communal, (Abele, 2003, cited in March, van Dick & Bark, 2016).

As previously highlighted in this chapter (p. 65), gender identity is one aspect of their social identity. Ely (1995) suggests that the meaning a woman attaches to being female can be associated with being positive or negative or undecided "depending on the salience and nature of comparative distinctions between men

and women in a given setting". These feelings can then affect self-attribution, including stereotypic attributions, such as being caring and nurturing. The comparative distinctions between women and men, including stereotypical attributes, and the value that is attributed to these distinctions help to shape a women's work identity (Ely, 1995).

West and Zimmerman (1987) use the term *doing gender*, whereby they argue that a person's gender is about what one does, and how one interacts with others. By portraying feminine or masculine traits through bodily postures, movement, actions, ways of behaviour, or how a person looks or sounds like a man (or woman), they must be perceived as that. According to Gherardi and Poggio (2001), "gender should be viewed as a practice and not as a natural phenomenon" (p. 257), as men and women define their position through practices and conversation, and their differences create their identity. Gender is to some degree always relevant in the workplace through interactions, as we adopt a gender stance that is recognisable to those we interact with (Holmes & Schnurr, 2006). For example, Ibarra and Petrigtieri (2016) found in their study that when changing roles, both male and female participants experienced a gap in what they were doing and what was expected but they used different strategies to bridge that gap. Women used a preventive style by assuming greater task competence to compensate for perceived stereotypical attributes others may have about them. On the other hand, men tended to use an acquisitive, dominant style to project confidence. However, March et al. (2016) found that the masculine agentic traits ascribed to working men and women had changed from earlier studies and the results showed that working women are not perceived as agentic as previously. Their study showed that working women

are still perceived as communal, which they attributed to societal changes as there are more women than in the workforce 30 years ago.

Identities of women in leadership roles often come under scrutiny and these women may feel they are being judged by others (Meister, Sinclair, & Jehn, 2016). When women use terms such as 'mother', stereotypical connotations associated with being a mother become salient. Meister et al. (2016) found that women have to cope with the feeling of being misidentified through the perceptions of others and suggest with time and power these experiences become less obvious. Mavin and Grandy (2012) discuss the concept of 'doing gender well or differently' and they contend that gender binaries can be challenged through the emergence of women leaders who show a more communal type of behaviour. Martin's study (2014) highlighted how humour is a natural part of women middle managers' identity as they use humour to make paradox negotiation more rewarding. Martin (2014) suggested, "women middle managers can be encouraged to practice humour initiation as a strategy to negotiate gendered paradoxes" (p.166).

Kyriakidou's (2012) study of the construction of women engineers' identity found redefinition or developing the group's own unique set of values and goals became a key process in constructing their professional identities. On the other hand, Hogg and Terry (2000) suggest that professional identity may be more important than gender. Taking Hogg and Terry's (2000) suggestion into consideration could mean the participants in this thesis would identify with their role rather than with being female. It would therefore seem that before a space can be defined for non-academic staff, there needs to be an examination of how gender shapes the occupational landscape (Simpson & Fitzgerald, 2014).

77

3.1.4 Role identity

According to Burke and Stets (2009), "roles provide structure, organisation, and meanings to selves and situations" (p. 113). Similarly, role identity arises from enacting a particular role (Chreim et al., 2007) and provides a definition of self-in-role. Ashcraft (2007) describes it as "the micro-practices of enacting a job and making sense of the work we do" (p. 12). The term 'role identity' was coined by McCall and Simmons in 1978 to highlight how the two notions are inseparable: "Identities enable persons to ascribe meaning and purpose to their actions and encapsulate the experience of a role" (Barley, 1989, p. 51). However, role identity also needs to be verified by others and a role only makes sense when it is related to other roles (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Barley (1989) discusses the work of the Chicago sociologists who share the notion that roles are not a "predefined set of rights and duties that could be donned and doffed as easily as a well-tailored suit of clothes" (p. 50). Rather, they emerge through an ongoing negotiation process where a person develops their attitudes and behaviours specific to those they interact with. This would mean interaction with others needs to validate a person's credibility, so they can feel they are good in the role (Ibarra, 1999). Emotional discomfort arises if a person does not feel authentic and the individual fails to see how a new identity links to a past identity (Ibarra, 1999). Similarly, in a study focused on professionals, Pratt et al. (2006) found that the way in which professionals interpret and enact their role is based on how they view role identity. This is because identity correlates with their perceived work competencies and people reconcile their self-conceptualisation with what their role entails and how they do it (Pratt et al., 2006). They argue that a person can enrich his or her identity,

"patch it or use a temporary splint" by bringing in previous identities, such as student identity, to customise their identity. Furthermore, they reiterate "the importance of understanding 'what they do' in order to gain a richer appreciation of 'who they are' in the identity construction of professionals" (Pratt et al., 2006, p. 259). However, Pratt et al. (2006) conclude their study by acknowledging that they based their work on new, emerging professionals who were constructing their professional identity and that further study is needed for those who are more experienced in their roles. The idea of constructing a professional identity using the concept of Pratt et al. (2006) could be challenging for non-academic staff due to the historical influence of the hierarchical university culture. As discussed previously, in light of social identity theory, the existence of two distinct groups would mean breaking down any preconceptions that are already associated with being part of the non-academic group.

Simpson and Carroll (2008) argue that while the notion of role was dismissed by identity scholars in the past, it is still used by individuals when discussing their practices and experiences. To theorise identity construction, Simpson and Carroll (2008) use the space of 'boundary object' as a way of distinguishing the notion of role. According to Burman (2004), "boundary objects offer a site or medium for the negotiation of identity and difference" (p. 370). Issues of power are integral when there is a situation needing to be defined by difference, conflict or negotiation. Simpson and Carroll (2008) propose that, to understand the relation of power and agency, role as a boundary object is a way of working together. Within a university environment, where there is already a perceived power difference between academic and non-academic staff, using role as a boundary object could help to negate these differences. The roles of the staff in

the academic and non-academic groups both contribute to the student experience and achievement; therefore, by negotiating a more positive identity for the group of non-academic staff, a more equal partnership could be established.

In sum, personal, social and organisational identity are part of an individual's work identity. Social identity theory outlines how people categorise themselves within a work environment through self-comparison and self-categorisation. Accordingly, they devise which social group they belong to by comparing themselves to others in relation to how similar or different they are. In an organisation such as a university, social identity theory can provide one answer to the question of "Who am I?". Furthermore, in an environment where there are two distinct groups, academic and non-academic, it is important for both groups to be able to answer the question, "Who are they?", so each has an understanding of the other. Effective interaction and negotiation between the groups is needed in order to validate a group member's credibility. In light of the policy changes in the university environment and the ambiguity of roles, there is a need for both groups to have a good understanding of each other's roles. Previously, the literature has indicated that non-academic staff are invisible and at times undervalued. Therefore, it is particularly important for their roles to be validated by their academic colleagues.

Within a social system such as a university, it is also important for a person to identify what they do. The concept of professional identity is a way of understanding this. However, a professional identity is not necessarily job-specific and is gained over time through experience and meaningful feedback. Both professional and role identity are interwoven. Similar to professional

identity, role identity emerges through interaction with others and a process of negotiation about what each role entails. The next section outlines how this process, termed 'identity work', is developed, followed by an outline of the influence an organisational context has on the process of identity construction.

3.1.5 Identity work

Identity work is "a sociological notion of *identity* having at its centre an analytical distinction between people's 'internal' self-identities and the 'external' social-identities to which they relate" (Watson, 2008, p. 123). From a practical perspective, Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) suggest that "identity work refers to people being engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness" (p. 1165).

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) explored a link between organisational control and identity regulation and outlined a conceptual framework which focused on an interplay between regulation intervention, identity work and self-identity. They propose that organisational structure is central to the regulation of identities and organisational practices such as induction, promotion and training can have an influence on how an individual's identity is formed (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). This influence can be strategic or more subtle through everyday interaction which individuals can either engage in or distance themselves from.

Situational aspects, together with the organisational setting and professional networks, have a strong influence on the way relationships are formed and maintained (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). Chreim et al. (2007) claim that research on roles and identities previously concentrated on a micro perspective

at early stages of a person's career and so they undertook a study to show how institutional influences have a significant part to play in reconstruction of professional identities. Their findings indicated that an institutional environment both enables and constrains how a person forms his or her professional identity (Chreim et al., 2007).

Walsh and Gordon (2008) propose that individuals create their work identity by incorporating their social identity with the way they identify with their organisation and their occupation. Furthermore, because identity is socially constructed, language plays an important part in how one is perceived (McInnes & Corlett, 2012; Meister et al., 2016). Construction of identity or identity work in organisations can happen through every day, mundane conversation (McInnes & Corlett, 2012). People not only construct their professional identity but also their positioning through workplace talk (Holmes & Schnurr, 2006) by explaining the importance of their work to others through occupational rhetoric (Fine, 1996). Scott (2007) emphasises the link between communication and identity through a framework connecting social identity theory to the study of organisational identity. He highlights that it is through communication with others that we "express our belongingness (or lack thereof) to other groups and are able to then assess the reputation and image" (p. 124). Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) further suggest that using narrative to make sense of one's identity when transitioning into a new role helps a person to understand and drive towards a tentative self and eventually to "reinforce or transform their work identity" (p. 149).

When a number of individuals follow the same career path, it becomes socially recognised by others (Barley, 1989). Career paths provide an individual with

signals for "judging career progress, and with a terminology for staking down one's identity and making sense of one's role" (van Manen, 1980, cited in Barley, 1989 p. 51).

3.2 Summary of Chapter 3

This thesis mainly focuses on a social identity theory approach as an overarching guide to understanding how the study's participants experience their professional identity. However, role theory is also relevant to how the participants experience their role. Role identity and professional identity are also linked to a person's career pathway. To have a socially meaningful career, individuals need to associate themselves with a reference group (Barley, 1989).

It is important for a person to identify what he or she does within a social system such as a university. Social identity theory and self-categorisation are relevant to this thesis in that there are two distinct groups. Professional identity is one way of gaining an understanding of this.

4 CHAPTER 4 - METHODOLOGY

The research for this thesis was undertaken from a social-constructivist perspective using a hybrid approach informed by van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology. However, while the study draws on the literature from writers who discuss hermeneutic phenomenology it does not uphold the strong focus of lived experience that underpins a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. One of the challenges encountered when undertaking this research was the tension between presenting a considered theoretical view, to the sociological concepts of professional and role identity, and the deeper philosophical assumptions that underpin hermeneutic phenomenology. Qualitative studies can "have the look, sound, or feel of other approaches" (Sandelowski, 2000, p.337) such as a qualitative descriptive approach. Taking this into consideration, rather than phenomenological notions of hermeneutic phenomenology in its pure sense, a hybrid approach brings a 'hue' of phenomenology (Sandelowski, 2000) to the interpretation of texts presented in this thesis.

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 20 female participants in 4 New Zealand universities. Van Manen's (1997) existential themes framework was used to analyse the data.

4.1 Introduction

The first section begins with the rationale and aim of this thesis. This is followed by a discussion of my positioning as an 'insider researcher'.

The second section presents the framework and design of the study, moving into a deeper discussion of the paradigm, and the axiological, ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives underpinning the study. The third section outlines the historical beginnings of hermeneutic phenomenology and its use in organisational studies. This section also discusses in more depth the philosophical perspectives of Heidegger's and Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology. The fourth section provides an account of how the research was executed by outlining the participant criteria, the interview process and the process undertaken for the analysis. Finally, this chapter discusses the ethical considerations and the limitations of the study, ending with a summary.

4.2 Rationale for the study

Scholarship on women's careers has long established that women do not follow the same career trajectory as their male counterparts. Several scholars (e.g., O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003) have developed holistic frameworks that are more in line with a woman's life pattern. Statistics show that even though 69 percent of managers within the education sector are women, there is still slow progress for women to reach top management positions (Statistics NZ, 2015).

Scholars also highlight that non-academic women in universities are further disadvantaged in the "ivory basement" (Eveline & Booth, 2004, p. 243), with little or no scope for career advancement, facing challenges such as 'role discrimination' (Ricketts & Pringle, 2014). This is concerning when statistics show that there is a significantly higher proportion of women than men in New Zealand universities (Ministry of Education, n.d.-b, see Figure 1). However, the literature review revealed that there has been very little research on the identity

85

of non-academic staff in New Zealand, and the area of non-academic women in universities is under-researched, particularly in management roles, a gap which this thesis aims to address.

Figure 1
Gender Comparison in New Zealand Universities (includes all employed and contracted staff)

Year	Number of Female staff	Number of Male Staff
2012	7790	4495
2013	7950	4545
2014	8010	4605
2015	7715	4425
2016	10830	6070
2017	10790	6160
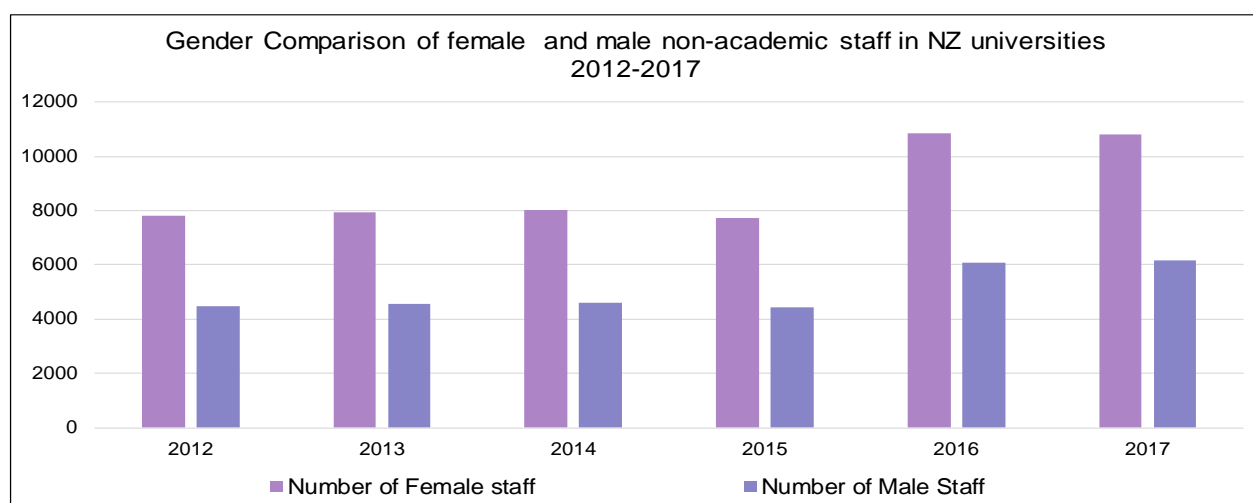
Notes
1. From 2016 onwards staffing counts are for a full year. Previously a snapshot collected 1st week of August
2. non-academic staff covers executives, advisors, technicians, librarians, administrators and general service staff

Retrieved from https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary-education/resources.

4.2.1 Aim of the study

This thesis aims to explore the lived experience of women working in non-academic management roles in New Zealand universities. The purpose is to

86

gain an understanding of the meaning this group of non-academic managers give to their identity in the university environment. This identity includes their professional role. The study also aims to examine the meaning this group of non-academic women give to their career aspirations and advancement in the university sector and to provide a unique contribution to the body of knowledge on non-academic staff.

To meet these purposes, the following research question and sub-questions were formulated:

How do non-academic women within academic departments understand their identity in university environments?

- o How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their professional role?
- o What do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments say about their future career aspirations?

Undertaking this thesis, I began by researching methodologies that would resonate with my values and the way in which I view the world. Researchers undertaking studies in organisations have often taken a positivist approach (Prasad & Prasad, 2002). However, in the last decade or so, the idea of using a more interpretive way of enquiry has been seen as relevant, particularly in enhancing understanding of the complexities of people in organisations (Prasad & Prasad, 2002). A qualitative approach is also considered appropriate when the focus of the research is on the meaning people give to their experience (Ticehurst & Veal, 1999).

87

After examining several different methodological approaches, I decided to take an interpretative perspective, which is in line with my belief that there is no one truth, as knowledge is socially constructed. Firstly, I pondered on how my experience working in the university environment as a non-academic woman manager was the catalyst for my choice of topic for this thesis. I then considered the significance of my position as an insider researcher and these considerations strongly influenced my decision that a hybrid approach was the most appropriate framework. In this way, my approach for selecting an appropriate methodology was similar to van Manen's (2014) suggestion that "a person [who] turns towards phenomenology does so out of personal engagement' (p. 154). Greene (2014) also argues there is merit in researchers acknowledging and reflecting on their positionality when undertaking insider research.

While this thesis was informed by both Heidegger's and Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology, I favoured Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as it resonated with my sense of how my pre-understandings and interpretation would add value to the meaning and understanding of the topic. Gadamer advocates that one needs to be conscious that there is common ground, in order to bridge the gap through merging the past and present. Therefore, a researcher's pre-understanding or prejudice is integral to the importance of the hermeneutical enquiry (Gadamer, 2013). Also, as this approach is relatively new in business studies, I took a hybrid approach rather than hermeneutic phenomenology in its purest sense. When doing hermeneutic research, one is not "trying to grasp the pure experience" but rather pursuing an understanding of the phenomenon of the research topic which "remains

central to the understanding" (Binding & Tapp, 2008, p. 126). As there is no specific formula for collecting data in a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, van Manen (1997) suggests a variety of data sources can be used, including both interview and personal experience. I selected semi-structured interviews to gather the data in conjunction with my reflections on my 'insider' experience.

Van Manen's (1997) existential themes were used as a framework for analysing the data, and social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974) provided a lens for looking at identity and also non-academic women, the focus of the study, as a social group. Furthermore, my prior experience and tacit knowledge of working in a university environment, along with my extensive reading in this area, gave me insight into what questions to pose and also helped me to understand more deeply the context the participants of this study were positioned in and the issues that impacted on them. The following section will examine 'insider' research further and then move on to discussing the research design in more depth.

4.2.2 *Shaping my position as an 'insider researcher'*

> One must not only be one in order to understand one; one must be one in order to understand what is most worth understanding. (Merton, 1972, p. 16)

Insider research is not a new phenomenon (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2013). More than 40 years ago, Merton (1972) distinguished between 'insider' and 'outsider'. The 'insider' has access to privileged kinds of knowledge which the 'outsider' does not. Insiders are therefore members of specific groups with a certain social status and outsiders are non-members (Merton, 1972). In this thesis, I have inside knowledge through extensive experience of working in a tertiary

environment as a non-academic woman. Scholars such as Greene (2014), who highlights the pros and cons of 'insider research', suggest it can be problematic because the 'insider' has a vested interest in the outcome and therefore may be unable to attain the distance and objectivity deemed necessary for a valid research project. Mercer (2007) refers to this challenge as wielding a double-edged sword. Scholars mostly agree that insider/outsider research is not sustainable in the sense that a research area is very specific and therefore the researcher can be an insider for some parts but not necessarily all.

For this thesis, I have worked in the university as a female non-academic, therefore I can be seen as an insider. However, I have not worked in the specific context that the participants are positioned in. Contextual influences, such as different universities, different faculties and different positions, will result in different experiences and perceptions of those experiences. In this sense, I am an outsider. Furthermore, in the situation of interviewing my participants, I am not "one of them"; I am in another role as the researcher and therefore could be considered an outsider. Being an insider can be an advantage when undertaking a hybrid approach informed by van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology. An insider has tacit knowledge and brings their biases and experiences into their interpretation of their research. In this sense, my previous 30 years' experience working in the tertiary environment, and as a manager in an academic department, helped to bring understanding to the interpretation of the text relating to the participants' experiences. Brannick and Coghlan (2007) suggest being an insider adds value and argue that, while 'insider research' has had relatively little consideration as an approach to organisational research, they believe there is no inherent reason why being an insider should be an

issue. Besides, it is an advantage being an insider because an outsider does not have the same life experience and so they cannot fully comprehend the situation (Merton, 1972).   In a recent study, Ross (2017) highlights the aspect of emotional challenges of insider research. An insider can have empathy with their participants (Mercer, 2007; Ross, 2017). While there has been limited research on the significance of emotions (Ross, 2017), insider research requires the researcher to reflect on their own identity and experiences (Ross, 2017). However, even though this reflective process can be challenging for the researcher, it may also enrich the study. Finally, consideration of the benefits of the insider status was an important influence in deciding on the design of the study.

4.3 Design of the study

This section will firstly outline the design of the study, then lead on to discuss the paradigmatic, axiological, ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives for the framework undertaken.

Table 2
Research Design

Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology	Method
Interpretive	Relativism	Transactional/ Social Constructionist	Hybrid approach informed by van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology	Semi-Structured Interviews
The nature and meaning of experience and reality are interpreted	Interpretation is relative rather than absolute	Knowledge is created rather than discovered	In-depth understanding of an experience	Draw out specific detail of meaning which allows for thematic analysis

Adapted from The Constructivist Credo (Lincoln & Guba, 2013)

4.3.1 Paradigm

A paradigm consists of axiological, epistemological, ontological and methodological perspectives based on a basic set of beliefs (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A researcher's own values and basic beliefs on what counts as knowledge determine the framework to use to undertake research. Merriam (2009) outlines three of the main philosophical positions as positivist, interpretive and critical. Taking a positivist perspective, one assumes that reality already exists, and it can be observed and measured.

From an interpretive perspective, the researcher assumes there is no observable single reality and knowledge is therefore constructed rather than discovered. The interpretive paradigm is the philosophical stance which will provide the guideline for this study on how non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their identity in university work environments. This approach is associated with using qualitative methods to understand the meaning people attach to their lives and recognises the role of the researcher in interpreting the data and the importance of language (Merriam, 2009). Taking my insider status into consideration, I felt that an interpretative, qualitative approach was an authentic way to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences.

Critical research is often used in feminist research to make change and empower (Merriam, 2009). Critical research "goes beyond uncovering the interpretation of people's understanding" (Merriam, 2009, p. 9) and aims to "critique and challenge, to transform and empower" (p. 10). While I acknowledge that a feminist or critical feminist perspective could be deemed appropriate, I selected to take a descriptive interpretive approach informed by

van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenological which resonated with my insider status and my prior experiences, outlined in Chapter 1.

The rationale for choosing women as the target group was because they represented the majority of those working in a non-academic management role in the New Zealand university sector. The purpose of the thesis was to gain an understanding of the experience of this group of women with an aim of bringing more visibility to the importance of their roles and their professional identity.

4.3.2 *Axiological perspective*

Axiology comprises ethics and aesthetics (Lincoln & Guba, 2013) and refers to the values and opinions a researcher holds in relation to the process of generating knowledge (Kafle, 2011). I believe that everyone has their own perception of truth, so I wanted to get a sense of how the participants experienced their everyday lives from their point of view and the meaning they gave to their experiences and hence their particular truths.

A researcher's values have an influence throughout the research process, from the choice of the research area and the choice of the research question to the method, design of the research, analysis, interpretation and conclusion of the data (Bryman, 2008). Values, therefore, become a form of pre-supposition held by the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2007). As an 'insider' researcher, I had experiences working in a university environment whereby I had a pre-understanding of the context I was researching in. I drew on these pre-understandings in order to gain an insight into the stories the participants shared with me. In this way, by undertaking an inquiry from an interpretivist perspective, my 'bias' as researcher is part of the process of the interpretation. In contrast,

from a positivist perspective, the belief is that knowledge is objective, value-free and without bias (Crotty, 1998), thus a positivist inquiry can be carried out without the influence of a value system (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

4.3.3 Ontological perspective

Ontology is the study of being and forms the theoretical perspective of a study (Crotty, 1998). It is our most basic beliefs about what kind of being a human is and the nature of reality (Creswell, 2013; Grant & Giddings, 2002). It includes philosophical assumptions about reality, or "what is" (Crotty, 1998, p. 10) or, in other words, when is something real? Crotty (1998) refers to ontology as being concerned with "the nature of existence" (p. 10) and suggests there is a similarity between ontological and epistemological notions as they inform the theoretical perspective of a study.

From a realist perspective, there is "something" out there to be discovered, whereas a relativist is of the view that knowledge is a social reality which is value-laden and only comes to the fore through the process of interpretation (Creswell, 2013). The two frequently held positions on "what is reality"? are referred to as objectivism and constructionism. Objectivism (known as positivism) professes that "social phenomena and their meaning have an existence that is independent of social actors" (Bryman, 2008, p. 19). It implies that social facts are beyond our influence. Gadamer disputes the historical science concept of describing the particulars of an object without taking into consideration the historical differences of what is already known. He argues that if historical differences are not taken into account, it can be detrimental to the research purpose (van Manen, 2014).

An alternative view is that of constructionism (known as interpretivism), the perspective undertaken in this thesis, whereby it is through the social actors (including the participant and researcher) that meaning of a phenomenon is produced (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The constructivist's viewpoint relates to the ontological perspective that there is no reality until it is constructed and interpreted in the mind. Taking a constructivist's stance in this thesis meant that both the participants' experiences and my prior experience contributed to giving meaning to this study. Lincoln and Guba (2013) describe relativism as "the basic ontological presupposition of constructivism" (p. 39) and suggest that an interpretive inquiry such as hermeneutic phenomenology would be an appropriate choice. Interpretive research is associated with qualitative research focused on meaning and understanding (Merriam, 2009).

According to Creswell (2007), a qualitative viewpoint has the assumption "that all research is value-laden and includes value systems of the inquirer, the theory, the paradigm used and the social and cultural norms of either the inquirer or the respondents" (p. 247). It is important to note, however, that qualitative research can be undertaken in a positivist mode (Prasad, 2002). However, as Lincoln and Guba (2013) point out, the scientific notion of objectivity that positivist researchers uphold conflicts with a constructivist viewpoint. Constructivists believe knowledge is shared and co-created by both the researcher and participants, taking into account their various value systems. As in this thesis where my own experience, and the experiences of the participants, are part of the whole, the impact of values held by both the researcher and the participants cannot be hidden. Taking this into consideration, it is important researchers are aware of their own values and

beliefs when undertaking research from an interpretative perspective and, as Bryman and Bell (2007) suggest, that they "explore how these biases and characteristics affect the research process" (p. 712). As Heidegger argues, we can never be free of our pre-suppositions; therefore, they influence our understanding of an experience (Gill, 2014). In line with the interpretive viewpoint, I believe a researcher can never be value-free, contrary to a positivist viewpoint where the goal is to be value-neutral (Crotty, 1998).

4.3.4 Epistemological perspective

Epistemology relates to how we know what we know (Kafle, 2011). Similarly, Crotty (1998) outlines an epistemology as "a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (p. 3). There is a range of epistemologies and how we look at the world and make meaning of it influences how the choice is made. People have differing viewpoints on the same phenomenon as they see the world in different ways. For example, when looking at the world from an objectivist viewpoint, meaning exists regardless of whether anyone is aware of it or not, therefore it can be discovered. The world exists irrespectively and, from an objectivist (positivist) point of view, we can discover the truth through the understandings and values of the people we study. An objectivist (positivist) takes an epistemological position that supports the importance of imitating the natural sciences and sees that knowledge is arrived at through gathering facts that provide the basis or law (Bryman, 2008). A positivist viewpoint is usually associated with a scientific approach to gathering and analysing the data, where there is one truth or reality (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

On the other hand, constructivist researchers differ from objectivists in the sense that they follow the view that nothing exists without a mind and therefore meaning is constructed, not discovered (Crotty, 1998). Crotty (1998) explains the notion of constructivism as "all reality, as meaningful reality is socially constructed" (p. 54). A constructivist also believes that people can construct meaning in different ways in relation to the same phenomena. Interpretive research is placed within the philosophy of social construction, a worldview in which individuals seek to understand the world they live and work in (Creswell, 2007), with a belief that social knowledge or truth is based on an individual's own worldview (Bryman & Bell, 2003). In contrast to a positivist viewpoint, an interpretivist believes there are multiple realities (Bryman & Bell, 2003), and goes beyond what is being said "to understand this complex and constructed reality from the point of view of those who live it" (Schram, 2006, p. 44). The interpretivist framework supports the ontological perspective of multiple realities that are constructed and can be altered by the knower, as "reality is not something 'out there', but rather something that is local and specifically constructed" (Laverty, 2003, p. 24). In terms of practice, social construction requires the researcher's questions to be broad, so participants can put together a meaning of a situation for the researcher (Creswell, 2013). The researcher focuses on the context of the history and culture of where the participants work and, in doing so, can gain an understanding (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the researcher is required to acknowledge how their own background shapes their interpretation (Creswell, 2013). Using an interpretive approach in this study to gain understanding of how the participants experience their identity in the context of their work environment required me to examine my own experience

97

of working in a similar environment, an integral part of the interpretative process in a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology.

4.3.5 *Methodology*

A hermeneutic phenomenological approach questions the meaning rather than solves the problem, with tradition and insights guiding the process (van Manen, 1997). This methodology attempts to uncover and see through the "presumptions and suppositions that shape our understanding of the world and understanding of life" (van Manen, 2014, p. 55) and, rather than testing a theory, fits with the aims of this study to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences. Prasad (2002) also strongly advocates adopting hermeneutics as a research approach for organisational phenomena and suggests "developing a genuinely hermeneutic imagination may well be regarded as the overall goal of organizational scholarship" (p. 29). Methodologically, hermeneutics requires the researcher to give careful consideration to the history of the organisational phenomenon (Prasad, 2002). Therefore, taking into account how the university environment has evolved and changed is integral to understanding the experience of the participants in this study and is consistent with the hermeneutic phenomenological process.

Van Manen (2014) proclaims that phenomenology is more than a philosophy: it is a way of questioning the meaning of life and the decisions and actions we make. Phenomenology has the potential to understand and gain insights and meaning and "wants to investigate the ordinary emergences of human experience and meaning" (van Manen, 2014, p. 54). Taking into consideration the distinction van Manen (2014) makes between using phenomenology rather

than other types of enquiry, a hybrid approach is an appropriate methodology for undertaking this study.

Other methodologies will not bring the depth of understanding this study aims to achieve. For example, some researchers may come from an objectivist viewpoint, where they claim that scientific methods are impartial and supposedly free from "idiosyncrasies or personal styles" (van Manen, 2014, p. 25). An objectivist viewpoint does not resonate with my belief that there is no reality without a mind to interpret and nothing can be interpreted without prior assumptions. In this thesis, my prior experiences contribute to the interpretation of the data, in the sense that I have taken my pre-conceptions from these experiences into consideration. Without acknowledging my prior experiences and examining them in light of the data gathered from the participants, I would not have been able to fully understand the phenomenon. Gadamer (1975) proclaims that "a person who believes he is free of prejudices, relying on the objectivity of his procedures and denying that he is himself conditioned by historical circumstances, experiences the power of prejudices that unconsciously dominate him vis a tergo" (p. 360).

The following section outlines the history of hermeneutic phenomenology, focusing on Heidegger and Gadamer's philosophical perspective. Next is a diagrammatic outline and explanation of the hermeneutic circle. A brief discussion of the literature of phenomenology and management studies will follow.

