

Service Academies and Student Transitions: An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

Service Academies are vocationally-focussed courses run in New Zealand secondary schools. They have a military style teaching and learning environment, and were initiated with the intention of helping students who were at risk of not achieving, in a very structured environment. Students seeking recruitment into the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and other uniformed government services also take part in the course to gain relevant skills and experience. The first course was set up in 1999, and since then there have been several expansions, resulting in twenty-six academies currently operating nationwide.

This qualitative research sought the opinions of academy directors and ex-students on the efficacy of the course and its effect on the transition to employment or other outcomes. Research questions guiding the study considered the educational strategies and leadership practices that support the academies, the factors students and their course directors perceive as leading to successful engagement with the programmes and ways of further developing Service Academies to enhance student outcomes. Academy directors and ex-students were surveyed to produce data on the course and its effect on student transitions to employment.

There were significant similarities in the responses from staff and ex-students, showing they valued many of the same elements of the courses and had a shared vision of effective ways of transitioning students. The questionnaire and interview responses were mainly very positive, with a lot of emphasis placed on the beneficial nature of the military-style learning environment and the effect of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) ethos and culture in the academies.

The key areas identified for improvement were the external leadership of the programmes, particularly from the Ministry of Education, and the need for an organised programme to support new staff setting up academies, as well as existing staff. Desired elements of this programme included a central resource bank of classroom and assessment material as well as administrative templates. The opportunity for students to achieve NCEA credits through the academies also needs more work, and needs clear communication between the Ministry, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), the academies and the NZDF. Finally, there is a need for clear pathways of professional learning and development for academy directors, most of whom are not trained teachers to enable them to support students as effectively as possible.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Research background.....	3
Rationale	5
Research aim and questions.....	6
Organisation of thesis	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
Introduction.....	8
Theme one - factors beyond the student’s control.....	9
Theme two – the effect of educational success	16
Theme three - vocational learning in school.....	18
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	25
Introduction.....	25
Ontological and epistemological position.....	25
Qualitative methodology	26
Research design and methods.....	27
Questionnaires.....	28
Interviews.....	29
Data analysis.....	30
Reliability.....	31
Validity.....	31
Triangulation.....	32
Ethics	33
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS	35
Introduction.....	35

The course and its content.....	36
Whanau involvement with the course.....	50
Director development.....	53
External Leadership and Guidance.....	54
Student transitions.....	60
Summary	62
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	63
Introduction.....	63
Research questions	63
Recommendations.....	69
Conclusion	70
Limitations of the study	71
Recommendations for further study.....	72
REFERENCES.....	73
APPENDICES.....	79

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1	New Zealand Youth and Total Unemployment Rates, 2007-2012	p.8
Figure 2.1	Percentage of 15–24 year old New Zealanders Not in Education, Employment or Training, 2007-2012	p.18
Figure 2.2	Traditional transitions in New Zealand education	p.27
Figure 2.3	Modern transitions in New Zealand education	p.28
Figure 4.1	Average division of course content across surveyed academies	p.44
Figure 4.2	Ex-student responses to the statement “The course content was interesting and I felt motivated to get involved in the work”	p.48
Figure 4.3	Elements of the Service Academy courses that directors saw as effective in motivating and engaging students	p.49
Figure 4.4	Elements of the Service Academy courses that ex-students described as helping them to achieve	p.49
Figure 4.5	Ex-student responses to the statement “The course had a negative effect on how I worked in school generally”	p.53
Figure 4.6	Elements that directors saw as barriers to student engagement with the course	p.55
Figure 4.7	Ex-student responses to the question “Were your family supportive of your decision to enter the Service academy?”	p.58
Figure 4.8	Directors views of the current levels of external leadership and support of academies from the schools' management, the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Defence Force	p.62
Figure 4.9	Course elements ex-students viewed as assisting transition to employment or recruitment into the NZDF	p.67

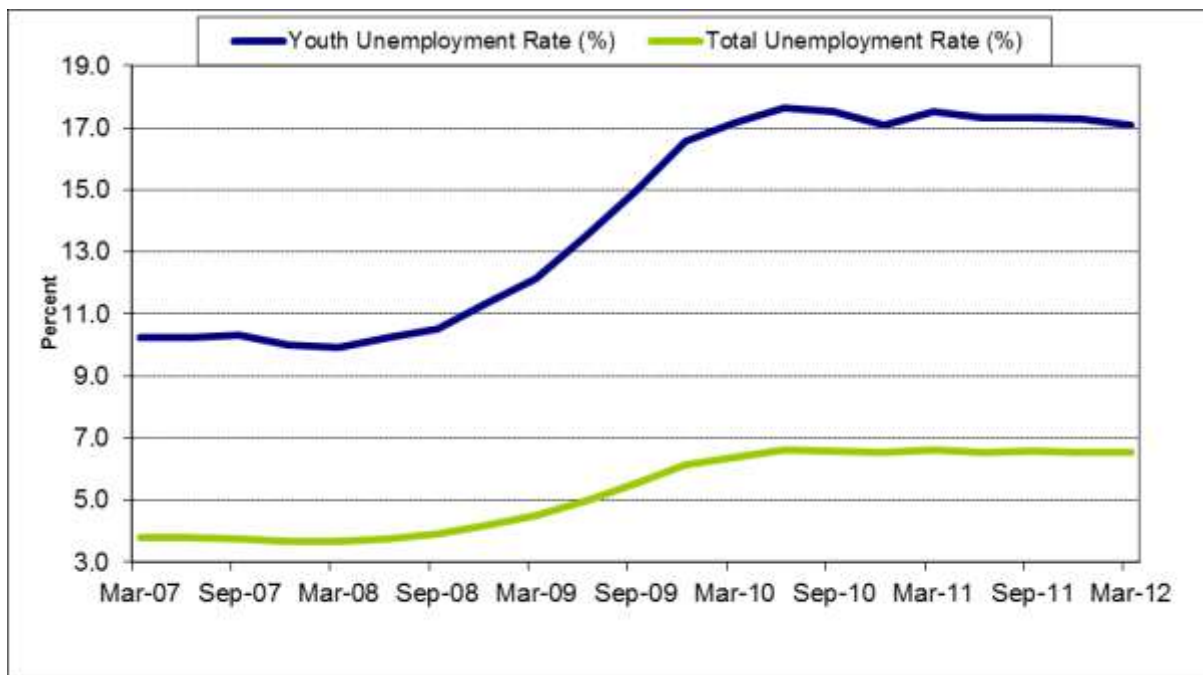
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EOTC	Education outside the Classroom
LSV	Limited Service Volunteers
MOE	Ministry of Education
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NQF	The National Qualifications Framework
NZDF	New Zealand Defence Force, comprised of the New Zealand Army, Royal New Zealand Navy and the Royal New Zealand Air Force
NZQA	The New Zealand Qualifications Authority
PD	Professional Development
PT	Physical training
RNZAF	Royal New Zealand Air Force
RNZN	Royal New Zealand Navy
VFCs	Vocationally-focussed courses (in schools)
YDU	Youth Development Unit, a unit of the New Zealand Defence Force which provides courses for social and education agencies, and the parent unit which oversees the Youth Life Skills cell.
YLS	Youth Life Skills cell, the branch of the New Zealand Defence Force which provides camps and courses for the Service Academies

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In contemporary New Zealand fifteen to twenty four year-olds are disproportionately over-represented in many negative statistics, one of which is unemployment. In the December 2012 quarter for example, 19.0% of fifteen to twenty four year olds were unemployed, compared with an overall national unemployment rate of 6.9% (New Zealand Ministry of Business Innovation & Employment, 2013). Young people struggling to find work upon leaving school is not a new phenomenon. The pattern has been repeatedly described for many years and any increase in general unemployment tends to disproportionately impact on youth.

Figure 1.1 – New Zealand Youth and Total Unemployment Rates, 2007-2012



Source: New Zealand Department of Labour (2012b)

This trend is repeated in international statistics, and has been the case in previous global economic recessions such as the Great Depression of the 1930s and the economic downturn of the 1970s (Ainley, 1996; Gurney, 1980; Hummeluhr, 1997; Kogan & Unt, 2005; Stern, Finkelstein, Stone III, Latting, & Dornsife, 1995).

There are many reasons school-leavers struggle to find or sustain employment, particularly in difficult economic times. Some employers are reluctant to invest in the training needed by new employees. The 'last-on / first-off' process has a disproportionately negative impact on young people and high unemployment increases competition for positions requiring low or no qualifications (Hummeluhr, 1997). Some school-leavers lack qualifications, most lack relevant experience and many do not have a clear idea of an intended or desired career pathway. In all three of these areas of difficulty, students may be helped by a vocationally-focussed, school-based course. Such courses have the potential to help students attain qualifications, relevant skills and experience, and potentially most importantly, a sense of direction in their adult lives.

Many young people lack engagement with education because of its perceived irrelevance, typified by the question routinely posed to secondary teachers: 'When am I ever going to need this?' From an outsider's perspective, it is easy to see why young people cannot grasp the relevance or potential use of theoretical learning. Learners do not know what they do not know, and if they have never had the opportunity to use knowledge in a practical way, it must be hard to see how they can do so. It is therefore important that curriculum leaders, careers advisors and others within schools align learning with real life experience and make it as 'real' as possible. There is an increasing recognition of this need within governmental agencies involved with education.

In July 2013, the Education Review Office (ERO) released a report entitled *Secondary Schools: Pathways for future education, training and employment*, which describes what ERO sees as effective secondary school practices for providing pathways to further study and employment for students. The report describes the changing environment in secondary education in New Zealand, and the growing requirement for teachers to know "what their students can do and where they want to go" (Education Review Office, 2013b, p. 1). One could argue that ideally this would have always been an element of teaching senior secondary school students, and what is in fact growing is the recognition of how potentially beneficial this is. ERO go on to illustrate the need for teachers to know what each individual's barriers to success are, and to stress the importance of career management competencies as well as the values and key competencies described in the New Zealand Curriculum.

Research background

In 1984, in response to a request from the then Department of Social Welfare, the New Zealand Army set up the Limited Service Volunteer (LSV) programme which provided six-month residential courses for long-term unemployed young people, to teach them general employment skills in a highly structured, military environment. The LSV courses were restructured in 1993 and have continued to grow and develop. Seeing the effectiveness of the LSV courses, the Ministry of Education initiated the first Service Academies in 1998. Four low-decile South Island secondary schools were offered the opportunity to run Service Academy courses, which had the aim of working with small numbers of selected school students in a military-style teaching and learning environment. Oversight and funding of these initial academies was later transferred to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). Targeted students for the programmes were those who were considered most at risk of leaving secondary school with no qualifications, and the goal was to re-integrate them to mainstream education or transition them into employment. Today the Service Academy courses have expanded to twenty-six schools nationwide and are mainly funded by the Ministry of Education, with support from the TEC, Ministry of Social Development (MSD), and the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). I was asked to help set up one of the academies at an Auckland secondary school in 2007, and served as its director until the end of 2010 when I became a deputy principal, with the academy as one of my areas of responsibility.

The courses have a teaching focus on both military-specific and general employment skills and students have the opportunity to gain credits toward the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) by completing units of work in these areas. The courses' current format is facilitated by the flexibility and scope of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In addition to the Service Academy coursework, students complete conventional schoolwork including English, mathematics and other curriculum areas such as physical education with mainstream students. There is the potential for individual academies and schools to structure their course content and timetable to suit their own unique requirements.

The learning environment includes a high level of expectation of punctuality, personal presentation and work output from the students. Many of the students involved in the courses have never experienced an environment like this prior to entering the academy. My personal experience, as well as feedback from students and their whānau, indicates a positive response to the physical nature of the programme as well as to the clear boundaries and expectations. This is borne out in research, for example Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) describe the positive effect on learning arising from strong classroom management, and the important role leadership has in supporting this. Anecdotally, many students report gaining educational and vocational direction and feeling an improved sense of self-worth from belonging to such a strong team environment. Some students go on to recruitment into the NZDF - either the New Zealand Army, Royal New Zealand Navy or Royal New Zealand Air Force. Other graduates of the programme have gone into other government service roles, including some who have been recruited by the New Zealand Police and the New Zealand Fire and Customs Services while others have progressed into general employment or further education.

Vocationally-focussed courses (VFCs) are an area that is rapidly growing in New Zealand. One example of this development is the *Youth Guarantees* initiative, which was enacted in 2011, and includes vocational pathways and secondary-tertiary programmes. Trades academies have been set up under the umbrella of this initiative and now run in twenty-two secondary schools nationwide. The Service Academy is one of the many VFCs in the school where I work. There is recognition from teachers, parents, students and employers of the benefits of these types of programmes, and in my experience strong support for them. Other programmes include a Building and Construction School, a Business School, a *Gateway* programme that links students with work experience opportunities and numerous courses that make use of the *Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource* (STAR). These courses are in areas such as Catering, Automotive and Mechanical Engineering. This plethora of vocationally-focussed programmes has been a deliberate direction pursued by the school. It has generated a significant amount of positive publicity and growth and formed a part of the school's organisational culture, and in doing so reflects the values, ethos and direction of the school. It represents a substantial overlap of individuals' governing values within the organisation (Dick & Dalmau, 1999).

This strategy is supported by Athanasou (2001), who advocates early intervention, in particular with students who may be disadvantaged by their background, to outline educational-vocational options. He sees this as critical for tackling unemployment. Stuart Middleton (2009) neatly summarised a requirement for a “porous interface between schooling and what is to follow” (p. 24) in a presentation to secondary principals, and this reflects the two-way nature of the relationship, and the importance of schools building active connections and affiliations with their communities and other stakeholders.

Rationale

Service Academies are a relatively recent addition to the VFC landscape in New Zealand and have undergone rapid expansion in recent years. Although the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) set up the first Service Academies in 1999, there were only the original four South Island Academies until 2007. One of these, the Linwood High School Academy has subsequently closed. Then in the period 2007 to 2010 another eight Academies were initiated by the Ministry of Social Development and since then the Ministry of Education have opened a further fifteen. The Ministries of Social Development and Education, who have funded the courses for the past seven years, collect data that is mainly quantitative; however, they have not released any information describing what they see as effective practice. There has been one short review conducted by the Education Review Office (ERO) (2011), which was positive in the main, and made limited recommendations for further actions, but has had no follow up. I initiated this research therefore to explore what is being done, which elements appear to have a positive influence on outcomes, and to help those setting up and running these courses to improve educational and vocational outcomes for the young people involved. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1999) describe the investigation of factors which impact on school-leavers employment as meaningful because of its importance for the individual, corollaries for society, and the implications for policy-makers as well as for the professionals in careers guidance and education.

This research has focussed on school practices and their effect on the school-to-work transition, with a view to considering the perceived impact of the courses on youth employment outcomes. The purpose of the research was to examine Service Academies as

an example of VFCs, to identify school practices that support their efficacy and investigate barriers to student engagement. I trust that the research will provide schools leaders and those educators with an interest in VFCs with informative background information and useful strategies to aid in developing these programmes.

Research aim and questions

The research aim of this study is:

To explore Services Academies in New Zealand secondary schools in terms of current practice, student engagement and possible avenues for future development

And the subsequent research questions are:

1. What educational strategies and leadership practices support Service Academies in secondary schools?
2. What factors do students and their course directors perceive as leading to successful engagement with Service Academies?
3. How can Service Academy courses be further developed to enhance student outcomes?

Organisation of thesis

The thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter One has presented an overview of this research project, a rationale that justifies the study and an outline of the research aims and questions.

Chapter Two presents a literature review that critically evaluates existing research relevant to the study, under three themes. These themes consider the effect of different factors on students' educational and vocational outcomes.

The research methodology and design are examined in Chapter Three. The methodology is explained and justified, the data gathering methods described and the sources of academic rigour are illustrated.

Chapter Four describes and analyses the data collected. This is done under five themes that were identified in responses. These themes are widespread, reflecting the input of and impact on students and their families, the schools and the external stakeholders.

Chapter Five concludes the study with a summary of the project, a review of the limitations of the research, and recommendations with regards to practice and further study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There is a broad range of literature relevant to this topic, and the studies reviewed here are also widely varied. The literature ranges from narrow and personally-focussed studies, such as psychological studies of how students make decisions (Gurney, 1980; Jung, McCormick, Gregory, & Barnett, 2011) to very broad reports with a focus on policy and strategy, such as the work produced by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (1999, 2000). As a result, much of the literature referenced in this chapter has been selectively reviewed as examples of the research in the particular area.

Gurney (1980) studied 411 school-leavers in Melbourne to examine the impact of unemployment on psycho-social development. Based on this study, he describes a continuum of psycho-social crises experienced by human beings at different stages of life. He claims that adolescents experience a crisis around identity versus identity confusion and that “identity formation is linked directly with occupational choice” (Gurney, 1980, p. 3) . He goes on to state that unemployment places identity under threat. Vocation certainly plays a large part in personal identity – consider how routinely one is asked the question ‘What do you do for a living?’ when meeting someone new in a social setting. Therefore, based on Gurney’s writing, one could argue that helping a young person gain vocational direction, and with it identity, is extremely beneficial to him or her, and a worthwhile activity for secondary schools. Athanasou (2001) agrees, stating that the study of both educational and vocational achievements and the link between them is worthwhile as it has significant impact both on the individual as well as on society. Scarpetta, Sonnet, and Manfredi (2010, p. 4) describe the potential long-term negative effects of unemployment for young people:

... for disadvantaged youth lacking basic education, failure to find a first job or keep it for long can have negative long-term consequences on their career prospects that some experts refer to as “scarring”. Beyond the negative effects on future wages and employability, long spells of unemployment while young often create permanent scars through the

harmful effects on a number of other outcomes, including happiness, job satisfaction and health, many years later.