4.4 Hermeneutic phenomenology

According to Kafle (2011), the term phenomenology includes a philosophical movement as well as a variety of research approaches. The aim of phenomenology is to describe a phenomenon which is experienced by people and includes anything with thoughts and feelings. Phenomenology is not a method for finding or discovering answers but rather a way of questioning (van Manen, 2014). Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is regarded as the originator of phenomenological philosophy (van Manen, 2014). Edmund Husserl developed the method, now known as transcendental phenomenology (Kafle, 2011), as a way to elevate the status of philosophy in line with the rigours of science (Gadamer, 1975). "Husserl refers to his descriptive method as "reduction," which underpins the analytical process of several phenomenological methodologies". (Gill, 2014, p.119). Reduction requires the phenomenologist to suspend their assumptions about a phenomenon, free from everyday assumptions (Gill, 2014). This description is objective and does not include the researcher's own views. Husserl coined the notion of *lebenswelt* or lifeworld and proposed one needed to bracket out the world as well as one's own biases in order to successfully achieve contact with the essence of a phenomenon. Finley (1999) explains that "the lifeworld is the world of experience as it is lived" (p. 301).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is "the study of *experience* together with its *meanings"* (Friesen, Henriksson, & Saevi, 2012, p. 9) and is "concerned with the life world or human experience as it is lived" (Kafle, 2011, p. 191). The term 'hermeneutics' derives from *hermeneuein*, a Greek word meaning to 'understand' or 'interpret' (Crotty, 1998, p. 88). Hermeneutics is categorised into

three groups: *classical, philosophical* and *critical*. The early approaches were more rigid and confined to interpreting text (Prasad, 2002). *Classical hermeneutics* was previously understood as a way of understanding parts or passages of text that are difficult to understand. Friedrich Schleiermacher transformed hermeneutics beyond biblical text interpretation to a general theory to guide the practice of correct interpretation and understanding (van Manen, 2014). Schleiermacher proposes that a text should be read with an open mind and when doing so, to reconstruct the past (van Manen, 2014). However, Gadamer argues that to reconstruct the past could be too complex and therefore one must place oneself in one's own social context (van Manen, 2014). *Philosophical hermeneutics* is concerned with the process of the act of interpretation and the emergence of understanding and interpretation and regards temporal distance as necessary to gain understanding. From a Heideggerian perspective, hermeneutic phenomenology can be considered as the best way to study human beings because it is "an interpretation of human beings as essentially self-interpreting" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 34).

Critical hermeneutics builds on the notion of philosophical hermeneutics but differs in the sense that critical theorists argue interpretation is the recovery of the original intention of the author of the text, rather than the interpretation of the researcher (Prasad, 2002).

Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, both born in Germany, were fundamental contributors to the growth of philosophical hermeneutics. Moreover, Heidegger, a student of Husserl, was widely considered to be one of the most significant philosophers of the 20th century (van Manen, 2014). In contrast to Husserl, Heidegger believed that we can never be free of

assumptions and furthermore our presuppositions influence our understanding of an experience (Gill, 2014). Heidegger deviated away from the concept of 'bracketing' and developed his own type of phenomenological methods, inspiring 'interpretive' or 'hermeneutic' phenomenology (Gill, 2014). Based on Heidegger's argument that suspending one's opinions is impossible, philosophical hermeneutics focuses on unveiling and interpreting the individuals' experience through their life stories (Kafle, 2011).

Heidegger talks about *Dasein*, the German word meaning existence or being there, commonly referred to as 'man'. However, more accurately, Dasein refers to the "aspect of our humanness which is capable of wondering about its own existence and inquiring into its own *Being*" (Heidegger, 1962, cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 176). This approach differs from *classical hermeneutics* in the way that it requires one to place oneself "within the spirit of the age" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 264). In other words, this means giving space to be conscious of one's own prejudices so that one can understand if they are prejudices or not (Gadamer, 1975, p. 266).

Van Manen (2014) describes hermeneutic phenomenology as "a method of abstemious reflection on the basic structure of the lived experience of human existence" (p. 26). Hermeneutic phenomenology assumes humans live in a referential whole of interpretations, in the sense that they already understand everything in a certain manner (Heil, 2008). Heidegger (1996) calls this referential totality of interpretations a 'world'. The term 'world' does not necessarily refer to the external environment but rather the familiar horizon in which one is involved, and this can include the corporate world (Heil, 2008) or,

as in this thesis, the New Zealand university environment the participants are working in.

Gadamer (1975) suggests there are two dimensions of meaning to 'lived experience' (van Manen, 2014) – as one must live through an experience before one can reflect on that experience, it then becomes a 'lived experience'. *"*Genuine experience is experience of one's own historicity…. Thus we will have to seek out in hermeneutical experience those elements that we have found in our analysis of experience in general*"* (Gadamer, 2013, p. 366). During the research process, researchers go through a 'lived experience' as they are becoming aware of their pre-reflections and taken-for-granted pre-understanding and biases (Kafle, 2011). As Laverty (2003) explains, "pre-understanding is not something one can step outside from or put aside as it is understood as already being with us in the world" (p. 24). Therefore, the researcher should move back and forth, reviewing personal assumptions and then returning to looking at participants' experiences with a new perspective (Friesen et al., 2012), a process which is referred to as the hermeneutic circle.

4.4.1 Hermeneutic circle

The hermeneutic circle is a metaphor used to diagrammatically explain moving from the parts to the whole and represents the combined aspect of human understanding. In essence, this means that, from a hermeneutic perspective, it is important to understand the parts before the whole can be understood. This process shows the relationship between the reader and the text and how it moves back and forth as the reader gets to know more. From a hermeneutic perspective, a researcher learns to "look beyond the interview situation and analyse the interviews as texts" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 60). Similar to

having a conversation, the aim is not to understand better but understand differently (Koch, 1999).

Language and text are important aspects in a hermeneutic investigation and, according to Gadamer (1975), the meaning of the text emerges through a conversation with the interpreter and the text and the text questions the interpreter's prejudices. Gadamer rejects the idea of a division between the text and the reader and emphasises the importance of the fusion of horizons where the pre-understanding (prejudices) gives context where meaning can emerge (Prasad, 2002). For example, fusion of horizons in this thesis was the process of considering the data gathered from the participants' interviews in light of my own prior experiences of working in an academic department. According to Gadamer (1975), to truly understand a text requires "suspension of our unproductive prejudices" (p. 266). Gadamer (1975) refers to the 'historicity of experience' where "experience itself can never be a science" (p. 355). In a hermeneutic inquiry, the process cannot be repeated with the same result (Gadamer, 1975), the reason being that someone who is experienced is also open to new experiences and can learn from them (Gadamer, 1975). In this way, acknowledging one's pre-understandings and bringing them to the interpretation is part of the process of the hermeneutic circle.

Bontekoe (2000) describes the circle in its basic form as "two poles – on one hand the object of comprehension considered as the '*whole'*, and on the other hand, the various parts of which the object of comprehension is composed" (p. 3). The *whole* is understood in terms of its *parts* and, once integrated, the parts define the whole (Bontekoe, 2000, p. 29). As a researcher experiences different

frames of reference, "our understanding of self and the world cannot help but incorporate some of this worldly 'text' into our own" (Freeman, 2007, p. 929).

Figure 2
Hermeneutic Circle
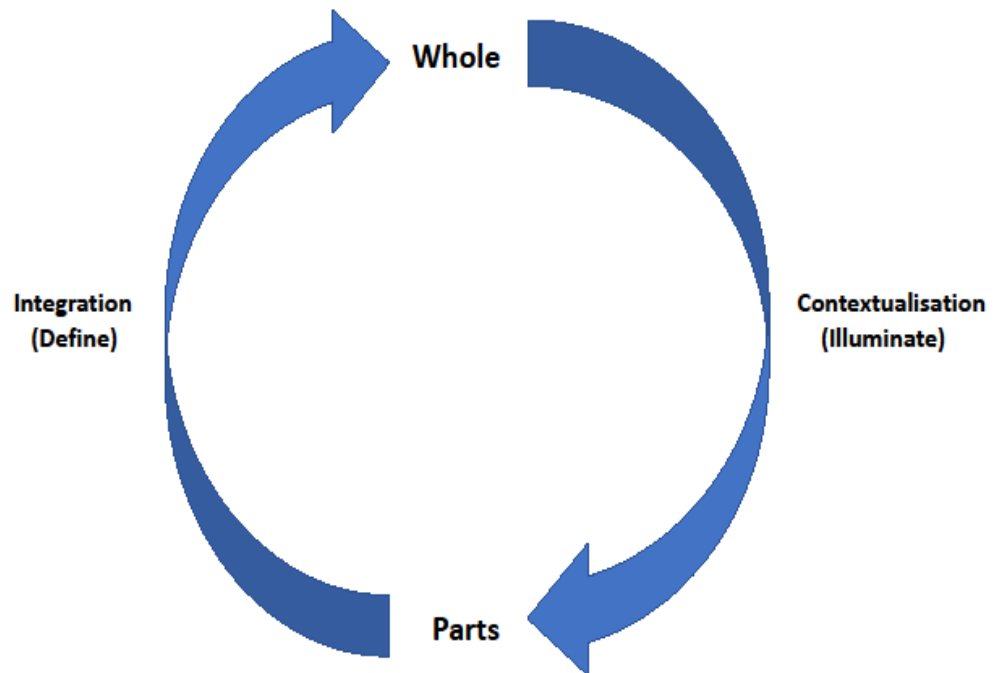
Adapted from figure 1.1, Bontekoe (1996, p.4)

4.4.2 *Phenomenology and management studies*

The field of enquiry in business research can be varied and complex and crosses a range of disciplinary boundaries (Ticehurst & Veal, 1999), referred to as trans-disciplinary (Tranfield & Sharkey, 1998). Tranfield and Sharkey (1998) discuss the idea of positioning management studies within the social sciences. There is a wide range of views within management studies and no agreed ontological and epistemological paradigm (Tranfield & Sharkey, 1998). However, there is growing interest in using phenomenology for management-related studies as a way to explore human experience and meaning (Ehrich,

105

2005; Gibson & Hanes, 2003; Gill, 2014; Prasad, 2002; Prasad & Prasad, 2002; Segal, 2010; Tomkins & Eatough, 2013). Several leading phenomenological philosophers are concerned with the notion of work and working. For example, in their study of women faculty's experiences of being mentored, Gibson and Hanes (2003) used a phenomenological approach to help "understand the complexity of human experience and gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of participants' experience" (p. 201). Gibson and Hanes (2003) argue that by applying a philosophical concept of phenomenology rather than the more positivist approach to mentoring that researchers have previously used they can research humans in their natural world and gain a more holistic understanding.

Tomkins and Eatough (2013) followed Husserl's idea of going back to the things themselves within the context of work and organisation. Within their study, they emphasised the need to suspend the organisational attitude in order to access the raw experience of their participants. A later study on organisational leadership by Tomkins and Simpson (2015) used Heidegger's notion of care (*sorge*) and expressed disappointment that Heidegger's philosophy has come late to organisational research, as many of the themes are directly relevant to organisational studies. Segal (2010) highlights the value of using Heidegger's notion of existential hermeneutic phenomenology for management studies. While management experiences are often taken for granted, Segal (2010) suggests in order to gain a deeper understanding, it is important for managers to return to the phenomenon to make sense of what is happening. From a Heideggerian perspective, there are times when one needs to be more philosophical and ask the question what the experience means.

In sum, in the last decade, there has been a growing interest in using phenomenology in management studies. Scholars have suggested that a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to management studies has helped to explore the human aspect of management to gain a deeper understanding of managers' experiences. Furthermore, several scholars have highlighted the value of researching humans in their own world as it is more meaningful and gives a holistic perspective of the phenomenon.

The following section will outline and explain the process of the hybrid hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry undertaken within this thesis.

4.5 Method

Hermeneutics does not have a defined method. As Gadamer (1975) notes, it has been said that "the method of phenomenology and hermeneutics is that there is no method" (cited in van Manen, 1997, p. 30). Therefore, van Manen (2014) suggests that, instead of thinking in terms of a method, we can take on an attitude of the things "in the world as we live" (p. 36). In this way, we reflect on the experiences that we have lived through. Gadamer (1989) argues that the purpose of investigation is not to offer a general theory of interpretation; rather, it is to discover what is common to all modes of understanding (cited in Binding & Tapp, 2008, p. 122). An interview process is used most often in a hermeneutic inquiry, whereas other kinds of qualitative enquiry have a different focus and use a different method. For example, survey studies are often used when wanting to gain participants' opinions, ethnography is used for cultural inquiry and grounded theory for theorising meanings (van Manen, 2014). There are various ways to conduct interviews and the researcher decides on what type of interview style they will use, depending on the aim of the research and the

research question. For this thesis, I used semi-structured interviews. This method allowed me to probe to seek further clarification and gain a better understanding, resulting in a rich, detailed description (Bryman & Bell, 2003) suitable for a hermeneutic enquiry.

The aim was for the participants to lead the conversation and talk about their own experience or what it is like for them. While semi-structured questions guided the interview, the probing questions were used to encourage or seek more in-depth clarification, depending on the flow of the conversation. According to Merriam (2009), this method is more flexible as the questions do not need to be asked in order and it allows the researcher to follow up issues that are interesting and that they want to explore more deeply. Structured interviews do not allow for the same flexibility and are usually used for obtaining information, such as demographic data (Merriam, 2009). By using semi-structured interviews, the participants were encouraged to share their feelings, thoughts and values about their experiences as managers in the university context, in a safe, empathetic environment. When using a hybrid hermeneutic phenomenological methodology it is necessary to continually question one's own prejudices (Prasad, 2002). My experiences working in a university environment in a non-academic manager role have formed my ideas around my identity. Therefore, in keeping with the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I needed to be mindful of my own preconceived ideas and prejudices when interviewing the participants and analysing the data. Gadamer (2013) maintains that to understand meaning, one must be aware of biases and remain open by embracing the understanding of others through the text. It was important that as a researcher and an 'insider', I was aware that "self-reflection

and auto-critique" are an integral part of the process (Prasad, 2002, p. 29) and are in line with the philosophy of the overarching hermeneutic phenomenological approach undertaken in this study. I also wrote notes in a reflective journal to increase self-awareness and understanding during the research process. The task of understanding is achieved through the process of writing (Koch, 1999).

4.5.1 Recruitment of participants

In hermeneutic phenomenology, participants are selected who have the lived experience of the focus of the study (Laverty, 2003). The selection of participants for this study was therefore based on purposive sampling and snowballing. The criteria outlined females working for at least five years in non-academic management roles with staff management responsibilities in an academic department within one of the eight New Zealand universities. My rationale for choosing those working in academic departments was because this is an under-researched group. As highlighted in the literature review, previous research has mostly focused on non-academic staff as a homogenous group or in research divisions where non-academic staff cross boundaries and are also responsible for academic work. My supposition was there may be a different dynamic for those non-academic managers working in an academic unit where academic staff are the majority. I considered five years of working in a university environment to be a significant amount of time for the participants to have the depth of experience that would add meaningful value to the study. The population for the study was women working in roles such as school managers, department managers, faculty managers, who were responsible for managing non-academic staff and the administration and operation of these

units. Women were chosen as the focus group due to the significantly higher proportion of women managers within the New Zealand university sector (Statistics NZ. 2015). In this thesis, an academic unit encompasses a faculty, school, department or unit that is concerned with academic business. The central university units and library were not included.

After receiving ethics approval in April 2016 (see Appendix B), I began the procedure of recruiting the participants for the study. As part of the ethics approval, I approached the human resources directors at each of the universities for permission to recruit. Gaining permission was to ensure transparency as I was recruiting staff for a study in relation to their roles within the university sector. I emailed six of the eight universities with a brief outline of the study, requesting them to post the advertisement (see Appendix E) on the internal websites (intranets) of their universities. I decided six universities would be sufficient to recruit the number of participants I required to gain a good insight into the meaning of their stories and achieve the aims of this study. Initially, I did not extend the invitation to the university I was currently working in. My rationale for this decision was because my own experience working as a non-academic woman manager in an academic department at my current university is included in the study. The other university I did not approach was the smallest university.

The process of recruitment was challenging. While there was no difficulty communicating with some of the universities, I needed more persistence with others. This entailed several follow-up emails and phone calls. Five of the six human resources directors contacted responded and gave approval to recruit participants. Once I had gained approval, I then had the issue of how to place

the advertisement. This proved to be challenging. While several of the universities were very supportive and posted the advertisement, not all the universities have an intranet. Consequently, I submitted an amended ethics application to recruit through snowballing and purposive selection using my networks, which was granted on 19 July 2016 (see Appendix C). Again, this required some persistence to get the advertisement out to the target cohort of non-academic staff. Initially, the response was encouraging, with 23 enquiries from four universities. There were no enquiries from the fifth university. However, only 17 respondents met the criteria from three universities. As the hermeneutic methodology does not strive for an empirical generalisation (van Manen, 2014), there is no set number of interviewees required. Therefore, the aim was to gain samples from universities around New Zealand to gather enough rich data to be able to give a "powerful experiential example of anecdotes" (van Manen, 2014, p. 353) to ensure the rigour of the study. Those who did not match the criteria were emailed with an explanation of the reason why. Applicants who were eligible were sent the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix F) and the Participant Consent Form (see Appendix G) with further information about the study, its purpose, what was required of the participants, the risks and benefits, and contact details. Many of the participants were at universities outside my residential area. Considering time and the cost of flights and accommodation, I tried to arrange to interview several participants at the same location on one visit. The interview venue was chosen by the participants and all interviews were conducted either in the participant's office or a meeting room at their university. I suggested to the participants to choose the interview venue as I assumed they would feel more relaxed and comfortable

in a familiar environment. Sixteen participants in total were interviewed between May 2016 and July 2016.

Over the next couple of months, I transcribed the 16 interviews. This was a slow process as it entailed reading and listening (Silverman, 1993). However, it was beneficial in gaining a good understanding of the essence of the participants' stories. After I had transcribed the 16 interviews, my supervisors and I decided to extend the pool of participants to include the university I work in. Given only 17 respondents met the criteria from three universities it was considered advisable to increase the sample size from at least half of the eight universities. The rationale for this decision was to ensure the study was robust with a cross-section of participants from around New Zealand. As I had not included this group in my original ethics application, I submitted a second, amended application requesting to recruit participants from my own university. To ensure against power imbalance and coercion, the recruitment excluded the faculty I am currently employed in. The second amended ethics approval was received in March 2017 (see Appendix D). Again, I was required to contact the human resources department for approval to interview. Over the following months, I placed the advertisement around the university when I attended meetings or seminars. I also talked about my study whenever I had an opportunity in an attempt to create interest. However, as I did not apply to recruit using my internal networks, it was difficult to get the advertisement circulated.

I had no responses from this ad hoc approach; therefore, in June 2017, I placed an advertisement on the university intranet. From this advertisement, I received three initial enquiries. Two of the three consented to be part of the study and interviews took place in the middle of June 2017. I later received another three

enquiries and another two participants were interviewed. I completed my data collection in August 2017 with a total of 20 participants as data saturation had been reached. I reflected on possible reasons for participants not being as forthcoming as I had anticipated and wondered if maybe the topic of identity could be confronting to some people, as they were unsure of what this might uncover. I also considered that the ethics approval condition requiring approval from the human resources director at each university could have deterred prospective participants. There was a possibility that because of this process the participants may have felt insecure around identity and their confidentiality. The focus of the thesis was to examine non-academic women managers' in academic units as a homogenous group; therefore, due to confidentiality and study focus the table does not categorise the participant by their university.

As there are only eight universities in New Zealand, the focus group are a small geographic population. I therefore chose not to use titles as they can be specific to the university and therefore identifiable to those in the non-academic community working in New Zealand universities in academic units. Inconsistencies in titles can also be an issue for non-academic staff moving across the sector in relation to their identity. Due to confidentiality, the job titles are represented by levels rather than names in table 3. I categorised 'high level' as participants working in senior administrative roles, such as faculty manager, registrar, director; 'middle level' as participants working in school manager, business manager roles responsible for a team of administration staff; 'low level' as participants working as department managers with one or two staff. The profile of the participants is outlined in table 3. The table includes approximate age group, qualification and the level of the role.

Table 3

Participant profile

Participant	Age Range	Qualification	Level of Role
Alice	25 - 40	No degree	Middle
April	41 - 65	Post Graduate	High
Betty	41 - 65	Undergraduate	Middle
Belinda	41 - 65	Not known	Middle
Carla	41 - 65	Not known	Middle
Dora	41 - 65	Not known	High
Dorothy	41 - 65	Post Graduate	High
Edith	25 - 40	No degree	Low
Harriet	41 - 65	No degree	High
Irene	41 - 65	Not known	High
Isobel	25 - 40	Post Graduate	High
Jasmine	41 - 65	No degree	High
June	41 - 65	Undergraduate	High
Lorraine	41 - 65	No degree	Low
Lydia	41 - 65	Post Graduate	Middle
Mary	41 - 65	Not known	Middle
Meredith	41 - 65	Not known	Middle
Sadie	41 - 65	No degree	Middle
Sylvia	41 - 65	Post Graduate	Middle
Violet	25 - 40	Post Graduate	High

Note: High relates to those working in senior type roles (e.g. faculty manager; director, registrar)
Middle relates to middle management role (e.g. school manager, business manager)
Low relates to low management role (e.g. department manager, administration manager)

4.5.2 Interview process

In hermeneutic phenomenology, the specific purpose of the interview is for exploring and gathering stories of lived experience (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). A phenomenological philosophy suggests that humans experience the world

through language and through language they provide understanding and knowledge (Byrne, 2001).

The interviews were guided by semi-structured questions and asked about the experiences of the participants. However, the interviews were organic as they flowed on from the conversation that developed. I chose to audio-record the interviews in order to give my full attention to the participants and concentrate on what was being said. As Heidegger (1996) states, "only he who already understands can listen" (p. 165). Also, I wanted to establish a rapport with the participants as they were aware that, while I was in a researcher role, I was also an 'insider' in the sense I was a female working as a non-academic in an academic unit.

At the beginning of the interviews, I asked the participants if they had read the information sheet and understood the purpose of the study. I explained that the study was to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences in their management role and an understanding of their identity in the university environment and was not intended to investigate or critique any policies or procedures at their university. The participants were asked questions about how they understood their role and responsibilities, their experience working in a management role in an academic department, and the meaning they gave to their career opportunities and their career aspirations within the university. They were encouraged to reflect and share their stories and feelings. The interviews were insightful as the participants reflected on their experiences and gave concrete experiences of events, frustrations and successes of their everyday lives.

Gadamer (1998) suggests "the person who wants to understand must question what lies behind what is said" (p. 370), as "understanding is always more than merely re-creating someone else's meaning" (p. 373). In other words, this means exploring the significance of their self-understandings in ways the participants may not have been able to see (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Kafle (2011) describes this as "an attempt to unveil the world as experienced by the subject through their life world stories" (p. 186).

The interview length ranged from between approximately 30 minutes to 60 minutes. The participants were asked the following questions and encouraged to talk about their experiences.

1. Please tell me how you understand your role? (How would you describe your role?)

2. What are non-academic staff called in this university? How do you feel about that term? What does it mean to you?

3. Please tell me about your experience of working in a management role in an academic department. What are your main responsibilities? Tell me about the the challenges? Tell me about what works well?

4. How do you think your academic colleagues perceive your role?

5. Please tell me about your interaction with your academic collegues?

6. How do you perceive your opportunities in your present role?

7. What are your career aspirations?

8. Please tell me about how you feel about your opportunities within the university for the future?

9. What is your understanding of the career pathways at this university?

10. How do you perceive a career pathway for non-academic women managers in the university?

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) suggest a well-run interview may be an enriching experience and provide participants with new insights into their situation. I felt that most of the participants felt good about sharing their experiences. When I asked a follow-up question, at times I noticed how they paused and reflected on their own words before continuing. When beginning the interviews, I encountered the challenge of determining the level of responsibility of the participant's role. This was due to the inconsistency of names of the academic business units and roles throughout the universities. The universities also had varying structures and the hierarchical naming of schools and faculties and departments was also different across the universities. This was not something I had anticipated before I began the interviews and it was challenging to ascertain how and where the participants fitted into the structure at their university. A further complication was the inconsistency of the participants' titles in relation to the responsibilities of their roles. While some of the participants had very similar responsibilities, their titles were varied, for example, director, faculty manager, administrator, business manager, school manager, department manager, academic unit manager and other variations on these terms. Consequently, this required me to spend some time at the beginning of each interview to gain an understanding of the level the participant was working at in relation to the university structure. Being an 'insider' helped with this process, as without prior knowledge of structures and responsibilities of similar

roles, it would have been difficult to determine the level of responsibility of the participants' roles.

After the interviews were completed, I transferred them from the digital voice recorder to my computer for transcribing later. I chose to transcribe the interviews myself as part of the early analytical process as I considered this a necessary step in the hermeneutic method that would help me to gain an initial understanding of the meaning. One of the things I became aware of through re-listening to the tapes was my own interview style. I consciously tried to improve my clarity and slow down my speech as the interviews progressed. While the value of the repeated listening is often overlooked and thought of as merely a clerical task (Kvale, 2007), it is also considered an important element in gaining a better understanding (Silverman, 1993). Furthermore, as the transcription process is a transformation from oral conversation to written, it can involve judgements and decisions as voice and tone play a part in the interpretation. Kvale (2007) also suggests that "the social and emotional aspects of the interview situation [are] present or reawakened" (p. 95) when the researcher transcribes and to some extent the analysis will have already started.

Once the interviews were completed, I asked a senior non-academic colleague at my university to interview me and audio-tape the discussion. The questions were the same as I had asked the participants. However, we moved on to a conversational interview which encouraged me to think more deeply about my own experiences. I found this process to be valuable in the sense that it opened up my mind to my own prejudices and prior understanding of my identity that I may not have been aware of previously. It also led me to question why I felt this way and provided an opportunity to draw on these thoughts when I was

undertaking the analysis of the participants' interviews. To be as open as possible requires one to be critically self-aware of one's assumptions (van Manen, 2014). According to Gadamer, it is our prejudices that "define the limits and the potentialities of our horizons of understanding" and are therefore necessary for our understanding (Prasad, 2002, p. 18). As Koch (1999) explains, "prejudices are merely the conditions by which we encounter the world as we experience something, and we take prejudices (value positions) with us into the research process and these assist us to understand" (p. 177). Gadamer refers to this as the 'fusion of horizons', where the interpreter comes to an authentic understanding of the text (Gadamer, 2013). 'Text' was used in the broad sense in this thesis and included my own reflections of working in the university environment. Sharkey (2001) suggests "the life expression is understood in a particular way because of the specific questions and pre-understandings brought to the event of understanding by the interpreter" (p. 27).

4.5.3 Analytical process

The transcription of the interviews was a long process with approximately 90,000 words of data collected. In spite of the fact that it was time-consuming, I considered it to be worthwhile, as my thoughts went back to the surroundings and the interview became alive again as I reflected on my experience. At this beginning stage, I had already begun to form some ideas. As van Manen (2014) suggests, understanding turns out to be a development of the idea at the starting point. I found that through the transcribing process I gained a good insight into the meaning of the participants' stories. Gadamer suggests insight is more than just knowledge: it uncovers something that was previously not known (Gadamer, 2013). Therefore, keeping an open mind was important

during the analytical process so I could gain an understanding of the essence of the experiences the participants were telling me about.

Once the transcriptions were completed, I emailed the participants offering a copy of their interview to read through and asked them to get back to me with any necessary changes or queries. Several participants did not reply and others emailed back with positive messages about the research but did not want to read through their interview transcripts. Only one of the participants asked for her interview transcript and after reading it she queried some information she felt may expose her identity. I responded with an assurance that I would remove any identifying information. There was no other contact with the participants in regard to reading through their interview transcripts. I made this decision following the philosophical beliefs of Gadamer (2013) who states the process of interpretation of the text "does not mean referring back to the original source where something is said or written" (p.410). According to Kvale (2010), if the participant makes ambiguous and contradicting statements during the interview, the researcher needs to decide whether there is a failure of communication or rather if this reflects the participant's inconsistencies and contradictions in the real-life situation. "Gadamer believes that the drive behind human's search for expression is the continuous effort to articulate our understandings" (Freeman, 2007, p. 929).

After my initial thoughts around the interviews, I read through the 20 transcriptions many times, highlighting those areas that seemed to stand out as being important, significant or different. Through reading, I gained an understanding of the essence of what the participants were meaning. At first, the transcripts appeared overwhelming with so many different areas discussed.

However, according to Gadamer, "a person who wants to understand must question what lies behind what is being said…. If we go back behind what is being said, then we inevitably ask questions beyond what is said" (Gadamer, 1998, p. 370). Therefore, in order to gain an understanding of the meaning, I went through the process of re-reading and thinking more deeply about the essence of what was behind the words. Van Manen (2014) refers to this as letting the text speak to us.

I wrote notes about the thoughts I had on the important points and continually questioned what the meaning of the participants' experiences were, rather than just hearing their opinions and ideas. Reading through the interviews, I observed that a lot of the text was about the participants' own opinion or they started the sentence with the words "I think". Van Manen (2014) notes that people will share their opinion, views and values more easily than sharing the fullness and subtleties of the meaning of the experience as they lived it. Yet these opinions, perceptions and values are only helpful to lead the researcher into the lived experience; thus, the challenging part is working out how to capture the experience itself (van Manen, 2014). In essence, I needed to be conscious of using an interpretive methodology rather than analysing the data by just recording the participants' sharing of opinions and views around situations in a descriptive way.

During the analytical process, I was mindful of the importance of having an understanding of the excerpts in relation to the whole script in order to gain meaning of the lived experience. Van Manen (1997) maintains that the meaning or essence of a phenomenon is "multi-layered and multi-dimensional", which he describes as "making something of a text or of a lived experience" by "grasping

and formulating a thematic understanding" (p. 78). Through this process, I was able to categorise parts of the transcripts and note areas that were more significant into sub-themes.

Byrne (2001) maintains that "to be engaged in a conversation with a text is to bring one's prejudices into play. On the basis of one's prejudices one is able to understand the content of what the text says" (p. 969). While one's own prejudices or fore-conception is part of the process, according to Gadamer (1989, p.282), it is necessary to be aware "so the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth". In this study, this process was in line with the hermeneutic circle of examining and reflecting on the parts and then the whole and going back and forth in order to gain an understanding.

Sharkey (2001) explains, "Gadamer acknowledged that the process of understanding may well be one where the interpreter unmasks and rejects a prejudice that was mistaken in some way, but the process may also result in an affirmation of the understanding that one began with" (p. 27). Therefore, even though I had an awareness of my pre-understandings prior to analysing the interviews, I was open to change as I questioned the text and sought out new understandings. Moreover, "questioning opens up possibilities of meaning, and thus what is meaningful passes into one's own thinking on the subject" (Gadamer, 2013, p. 383). Gadamer also believes that the interpreter's standpoint is never fully closed and always open to further understanding and this understanding takes place through the medium of language.

4.5.4 Developing themes

While the study was guided by a thematic analysis that drew on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006), the process of analysing the data in a hermeneutic enquiry is not rule bound (van Manen, 1997); instead, the process is more fluid, spontaneous and intuitive rather than sequential (Finlay, 1999). Furthermore, the writing needs to be expressive and plausible to the reader even if they have not experienced the same phenomena (van Manen, 2014).

In order to understand something, we must have some initial idea of what it is we are trying to understand (Crotty, 1998), as understanding is more than re-creating the meaning of someone else. As an insider, I already had my own experiences to draw on. With this in mind, as I gained a good understanding of the meaning of the text, I looked for common themes throughout the participants' transcripts to ensure the main themes truly reflected the phenomenon.

Through the process of reading through the transcripts, I thought about what was meaningful, then coded excerpts which I perceived were relevant with words or phrases. Coding is a way of organising the text in order to categorise common themes. For the process of coding I used "meaning coding" (Kvale, 2010, p. 105) by attaching keywords to text for identification of statements that reflected the meaning of the participants' experience.

> "The understanding of something written is not a repetition of something past but the sharing of the present meaning … it is not really a relationship between persons, between the reader and the author … but about sharing in what the text shares with us" (Gadamer, 2013, p. 410).

During this process, even though my own experiences were part of the analysis, I was conscious of being authentic and ensuring I had captured the essence of what the participants were saying.

While there is no prescribed method for analysis in hermeneutic methodology, van Manen (1997) maintains 'theme control' gives control and order to our research and writing. Therefore, to determine the themes, van Manen (1997) suggests the researcher separates incidental themes that do not affect the phenomenon and identify essential themes (Gill, 2014). The reason for doing so is to determine themes that will be meaningful for the phenomenon being studied. Once I had coded all the transcripts, I looked for common words or phrases and grouped them accordingly as I looked for common themes. According to Finlay (1999), the interpretation continues until a sensible meaning has been reached.

The next step was to categorise the data into main themes using van Manen's existential themes as a framework.