From 1980, researchers from the Australian Council for Educational Research conducted a longitudinal study of 5,475 Australians born in 1970. School students were surveyed at the age of ten and again at age fifteen. Researchers then followed up with the students regularly by mail until 1994 to assess the effects of multiple factors on educational and vocational success. As part of this, the group were surveyed at age 21 to categorise their job by level of qualification required, for example university degree, diploma, trade certificate or unskilled, and this was compared to other factors of their life and education. Using the findings of this study, Athanasou (2001) describes numerous elements that affect educational and vocational achievement including literacy, numeracy, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, socio-economic status, completion of schooling and vocational interest. The model he developed operates at the initial stages of a person's career. He goes on to categorise the findings into three broad groups of factors, which influence variation in educational-vocational achievements:

1. Factors beyond the student's control such as ethnicity, gender or socio economic status
2. Educational components, including level of achievement, literacy and numeracy
3. The motivating effect of secondary school activities in vocational areas

This research is unusual in that it looks broadly across these three key areas of student educational and vocational achievement, while many researchers have a much narrower focus. In the remainder of this chapter, the literature reviewed around the topic of youth transition from secondary school to the workplace is considered under these three broad categories. Within each theme, the impact of school leadership practices is studied, as well as prevailing school organisational culture.

Theme one - factors beyond the student's control

Many factors that are beyond the control of students have been statistically shown to be linked to educational achievement, and by extension to vocational achievement. Examples

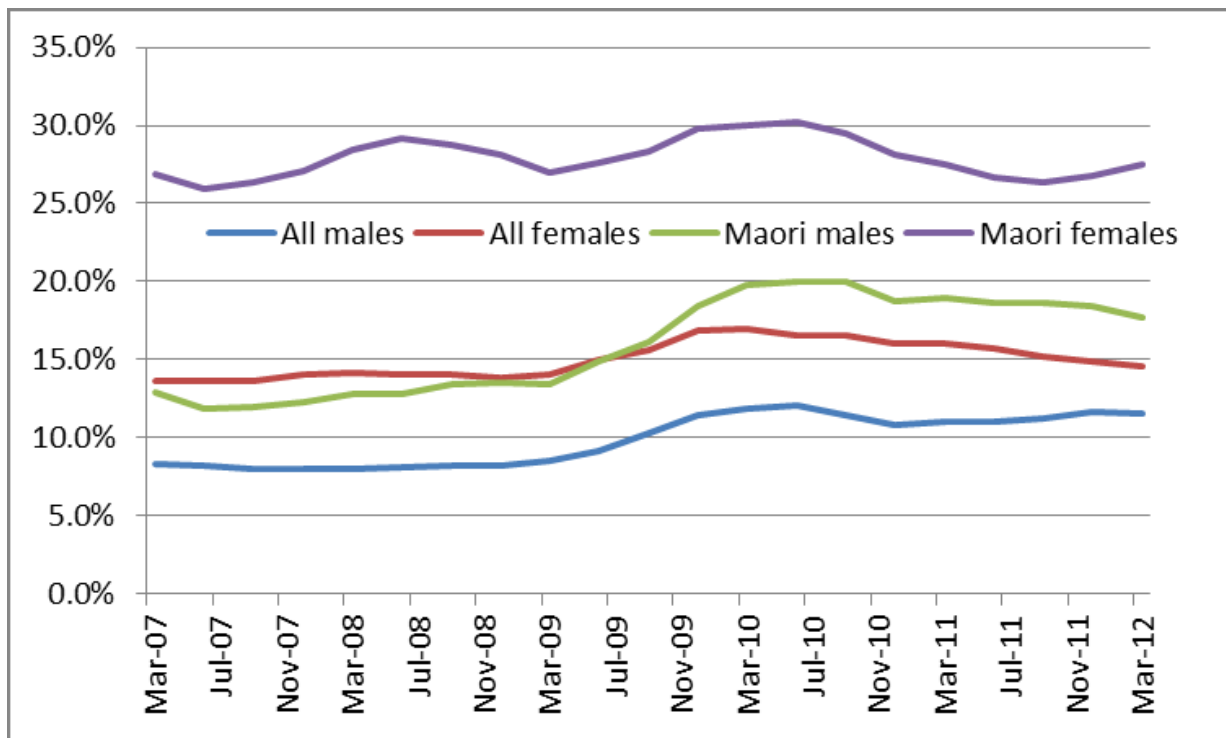
of these factors include gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, health, and family support (Athanasou, 2001).

Ethnicity

There is currently considerable debate about ethnicity issues in New Zealand education, and particularly on the under-achievement of Māori and Pasifika students. The Education Review Office (ERO) defines priority learners as “students who have been identified as historically not experiencing success in the New Zealand schooling system” (Education Review Office, 2012b, p. 4). They include Māori and Pasifika students in this classification, along with students with special needs and those from low socio-economic backgrounds. It is important to remember that some students may match more than one of these descriptors. Middleton (2011) describes priority learners as “young people who do not proceed smoothly through the education system and onto employment. This group comprises a cross section of young people but Maori and Pasifika are disproportionately represented in it” (p. 1).

One example which demonstrates the cause for concern is the ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’ (NEET) statistics for young people, age fifteen to twenty four, in New Zealand. Figure 2.1 shows that for both males and females, young Māori are significantly less likely to be in employment, education or training than the general population, and that these levels are remaining relatively stable over the period of the graph.

Figure 2.1 – Percentage of 15–24 year old New Zealanders Not in Education, Employment or Training, 2007-2012



(New Zealand Department of Labour, 2012a)

The Ministry of Education has responded to this crisis on many fronts. One example is the prescribed National Education Goals (NEGs), which make specific reference in NEG 9 and NEG 10 to participation and achievement for Māori and New Zealand’s place as a Pacific Nation (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2009a). In addition the Ministry *requires* that as part of the strategic planning in their charter, schools incorporate improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students as a group (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2013b).

The requirement for schools to engage with the issue is being evaluated by the Education Review Office (ERO). This year ERO has released their *Pacific Strategy 2013-2017*, which outlines the rationale behind this strategy and how they plan to achieve it (Education Review Office, 2013a). Their strategy’s goals involve the development of evaluative and organisational capacity within ERO to support Pacific learners and to support schools to support Pacific learners. They are seeking an improvement of interagency cooperation, and have an aim of making ERO reports more accessible and readable for Pacific families. Finally

ERO are intending to help schools improve engagement with Pacific families (Education Review Office, 2013a).

Many schools are placing an increasing amount of focus on the importance of family and whanau engagement through programmes such as the *Starpath Project* to improve student outcomes. *Starpath* engages students and their families through academic counselling, which takes the whole picture of the student's schooling into account, including achievement, attendance and goal setting (The University of Auckland, 2011). An important element of this is clear communication between school and home, and the education system can be guilty of baffling the uninitiated with jargon. Gorinski and Fraser (2006) conducted a literature review of what constitutes effective engagement of Pasifika parents and communities in education, and they advocate for "language which is 'parent-friendly', honest and constructive, particularly for those parents who are not native English speakers" (p.34).

Gunter (2006) claims that school leaders and leadership attempt to control rather than embrace diversity, and view diversity as a problem to be managed. This is a relatively negative view of the situation, and some leaders view diversity as an advantage to be explored and enjoyed. Blackmore (2006) describes "capturing the creativity arising from diverse workforces" (p. 184), and Goleman (1995) concurs, depicting "the potential fruits of diversity, in terms of heightened collective creativity and entrepreneurial energy" (p. 156). It is important that school leaders promote an organisational culture that reflects high standards for all students in an environment that accepts and celebrates all.

Support of programmes like *Starpath* not only leads to openness, as engagement with families and community are essential elements but also helps transition young people from school. ERO (2013) urges schools to "increasingly work with family, whanau and iwi to develop student pathways to education, training and employment" (p. 3).

Gender

Girls' academic achievement has shown a steady improvement over the past two to three decades, while boys have largely stayed static, or in some instances declined, both in New Zealand and internationally. In all the 57 countries that take part in the Programme for

International Student Assessment (PISA), girls have higher reading achievement than boys (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.). Lenton (2005) describes an increase in high-achieving females going to academic higher education in United Kingdom through the 1990s, and Athanasou (2001) found that in Australia there were twice as many females working in jobs requiring a degree than males. Females also outnumbered males in jobs requiring a diploma. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Athanasou (2001) found there were more males in jobs requiring trade certification – the traditionally male occupations such as mechanics, electricians and carpenters who typically start their career with an apprenticeship or trade training.

In spite of this pattern, and of the clear links between educational and vocational achievement, the average income for females continues to lag behind that of males. In June 2013 in New Zealand the gender pay gap – the difference between what men and women earn - measured 10.1% (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Rumberger and Lamb (1998) analysed longitudinal studies of more than 30,000 school students in Australia and the United States of America, to compare the early employment and further education experiences of ‘dropouts’ – students who had not completed their schooling. They found that although failing to complete school had an effect on earning potential, in the United States of America earnings varied more by *gender* than by high school completion status. They attribute lower earning by females to the types of occupation they typically held.

Duffy and Sedlacek (2007) identified gender as one of the key factors influencing vocational direction. Their study of 31,731 first-year college students in the United States took place between 1995 and 2004. In it, they studied the variables students believed were most important to their long-term career choice. They found that men tended to place greater importance on making money, while female respondents were more inclined to place worth on roles that they saw as contributing to society. This finding raises the question of how significantly gender is affecting or limiting student career choice and what schools are doing to counter it. The New Zealand Government’s Employment and Vocational Guidance Service ran a promotion entitled ‘Girls can do anything’ in the mid-1980s, but this is a cause that seems to have dropped from sight. It has had no formal Government promotion over recent years, although some tertiary providers have undertaken advertising campaigns under the theme. Cook (2012) writing on the New Zealand Government’s Te Ara (The Encyclopaedia of

New Zealand) website claims that by the mid-1980s the notion of girls doing anything had become widely established. One glance at most building sites or nurses' stations around the country today will most likely demonstrate that while the idea may be intellectually accepted, on-the-ground practice is still lagging behind – nearly thirty years later.

Studies show that schools must practice role modelling the 'girls can do anything' ethos and have diverse people in a variety of roles, including leadership (Blackmore, 2006; Gunter, 2006). In addition, academic and career counselling is crucial. Unfortunately, the battle against stereotypically narrow career choice is not limited to gender. Pressure on a young person can be exerted by their family, and one of the strongest prejudices on career choice can be socio-economic status.

Socio-economic factors

The children of blue-collar families are more likely to pursue blue-collar jobs, just as the children of professionals are statistically much more likely to attend university (Jung et al., 2011; Lenton, 2005). In the eastern European countries that were part of the Soviet bloc in the mid- to late-twentieth century, class reduction strategies were seen as crucial to the ideals of Communism. Strategies such as quotas for 'working-class' children entering university were used, however even in this highly controlled environment, it was found "despite all institutional efforts, children from advantageous family background manage to obtain higher level of education and occupational outcomes (sic)" (Kogan & Unt, 2005, p. 224).

In 2008 the Ministry of Education (MOE) released a comprehensive report entitled *Student perspectives on leaving school, pathways and careers*, which was written by Karen Vaughan of the New Zealand Council for Education Research (NZCER). She reported that the single most significant factor students perceive as useful support in career decision-making is talking with their family about their options. "Generally speaking families no longer necessarily set the parameters of students' career choices in an overt way... however, families do undoubtedly encourage and discourage young people in other ways, through their values, knowledge and networks" (Vaughan, 2008, p. 48). She goes on to state that in the current climate of improving careers advice and guidance, family advice may in fact be

even more prevalent and important as students attempt to make sense of the large amount of information available to them.

There are strong indications that the single biggest predictor of vocational success is academic success (Ainley, 1996; Athanasou, 2001; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Lenton, 2005) however the effect of socio-economic factors on educational attainment should not be under-estimated. Lenton (2005) found that while high academic achievement increases the chances of going to higher academic education, low socio economic status may negate this link, at least in part. Reasons for this could be a lack of value placed in higher education in lower socio-economic families, a financial need for the young person to work, or a combination of these factors.

Another factor that significantly affects both educational and vocational achievement is completion of schooling. In their study of high school drop outs in the United States of America and Australia, Rumberger and Lamb (1998) found that social class inversely affects the student's chance of completing secondary schooling to twelfth grade. They also found that low academic achievement early in school led to a much higher chance of dropout, and that dropouts have more difficulty attaining sustained employment. All of this indicates greater difficulty for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and lends support to their classification as priority learners in the New Zealand system.

Other factors

A person's character and personality can be viewed as a combination of nature and nurture, but in most people our behaviours are innate and ingrained – our personal 'action theories' (Argyris, 1977). Jung et al. (2011) described the effect of personality on academic and vocational success. Some individuals exhibit 'long-term orientation', where they think about things like planning ahead or saving for the future, and this affects their vocational decision-making. These findings were part of research that was conducted to examine the effect of culture and motivation on the career decisions of 492 school leavers in Sydney, Australia. The researchers found that students who have better long-term outlook are more likely to be income focussed and students who are idiocentric are more likely to enjoy their career.

Once again, the importance of good advice, whether from homeroom tutors, a careers advisor or through a mentoring programme is apparent.

Conclusion

In 2010 eighty percent of the total students in the Service Academies were Māori or Pasifika, and seventy percent were male (Education Review Office, 2011). While the ethnicity of the academies is a reflection of the schools they are based in, these statistics also demonstrate that Service Academies are addressing the needs of students who have been shown to be most at-risk.

In conclusion, many factors are beyond a young person's influence. While there may be nothing the student can do about his or her gender, ethnicity, and socio economic status, there are significant actions school can take to mitigate the impact of negative factors and broaden the student's horizons, and it is essential that school leaders consider this in planning (Bush, 2003).

Theme two – the effect of educational success

As stated earlier, there is strong evidence of the link between academic success and vocational success. It could perhaps therefore be argued that schools should be focussing primarily on what they have always done – curriculum instruction. For example, Athanasou (2001) describes the strong correlation between literacy and numeracy scores at school and qualification level of job attained and Stern et al. (1995) link mathematical competency and increased earning potential, postulating that this factor indicates an increased demand for intellectual aptitude in the workplace. Gaining knowledge and experience is described by Kogan and Unt (2005) as the acquisition of 'resources', which develops human capital and improves employment prospects.

Heimler, Rosenberg, and Morote (2012) surveyed 343 students and 92 staff from a California business school and 97 human resource managers who had recruited students from the school. Following analysis of the data, they described eight dimensions of basic employability skills, for predicting career success and advancement. The number one

dimension was literacy and numeracy, and they found that another academic competence, information technology skill was also important. The remaining dimensions were generic employment skills such as leadership and interpersonal skills. These dimensions are discussed in the next section.

Educational leadership must have a focus on curriculum as the core business of education (Bush, 2003), and practices that improve academic outcomes, including numeracy and literacy lie at the heart of good leadership. The Ministry of Education's professional standards for secondary principals have a strong focus on learning, with all four areas of practice making reference to enhanced student learning or experiencing success in learning (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2009b). This demonstrates that although the four areas of management described are disparate – culture, pedagogy, systems and partnerships and networks – student learning must lie at the heart of all educational practice.

Staying at school longer has been shown to improve academic outcomes, and as reported in the previous section, there is a strong relationship between completion of schooling and qualification level of job (Ainley, 1996; Athanasou, 2001; Rumberger & Lamb, 1998). Students are also recognising this link, by not only staying at school longer because there are fewer jobs to go to in the current economic climate, but also because they believe that "...their long term employment prospects would be shaped by the level of education and skills which they attained in their youth" (Ainley, 1996, p. 3). However Ainley (1996) also states that statistical trend of students staying at school longer has deprived some of the opportunity to learn employment skills on the job, perhaps implying that some of the things they are learning at school are not altogether helpful in the workplace. He argues that students who remain at school are deprived of maturation opportunities provided by the responsibility of being an employee. Stern et al. (1995) suggest that the integration of academic and vocational learning, linking school with a structured work experience is a potential solution to this issue.

If schools plan successfully, there is the potential to support young people in times of economic difficulty. In Sweden in the 1990s, the youth unemployment rate did not increase, in spite of high adult unemployment and a decrease in employment for both young people and adults. The suggested reason for this situation was Sweden's adaptable and diverse

school curriculum structure, which accommodates learners of all abilities. It meant that students who may have been tempted to leave school and attempt to find work were able to stay in school and take part successfully in meaningful learning (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2000).

Kaplan (2008) observes that workers striving for career advancement need to self-manage their careers. He offers the following guidelines for career self-management: assessing one's career, skills, and performance; seeking coaches and mentors; having the humility to confront personal weaknesses; having an intrapreneurial attitude; seeking opportunities without putting one's own self interests ahead of the organization; and being willing to voice dissenting views. However skills and behaviours such as self-review, motivation and long-term planning and goal-setting are not typical curriculum content, and this content needs to either be taught in a careers course or even better in the context of a vocationally-focussed programme. These programmes are looked at in the next section.

The guidelines raised by Kaplan are reminiscent of some of the cross-curricular strands described in the New Zealand Curriculum document under the headings 'Key Competencies' and 'Values' (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007). These values and competencies are intended to produce learners who meet the Ministry's vision of confident, connected, actively involved lifelong learners. The key competencies are thinking, using language, symbols and text, managing self, relating to others, and participating and contributing. Attainment of these competencies is intended to not only support learning in school, but to continue to support the young person following transition to tertiary study or employment.

Theme three - vocational learning in school

The task of engaging students in classroom learning is an on-going challenge for teachers, and one of the most effective tools in achieving this is the element of relevance. For senior secondary students in particular, demonstrating clear links between classroom learning and future employment opportunities can draw students in and assist them in making choices and becoming motivated (Education Review Office, 2012a; Stern et al., 1995).

One way schools can do this is through vocationally focussed courses (VFCs). There has been a rapid expansion in the breadth and number of VFCs in New Zealand secondary schools since 2007. Examples currently in use include Service Academies, Trades Academies, Gateway courses, Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) funded courses as well as a wide range of courses run by schools tailored to their individual needs or geographic area such as agriculture and horticulture courses in rural schools.

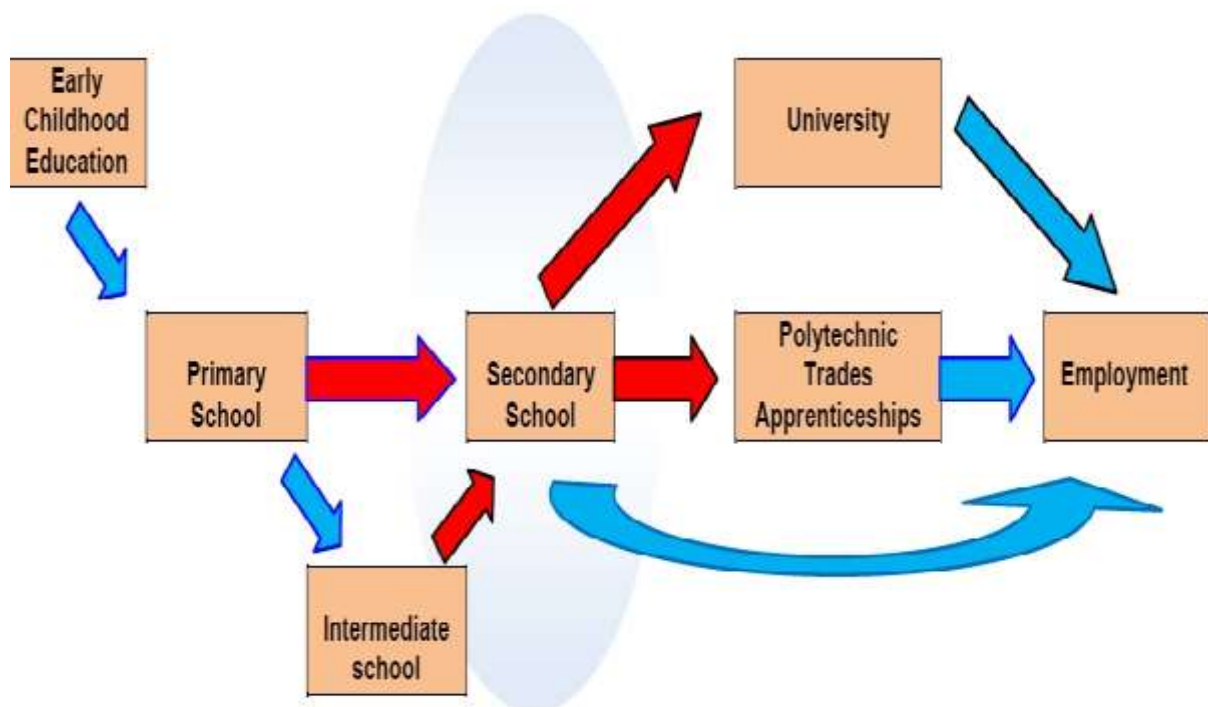
Service Academies, have a specific military focus, as described in the introduction, however some other VFCs are more general in nature, and support the student in their desired career path. The Gateway programs utilise a funded coordinator working in schools, who organises work experience for students in a job area of their choice. This work experience is aligned with curriculum learning so that relevant employment skills and knowledge are attained in conjunction with formal qualifications under the qualifications framework (Tertiary Education Commission, 2013).

The Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) is intended to assist student transitions from secondary school with a particular focus on at-risk students (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2013a). STAR- funded courses are typically elements of regular classes that have been run in secondary schools traditionally, and are aligned with the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC). The resource gives students the opportunity and resource to take part in tertiary-level learning while still at school. This usually takes place through a formalised agreement between the school and a tertiary provider, and takes the form of short courses. Examples include barista courses for catering and hospitality students and health and safety programmes for technology students. These opportunities provide the students with skills, experience and qualifications that they would not otherwise be able to access at most secondary schools.

Trades Academies have been set up in twenty-two schools nationwide and run VFCs with foci in six broad areas: Construction and infrastructure, manufacturing and technology, primary industries, service industries, social and community, and creative technologies. Individual academies run courses in a combination of these areas, depending on the needs of their community and the resources available to them (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2011).

In a discussion paper published on the Ako Aotearoa website, Middleton (2011) describes the history behind this growth in complexity of transitions from school for New Zealand secondary students. Up until the 1970s, students who completed secondary schooling in New Zealand essentially had two pathway options – university or employment. Employment may have included further education in the form of polytechnic courses, often associated with an apprenticeship and carried out as night classes or block courses.

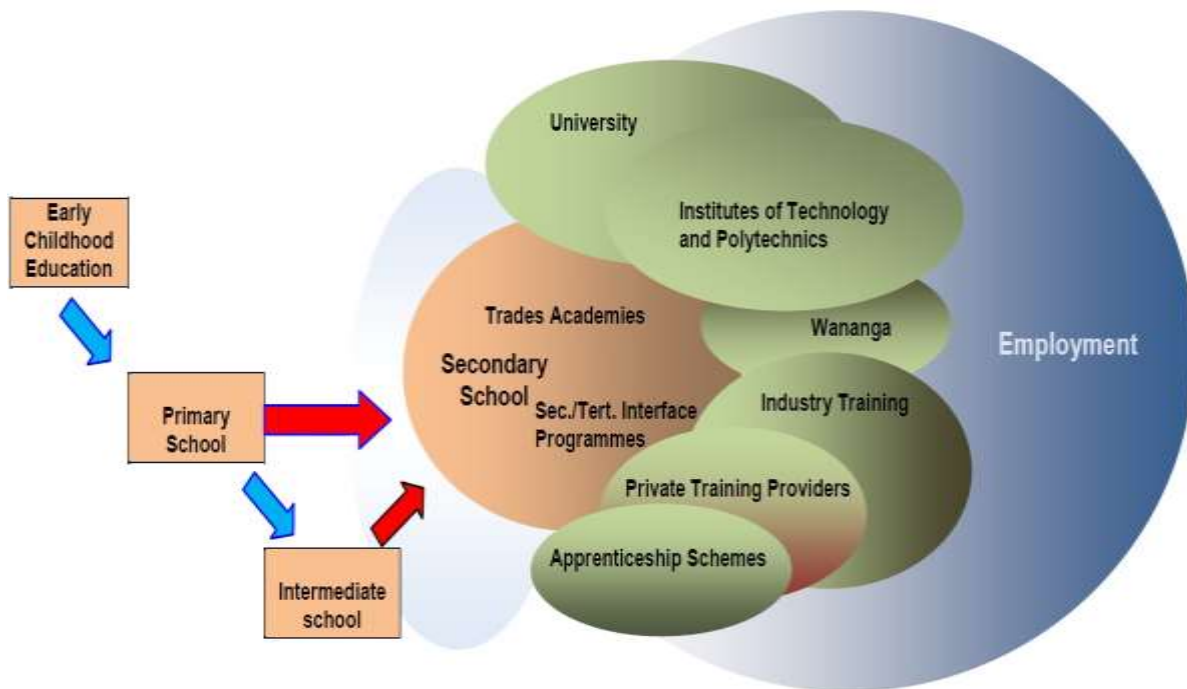
Fig 2.2 Traditional transitions in New Zealand education



Source: Middleton (2011)

A period of development followed, in response to events such as the economic and legislative upheavals of the 1980s and the development of an underclass of disengaged students in secondary education. The resulting picture of modern transitions that has emerged is comparatively complex, and reflects the need for “introduction, induction and socialisation into postsecondary programmes” (Middleton, 2011, p. 12).

Fig 2.3 Modern transitions in New Zealand education



Source: Middleton (2011)

In spite of their current popularity, VFCs are not a new concept – in the United States of America for example, a cooperative education programme which helps students attain paid work aligned to their field of study has been in place for over one hundred years (Stern et al., 1995).

One of the roles these courses play is in giving students vocational direction and allowing them to develop their own work values. Duffy and Sedlacek (2007) describe work values as the outcomes each person wishes to achieve from work, the required components of work, such as interests and skills, as well as non-specific values such as the desire to become financially independent, contribute to society, or work independently. Studies indicate that work values are relatively stable after the age of eighteen; therefore it should be seen as an important task for schools to help students articulate their own work values. This task must be well planned and co-ordinated for maximum effect. The Education Review Office (2012a) describe the importance of school-wide processes to develop the career management competencies of students in their document *Careers Information, Advice, Guidance and Education (CIAGE) in Secondary Schools*, to motivate students to achieve their goals and

ensure the provision of regular opportunities to develop career management skills, and by extension, work values.

The culture of a school has a significant impact on whether vocational courses are encouraged and cultivated, as well as on how students' career needs are met (Basham, 2011; Vaughan, 2008). A traditional, strict grammar-school approach, where students are closely monitored and corrected may produce good academic results, but the development of maturity, self-motivation and work ethic must be questioned. Young people entering the workforce must learn to make decisions and interact with others appropriately (Ainley, 1996). Students who stay on at school are in a custodial arrangement with limited opportunities for development. Rumberger and Lamb (1998) illustrated this pattern by comparing nineteen-year-old employees who had left school early with those who had completed school. They found the 'drop-outs' were earning at a higher level than the high school graduates, which they credited to their longer exposure in the workforce. Perhaps not surprisingly, by the time the employees are in their mid-twenties however, the high school graduates were earning at a higher level.

Heimler et al. (2012) looked at the expectations of college graduates in the United States and found that the students expected to have attained the necessary skills for their chosen profession at college. This issue is also relevant to secondary school students who are planning to enter the workforce directly from school. Heimler et al. (2012) propose that both work ethic and critical thinking contribute to leadership, and they consider leadership skills to be one of the key indicators of career advancement potential. Vocationally-focused courses have the scope to help students develop non-specific skills such as leadership.

Course managers and leaders must carefully plan course content to incorporate all of the critical elements required. Stern et al. (1995) describe the trade-off between these components. On the one hand, a balance needs to be struck between vocational learning and curriculum learning, and within vocational study, there needs to be balance between the acquisition of job-specific skills and general employment skills. Vocational content allows students to gain skills, experience and possibly qualifications that increase employability in the job market. In addition, this is often the work young people *want* to do on a day-to-day basis – this is why they signed up for the course. However, curriculum

learning is essential because, as stated in the last section, ability and achievement in numeracy and literacy are indicators of future success in the job market. In addition, these skills can assist a student to gain formal educational qualifications such as the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). If it is possible to contextualise curriculum learning by combining vocational and curriculum content, this quality is engaging for students and potentially very effective. Students have been shown to make accelerated progress when they can see the benefit of what they are learning as this leads to enhanced engagement (Ainley, 1996; Stern et al., 1995). Combining vocational and curriculum learning has two-fold benefits; on the one hand, concrete meaning is given to theoretical or abstract ideas and on the other hand, it can deepen the intellectual content of vocational study. Contextualising learning to make the curriculum authentic is achievable in all curriculum areas, not just in VFCs.

Contextualised learning plays an important role in the Service Academy courses. In 2011 the Education Review Office (ERO) conducted a short review of the Ministry of Education-led Service academies in New Zealand. Reviewers visited schools, interviewed academy staff, students and school leaders, and examined documentation such as course schemes. The short report they released was entitled *An Evaluation of Service Academies – October 2011*. In the report, ERO acknowledged the successes the academies were having and the value of the programmes for students lacking direction or engagement. They identified a number of future actions to be addressed, including: aligning learning with the National Qualifications Framework where possible to allow students to gain NCEA credits, developing procedures and documentation to improve student transitions and introduce tracking, fostering appraisal of and professional development for staff and creating robust self-review procedures. They described four critical elements factors as being behind the effectiveness of the academies. These were the leadership provided by the academy directors, the quality of teaching in the academy programme, the New Zealand Defence Force's contribution, and the supportive academy culture (Education Review Office, 2011). Many of these elements are reminiscent of the leadership practices described by Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2009), in the Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES) on leadership. These elements include creating educationally powerful connections and ensuring an orderly and supportive environment.

The alignment of the courses with the NQF has the potential to improve measurable student educational achievement, and as stated earlier, improve vocational outcomes. It will also aid students in meeting the minimum NCEA requirements for recruitment into the NZDF, thereby potentially improving their vocational outcomes.

In conclusion, VFCs have the potential to improve student engagement in the short-term, resulting in medium- and long-term improvements in educational and vocational achievement.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents a justification and rationale for the methodology adopted to conduct research in Service Academies. The ontology and methodology are examined, and the research methods described. The reasons I used these methods are justified and the issues of reliability and validity are addressed. Finally, ethical considerations are identified and considered.

Ontological and epistemological position

Research into the impact of vocationally-focussed courses (VFCs) on student outcomes is transactional and subjectivist, meaning that reality is as experienced by the subject, and observations and research findings emerged from the interaction between the researcher and participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Every student begins the programme with different background knowledge and skills; each student experiences the courses differently, and has different outcomes. In some cases, these outcomes will have been deeply affected by the course and in other cases barely at all. As a result, each person's narrative is personal, subjective and unique (Bryman, 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The ontology therefore is a human construct, developed in part through social interaction.

Ontological assumptions are made when conducting research, and perhaps the most important question in this instance is whether the social reality is external and objective, or the product of individual consciousness (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The assumptions made vary according to the research methodology. For example, quantitative research, which operates in the positivist paradigm, assumes that good evidence is based on precise observations or empirical measurements that are reproducible and enable findings to be generalised to other contexts. However, a researcher operating in the interpretive paradigm would argue that while scientific research is seen by some as rational, the frame that it is measured against is itself a construct, therefore "...both science and its corresponding 'truth' are wholly socially and culturally constructed" (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 35). This research takes place in the interpretive paradigm.

The ontology around youth disadvantage is interesting – is it simply a case of young people complaining? “Poor me, life’s hard...” On the other hand, the ‘hard’, empirical evidence, such as the unemployment statistics produced at the start of this paper, would suggest there are genuine grounds for concern; however the *effect* on the individual is unique.

Qualitative methodology

The research explored these matters and due to the complexity and breadth of potential responses, the research methodology was predominately qualitative, with the inclusion of some quantification of base-line data. Most of the resulting findings were idiographic, understanding and assessing individuals’ stories as well as looking at the participants’ accounts of the impact on students, whānau and schools. As a qualitative study, the outcomes and findings are not necessarily applicable across all schools and courses; however the broad patterns established may enable the information to be adapted and provide insights in alternative settings (Cohen et al., 2007; Davidson & Tolich, 2003).

Even data that is apparently empirical, such as that collected by the Ministry of Education to track students’ employment outcomes, is the product of dialogue and open to interpretation. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) recognised this fact in the early days of the Service Academies when they sought written reports of individual student progress. The fact that similar narratives of the effect of the programme were being heard from different academies gave the data reasonable reliability. This example reflects the belief of interpretive researchers that qualitative sources of information are not necessarily better or worse than quantitative data – just different (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

This research methodology does not separate the researcher and the subject, it acknowledges the relationship. This is unlike the positivist paradigm, which is associated with objectivist epistemology. The positivist paradigm portrays reality as existing outside of the consciousness, and is sometimes referred to as reductionist as it breaks complex social interactions down into component parts. It often makes the epistemological assumption however, that these components behave the same in isolation as they do in the whole. By contrast “the interpretative paradigm argues for the primacy of relationships over particles” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 28). It was important therefore to use research methods that

gave respondents scope to tell their stories, and describe the Service Academy programme in the way that they experienced it. The two methods I selected to implement this study were questionnaires and interviews.

Research design and methods

Bell (2007) describes the importance of establishing precisely what the researcher wishes to find out before deciding on data collection methods to be employed. In this particular case, student voice is critical, as school practices can have unrecognised or unexpected effects. Therefore, it was important for me to seek responses from both academy staff, and ex-students who had experienced the transition from the programme.

As a qualitative study, a representative sample from the entire population was not required. Instead, I targeted a purposive sample relevant to the research. In the case of the research into VFCs, there is little point surveying students or staff who have had no experience of them, and are unaware of their structure, function, and desired outcomes. The use of a purposive sample led to 'snowball sampling', where the original respondents generate a larger group of informants (Davidson & Tolich, 2003).

Data for this study were gathered in three ways:

1. Questionnaires for ex-Service Academy students (See Appendix 1)
2. Questionnaires for Service Academy directors (See Appendix 2)
3. Interviews with Service Academy directors (See Appendices 4 and 5)

I surveyed Academy directors and ex-students by an electronic questionnaire to gain baseline data. The questionnaires were developed to gain a broad understanding of the perceptions of ex-students and academy staff around Service Academies. The questionnaire focus was on the research questions; however, there were also open-ended questions to allow free expression of issues that could be explored further.