4.5.5 Existential themes

Using van Manen's (1997) lifeworld *existentials,* lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), lived human relations (relationality or communality) and lived things (materiality) as a process for interpreting the data into themes, I reflected on the experiences of the day-to-day lifeworld of the participants. According to van Manen (1997), these five existentials are what forms our lifeworld and can be understood in relation to our lived experience. They belong to "the fundamental structure of the lifeworld" (van Manen, 1997, p. 102).

As described by Van Manen (1997), *spatiality* refers to how the space we are in makes us feel. The first idea that came through strongly in the analysis of the data was the significance of the space or the environment the participants were positioned in and the influence on how they experienced their day-to-day work. Within van Manen's framework, the notion of spatiality*,* in relation to this thesis, refers to the *lived space* within the university setting and how this space plays a part in the identity of the participants.

Corporeality, as described by van Manen (1997)*,* "refers to the phenomenological fact that we are always bodily in the world" (p. 103) and we can show or hide something about ourselves through our body. For instance, in this thesis, the participants are all female and therefore feminine traits became evident in the way they managed, referred to as *doing gender*.

Van Manen's (2014) explanation of *temporality* or 'lived time' is how time appears for us. That is, it either goes slowly or quickly depending on the situation we are in. In this way, time may be experienced differently depending on the stage of life we are at. In this thesis, there are different ways *lived time* is connected to the participants. For example, the participants experienced time in their longevity or how they have gained experience over time. They also experienced changes in their everyday work over time with the introduction of new technologies.

Relationality is the lived relationship we have with others in the "interpersonal space we share" (van Manen, 2014, p. 104). The university is a hierarchical institution where there are two distinct groups, academic and non-academic; therefore, the relationships between these groups also had significance to how

the participants felt about their social group. In regard to this thesis, relationality is the connection between the participants in relation to their role as non-academic women managers in a New Zealand university and their relationship to their academic colleagues, peers and students.

Finally, van Manen (2014) explains the theme of materiality as how the *things* in our lives are experienced. These are the things around us that we see and use in our everyday lives. In this thesis, the theme of materiality represents how the participants experience technology in their day-to-day lives and the significance the technological changes have to their identity.

In sum, through a process of listening, reading and reflecting, the essence of the meaning and understanding of the participants' lived experience was uncovered. Finally, this section explained how van Manen's existential themes were used as a framework to analyse the findings of the phenomenon this thesis explores.

4.6 Ethical considerations, limitations and potential benefits

Lincoln and Guba (2013) point out that the constructivist researcher may face ethical challenges when undertaking face-to-face inquiry and therefore a high level of trust is required. While this thesis was undertaken from a constructivist viewpoint, I felt that my 'insider' status gave the participants a sense of trust. My insider status meant I had an understanding of their environment which helped me to connect with the participants. I also reassured the participants that the interiews were transcribed by me and no individual or organisational information leading to identification would be used in the study. Confidentiality of the participants was protected by using pseudonyms to replace the names of

participants. Universities were not identified in an individual context but rather in a collective context in relation to trends that emerge from the data.

4.6.1 Authenticity/ trustworthiness

Kafle (2011) highlights the difficulty in assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research and in particular hermeneutic phenomenological research and suggests following the guideline of a "recommendation for a dynamic interplay among five research activities": commitment to an abiding concern, oriented stance toward the question, investigating the experience as it is lived, describing the phenomenon through writing and rewriting, and consideration of parts and whole (p. 191). In relation to Kafle's (2011) guidelines, I undertook this thesis with a commitment to give a voice to this group of non-academic women managers who were previously under-researched. I investigated the experience through the interviews. I followed the hermeneutic process of moving back and forth between the parts and the whole as outlined in the model of the hermeneutic circle as I gained an understanding of the participants' lived experience.

Lincoln and Guba (2013) outline the following four measures to ensure rigour and trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. However, a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry requires the researcher to be reflexive and ethically self-aware as they are "part of their own inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 662). Consequently, when a researcher reflects, they are more inclined to present trustworthy and honest accounts.

Gadamer proclaims that "the hermeneutics experience also has its own rigour; that of uninterrupted listening" (Gadamer, 2013, p. 481). He used words like 'tact', 'judgement' and 'taste' to refer to the qualities he believed were associated with authentic acts of interpretation and understanding (Sharkey, 2001, p. 29).

In this thesis, I positioned myself as an 'insider' and was aware of the implications of being part of the group under study and conscious of being authentic. The interview questions are based on a valid phenomenological inquiry of a group of non-academic women managers working in an academic unit in order to gain an understanding of the lived experience and therefore are unique and cannot be measured or reproduced. Therefore, an inquiry by other researchers into the same phenomena would be unlikely to produce the same outcome but would offer new insights and understandings.

4.6.2 *Limitations and potential benefits*

The findings are limited to the context of a tertiary education environment in New Zealand universities. The purpose of the study was not to generalise to other 'like' organisations or workplaces. The hermeneutic approach was chosen with the intended benefit of being able to closely relate to the participants as an insider researcher. This enabled me to fully immerse myself in the data and grasp the essence of the participants' lived experience. However, because the approach was limited to a small group, it could be considered that with wider participation there may be different perspectives of the same phenomenon.

Given the limitations of the study, the potential benefits of this research are:

- to provide an insight into the identity of 'non-academic' women working in management roles in academic departments and understand how they experience their role and perceive their identity in the New Zealand university environment.

- to inform the sector on ways to develop future career pathways for non-academic women in universities.

- to provide a model which may offer educational policy makers, tertiary institutions and the Association of Tertiary Managers (ATEM) with a greater sense of how female non-academic managers' professional identity can be enhanced.

- to use a hybrid hermeneutic phenomenological approach to analyse identity in management studies for a more in-depth understanding.

- to contribute to the body of knowledge on professional identity of roles predominately undertaken by women

4.7 Summary of Chapter 4

In sum, Chapter 4 outlined the interpretive paradigm for the study and discussed the justification for selecting an interpretive, constructivist perspective. The process of inquiry was informed by Gadamer's and van Manen's philosophical hermeneutic perspective and through the lens of social identity theory. The research design was undertaken using a hybrid approach informed by van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology to gain an understanding of the lived experience of non-academic women managers in academic units. The analysis for the study was based on van Manen's five existential themes. The four existentials, spatiality, corporeality, temporality and relationality, are "considered as belonging to the fundamental life-world" (van Manen, 1997, p.

102). The fifth existential theme, materiality, relates to the things that are part of our lives. Excerpts from the participants' interviews and the developed themes will be presented and analysed in Chapter 5.

5 CHAPTER 5 – FINDINGS

> The understanding of something written is not a repetition of something past but the sharing of a present meaning. (Gadamer, 2013, p. 410)

5.1 Introduction

The analysis began with an exploration of the interview transcripts looking at how the participants experienced their professional role, identity and career aspirations through their lifeworld. Heidegger (2013) refers to this as being-in-the-world or the way humans exist and how they are involved in the world. Being-in-the-world encompasses our past, present and future. 'Being' could be therefore understood as the "anchoring of self in the world", as "the fundament of identity" (Barnett & Di Napoli, 2008, p. 201).

Chapter 5 is divided into five main sections outlining the main themes determined from the data. These main themes and sub-themes encompass how the participants experienced their professional identity in their 'everydayness' of being-in-the-world. The five main themes were developed through a holistic approach of thinking through both the initial ideas uncovered from the interview transcripts in conjunction with the essence of the whole transcripts. The iterative process involved going back and forth between the parts of the transcriptions until an understanding of the meanings came to the fore of my understanding. These main themes evolved into *Relationships*; *Environment*; *Doing Gender*; *Knowledge and Experience*; and *Changing Technology*.

5.1.1 Emerging themes

My observations, based on immersing myself in the data, were that all the participants were proud of how they enacted their roles, the way they built and maintained their relationships and their unique knowledge and experience. They appeared to enjoy working in their role and felt they made a positive contribution to the university environment. However, through the hermeneutic process of uncovering the meaning of the participants' experiences, these feelings of enjoyment and pride were not absolute or linear but contingent on embracing tension around their perceptions of how they were at times juxtaposed with feeling undervalued in their role.

Under each theme, verbatim excerpts from the participants' interviews have been chosen to illuminate how these experiences give meaning to their role, professional identity and career aspirations. To provide structure, the main themes have been categorised within the existential themes to which they relate most strongly, using van Manen's (1997) framework. As he explains, "the four existentials of lived body, lived space, lived time and lived relation to the other can be differentiated but not separated" (p. 105). Taking this into consideration, this chapter will also outline how the participants' experiences of living in the world overlap and relate to more than one of the existential themes.

Table 4
Outline of Main Themes

Theme One	Environment (Spatiality – Lived Space)
Theme Two	Relationships (Relationality – Lived Self-Others)
Theme Three	Doing Gender (Corporeality – Lived Body)
Theme Four	Knowledge and Experience (Temporality – Lived Time)
Theme Five	Technology (Materiality – Lived Things and Technology)

The interview questions were developed to firstly understand how the participants perceived their own identity within the workplace; and secondly, how the participants perceived their opportunities for future career pathways. The following research question and sub-questions were formulated:

How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their identity in university environments?

- o How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their professional role?
- o What do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments say about their future career aspirations?

Firstly, the lived space the participants occupied in relation to where they were positioned within the university structure came through strongly as having a significant impact on how they felt about their professional identity. The hierarchy and culture affected how they perceived the importance and credibility

of their role. In the same way, titles and names given to categorise non-academic staff and their roles appeared to be entwined with how they experienced their role and how they understood their professional identity. This led to the understanding that the lived space in which the participants were positioned had a significant influence on their relationships.

Listening to the participants' stories, it became apparent there was a common notion around a need to have exceptionally good people skills. In this sense, good relationships were an important part of how successful or how satisfied the participants felt in their role. Relationships included those with their academic colleagues, the staff within central university units and the staff they managed. Relationships came through as being pivotal to how the participants experienced their roles and therefore evolved into the second theme.

The level of trust, respect and responsibility that academic-managers bestowed on the participants' roles impacted on their self-efficacy, job satisfaction and a feeling of credibility in their role. Therefore, it seemed validation for the role was dependent on the relationship with the participants' academic-managers. In turn, validation of their role led to the participants' perception of a higher or lower status in regard to their professional identity. Feeling respected for their decisions and opinions appeared to give the participants more credibility, which then led to a more positive professional identity and vice versa.

Taking into consideration the importance of relationships and the way the participants interacted with their colleagues and enacted their roles led to the third theme, 'Doing Gender'. The participants exhibited what are considered to be female traits in the way they executed their roles, managed their staff and

interacted with their academic colleagues and students. Throughout the interviews, there was evidence of a caring or nurturing approach towards their colleagues and students. All of the participants showed pride in their teams' achievements and a commitment to developing them to reach their potential. The data also revealed the participants felt an element of protection for their teams in relation to ensuring they were respected and valued by their academic colleagues.

Furthermore, some of the participants adapted their behaviour to achieve their goals. Their stories conveyed their pride, satisfaction and success within their roles and also at times showed feelings of disappointment and frustration as they felt their roles were undervalued. The participants' feelings of pride in relation to their knowledge and experience was revealed as an important aspect in the way the participants experienced their everydayness.

The fourth theme of Knowledge and Experience showed through in regard to the way the participants felt their university knowledge and experience and understanding of the policies and procedures were integral to how well they performed their role. An expert understanding of the procedures, processes and systems acquired over time was shown to be necessary in order for the participants to be able to do their day-to-day work and provide guidance to their academic colleagues. Career opportunities also showed through in different ways. Some participants had grown into their roles over time and others had been proactive in creating their own opportunities. Some participants had gained qualifications, which appeared to give them confidence and enabled them to move forward in their careers. Confidence in their knowledge and

experience was shown to have a strong influence on how they perceived their own credibility.

Technological changes, training and implementation of new systems appeared to have an effect on all the participants to a varying extent. The main purpose of the participants' roles was to manage the operational and administrative side of the units they were located in. Systems and processes were the tools they used to get the job done. This led to the fifth theme, Changing Technology. While the amount of data presented in this theme is less than that of the previous four, changing technology had a significant influence on the experience of the participants and therefore was considered to be of equal importance. While some of the participants embraced new technology, others felt frustration with continual change and lack of training.

Overall, the five main themes – Environment, Relationships, Doing Gender, Knowledge and Experience, and Changing Technology – showed how the participants experienced being-in-the-world and how they understood their roles. These five main themes were broken down into sub-themes as outlined below and unpacked using van Manen's (1997) framework, with the existential themes of spatiality, relationality, corporeality, temporality and materiality being addressed. Finally, the process of understanding gave an insight into how the participants experienced their professional identities. The sub-themes are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Main Themes and Sub-themes

Main Themes	Sub-themes	Van Manen's Existential Themes
Environment	• Hierarchy and culture • Titles and meaning • Two groups and one space	Spatiality – Lived Space
Relationships	• Developing and maintaining • University language	Relationality – Lived Self-others
Doing Gender	• Notion of care • Feeling pride • Feeling undervalued • Adapting behaviour	Corporeality – Lived Body
Knowledge and Experience	• Longevity • Career pathways	Temporality – Lived Time
Changing Technology	• Change	Materiality – Lived Things

5.2 Theme One: Environment (Lived Space)

I found I've actually had to create my own identity and fit that identity into an organisation and I have had to manipulate that environment at times for me to fit into it. (Sylvia)

The first main theme 'Environment' reveals how the participants experienced their professional identity in the space they occupied within the university environment. The Environment theme is divided into three sub-themes: *Culture and hierarchy, Titles and meaning* and *Two groups and one space*. Using van Manen's (1997) framework as a guide, the environment theme is unpacked with reference to the existential theme of *spatiality*. Van Manen (2014) suggests "the existential theme of spatiality may guide our reflection to ask how space is

experienced in respect to the phenomenon" (p. 305). Furthermore, any entity within the world is in a space that can be determined (Heidegger, 2013).

The environment the participants 'lived in' within the New Zealand university setting was very much determined by the culture and hierarchical nature of the university structure. The boundaries around the participants' roles were changeable. The way they experienced their lived space appeared to be dependent on how 'others' related to them, emphasising a strong interconnection between spatiality and relationality. Therefore, while the excerpts from the interviews under this section primarily show the space the participants occupied, these also show how the relationships they had with others determined their experience of the space. In relation to van Manen's (2014) existential themes, spatiality overlaps with relationality in the way the participants in this study were positioned in a unique space linking their academic colleagues and the central university units. Also, at times, the participants were positioned within a linked space between their academic colleagues and the academic-manager.

5.2.1 Culture and hierarchy

The culture of the university and how that culture affected their everyday lives was something that showed through in most of the participants' interviews. At times this effect was subtle and nuanced and at other times more explicitly expressed.

Sylvia, who has worked in several universities within New Zealand over many years, feels that while the policies and regulations are similar throughout the university sector, the culture can be very different, and it takes time to

understand how to fit into that culture. Sylvia also feels there is the idea of being perceived as less important than academic colleagues.

> There is always a perceived level of more importance for academic staff and the hierarchy on that side is far more important than professional [non-academic] staff and I think that's a very old culture that is changing slowly but you still have to be aware of it to establish where you are in the structure. (Sylvia)

Sylvia believes it is important to create a space that fits her own personal values and expectations as these are very much part of her job satisfaction and professional identity. She is proud of the perseverance and determination she has used to create her professional identity and believes it is crucial to establish *"who I am, my fit and where I fit in the structure of the university"* (Sylvia). From the point of view of van Manen's existential theme of corporeality, Sylvia's values, strength and resilience reveal how she gives meaning to the space she has created. Sylvia also shows a caring attitude towards her staff in the way she speaks about the importance of her staff having the same level of satisfaction within the space they occupy.

> It has been up to me in each job to set my standards and my goals and set my level of expected respect from academic staff and other staff. So, it is how I've come into the university and set my standards and expectations that have mattered and at times it's taken a lot of strength and resilience and sometimes up to two years to establish that in the environment I'm in. Some are tougher, and some are easier…. It's very important for me because satisfaction in a job is very important and if I'm satisfied in a job, I make sure the staff that I manage have the same level of satisfaction or similar. (Sylvia)

Others shared the view from their experience that the university is a hierarchical environment with a culture that is old-fashioned. Alice refers to the university environment being *"completely hierarchical and very elitist from the top. You know, from your senior leadership team and then … your professors and your senior lecturers and then your professional staff at the bottom. That's how it is."*

139

Alice describes it as being an out-dated attitude and reflects on the effect it has on her team, saying that,

> .…administration staff in general don't get heard at all. It does feel a bit 1960s and they're just here to do the paper work and go home and I'm not sure how to change that and empower them more or increase their reputation of being good at their jobs…. (Alice)

From Alice's perspective, the culture dictates how others view her team regardless of how well they are performing and she shows her frustration at not being able to change this, as it is just the way it is. Her words imply there is a lack of voice for non-academic administrators. Many participants expressed the idea that to have a voice is dependent on one's place or the level one works at in the organisation and some participants felt non-academic staff were at the lowest level. Heidegger (1996) argues that speaking with others and speaking out is predominately how man's being-in-the-world takes place. However, some of the findings showed how speaking out is not always accepted. Meredith refers to the university's new strategic plan with a sense of disappointment in relation to the exclusion of the non-academic group of staff. Even though the university has undertaken many feedback sessions, which all staff are invited to participate in, Meredith feels there has been no acknowledgement of this contribution.

Meredith spoke up at a university meeting and voiced her concerns by saying:

> How are we supposed as [non-academic staff] to contribute towards the strategic plan?… 'cause this has never been addressed. We have no stake in this, we have not been told that this includes us. There is no enabling strategy there for us … there's no plan around it, there's no reward, there's no recognition. (Meredith)

Meredith appears to feel excluded while having strong convictions about the input that non-academic staff could contribute. In this sense, her exclusion

affects the way she experiences her professional role and she feels unrecognised.

Some of the participants' comments showed it was their own perception of being at a lower status rather than based on reaction from others. Mary expresses this by saying, *"The key people in the department are the academics so I think … you need to be quite clear about what's your role and what's an academic role."*

Betty's comments show that, while she has an understanding of her academic colleagues' roles, her sentiments are less accepting than Mary's as she would like to feel that her role is of equal status.

> I recognise the value of research and their [academic colleagues] teaching and what they need to do but, it would be nice to have a more equal balance, that you weren't the lower class citizen. (Betty)

Yet, while Betty perceives her role to be of lower status, she is self-assured and confident in decision-making. Betty highlights the difficulties she encounters around trying to do her job well when having an opposing opinion on a process or issue:

> Now sometimes that's not entirely easy because universities are very hierarchical, and the academic is the most important person. But they're not always very practical and so I do have some issues with decision-making and academics that impinge on what we're doing that are totally impractical. (Betty)

This said, most of the participants expressed respect for their academic colleagues and had good relationships with them. However, at times they felt their role was not considered to be of equal importance. According to Meredith, *"We work in this very funny situation where we are supposed to be very egalitarian. Universities in New Zealand are supposed to be very egalitarian.*

141

But they're not." While Meredith feels she has not experienced any divide between the academic and non-academic staff in the school in which she currently works, she reflects on previous schools she has worked in:

> ….I've experienced this because I've worked in other schools. And I hear people talk and I know what's going on. That administrators get treated like second class citizens especially in schools. I don't know about in central [management units]. But especially in schools, in departments. (Meredith)

While several of the participants working in a more senior level position spoke about definitely having a voice and felt they were listened to, this was not the experience of many of the participants. The majority of participants' reflections showed that at times they did not feel their opinion was valued and this appeared to be a frustration, particularly when they felt they had value to add. The reason for this appeared to be attributed to the hierarchy and culture in the university rather than individual prejudice. At times, their status as a non-academic staff member meant they were not asked for their opinion even when they believed they had the experience or knowledge to sort out the issue. This is of particular concern for Betty when it relates to students. She discusses her feeling of frustration when she feels she could add value to the management meeting but is not included:

> I'm excluded from those meetings because I'm a [non-academic] staff member. If you just had me there, I'd be able to answer the question in ten seconds … or give a reason. But oh no, we only have x number of representatives and the academics … you make decisions at that meeting and … then we have to back track. (Betty)

Betty feels the only reason she is excluded is because she is not in the academic group, even though decisions that are made have a direct impact on the work she is responsible for. For example, Betty is confident in her ability to make a positive contribution and perceives this is a hierarchical issue rather

than her academic colleagues not respecting her opinion. Similarly, Violet understands that at times the work overlaps and encroaches on the academic space and realises there is a reluctance about her input being accepted.

> ….there are sometimes issues that I would like to raise or things that I've heard about where it touches a bit what is happening in the academic space and I'll get a bit of push back on that which would be, "That's not your domain". (Violet)

Violet's experience also shows that a hierarchical attitude by some of her older academic colleagues can restrict her in her role. She feels this attitude is more prominent amongst those who have worked there for a long time rather than the newly appointed younger academics who do not appear to be influenced by the historical culture.

> ….there's a preservation of the hierarchical way of thinking and working when people are… (I don't want to sound ageist because it doesn't mean that all academic staff are stuck in one way of thinking), there are some staff that are really forward thinking, but in my experience, it seems as if it's the younger cohort of staff that are more forward thinking. So, at the moment I would say, yeah, possibly we are a little held back in the way that we operate by the kind of glory days perspective of university and its purpose and function. (Violet)

Violet's reference to the "glory days" is in line with the time before the neoliberal reforms.

Sadie also refers to the varying attitudes of academic colleagues towards non-academic staff. Based on her experience, she feels such attitudes are determined by the individual rather than by age or longevity of tenure.

> There's quite a difference. There's older academics that have been round for many, many, many years and then we see the newer academics, the more junior academics coming through…. I notice the range is quite different and their attitude toward [non-academic staff], some of them will think that's fine and they'll work as an equal and others will be more inclined to think that's just admin, get that done and so they don't have a concept of that. (Sadie)

Several staff talked about being in a space between academic and non-academic identity. For example, Irene points out, "*I have more and more over the years crossed over into what could be perceived as an academic realm.*" Irene works in a high-level position and perceives that her colleagues, both academic and non-academic, do not realise she is not an academic. She reflects on how she feels about being seen as something she is not. Despite the fact the type of work Irene is engaged in crosses into the academic realm, she is conscious she is not an academic and appears to experience some uneasiness about being perceived in this way. While Irene feels respected by her colleagues, she does not feel comfortable in the academic space.

> On my journey to get to this point, I've never really felt so uncomfortable about being in this space … and so probably because over the last five or so years I've moved more and more into that kind of academic zone, I'm kind of finding that I'm feeling self-conscious about the fact that I'm not an academic staff member. (Irene)

It appears Irene has a sense of disquiet about being seen as an academic and the fact she is uncomfortable alludes to her perception that being an academic is held in higher esteem because of the culture of the university. However, Irene has a collegial relationship with her academic colleagues and her experiences show she feels respected and valued.

> I suspect a number of them don't even know I'm not an academic…. I think that they respect me. It's kind of a joke in the faculty, "[participant's name] says" and everybody does it…. I've never in my years and I've been at [university's name] over 20 years, I have never felt undermined or looked down upon by an academic staff member, ever. (Irene)

5.2.2 Titles and meaning

During the interviews, the participants were asked to talk about how they felt about the term used to categorise non-academic staff. Out of a total number of 20 participants, 14 said the term for non-academic staff had changed in recent years at their university and they were now called *professional* staff. Some of the participants were indifferent and did not feel it mattered what nomenclature was used, others were more negative, and several felt uncomfortable with the term professional staff and questioned what the term really meant. Several participants felt they were already professionals so did not need to be labelled. Most accepted that the term given to a group reflects status as universities are hierarchical institutions.

Two of the participants, who were both working in a more senior role, felt the term used for non-academic staff was very important because it had connotations and meaning of status or importance. For example, Dora believes that changing the nomenclature for non-academic staff to professional staff means, *"it's been acknowledged that we have just as important role in the university as the academics.… I mean we are in a hierarchical organisation and titles, names are very important."* Dora's perception is positive as she believes a title gives clarity to the level of authority the position holder is granted, providing her with the legitimacy she requires to perform in her role. Dora continues by saying,

> ….in a hierarchical organisation they know that at the end of the day the policies and statutes say I've got so much authority, and so they may not like it, but they know I have that decision. (Dora)

In a similar way, Irene, who is also in a senior-level position, agrees that the language or terms used to categorise staff are meaningful and have a significant

impact on their identity. Irene emphasises how she feels about being referred to in a negative way by the word 'non':

> Well, I get extremely annoyed when I'm referred to as a non-academic staff member and I'm always surprised when people don't understand what the issue is.… If you go on to the [website] and look at jobs, it's referred to as non-academic and I don't want to be referred to as a non-male and I don't want to be referred to as a non-academic. (Irene)

It appears Irene experiences frustration at the lack of understanding from others. She feels being categorised as a 'non' or not part of the other (academic) group shows a disregard for the group she belongs to. Heidegger (2013) describes a 'passing over' and asks the question, "Is it so obvious that every 'not' signifies something negative in the sense of a lack?" (p. 332). Irene's reference to a similarity between being categorised as a non-academic and a 'non-male' highlights an example of how women need to continually strive for equal status in organisations.

Other participants appeared to be indifferent in relation to the term used to categorise non-academics, yet at times there appeared to be more emotion behind what they were saying. For example, Sadie shares, *"I've always called myself professional, so I don't need the type of label thank you very much."* This alludes to the idea that the title 'professional' may have connotations of stating the obvious and could be construed as slightly patronising.

Dorothy also says she does not have strong feelings either way. However, when the term non-academic staff changed to professional staff, she experienced a feeling of distrust with the process and felt the change of title was just a token gesture in an attempt to show how much the non-academic staff were valued.

It appears that Dorothy still experiences a lack of recognition for her role and what she has achieved, which the change of title does not address.

> I said as long as it wasn't just an exercise in rebranding just for the hell of it, trying to make us feel better and more loved, you know, and all that touchy feely stuff. I actually said they need to put some substance behind.… What's more important, my actual role and how I'm valued in my role or not as the case may be. (Dorothy)

Isobel, who is working at a senior level, speaks about how her job title does not indicate the level of her role as there are no consistent titles for non-academic staff. She said, *"It's confusing for people because it's hard to align where we fit in terms of our level, our level in terms of the structure."* Where a participant's role is positioned within the university structure has a significant impact on how the participant reacts to situations in the workplace.

April feels the categorisation emphasises the binary divide between academic and non-academic staff. *"There's very much still a culture of 'them and us' and … I don't like non-academic but then I don't like professional. Not that I'm not professional I don't think [laugh] but certainly … I don't see why we have to have a label.… Why can't we just be staff*?" April expresses the idea that just having a different label or term to describe her group creates a higher, lower distinction between the two groups.

5.2.3 Two groups and one space

From the conversations with the participants, it was clear the sense of "them and us" is still evident in the universities in New Zealand. The reason appears in part to be attributed to the hierarchical nature of the university structure and also because, while both academic and non-academic staff are working towards the same goal, they do so in different ways. Sadie and Harriet acknowledge the

notion of "them and us"; however, they both point out that they are working at building a positive equal relationship:

> I don't like it and I don't buy into it. I just think at the end of the day I'm here to do a job not to make their life miserable. But be kind to each other at the end of the day and so I go out of my way to be pretty fair and non-threatening but I'm not a push over.… It could be very easy if you start to take it personally or you start to rant over a few things the relationship would turn sour very, very quickly. So, I work on those relationships. (Harriet)

Sadie feels she has a good understanding of her academic colleagues' priorities and tries to support them. However, at times, this is difficult and Sadie finds herself situated in a place between supporting her academic colleagues and supporting her own teams. Sadie can identify with both groups and is torn between where her priorities lie. The space Sadie is living in, between two groups, appears to influence how she perceives her professional identity.

> ….some [academics] will think that's fine and they'll work as an equal and others will be more inclined to think that's just admin get that done.… Now, personally, that is something that irks me a little bit, because I'll often find that a request will come through and they'll [academics] expect it to be done now. (Sadie)

Violet acknowledges the "them and us" culture and outlines her strategies to manage it:

> I try to be approachable. I try to go in unassuming. I try to listen, carefully, and see both sides of a situation and not get too caught up in this "us and them" dichotomy that seems to happen here a lot. (Violet)

The participants' excerpts show how the lived space they were positioned in within a hierarchical environment had a significant effect on their relationships with their academic colleagues. Violet and Sadie react in different ways, Violet with humour and Sadie with some annoyance, but both show how they have understood the need to adapt their behaviour in an attempt to address the "them

and us" attitude. Thus, this emphasises how the existentials of lived body, lived space, lived time and lived relations are all interwoven in the holistic way a person experiences being-in-the-world.

5.2.4 *Summary of environment*

Spatiality or the 'lived space' is highlighted through the way the participants experienced their professional identity. The data revealed that the way in which the participants experienced space in their everyday lives had a significant impact on how their professional identity was experienced. Existential themes do not stand alone, and this section shows how the way the participants experienced their space was dependent on their relations with others. These examples show the relatedness between the existential themes, spatiality-temporality-relationality, as the participants influenced the space by their relationships and the historical culture of the university (lived-time). The examples also demonstrate how the existential theme of corporeality is intertwined in the way some participants showed feelings of disappointment, frustration and a general feeling of unfairness and also adapted their behaviour. Similarly, showing care to others also was evident as participants wanted their teams to feel satisfied within their space also. However, participants who were positioned in senior roles appeared to have a more positive perception of the space they occupied.

Overall, the data showed that while the term used for non-academic staff did not have an obvious, notable effect on some participants, they had strong underlying feelings and emotions around what the title represented in relation to the legitimacy of their role and professional identity. This was evident in words and phrases used by the participants such as "lower class", "second class",

"equal to", when comparing their position to their academic colleagues. This highlights the gendered nature of their roles as being less important because they are considered to be women's roles.

The fact that the participants' roles were positioned within the academic units may have been a source of tension as they were torn between wanting to support their academic colleagues and their responsibility to follow policy and process. Relationships were an integral part of how the participants experienced their identity. The participants were all aware of how the relationships with their academic colleagues impacted on their day-to-day role. Furthermore, the participants highlighted the importance of having good relationships in order to enact their roles successfully. The next section discusses relationships in more depth, highlighting the interconnection between van Manen's (1997) existential themes.

5.3 Theme Two: Relationships

> *I have realised that if I want anything done, I have to build a relationship with that person. So, I have to build credibility and I build credibility through relationship.* (Meredith)

Being-in-the-world involves being with others. There is a *connectiveness* with others as we share the interpersonal space within our lifeworld. Guided by the existential theme of relationality in van Manen's (1997) framework, this section explores the relational aspects of the participants and their colleagues at work. The participants' experiences showed how their relationships were entwined with other of van Manen's (1997) existential themes, such as corporeality and spatiality. Through the participants' relationships, they experienced positive feelings of trust, confidence, respect and credibility. On the other hand, there

were times when their relationships had a more negative impact on the participants, resulting in feelings of disappointment and being undervalued. Furthermore, the connection between relationality and spatiality is shown in the way the participants experienced their space in relation to their academic colleagues.

5.3.1 Developing relationships

All the participants acknowledged the importance of cultivating and maintaining relationships with their academic colleagues in order to be able to do their job well. Credibility, success in their role and trust appeared to be the most important aspects to ensure the participants developed and maintained good relationships with their peers, academic colleagues and colleagues across the university in central university units. Furthermore, it appeared that, regardless of the level or responsibility of their role, the participants were consciously invested in establishing a good working relationship with their academic colleagues.

Dora states the relationships she has formed are "*hugely important and it's not just within the school, it's across the whole university…I would spend probably, I would say probably 40% of my time on relationships.*" Dora continues by discussing how her role is connected with the central university units and expresses that to develop and maintain positive relationships is integral to her role.

Several of the participants expressed how personal values influenced how they developed and conducted their relationships. Meredith feels it is essential to the success of her relationships to be welcoming to colleagues and have time to

listen to show them they are important to her. Meredith's statement reveals how her manner towards her colleagues is warm and caring. She has an awareness of how her facial expression can influence how receptive she appears.