Following this survey, I interviewed a purposive sample of three directors to gain more in-depth data. I used the research questions and themes identified in the questionnaires as a framework to guide the discussion.

Questionnaires (See Appendices 1 and 2)

Questionnaires were selected as a research method as a large quantity of data can be gathered in a relatively short period, and the data is relatively easy to analyse. An example of this was the use of a Likert scale, in which the respondent ranked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a statement. The responses were pre-coded and then scored to highlight potential issues or common areas of concern (Hinds, 2000). By using an online tool called *Survey Monkey*, respondents were able to complete the questionnaire electronically, allowing me to gather data from a much wider geographical area. This created the potential to identify regional issues, which can be an element affecting educational and vocational outcomes (Athanasou, 2001).

A further advantage of electronic survey techniques was that in almost all cases the questionnaire was delivered directly to the person for whom it was intended, with a covering explanatory letter. The system is therefore direct, confidential and free, unlike using a postal service, and the informant was able respond to it directly.

Important aspects of question development were considered, to elicit accurate information. Questions were written to be no longer than necessary, and the *Survey Monkey* website was easy to use, producing an uncluttered and appealing layout to aid response. Pitfalls I attempted to avoid in questionnaires include hidden assumptions in questions, ambiguity, leading questions and double questions which request a single response to two (or even more) elements (Bell, 2007; Hinds, 2000). The survey was piloted to try to identify these problems.

Questions that were asked around abstract concepts such as 'satisfaction' are difficult to measure or accurately compare responses from different participants. I needed to 'operationalise' the abstract concepts by identifying more quantifiable indicators of satisfaction and ask questions about the indicators (Bell, 2007). An example of this was in questioning former students about whether they felt the school's principal and management were 'supportive' of the Service Academy course. This is an abstract concept as behaviour one ex-student saw as supportive may not have been viewed in the same light

or even noticed by another ex-student. I attempted to operationalise this by following up with a question asking them to describe behaviour they saw as supportive.

As stated, once the questionnaire was developed, it was piloted before sending it out to its intended respondents. Piloting was intended to identify the flaws, as well as providing feedback on the content, structure and 'user-friendliness' of the questionnaire (Bell, 2007). The individuals in the pilot group work with the Service Academy in the same school as me. I had excluded them from providing research data to avoid ethical concerns, however they had the appropriate skills and knowledge, which was similar to that of the respondents who would ultimately provide the research data, and therefore made useful pilots.

I began data analysis as soon as responses began arriving, to save time, and to gain a clear idea of potential themes that would be worth introducing in the next phase, the interviews with Service Academy directors.

Interviews (See Appendices 4 and 5)

The purpose behind interviewing staff was to add depth to questionnaire data in a dialogic manner. As I have been involved with Service Academies for approximately seven years, I have a thorough background knowledge, and this enabled me to conduct semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews look to capture data while at the other end of the spectrum, unstructured interviews aspire to understand complex behaviour (Fontana & Frey, 2005). The semi-structured nature of these interviews meant that while there was a script to follow, there was also the capacity to allow the interviews to flow, and some responses were elicited which may not have been touched on had we been following a rigid set of questions.

This process raised a potential source of bias however, as it would have been impossible for me to remain entirely objective and neutral through the course of these interviews. Fontana and Frey (2005) suggest that neutrality is practically unworkable for an interviewer, and it is more important that an interviewer acknowledge his or her own bias. In the present study, this acknowledgment was straightforward, as the interview subjects have known me professionally for between four and six years.

Fontana and Frey (2005) describe a list of important elements for an interviewer to consider when setting up an interview. These elements include understanding the language and culture of the respondents, deciding how to present oneself, locating an informant, gaining trust and establishing rapport. Once again, my work history in a Service Academy and my own military experience – I served in the New Zealand Army from 1988 to 1992 – made meeting these elements more straightforward than it may have been for a stranger to the Service Academy or military environment.

Data analysis

Analysis of qualitative research involves considering research data and drawing implications from it, by looking at commonalities, themes and patterns in relationships (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006). They describe a process of getting “from data, topics, and questions, on the one side, to answers or propositions, on the other, through intensive immersion in the data” (p. 198). They also recommend remaining open-minded to the information, using inductive reasoning to develop understanding based on the data, rather than relying on pre-existing knowledge and analysis through deductive reasoning. It is important that, rather than simply describing findings, an in-depth framework is described which draws ideas together and can potentially be used in future deductive reasoning. There are many ways of achieving this, and comprehensive analysis needs to employ a range of methods if it is to be accurate and rigorous.

When considering how to analyse data provided, it became even more apparent that the research into Service Academies needed to be conducted qualitatively. Cohen et al. (2007) state that positivistic analysis is problematic in a classroom environment due to the number and complexity of human interactions occurring.

The questionnaires were analysed firstly by repetitive reading, looking for themes and sub-themes in the open-ended question responses, and comparing numerical data from questions that asked respondents to rank the value or level of satisfaction with an element of the course. While the questionnaires were structured, they also left scope for

respondents to identify issues requiring further enquiry, shaping questions for the interviews in stage two.

The interviews were transcribed and the respondents were given the opportunity to check the transcripts. The transcripts were subjected to the same repetitive reading process to identify themes and sub-themes.

Reliability

The reliability of research data relates to its consistency and trustworthiness. This is a much simpler achievement in scientific research, comparing treated subjects with control groups across a representative sample of the population. As stated in the description of the research method, the work on Service Academies included a purposive sample of people who have been asked to participate in the research and had been deliberately selected as “theoretically important units” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 35). While this method did not achieve representative reliability, it does not set out to do so, as the findings are not intended to be generalised across a population. Representative reliability means that a group of subjects will produce consistent results, however while people may react similarly to a physiological stimulus, their emotional and behavioural responses to an event or sequence of events could vary tremendously.

In order to gain a range of perspectives, the director of from every Service Academy in New Zealand, except the one I work with, was approached and asked to complete a questionnaire (See Appendix 3). This intent behind this strategy was to introduce rigour and various forms of validity to the findings (Davidson & Tolich, 2003; Keeves, 1997)

Validity

When questioning the validity of research findings we are asking “Are these findings suitably authentic ... that I may trust myself in acting on their implications?” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 205). Validity, reliability, rigour and authenticity must be built in to the research from the very beginning. In planning the research I sought to achieve construct validity, which

addresses both ontological and epistemological issues and assumptions, and internal and content validities which refer to the research methods and practice (Cohen et al., 2007; Davidson & Tolich, 2003)

Construct validity was achieved through the submission of a research proposal to the Education Department Research Proposal Approval Committee, consultation with my supervisor and the piloting of questions before the questionnaire was sent out. The questionnaire was piloted with people who were experienced in the field, but not part of the research due to existing working relationships with me, and the ethical issues surrounding that.

Internal validity exists when there is congruence between the observations and the theoretical ideas they are based on (Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007). Internal validity was promoted by checking transcripts and analysing data to identify themes that could be compared to and measured against aspects raised in the literature review. External validity is difficult to achieve in a qualitative study, and it is important to avoid making generalisations based on findings.

Triangulation

Multiple observations between different levels such as course directors and students, between different schools, and over time using different methods produced commonalities in findings that supported each other. This is referred to as *triangulation* of multiple information sources, observers and methods of inquiry, and it gives findings reliability and strength. Multilevel research is important in an educational setting to gain a clear picture (Keeves, 1997)

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that questioning multiple subjects using a variety of methods contributes to triangulation, but that triangulation does not necessarily 'equal' validity. While triangulation alone is insufficient to demonstrate validity, one could certainly argue it has a place as a major contributing factor, and Davidson and Tolich (2003) claim qualitative research gains validity through triangulation. The use of quantitative base line

data in conjunction with qualitative methodology in this study lends methodological triangulation to the findings.

Triangulation was sought in three ways: multi-level triangulation by comparing responses of both staff and ex- students, multi-perspective triangulation by gathering data from staff and ex-students from different schools across New Zealand, and time triangulation by considering responses from ex-students who had been in the course at different times. This gave multiple perspective feedback geographically, in time and across differing levels of hierarchy.

Ethics

The main ethical issues raised in this study were power issues relating to the school I work in, cultural elements relating to the interviews with three academy directors who identify strongly as Māori and issues of privacy. These issues were all addressed in the ethics application I submitted to the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC), who subsequently approved the study.

At the heart of ethics is the concept of doing no harm to subjects (Wilkinson, 2001). The idea of 'first, do no harm' is reminiscent of the Hippocratic Oath taken by medical professionals. Harm may take many forms including physical, emotional, or harm to a subject's career. In terms of emotional and career harm, power issues had the potential to come to the fore. Therefore, I did not conduct research in the school I work at, as I am a member of the senior management team. There was the potential for a power imbalance issue that would have arisen if I had sought responses from Service Academy staff who report directly to me. I did however ask them to pilot the questionnaire and provide feedback on it. Had I sought responses from them there was the risk of staff not wanting to be honest with me about things they see as negative in case I 'hold it against them'. They may even tell me what they think I want me to hear, and this would affect the authenticity of the findings.

There were potential cultural issues arising from the interviews with academy directors, who identify strongly as Māori. For these men, their culture is not only a key element of

their identity, I believed it potentially affected the way they run their courses and interact with young people. At the suggestion of the Faculty of Social and Health Sciences Kaihautu Mātauranga Māori, who I consulted with as part of the ethics proposal, interview questions were added on the topic of the importance of cultural identity in student engagement.

Wilkinson (2001) describes loss of privacy as a potential source of harm arising from research. A researcher needs to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity to their subjects by not associating responses with respondents and writing work up in such a way as to make it impossible to identify who said what (Bell, 2007). There is of course the potential situation whereby someone who reads the research findings, and has a close personal or working knowledge of the research environment may be able to draw conclusions; however the researcher must strive to make this as difficult as possible. In addition to the final write up, confidentiality and privacy concerns need to be addressed around secure data storage of both electronic responses and hard copies of written research notes and responses. Electronic mail has built-in benefits in this respect, in that it is normally password-protected, and it can be used as temporary storage for responses. The 'blind carbon copy' (BCC) function means that only the researcher can see the names and addresses of the recipients. In addition, the respondent can send their reply directly to the researcher without going via a third party.

The final ethical considerations that needed to be addressed, was my personal experience in this field, and the fact that I have known some of the subjects professionally for a number of years. Fontana and Frey (2005) describe researcher involvement with the group under study as 'problematic' and it was important to acknowledge this relationship. This was not only ethically important, but it was also relevant to the authenticity of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

Following the email approaches to schools, the initial response from Academy Directors was disappointingly low. After three weeks there had been two responses; however follow-ups eventually produced nine responses. These are designated ADQ1 – ADQ9 in quotes below, denoting Academy Director Questionnaire responses. Directors I spoke to in person indicated there were difficulties around gaining organisational consent from busy principals, not because they did not support the research, but simply due to the other demands on their time. The directors were asked to fill in an online questionnaire, which sought feedback in three main areas of the course: the course structure and its effect on student outcomes, their own professional development, and leadership and sources of support for directors.

There is a strong culture amongst many of the Service Academies of ex-students keeping in touch with each other and with their staff. This is mainly informal through personal contact and social media. I used academy Facebook pages to post requests for responses to the online survey. Respondents were asked to describe the academy experience, and how it affected their transition to the workforce and beyond. As with the directors, the initial response was very low – three responses after three weeks - and I posted reminders. I also asked those who did email me for the survey link to let their friends know. In spite of all of this, I ended up with a total of sixteen responses from ex-students.

Unfortunately, one of these responses was not genuine and that set of responses was removed from the analysis. When I was designing the research method, the department research committee asked how I would identify a false response, given the very public nature of the Facebook request for respondents. With that in mind, I developed the questionnaire with very specific questions around the timeframe that the respondent attended the academy, and which military camp hosted their induction course. As the induction courses have been moved around a lot, and hosted at Burnham, West Melton, Waiouru, Whangaparoa, Motutapu Island and most recently Hobsonville, I could gain an indication of whether a response was genuine by aligning the date they said they were in

the academy with where they said they attended induction camp. The false response simply answered “Here” to the question “Where did you attend induction camp?”, and gave a sequence of responses, which included facetious and offensive answers. I disregarded the entire questionnaire from that respondent and designated the remainder of the Ex-student responses ES1 to ES15. This is a disappointingly low number, considering the hundreds of students who have graduated from the academies.

The questionnaire findings were analysed quantitatively, to assess baseline data, and qualitatively using key words and coding to identify common themes. I found a strong match between director and ex-student responses, showing they shared many opinions and valued similar elements of the course. Common themes were then raised in interviews with three academy directors, and the Academy Director Interviews were coded as ADI1 to ADI3.

Five main themes were identified from the responses; course content, whanau involvement, staff development, external leadership and student transitions to employment. At the core of all themes is the effect on the students’ development and educational and vocational achievement. The data is presented under these headings, however there is cross over between themes and some data was relevant to more than one theme.

The course and its content

Initial course set up

Course content and structure has grown organically in most cases. During the initial set-up phase, most schools were given little or no direction around course structure and content by the relevant government organisation, whether it was TEC, MSD or MOE who initiated the course. Frequently, this set up was required to take place in a very short timeframe, accentuating the problem. One of the newest directors, in a small, relatively isolated location described his experience, which reflected the experience of many directors.

I was given an open book to set the Academy up for the 2012 year, and had absolutely no idea where to start, no guidelines to follow and found it very frustrating. I was not involved or invited to any previous seminars or

meetings so had to rely on what they could relay to me and I used the Internet for information and contacts. I interviewed students over the Christmas period, off site and managed to get 20 students. (School) Management were very supportive, but I felt it was the blind leading the blind. The uniforms arrived two days prior to departure to Induction Camp - this is an example of the pressure we were under. Our PT gear arrived while we were at Waiouru (ADQ3).

The majority of respondents indicated that they had set up their academies by 'making it up as they go along' and seeking support from existing academies. In many cases, they reported falling back on their military experience in the first instance.

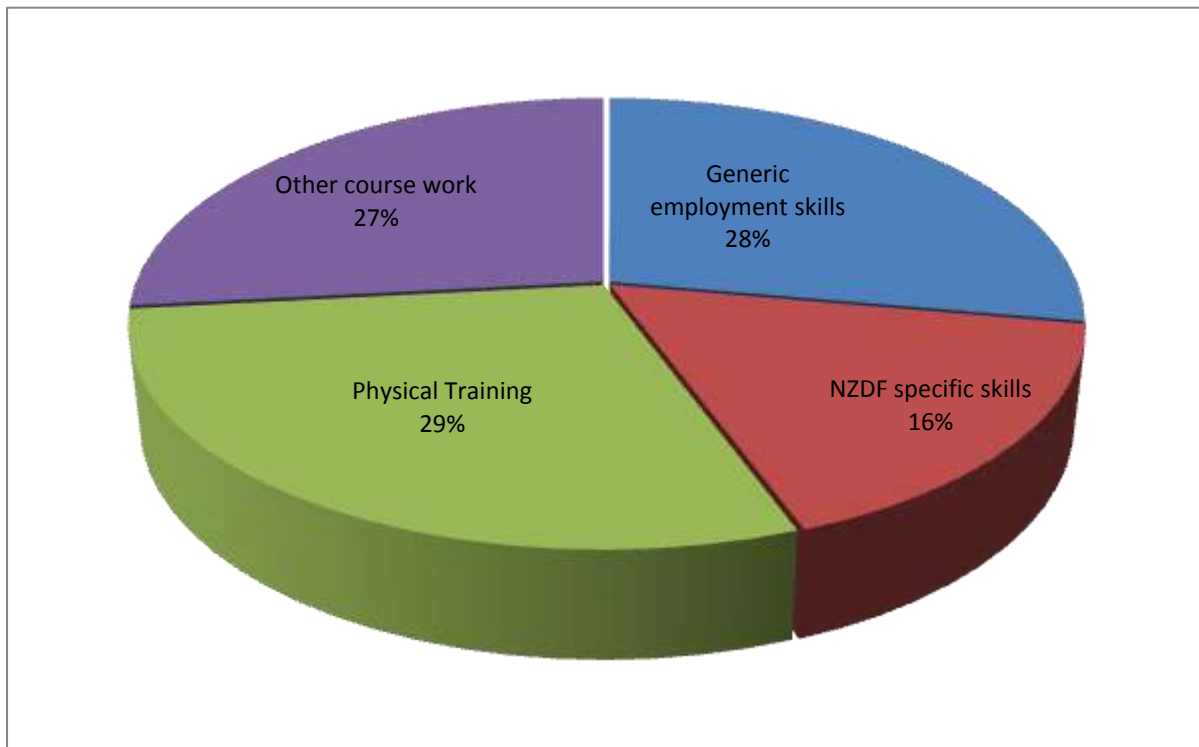
The school gave me no programme, just sixteen kids. I just did what I know, talked about my career, schooling and why I chose the military. I told them a few 'war stories' about my overseas trips, which engaged them. Then I began to develop the course like a Navy Command School course, just broke it down into hours and built it up (ADI1).

This leadership vacuum from the Ministries involved caused a significant amount of concern. This theme is discussed further in the section on external leadership of the academies.

Division of course in terms of teaching areas

In spite of this lack of initial direction, most courses have evolved to the point where they are run along similar lines at present, and all respondents' courses do a combination of the following areas in varying quantities.

Figure 4.1 Average division of course content across surveyed academies (N = 9)



Physical Training (PT) is a critical part of NZDF life, not only because fitness is an important element of the role, but PT also aids in the development of teamwork and leadership, and improves the overall health and wellbeing of personnel. One director commented, “The students gain a tangible sense of achievement in PT” (ADI9).

Core generic Unit Standards involve the teaching and assessing of various generic employment skills, and are seen as valuable because of the skills they teach, and because they give the students an opportunity to achieve NCEA credits. Examples of learning areas include time management, personal presentation and writing curricula vitae. These learning areas have significant relevance to the NZDF and its recruiting processes, and they have the potential to be useful in many other types of employment.

NZDF-specific employment skills, such as foot drill and navigation are learned on camps with the Defence Force, as well as in the school environment. Every director who responded had served in the NZDF, meaning that they have the required skills to instruct in these areas.

Respondents stated that their courses had changed progressively over time, to suit the needs of the community, the experience and abilities of the director and the needs of the

students in terms of recruitment. An example of this was one director who reported that after several students had struggled with the electrical and mechanical components of the NZDF recruit testing, he introduced Science unit standards that gave the students basic understanding in these areas.

Prior to 2010 most students were in the Service Academies full time with some Maths and English built into the Academy programme, however all directors who responded stated that their students now also spend time in other curriculum areas in the school. All reported students taking part in English and Mathematics classes with non-academy students, and many academies' students also worked in other curriculum areas.

It's good that they now do English and Maths at an appropriate level for their achievement (ADQ7).

Some students choose their other courses because of interest, some to gain credits toward NCEA, but mostly they pick courses to improve their chances of being recruited (ADI1).

Examples of courses that were seen as beneficial to recruitment included catering and hospitality for students seeking recruitment as chefs, biology for those wishing to become medics, carpentry and engineering. Both students and directors saw using the existing school structure in this way to add value to the Service Academy course and gain relevant qualifications and skills as worthwhile.

Some students even pick up part-time work linked to their career-focused course. For example, some were working as caterers at Eden Park (ADI1).

The academy groups are normally restricted to twenty students. As this is a relatively low number, staff have time to spend with students on an individual basis giving them and advice and guidance. Three of the nine directors who responded, and one of the ex-students described mentoring or one-on-one academic and career guidance as engaging elements of the course.

Developing one on one rapport with the students regarding career options and guidance is very helpful. (ADQ5).

Small numbers in class make this easier. We ring parents when they're doing good and bad, and encourage attendance at parent teacher interview night (ADI3).

As with the *Starpath* programme described in Chapter Two, academic and career mentoring are very effective methods of engaging with students and their families to improve educational outcomes. One staff member described his students as virtually being on Individual Educational Programmes (IEPs) and he felt this flexibility within the course gave the students strong vocational direction that the students found motivating.

One of the directors interviewed divides his academy into two groups, based on whether the student wishes to seek recruitment into the NZDF. The MOE only requires academy students to go into some form of sustained employment or further education following the course. After the induction camp, which gives students a 'taste' of service life the director individually interviews them and asks if they think they wish to pursue recruitment into the NZDF. A different approach is then taken with the two groups, with the 'military' group spending more time on the NZDF-specific employment skills, and the 'non-military group' being given more intensive one-on-one careers guidance to help them find vocational direction. The non-military group also receive support from the school's Gateway programme to find part time work or work experience in their area of interest. The director stated that since he had been dividing his academy in this way he had improved student outcomes.

It's good for the non-military kids stay in the academy because they often need the behavioural adaptation. The Service Academy discipline stops the mischief kids mucking around, gets them back online (ADI1).

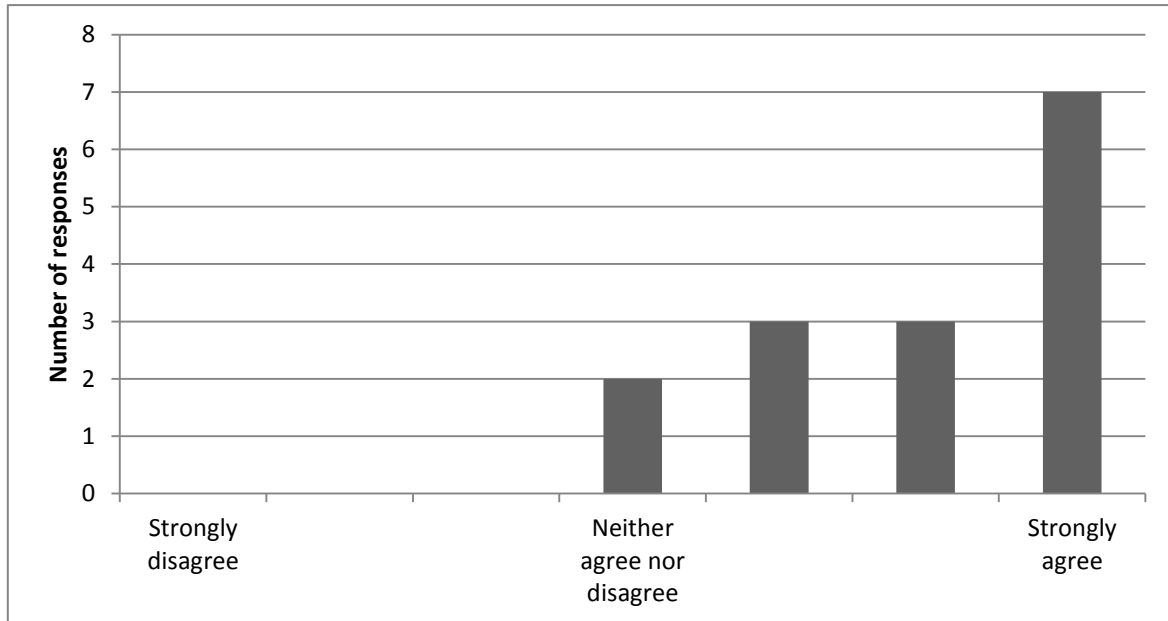
Positive elements of the course

All directors and ex-students who responded either agreed or strongly agreed that there was a positive effect on the students from the discipline and high expectations arising from the military ethos and teaching and learning environment.

(The students) build great individual confidence through military based activities (ADQ5).

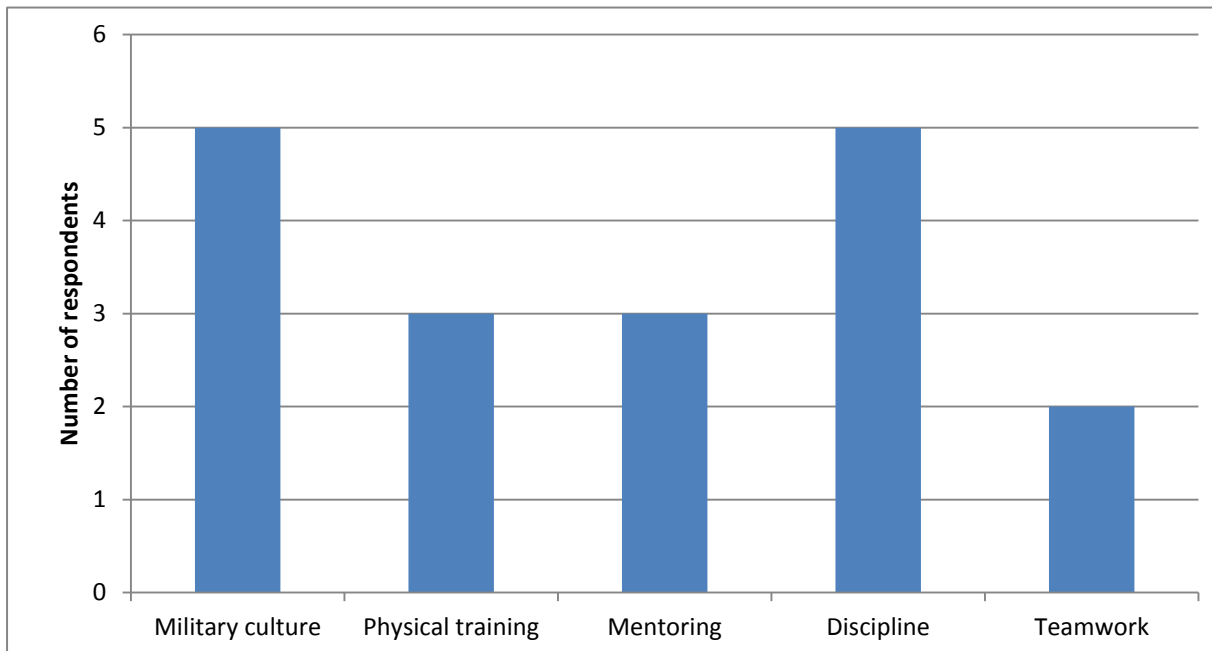
Personal responsibility regarding things like time management, and self-respect are important. (ADQ8).

Figure 4.2 Ex-student responses to the statement “The course content was interesting and I felt motivated to get involved in the work” (N = 15)



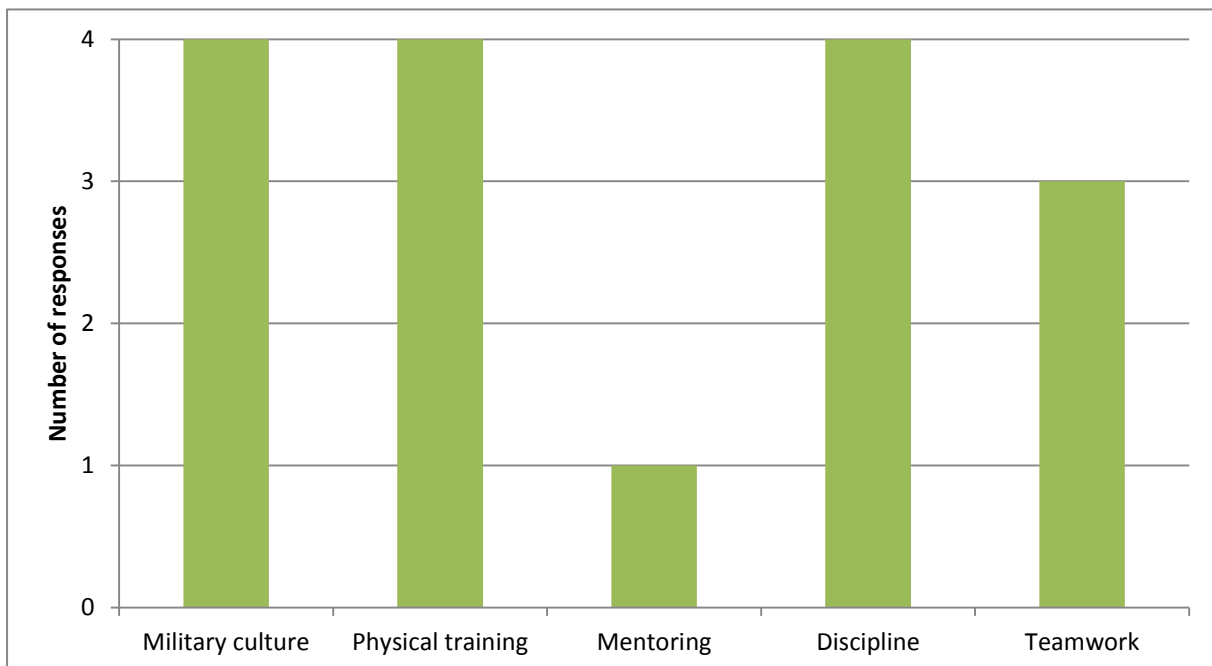
Many of the other elements described by respondents as being specifically beneficial are components of the military environment.

Figure 4.3 Elements of the Service Academy courses that directors saw as effective in motivating and engaging students (N = 9)



(N.B. Some directors provided more than one response)

Figure 4.4 Elements of the Service Academy courses that ex-students described as helping them to achieve (N = 15)



(N.B. Some ex-students provided more than one response)

As described in Chapter Three, the directors who were interviewed identify strongly as Māori. At the suggestion of the faculty Kaihautu Matauranga Maori, I asked them about their perceptions of the importance of cultural identity in student engagement. All three responded that the predominant culture in the academy programme was the NZDF culture, with its associated ethos and values. While there was acknowledgement of, and where necessary allowance made for students' cultural or religious identity and beliefs, all three directors explained that everyone was treated the same way and was under the same expectations.

I don't place too much importance on it, but always show respect and understanding to the students' cultures. The strongest culture in here is the military culture (ADI1)

One example of an allowance being made was a female student of Middle Eastern ethnicity who was allowed to wear long PT kit, in accordance with her Islamic beliefs.

There are many elements of culture in the academy - military culture, youth culture, school culture as well as ethnicity. With the military culture, I want to impart knowledge but have to balance with the fact that they are school students. Acknowledging ethnicity is important, and we do this through ritual and rules, such as the use of karakia. This includes sharing my own culture as well (ADI3).

One of the directors, who works in a school with a large Pacific cohort, did acknowledge, "Being brown gives me an advantage" (ADI2). He went on to elaborate that he thought being 'brown' helped with regard to forming relationships with and engaging with students. He believed that the students were more accepting of him and felt he understood them.

Another example of an important element of military culture, which nearly half of the respondents identified as beneficial, is the focus on personal physical fitness, with its associated confidence and self-esteem. Soldiers refer to being 'fit to fight', and as stated earlier physical fitness is a key element in operating efficiently in a defence role. There are also however the associated psychological and health benefits of being physically active,

and both directors and students believed there was a relationship between improved attendance and work output, and improved physical fitness.

One director believed improved classwork stemmed from students “not being glued to a chair all day” (ADQ4). Interestingly directors reported that they used physical training (PT) as both a reward – ‘finish this work and we will go out and play touch rugby’ – as well as ‘corrective training’, a euphemism for punishment. Examples of this included repetitions running up hills and carrying heavy gear such as logs or vehicle tyres. There was however, recognition from one director that it is important to exercise caution and to not turn students against PT.

The Service Academy programmes all have a strong focus on teamwork, once again reflecting the defence force ethos. Teamwork also provides an opportunity for students to gain NCEA credits, as there are core generic Unit Standards that assess candidates’ abilities in participating in and leading a group to complete tasks. In the academy environment, directors and ex-students both believed effective teamwork translated into improved individual academic performance and engagement.

One interviewed director described teamwork as one of the single most beneficial aspects of the course.

Students who entered the workforce, both the DF and general employment, say they had learned how to work with others, both people they don’t know and individuals they would not normally interact with (AD12).

Ex-students described learning how to look past who people were, and focus on the task that needed to be done.

Induction camp (was beneficial) as it involved a lot of team work. I say this because I was in a class that had different interests and personalities as well as different backgrounds. The course helped to see past that as well as accept it which helped to focus on what was important (ES4).

Being able to lead and work in a team has helped immensely in my job (ES9).

All directors felt the Service Academy course had either a positive or a strongly positive effect on student learning and behaviour in other areas of the school. Staff respondents mostly described improved work ethic and engagement, as well as specifically mentioning improved attitude and attendance, including from students who had previously been at risk of not achieving or even exclusion.

After the initial grounding period where ethos and values are established, our students tend to be the ones looked up to or towards by other students and staff (ADQ2).

The (academy) students are more mature and become more responsible for their actions (ADQ6).

Once again, the military culture in the Service Academies was given credit for this. Traditionally the academies have very high expectations of punctuality, personal presentation and work ethic, and directors believed these habits continued into other areas of school and beyond. One staff member described feedback from a sports coach, who had commented on the benefits of improved fitness of academy members as well as the development of leadership, responsibility and maturity.

Many directors believed the programme had significant positive effect on students who had otherwise been at risk of not achieving.

Since the start of the programme, the school has seen remarkable changes in attitudes from students who might normally be excluded from the school (ADQ7).

The students I have, who have come from mainstream are often not achieving and would have frequently been truant. If it wasn't for the Academy these students would not be achieving (ADQ4).

Ex-students agreed, describing themselves as becoming more motivated by the challenges the Service Academy provided.

I loved the discipline in the course. Each day I was motivated to square my uniform away and make sure I had everything I would need for the day's activities, which I did not do prior to joining the Service Academy. I felt that each day held new challenges and new information to learn. I found the course content to be very interesting and relevant for my future career choice (sic) (ES1).

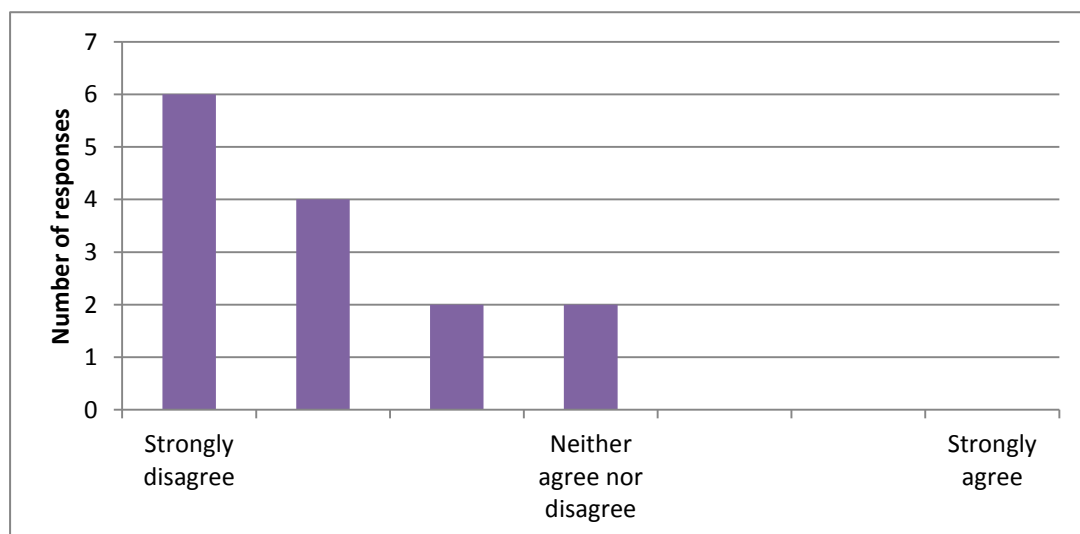
(The course) raised my standards in the way I presented myself around the school (ES4)

Some students began comparing themselves and their achievements against their fellow students in the mainstream

I feel as though we were more respected than other students at school. We took pride in our appearance and not being late etc. There was a higher expectation for us and I felt as though that commanded a little more respect and support from senior management (ES12).