> I believe very strongly it's about the person, not the task, so these are the values I have brought in. I have tried to go out of my way to accommodate people. Whenever they walk into my office, it is very important to me that they never get a grumpy face, "Well, I'm too busy to help you" face. As that might be the only time in the month when they get to deal with me. And that will leave a lasting impression. (Meredith)

The way in which a person's body reacts or shows feeling can have an influence on how that person is perceived. Meredith's everyday experiences with others shows how closely relationality and corporeality are interwoven. She perceives her caring attitude and kind expressions are important in gaining the trust and confidence of her colleagues.

Many of the participants believed a strong relationship with their academic-manager was essential as it would enable them to operate more effectively in their roles. In particular, the dynamics of the relationship with their academic-managers seemed to have a significant effect on the validation of the participants' roles. Having validation of their role was integral to their job satisfaction and their role credibility. They felt their roles were validated in the way their managers recognised the authority and responsibility associated with their roles.

Mary agrees the relationship with her manager has a significant effect on how she experiences her role and professional identity. Mary expresses the sentiment by saying, "*A lot of what you do depends on your head of department, your head of school*". She has worked with several different heads of school and speaks about being "*out of the loop*" and in "*no man's land*" when the Head

of School is self-contained and does not ask for her input. Mary reveals how being in her role is dependent on being included in the day-to-day issues and without that inclusion she feels disconnected.

> And so, if you have a head of department that's very self-contained and … manages everything themselves then you're kind of out of that loop and you're sort of a bit in no man's land. I've had quite a lot of heads of department and schools so…. I think the ideal is work with the head of department who keeps you involved in what's going on and you support that person in that role. (Mary)

Mary goes on to describe her role as being "*sort of like a bit of a gatekeeper, a bit of an intermediary between academic staff, often what's happening at the ground level and head of department*". Her role is situated in a space determined by her relationships.

In a similar way, Betty reflects on her experience of the ambiguity around having autonomy in her role.

> ….there's so many shades of grey … but yes, so sometimes I'm allowed to have complete autonomy and complete authority and sometimes they'd prefer me not to and that is a matter of a fine line. It is a bit of a tight rope that I walk. (Betty)

Betty's example shows how relationality overlaps with spatiality as her lived-space is dependent on others. It appears Betty feels there is no consistency in her authority, which can be frustrating knowing where her boundaries are between her space and the academic space.

From a more positive perspective, Dora demonstrates how the support of her manager gives her role credibility which in turn gives her the self-efficacy to achieve.

> I do know there are pockets of academic staff across the university that have total disregard for people in my role, however at the end of the day

..., those [professional staff], aren't getting the support from their managers. What I've been able to achieve and do is because I've had good managers. (Dora)

Sadie also agrees on the importance of ensuring she has a professional working relationship with her academic-manager and points out that friendship is not mandatory: "*What I can do is I make sure that I've got a fantastic relationship with my Head of School. It doesn't matter whether they like me or not, the working relationship is fantastic.*"

Similarly, Belinda recalls how she feels her contribution to the decisions of the Head of School is important and reliant on a good relationship between them. It appears that the esteem Belinda gains from the good relationship with her academic-manager has a positive influence on her sense of professional identity.

> It's a really important role as I work closely with our [Head of School]. We have a great relationship and I think we have to have that to make it work with the decision he makes, and he'll consult. (Belinda)

Belinda shows how her expertise and knowledge of policies and procedures is acknowledged, giving her a sense of credibility amongst her academic colleagues.

> I just take the administration side off the [Head of School] and make sure all the behind-the-scenes are working, like I do the budget, we do the academic timetabling, HR and that sort of a thing and my role is (I know I shouldn't say this but) it's seen as running the school, it oversees everything that's happening, you get a lot of queries from academics on how to do things and also relaying processes and keeping within the guideline on how to do things. (Belinda)

Belinda is proud of her relationship with her manager and, while she feels she runs the school at times, she is spatially aware of the boundaries around her

role and has an understanding of where her role is positioned within the university structure.

Relationships with colleagues and peers were also highlighted by all the participants. One of the main responsibilities of their roles was ensuring the operational and administrative tasks were completed in a timely way and in line with policy and procedure. Good relationships were therefore necessary to get academic colleagues on board to complete the tasks they were responsible for. Irene talks about how she believes having a good rapport creates a bond between her academic colleagues and herself where they respect each other. She gives an example of how her academic colleague met a deadline for her when she asked, giving Irene a sense of pride that she feels respected by others.

> "Where is the [report name] report?" and he [academic colleague] said, "I'll have it for you by whenever." And I said, "Well, hang on a minute, it's not for me." And he said, "I know that but if I make it for you I will do it and then I feel like I am doing something for you and if it's not for you, I wouldn't really bother doing it". (Irene)

On the other hand, Sadie has a feeling of frustration when some of her academic colleagues do not necessarily have an understanding of the pressures her administration team are under at times. Both groups are working towards the same goal, but they cannot necessarily see it from each other's perspective.

> There's lots of layers and we get that, we understand why that is but … I think it's a lack of understanding as to why. The academics will want it done straight away and they'll say, "Why isn't it done quickly?" (They often… leave things to the last minute). So, I'm sort of caught in the middle there because they'll race off to Head of School… and I get that, and then my admin team will be going rah rah rah at me and I'll be going, "Well, I didn't know anything about this. It's a little bit like fighting fires. Sometimes it's very tiring and frustrating but it is part of the role. (Sadie)

155

Relationships were often seen as a balance between supporting their academic colleagues and complying with policy and procedures set out by the central university units. While the participants had an appreciation of the priorities of their academic colleagues, they were also aware of their obligations to ensure policies and procedures were followed correctly. For this reason, it is important for Harriet to cultivate a good relationship with her academic colleagues by understanding what they are aiming to achieve. However, she feels that the central university units do not have the same understanding.

> You do need to manage those relationships, [an academic has] just spent how many years and there's one focused thing and that's all [the academic] can think of and someone comes in and says, "You can't spend that on your trip, what did you do that for? … You eat breakfast, why would we pay for your breakfast?"
>
> [Academic says],… "but I'm working, I don't want to be going to [research destination]."
>
> It's not very easy. It's a fine line and people who are in central kind of go, "Look at those academics, look what they're doing, why are they doing that?" But from their [academic staff member's] point of view, they're going, "I'm just trying to do my job, I just want to get on with things and you keep making me do this silly paper work". (Harriet)

Harriet believes it is important to have a clear understanding of the university rules and regulations to enable her to be confident in the decisions she makes. This is an example of three of van Manen's existential themes – relationality, spatiality and corporeality – showing Harriet's experience of both relationships and the lived space. Harriet shows how she is working in a space where she is required to support her academic colleagues and also ensure the policies and procedures set out by the central university units are followed. While she understands the dedication her academic colleague has given to research, she has accountability to ensure the research-trip spending is within policy. These situations are difficult to manage; however, Harriet explains that you have to

156

learn to work with them, ensuring the relationships with your colleagues are maintained. Yet, at times, a close relationship can become an issue for Harriet as she has been in the academic department a long time and has built a close relationship with her academic colleagues and understand their viewpoints. At these times, relationships can hinder one's decision-making.

> It's very easy in an academic department too to start getting swayed by the way … most people can talk themselves into things. Academics if they want something, and it's not quite within the policy, they will have justified it in their own way why they should get it. And if you stay in a department long enough, the lines of norm or the lines start to blur. So, you have to make sure you keep a good grounding of what the guidelines [are]. (Harriet)

Many of the participants who had worked at the university for a long time talked about how they developed their relationships over time. Carla reflects on how through the relationships she has built, she has also gained credibility over the years. She feels proud of the respect she has gained and feels she is listened to and valued.

> I had made a fairly good name for myself. Like even throughout the university if I see a procedure or something or other that doesn't work, I'll contact the right people, you know the finance registrar or whatever and try to get something sorted. And I'd always been on review panels and all sorts of things. (Carla)

Similarly, building relationships across the university to gain respect and develop credibility in her role is also highlighted by Isobel as she reflects on her experience of developing networks and taking on the essential attributes she believes are required to be credible.

> You have to be prepared to be seen to be hard-working and putting yourself out there and prepared to take on things that you might not want to. (Isobel)

Dora highlights how success in her role is dependent on her relationships, in particular, the importance of socialising with her peers. This became evident when she moved to a higher level and realised she could lose the links to her networks.

> ….my socialising group was gone, and I was within another group and I didn't want to lose my links back to the School Manager's because I'm only as successful as my relationship with them. (Dora)

Jasmine shares a similar experience that occurred when she was promoted from being part of a team into a management role. She expresses a sense of exclusion in that her original team members now regard her as having a higher status and she is no longer trusted with the confidences they previously shared. Jasmine describes the first time she realised the significance of being a manager: the situation had changed, and she was no longer "*one of them*".

> I hardly ever go down to the staffroom, and this particular day I wanted to go down and heat my lunch up, so I went down and as soon as I walked into the room somebody said, "Stop" and I went, "Oh, I'm management, they don't want to talk in front of me", and so that was the first day I really felt like management. It was like, "Oh yeah, I'm not one of them anymore".

> It made me feel awful, it made me feel really awful because I knew… I remember… saying to someone, "I think I've made it to management". And she said, "Why?" And I said, "Because everyone stopped talking when I walked into the room". (Jasmine)

Many of the participants also felt there was no value placed on the time and effort it took to build successful relationships. An essential part of the participants' roles was completing deadlines or following procedures set by the central university units. Therefore, they believed it was important to have good working relationships with colleagues in these areas. Sadie refers to the frustration she feels when this aspect of her role is "*taken for granted"* and not acknowledged:

> So that frustrates me a little bit with the [Human Resources] perspective, we can just tick boxes and we can rotate school managers around like you're not doing anything, there's no value placed … on the relationships that you already have. (Sadie)

The trust that is built up through having a consistent relationship with colleagues in the central university units is important to Sadie. She appears to feel vulnerable in a situation where these relationships do not have time to develop because of constant change.

> It takes a little bit of time to build that trust and even to be in a position where you might feel comfortable enough to say, "God, I don't understand this". You know, if you don't really know someone you're thinking, "I don't know if they're going to go off and say that school manager and that." (Sadie)

Lydia believes that, to have a positive relationship with her colleagues, it is important to support them by ensuring she has a good understanding of the university's policies and procedures. The participants also spoke about the challenges of understanding how the university system works in relation to government policies and laws in regard to students. Lydia, in particular, stresses these challenges:

> I think the challenge of any administrator is having a good understanding of how the university works and how all the Acts fit together… even small things, like why a policy has come about. So, a new student arrives in the country, the university will pay for so many weeks before they start but not anymore, so four weeks and, you know, some of those academics find that quite hard but it's all to do with visas. And taxes and things like that and how it's defined in terms of someone relocating. It's kinda knowing those little things are really important so you can have a quick conversation with an academic but then you can say, ok well that's because of this Act and so that's really important. (Lydia)

All the participants expressed sentiments similar to those of Dora who maintains, "*Most staff, most academic staff, general run-of-the-mill academics are very, very good to work with … very, very good.*" Dora is working in a high-

level position at faculty level and speaks about the necessity of having good relationships and support from her academic-manager to be successful in her role:

> One of the … biggest issues in the role is actually bringing the academics along the journey. So, a lot of my time is spent in forums with academic staff, whether it's with our senior leadership team, or heads of school, or associate deans, or actually amongst the academics themselves, and that really depends on the issue, and so where it needs to be pitched. Where you're going to get the most ground support from, where you're going to get the most resistance from. (Dora)

Her challenges are mostly around the difficulties she encounters in getting her colleagues on board with the changes she needs to implement or new initiatives she is required to lead. This aspect of her role can be challenging; however, Dora highlights how she has a clear idea of her responsibilities and boundaries and is self-assured and confident in her ability to be successful in achieving the goals she is set: "*There are some personalities and they will push back … but I'm quite clear about where my boundaries are, and I can push back*" (Dora).

As previously highlighted in the first section of this chapter, the hierarchical environment the participants 'lived in' had a significant effect on the relationships with their academic colleagues. Dorothy's reflection on her relationships with her academic colleagues highlights how a perceived hierarchy influences her everydayness. She uses the analogy of having *"two camps"* – one group of academic staff who treat her respectfully and another group who are not so respectful. In the first camp, she feels valued for her work and treated as an equal. She feels proud of the fact that her colleagues see her as a resource.

> There's one camp that really value my work and obviously my team's work and really just treat me as an equal… they do come to me with lots

of questions, but that's good because that means they are … seeing me as a resource in terms of coming and asking before making big mistakes where I have to go on… (Dorothy)

5.3.2 *Understanding academia to build relationships*

Gaining qualifications also appeared to give the participants a better understanding of their academic colleagues and the world they work in. Violet refers to her qualifications as meaningful in that they help her to understand the points of view of both her non-academic and her academic colleagues. While she suggests there is a division between the two groups, she is supportive of her academic colleagues as a way to break down any barriers.

> I do have the advantage of having my Master's and I had planned to become an academic until I realised that's not something that I want to do [laugh].
>
> I can be quite academically minded anyway, so I think that's possibly one of the reasons I got the job, as well as I can see the perspective of both [non-academic] and academic staff and I can understand, having worked in universities for the last [number] years now, what some of the challenges are and so on. (Violet)

Qualifications were also highlighted by some participants as a way of gaining respect from academic colleagues. For Sylvia, the importance of having a qualification when working in an academic environment was the catalyst for her decision to enrol in a Master's qualification. Sylvia also feels it gives her a good understanding of academia, which helps her to positively support her academic colleagues. However, the reason for undertaking her qualifications was about gaining confidence.

> ….when I was younger, you know, you lack the confidence … you're in a big organisation where there was a big realisation where academic was everything and… I actually realised that without qualifications the perception of who you are was a lot lower than what it could be. So that's why I did my Master's and overnight once I passed… that the perception, you could feel it changing, so it was important in an academic environment to have that qualification … it built my confidence, resilience

and how I felt about myself and … that what I had to say was valuable and I think that's probably the key bit. What I had to say was valuable.… (Sylvia)

Sylvia points out how her confidence increased through achieving further qualifications and also how she experienced a change in the way her academic colleagues perceived her. She feels that a qualification makes her seem more intelligent and appeared to give her more credibility. The qualification makes Sylvia feel her contribution is valuable and worthwhile.

Qualifications also appear to have an influence on how Dorothy interacts with her academic colleagues. She perceives her PhD as improving her relationships and the respect she receives. Dorothy feels that while some academic staff already treat her with respect so there are no changes, she perceives that having a qualification has a positive influence in regard to those who she feels did not previously show the same respect.

> And because I have a PhD, I do think that … helps in one sense, not so much with them because… that camp kinda treat people equally anyway and kinda value. But the other camp who try to sort of treat professional staff as the other side. … I do think it helps having a PhD there. (Dorothy)

Similarly, Lydia speaks about her good relationships with some of her academic colleagues who are very respectful; they work well together and complement each other's input. On the other hand, relationships with another group appear to frustrate Lydia as she feels this group regard their qualifications as making them more capable than she is.

> ….their [academics] level of expertise is about their PhD, but I have a lot of arrogant academics who think that because they have a PhD, they think they know everything, and they are quite difficult and quite hard. But then again, I have academics that are good and can work together and it's great and you know it's really easy to work with because you know what their job is, and they know what their job is, and I know what

my job is. We work really well together but it's those ones who "I have this vision" and "I want to do" and "I think"! Well, good luck with that, but when it fails, come and we'll fix it up. (Lydia)

5.3.3 University language

Effective communication was regarded by participants as crucial to good relationships and closely linked to participants' understanding of their academic colleagues and vice versa. University language was highlighted by many of the participants in relation to the words and acronyms used that are specific to the university environment. Several participants spoke about the need to have an understanding of the "academic speak" in order to perform their roles effectively, which at times was difficult. According to Gadamer, "language is a medium where I and world meet" (Gadamer, 2013, p. 490). Yet, this can be problematic when the language spoken is not always understood by the listener.

Belinda points out, "*They talk their lingo and you've got to get used to that.*" As Heidegger (2013) states, "talking is the way in which we articulate 'significantly' the intelligibility of Being-in-the-world" (p. 162). When the experience of being-in-the-world is not the same, this can mean one does not understand. However, Belinda feels that at times there is an expectation that she and her team must have the same level of knowledge as their academic colleagues in terms of their "*defined areas",* in which "*some of them talk up here and you need to know down here".* Belinda goes on to explain that a lack of understanding can be an issue as, at times, the "*interpretation of things can be quite different too. Guidelines and policies, they can [be] interpreted differently.*"

In some instances, participants noted the difference between central university units and the way they communicate with and understand the academic units.

Irene, who has been working at the university for many years, reflects on a lack of understanding between the central university units and the academic units. She has become familiar with the language of both groups and has learnt to understand them over time.

> It's a bit like learning the language of the university, like when you are talking to academics you know what they're talking about and they know what you're talking about. And I think sometimes that's the issue with people from central units, they're talking a different language and everybody's thinking, "What the hell are they talking about?" You've got to learn the language of the university, if you like. (Irene)

5.3.4 Summary of relationships

Relationships were strongly bonded and intertwined with how the participants perceived the space they lived in and the way they enacted their roles, showing how the existential theme of relationality is intrinsically connected with both spatiality and corporeality.

Relationships were key to how the participants felt about their credibility in their roles and also how successfully the participants felt they were able to perform their roles. Having validation of their role was an important aspect for the participants in relation to their job satisfaction and their role credibility. The participants felt they had validation of their roles when their level of authority and responsibility was recognised by their academic-managers and colleagues.

Participants mostly spoke about their relationships in reference to their academic colleagues; however, the importance of relationships with their own peers or other non-academic colleague also emerged.

Several of the participants highlighted that having an academic qualification appeared to give them more credibility and a better understanding of the

lifeworld of academics, whereas others felt building relationships and understanding the university language were the most important issues. Understanding government policies and laws and how this related to students was regarded as particularly important.

The findings strongly emphasised that the participants' credibility in their role was dependent on their relationships with academic colleagues. When the participants felt respected by their academic colleagues, they had a more positive perception of the value they added and therefore a higher sense of professional identity.

5.4 Theme Three: Doing Gender (Lived Body)

The third theme, Doing Gender, is unpacked using the existential theme of corporeality within van Manen's (1997) framework. The non-academic manager role in academic units is predominately female in New Zealand universities and all the participants in this study were women. While the interview questions did not directly address this fact, at times their experiences reflected issues in relation to their gender. Through reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, female attributes were evident in the way the participants acted out their roles as managers. The reflections from the participants revealed how they corporeally experienced their everyday world in the way they cared about their colleagues and felt proud, confident and respected. At times, they also showed how they felt undervalued and disappointed. They also spoke about adapting their behaviour in order to perform their role more effectively. Van Manen (2014) refers to the 'lived body' as the way in which one experiences the world. In line with van Manen's existential theme of corporeality, the theme Doing Gender is divided into the sub-themes of *Notion of care, Adapting behaviour, Feeling pride*

and *Feeling undervalued.* These sub-themes show how the participants' spoken reflections were experienced as felt-senses of the body.

The participants' sense of professional identity showed in the way they spoke about caring for and supporting their teams, academic colleagues and students. The participants also highlighted the notion of their roles being seen as a female. Irene reflects on her experience of working within the university:

> ....if men come into those roles at a lower level, they tend to leave 'cause I think they find it even more frustrating that they can't get ahead. And then if you look at the relationship at the top, although we're all women, if you start looking at the top, you'll see more and more men, they sort of crowd the space up there. (Irene)

Similarly, Jasmine speaks about these roles as being women's roles and is proud of the power of the women in the group. She highlights the lack of clarity around the titles and responsibilities of those in similar positions: *"I look at them and nobody does anything the same. We all do things just slightly differently. So sometimes I struggle to find a commonality, and there's some pretty powerful women in that group"* (Jasmine). While many of the manager roles in academic units are similar, there appear to be no common titles used for the roles, and responsibilities are also variable.

5.4.1 Notion of care

The sub-theme of *notion of care* stood out strongly when analysing the data. Heidegger (1996) refers to care as *sorge.* Many of the participants alluded to the idea of needing to care for or look after their academic colleagues. They showed how they were protective and proud of their teams. There was also evidence of the part the participants played in the student experience by giving pastoral care to the students. The notion of care equally combines two of van

Manen's (1997) existential themes – corporeality and relationality. Many of the participants viewed their role of needing to support everyone as an overall *"go-to person"*. They used mothering or caring type language to describe how they supported their colleagues. According to Meredith, "*I do a lot of pastoral care with staff and postgrad students, tutors.*"

> That's what I do. I look after everybody. I'm everybody's friend and mum and sometimes disciplinarian. You know they have a gripe about somebody that's got nothing to do with me, they come and talk about it and somehow feel better. I'm the confessional box as well. (Meredith)

Sadie highlights the importance of creating an atmosphere of safety for staff to come and talk to her, regardless of what the issue is, explaining, "*It's really key because if you don't have that ability, you're not going to get the best out of people.… Those people need to know, everybody needs to know that they've got a safe place to go*" (Sadie). Creating a safe haven for her colleagues shows how Sadie acts in a protective way.

Caring for students was also seen as an important part of how the participants enacted their roles. Dorothy highlights how this is particularly important when a student is having problems: "*I do enrolment and I do advise students, especially those in crisis.…*"

Dora also explains how she understands the challenges students are faced with and the importance of ensuring they are given support.

> [T]his time of the year we have a lot of students that are very anxious, and so they are wanting to withdraw, they are not meeting guidelines, deadlines with their assignments and it's ensuring we are wary of those students soon enough to provide guidance as to whether they should withdraw from the course or if they should seek support from some of our other student services. (Dora)

167

Technical support or helping their academic colleagues through processes and policies was another area where the participants showed care. Particularly when new systems were implemented, participants spent time teaching and supporting academic colleagues through the process. For example, Edith takes on the role of carer or a mother figure, showing the way with new technologies, and uses female analogies relating to her being a 'mother figure'. When her colleagues feel ready, they say, "*Mum, you take your apron strings … untie your apron strings. And you hand them the apron.*" These words are an analogy of a child/mother relationship portraying a dependence where Edith is relied on. Edith further highlights this analogy by saying, "*They have to stand on their own two feet 'cause they can. I really like the support that I give them but it's great to see that they can now fly solo.*"

Reflecting on the meaning of her role, Edith says, "*You are, I suppose like the glue.*" Similarly, Mary says, "*I* have *been called the glue that keeps the unit together.*" Both of these quotes represent the notion of keeping everything together.

5.4.2 Adapting behaviour

To gain respect, several of the participants talked about having to change their behaviour to be heard or to be taken seriously, almost acting the part to portray a different identity. By taking on a more confident persona, Sylvia feels she is now perceived as being more credible and respected in her role as manager and more valued for her leadership and ideas.

Sylvia reflects that,

….when I first started out in tertiary I wasn't as confident as now. So, I bowed to a lot of pressure. But I soon learnt, after about eight years, that you actually had to take control and be confident to get further in tertiary or our role as a professional staff member stays at a lower or [at a] perceived lower role than academic. (Sylvia)

Sylvia expresses that "*to establish explicit respect from academics you actually have to say what you do, you have to be there and grab … you've gotta tell people what you do*".

Dora is an experienced manager and has an understanding of the value of listening to others' needs and concerns before she attempts to make changes. In the same vein, Heidegger's (2013) notion of listening is being-in-the-world and being open to others. Dora shows how through listening and understanding, she has adapted her behaviour in order to get people on board with change, or new procedures or policies, hence gaining respect from her colleagues.

So really, I've had to learn that one system, one method will not meet the needs of the majority … and that my nature is very much like, "These are the rules, do it" [laugh] so I've had to actually learn to adapt my behaviours to suit the audience and the situation at hand … so I think it's my own behaviours that have helped me gain that respect. (Dora)

Similarly, using humour was another way in which several of the participants tried to get their academic colleagues on board. June has a good understanding of the frustration her academic colleagues experience with adhering to the detail of the procedures she has to enforce. June has adapted her behaviour by engaging her colleagues, to ensure the relationship remains collegial.

…. a lot of the stuff I'm asking them to do or asking for is quite pedantic stuff and you can easily get off side with some staff because it's such a pain in the neck to do. So, I think I'm quite good at injecting a bit of humour into things and just trying to make it as pleasant as possible for everybody. (June)

Lydia elaborates further on adapting her behaviour to meet the expectations of her academic-manager. She speaks about how the Head of School position often rotates and the non-academic managers have to adapt according to the requirements of their new manager. Lydia talks about the effect these changes can have: "*[W]e can get a really good one and we can get a really bad one and it doesn't matter who we get, we have to change our style.*"

Lydia highlights how she supports the new manager regardless, when at times this may not be in the best interest of the university: "*We also let them make the mistakes and let them go ahead even if we don't like it.*"

5.4.3 Feeling pride, feeling valued, feeling undervalued

Most of the participants expressed that they were proud of what they had achieved, in spite of a lack of training and preparation for their roles. They reflected on how their ability and skills had grown through their own perseverance.

Meredith has volunteered to be on focus groups to look at new initiatives and she is surprised that her colleagues are now taking notice of her opinions.

> But now it's starting to really gain traction and now I'm getting to be around the table where these decisions are made, and the gob-smacking thing is people are listening to me, which I can't believe, I can't believe people are listening to me at all… it almost… I can't believe it…. That's probably to do with my own, view of my own credibility in my own capability and my own skills and my own level of performance. I can't believe other people would listen to me. (Meredith)

Meredith is proud of her achievements and shows disbelief that she is being listened to. When asked how this experience makes her feel, Meredith responded,

> ….empowered and capable and like I'm not just a stupid administrator…
> but I can actually do things and I can actually know things. So, by that in
> myself I've actually completely changed my whole idea about myself and
> who I am, and it didn't start off that way. (Meredith)

By challenging herself, Meredith has gained confidence in herself and her abilities. From this experience of being listened to, Meredith feels a sense of empowerment and credibility, which has a positive effect on her professional identity.

Similarly, Sadie reflects on an experience at a school retreat where groups of both non-academic and academic staff were involved. She was initially unsure how her team would react, as the situation was different to their usual working environment. She worried there was a possibility of being judged by others. Her team were chosen by the external facilitator to help facilitate the groups.

Sadie explains, *"What was really fabulous was the external facilitator looked at me and said, 'Do you mind?' and he was taking one here and one there and so it was very interesting to see that, and I thought that's pretty cool."*

While there was an awareness that the way the team performed could reflect on her as a manager, she was very proud of her team.

> Our administrators were actually facilitating, and they didn't even know
> they were doing it. Because it's second nature to us now.
>
> I was actually quite pleased with that too. I did a wee smile and thought,
> "That's working really quite well". (Sadie)

The positive experience appears to have given Sadie a feeling of personal satisfaction. Her reflection reminds her how her feeling of happiness and pride manifested into a "wee smile", corporeally showing her reaction to feeling proud and happy.

171

Throughout the interviews, the participants showed collegiality with their colleagues. However, there were times of frustration when the participants appeared to have a good understanding of the role of their academic colleagues but felt this was not reciprocal. They felt their colleagues did not fully appreciate what the role of a non-academic staff member entails. Belinda's experience in previous school manager roles shows a lack of understanding by her academic-manager and colleagues of the level of work the non-academic team are responsible for. She expresses that non-academics are "*just seen as secretaries, and they* [academics] *don't want to do a lot of the basic stuff and they don't want to do our role, but we need their input*".

Belinda's previous experience was different from that of the school she is currently in, where she feels she is more respected: "*In the school I'm in at the moment the staff are fantastic, they're helpful, very willing, and pretty good school.*" However, in "*the other one I was in there was a lot of 'We teach, we do our research, we don't want to know about administration'*" (Belinda).

April perceives there is a lack of understanding of her team's role primarily because her academic colleagues are focused on their discipline.

> So, generally, in terms of reporting to an academic, I find it can be quite loose. There's … not always a thorough understanding of what it is we do in terms of being managed by a staff member who is an academic who's largely focused on a particular discipline and teaching and research and all those things that go into the mind-set or mechanisms of an academic staff member.…
>
> While they manage me as a direct report I wouldn't (unlike I would expect to be able to do things for my staff if they're away), there's no comparison there.… they don't really know … they don't understand my role. (April)

While her direct line manager is supportive of her development, there is disappointment that her role, and how it impacts on the university's goals, is not fully understood.

> I mean they've certainly always been supportive in developing me [but] I don't think there's always the understanding or the concept of what our needs are as [non-academic] staff and how we deliver to the university. (April)

Furthermore, April reflects on her struggle and disappointment in getting acknowledgement for her team. April feels this is due to a lack of understanding as to how her team contributes to the student experience and achievement, mostly because there is no easy way to measure it.

> ….the workload is always a battle … getting a balanced load for your staff and for yourself can often be difficult. It's hard to show, ok so we're extremely busy but how do you measure, how do you show compared to any FTE [full-time-equivalent staff], how do you measure what that workload should look like.… I can show percentages till the cows come home but it's not necessarily understood to be a priority because it doesn't affect the teaching, it's not in front of the classroom, so it's not seen as quite so important I believe. (April)

The participants spoke about the way their roles where based around supporting the students. For example, according to Lorraine, "*[W]e have a big involvement with the students who are rotating through as well.*" April also speaks about "*the energy and the hard work that our teams put into delivering services for our students ultimately but that's sometimes overlooked or disregarded or just expected or just magically happens*".

Similar to April, other participants highlighted that the work they did in relation to the students was not always acknowledged. Alice maintains that,

> ….we are the people who to do the nuts and bolts of everything and yes, the academics do the research and do the teaching but we give them all the tools in the faculty, we do all the course outlines, we deal with the students, we put them into tutorials, we do the timetables, we do the exams, you know like I just don't feel like we get rewarded enough. (Alice)

Violet also reflects on her experience where some of her academic colleagues do not value the work area she belongs to or the tasks her area manage. Therefore, at times, it makes it difficult to "*get them on board"* when they are required to be part of a process that she is responsible for.

> Many of the academic staff that I've encountered feel like [department name] … what I'm doing is par for the course, that it's not core business. That their core business really is to teach and to support current students and [department name] while it's a necessary evil in some ways, it's not where their interest or skill set lies particularly, so getting them on board sometimes with the things that need to be done is challenging and while I don't think they're dismissive of this role, I don't think they prioritise what I necessarily want or need either. (Violet)

Violet shows her disappointment that the work she does is not considered of equal importance to the work others do. Therefore, the status of her role and her professional identity is also deemed to be lower. The perceived lower status of the role is also an issue for Sadie who speaks about feeling undervalued or her belief that the role she is currently in as school manager is undervalued. Sadie expresses disappointment that the role does not have a higher profile or status. While her statement appears to be an opinion, it comes from her experiences or her "truth" as she perceives it.

> I think the university doesn't truly acknowledge what the school managers do. I think in some ways the role is almost dumbed down. I find it offensive because I believe to be a good school manager, you have to be a really good people manager. Across so many different areas. The role is not really valued for what it does. (Sadie)

The words *"being dumbed down"* implies that Sadie believes the role is much more than it is seen as. This alludes to Sadie feeling that the expectation of what is required, and the responsibilities, are much higher than the acknowledgement given to the role.

The issue of a lack of understanding of their role was shared by other participants. They felt they had their own expertise and knowledge to contribute; however, it appeared this was not well understood and, in a sense, there was a feeling there was no real value placed on this.

Lydia reflects on this experience, revealing a feeling of disappointment that, even in a social situation where her male academic colleague has invited her as a guest, his actions show that he does not value her as such. In reality, he has invited her not as a guest but to help or serve. Several of the participants discussed the political aspects of the "old boys' network" and feeling unable to compete because they were female. Lydia shares that,

> An academic came to me and said, "Oh look, can you organise this event?" and I said, "I can't do it myself but I can give you a staff member, an admin staff member who can organise the event for you".... And then they came back to me and said, "Would you like to come to the event as a guest?" and I said, "Yeah, I would actually, thanks" and so I went along and I was standing there and talking to [another guest] and the academic came up to me and said, "Excuse me… can you take the glad-wrap off the food?" and it's like, "Oh!" (Lydia)

Sylvia's reflection also highlights the notion of the old boys' network. Using the term "old boys' network" typifies what is generally considered as masculine traits and behaviours.