(The course) encouraged me a little more and I became more aware of peers around me who were not as motivated to do something with their life after school was finished (ES11).

Figure 4.5 Ex-student responses to the statement “The course had a negative effect on how I worked in school generally” (N = 14)



One exception was an ex-student who commented

I began to focus more on the Services course and fell behind a bit in my other subjects (ES10).

Ex-students were surveyed about specific staff activities that motivated them and led to engagement. As with the directors, there was a strong response around the impact of the NZDF culture and the elements of the NZDF values of courage, commitment, comradeship and integrity. Ex-students reported high expectations of accountability, having personal responsibility regarding elements such as time management and overall high standards.

Staff were consistently supportive and there was an expectation set for all students to achieve (ES9).

One ex-student even described corrective training as an aspect he or she valued. Students valued having a clear and realistic career path, and staff using their experience to assist with the recruiting process. Once again, PT and the balance between classroom theory and practical activities was strongly reported.

Another motivating component of the course described by ex-students was the chance to work with and compete against students from other academies at camps, on courses and in sports competitions. Students reported making friendships that had lasted into the workforce, particularly for those who were recruited and went away to basic training together.

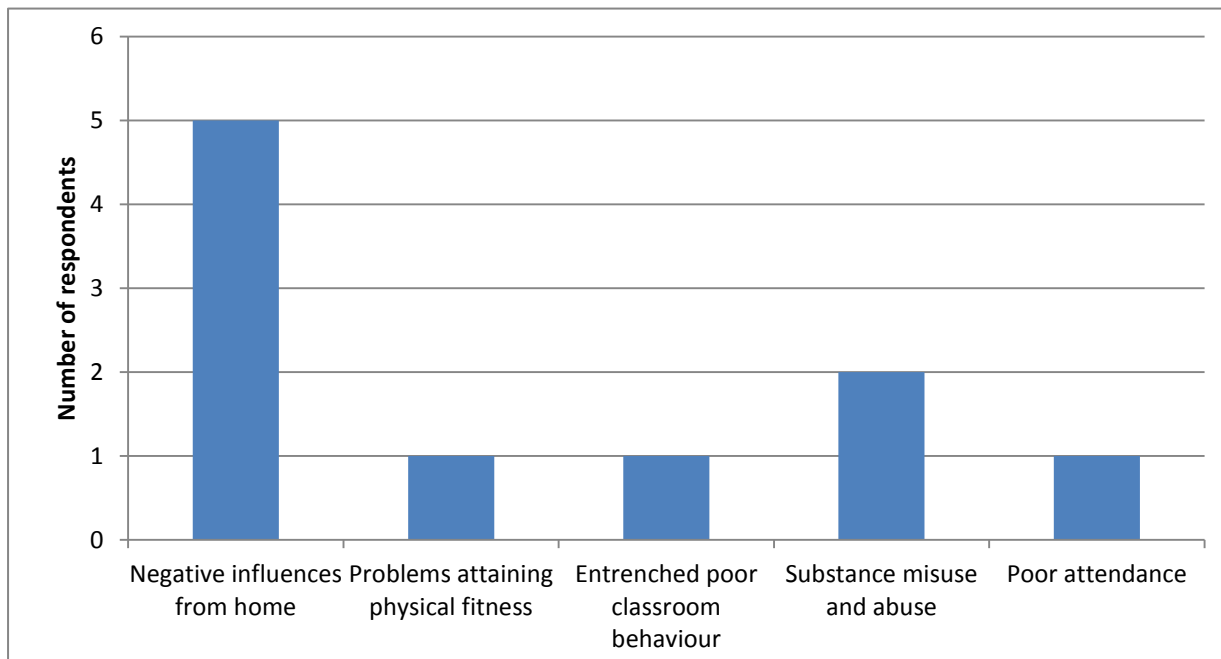
Getting to meet a bunch of new people outside my normal social group and from other schools was awesome. This helped me in my Army career when I met people from other Service Academies who had also joined (ES2).

Negative elements of the courses including barriers to student engagement

Barriers to engagement are frequently individual, and need to be addressed discretely and discreetly. Respondents identified a range of barriers, most of which were not easily dealt with. The most commonly described barriers were elements arising from outside of the

academy environment, and they are discussed in more depth in the next section on whanau engagement.

Figure 4.6 Elements directors saw as barriers to student engagement with the course (N = 9)



(N.B. Some directors provided more than one response)

It is important to remember when looking at these responses that many students have the Service Academy course recommended to them because they are already disengaged with school, and it can be very difficult for students to turn around deep-seated behaviours.

Both staff and students described problems around perceptions of inconsistency in discipline and expectations. These arose between the NZDF camps and school, between the Service Academy and other curriculum areas and between different staff. One interviewed director described walking a fine line between “not treating the students like soldiers, but not treating them like ordinary students either” (ADI3). Many respondents, both staff and ex-students, described the highly disciplined environment in the camps as beneficial, but said this was not always maintained when they returned to school.

The discipline was good at the camps and gatherings with the other academies. The course helped me maintain a better lifestyle and gained life-

long skills that make you crave the NZDF environment. The only thing was that in the classroom in my last year, there needed to be more structure to the lessons and discipline at times (ES15).

In the camps, the students are in a highly controlled environment twenty-four hours a day, however once back at school the difficulty for the director becomes the return of other potentially negative influences such as peers, the home environment and substance availability.

Within the course itself, all but two directors felt that their students engaged with all of the course content. The other two responded that some students were difficult to engage with the academic and written aspects of the course, and that students became much more involved during PT or other physical, outdoor activity.

The students found the academic, in class work least engaging. Just because the bulk of our students are "Hands On" and don't enjoy the classroom as much as they do being out and about (ADQ1).

One director wrote that many students who entered the programme were looking for something different, and were disengaged with school. They were aware that there is a comprehensive physical component of the course, and were not prepared for the fact that they still needed to take part in written work in class as well. He described the least engaging element of the course as "anything to do with a pen" (ADQ5).

One ex-student respondent reported having difficulty with the physical component of the course and struggling with a negative body image. That respondent's overall comments on the course were very positive however.

A factor causing concern, which has arisen from the introduction of course work in other curriculum areas of the school, has been the loss of class time when attending academy courses and camps. In a typical school year, an academy student would attend a two-week induction camp, a one-week bush-skills camp, potentially a one-week leadership camp and multiple sports days, visits to NZDF bases and other EOTC activities. This was not an issue when the students were in the academy full time, however some directors reported being

pressured by other school staff, management and even sports team coaches to not let some students go on some trips.

I try and make the students catch up with missed work using Service Academy class time, but it is up to them to be organised and motivated enough to do it. I can't keep track of every single student's missed work (ADI1).

In summary the negative responses and descriptions of barriers to engagement were immensely outweighed by the positive responses. The respondents – both staff and ex-students – frequently wrote “Nil” or “Nothing” in response to questions about work students had not engaged with or areas for improvement. While this is very encouraging for staff involved with the courses, it is important not to become complacent and to continue to seek improvement.

Whanau involvement with the course

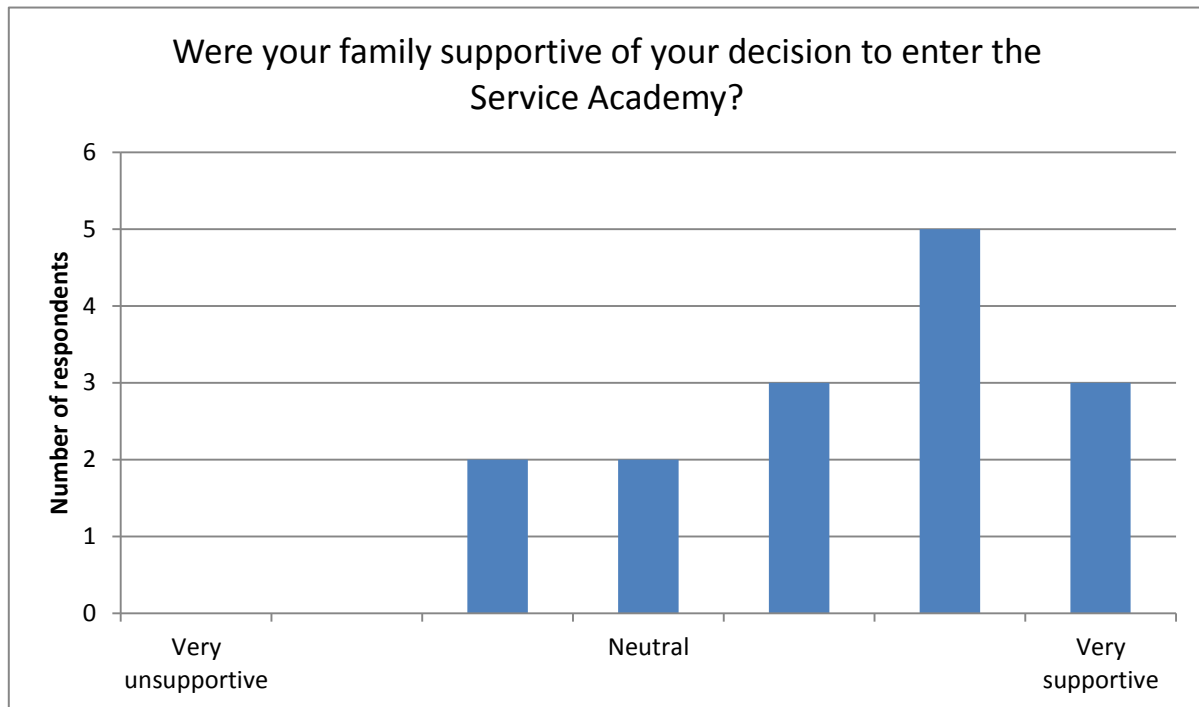
Two of the three directors interviewed described engagement with family as an extremely important element of their course.

It is probably the single most important element, right from the start. And don't just send letters home, eyeball them. Be hands on and proactive, we ring them up, invite them in, feed them. (ADI1)

The remaining interviewee acknowledged its importance but also stated that some families preferred to “just let the school get on with it” (ADI2).

Ex-students were surveyed on the level of support from their family to their entering the Service Academy.

Figure 4.7 Ex-student responses to the question “Were your family supportive of your decision to enter the Service academy?” (N = 15)



Some ex-students stated that their family expressed surprise or even concern at the idea of their young person joining the military; however, most could still see the benefits.

It was a bit of a surprise for them at the time, but they supported me (ES2).

Another concern described by an ex-student was that his or her family was apprehensive that entering a vocationally-focused course would have a detrimental impact on his or her overall education.

My family were reserved because they wanted me to focus on the education side of school, however I was not motivated to attend classes and school work began falling by the way side for me (ES3).

One of the directors interviewed described a conversation with a parent who assumed that entering the Service Academy meant that his son would not be able to attend university, which is not the case at all. It is reassuring to note that the research conducted for this study has had a strongly positive response that the Service Academy programme is in fact beneficial to other areas of learning.

Whanau provided different kinds of support with one ex-student describing his family members taking part in fitness training.

My family helped me with my fitness so that I could pass the entry fitness test. They believed that the Service Academy was the best course at my high school and would do wonders for me even if I had not have gone into the Army (ES1).

Unfortunately, the barrier to success most commonly identified was the home environment. Staff described concerning behaviour ranged from substance abuse and involvement with gangs or other criminal activity, to enabled truancy.

For a few students, whanau and other elements of the home environment can have a major effect on their achievement. These problems are often deeply ingrained (ADQ9).

(Barriers include) family issues, girlfriend issues, behavioural issues. Those with difficulties get into trouble before the programme has had a chance to make an impact (ADQ5).

Another barrier I have encountered is the "sibling" dilemma where families have to go to work and the students have to stay home to look after their siblings instead of coming to school (ADQ4).

... family can sometimes pull them down so it's important to educate the family (ADI3)

It was noted that part of the effectiveness of the induction camps was that for two weeks the students were in a controlled environment, where all they had to deal with was getting their job done. Induction camp is a difficult time for the students; they are placed under physical stress, made to work with people they do not know, sometimes in adverse weather conditions and without a lot of sleep. They are placed under time pressure to achieve tasks. It is, in essence, a 'watered-down' version of military basic training, yet for some students it is an extremely beneficial break from their normal environment and peer group, which shows them what they are capable of achieving.

It is not unknown to have young people going through withdrawal on camp, whether that be from cigarettes, alcohol or something worse (ADQ8).

While it is unreasonable to blame all of the negative outside influences on family, the feedback clearly shows that engaging with family is beneficial in addressing these issues.

Director development

All nine directors who responded had experience and instructors' qualifications in the New Zealand Defence Force. Training personnel as instructors is a strong part of the culture in the NZDF. Promotion is gained through a combination of time served and leadership potential, and once personnel gain seniority they are expected to impart their wisdom and experience, both formally and informally to assist in the development of others. Only one of the respondents had formal school teaching qualifications.

Two of the three directors interviewed expressed an interest in taking part in tertiary study in education, with a view to potentially completing teacher qualifications. Both saw this as an area of personal and professional development however, which was not vital to their work in the Service Academy.

I am thinking about teacher training, but my plate is very full and I am worried it would have taken too much time away from students (ADI3).

I would like to do teacher training or education papers on a part-time basis but I don't have the time or the money (ADI1).

A factor encouraging one of the directors was that he would not have to keep applying to the New Zealand Teachers' Council for a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT) on an annual basis.

Directors reported excellent support from their schools around the availability of professional development, both within school and through external courses.

There's heaps of PD available, both in school and externally if there's money available (ADI3).

One of the interviewed respondents has been appointed as the school's Māori dean, and he has taken part in a significant amount of professional development in support of this role. The fact that the school approached him and asked him to consider the deaning position, in spite of his not being a formally qualified teacher, demonstrates the value the school places on his work as Service Academy director and the strength of his pastoral care.

I think the boss liked what he saw going on in the academy and thought I could have that effect on other boys around the school (ADI2).

Many respondents described apprehension when first teaching teenagers, however most reported that they began by using the instructional methods they had learned in the Defence Force, and the students had responded well to it. Over time, these methods had been adapted; however directors still felt that maintaining the core nature of the military environment in the classroom worked well, and was an environment that the students expected, enjoyed and responded to favourably.

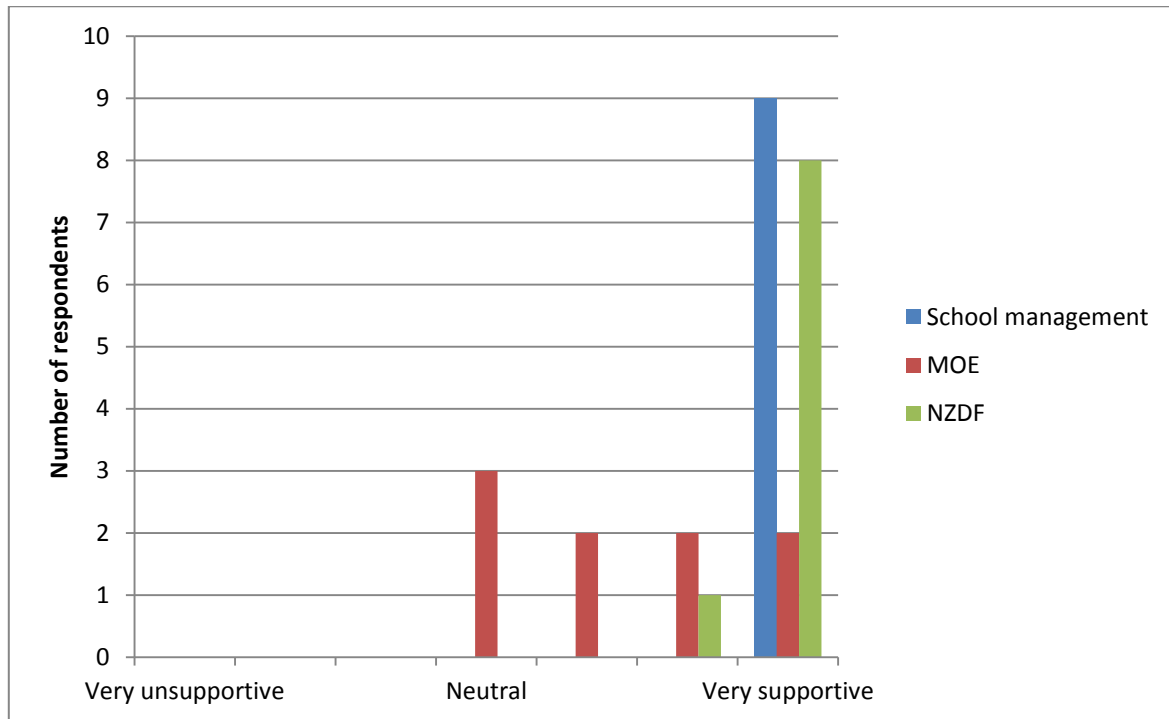
Initially I just started the same way (as the NZDF). It was an instructor / trainee relationship, with high levels of direction and high levels of support. The young people really responded to it. (ADI2)

External Leadership and Guidance

As described earlier, due to their lack of school experience and teaching qualifications, directors frequently required support and leadership, particularly in the early days of setting up their academies. They sought this from a range of sources, both within school and externally.

Directors were surveyed about the level of support they received from three main sources, their schools' senior management, the Ministry of Education who fund the course, and the New Zealand Defence Force who are contracted to provide camps and courses.

Figure 4.8 Directors views of the current level of external leadership and support of academies from the schools' management, the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Defence Force (N = 9)



Support from school management

Directors were asked about the level of support from school management both when the programme was first initiated and now. All but one academy director described their school's management at the beginning of the programme, as 'supportive' or 'very supportive'. The director who lacked initial support did not have academic support, in the form of a Maths or English teacher for the group. He was expected to take these lessons himself, in spite of having neither the qualifications nor experience to do so.

Initially there was a lack of teacher support to teach maths and English and a lack of curriculum support to teach other subjects. There was a lack of support to help me be a better teacher and I felt the management were turning a blind eye to these areas (ADQ5).

He persevered however, and with some persuasion from the Ministry of Social Development, who were funding the course at the time, the school raised its level of

support. In the interview, this director stated that he also felt things improved, as the school management recognised the value of the course.

They could see the change in terms of positive behaviour and improved attendance from students who had been pretty difficult (ADI2).

It should also be noted that there has been some significant personnel changes in the senior management team of that school. All nine directors who responded described their school leadership as 'supportive' or 'very supportive' now.

Directors described a wide range of activities as supportive. This included the provision of assistance with course planning and managing administrative tasks such as markbook entry and reporting, mentoring and guidance, which included performance appraisal, visiting the academies regularly and speaking with the students and facilitating the use of school amenities such as gymnasiums.

The principal always talks to our crew in passing. He attends parades we do, and an open door policy is in place (ADQ1).

The SMT give me regular positive feedback on personal performance, positive feedback on the Academies overall performance. They allow me to get on with my job (ADQ9).

Three directors commented that while school leaders supported them well, their management style was not prescriptive or autocratic, and the director was given the scope to develop and run the course as they saw fit. Two directors said that their management had an 'open-door policy' and that this was beneficial and supportive.

Both directors and ex-students described principals' public acknowledgement of academy successes, visiting the academies and attending events such as march-out parades and sports days as supportive behaviour. Ex-students felt this led to the development of motivation for the students and mana for the group.

The principal was very supportive and would frequently visit the Academy. Our exploits were brought up in assembly often (ES1).

Ministry of Education (MOE) support

Many of the directors who responded expressed gratitude for the initiative and the financial support, however there were a significant number of concerns at what they saw as a lack of leadership and direction from the Ministry of Education (MOE).

There has been minimal contact by MOE during the year and no collective meetings between the MOE and Directors (ADQ7).

As can be seen in Table 4.8 on page 58, the MOE ranked significantly lower than school management and the NZDF in terms of their level of perceived support. MOE normally have a staff member who is the main point of contact for directors, and there has been a high turnover of staff in this role. This has resulted in inconsistencies in information and a general lack of communication.

Support has diminished somewhat since departure of (the most recent Ministry contact person). Currently there is very little contact with MOE (ADQ2).

The MOE was described by one director as “very hands off” (ADQ8) which suits some staff; however others felt they needed more support.

Some directors expressed concern at the lack of a structure to enable recognition of work in terms of qualifications. While this is primarily the role of NZQA, directors felt that leadership was needed from the MOE in promoting this. This had been happening, but was thwarted by a change of personnel at MOE

We were working toward a formal Service Academy qualification, recognised by the NZDF as an ‘attestation of service readiness’, but then the old MOE contact left and the new one did an about face and said we don’t need another qualification (ADI3).

The programme needs a bit more standardisation (which is being worked on) to allow potential employers to see that students that do an Academy

programme regardless of venue, will be of a high calibre and should always be considered. At the moment, the differences in Academies is too broad for them to be able to do that (ADQ1).

The phrase 'which is being worked on' above refers to ongoing communication between some directors and NZQA to try to address the qualifications issue. One director described the interaction with NZQA as "very long and frustrating" (ADI3).

The final concern raised was around the fixed term nature of contract between schools and MOE for the academies and the resulting uncertainty for directors. One stated "stability in employment is an ongoing issue" (ADQ6). It could be argued however, that the Ministry should not be held accountable for this, as this is a political decision from the Minister, over which the Ministry has very little control.

New Zealand Defence Force support

The leadership and support provided to the academies and their staff by the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) is very highly regarded.

Great staff, students have immense respect of NZDF staff (ADQ6).

Well managed courses, professional and patient Defence Force staff. They listen to the directors and implement changes as required. Flexible and friendly (ADQ8)

Both directors and ex-students reported significant benefits gained from induction camps as well as other programmes such as leadership courses. In addition, the NZDF provide further support by coming into schools to help with instruction in NZDF specific skills like foot drill, and loaning academies kit like outdoor equipment to take on camps. Several directors noted that the students have great respect for the NZDF staff and see them as role models.

The camps are always well received (ADQ2).

The introduction into the service life style through such events as the induction camp in Hobsonville and meeting different military personnel was a good eye opener to the people in the NZDF (ES6).

Some directors expressed concern that students do not gain NCEA credits from camps, even though it is possible to apply some activities undertaken like high ropes and tramping to Unit or Achievement Standards. One of the issues is that often the school and the NZDF are not accredited providers of the relevant standard.

The time has gone where students come to these courses and take away the experience and a certificate which means nothing 5, 10 years down the track. I want my students to come away from these course with CREDITS or Verifications that go towards their NCEA results. Whanau also (some) are also questioning this (ADQ7).

The Youth Life Skills (YLS) cell, who run the camps and courses, was working toward rectifying this in 2009, and 2010. Unfortunately, the 'civilianisation' of the NZDF had an extremely detrimental effect on YLS and its parent unit, the Youth Development Unit (YDU) who also run the Limited Service Volunteers (LSV) courses. Significant numbers of key personnel, including some with more than twenty-five years' experience, were either made redundant or 'restructured'. This change was simply a money saving exercise, which has since been criticised by the Auditor General as ineffective and having a detrimental effect on morale and operational capacity (Watkins, 2013). This loss of key staff terminated the development of NCEA-aligned course work on camps. It has recently been raised again by both directors and NZDF personnel as an aspirational ideal.

Other sources of support

Aside from school management, the NZDF and MOE, the primary source of support and leadership for many directors is other academy directors. For example, one director stated "Other directors in the region are my main source of support" (ADQ4) and another listed "other directors" (ADQ6) as his only source of support, aside from the main three discussed at the beginning of this section. Respondents described open sharing of resources and documentation and strong collaboration between directors. In addition, several

respondents described receiving support from other departments within schools, with Physical Education being mentioned most frequently.

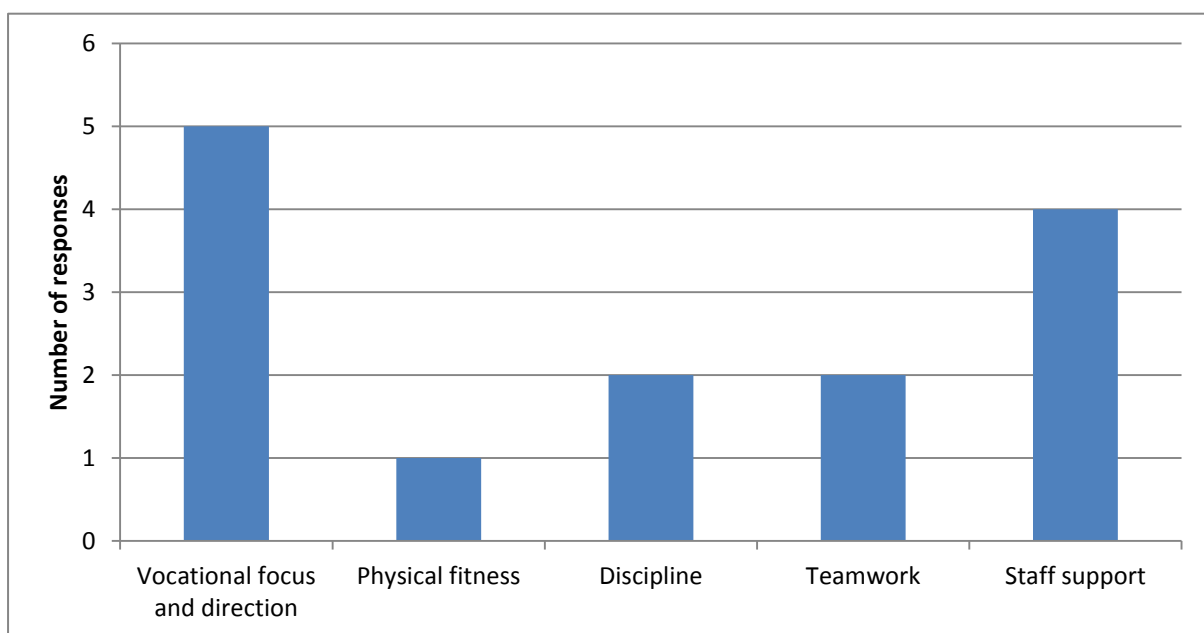
PE Department allows us to utilise their spaces if enough time is given in advance (ADQ5).

Other sources of support described included the New Zealand Police and Fire Service, who both now have ex-service academy students in their ranks, and the Duke of Edinburgh Award organisation along with its supporting bodies such as the Joshua Foundation.

Student transitions

All of the ex-students who responded went into full-time employment upon leaving the academy. Each respondent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements 'Things I learned in the academy helped me to get a job'. They described a number of individual components that they felt contributed to their transition to work.

Figure 4.9 – Course elements ex-students viewed as assisting transition to employment or recruitment into the NZDF (N = 14)



The NZDF recruiting process is long and complex. It can take more than six months, and includes an initial application form, a written autobiography, a one-on-one interview with a recruiter, testing in English, mathematics, logic and problem solving and mechanical and electrical knowledge, a medical and physical examination and a fitness test. Knowing what to expect and ways to succeed is valuable to young people entering the process.

Students described the value gained from directors using their own military experience to assist the student through the recruiting process.

My academy staff were both ex-army so their help was invaluable. They aided me in one on one physical training, ran us through mock entry tests and gave us a good base discipline through drill and fair punishments (when we got in trouble) which helped me get my job. They also drove me and my academy mates to and from appointments with the recruiters if we could not manage to get ourselves there (ES3).

Once again, this shows the value of mentoring by academy staff and the NZDF culture within the academy. Vocational direction was also seen as important with one director describing “The focus on the NZDF as a pathway, the students experiencing it first-hand, the fact that the course gives the students vocational direction” (ADQ4) as key elements in student engagement.

Many directors and ex-students believe the most important element assisting student transitions is the NZDF ethos, which underlies the academies. One of the interviewed directors described this effect.

The most valuable elements (of the programme) are the ‘basics in life’ – respect, presentation, manners, working hard. It’s stuff we don’t teach with a piece of paper, we just expect it all the time. Students remember what they’ve been through and use it in the workplace. That’s the most exciting things, seeing them succeed down the track” (ADI1).

Summary

In summary, the data around Service Academies shows consistency between different academy directors, and between staff and ex-students. Commonly identified elements that are seen as valuable are mainly those associated with a military-style teaching and learning environment; discipline, mentoring, physical training, and teamwork, delivered in a career-focussed learning programme. There is however always room for improvement and moving forward, directors see support around course set up and the development of structured qualifications as important next steps.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This final chapter will provide an overview of the research study. Findings are considered under each of the research questions, and recommendations are made based on these findings. Overall conclusions are drawn, limitations of the research are evaluated and recommendations made for further study.

Research questions

One: What educational strategies and leadership practices support Service Academies in secondary schools?

An element of the academy environment that both staff and ex-students responded to strongly was the consistent boundaries and strong classroom management practices in the programmes, stemming from the military culture. Effective leadership involves setting a tone and an orderly environment, creating a culture for classroom learning (Robinson et al., 2009; Seashore Louis et al., 2010) and many ex-Service Academy students reported that they felt this element was a strong feature of the academies. One result of this is that schools value their Service Academies as they see them as beneficial in addressing the needs of disengaged and at-risk students. Weber (1996) discusses the promotion of a positive learning climate and postulates that adult expectation of factors like student work output, independent study and behaviour are important. Service Academy directors reported having high expectations of student work output, which mirrored the sorts of expectations employers have, such as working unsupervised and showing initiative to complete tasks.

Until approximately 2010, most Service Academy students' school programmes involved only taking part in the academy, however there has been a shift in the way programmes and student timetables are organised. This change has meant students have had the opportunity to undertake an individual pathway that includes other subjects rather than just the Service Academy. This improved flexibility has meant improved outcomes for some students in terms of gaining NCEA credits, skills and experience with relevance to their chosen career paths. Although it is difficult to assess the impact of this change given the nature of the employment market since the global financial crisis, it is not unreasonable to assume that

these improved educational outcomes have probably led to improved employment outcomes.

Two main areas of leadership affect the Service Academies and the resulting student outcomes: the external leadership of the academies by the school management and external agencies like the NZDF and the MOE, and the leadership of the academy itself by the directors.

The leadership of the academies by the directors reflects the directors' military backgrounds, and is reflected in a strong organisational culture (Education Review Office, 2011). Bush (2003) describes three dimensions as forming the basis of a working definition of educational leadership. These are leadership by influence, leadership and values, and leadership by vision. The three dimensions are strongly interrelated: vision – 'this is a good way to go', values – 'these are the right things to do' and influence – 'come with me!' Both staff and ex-students reported that students were inspired or influenced by the NZDF personnel, and by directors' personal military histories. These elements of vision, values and influence are strongly reflected in the way the directors run their courses, and in the effect they have on their students' motivation and vocational direction.

Externally, many directors reported the positive effect of balanced leadership from their school leaders, which was neither autocratic nor laissez faire. Most directors felt that their school managers led and managed the academies effectively, in a democratic, participative fashion, but that the Ministry of Education (MOE) personnel were too hands-off and removed. This was reflected in the directors' assessments of the leadership of the academies (see Figure 4.8). As almost all directors are not trained teachers, supporting director development is very important. Robinson et al. (2009) identify participating in and promoting professional development (PD) as having the largest measured effect size, in terms of the effect on student learning outcomes in their Best Evidence Synthesis (BES). They claim that the large effect size (0.84) indicates that promoting and participating in teacher learning and development has "a large, very educationally significant effect on student outcomes" (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 42), and all three interviewed directors

reported strong availability of effective and relevant professional development opportunities.

The other most reported element of leadership affecting the academies was the recognition and publicity given to the programmes by school management, and the resulting prestige and mana. This recognition had an effect on student morale and self-esteem, and ex-students reported a positive associated effect on their work habits.

The efficacy of these educational and leadership practices was recognised by both staff and ex-students, and the findings of this study are similar to the recommendations in the ERO *Pathways* report. These recommendations include supporting individualisation of student pathways, the development of leadership and self-management skills, and the formation of partnerships with the community.(Education Review Office, 2013b).

Research question two: What factors do students and their course directors perceive as leading to successful engagement with Service Academies?

Much of the benefit for students that arises from the programme stems from the focus on the individual, within a strong team environment. The teaching environment has strong similarities to the NZDF instructor/trainee relationship, which is a high support model, with very high expectations of students' work ethic and standards of behaviour. This method of instruction was the 'default setting' for many of the directors starting out at the academies, as they are mostly not trained teachers and so took the same approach with the academy students as they had done with recruits in their past. As one director commented, many of those recruits had been in their late teens or early twenties anyway, so dealing with senior secondary students had similarities. Staff and ex-students reported that Service Academy students were engaged by these instructional methods, and responded positively to them.

This teaching model incorporates processes to mentor students, helping them develop a pathway, and progress through it. Individual support is firmly entrenched practice in the academies (Education Review Office, 2011) and both staff and ex-students described the mentoring process as having beneficial effects on student outcomes. This is consistent with

other studies (Madjar, McKinley, Deynzer, & van der Merwe, 2010; The University of Auckland, 2011), where it was found that access to appropriate mentors facilitated goal setting, realistic expectations and smoother transitions for students. Ex-students in this study reported that the resulting vocational direction has been beneficial for them, particularly as it has been accompanied by the teaching of skills like goal-setting and time management.

Respondents believed that the provision of vocational direction and a career pathway is effective in engaging students. The effect of being able to see that work conducted now has a future purpose is engaging for students, and both staff and ex-students recognised this. There is strong potential for this effect to be put in to use in many areas of a secondary school, it does not need to be limited to vocationally-focussed courses. The input of dedicated and knowledgeable careers staff is critical in achieving this outcome (Basham, 2011).

An important element of the programmes involves the families, and the value of engaging with students and their whānau has been recognised by the respondents to this study, as well as by other research (Athanasou, 2001; Gorinski & Fraser, 2006). As described in Chapter Three, the *Pacific Strategy 2013-2017* released by the Education Review Office (2013a) and the *Starpath* project advocate and provide mechanisms for schools to engage with young people and their families.