> Political things that go on [in] the old boys' network and I can't actually participate in that. I feel it's very unethical.... I know if I participate in those, I'd get further up the ladder, but I can't work like that because once you start going right up high, you have to play all those games and say

175

all the right things, do the right thing and go to the right dinner and wear the right clothes. (Sylvia)

While Sylvia feels that it could help her career to adapt her behaviour in line with her perception of the old boys' network, she does not feel comfortable being in a position that requires her to go against her ethical beliefs. On the other hand, Sylvia feels there is "*an old women's network*" the higher up you go in the university. She likens it to "*being at high school… you know you've got to join the netball team and the sort of games they play at a higher level*".

Lydia also draws attention to the issue of gender and the male domination in the area she works in and how that may have an influence on how the non-academic staff are treated. Lydia feels there is "*probably a lot of sexism that happens and … that's an issue*". Lydia expresses anger and frustration around being both a non-academic staff member and female when she shares her story about a suggestion she had presented that was rejected by her academic colleagues. She explains her perception of the reason for her rejection by saying, "*Because I'm a school manager and because I'm a woman and that wasn't my role.*"

5.4.4 Summary of Doing Gender

In this section, the data revealed how the existential themes of corporeality and relationality were strongly interconnected. The notion of *doing gender* became apparent in the way the participants enacted their everyday roles as managers. This was further emphasised in the way several participants spoke in regard to adapting their approach to their academic colleagues in order to maintain positive relationships.

The way the participants revealed positive experiences of feeling proud, caring, valued and respected increased the participants' perceived credibility in their role, whereas a lack of credibility appeared to have the opposite effect. Relationships are highlighted to be integral to how the participants experience their identity.

5.5 Theme Four: Knowledge and Experience (Lived Time)

I 'spose I've been here a very long time and I've got a lot of institutional knowledge now. (Irene)

Knowledge and experience evolve over time. Theme Four, Knowledge and Experience, highlights how through *lived time* the participants acquired the knowledge and experience they used every day and would be able to take this forward towards their future roles. "Temporality temporalizes itself as a future which makes present in the process of having been" (Heidegger, 2013, p. 350). In this thesis, temporality in Theme Four represents how the participants' past experiences, present experiences and future experiences were connected through temporality.

In this section, the participants' stories are explored through van Manen's existential theme of *temporality (lived time),* and divided into sub-themes *Longevity,* and *Career development.* Van Manen (2014) states that the existential theme of temporality "asks how time is experienced with respect to the phenomenon" (p. 305). The phenomenon in this thesis explores how non-academic women managers experienced their professional identity in an academic unit. The thesis also explores how they understood their roles and perceived their future career aspirations.

177

The findings revealed how the participants' knowledge and experience were deeply embedded in the way the participants perceived their professional identity. They were proud of their knowledge and felt it made a difference in regard to the support they gave their academic colleagues. All the participants agreed it took time to acquire the knowledge needed to be successful in their role. They appeared to be particularly proud of tacit knowledge they had acquired over time through being part of the academic environment. In addition, many of the participants talked about the impact of lack of training for their role and how they had developed their role over time through using their initiative and building relationships.

5.5.1 Longevity

Carla has been in the university environment for many years and speaks about the way her academic colleagues respect her for the knowledge she has gained. Carla reflects on how her manager directs others to her because of her expertise around process and budgets. The respect for her knowledge seems to validate Carla's confidence in her role.

> So, the head of [academic unit] tells them he won't sign off on a research application until I've seen the budget… whereas before they'd put in their own budgets and they'd forget about including overheads and all the rest of it and there'd be a big drama … and even just small things like they would put in for say a technical staff member but they wouldn't be up to date with what the current award rates are, so they wouldn't apply for enough. So I got the award rates and we know in advance … so if it's for next year's funding, you don't put down this year's rate, you put down next year's rate. And just those small things can make a big difference overall in your budgets. (Carla)

Similar to Carla, Harriet has also been working at the university a long time and feels that it is important to take into consideration the value of those with a background of university experience rather than recruiting from outside the

university. She also previously worked in central university units. However, while prior university experience helped Harriet to secure a role in an academic unit, she felt she needed more in-depth knowledge specifically related to how academic units operate and also to how they relate to the students. Learning for this role was specialised and knowledge was developed over time through using her previous relationships and her own initiative.

> It was hard enough coming from central and I was lucky 'cause I knew enough people. I knew the people in payroll, accounts, I could get by, but you still have to pick up all the student stuff and you have to have a good knowledge of the courses and how they run and that's something I hadn't got my head around here yet. I've been in the university that long, but I haven't learnt the [school] curriculum … definitely having worked in all those different areas, it's definitely helped because I knew people I could call. So even if I didn't know what to do, I had the contacts to do it. (Harriet)

Harriet highlights her lack of training and speaks about how she used her initiative to develop the knowledge required for her role:

> Back in the day when I first started out, particularly in [name of department] was my first academic department, I rang the auditor a lot and said, "Look, this is what I am being presented, this is what I think but I'm not sure". And he said, "For an auditor, it's black and white". And so, I built everything on that, and I was audited over there a few years back and came out ok. (Harriet)

Many of the participants had been in their role a long time and emphasised the wide span of knowledge required as well as tacit knowledge which took time to build. Lydia continues to talk about the importance of the school manager role and shows disappointment at the lack of recognition. Lydia's example below is very similar to those of many of the participants:

> I'm coming up around eight [years] and a lot of them that I know have been in the role … for 14 years. They're [school managers], very good at their role and it's recognising the importance of that role. You are running a small business, you know. In our school we're coming up to around [dollar amount] next year and that's a lot of money. (Lydia)

Meredith reflects on her experience as a school manager and expresses frustration at the lack of acknowledgement for the value of the institutional knowledge she brings to her role. Her words reveal a sense of loss and disappointment and, similar to many of the participants, she feels that the university does not care enough about her worth.

> I think my value for the university comes directly because it's my institutional knowledge. That is my value to the university. So instead of keeping that, which is worth its weight in gold to them, they're willing to lose me … 'cause there's nowhere to go. So, they lose all of that … it's very sad for me … that there is no opportunity for me. (Meredith)

5.5.2 Career development

Many of the participants talked about forging their way into their positions in an ad hoc way. Some had been at the university a long time, during which there were a number of reviews and restructures and they found themselves in a management position. Others had been hired through family or internal contacts. Many had not had any formal training or clear pathway to follow. Some participants felt relationships were also linked to career advancements and therefore non-academic staff needed to build relationships and put themselves out there to be noticed in order to further their career. These findings emphasise how van Manen's (2014) existential themes of relationality and temporality are interconnected. Building a future career appeared to be dependent on the networks and relationships the participants had formed. Furthermore, as shown in previous sections, the participants' confidence and self-efficacy grew when they believed they were valued by others.

Isobel is working at a high level and has achieved career success by developing good relationships and being proactive in taking opportunities. Her self-efficacy

in undertaking roles with which she is not familiar has given her confidence and helped her to achieve.

> To get to that point you have to have developed good relationships with people across the university … you have to be prepared to be seen to be a hard worker and putting yourself out there and prepared to take on things that you might not want to.
>
> ….you have to be prepared to get out of your comfort zone and meet people and actually (I don't like the word network) but building relationships.
>
> So yeah, I do 100% think you create your own opportunities. (Isobel)

Meredith feels she needs to make her own career path as there is no definite pathway for non-academic managers in academic departments. If she does not do so, she will have to stay in the role she is in and she feels strongly that she wants to move forward. Meredith states, "*I will have to forge a path where there isn't currently a clear path. I don't want to retire in this position.*"

Meredith continues to speak about the lack of career opportunities for non-academic staff and felt that the reason is the role is perceived as women's work and therefore of lesser value or importance. Her words also show her concern at the negative message this is portraying to the students.

> The longer you can keep a [non-academic] staff member in the current position the better … it means you don't have to replace them. You don't have to train a new person to do that job. So, the longer the university can keep me in my current position the better for the university … it's less upheaval. It's not better for me but it's better for the university. Which I kind of think is sad.... What does that show to postgraduate students, what does that show to other students? This is a woman's job? (Meredith)

Similarly, Lydia feels there is no career path and uses the term "*non-academic*" to explain that because she is not in an academic position with a qualification, she feels there is a barrier preventing her from progressing in the university

environment. Her words *"glass ceiling"* also emphasise the idea that Lydia perceives being a female has added to her lack of progression.

> ….you can become an administrator, senior administrator and you can become a school manager and that's about it and if you look at organisations in the public sector a competent person can … go up, but here we hit the glass ceiling because of the fact we are non-academics and don't have a PhD. (Lydia)

Lorraine is very happy in her role as department manager but expresses disappointment that there was no career path in her immediate area. She says,

> Personally, I cannot go any further than what I am now. I would have to do something totally different. That's one disadvantage, there's nowhere further for me to now go….
>
> [I]f you are in a similar role to myself that it would be within the whole university, there would be no further to go. (Lorraine)

Sylvia also speaks about there being no clear career path. Similar to Lorraine, she talks about having to move away from the academic area she is positioned in and look across the universities in order to progress.

> Well, as it is now, to change the career within the university is a huge process and you can't do that by yourself … and I'm not energised to go in and do this.… I look for pathways and opportunities that might get me where I want to go. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes it means changing jobs at universities which I have done, moving around. On the management side I also understand now that careers have a finite end and … we can't go any further … a job is this level and to go further you need to move or qualify or change jobs. It's just a fact you can't have everybody going up grades till the salary bursts around the seam. (Sylvia)

Irene voices similar sentiments to many other participants in regard to having to move from an academic unit to the central university units in order to progress in her career:

> ….when you get to a point, well, actually no, you're not going to progress anymore. You need to find another job because this job is at this level and then they're like there aren't any up there … jobs. (Irene)

Harriet also reflects on her frustration at not being able to get a promotion in her current role. She speaks of her disappointment as she enjoys her role but without a promotion, she feels demotivated.

> …. there's no such thing as promotion. You have to move roles and I know that this is something that has been a bugbear for a lot of people. Because that's part of the reason I've just moved is that I was in [name of department] for 16 years and I've been at the top of my scale for probably 11 of them. It's a real shame 'cause as long as you are doing a good job, there's no doubt in my mind that we should move more often but if everyone is happy it's very difficult to keep that motivation of… well, not motivate but it does get a bit blasé if you're not seeing anything for it. (Harriet)

On the other hand, Edith's reflection demonstrates her positivity and pro-activeness in achieving her ambition of being an administration manager in an academic department. Edith showed how she was happy working in an academic environment, but she enjoyed the administrative side and found working within the university had given her opportunities. After Edith was unsuccessful in getting an administrative position, she tried again and was appointed to the role she currently holds.

> So that opportunity didn't happen in my current role and then I saw this [name] departmental administrator role and I thought that is me, and I applied for it and I got it and so for the last three and a half years I have actually been doing my dream role and I think opportunities are there for anybody if they choose to see them, or find them, or find them for themselves. (Edith)

Harriet has a lot of experience in different areas through her longevity at the university and reflects on the early days of her school.

> …. having worked in all those different areas, it's definitely helped because I knew people I could call. So, even if I didn't know what to do, I had the contacts to do it. But I have got a good sound admin background….
>
> …. a lot of people in these roles have been promoted up from secretaries.… (Harriet)

183

Harriet has grown or evolved into her role in a way that Heidegger (2013) describes as 'thrownness', a way of being-in-the world as one is thrown from one situation to another.

Jasmine's excerpt reflects a situation similar to those experienced by others whereby she has progressed in her career through her tacit knowledge and experience. It appears Jasmine feels a lack of self-efficacy because she is aware she has no formal education, which she perceives is important within an academic environment.

> …. they talk about the imposter syndrome … and a light went off and I think, yeah, sometimes that's what it's like. I'm at this level through… simply through staying put really. I am being promoted up and up but no real education with or behind me you know, it's just by doing the job and knowing the job, you know…. You tend to move up the ranks and I feel like someone is going to tap me on the shoulder and say, "You're not meant to be here". (Jasmine)

Similarly, Irene speaks about portraying a confidence she is not feeling. Her reflection shows a similarity with that of Jasmine in the sense they have both grown into the roles through longevity, experience and support from managers. While they did not feel confident in the role initially, they have worked through it and grown in confidence over time.

> …. sometimes when I reflect, I say I've been lucky in that the people I have been working for have always given me space to grow. So even before my last manager… way, way back, but I also think, well, why have they done that? Is it something to do with me as well? So, it must be a two-way thing. I think I probably come across as being quite confident… I'm not [laugh] but you know actually inside that's not what I'm feeling but I think maybe people think I'm more confident and self-assured than I really am. So, therefore, maybe they just go with it. (Irene)

Carla considers the career ambitions of the staff she manages and spoke about how she was aware there is no succession planning in the role. As her staff are women who want to have a work-life balance, they are not focused on their

future careers or undertaking study to attain qualifications for future development opportunities.

> When I retire, I don't think there is anybody here that would be suitable to replace me in my role as it is... not that they're not capable but they probably need to be doing a business degree or something like that at the moment but none of them are. (Carla)

On the other hand, Carla reflects on her many years in the university setting and feels that a lot of the administration staff she manages do not want a career at the moment as their families are their priority.

> A lot of them are just quite happy to do what they do. They might have young families or teenage families and they're just at work really because they like going to work. And the admin roles in the office I'm just thinking about them. They've been in those jobs for a long time. They're probably mid-50s and they never seem… they don't apply for other jobs anywhere else. They're just quite happy doing what they do. They come at eight-thirty. They go home at four-thirty. If they have an hour for lunch, they go home at five… and they switch off. (Carla)

Lydia spoke about why she enjoyed working in universities and felt that it was important to recognise the passion non-academic staff had for education and to encourage their development.

> …there's something really neat about universities and the fact they are about education and how education can transform lives. And I think that's really really important, that's what really interests me about education and that's a really positive thing and I think if you have staff who really believe in why not develop them… (Lydia**)**

Dora proactively developed her team by encouraging them to enrol in courses and gaining an understanding of those who resisted. She also sought new opportunities for her staff to move in to other roles in order to gain experience and help progress their careers.

It's encouraging staff to go on it [courses] and some of them aren't willing so … "what is the problem? Why don't you want to go on it?" and to find a comfort zone so that they start going on these courses and then you know when opportunities come up. I've sent staff away on secondment and when they've come back we've looked, actively looked for positions for them to apply for. (Dora)

However, professional development opportunities for non-academic staff varies throughout the universities. Some universities offer more than others depending on the available budget. Sylvia is committed to ensuring both she and her staff have opportunities for professional development and she speaks about the difficulties in gaining funds to do so.

I use creative ways to get professional development, resources, funding and time. Again, it's been a battle. It's an ongoing slow battle to build up the respect and get value back for professional staff to get that funding ….

For one university I've worked for, there is no policy and so I've had to fight for what I've got. (Sylvia)

Even when the policy espouses commitment to professional development for staff, this does not necessarily follow through with the time allocation to support a non-academic staff member to undertake qualifications. It appears that none of the universities has a development policy for non-academic staff that allocates time for completing a PhD.

April, who was studying for her PhD at the time of the interview, highlights how she needs to work full-time to support her family and so is not able to take time off to study.

I don't want to say that I am content to just mosey along, but I'm fairly well supported as a non-academic doing further study … other places I've worked it hasn't always been easy, you know that stigma… like what are you doing a Master's degree for when you don't need that for your job, you're just an office worker.… (April)

April acknowledges the good support she has from her peers and colleagues in her present role. However, she experienced a stigma about undertaking study in a previous workplace.

> …. now doing a PhD, it's been nothing but supported from most of my peers. Although I do get some of them moan at me about how busy they are and how they're doing a PhD and they're teaching and … "You don't know the half of it, mate" [laugh]. (April)

At the university where April is working at present, she feels supported, although she is aware that the policy for academic staff is more liberal in time allocation. It seems resilience and determination are crucial for those who have undertaken academic qualifications.

Sylvia points out how developing management skills through gaining formal qualifications has given her the confidence to believe in herself. Sylvia feels she created her own identity through her experience and by gaining confidence and understanding herself and knowing her strengths. She has since worked at moulding the role to fit her identity. She believes her perception of herself and the perception others have of her has changed because she has a formal qualification, and this has given her confidence and credibility.

> …. it gave me confidence as well. It was saying, here you are with this qualification, you've done it, you're as good as they are. You know it's like … you're an intelligent person so it was all written down now, so you've got the certificate now to basically say you're intelligent.
>
> Yes, because now they said I could do it. Now here's this bit of paper that said my ideas were intelligent and correct or valuable (not always correct). (Sylvia)

Betty has a similar discipline qualification to the academic staff she works with and she acknowledges "*that most of the time the academics do value my input".*

Betty perceives that her qualification helps in the way her academic colleagues see her; they now regard her as having credibility and therefore her opinion is seen as being valid.

> I think they have some good ideas and some valid decisions but of course they're governed by what they are trying to do as well …
>
> [My role] would be much harder for somebody who didn't have an understanding of the [Subject] process. While I don't have a PhD, however I do understand, and I understand the pressures of academic and the pressures of learning but certainly having the [Discipline] background makes a huge difference and gives me more authority to say, "No, sorry". (Betty)

Opportunities for career progression were shown to be available for non-academic staff, albeit staff needed to be proactive in order to take them. It became apparent that confidence and self-efficacy were important aspects in how the participants developed and progressed their careers. As Dora suggests, "*It's actually having courage to put your hand up.*" This view is shared by Meredith who, even though she enjoys her present position, has an ambition to move forward. She acknowledges that remaining in a role provides a sense of security which other women value; however, she is ambitious and is actively looking for new opportunities.

> I think if I'm still in the same job when I retire I'd go dolally. I know there are people, women who love their jobs, love their teams. They're comfortable and safe and secure in it. It's a great job and they wouldn't trade it for the world and they have no aspirations for anything else or desire for anything else. And that's fine. I'm happy for them. For me, I don't want that. I actually want more. So, what I'm now doing is, I'm actually, I'm actively starting to tell people around the university I want more.… And that involves, very strategically applying for other positions in the university. Not the one I want but others as a show of intent. (Meredith)

Lydia, on the other hand, speaks about the choices she had to make between being a mother and pursuing a career. Lydia had studied and gained her

master's qualification before she had her children, then came back to work full-time after they were born. However, she reflects on her choices and what it means to balance work and spending time with her family.

> You really want to have the time and have meal time, you can't have a full-on career. So, this job suited me really well 'cause I'd done it before, I knew the university, I mean there's nothing new in it. (Lydia)

Many of the participants highlighted how they could only progress so far in academic units and if they wanted to develop their careers further, they would need to move to the central university units. Staff retention also appeared to be an issue. Belinda highlights how the limitations of the role have had an effect on retaining good staff. When asked about future opportunities, Belinda shows a sense of frustration at not being able to support her staff to develop.

> No, we're limited and that's been one of my gripes. Because we do lose good people and in time, we're all going to become middle-aged plus in administration because the time in our career when we're happy (and my role, there's never a dull moment, interesting, really interesting job). But young ones they're ambitious and they want to move on other places. I mean we've been struggling, we've lost the battle to get administrator roles to be backed up, and there's inconsistency in the university of doing that, which is a shame. So, I can't even give like anybody a step up within our team, which is a shame, so the younger ones will move on. (Belinda)

Belinda is explicit when she speaks about the limitations of her role, describing it as *"purely operational and administrative"*. In terms of career progression, Belinda highlights how a lot of what happens within their roles in the academic units is controlled by the central university units.

> I think you're pretty limited because we are guided by our central services. We've got payroll over there, we have a faculty HR. So, unless they brought that back into the schools, we'd be right. But… we can't write policy. You know the system. We do the nuts and bolts. I mean we have expanded a bit in [name] but … in terms of career I mean it's experience. (Belinda)

Carla was appointed into a new position and has worked hard to structure the role in a way that is helpful to her academic colleagues and they see a purpose in what she is doing. The pride in her achievement shows when she says, *"Now that I've established the role and they can see how it's working, they certainly, I think, see me as the expert in a lot of these things and they'll come and ask."* Often, this was knowledge and experience participants had acquired over many years and they were proud of this and saw it as a valuable asset. However, if they wanted to progress their career, they needed to forfeit this knowledge and move to another area of the university or leave altogether.

On the other hand, June felt that her skills and attributes gained from working in the public sector were transferable; however, the university knowledge is specialised and not something quickly acquired. June explains, "*It was like going to another planet so starting all over again, but I had the skills and attributes to be able to work my way through it all. It was really tough, but I loved it. It was a great challenge."*

Finally, Belinda expresses her satisfaction in her present role. She is happy in the way she experiences her everydayness and is not actively seeking to move on in her career.

> I'm happy to stay here. I like the university, I like the environment. I meet so many people. I can't see myself getting bored at all. There's always challenges. You know, I would be happy to stay here until I retire. (Belinda)

5.5.3 *Summary of knowledge and experience*

The participants showed that they were proud of the knowledge they had and enjoyed working in academic units. However, progression within the academic

units appeared to be limited. The participants who showed more positivity around career development opportunities appeared to have more self-efficacy and confidence. Others had moved to a higher role through longevity and had grown into roles through time. Several participants spoke about how they considered the choices between spending time with their families and pursuing their careers. All the participants agreed experience and university knowledge were important assets, yet it seemed they were not necessarily acknowledged or valued through policies and support from the university. Even though through longevity some participants had risen to higher level roles, there was not a clear career pathway.

5.6 Theme Five: Changing Technology (Lived Things)

In relation to van Manen's (1997) framework, in this thesis, systems and technology are the *lived things* that influence how the participants experienced their lifeworld. According to van Manen (2014), "it would be difficult to overestimate the significance of *things* in our lives" (p. 306). The data highlighted to what extent the participants' roles were dependent on the systems within their environment. This section will explore how systems and technology were experienced in the day-to-day lives of the participants.

Changes in technology and the introduction of new systems and processes had a marked effect on the participants' roles in terms of increased stress from requiring them to learn new skills and systems. Furthermore, there was an expectation the participants would have the expertise to support and teach their academic colleagues how to use new systems and processes. This was

particularly evident for those who had school manager or school department manager roles. Several of the participants showed their frustration around keeping up with these changes. Heidegger speaks of the dangers of technology and maintains that technology "should not just be interpreted as the tools and techniques that we use to produce things" (van Manen, 2014, p. 110). Supporting the finding in this thesis, he suggests that we need to understand how it is used for "consuming wants, needs and desires" and argues that it "has profoundly shaped our spiritual, social and physical experience" (van Manen, 2014, p. 110).

Belinda highlights how the pressure from changing systems is not only impacting on her but also affecting her academic colleagues.

> …. the university at the moment is changing a lot of systems, how you do things and it's all happening at once. And the academics are sort of saying and we're saying, "Enough, enough"…. It all comes on to your desk, it all comes in someone's desk, their 'in box' and the challenges are keeping up with changes and there's been heaps and it's really changed and it's finding you've got to think smart. (Belinda)

The new technology systems in the various universities clearly took a lot of time to implement and the responsibility of ensuring the process through successfully seemed to rely on the participants. According to Isobel,

> We put in a new [technology system] a couple of years ago and bedding that down and making it work across the university has been a really time-consuming activity to make it work for everybody. (Isobel)

The effect of the implementation of new systems and changes on the academic staff are revealed in Belinda's story.

> …. a lot of the stuff affects them [academic colleagues] and the way they do things and yet if there's problems, they come to us which is really hard because we don't understand the systems that they use, like working out their tutorials. We've got this new [online system] and there have been

glitches. We have to try to sort it out, in consultation with other areas, but not actually using those packages, it can be a challenge. (Belinda)

Belinda shows how the responsibility for ensuring the systems are running smoothly can be challenging, particularly when it is an academic process she is not involved in and she lacks an understanding of the process.

Similarly, Edith speaks about how trying to sort out the technical issues presents her with a challenge. This is another example of the wide range of skills the participants needed in their roles and also emphasises the changing landscape in which the role was performed. While previously Edith would have been able to follow manual processes, this is no longer an option.

> *…. that I struggle with, that is a challenge because it is … I'm not an IT technician but to be able to use these technologies when they don't work you need help to get yourself through them and I think it's crazy. So that's my challenges. I don't know now what processes are, because you get this online prompt and you think, "Well, what'll I do?" You haven't got a piece of paper that comes to you anymore that says, "Please fill this out" … down the bottom it says, "Once the form is completed, please send it through to such and such," easy, you don't get that anymore and I think it's a shame…. So that's my challenges, is trying to get my head around so many different functions. (Edith)*

5.6.1 Summary of technology

Technology has changed and shaped the identities of the participants.

Changes in technology and the introduction of new systems and processes had a significant effect on the participants' roles in terms of bringing in new challenges which proved to be stressful at times. The changes introduced meant they were required to learn new skills and systems and also to support and teach their academic colleagues how to use them. To be successful in their role, the participants felt it was important to have a good understanding of the

operational aspects of these systems and at times be expert, so they could support their academic colleagues.

5.7 Conceptual model

Overall, the findings showed how the participants' experience was significantly influenced by the academic environment in which they were positioned. Their relationships with their academic colleagues and the central university units also impacted on the way in which they enacted their roles. They were proud of their knowledge and experience and contribution to the student experience. However, they did not always feel they were valued or recognised. In part, this was due to the hierarchical environment but, more importantly, it was dependent on having validation for their roles from their academic-managers.

The following model conceptualises the space the participants were positioned in and diagrammatically shows how the validation of the participants' role by their academic-manager had an important influence on their credibility to perform their role and in turn had an effect on their sense of professional identity. The findings indicated that the participants were positioned between their academic-manager and colleagues and the central university units. However, they were invested in supporting their academic colleagues as well as being in the position of having a stewardship role in relation to upholding the university policies.

The dotted line to the central university units indicates both the connection to the central university units and the line which they would need to follow in order to have any career progression opportunities within the university environment. The dotted line to the students indicates the part the participants play in the

student experience and achievement. The model also highlights the five main themes that centre on the way in which the participants experience their roles, as revealed by the findings. These are shown as *Environment, Relationships, Knowledge and Experience, Doing Gender* and *Changing Technology*.

Figure 3
Conceptual Model – Non-academic Managers' Professional Identity
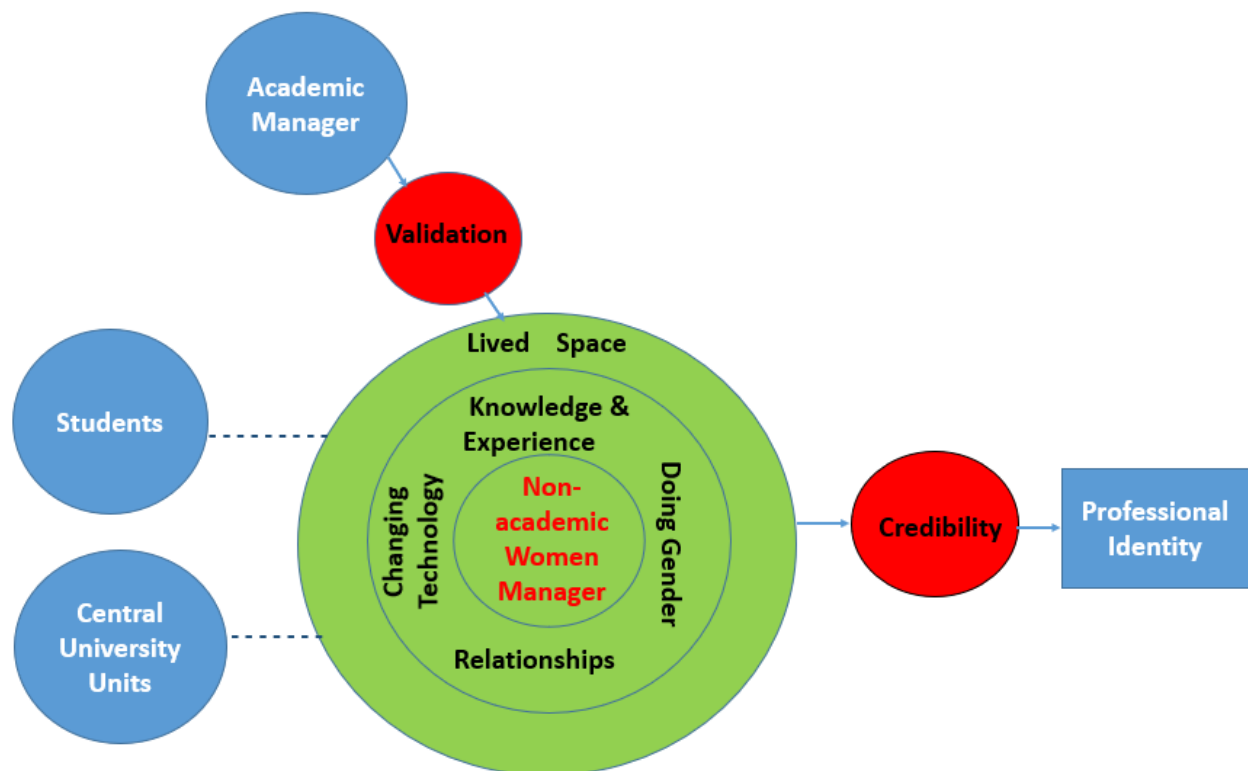
5.8 Summary of Chapter 5

Using the hermeneutic phenomenological method to "explicate meanings" (van Manen, 1997, p. xiv), the combined existential themes of the lifeworld showed how the participants experienced their everyday work. Through the existential

themes of Spatiality, Relationality, Corporeality, Temporality and Materiality*,* this study explores how the participants' experiences gave meaning to their professional identity in their world as managers in the academic environment. The analysis reveals some common meaning from the participants' experiences.

The chapter emphasised how the five main themes, *Environment, Relationships, Knowledge and Experience, Doing Gender* and *Changing Technology,* combined to reflect how the participants experienced their lifeworld within the university. However, throughout the interpretative process, there was an awareness that every person is "corporeally, temporally and spatially separate singular beings" (van Manen, 2014, p. 60). Therefore, while each section was explored separately and had distinct understanding, when combined, they revealed an understanding of how the participants in the study experienced their professional role, professional identity and career opportunities.

The first theme *Environment* revealed how the participants' reflections showed an understanding of how they experienced spatiality in their lifeworld. It was evident this group of staff were situated in a unique space within the university structure that was affected by the hierarchical nature of the university environment. Many of the participants also expressed how they perceived their academic colleagues to be more important than they or their non-academic colleagues were. Some appeared to accept this and feel it was how it should be. However, others expressed a desire to be seen as equal in status to their academic colleagues, rather than a "*lower class citizen*" or "*second class citizens*".

196

While none of the participants explicitly referred to their different status, an underlying feeling appeared to suggest this perception in some way during every interview. Van Manen (2014) highlights that identity for Hegel "means difference and difference means identity, because one cannot think identity without difference" (p. 84). From the data, it became apparent the participants perceived there was a hierarchical difference between the academic staff group and non-academic staff group. In spite of this, all the participants spoke about having good relationships with most of their academic colleagues and expressed a professional respect and an appreciation of the pressures their colleagues were under. As previously explained, from a philosophical hermeneutic perspective, the experiences revealed by the participants showed how they were interwoven with all aspects of being-in-the-world.

The second theme, *Relationships,* unpacked within van Manen's (1997) existential theme of relationality*,* revealed how the participants experienced their *connectiveness* with self and others. Connectiveness included their relationship with the central academic units, their peers and their teams. It also encompassed the participants' part in the student experience and achievement. It appeared their relationships were intrinsically connected to their professional role and professional identity. In particular, it was evident the relationship with their academic-manager had a significant impact on their perceived credibility. Also, it appeared that the higher the participants' perception of their credibility, the higher they perceived the status of their professional identity and vice versa. Gaining academic qualifications seemed to validate the credibility of the participants' ability to perform successfully in their roles. Having credibility

appeared to give the participants a sense of greater self-efficacy and confidence.

The third theme, *Doing Gender,* showed how the participants corporeally enacted their roles, revealing female traits in the way they engaged with their colleagues. The participants' stories revealed how experiences of being valued and undervalued, proud, empowered and respected all evoked either positive or negative feelings towards the credibility of their role and professional identity.