As mentioned previously, the Service Academies have strong organisational cultures based on the NZDF ethos and values. This includes the values often referred to as '3Cs and I' - courage, commitment, comradeship and integrity, but other elements of the defence force are an integral part of the environment in the programmes, and lead to engagement from students. Respondents reported examples such as the emphasis on teamwork, the use of physical training (PT) and adventure-based learning (ABL) in the programme and the use of specific military techniques and systems such as foot drill.

In conclusion, many of the outcomes from and responses to the second research question are in fact similar to the first question, as the educational and leadership practices themselves are having a significant effect in engaging students in the programme.

Research question three: How can Service Academy courses be further developed to enhance student outcomes?

There was a strong response around the lack of co-ordination of information for Service Academy directors, and it is not clear with whom this responsibility should rest. Most directors believe it should lie with the Ministry of Education (MOE) as the initiators and funders of the programme; however MOE have traditionally had a hands-off role when it comes to shaping individual school programmes. Other aspects of overall leadership raised for consideration include the co-ordination of effective administration of the academies, including storage and dissemination of resources in an accessible central resource bank, the provision of start-up material for new academies, and co-ordination of communication both in an ongoing electronic format and through the provision of regular face-to-face meetings.

As described earlier, the setup of new courses has often been run in an ad hoc fashion, resulting in an unnecessary workload for new directors and their line managers, stress and potentially lost opportunities for young people. One exception was the 2010 expansion, prior to which the eight principals involved were invited to meet with representatives from the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and an existing Service Academy director. The commanding officer of the Youth Life Skills (YLS) cell of the New Zealand Army and the academy director initiated this meeting. Their intention was to try to help these principals, who had been informed in the first week of December that they had been granted a Service Academy, and that they needed to have it up and running by the end of January the following year.

At the meeting, the YLS personnel explained their role in providing camps and other support and the director provided the principals with examples of his course information. This included course outlines, assessment schedules, templates for administrative documents such as *Education Outside the Classroom* (EOTC) forms and uniform supply inventories, and

a job description for an academy director. The feedback following this meeting was very positive, however, once again, the initiation of the meeting happened by chance, in an ad hoc fashion without any leadership from the Ministry.

From 2008 until 2010, the Army hosted an annual three-day conference at Burnham Camp, providing a conference venue, meals and accommodation for directors as well as representatives of other stakeholders such as NZDF recruiters and MSD. This event provided an opportunity to share ideas and challenges and plan ways forward. Unfortunately, this conference was another victim of the NZDF cost cutting measures described in Chapter Four, and valuable opportunities to share information and provide mutual support were lost. Since then the MOE have hosted one-day meetings on two occasions to provide networking opportunities and address issues.

Many of the directors who responded believe that there is a necessity for students to gain formal recognition, preferably in the form of NCEA credits, from work completed in the Service Academy, including in the camps run by the NZDF. This will require co-ordination between the schools, the NZDF and NZQA, working together to provide a consistent framework of Unit and Achievement Standards, which can be used to set up and run courses. The notion of developing a National Certificate or similar qualification is also believed to have merit. There is a similar course in the United Kingdom called the Diploma of Uniformed Public Services, which has the potential to serve as a template. It has a similar format in terms of using standards based assessment, and being focussed on providing an employment pathway. Once again, the MOE would seem to be the appropriate organisation to lead and co-ordinate this, and at the time of writing there have been developments in this area.

The 2011 ERO review of Service Academies described in Chapter Two made several recommendations, the majority of which were aimed at school management (Education Review Office, 2011). In spite of the concern raised by some directors in this study around the perceived lack of leadership from the MOE, ERO made only three recommendations for action from the Ministry, and they were relatively narrow in focus. In the body of the report however, ERO state that schools and the Ministry need to address questions that had been

raised about the “registration, training and employment conditions of academy staff”. This reflects the uncertain employment environment for directors who are, in the main, employed on one or two-year contracts in line with the contracts the schools have with the MOE for the academies. This uncertainty around job security was described as ‘concerning’ by directors in their responses, and is very difficult to do anything about, being essentially at the whim of the government of the day.

Recommendations

The last question in the online questionnaire was open-ended, asking directors whether they wished to make any further comments. It is interesting to note that given carte blanche, every single director’s comment made reference to the leadership of the courses.

Many directors believe that the key to improvement of the courses lies with the Ministry of Education. Ideally, the MOE would appoint a staff member who has the experience, leadership skills and knowledge to act as a co-ordinator for the academies, disseminating co-ordinated and consistent information between the academies and other stakeholders. Further benefit could be attained if the staff member had the technical ability to setup online file sharing in the form of a central resource bank, so that current and new staff were not constantly ‘re-inventing the wheel’ in terms of course paperwork. In addition to this, a key role for this staff member would be the organisation of face-to-face meetings or conferences, involving Service Academy staff, the MOE, NZDF and other critical stakeholders.

School leaders are currently supporting the Service Academies well, and directors and ex-students expressed appreciation for their efforts and satisfaction with the current situation. The key recommendation for school management arising from this study is to ensure that directors are provided the professional development opportunities necessary to work effectively in a secondary school environment, and to support them in taking up these opportunities. Some directors described not taking PD opportunities because of a lack of time and/or money to do so, and support from school leaders should be in place to mitigate this where possible.

Ex-student respondents praised Service Academy directors for their commitment and effectiveness, and for the positive effect their work has had on these young people. It is important that directors look after themselves as well as their students, and actively seeking networking opportunities has potential benefits. Communication between academies, as well as internally with staff such as careers advisers and those involved in other vocational courses will help the directors to develop a support network and mitigate isolation. In addition, directors should continue to pursue professional development opportunities to gain skills and experience in the education setting. Although it has been clearly shown that the military environment translates well into the education setting for many people, knowledge and skills in pedagogy and other fields associated with education will aid directors in both classroom practice and in managing and leading the academies.

Conclusion

This research focused on the Service Academies practices and their effect on the educational and vocational outcomes of the young people who take part in the programmes. The questionnaire and interview responses about the Service Academies were overwhelmingly positive. In addition to this, several elements of the courses reflect factors that are described in existing literature as being beneficial for student outcomes. Examples include aspects reported in the 2013 ERO *Pathways* report, such as forming partnerships in the community, supporting individualisation of student pathways and the development of leadership and self- management skills (Education Review Office, 2013b).

There is however, still much that can be done to improve student educational and, by extension, vocational outcomes and the key element at the heart of these improvements is their leadership and co-ordination.

In a conference presentation in 2009, I described the Services Academy course as a ‘win-win-win-win’. *Families* were reporting positively about the changes in attitude and motivation of their young person. *The NZDF* were gaining good recruits, who were not only being ‘screened’ before recruitment, they were arriving with an existing and *relevant* skill-set and knowledge base. The *Ministry of Social Development* (MSD) who were funding the course at the time, and also run Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) were paying out

fewer benefits as at that time 98% of students who had come out of the course were either in employment or further education. Many of those students had been considered at-risk before engaging with the Services Academy. The *schools* that had Services Academies were reporting decreased behavioural issues and improved academic achievement of the cohort. Moreover, most importantly of all the *students* themselves reported being happier and more engaged, and felt they were significantly more likely to go into employment. There is evidence supporting vocationally focussed courses, and if they are run effectively, significant potential for widespread benefit.

Limitations of the study

The numbers of respondents were lower than originally planned. Disappointingly, there was a low return rate of ex-student replies, given the hundreds of students who have been through the programmes and the high level of communication that still goes on between them, mainly through social media. The directors I asked about the low ex-student response were surprised, as they had thought their ex-students would be motivated to participate in research about the academies, given the beneficial effect the academies have had on many of them.

During the interview phase, one of the interviewees asked me what the new directors responses were to one particular issue. However, although new directors had responded to the questionnaire, I had only interviewed experienced directors, on the assumption that their depth of knowledge would have been beneficial to the study. On reflection, it may have been beneficial to interview a new director, who has recently been through the set-up of an academy and the transition into a secondary school as a new work environment.

As I have significant experience in this field I had to work hard to put my own ideas and familiarity to the background, and focus on analysing and reporting on research findings without bias. The research findings were mainly what I had expected, although that is not in itself surprising given my experience.

Recommendations for further study

This research has covered only one very specific type of vocationally-focussed course, there are a plethora of opportunities for research into the effects and outcomes of many other types of VFC. Given enough time and resources, a longitudinal study tracking students who have come through VFCs into employment and then through the early stages of employment to assess career development would provide useful data for those running courses.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

Ex-Student Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. My name is Tony Coughlan, I am an ex Service Academy director and currently a post graduate student at Unitec Institute of Technology in Auckland. I am looking at the Service Academy courses to assess what they do that works for young people and how they can improve. Your feedback is entirely confidential and individuals and academies will not be identified in the research write up. Please answer these questions as honestly and fully as possible, your input is deeply appreciated.

1. When did you start at your Service Academy? _____
2. When did you graduate? _____
3. Where did you attend Induction Camp? _____
4. When you left the Academy, did you go into? (please tick one)
 - Full time employment
 - Part time employment
 - Full-time study
 - Part-time study
 - Other (please describe) _____

Thinking back to when you first joined the academy

Please rate the following statements in terms of how strongly you agree or disagree with them

5. I feel that my family / whanau was supportive of my decision to join the Service Academy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly									Strongly
Disagree									Agree

Comment

10. Looking back, what aspects of the course helped you the least?

11. Do you feel the course could have been made more interesting and motivating? Yes / No

If so, how?

Thinking back to when you left the academy

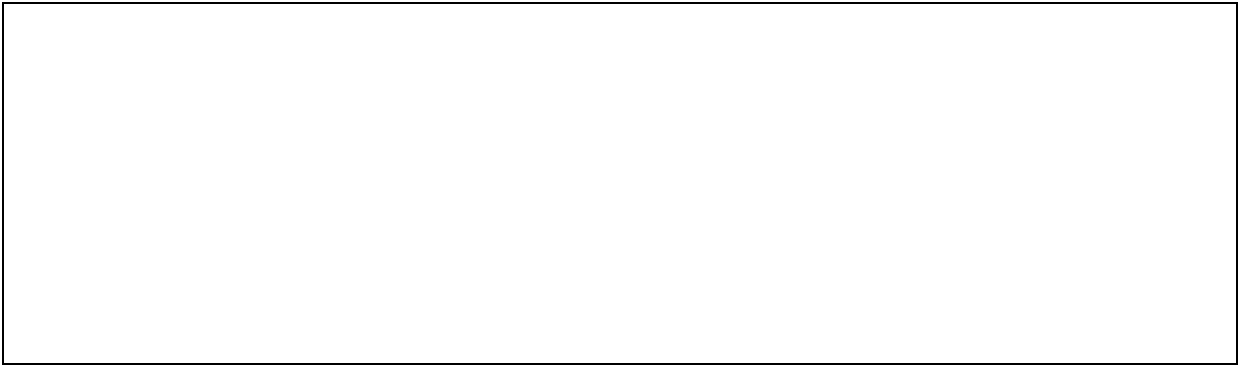
Approximately how much time passed between when you graduated from the Service Academy and you started your job or further study (e.g. PTE course)?

Please rate the following statements in terms of how strongly you agree or disagree with them

12. Things I learned in the Service Academy helped me decide what I wanted to do for a job

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly									Strongly
Disagree									Agree

13. Things I learned in the Service Academy did not help me get a job or accepted into further study or training



Thank you very much for your time and input

Tony Coughlan

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER (2103-1057) This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from July 2013 to July 2014. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the committee through the UREC secretary (ph: 09 8154321 ext 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX TWO

Academy directing staff questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. My name is Tony Coughlan, I am an ex Service Academy director and currently a post graduate student at Unitec Institute of Technology in Auckland. I am looking at the Service Academy courses to assess what they do that works for young people and how they can improve. Your feedback is completely confidential, and individuals and academies will not be identified in the research write up. Please answer these questions as honestly and fully as possible, your input is deeply appreciated.

1. What date did you start with the Service Academy? _____

2. Do you or have you worked for the New Zealand Defence Force? Yes / No

3. Do you have other NZDF or other instructor qualifications? Yes / No

Details _____

4. Do you have a formal school teaching qualification? Yes / No

Details _____

5. What aspects of the Service Academy course do you feel help the students the most?

6. What aspects of the course do you think the students find the most difficult?

7. What aspects of the course do you think the students perceive as least valuable?

8. What do you see as the most effective things you do which result in engagement or 'buy-in' from the students?

9. Do you believe the course has an effect on how students work in school generally, including in other curriculum areas and in co-curricular areas like sport?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly				No					Strongly
Negative Effect				Effect					Positive effect

If so, how?

10. Can you think of an example where a student has not engaged with or responded to the course, and what barriers were preventing this from happening?

11. Approximately how many hours a week do your students spend

- a. In the Service Academy _____
- b. In other curriculum areas of the school _____

12. Within the Service Academy course approximately what proportion of time is spent on teaching:

- a. Generic employment skills (such as writing curriculum vitae) _____

- b. NZDF specific employment skills (such as drill) _____

- c. Physical Training _____
- d. Other _____

13. Thinking back to when you first started with the Service Academy, please rate how well supported by the school management you feel you were.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Unsupported					Strongly supported				

Please give examples of specific leadership practices that made you feel supported or unsupported

14. How well supported by the school management do you feel you are now?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Unsupported

Strongly
supported

Please give examples of specific leadership practices that make you feel supported or unsupported

15. How well supported by the Ministry of Education do you feel?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Unsupported

Strongly
supported

Please give examples of practices that make you feel supported or unsupported

16. How well supported by the New Zealand Defence Force Youth Development Unit do you feel?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Unsupported

Strongly
supported

Please give examples of practices that make you feel supported or unsupported

17. What are other sources of professional support for you in your role as Service Academy director?

18. Please add any further comment you would like to make about the course, and how you believe they could be developed or improved.

Thank you very much for your time and input

Tony Coughlan

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APPENDIX THREE

24 Anita Ave

Mt Roskill

Auckland 1041

27 June 2013

To whom it may concern

My name is Tony Coughlan, I am completing a Master of Educational Leadership and Management at Unitec Institute of Technology this year. My research involves looking at the effect of the Service Academy programmes in New Zealand secondary schools on youth transitions to employment.

I would like to undertake qualitative research in your school in term three. The research would be in the form of an electronic questionnaire and would seek the views of the Service Academy director. The questionnaire would take 10-15 minutes to complete and would examine the respondent's perspectives of transitions to employment for students who have been involved in the Service Academy programme. I am seeking feedback from all Service Academy directors in New Zealand as well as ex-students.

All data gathered will be anonymous and no individual or organisation will be identified in the write up. If you approve, can you please complete a letter granting permission to conduct research at your school. I have attached a template of a letter, supplied by the Unitec Research Ethics Council.

If you have any queries or concerns please do not hesitate to get in touch, I am more than happy to meet with you or talk on the phone at your convenience.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Coughlan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tony Coughlan

APPENDIX FOUR



Information for participants – Service Academy directors being interviewed

Research Project Title: Service Academies and student transitions; an exploratory study

The research involves looking at the effect of the Service Academy programmes in New Zealand secondary schools on youth transitions to employment. I will be exploring factors ex-students and course directors perceive as leading to successful engagement with Service Academies, educational strategies and leadership practices that support Service Academies in secondary schools and how courses can be further enhanced to improve student outcomes.

What we are doing

I would like you to initially complete a questionnaire which seeks your perspective on the course content and practice, and following this I would like you to take part in an interview to explore the questionnaire responses in greater depth.

What it will mean for you

The questionnaire should take approximately 15 minutes to complete and the interview will take no longer than an hour. I am happy to interview you at a time and place convenient to you, please reply by email to suggest something suitable for you. Following the interview, I will provide you with a transcript of what was said for you to check.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This does not stop you from changing your mind if you wish to withdraw from the project. However, because of our schedule, any withdrawals must be done within 2 weeks after we have interviewed you.

Your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you will be stored on a password protected file and only you, the three researchers and our supervisors will have access to this information. Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the Thesis. The results of the research activity will not be seen by any other person in your organisation without the prior agreement of everyone involved. You are free to ask me not to

use any of the information you have given, and you can, if you wish, ask to see the Thesis before it is submitted for examination.

Please contact us if you need more information about the project. At any time if you have any concerns about the research project you can contact our supervisor, John Benseman phone 815 4321 ext. 8736 or email jbenseman@unitec.ac.nz

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2103-1057

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from July 2013 to July 2014. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX FIVE

Interview schedule - Interview of Service Academy directors by Tony Coughlan

Preamble

I will interview three current Service Academy directors who all have five years or more experience of running their course in addition to extensive experience in the New Zealand Defence Force. The rationale for this research method is that these are key people who have a very deep understanding of how the academies function. They have responsibility ranging from long-term goal setting and strategic management, through to day-to-day hands on management, teaching the programme and working with the students, their whanau and other agencies such as employers. The interviews will be informal and unstructured to gain qualitative data using broad questions. I will be able to conduct an unstructured interview as I have sound understanding of the subject, having been a Service Academy director for five years.

The content of the interview schedule will be finalised when the questionnaires have been analysed, but the following approximates what is expected to be covered in these interviews .

Introduction

- Thank respondent for taking the time to assist with the research
- Re-explain the purpose of the research and the research aims
- Summarise the relevant findings to date, from the questionnaires and explain that the interview will mainly be considering these findings in greater depth.

Questions

1. I would like to start with the course itself. Can you please briefly outline the course outline and structure in your Service Academy, in terms of work undertaken and the balance between generic employment skills, specific employment skills, and general curriculum learning?