Theme Four, *Knowledge and Experience,* was explored using van Manen's (1997) existential theme of temporality. This section shows how through lived time, the participants' knowledge and experience developed. Longevity appeared to increase tacit knowledge which led to opportunities the participants grew into. Career opportunities were limited within the academic units. However, some participants were more proactive than others and believed there were opportunities through using initiatives and relationships. Those with a higher degree of self-efficacy in their present role appeared to have more confidence to be proactive in regard to their career progression. Credibility and confidence also seemed to have an effect on the participants' response to their career opportunities.

Theme Five, *Changing Technology,* was examined through van Manen's existential theme of materiality and also encompassed corporeality in the way the participants experienced their roles. The roll-out of new systems across the universities was highlighted by nearly all participants, showing varying effects on the participants' corporeally as they talked about experiencing stress and frustration. At times, they enacted a caring role in the way they ensured their

academic colleagues were adequately trained and supported to use new technology and processes. In addition, the implementation of new systems emphasised temporality in the way the participants were required to adapt to the continual changes over time. While the section on Changing Technology is smaller in comparison to the other themes it was nonetheless significant in the way it shaped the participants identities.

In conclusion, the findings showed how the participants' sense of professional identity was dependent on validation of their roles by their academic colleagues and, in particular, their academic-manager. Validation of the role led to a stronger sense of credibility and, in turn, a higher sense of professional identity. Through the combination of the findings explored through van Manen's (1997) framework of existential themes, this chapter assisted in gaining an understanding of how the participants experienced being-in-the-world. Through merging the existential themes of spatiality, relationality, corporeality, temporality and materiality, the data revealed how "we know things through our bodies, through our relations with others, and through the interaction with the things of our world" (van Manen, 1997, p. xiv) and gave an understanding of how the participants experience their space within the university environment.

The next two chapters will discuss the findings in more depth through examining them in light of the previous literature to gain an understanding of how the participants experienced their everyday roles and their career aspirations.

6 CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSION ON ROLE AND CAREER

6.1 Introduction

The analysis chapter uncovered how the five existential elements of lived space (spatiality), lived relations (relationality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality) and lived things (materiality) were intertwined in how the participants experienced their world. For example, the participants' experiences were within the university context (lived space); with the relationships they had with their academic colleagues and peers (lived relations); as women managers (lived body); taking into account the experience and knowledge they had gained over time (lived time); and the effects of changing technology (materiality).

As van Manen (1997) explains, "each of the existentials of lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived relation to others can be differentiated but not separated" (p. X). However, it is important to keep in mind that while van Manen's existential themes of spatiality, corporeality, temporality, relationality and materiality were used as a framework to analyse participants' experiences within the university environment, the way the participants existentially experienced their lifeworlds outside the university environment also had an influence.

6.2 Structure of Chapter 6

Chapter 6 discusses and develops the findings from the interviews with the 20 participants expanding on how the participants experience their professional roles and their career aspirations. The chapter is divided into four sections reflecting on the two sub-questions. This discussion draws on the literature from

prior studies and articles by scholars on non-academic staff and career theory in Chapter 2. This chapter concludes with a summary of the main points.

The first section of Chapter 6 considers the findings in relation to the following question:

> How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their professional roles?

6.3 Understanding the 'everydayness' of being in the role

The findings from this thesis show how the participants' experience their role in their everyday world. Overall, the findings concurred with Gander's study (2017) in that most of the participants were committed to the university and enjoyed working in the tertiary environment. The participants' main aim was to support their academic unit, their academic colleagues, the student experience and the teams they managed while ensuring that the policies and procedures of the central university units were adhered to. This group was the link between the central university units and the academic departments. While it might appear that they had a "foot in both camps", this was not the feeling of the participants in this thesis. This indicates that they sat outside Whitchurch's (2008a) notion of the third space and were more firmly situated inside the academic department. All the participants proclaimed to have a good understanding of their academic colleagues' priorities. However, many of them showed frustration and disappointment at not receiving a reciprocal understanding in regard to their own role. This frustration and disappointment were revealed in the way the participants expressed that they felt their roles were not fully valued or respected. Furthermore, non-academic women managers played an

essential part in the student experience and achievement, which often went unnoticed.

The next section unpacks and discusses the findings from Chapter 5 relating to the sub-question, "How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their professional roles?"

6.3.1 *Lived space – environment and hierarchy*

Contextual issues were shown to have a significant influence on the way the participants experienced their roles. Previous scholarship has highlighted how the shift in the tertiary environment over the last three decades has significantly impacted on both academic (Billot, 2010; Deem, 1998; Henkel, 2005; McInnis, 1998) and non-academic staff (Bacon, 2009; McInnis, 1998; Szekeres, 2004, 2006, 2011; Whitchurch, 2006; 2008a; 2008b; 2009). Garcia and Hardy (2007) suggested that the managerial approach would have a positive influence on non-academic staff in regard to their professional identity. The administrator would become more powerful (Lewis, 2014; McInnis, 1998) and autonomous (Winefield et al., 2008). While findings from this thesis confirm that the responsibilities for non-academic staff have become more varied and diverse, there was little evidence of the participants gaining more power or autonomy.

The historical beginnings of the university that created two distinct groups impairs the progress for the non-academic group to form a professional identity. This thesis highlighted how having the two groups in one space impacted significantly on how the participants experienced their role. Several of the participants spoke about "them and us" when referring to their relationships and where they fitted into the organisational structure. Previous research has

commonly referred to this as the 'binary divide' (e.g., Dobson, 2000) and the findings from this thesis show this still exists to some extent in New Zealand universities. Several participants assumed and accepted that their academic colleagues were more important, perpetuating the historical notion of working in a service role (Whitchurch, 2008a). Without a change of perception, this could remain a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In spite of the hierarchical university structure, developing and maintaining good relationships with academic colleagues, peers and teams was a top priority for all the participants. Contrary to Lewis's (2014) suggestion that a "them and us" situation has extended to colleagues in central university units, the participants in this thesis felt maintaining good relationships with colleagues in central university units was a significant part of building trust and respect. Several participants highlighted how they had built up trust with their colleagues in finance and human resource units and the relationship had been fundamental in helping them learn their role.

Whether managerialism had a changing effect on relationships was uncertain. However, findings support Tight's (2014) argument that it is only a perception that universities previously operated in a collegial environment, at least in regard to the relationship between the academic and non-academic groups. Several of the participants highlighted how they felt the hierarchical attitude was more prominent amongst older-aged academics and there was more collegiality with the younger, newly appointed academics. Again, this would indicate that the perception of non-academic staff being less important stemmed from the historical origins of higher education where the culture was that administrative staff were in a service role in the academic community (Whitchurch, 2008a).

Relationships with peers also had a significant influence on how the participants experienced their roles. Several of the participants found their relationships changed when they moved into management positions. One participant spoke about how she experienced a difference in how her peers perceived her once her job role changed and she became no longer part of their group. Initially, their reaction took her by surprise until she realised it was because she was a now a manager. This can be challenging for new managers because, as Hogan (2014) points out, management is not often seen in a positive light. Another participant expressed how she was concerned about losing her network links now that she was in another social group.

6.3.2 Linked space

According to Whitchurch's framework (2008a), non-academic staff, bound by rules and regulations, would be categorised as being in a bounded group. Nevertheless, while to some degree the participants were bound because of their accountabilities, it is clear from the findings that the participants saw themselves in a position that required them to have unique understanding and experience relative to their academic unit. Rather than a bounded role, they were positioned in a linked space determined by their relationships with their academic colleagues and their relationship with central management.

This thesis showed that while the participants did have an overall commitment to the institution, they also had loyalty to their academic department and their academic colleagues. There was a significant difference in regard to loyalty compared to that reported in previous research (Bacon, 2009; McInnis, 1998). As the participants were in a stewardship role, they had to ensure they were complying with the university policies in order to execute their roles efficiently.

The extra demands around administration work in relation to compliance, reporting and accountability meant at times they felt conflict between supporting the organisational goals and the goals of their academic colleagues.

This finding concurs with Kuo (2009) who highlighted the strain between the two groups in relation to the different priorities. In part, these findings are consistent with Bacon (2009) and McInnis (1998) who point out that academics are dedicated to their research interests and their perception of student needs, while the non-academic group is committed to the institution. This situation was a dilemma for the participants, particularly when their academic colleagues felt the decisions made were not in the best interest of academic traditions. These findings also align with previous studies, such as Kuo (2009), who found academic staff were frustrated by the authority and structure of the administrative process when administration staff made decisions that did not seem to be supportive of academic outputs. This finding acknowledges Sutton's (2017) argument that the managerial approach conflicts with academia's moral purpose and values. Taking this into consideration, a structural change where non-academic and academic managers in academic departments are equally positioned could be a way of working more collaboratively in decision-making, using both an academic perspective and a business perspective.

This model of management is in line with Marginson (2004), who suggests that for the future health of universities, the two groups need to work collaboratively together. However, while scholars propose collaboration as a positive way forward (Bradney, 2016; Deem, 1998; Marginson, 2004), Macfarlane's (2017) study also highlighted the complexity of the concept of collaboration and the challenges that it entails.

6.3.3 *Importance of language and communication*

Good communication and an understanding of their academic colleagues' priorities was highlighted in the findings as being necessary for the participants to perform their roles effectively. For the two groups to communicate effectively, the participants needed to have an understanding of what one participant referred to as "academic speak". In an academic unit, where academic staff are involved in research, this was particularly important. The findings highlighted how through having an understanding of this language, the participants felt a stronger sense of unity or belonging to their academic unit. Identity is socially constructed through language and communication, as this is how one is perceived by others (McInnes & Corlett, 2012; Meister et al., 2016). Kyriakidou (2012) suggests that workplace rhetoric also helps with building professional identity in the sense that it helps people explain the importance of their work. Similarly, another participant spoke about how it was important to have an understanding from an academic's perspective so she could be the link between her academic colleagues and her colleagues in central university units. The importance of clear communication and language also extended to how the participants understood and clarified policy and procedure. It was an essential part of their everyday experience of working in an academic unit and being able to support their academic colleagues with learning new administrative initiatives and understanding policies, in particular those that related to their students.

The term 'non-academic' was another important issue raised in the literature and in the findings. Heidegger (2013) determines that when something is 'not', it is being 'passed over' or of little consequence. Similar to other scholars (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Lewis, 2014; Szekeres, 2004, 2011; Norzaini, 2010;

Whitchurch, 2006, 2009), the findings highlighted that the term 'non-academic' staff is negative, problematic and lacking respect (McInnis, 1998). One of the participants spoke about how she felt the word "*non*" showed a total disregard of the identity of the group she belonged to and likened it to being classified as a "*non-male*". Her sentiments highlight how women grapple with their identity, concurring with Eagly and Carli's (2007) analogy of a 'labyrinth' and the many barriers and obstacles women face in the workplace that they need to overcome.

While the New Zealand government still categorises this group of staff as 'non-academic' (Ministry of Education, n.d.-b), many of the New Zealand universities have changed the term to 'professional' staff. This is in line with Australian universities who changed the name to professional, with the purpose of lifting the profile and increasing the professional recognition of this group (ATEM, n.d.). However, the findings from this thesis would in part concur with Sebalj et al. (2012), who questioned whether a change of name would achieve this. Some of the participants felt the change of title to 'professional' staff gave more clarity to the role and was an acknowledgement that this group was valued. This was, however, not necessarily the perception of all the participants. Several of the participants felt it was stating the obvious as they were already professional; others were nonchalant. One participant did not feel the change of name had addressed the issue around valuing non-academic staff. The findings also highlighted that a name change had not achieved the goal of lifting the profile of this group, one of the reasons stated for changing the name in Australia. As Simpson and Fitzgerald (2014) argue, the term non-academic "dilutes and diffuses" (p.1936) the identity of the group. However, while one participant

acknowledged that names and titles are important in a hierarchical organisation, overall the inconsistency in the participants' responses highlighted that the change to professional staff had not addressed the issue of their professional identity as a valued group.

6.3.4 Invisible, valued or undervalued

The findings in this thesis showed similarities to previous studies undertaken in Australia and the United Kingdom on the invisibility of non-academic staff (Allen-Collinson, 2006, 2007; Eveline & Booth, 2004; Szekeres, 2004, 2006, 2011). Irrespective of how the neoliberal reforms and managerial approach has changed the way the university operates, this thesis reinforces Eveline and Booth's (2004) sentiments that little has been done to rectify the invisibility of female non-academic staff. On the contrary, the findings highlighted more pressure on the participants' roles and a lack of acknowledgement of the increased complexity. A Lack of recognition also impacted the identity and careers of the participants.

Most of the participants were confident in their knowledge and had the experience to take responsibility and make decisions outside the scope of their role. Pitman (2001) also highlights that the improved quality from a managerial approach should incorporate not only teaching and learning but other areas as well. However, the findings showed the participants felt at times that their opinion was not valued and they were not being listened to.

Some of the participants showed frustration and disappointment that they were excluded from having an input into decision-making within their academic unit. For others, exclusion undermined their confidence. Similar to Ricketts and

Pringle's (2014) study, the participants in this thesis felt that it was because of their status as non-academic staff members that their opinions were disregarded. According to Kanter (1979), managers can feel alienated if they are not in the heart of what is happening and are not involved in decision-making. On occasions when the participants felt their opinion was heard, it had a positive influence on how they perceived their worth.

On the other hand, not all the participants believed they needed to or should have an input. For example, one participant felt it was important to be clear about what her role was responsible for and what was academic work. Yet, as scholars (such as Bacon, 2009; Middlehurst, 2010; and Whitchurch, 2006a) point out, there is a possibility of roles becoming more difficult to define due to the blurring of boundaries between academia and administration.

Having a voice gives a person the means to put themselves forward, using their networks to seize opportunities. According to Barnett and Di Napoli (2008), voice and identity are interconnected "as voice is the projection of identity into the world" (p. 198) or a way of positioning oneself. There were occasions when the participants used voice to proactively put themselves forward for career opportunities; however, for others speaking up appeared to be difficult to do. This could be because many of the participants' experiences showed how they felt their opinion was not worthy, such as one participant who expressed disappointment at not being heard in regard to her contribution to the strategic plan. In order to show how the voice of non-academic staff is valued, this thesis supports Gray's (2015) and Lewis's (2014) argument that universities need a shared direction with strategic goals that include shaping both the academic and non-academic workforce.

As previous scholars such as Henkel (2005) have suggested, it might also be time to review academics' assumptions about roles, relationships and boundaries. This could be challenging, as the scope of the participants' roles varied depending on their manager and the level of responsibility they were granted. There is, however, the potential for non-academic managers to be more involved in decision-making in collaboration with academic-managers. The findings showed how building and maintaining relationships, caring and supporting, and knowledge and experience were integral to how the participants enacted their roles. In a practical sense, the scope of the non-academic managers' roles could therefore be extended to optimise the positive attributes of care in the way the participants managed using a collaborative approach.

This thesis also showed how the some of the participants felt their work was undervalued in comparison with their academic colleagues. This finding has similarities to the research assistants in Allen-Collinson's (2009) study, who felt they were peripheral to the academic core business. One participant felt her school manager role was "*dumbed down*" and she showed frustration at the lack of acknowledgement and respect for her role, reiterating Eveline and Booth's (2004) notion of being in the 'ivory basement'. Another participant felt her role was seen as a woman's job, which reflects the study of Szekeres (2004), who suggests that administration is perceived as being menial work and therefore women's work. These findings also echo Wieneke (1995), who states that non-academic women "are considered as part of the furniture" (p. 16). One participant also showed concern about the message this sent to students, that is, perpetuating the idea that the role of a non-academic is less valued and, according to Castleman and Allen (1995), that it is a feminised workforce.

The participants were all aware of how their roles related to the students. They were passionate about the support they gave them but expressed disappointment at the lack of acknowledgement and understanding of the contribution their teams made towards the student experience. They felt their work was perceived as not important or a priority because it was not considered core business and therefore often overlooked. This finding concurs with Graham and Regan (2016), who highlight a lack of acknowledgement of the part non-academic staff play in the student journey, particularly in regard to their technological skills. This thesis also highlights how the changing administration and technological systems in the universities resulted in pressure being placed on the participants.

On the other hand, participants who held senior-level roles, such as faculty manager or registrar, appeared to be more respected by academic colleagues and therefore had more influence within their roles. One participant attributed the hierarchical structure to the reason she was respected because it gave her position authority. In a sense, this affirms Simpson and Fitzgerald's (2014) question about whether labels and titles can signify working at a higher level and therefore improve the way women are viewed. For example, when the title carries some authority, it overrides the perception that it is women's work and therefore demands respect, whereas women working in lower administration roles are still perceived as doing 'women's work'.

6.3.5 Doing Gender

Overall, the findings concurred with Holmes and Schnurr (2006) in the way that gender was recognisable through the interactions the participants reported. Feminine traits in relation to leadership was evident in the findings in the way

211

the participants assumed to align with aspects of their gender. Furthermore, the feminine attributes displayed by the participants were considered as having a positive effect on their leadership and professional identity. This thesis showed how the women enacted their roles with ingrained social constructs associated with being female, such as being caring, protective and adapting their behaviour, which West and Zimmerman (1987) refer to as *doing gender*. These findings suggest some similarities with Priola (2004), who found that women managers have a more feminine management style with a focus on supporting and nurturing. The findings also resonate with Eagly and Carli's (2007) description of female attributes in the way the participants were proud of their friendliness and helpfulness.

While caring is considered to be a feminine trait associated with soft management (Newman, 1995, cited in Deem, 1998), using stereotypical terms can have the perception of being misidentified and women in leadership can feel judged (Meister, Sinclair, & Jehn, 2016). However, this feeling was not evident in this thesis. In contrast, the findings revealed a feeling of pride in the way the participants cared about their academic colleagues. Several participants used analogies associated with being a mother figure. They were proud of the way they cared about and supported their colleagues with no evidence of feeling judged or scrutinised for using a "feminine" approach. On the contrary, their caring approach has similarities to Mavin and Grandy's (2012) concept of 'doing gender well and differently'. Even though the literature highlights how universities are historically seen as gendered where male attributes are valued (e.g. Wallace & Marchant, 2011), there was no evidence in the findings of the participants adopting masculine characteristics to enhance

their professional identity. The reason for this could be as March el al (2016) found, masculine agentic traits ascribed to working men and women have changed in the last 30 years. Women are still considered to be communal, attributed to societal changes and more women in the work force. Also as Ely (1995) suggests being female can be associated with being positive depending on the setting. These findings are encouraging in light of the perception that non-academic women work in an environment with a culture where masculine characteristics and behaviours of management are shown to be valued (Wallace & Marchant, 2011). Other scholars have highlighted how a caring management and leadership approach can also be a way forward for organisations. Kawamura (2013) suggests that "care is required for organisations to survive" (p109). While the ethic of care had its origins in feminist theory based on a moral framework (Gilligan, 1982, cited in Lawrence & Maitlis, 2012), Kawamura (2013) argues that "care is a driver of economic success and human well-being" (p.102). The concept of care has been used mainly in health, social studies and feminist literature; however, scholars such as Dutton et al (2006) have demonstrated that introducing organisational strategies that include care or compassion in the workplace has positive effects on staff and their organisations. Lawrence and Maitlis (2012) also emphasise there is more to the practice of an ethic of care than being sympathetic. An ethic of care "can be directive and transactional, as well as emancipating and inspirational" (Tomkins and Eathough, 2015, p. 127). Kawamura (2013) also argues that "caring decision-making is grounded in respect of self and of the other" (p.109). Furthermore, Heidegger describes the concept of care (*sorge*) as being "bound together by unity of meaning" (1976, p. 73). Therefore, it would follow that emphasising Mavin and Grandy's (2012) notion of 'doing gender well

213

and differently' and developing a conceptual model based on collaboration as an ethic of care could be a positive way forward and in line with the findings.

Another example of 'doing gender well and differently' (Mavin & Grandy, 2012) was highlighted in the way the participants adjusted their behaviour in order to get their academic colleagues on board with new initiatives and changes. In particular, those participants in a school manager role highlighted how they had to adapt their behaviour when a new head of school with a different management style came into the role.   Head of school role was usually held for a three-year term. Therefore, adapting to different academic managers also impacted on the participants' identity. The findings showed that when the Head of School was more self-sufficient, the participants felt that their skills and experience were not as valued. A feeling of not being valued or included impacted negatively on the participants' credibility and how they perceived their identity. On the other hand, when the Head of School was more inclusive, the participants felt more valued and more credible, which had a positive effect on their identity.

Adapting behaviour could also have either a positive or negative effect on how they felt about their role in terms of role validation and their own credibility. The findings showed similarities to Martin (2014) in the way several participants used humour to negotiate situation. The participants adapted their approach by using humour as a way of encouraging their 'academics on board' or as a way of diffusing difficult situations. Martin (2014) suggested women managers can practice humour as a strategy to "negotiate gendered paradoxes" (p.166).

On the other hand, several other participants emphasised the more negative aspects of being both a woman and a non-academic, affirming the notion of being in a feminine type role. One participant perceived that there was still evidence of an "old boys' network", but she was not prepared to "play the game" in order to succeed. In the same way, she spoke about the "old women's network" and also did not want to be part of it. Both these comments highlighted how being authentic and true to herself is an important part of this participant's identity. According to the kaleidoscope career theory, authenticity is an important aspect of how a women's career develops (Mainiero & Sullivan). Authenticity is also integral to developing one's identity (Ibarra, 199). The old boys' network is part of the masculine ethic of a gendered organisation where masculine characteristics and behaviours are valued (Wallace & Marchant, 2011). As Mavin (2006) highlights the historical organisational gender systems reinforce men's place in management. The structure of an organisation is, therefore, more suited to men who put work first and separate it from family (O'Neil et al., 2008). However, as Mavin (2006) argued, even though there is an expectation that there is a sisterhood amongst women in organisations, this may not be a reality. The notion of natural allies can be a challenge for women who move up to senior management positions at times as they struggle to maintain the behaviours that are expected of them. As O'Neil et al. (2018) suggested, women need to understand their expectations of each other in order for organisations to create structures to support them.

Another participant told a story about being asked to take the covering off food by her academic male colleague. She felt her academic male colleague perceived her as being subservient and the incident left her feeling disappointed

and undervalued. Whether she was asked because she was a woman or because she was a non-academic was not clear; either way, it reaffirmed Fitzgerald's (2014) argument that even when women are in management roles, they are still marginalised.

6.3.6 Summary

In sum, the findings from this thesis highlighted how the environment the participants *'lived in'* was significant in how they experienced their roles. Unlike their non-academic peers in central university units, the participants in this thesis were managed by an academic and were situated within an academic unit. Consequently, the space they occupied was a unique space, linking their academic colleagues and non-academic peers in central units. This thesis highlighted the struggle for these participants relating to their position as a non-academic in an academic environment and how their credibility was dependent on the validation of their role from their academic-managers.

This thesis also showed how the participants proudly enacted their roles with a management style known as *doing gender*, using feminine attributes, such as caring, protection and adapting behaviour. The participants understood the importance of developing and maintaining relationships with their academic colleagues as well as their colleagues in central university units. They spent time maintaining and developing these relationships and, overall, felt there was collegiality between them and their academic colleagues. In line with previous studies on non-academic staff, this thesis showed most of the participants felt they were not always valued and several shared how at times they felt undervalued and disrespected. That said, it was noted that those working in a

senior level position appeared to have a more positive view of their worth and seemed to be better acknowledged.

Finally, there was evidence in this thesis of the impact of these changes on non-academic staff, in particular the increased compliance, monitoring and reporting demands. The findings from this thesis did not resonate with previous literature, such as the studies of Lewis (2014), Winefield et al. (2008) or McInnis (1998) in which the authors suggest staff in non-academic roles are able to gain more autonomy or power in a managerial structure than they had previously. The reason for this was possibly because their studies were undertaken with a homogenous group of staff who were working in multiple units across the university, whereas this thesis focused on staff positioned in a specific academic unit. Neither has there been any evidence of blurring of boundaries referred to in previous literature. More likely, as the findings showed in the context of this thesis, there is still evidence of the notion of the role of the non-academic being a service role. Overall, the findings highlighted how the participants experienced their roles was integral to how they perceived their professional identity.

6.4   Understanding aspirations, opportunities and future pathways

The literature review in Chapter 2 showed how women's careers progress differently from men's; therefore, career theories need to be more flexible in order to follow their life stages (O'Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2008; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003). The findings from this thesis confirm how women's life stages influence their career choices. Non-academic women have many obstacles to overcome which at times limits their progress.

This next section discusses the findings relating to the following sub-question:

> What do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments say about their future career aspirations?

This section is divided into three sub-sections. It first discusses the lack of career pathways for non-academic women managers, then focuses on the significance of qualifications. The section concludes with a discussion of the findings in relation to life stages and implications in relation to women's career theories.

6.4.1 Nowhere to go

A lack of career opportunities for non-academic staff was evident from the findings. These findings are consistent with previous studies such as those of Graham (2009) and Ricketts and Pringle (2014), who found there were few prospects for advancement and no career management for non-academic staff. Overall, it appeared that being a woman in a non-academic role also had a negative effect on the participants' career progression. Baker's (2012) suggestion that managerialism has provided pathways for non-academic staff was not the experience of the participants in this thesis. However, as previously mentioned, the findings highlighted how the participants were proud of their experience and skills and believed they had good institutional knowledge which is integral to working in an academic environment, yet there was no clear career pathway to follow. The findings reinforced Whitchurch et al.'s (2009) argument that a career for non-academic managers is an 'invisible career'.

There was some evidence in this thesis to support Castleman and Allen's (1995) 'blindspot' around non-academic women's careers and the perception of

the gendered nature of the non-academic role. Being a "non-male and non-academic" (Wallace & Marchant, 2011, p. 578) has probably made this group of female managers doubly invisible in regard to career progression. One participant referred to hitting the glass ceiling, which indicated her perception that women experience barriers that men in similar roles do not face. Similarly, another participant expressed how men coming into these roles would not stay because there was no progression. These participants highlighted the lack of career pathways, citing inequality because of gender and the level and position of their role, reinforcing Bell (2010, cited in Blackmore, 2014) that, even though there are equal opportunity initiatives throughout many universities, the career prospects for women are still limited.

When the participants were asked about their future career aspirations their lack of voice was evident. This response was in contrast to the enthusiasm they showed when discussing their roles. Many of the participants were slow to answer or had very little to say in regard to their opportunities or future. Silence or absence of voice highlighted the historical gendered aspects of the non-academic career and the lack of identity associated with it.

However, Davis and Graham (2018) suggest non-academic managers need to take more responsibility for their own progression as changing times have opened up more opportunity. There was some evidence in the findings that participants who had progressed to higher roles had done so through proactively seeking out new opportunities. Several participants cited how they had needed to use their own initiative and, in some cases, persist in building relationships and networks in order to progress. For example, one participant's approach was to tell everyone she was actively looking for a new position.

Another participant proactively sought out vacant positions until she achieved her ambition of being an administration manager in an academic department. These findings show similarities to Schein and van Manen's (2016) notion of internal careers, where it is a person's internal influences that create the differences in how their career may develop.

Other participants expressed how they had progressed by chance and not through actively planning a pathway, highlighting again that there is no obvious career pathway for non-academic managers to follow. Other participants had supportive managers who had given them opportunities. These findings reaffirm Lewis's (2014) proposed 'accidental administrator' and Whitchurch et al.'s (2009) suggestion that the non-academic career is "serendipitous rather than the result of active planning" (p. 59). However, Hurst et al. (2016) argue that as women's career trajectories do not follow the traditional linear pathway, organisations do not understand the value of their experience and the benefit to the organisation.

The findings were consistent with Gander's (2018a) research that found there is a lack of opportunities for career progression opportunities within the academic units. Similar to Szekeres (2004) who suggests that non-academic staff have to resign from their roles to move to a higher position, the participants believed there were opportunities within the central university units, yet, this did not seem to be their preference. The participants' interest lay in working in an academic unit, where their roles entailed directly interacting and supporting academic colleagues and students. This finding aligns with Schein and van Manen (2016) concept of 'career anchors' in which a person's 'internal career' relates to self-image around self-perceived competencies and personal values.

Given this perspective, in the case of a non-academic staff member who enjoys working within an academic unit, their career anchor would be derived from identifying with that specific work environment. In this sense their career anchor is within the academic unit and part of their professional identity. Furthermore, if non-academic staff are undervalued, they have less stability in their role, which then impacts on their self-concept or career anchor. In light of this, the impetus for proactively developing a career outside the university environment or outside the academic unit might not be desirable.

There was also a concern from several of the participants that the lack of career pathways resulted in ambitious younger people moving on. Several participants were frustrated that this meant there was lost opportunity for succession planning and retaining the knowledge within the academic unit, confirming Berman and Pitman's (2010) argument that when non-academics move on through lack of opportunity, their expertise is lost. These findings also reiterate previous scholarship, such as Lauwerys (2002) and Szekeres (2011), on the concern of retaining people in non-academic roles with no career prospects.

A lack of career development policy for non-academic staff was also highlighted by several of the participants. One participant spoke about how she had to fight for what she had got as there was no policy to support development of non-academic staff. To some degree, the findings were in line with scholars, such as Ricketts and Pringle (2014) and Gander (2018a) who argue that there is inequality in relation to career progression for those working in non-academic roles in comparison to their academic counterparts. Gander (2018a) also suggests, however, that there could be a difference between those working in more traditional areas such as faculty or academic departments.

Several of the participants showed concern and frustration at a lack of training for their roles, in particular the school manager roles affirming Gornitzka and Larsen's (2004) finding that people find it unsettling when the range of their tasks diversifies. The roles had become more complex but rather than being engaged in any formal training programme, they had to acquire the necessary skills organically. Several participants expressed how the role required financial experience and skills. One participant also compared her role to running a small business and felt frustrated at the lack of support around the increased complexities of her role.

Whitchurch's study (2008a) found changes have occurred as roles have diversified and developed; pathways are no longer linear and have instead become more fluid. In this thesis, there was very little evidence of fluidity as in Whitchurch's (2008a) boundaryless roles but there was an expectation that the participants had the necessary skills to teach their academic colleagues or guide them when new policies were introduced. One participant spoke about ensuring she was performing her role efficiently by structuring it in a way that supported her academic colleagues.

Implementing technological changes and new systems were also challenges for many participants to overcome, particularly as it had become their responsibility to teach technological innovation to their academic colleagues. Several participants emphasised concern about how this impacted on their team, particularly if it was an academic process unfamiliar to them. While there was a perception that the participants were seen as experts in their roles; however, consistent with Graham and Regan (2016), this was not formally recognised.

As previously mentioned, the findings from this thesis highlighted how the participants were proud of their knowledge around financial issues, policies and management skills, yet those responsible for management of the budgets and resources in academic units were academic-managers (Deem, 1998). Academic-managers are usually chosen for their academic expertise not necessarily their business acumen. Scholars, such as Hogan (2014) and Deem and Johnson (2000), suggest the skill set required and the day to day experiences of senior academic-managers are more aligned to senior administrators in non-academic roles. In light of this, universities could consider changing to a more collaborative model with both the academic-manager and non-academic manager working together.

It would follow, therefore, that finances, policy and procedure are more in line with non-academic managers' skills. While this change might be conceived as taking more control away from the academic community, the advantage would be that it could help alleviate the pressures academic-managers are under and leave them more time for academic leadership, developing programme curriculum and dealing with academic issues. Non-academic managers could work in partnership with the heads of schools, heads of departments and deans and contribute equally to the strategic goals of the academic unit and the university to ensure a positive student experience. In functional terms, this would require an extension of the scope of the non-academic managers' role but, in doing so, would give validation to the role and a commitment to career progression to a more senior level.

6.4.2 *Qualifications*

All the participants spoke about the knowledge and skills required in order to perform their roles efficiently; in particular, they emphasised a need for a good understanding of university policies and procedures. While there was some evidence in this thesis that suggested formal qualifications earned more respect from their academic colleagues, this was not necessarily the experience of all the participants. However, the findings are consistent with Graham and Regan (2016) who suggest that having qualifications has been shown to have an influence on the confidence of non-academic staff. One participant felt she had gained confidence which had led to her feeling more credible after obtaining her Master's qualification, and another participant had experienced an increase in respect, attributing some of this to her PhD qualification.

Several of the participants who did have qualifications expressed sentiments similar to Berman and Pitman (2010) who suggest a qualification such as a PhD is beneficial in increasing generic skills such as critical thinking, communication and emotional intelligence. One participant expressed how her PhD had given her insight into an academic's perspective, and she felt that it, therefore helped to break down the barriers. As Lewis (2014) suggests, this could be attributed to having a better understanding of their academic colleagues and therefore, being seen as an equal. Furthermore, as qualifications such as a PhD are considered an important part of the academics' identity, by gaining the same qualification would increase the participant's sense of her own professional identity. Research has found that both positive and negative intergroup comparisons affect a member's self-esteem (Wagner, Lam-pen, & Syllwasschy, 1986, cited in Ashforth & Mael, 1989). It could, therefore, follow that those

participants in this thesis with higher-level roles and higher qualifications compared themselves more positively with their academic colleagues and had higher self-esteem. On the other hand, those participants with lower roles and a lack of qualifications would have lower self-esteem, which in turn could result in a lower sense of professional identity.

Overall, the findings reinforced the importance of supporting non-academic managers' professional development. Yet even though participants with higher qualifications showed confidence and self-efficacy, there was no conclusive evidence to show their qualification was valued or supported by organisational policies. Similar to Ricketts and Pringle (2014), the findings highlighted a lack of support within the organisational policies in relation to time and money allocation. One participant, who was studying for her PhD, acknowledged that although she was supported by her manager and colleagues, there was not equal support by the organisation in regard to time allocation for study compared to her academic colleagues. This resonates with Berman and Pitman (2010) who refer to a dearth of support in relation to funding and opportunities for non-academic staff with PhD qualifications. The findings from this thesis would therefore support Ricketts and Pringle's (2014) argument that it is important that university policies address role-discrimination. More acknowledgement from universities of the benefits that non-academic staff contribute through gaining qualifications would also increase the profile of this group and lead to a higher sense of professional identity. Moreover, as Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) proposed, supporting the development of female staff and a commitment to work/life balance would benefit organisations in recruiting, retaining and shaping talent.

Furthermore, this participant expressed that there was a lack of understanding of her role and therefore a lack of understanding of her development needs. A formal qualification specifically for non-academic university managers working in academic units could be developed in the future. This would be a way of ensuring the knowledge, skills and unique understanding of the academic unit are captured and also ensure those who have a passion for working in this part of the university have a defined career pathway.

6.4.3 Life stages

This thesis confirmed the literature on the influence of family responsibilities on women's career development (e.g., O'Neil et al., 2008) and the desire to succeed both professionally and personally (Kirchmeyer, 2002). Staying in a familiar role, instead of progressing, is sometimes an option women choose in order to retain balance between family and working life. One participant highlighted how there was no time to even have a meal with the family while trying to work full-time, concurring with Early and Carli (2007) who argue women are already stretching themselves between both their home and work responsibilities.

The participants reiterated how there were different reasons why women chose to stay in their roles. Similar to O'Neil et al. (2011) who found that the women in their study had limited aspirations, some non-academic women did not want to progress their careers. One participant spoke about team members who loved their job and were comfortable and secure with no intention to change roles. Some had young children or teenagers and others had longevity in their roles but had no desire to increase their responsibilities or change roles. Overall, the women were at varying life stages with different priorities. Another participant

highlighted how some of the older women in her team were happy to come in every day and fulfil their roles but had no desire to move upwards. However, these comments could be based on the gendered assumption that women with families or older women do not want to progress their careers rather than the reality. As Still and Timms (1998) suggested some managers held stereotypical attitudes in regard to the reason older women in their 50's, do not progress in their career even when their family responsibilities had lessened and they more time to focus on their careers. Consequently, stereotypical attitudes and assumptions about women's lack of career aspirations could be considered as informal barriers to the participants' career progression.

Overall, these findings resonate with the literature that suggests women have a more holistic view of a career that encompasses all aspects of their lives where social roles, such as motherhood, require them to have more flexibility (O'Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2008; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003).

6.4.4 Implications for women's career models

As discussed in section 3.6.5 the gendered nature of the participants' roles was also significant in the way they experienced their roles. In line with Pringle and McCulloch Dixon's (2003) heuristic career model the findings from this thesis highlight how women take breaks and make choices about when and where to move on, depending on the stages in their lives. The heuristic career framework has four components; explore, focus, rebalance and revive. This model is circular rather than linear, which means women can reassess and move in and out of stages at varying times in their life, depending on both internal and external influences.

Several of the participants spoke about how they had worked in different roles moving from central university to the faculty. According to the heuristic model, when people are in the exploring stage, they try out different possibilities and then reassess before moving on to focus on the next life-stage.

Many participants spoke about how they had structured their careers around their other responsibilities. Several participants had young children and therefore had chosen not to pursue their careers. Relating these examples to the heuristic model, the participants were in the focus stage, focusing on their family responsibilities rather than focusing on their career. The focus stage was also evident for several of the participants who had decided to undertake further study to advance their career. During this stage, their focus was on their development, which would hopefully benefit their future career. Others showed how they were focusing on their careers and actively pursuing new opportunities or undertaking new responsibilities in order to progress.

Many of the participants were more reflective when discussing their future. Several were unsure of where to go from here, while others were reassessing their options or considering alternatives more in line with their values. These examples are in line with the rebalance stage of the heuristic model and did not necessarily coincide with age. Other participants were in the revive stage and had a clear idea of their future direction. They had enough experience in their present roles, their life was in balance, and they were ready to seek new opportunities.

Pringle and McCulloch Dixon (2003) explained that everyone was not necessarily equal in regard to social power, and therefore this impacted on

people's career trajectory. For example, the findings in this thesis found that even though the participants may be at the same stage within the heuristic model, they were not necessarily at the same stage of their career or life cycle. External aspects, such relational aspects and their environment had a significant influence on the participants' career decisions.

The findings also show similarities to the kaleidoscope career theory (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) around how authenticity is important to women throughout their career. Being authentic is demonstrated in the way the participants were true to themselves in the way they managed by 'doing gender'. The findings highlighted how some of the participants' careers had evolved unintentionally. They had grown into their roles through longevity and progressed to higher level roles, more in line with the traditional career.

6.4.5 *Implications for traditional and protean career theories*

From a theoretical perspective, there was evidence from the findings related to aspects of both the traditional and protean careers. Firstly, the literature highlighted how contextual changes have a profound effect on the academic staff's perception of the value and meaning of their work. The findings concurred with other scholars in the way the changes have resulted in more pressure for non-academic staff in terms of accountability and compliance.

On one hand the findings showed many aspects of the traditional career model still fits within New Zealand universities. On the other hand, similar to Clark (2013) the findings also showed some resemblance to the protean model in the way participants had taken responsibility for developing their careers by proactively seeking new opportunities rather than relying on the organisation.

229

However, the reason may be because of the absence of a traditional career pathway for non-academic staff.

In line with the traditional career several participants spoke about starting as an administrator in a faculty and progressing to a school manager, moving upward in a linear direction. The findings showed how the participants' values were congruent with the organisation in the way they were passionate about education and believed in making a difference through the part they played in the student journey. However, unlike their academic colleagues, the findings showed there was no traditional career path for non-academic staff.

Job security was also still significant to all the participants, and many of them had grown into their roles through longevity, commitment and loyalty. This finding does not align with Hall (1998) who argued that careers had moved away from the concept of loyalty and commitment within the traditional career towards a protean model based on "continuous learning and identity change" (p.8). However, both tacit knowledge and experience, particularly in regard to adapting to the changing technology and learning and developing new procedures are highlighted as significant aspects of how the participants experienced their roles. This finding demonstrated aspects of both the 'know-how' of the traditional career and the 'learn-how' of the protean career.

The meta-competencies proposed by Hall (2004) in the protean career, relating to being adaptable and developing was also consistent with the findings. Even though adaptability was one of the main attributes displayed by the participants in the way they experienced continual change, the findings strongly highlighted

how the context they 'lived in' was not conducive to developing and extending their identity.

As Hall (1996) proposes, it is essential to develop and maintain good relationships in the process of building careers. The findings showed how good relationships were important in the way the participants experience their roles, and several participants also highlighted how their networks had been significant in their career progression.   Nevertheless, the participants acknowledged that taking responsibility for their careers also took courage, confirming Hall's (1996) argument that a person needs to have a degree of self-efficacy in order to take responsibility for her/his career. It would, therefore, follow that without credibility and role validation in their present role, it was difficult for these participants to have the confidence to be proactive to drive their careers. As Mayrhofer et al. (2007) argues, a person's career is significantly influenced by her/his social identity as people compare themselves to others in their social context. Therefore, when a person feels her/his group is less valued it plays a major role in how her/his career develops.

A lack of confidence could account for why many chose to stay in their roles. Overall, the findings concur with Clark (2013) who suggests a hybrid model incorporating aspects of both the traditional and protean models. However, the gendered nature of the role also had similarities to women's career models such as Pringle and McCulloch Dixon's (2003) heuristic career. The findings showed how the circular framework meant the participants could move in a circular motion throughout their career. Between each stage, they reassessed and could either stay, move back or forward. This model was influenced by internal and external aspects and was not dependent on age or career length.

6.4.6 Summary

This thesis is also consistent with previous studies on women in management in the way women *do gender* when enacting their roles. The findings highlighted how the participants used feminine attributes, such as nurturing and supporting, which Priola (2004) suggests creates a more feminine management culture. Several of the participants expressed how their personal values guided them in their day-to-day interactions. Through gaining respect, the participants showed how they were able to get buy-in from their academic colleagues to implement changes or meet deadlines. Other participants used notions of care and support in regard to managing their roles. It would follow that the attributes that determine *doing gender* are what Schein and van Manen (2016) refer to as a person's 'career anchors'. In line with Schein and van Manen's (2016) concept of 'career anchors', internal influences such as the participants' personal values, motives and beliefs, influenced their decisions in balancing their home responsibilities and their careers. Therefore, considering the gendered nature of pastoral care, student retention could also be included in the responsibility of non-academic managers, who with their teams could further contribute positively to the student journey.

This thesis highlighted the lack of career opportunities in New Zealand universities for non-academic managers working in academic departments. The participants' opportunities were sometimes limited due to the lack of support from their academic-managers. Those who had support from their managers felt this had contributed towards their self-efficacy and confidence to progress. There was very little evidence to support Whitchurch's (2008a) notion of fluidity or boundaryless careers, or a third space for the participants in this thesis. The

reason for the difference could be firstly attributed to the positioning of the participants' roles within an academic department and secondly to the fact that the way they carried out their role was dependent on the level of responsibility and scope their academic-managers gave them. This thesis has some similarities with the protean career (Hall, 1996) and the traditional career, suggesting a hybrid model incorporating aspects of both. Furthermore, the gendered nature of the participants' roles and the cyclic direction of women's careers favoured the heuristic career model developed by Pringle and McCulloch Dixon (2003).

The findings from this thesis highlighted how tacit knowledge and experience specific to working in the university was an integral part of participants' roles but not acknowledged or valued. Furthermore, there was a lack of acknowledgement of formal qualifications. This is concerning if, as the literature highlights, universities want to retain women managers. These findings concur with Whitchurch et al. (2009) who argue that for non-academic roles to be attractive, there needs to be awareness raised and opportunities for development of this group of university staff. Lewis (2014) proposes promoting the identity of a professional administrator and this warrants further development. The findings from this thesis suggest there is an opportunity to develop non-academic managers with business-like skills in conjunction with extending the scope of their roles. It would follow that formal qualifications would be beneficial for the participants and a potential opportunity for development. With the appropriate experience and qualifications, there is the potential for them to take responsibility for staff management and finances within the academic units. Overall, the findings highlighted how the lack of a clear career

pathway had a strong influence on how the experienced their participants professional identity.

The next chapter will discuss the findings in relation to the main research question - How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their identity in university environments?

7 CHAPTER 7 - DISCUSSION ON UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

> In such a world one's identity moorings are planted in shifting sand. It is because identity is problematic – and yet so crucial to how and what one values, thinks, feels and does in all social domains, including organizations – that the dynamics of identity need to be better understood. (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000, p.14)

Chapter 7 discusses and develops the findings from the interviews with the 20 participants expanding on how the participants understand their professional identity.

The overall aim of this thesis was to gain an understanding of how non-academic managers in academic units in New Zealand universities understood their professional identity. The literature review highlighted how little has been done to address the issues of their perceived invisibility and identity. Previous studies have looked at non-academic staff as a homogenous group; however, scholars suggest there is a distinction between those working in an academic unit and other settings.

This chapter will draw on theoretical ideas from identity scholarship to explore the following question:

> How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their identity in university environments?

This section begins with a discussion on the findings from this thesis with reference to identity theories from sociology and psychology outlined in Chapter 3. These include self-identity, social identity, role identity and professional

identity. The discussion also refers to previous studies on identity in organisations and studies on non-academic staff.

7.1 Understanding identity through lived experience

The effect of managerial changes, the complexities around the historical background of the university, together with the hierarchical academic structure, have had a significant impact on the identity of non-academic managers.

7.1.1 Contextual influences

The literature highlighted how the changes in the tertiary sector have had have a profound effect on academic staff's perception of the value and meaning of their work. While the findings showed that contextual changes have significantly influenced the non-academic managers' roles in the sense there is more pressure for non-academic staff in terms of accountability and compliance, there was little evidence in a change of the value and meaning of their work.

Ashforth and Mael (1989) suggest belonging to an organisation can answer the question, "Who am I?", for the participants in this thesis this question was much more complex. This thesis concurs with Clark et al. (2013) that contextual aspects complicate how identity is formed. The findings showed how the networks of intra-groups within the universities, consisting of academics, non-academic peers in central university units, their own teams, and students, also contributed to the complexity. As previously mentioned, the participants felt that at times they were perceived as not being as important as their academic colleagues. In this way this supports Hogg and Terry's (2000) suggestion that the reason these intra-groups add complexity within organisations is that they hold varying levels of power and status.

In line with Chreim et al.'s (2007) study, the findings revealed how the university influences are strongly significant in enabling and constraining how the participants formed their professional identity. The conceptual model (Figure 3), illustrated how the main themes combined have significant influences that contribute to how the participants experienced their roles and their professional identity. The lived space that the participants were situated in, in relation to their academic colleagues, their colleagues in central university units and the students, is demonstrated in the model as linked but separate. It became apparent from the findings that due to the complexity of their lived space, the participants had several identities that were at times in conflict. For example, the participants identified with both central university and their academic unit in the way they wanted to support their academic colleagues but also wanted to ensure they were enacting their stewardship role efficiently. This finding is in accordance with the social identity theory, which states that individuals have multiple identities within an organisation, which at times conflict as they have tension between their organisational commitment and their identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Another aspect of multiple identities in this thesis is shown in how the participants identified as women, managers and non-academics. Furthermore, they identified with their academic unit and their role in supporting the student experience, which, depending on the nature of the function, could also differentiate them from their non-academic colleagues in central university units.

Historically, the non-academic professional identity, based on public service administration, was separate from the academic community and also dominated by academic identity (Whitchurch, 2008a). Scholars such as Deem

(1998) and Tight (2014) allege that universities were previously communities of scholars run by academics. However, as the literature explicates, the way the managerial university operates with a corporate approach is incongruent with an academic's sense of purpose. Overall, the consensus among scholars indicates that the expectation for academics to respond to the changes and adapt (McInnis, 1998) has had a negative influence on academic identity (Clegg, 2008; Kolsaker, 2014; Sutton, 2017). The drive to be accountable and efficient is in conflict with the notion of the university's purpose of being for the public good (Sutton, 2017). In addition, contextual changes, such as large classes and greater complexity in technology, have significantly impacted on the traditional way of working (McNaughton & Billot, 2016; Davis, 2018) and how academics make sense of their identity (Billot, 2010). As Davis (2018) argued it is important for tertiary institutions to prepare their staff for future disruptions. Yet, even though a change in the university structure towards a more managerial approach has had a negative effect on academic identity, findings from this thesis also showed that the participants' role was still identified as a service role.

7.1.2 *Findings in relation to Social Identity Theory*

The findings show how the positioning of the non-academic role within the hierarchical university environment offered another perspective to the social identity theory. Social identity theory is based on how individuals "find, create and define" a place within their social networks (Tajfel, 1974, p.64). While the conceptual model (p. 188) provides an explanation of the participants' position within their academic unit, the social identity theory offers further insight into the findings. Tajfel's social identity theory (1974) states that a person's identity is

formed through emotional attachment and her/his self-concept in the knowledge that s/he belonged to a group. A person's self-concept is comprised of his or her personal identity, including bodily attributes (such as being a woman), abilities, traits and interests and how s/he identify in the sense of belonging to a group (Tajfel, 1974).

A lack of connectedness and empowerment was highlighted in the way the participants spoke about having to adapt their behaviour to adjust to a new head of school. According to the social identity theory, a person views the organisation s/he are part of, such as the work environment, as a social category and searches for connectedness and empowerment (Ashforth & Mael, 1987). Therefore, for a person to belong, the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours of a social group are measured against a persons' own attitudes, beliefs and values. This concept means that if the group values and beliefs are similar to a person's own; they will also have a higher level of self-esteem.

Belongingness was highlighted as a significant factor in how the participants experienced their roles. The findings showed the participants identified as belonging to the university, the academic unit and also identity as part of the non-academic group. The findings also showed that the participants shared many of the same values but did always feel this was acknowledged or valued. For example, many participants highlighted how they were firmly invested in ensuring a positive student outcome and gave practical examples of their contribution. Another participant expressed a sense of disappointment concerning the exclusion of the non-academic group in the strategic plan. According to the social identity theory a lack of acknowledgement and recognition by the organisation leads to a lower self-esteem and vice-versa.

Employees with a higher self-esteem are beneficial to the organisation as they are more likely to have more job satisfaction. In addition, when an employee feels valued and appreciated by her/his organisation, s/he remains loyal (Fuller et al. 2003).

At the centre of social identity theory lies self-comparison and self-categorisation. Both positive and negative intergroup comparisons influence self-esteem. However, an in-group is only salient when there is an out-group to compare with, such as academic and non-academic. Furthermore, comparing one's group to another group by social comparison (Tajfel, 1974) can effect a member's self-esteem (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) and either enhance or lower one's sense of identity (Stets & Burke, 2000). In this thesis, the findings highlighted how social identity is positively related to self-esteem.

To some extent, the participants' sense of identity was lowered through believing that their academic colleagues were of higher status. On the other hand, several of the participants were more self-assured and had a strong identity in their role. Those participants working at a higher level also appeared to have higher self-esteem, which reiterated the idea that hierarchy also related to social identity. As previously discussed, the findings highlighted how the participants were proud of their knowledge and experience and the way they enacted their roles. In relation to the social identity theory these attributes characterised the *distinctiveness* of their group and the boundaries that surround them. Hierarchy and distinctions between the status of groups have an influence on the regulation of identities (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). For the status of the group to become more positive, these differentiations needed to be acknowledged and valued by their academic colleagues and the

organisation. In order to feel worthy and valuable, a social group needs verification and without verification members belonging to the group may feel a lack of efficacy (Stets & Burke, 2014, p. 410). Furthermore, if a group does not have identity verification, this could mean a lack of efficacy for those belonging to the group.

While the participants in this thesis were strongly connected to their academic units, at times they felt disempowered and undervalued. The hierarchical structure with two separate groups on different employment contracts, one academic and the other non-academic, emphasised "them and us" situation. The self-esteem of the group who perceive they have less power can also be affected when there is a power difference between two groups such as academic/non-academic. There were many examples throughout the findings that highlighted perception of a hierarchical distinction. One participant expressed how she recognised the value of teaching and research but felt she was still considered by her academic colleagues as being a "*lower class citizen*". With more recognition from the organisation could also lead to a higher self-esteem. However, while the social identity theory also suggests that more recognition could lead to more committed employees the findings suggest the participants were highly committed to their academic units and also the university. However, the findings indicated that where the participants felt a lack of acknowledgement it led to a lower self-esteem.

The participants working at a higher level felt more respected by their academic colleagues; nevertheless, there still appeared to be a difference between the status of the non-academic and academic group. For example, one participant suspected that her colleagues were unaware she was not an academic,

nevertheless this made her feel self-conscious. Even though she was proud of her position and of the value she added, she wanted to be recognised in her own right and not as something she was not. According to the social identity theory when group membership is seen as lower status, but one is unable to leave the group, Tajfel (1974) suggests either justify or reinterpret in order to make the group acceptable. From this finding, it would follow that by changing the terminology to a more positive term for the non-academic group could be one way to help to add value to the group status. While there is evidence of changes in many universities in New Zealand the term is not consistent across them all.

In regard to social identity theory's notion of comparison of the 'in-group' and the 'out-group', the participants did not aspire to be part of the academic group even though it was perceived as having a higher status. This differs slightly from the concept of social comparison in social identity theory which suggests a person judges the 'in-group' in a positive way and the 'out-group' in a negative vein. The findings from this thesis showed that, while the participants were positive about their own attributes, beliefs, values and behaviours, they did not judge the academic group in a negative way. They felt their roles warranted acknowledgement and credibility and wanted their own professional identity validated, while continuing to validate the professional identity of their academic colleagues.

In this thesis, it was clear that the participants perceived they had a good understanding of their academic colleagues and felt this was essential in order for them to perform their roles efficiently. On the other hand, the findings also showed how many of the participants felt there was a lack of understanding by

others of what their role entailed. A feeling of disappointment showed as one participant spoke about her struggle to get acknowledgement for her team, in particular for their contribution towards the student journey. This lack of understanding appeared to have an impact on how the participants felt they were perceived by their academic colleagues and therefore impacted on their identity. The social identity theory suggests indifference from the higher-group to the lower-group can cause low self-esteem. As Albert et al. (2000) propose, for a group to have a sense of identity, the two groups need to interact effectively in an endeavour to answer the question of "Who are they?" Unpacking this question in relation to this thesis, it would appear that if the participants did not receive validation of their role, they lacked the credibility to have a strong group identity. This poses the question, can an identity be developed when the other group is not aware of their colleagues' responsibilities?

7.1.3 Findings in relation to gender identity

Women's gender identity is one aspect of the participants' social identity. In this thesis, the participants identified with being women and as discussed previously, the findings showed how they enacted their management roles by *doing gender.*

The absence of career pathways highlighted in the findings also contributed to how the participants experienced their professional identity. Role models and trying out behaviours are the way people construct their possible identities as they transition through their career (Ibarra, 1999). Several participants discussed the benefits of role models concerning their career progression. As Marvin (2006) highlights, while there is an expectation that senior women in management will nurture and support their female colleagues to progress in

243

their careers, this is not always the reality. However, initiating mentoring programmes with clear expectations for non-academic female staff, such as NZ Women in Leadership programmes (Ramsay et al, n.d), could be a positive way for universities to encourage career development for this group.

The findings showed that as there were no clear career progression opportunities, there was no opportunity for self-evaluation or external evaluation to make a decision. The findings also highlighted an absence of voice for non-academic women around their career opportunities. Overall, a lack of acknowledgement in career development highlighted the historical gendered aspects of this group and also contributed to a negative effect on the participants' identity.

They were aware that they were members of the non-academic staff group, regardless of the terminology used in New Zealand universities.

They were also managers in a specific space within the university (an academic unit), which differs from being a manager in another group, such as a central university unit. The findings supported Ibarra's (1999) argument that women are more likely than men to be 'true to self' when constructing their identity (Ibarra, 1999). This was highlighted in the way the participants used their own experiences and personal identity to form their professional identity. For example, many participants spoke about perseverance, determination when reflecting on how they had developed their roles. Ely (1995) highlights how value is added to the shaping of women's professional identity through comparative distinctions, including stereotypes, between men and women. According to Ely (1995), the meaning women attach to being female can be

positive or negative. However, the participants in this thesis spoke positively about their feminine attributes, such as nurturing, supporting and adapting behaviour, highlighting how these attributes were an integral part of their professional identity. The findings would therefore agree with Kyriakidou's (2012) suggestion that redefining or developing the group's own unique set of values and goals could become a key process in constructing their professional identities.

7.1.4 Findings in relation to Role & Professional Identity Theories

Role identity is constructed through practices and experiences. Role theory is also concerned with how people determine their professional identity through interpreting and negotiating their roles as members of a social group. Barley (1989), proposes that a person's identity gives a sense of purpose and meaning to their actions and the way they experience the role. As Pratt et al (2006) argue, people reconcile their self-conceptualisation with what their role entails. Thus, identity correlates with how people perceive their work competencies in order for a role to make sense. Role identity also needs to be verified by others. The findings highlighted how the participants felt frustrated at times because there was disconnect between their self-conceptualisation of their role and how they perceived their academic managers and the organisation valued their role. Consequently, lack of role validation presented a challenge for the participants in regard to constructing a meaningful professional identity.

According to Stets and Burke (2014), verification of an identity is important in order for a person to feel self-worth. The findings in this thesis showed how the participants felt disempowered and undervalued when they perceived there was a lack of validation of their role by the organisation. When the interaction with

the participants' academic-managers and colleagues resulted in a lack of role validation, it had a negative effect on the participants' credibility. Ibarra (1999) argues that interaction with others is necessary to validate a person's credibility and to allow them to feel good in their role. Therefore, it follows that without being validated by others, the participants felt that their role was not credible.

In relation to Simpson and Carroll's (2008) concept of using the space of 'boundary object' to distinguish the notion of role, the findings highlighted that the participants roles were at times difficult to determine. The reason for this was due to the boundaries of their role being dependent on validation by their academic manager. Burman (2004) suggested that 'boundary objects' are a space for negotiation of identity and difference. As previously discussed the findings showed how the participants' displayed unique attributes that could be capitalised on further. Therefore, using the concept of 'boundary objects' as a way of working together to understand the relation of power and agency, (Simpson & Carroll, 2008) would seem a positive step towards creating a more collaborative model.

The findings of this thesis confirmed the idea of role identity being an ongoing process of negotiation (Barley, 1989). The findings showed how the participants adapted their behaviours and adapted to the continually changes within their environment, particularly in regard to new technology. Although change of role can be challenging, Sluss & Ashforth, (2007) proposed that interpreting and negotiating roles as members of a social group is how people determine their professional identity.

Role is also linked to career. Career paths provide an individual with signals for "judging career progress, and with a terminology for staking down one's identity and making sense of one's role" (van Manen, 1980, cited in Barley, 1989, p. 51). Barley (1989) suggests the way in which a career becomes socially recognised is when a number of people follow the same career path. Yet even though the participants were all non-academic managers in academic units, there was no socially recognised career pathway. Consequently, without a career pathway, the participants were unable to "stake down" their identity or make sense of their roles. In addition, the lack of a consistent term for those working in non-academic roles also hinders this group's identity.

According to the professional identity theory, professionals are identified by what they do and self-define as a member of a profession (Chreim et al., 2007). The findings from this thesis confirmed Clarke et al.'s (2013) argument that professional identity is complex and shaped by contextual aspects. As discussed in chapter 6, the space the participants lived within the academic unit had significant impact on how they perceived their professional identity. Organisations also have a significant influence on how professional identity formed. The findings showed how the participants enacted their roles using their knowledge and experience and perceived their roles were valuable. However, without validation, they did not feel credible. Furthermore, the findings showed the participants had no defined career pathway. While there were initiatives for future development opportunities highlighted by some participants, there was not a consistent approach or commitment across the universities. Therefore, to construct a strong professional identity for this group of non-academic managers working in an academic department would be challenging. A more

in-depth exploration for constructing a strong identity for non-academic managers is an area for future research.

7.1.5 Relating the findings to previous research

While there are some similarities with Whitchurch's (2008a) framework, the notion of the third space and the notion of the fluidity of identity (Delanty, 2008; Taylor, 2008) were not confirmed by the perception of these participants. Whitchurch's (2008a) third space refers to a crossing of boundaries between administration and academic domains. One of the main issues for most of the participants in this thesis was that their roles did not have a fluidity of identity nor did they feel they had a visible identity. The difference comes about because the space the participants occupied in this thesis is within an academic unit. The findings showed that their boundaries were determined by their academic-manager in the way they validated the participants' roles; that is, how much respect and inclusion they bestowed and also the level of responsibility they allowed the participants to have. In saying this, the exception would be those participants who were working in senior level roles, such as registry or faculty manager, in which there was some crossing of boundaries in regard to the knowledge they held around the policies and procedures for setting up new courses and programmes of study. However, their identity was not clear and still dependent on their academic-managers and colleagues.

On the other hand, in some sense the participants related to Whitchurch's (2008a) *bounded* group, as they were bounded by their function and worked within the rules and regulations of the university. Also, they were proud of their skills and knowledge. Whitchurch's (2008a) framework proposes that one of the defining elements of the bounded group is the notion of being 'locked in' (p.

383); that is, those within this group are not in a position to negotiate more role fluidity. While there is a negative connotation in the sense of being 'locked in', this thesis showed the participants could operate within their boundaries and were able to utilise their experience and skills – but to what extent and to what level was dependent on their academic-manager. As discussed previously, the findings showed that the participants were disappointed about the lack of career pathways within the academic units, and the option of moving out of their academic unit across to a higher role in the central university was not a desirable option for most. Taking both these findings into consideration, the participants appeared to be 'locked in'. From another perspective, the participants were proud of their roles and did not appear to have the desire to move across to the central university units.

The findings confirm studies by previous scholars such as Bacon (2009) and Gander (2018a) who propose that there could be a difference between non-academic staff working in central university units and non-academic staff working in academic departments. In a sense, the findings can be applied to Bacon's (2009) concept of distinguishing differences between non-academic staff: he refers to those who hold an external professional identity and work in central university units as *essential* and those who work in departments as *situational*. As the participants all worked in an academic department, they could in part be categorised as *situational*. The findings from this thesis highlighted, however, that there were a number of defining aspects around how the participants experienced their professional roles that characterised their sense of identity. For example, the participants were proud of their tacit university experience and knowledge around processes and policies and felt

that this knowledge took time to acquire. They considered their roles required specific skills in regard to supporting the students and felt that there is a lack of understanding of the impact they have on the student outcome. The participants showed an appreciation of their academic colleagues' priorities around teaching and research and stakeholder engagement. As previously highlighted, in this way the participants priorities could conflict at times and could differ from those working in central university units. It would follow, therefore, that there were common identifying attributes that could be considered as essential in relation to the participants' identity.

Thomas-Gregory (2014) found in her study on both academic-managers and non-academic middle managers in a United Kingdom university that the identity of middle managers was shaped by social processes, key people and opportunities, and the university's vision. She found those managers whose personal and professional qualities of moral purpose were intertwined had more satisfaction and enjoyment in their role. To a large degree the findings in this thesis followed a similar pattern: the closer the alignment, the more satisfaction the participants felt in their work, and vice versa. The interactions the participants had with their academic colleagues and managers strongly influenced how they perceived their identity. All the participants showed in some way how their personal and moral purpose was intertwined with their role; however, whether this meant they had more satisfaction in their role was not conclusive. The overall findings did suggest the participants were committed to the university environment and had an affinity to their academic department. Therefore, because of their commitment, those participants showed frustration

when their roles were not adequately validated by their academic-managers, colleagues and the universities.

Overall, this thesis may to some degree concur with Dawkins (2011), who proposes that non-academic professional identities do not have a "singular definition or stable status" (p. 57). This is due to the influence of "institutional context and interactions with others" (Dawkins, 2011, p. 57). It would follow, therefore, that to define the identity of non-academic women managers in this thesis would be more in line with Dawkins' (2011) reflective approach.

7.1.6 Constructing identity

As Stryker (1980) maintains, people gain insight through ongoing experiences and feedback from others, which help towards forming a professional identity. Similarly, findings from Priola's (2004) United Kingdom study on women managers in an academic institution suggests that the construction of identities is a continuous process of negotiation. However, the findings in this thesis match those of Kolsaker's (2014) study on relocating professionalism in an English university, who found there was not a strong professional affiliation among the non-academic staff group. Yet, in this thesis the participants have a clear understanding of belonging to the non-academic group in an academic department and an emotional attachment to being a member of this group. The participants also believed a strong relationship with their academic-manager was essential as this would enable them to operate more effectively in their roles. The findings from this thesis affirm Rhoades (2007, cited in Clarke et al., 2013), who suggests that both awareness around the importance of the university environment and the relationships with the many professions also need to be considered when constructing identity. Furthermore, the findings

from this thesis align also with Scott (2007) who proposes that communication and identity are linked as we "express our belongingness (or lack thereof) to other groups and are able to then assess the reputation and image" (p. 124).

While many of the participants in this thesis believed they were seen as being of a lower status, there was no evidence of Ibarra's (1999) notion of 'possible selves', where people construct identities through role models with the idea of adopting new behaviours. This was most likely because a professional identity for non-academic women in academic departments is yet to be constructed. There are also very few similarities with Pratt et al.'s (2006) idea, based on professionals reconciling their self-conceptualisation with what their role entails and how they do it. However, Pratt et al. (2006) reiterates that in order for a professional identity to be constructed this concept requires an understanding of "what they do" to gain an appreciation of "who they are" (p.259). In this thesis the participants did not seek the professional identity established by their academic colleagues therefore they did not have an identity to measure against, rather, they wanted recognition for their identity as non-academic staff members. However, the findings from this thesis do agree with Fiol et al. (2009), who argue that when a 'group identity' is not validated by another group, it causes tensions.

This thesis confirms that further developing identities within the non-academic staff groups has the potential to break down the barriers between academic and non-academic in the sense that there would be more than two groups to identify with. It could give those working in an academic department a specialised identity as a 'professional academic administrator' or 'professional academic manager' rather than a 'university professional administrator', as suggested by

Lewis (2014). Berman and Pitman's (2010) study on research administrators highlighted the difference between them and how they crossed the boundaries between academic and administrative work. The idea of a specialised identity for non-academic staff would address the concern of Sebalj et al. (2012) on having one broad descriptor for non-academic staff.

Overall, this thesis found that the participants did not have an established identity to validate their roles. Kolsaker (2014) uses the terminology of 'carving out a space' in her study as she proposes that professional identity is affirmed by both internal role identity and external sources. Following Obodaru's (2017) notion of professional identity, "I am who I enact", the findings showed that for these participants to construct a professional identity, they need to continue to be true to themselves as women managers and enact their roles in a way that is true to their beliefs. According to Gherardi and Poggio (2001), "gender should be viewed as a practice and not as a natural phenomenon" (p. 257), as men and women define their position through practices and conversation, and their differences create their identity. Therefore, managing their roles in line with Mavin and Grandy's concept of 'doing gender well' would seem a positive way for the non-academic managers in academic units to build their professional identity.

The findings also confirm Conway (2000b), who suggests that administrative roles need an academic benchmark and, as Lewis (2014) suggests, promoting the role of the professional administrator would help to increase the visibility of a career within the university sector for non-academic staff. At present, however, the context in which the participants are positioned within a university

environment is a continual challenge they face towards building and reshaping their professional identity.

In sum, the findings from this thesis found a strong link between the participants' role validation and their credibility, regardless of the level of their self-esteem. Here again, this in turn affected how they felt about their professional identity. However, as stated earlier, this was more evident in those participants in school manager or department manager roles rather than in those who held higher level positions such as faculty manager or registrar. The issue of a lack of understanding of the participants' role was also another issue that contributed to a lack of identity for this group of staff. In reference to role theory, the findings showed how the participants were strongly associated with their role and again were proud of their knowledge, experience and relationships with their academic colleagues. However, even though they had a strong sense of self-worth in this regard, without verification of their roles, it did not seem to transfer to a strong professional identity. This meant that while the participants were confident in their knowledge and experience, validation of their roles by their academic-manager was needed for them to feel they had credibility. It was important to the participants that their roles were considered to be value-adding in the way they contributed to the goals of both the academic department, the university and the student outcome. The findings showed a lack of acknowledgement of the participants' tacit and institutional knowledge and experience, which also added to a feeling of the lack of role credibility. Without having credibility, it is proposed that the participants would have a weaker professional identity in comparison to the academic group. On the other hand, those participants whose academic-managers validated their roles through

valuing their opinion and respecting their experience gave them a strong sense of credibility, leading to a stronger sense of professional identity.

7.2 Summary

While previous research has looked at non-academic staff as a homogenous group, this thesis focused specifically on those working in an academic department. It was important to distinguish how the experiences of those non-academic staff working in an academic department differed from those working in a central university unit, which the findings highlighted. While there are similarities with the 'bounded group' in Whitchurch's (2008a) theoretical framework, there were differences in the way that the participants' identity in this thesis was dependent on the validation of their role rather than structure or boundaries. Some aspects of this thesis agree with Bacon (2009) that the role of non-academic managers in universities "misses a crucial distinction" (p. 10) in that there are both generic and specialist managers. The difference is mainly due to the strong relationships the participants within academic units had with their academic colleagues, academic-manager and students. The findings showed how deeply the dependencies were ingrained and also how these relationships were imperative to how effectively or efficiently the participants were able to perform their everyday work.

In relation to the social identity theory, the findings give insight into the effect of how organisational intra-group can cause a feeling of insecurity. This thesis highlighted how levels of power, status and prestige between the intra-groups within an organisation actively contributed to the formation of a continuum of strong or weak professional identity for the participants. The findings are in line with the social identity theory in the way the non-academic group were

perceived as the 'out-group'. However, they differ in the sense that the participants were consistent in the belief that they could contribute and add value. In this way, the findings highlight that, even though the participants felt undervalued, they had a strong sense of purpose and belief in themselves.

Finally, to reiterate the most important findings, firstly, this thesis showed the participants were happy working within the academic domain. Rather than a third space, they occupied a unique space encapsulated in its own specific boundaries. Secondly, the participants appeared to have a high self-efficacy and confidence in their ability to perform well in their roles. However, they wanted to be respected for this position and valued for their knowledge and experience. For this to happen, they need their roles validated by their academic-managers, colleagues and organisations, which would lead to an increase in their role credibility and the formation of a strong professional identity. This means that, without the commitment from the university to validate the non-academic role through organisational policies and structural changes, a professional identity for non-academic managers will continue to be a challenge. The findings from this thesis therefore support previous scholarship on non-academic staff, such as Garcia and Hardy (2007) who suggest academic and non-academic groups need to address the longstanding binary divide. The findings also affirm Marginson's (2004) argument that there needs to be more strategies initiated to break down the barriers and grow a positive culture between the two groups, one that values and respects each other's contribution.

256

8 CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When a researcher is beginning a study, they must ask the question, "Of all the knowledge available to me, which is the most valuable, which is the most truthful, which is the most beautiful, which is the most life-enhancing?" (Lincoln & Guba, 2013 p. 37). The aim of this thesis was to gain an understanding of how non-academic women managers working in academic units experienced their roles, career opportunities and professional identity in their 'everydayness' of being-in-the-world. Through the hermeneutic process of iteration, listening to their stories and reflecting on both the parts and the whole, a unique understanding of this phenomenon was achieved.

8.1 Introduction and structure

Chapter 8 highlights the important contributions this thesis has made to the body of knowledge on the professional identity and career aspirations of non-academic women managers in New Zealand universities. This thesis also contributes to the body of knowledge on the professional identity of roles predominately undertaken by women and even a deeper understanding of power imbalance between intra-groups in organisations.

The first section revisits the aims and justification of this thesis. The next section discusses the implications and contributions of the findings of the thesis. The following two sections discuss the limitations of the thesis and suggest areas for further research. In the final part of this chapter, some concluding remarks are made, reiterating the contribution of the thesis and recommendations for how New Zealand universities can develop non-academic women working in

academic units and increase their professional identity and career opportunities for the future.

8.2 Revisiting the aims of the thesis

Managerial roles within academic departments in New Zealand universities have evolved over time. The corporate structure has required more accountability and control, resulting in an increase in administration. New roles have been established to deal with the day-to-day human resource issues and the distribution and co-ordination of tasks. In more recent years, the requirement for more accountability and compliance has resulted in the implementation of new policies and more procedures, supplanting older academics' ways of working.

Management has now shifted to the control of administrative managers (McInnis, 2012; Olssen & Peters, 2005) and the boundaries between administration and academia have blurred. Furthermore, the managerial university, demanding more accountability and efficiencies, has increased tensions between the academic and non-academic groups (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Dodson, 2000; Gray, 2012; Kuo, 2009).

As highlighted in the introduction chapter of this thesis, much has been written about the effects on the academic community (Henkel, 2005) and there has been a growing interest in the identity of non-academic staff (e.g., Bacon, 2009; Whitchurch, 2008a, 2008b; Lewis, 2014; Gray; 2015). Whitchurch's (2008a) contextual framework goes a long way in providing a basis for identifying non-academic staff into groups and conceptualises a 'third space' for those working across both non-academic and academic boundaries. However, scholars such

as Bacon (2009) highlight that non-academic staff working in an academic unit may have a different experience to those in central university units, an area that has not been previously researched.

Scholars have long argued that universities are gendered organisations with a patriarchal culture (Eveline & Booth, 2004; Wallace & Marchant, 2011) and women in management or leadership roles need to conform to the male worldview (Fitzgerald, 2014). The lack of diversity and the intensification of academic labour has been a discouragement for many women's leadership aspirations (Blackmore, 2014). Other scholars have found that women in non-academic positions have even more obstacles to overcome (Castleman & Allen, 1995; Ricketts & Pringle, 2014; Szekeres, 2004; Wieneke, 1995).

Non-academic staff make up over half of the New Zealand university workforce (Ministry of Education, n.d.-a), of which women are the majority (Ministry of Education, n.d.-b, see Figure 1). Yet, even though these numbers are steadily increasing, scholars highlight a lack of commitment towards the development of this group and a perception that they are undervalued. In a New Zealand study, Ricketts and Pringle (2014) found that non-academic women perceive they are less valued and have less participation in decision making. They suggest that there is a need to address role-based discrimination within university polices.

The aim of this thesis was to answer the following question:

How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their identity in university environments?

The following sub-questions were also formulated:

- o How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their professional role?

- o What do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments say about their future career aspirations?

As discussed in Chapter 4, this thesis was undertaken from a social constructionist perspective, using a hybrid approach informed by van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology. My 'insider' status had an advantage both during the interview process and analytical process, and in having a pre-understanding of the topic of this thesis. Semi-structured interviews were the method used to collect the data from 20 non-academic female managers working in New Zealand universities. The data were analysed using the framework of van Manen's (1997, 2014) existential themes.

As shown in Chapter 5, the findings were identified within five main themes and then categorised into van Manen's (1990) existential themes relating to the concept of lifeworld. The five main themes, *Environment, Relationships*, *Doing Gender, Knowledge and Experience,* and *Changing Technology* that emerged from the findings of the study cannot be viewed in isolation.

8.3 Implications and recommendations

Overall, this thesis gives a unique insight into how the participants experienced their professional identity in a holistic sense. The following section will outline and reiterate the contributions and implications of this thesis, beginning with contributions to research, theoretical contributions, methodological contribution and recommendation for practice.

8.3.1 Contributions to research

This thesis makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on non-academic staff in tertiary education and provides a new understanding of how non-academic women in a university environment experience their professional identity in their everyday roles. The findings add to previous studies on gender in universities, highlighting how feminine attributes, such as caring, supporting and nurturing could be considered a positive asset to the future management of academic units.

Firstly, this thesis makes several contributions to previous scholarship on the invisibility and identity of non-academic staff in universities. The findings show how the participants had their own unique space within the academic unit, which is separate from Whitchurch's (2008a) concept of the third space. These findings confirm previous scholars, such as Bacon (2009) and Lewis (2014) who suggest that there could be a difference in the experience of non-academic staff working in a central university unit and those in an academic unit.

The findings confirm previous scholarship from the United Kingdom (Lewis, 2014) and Australia on how the negative connotations of the term 'non-academic' has impacted on the identity of this group. This thesis suggests that the inconsistency of the term used for non-academic staff in New Zealand universities further hinders the identity of this group and the role its members play and is detrimental to building a respectful and validated professional identity for non-academic staff.

Secondly, the findings confirm there is still evidence of the binary divide between academic and non-academic staff in New Zealand universities. Within

an organisation such as a university, the hierarchy and perceived higher and lower status groups of academic and non-academic staff impacts on how the group members' identity is formed. The participants were proud of their knowledge and experience but felt they were under-valued and under-utilised in regard to the contribution they could make. Despite the fact that there has been an increase in non-academic staff within the central university with new roles for professionals, such as consultants in human resources and marketing, the hierarchical structure within the academic unit has remained.

Thirdly, this thesis adds to scholarship on career aspirations of women in non-academic roles, emphasising the gendered nature of the role of non-academic women managers in academic units. Women's leadership has been highlighted in the literature as being more negatively affected by the policy changes. Amongst the participants of this study, balancing families and careers were a key gender determinant. Choices varied amongst the participants with some choosing career and others deciding on family priorities. While there is little evidence of a boundaryless career (Whitchurch,2004) for non-academic women managers in academic units, there are similarities to previous research (e.g., Eveline & Booth, 2004; Graham, 2009; Ricketts & Pringle, 2014; Szekeres, 2004) highlighting a lack of career opportunities. Overall, the findings showed how there has been very little progress in relation to the acknowledgement of non-academic women in the university environment, which is concerning considering that non-academic staff are over half the workforce within New Zealand universities.

Fourthly, the findings from this thesis could be applied to other organisations where there is a power imbalance between the intra-groups and also in professions that are predominately undertaken by women.

8.3.2 Theoretical contribution

Firstly, the conceptual model (Figure 3) developed from the findings of this thesis adds to existing theoretical frameworks and models on non-academic staff identity. The model gives a unique insight into how non-academic women managers, spatially, relationally, corporeally, temporally and materially experience their professional identity in New Zealand universities. This insight offers educational policy makers, tertiary institutions and the Association of Tertiary Managers (ATEM) with a greater sense of how female non-academic managers' professional identity can be enhanced.

Through gaining an understanding of their everyday roles, this model illustrates how this group of women managed their roles by *doing gender* (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and enacting feminine attributes such as caring, adapting behaviour, protection and pride. Their knowledge and experience were highlighted as being integral to their roles and the constant technological changes were significant challenges. Overall, the model Illustrates how the linked space the participants were positioned in, between their academic colleagues and central university units, impacted on the way they experienced their role. It also shows an important link to the students. Most importantly, the model highlights how validation of the participants' role bestowed by their academic-manager and academic colleagues impacted on their credibility, which in turn led to a higher or lower status of professional identity.

Secondly, the social identity theory offers a theoretical lens to enhance an understanding of how non-academic women in academic units experience their professional identity. The findings related to the social identity theory in the way that the 'them and us' of the intra-groups significantly influenced the participants' self-esteem. There was evidence of social comparison between the academic group and non-academic group in the way the non-academic group perceived they were the 'out-group'*.* In relation to the social identity theory, it is important for there to be an understanding of who both in-group and out-group are before a valid identity can be established. However, the findings highlighted how the participants perceived there was a limited understanding by their academic managers of their roles.

A noteworthy contribution from this thesis is extending the social identity theory by highlighting how the *distinctiveness* of the participants' roles related to their professional identity. The unique attributes presented in the conceptual model (p. 188), revealed how the participants' roles identified the *distinctiveness* and boundaries. However, according to the social identity theory, the *distinctiveness* of a group requires acknowledgement and verification from the organisation before the status of the group identity increases. Therefore, for non-academic women managers in academic units to construct a positive identity, it is imperative for academic managers and the organisation to value the uniqueness of the non-academic managers' contribution and instil credibility.

The findings differed from the social identity theory as the participants did not aspire to be part of the academic group, nor did they judge members of this group in a negative vein. The participants were consistent in their conviction that their roles were valuable, but there was a dependence on their academic-

managers and academic colleagues to verify the role. Therefore, unless there are changes in government reports categorising staff who work in New Zealand universities as non-academic, the perception that academic staff are the in-group and those who are not academic staff being in the out-group will remain.

Thirdly, the thesis also highlighted how the gendered nature of the role related to aspects of the heuristic career model (Pringle and McCulloch Dixon, 2003). However, similar to Gander (2018b) the findings also showed how the career experiences of non-academic women managers working in academic units in New Zealand was in concordance with a hybrid orientation incorporating aspects of both the traditional career and protean career models.

8.3.3 *Methodological contribution*

This thesis contributes to management scholarship through taking a hybrid approach to gain an in-depth insight into identities in organisations and how people understand their identity spatially, relationally, corporeally, temporally and materially through examining their lived experience. While the study does not uphold the strong focus of lived experience that underpins a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, it provides a guide to future researchers to apply a hybrid approach informed by van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology framework (1997) existential themes belonging to "the fundamental structure of the lifeworld" (van Manen, 1997, p. 102). As Segal (2010) suggests, it is important for managers to return to the phenomenon to make sense of what is happening. Management experiences are often taken for granted but in order to gain a deeper understanding one needs to ask what this experience means. Considering hermeneutic phenomenological methodology is a relatively new approach to this area of management a hybrid approach brings a 'hue' of

phenomenology (Sandelowski, 2000) to the sociological concepts of professional and role identity.

8.3.4 Implications for practice

Gadamer (1998) suggests that it is practice rather than theory that "points to the meaning of our lives" (p. 35). This thesis provides educational policy makers and tertiary institutions with a greater sense of how the professional identity and career progression of female non-academic staff in New Zealand universities can be enhanced. As discussed previously, universities espouse equality and are committed to their purpose of teaching and developing students for the future. Yet, there is also the perception that there is a lack of recognition within the universities of the need to support and encourage non-academic staff to gain higher qualifications by providing time or favourable conditions in line with those granted to their academic colleagues.

The benefits from this thesis include the knowledge gained that may assist New Zealand universities by informing them of the importance of professional identity and career development opportunities for non-academic staff in management positions. In particular, the thesis recommends that universities provide non-academic staff with equal opportunity to gain qualifications that can enhance their role performance. Acting on this initiative could lead to more formally qualified non-academic managers who can confidently and effectively manage the business obligations of the departments, schools and academic units they are positioned in. Attributing more value and recognition to non-academic staff with higher qualifications could also positively change the perception of their status within the hierarchical structure. Therefore, the development of a New Zealand qualification for non-academic staff working in universities and a

266

consistent title could be a positive way forward in gaining respect for the role and a professional identity for this group.

A key recommendation from the thesis is that New Zealand universities need to shift from being passive to being proactive and extending the scope of the non-academic managers' role in academic units with the potential of introducing a collaborative model. It is apparent from the literature review that appointing academic-managers into roles with responsibility for accountability and efficiency has had a negative impact on the relationships among the academic community and their sense of purpose.

The findings showed how the participants' feminine attributes, such as caring and supporting, were integral to the way they managed their everyday roles. Also, the findings highlighted that while participants were proud of their knowledge and experience, they did not always feel valued. Therefore, building on the findings from this thesis, the notion of developing a model based on collaboration as an ethic of care with both academic and non-academic managers working respectfully together would seem a positive way forward for the future of New Zealand universities. Care could include using a management style where care for self and others is practised in a collaborative way. Given that universities are un-dynamic around organisational change, this may be challenging. However, the benefits would help improve efficiency and alleviate some of the pressures placed on academic-managers. Verification of an identity is also important in order for a person to feel self-worth (Stets & Burke, 2014). Taking this into consideration, it would seem that a collaborative model would define a career path for non-academic managers and be a positive step in enhancing their professional identity and increasing their self-worth.

8.4 Limitations

The hermeneutic phenomenological approach questions the meaning rather than solving the problem. While this could be considered a limitation in some methodologies when undertaking hermeneutic research, the aim of this thesis was to gain an understanding of the participants' experience rather than test a theory. Having only 20 participants could also be considered a limitation due to the small sample. A larger number has the potential to bring in different perspectives, however, it would not be recommended for the methodology used. A small number of participants is preferred for a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences.

Another limitation of the thesis was that participants from only four of the eight universities were represented in the participant group. This was due mainly to the restrictions on the recruiting process which required me to contact the human resources directors (or equivalent role) for permission to recruit. While seven out of eight universities gave approval, the advertising for participants within the universities proved to be a challenge. This may have been due to time pressures, the sensitivity of the topic and/or privacy concerns, as human resources directors were contacted about the study and potentially could have known (or determined) who participated.

Being an insider researcher can be considered to be problematic because this kind of researcher has a vested interest (Greene, 2014) and a potential for bias. However, in a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, Gadamer (2013) explains how "we are continually having to test our prejudices" (p. 317). Overall, I believed being an insider was advantageous to me as a researcher and the

participants in regard to trust and mutual understanding. This seemed to have a positive effect on the participants and appeared to help them to be more relaxed and therefore more open to talking about their experiences.

An interpretative approach relies on the understanding of the researcher; therefore, another study may provide different insights into this phenomenon. However, Gadamer (2103) believes every interpretation brings a new insight and it is the different perspectives that others bring that enriches the understanding of the phenomenon.

Further possible limitations were the absence of interview questions or discussion in relation to the participants' exact age and ethnicity which may have had an influence on their experience and brought a different perspective to the study. Similarly, longevity in the role also could have had an influence on the participants' experiences and how they perceived both their professional identity and their future aspirations. Ethnicity was another aspect that was not addressed in this thesis. While I was aware that the participants came from different cultures because of their accents and visual appearances, the interviews did not include questions on ethnicity. This could have been perceived as a limitation because the participants' culture may have influenced the way they experienced their identity. However, the purpose of the thesis was to consider non-academic women managers working in academic units throughout New Zealand as one cohort and bring awareness to their experiences as a group.

8.5 Areas for future research

Areas for future research include examining how age and ethnicity impact on non-academic women managers' everyday experience working in an academic department. There are also opportunities for future studies on similarities or differences that relate to men in similar roles in New Zealand universities. The findings show how all the participants had an understanding of the university culture and, while some accepted it, most wanted more acknowledgement and validation of their role. This could be different in the central university units, which were not the focus of this research. A comparative study on the professional identity of non-academic staff in central university units would also add an additional insight into the identity of those non-academic staff working in academic units.

Further research with a more in-depth inquiry into the participants' self-esteem and self-efficacy would also add another layer of understanding in regard to developing a professional identity for non-academic staff. In addition, further exploration could also be undertaken to ascertain if the non-academic group positioned in an academic department perceive they have scope to cross boundaries and how they view the significance of working in a bounded unit.

Further investigation into the development of a New Zealand qualification specifically for non-academic university managers working in academic units is also required.

Finally, building on the recommendations from this thesis, further research is required to explore the implications and implementation of a model based on collaboration as an ethic of care where academic and non-academic managers

can work together. This type of model would require the development of a framework taking into consideration how care can be used in collaboration with both academic and non-academic managers through decision-making, conversation, relationships and strategy.

8.6   Concluding remarks

Over this journey I had to consciously reflect on my own prior experience and go beyond the words being said to gain a deeper understanding of the essence of the meaning. My own 'lived experience' of undertaking this thesis lead me to become aware of my taken-for-granted pre-understanding and biases. The hybrid approach informed by van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology is relatively new to business studies and while it challenged me as a researcher I feel it achieved its purpose in gaining unique meaningful insights into how the participants experienced their professional identity.

While historically non-academic staff were seen as service staff, over time the roles have evolved and they have become more complex, requiring specific skills and experience. Non-academic women managers play an essential part in the managerial university, particularly in the student experience, a consideration that is often overlooked; therefore, in this era of user pay, it would seem important that commitment to developing and supporting the professional development of this group of staff is addressed. This thesis gave an opportunity for the participants to share their taken-for-granted everyday experiences and bring to the fore how they are worthy of attention. Finally, I close the circle with the hope that this thesis will raise awareness of the importance of increasing the visibility and worth of non-academic staff in New Zealand universities and

271

will bring about positive changes for the professional identity and career aspirations of non-academic women working in academic units in the future.

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275

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Table 1

Explanation of Terms Used for this Thesis

Term	Explanation
academic	university staff on an academic contract (permanent, tenured, fixed term & hourly paid)
academic manager	academic staff member with management responsibilities
academic unit	school, academic department, faculty
business-like	professional systematic pragmatic approach to practices in order to gain advantage by being efficient
central university units	university units excluding academic units and responsibility for the central service, such as human resources, facilities, finance, marketing, student services etc.
corporatisation	the process of restructuring the university administration structure into a corporation
faculty	an academic unit of the university devoted to a particular area of knowledge (e.g., Health, Science)
managerialism	professional management using business practices
senior level position	staff working as senior non-academic managers within their academic unit or division. For example, roles equivalent to faculty manager or registrar
senior management	senior management team of the university including the Vice-Chancellor and other top managers within faculties and divisions
managerialism	professional management using business practices

Ethics Approval April 2016

AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316 E:
ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

5 April 2016

Edwina Pio
Faculty of Other Internal Centres

Dear Edwina

Re Ethics Application: **16/70 Women's identity in management: A qualitative study on non-academic women in New Zealand universities.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 4 April 2019.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 4 April 2019;

- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 4 April 2019 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Nonie Kirker, Judy McGregor

Ethics Approval Amended 1

AUTEC Secretariat

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www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

19 July 2016

Edwina Pio
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Edwina

Re: Ethics Application: **16/70 Women's identity in management: A qualitative study on non-academic women in New Zealand universities.**

Thank you for your request for approval of an amendment to your ethics application.

Your amendment request to recruit participants through snowballing and purposive sample method using the researcher's networks has been approved.

I remind you that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC):

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 4 April 2019;

- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 4 April 2019 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Nonie Kirker, Judy McGregor

295

Ethics Approval – Amended 2

AUTEC Secretariat

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2 March 2017

Edwina Pio
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Edwina

Ethics Application: **16/70 Women's identity in management: A qualitative study on non-academic women in New Zealand universities.**

Thank you for submitting your application for amendment. I am pleased to advise that the amendment to recruit participants from AUT be approved subject to the following condition:

    1. Provision of the revised recruitment protocol and Information Sheet addressing AUT staff.

Please provide me with a response to the points raised in these conditions, indicating either how you have satisfied these points or proposing an alternative approach. AUTEC also requires copies of any altered documents, such as Information Sheets, surveys etc. You are not required to resubmit the application form again. Any changes to responses in the form required by the committee in their conditions may be included in a supporting memorandum.

Please note that the Committee is always willing to discuss with applicants the points that have been made. There may be information that has not been made available to the Committee, or aspects of the research may not have been fully understood.

Once your response is received and confirmed as satisfying the Committee's points, you will be notified of the full approval of your ethics application. Full approval is not effective until all the conditions have been met. Data collection may not commence until full approval has been confirmed. If these conditions are not met within six months, your application may be closed and a new application will be required if you wish to continue with this research.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: nonie.kirker@aut.ac.nz; Judy McGregor

Advertisement

Women's identity in management: A qualitative study of non-academic women in New Zealand universities

Are you a woman working in a non-academic management role in an academic department in a New Zealand university?

I am looking for participants to be part of a PhD research project. The aim of the study is to understand how non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their identity in the university environment. This identity includes their professional role. The study also aims to examine the meaning this group of non-academic women have of their career aspirations.

To participate you must be:

- female

- working in a management role in an academic department in the university

- be responsible for managing staff

- have a minimum of 5 years' experience working in the university environment

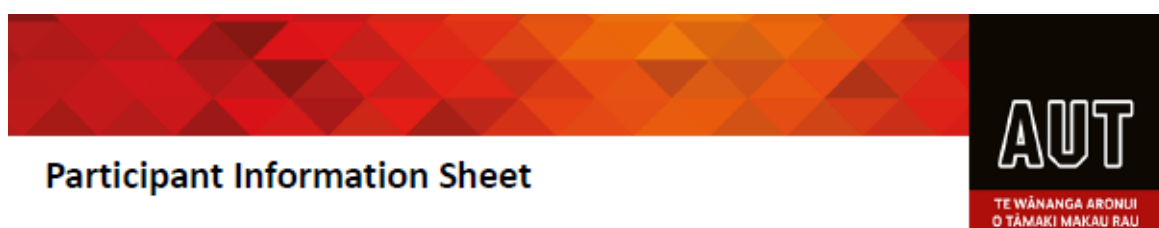- and be available for a 60 minute face to face interview

Contact: Nonie Kirker

Email: nonie.kirker@aut.ac.nz
Ph: 921999 ext 7655 or mob 021774354

Confidentiality will be respected.

Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

11 April 2016

Project Title

How do non-academic women working in management roles within academic departments understand their identity in university work environments?

An Invitation

Greetings, my name is Nonie Kirker and I am a student in the Post-Graduate programme in the Business Faculty at AUT. This research project is part of my thesis, which will contribute to a Doctorate of Philosophy in the Business and Law Faculty.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of the study is to explore the lived experience of women working in non-academic management roles to gain an understanding of the meaning they give to their professional role and their identity in the university environment. Furthermore, the study aims to raise the profile of this group through insight into their career aspirations and advancement in the university sector. It also aims to determine the need for partnership between academic and non-academic staff and to use the strengths of both groups in a complementary way.

The research will be submitted for a doctorate of philosophy qualification and may result in publications and presentations at AUT and conferences.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have responded to an invitation to be part of this research project. As a woman working in a management role in an academic department in a New Zealand university your experience is relevant and valuable to the research project.

What will happen in this research?

You will be invited to meet for a 60 minute interview that will be audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis by me. The interview will take place in a mutually agreed venue to ensure your privacy. You will be asked several questions, but can choose not to answer any questions you feel will cause you embarrassment or discomfort. You can also choose to withdraw from the study at any time up until the end of the data collection.

Participants will be asked to discuss personal experiences and feelings on the following topics:

- Your experience working in a management role in an academic department.
- How you understand your role and responsibilities within your role.
- Your perceived opportunities for future career choices within the university.

Your identity will remain confidential to the study through the use of a pseudonym.

What are the discomforts and risks?

As this research intends to investigate your personal experiences and feelings I am aware that parts of the discussion could be of a sensitive nature and that you may feel vulnerable.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

I will be respectful and show empathy to all participants regarding any sensitive issues that arise during the interview. You do not need to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable answering and can withdraw from the study prior to the completion of the data collection. There will also be an opportunity to verify your transcript.

What are the benefits?

You will be contributing to research and knowledge for improved understanding about the identity of non-academic women working in academic departments in a university. Furthermore, it intends to raise the profile of this group and gain an understanding of their career aspirations and advancement in the sector.

There will be an opportunity for you to read the research summary.

How will my privacy be protected?

Confidentiality of personal information will be maintained and all practical steps will be taken to ensure safety of interviewees during interviews. Pseudonyms will be used for any information that is in the public domain, including in the final version of the thesis. There will be no identifying details provided. No information will be divulged to your employer.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The amount of time required to be given by participants is 60 minutes.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Two weeks from receiving the invitation

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree to be part of this research please complete and sign the attached Consent Form and return to Nonie Kirker by email: nonie.kirker@aut.ac.nz

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, I will send an executive summary to participants on completion of the thesis

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Edwina Pio, *edwina.pio@aut.ac.nz* , Phone 9219999 ext 5130.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz*, 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details: Nonie Kirker, *nonie.kirker@aut.ac.nz*, phone 9219999 ext 7655.

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Professor Edwina Pio, *edwina.pio@aut.ac.nz* , Phone 9219999 ext 5130.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 5 April 2016, AUTEC Reference number 16/70.

Appendix G

Consent Form

Consent Form

Project title: Women's Identity in Middle Management: A Qualitative study of non-academic women in NZ Universities

Project Supervisor: Professor Edwina Pio

Researcher: Nonie Kirker

O   I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated March 2017.

O   I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

O   I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

O   I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.

O   If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.

O   I agree to take part in this research.

O   I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): YesO NoO

Participant's signature: ....

Participant's name: ....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

....

....

....

....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 5 April 2016 AUTEC Reference number 16/70

300