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# Learning in social work practice

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has been composed by myself, is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Hsien-Ta Li

## ABSTRACT

The research question underpinning this study is ‘How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?’ The research objective is to establish conceptual frameworks that theorise the organisation of learning in this context. Drawing upon literatures from Organisational Behaviour, Management, Social Work, Sociology and Psychology (e.g., Ballew and Mink 1996; Foucault 1995; Mayer and Salovey 1997; Ouchi 1979; Wehrich 1982) and undertaking an ethnographic inquiry in the Old-Five-Old Foundation in Taiwan, which collects documents as secondary data and gathers primary data through participant observations and interviews, this study establishes interdisciplinary frameworks to answer this research question. It argues that practitioners’ learning is organised by five kinds of structuring forces. At the macro level, practitioners’ direction of learning is organised by service purchasers’ demanding (an inter-organisational level structuring force) and the service provider’s planning (an organisational level structuring force). The evaluation of practitioners’ learning is organised by the service provider’s monitoring (an organisational level structuring force). At the micro level, practitioners’ methods of learning are organised by practitioners’ puzzle solving and instructors’ instructing (individual level structuring forces).

By looking at the macro and micro structuring forces (cross level analysis) that organise practitioners’ learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning (process analysis), this study systematically analyses the organising of learning through both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis, deepening an understanding of the organising of learning and thus making an original contribution to previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000).

## LAY SUMMARY

This study explains how practitioners' learning activities are structured in the context of social work practice. The research site is the Old-Five-Old Foundation, which is a social welfare foundation in Taiwan and is commissioned by local governments to operate various public welfare services. In light of data gathered from this organisation, this study argues that the learning activities of practitioners are structured by local governments, their organisation, the practitioners themselves and their instructors. Firstly, the competence practitioners need to develop is set out by local governments and their organisation. Then, it is through practitioners' learning actions and instructors' instructive actions that practitioners develop the expected competence. Lastly, their organisation carries out organisational means to evaluate whether practitioners have developed the expected competence.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADL	Activities of Daily Living
IADL	Instrumental Activities of Daily Living
MBO	Management by Objectives
PGY	Post-Graduate Year
The OFO Foundation	The Old-Five-Old Foundation
TOWS	Threat-Opportunity-Weakness-Strength

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## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Previously, learning in the organisational setting has been understood via perspectives such as Argyris and Schön's (1978) single-loop and double-loop learning, Senge's (1990, 2006) learning organisation, Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) knowledge spiral and Wenger's (1998) community of practice. However, this study suggests that a study that systematically pursues both *a cross-level analysis* and *a process analysis* (Heath and Sitkin 2001) of *the organising of learning* does not exist in these perspectives, leading to unsatisfactory understanding of learning in the organisational setting and thus denoting a knowledge gap. By performing a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning, this study deepens an understanding of learning in the organisational setting, adding an original contribution to previous studies (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000).

The research context of this study is social work practice in the third sector. The research site is the Old-Five-Old Foundation (see Chapter 4), which is a social welfare foundation (the third sector) in Taiwan and is commissioned by local governments (the public sector) to operate various public welfare services, mainly elderly welfare services (see Evers 1995 for welfare system). This study undertakes an ethnographic inquiry (Fetterman 2010; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995) in the Old-Five-Old Foundation. Literatures in relation to Organisational Behaviour, Management, Social Work, Sociology and Psychology constitute this study's intellectual sources. Drawing upon the literatures that address ecological

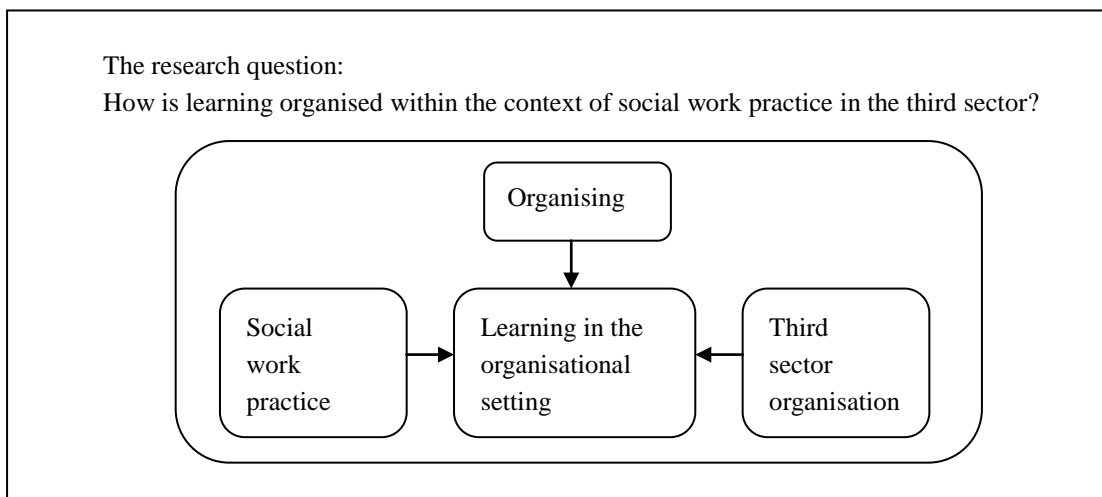
transactions, value activities, the exercise of power, strategic decisions, job designs, professionalism, the cognitive domain, the affective domain, organisational control systems, problem solving, case management, networks, information accessibility, information comprehensibility, identity, communication, orientation, supervision and organisational socialisation (see Chapter 2 for these literatures), this study bridges various theoretical concepts from different academic disciplines to analyse ethnographic data, creating *a new synthesis* of theoretical concepts that systematically offers a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning.

This introductory chapter aims to explain the formation of this study's research question (Section 1.1). It discusses the academic contexts from which the research question emerges. The research question is 'How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?' After that, it briefly explains the overall argument of this study (Section 1.2), in response to the research question. The overall argument is that learning within the context of social work practice in the third sector is organised by five kinds of structuring forces: service purchasers' demanding, the service provider's planning, the service provider's monitoring, practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing. Then, it ends by introducing the structure of this dissertation (Section 1.3).

## **1.1 Formulating the research question**

This section addresses the question: what might be a theme worthy of study? It

identifies the organising of learning as its research topic (Section 1.1.1), the third sector organisation as its research setting (Section 1.1.2) and social work practice as its research target (Section 1.1.3). This section argues that there is a need to relate learning to organising (Heath and Sitkin 2001), that the third sector organisation constitutes an appropriate research setting, and that social work practice constitutes a proper research target. By connecting learning in the organisational setting to organising, the third sector organisation and social work practice, this study's research question is formulated as 'How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?' This research question represents the theme that is worth studying. The research objective is 'To establish conceptual frameworks capable of theorising how learning is organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector'. Figure 1.1 indicates the components on which the research question is built.



*Figure 1.1 Formulating the research question*

### *1.1.1 Organising of learning*

Drawing upon Heath and Sitkin's (2001) suggestion, which puts emphasis on researching the activity of organising, this section argues that there is a need to relate learning to organising. However, it further adds and argues that to merely notice organising is insufficient, but the role of the formal organisation in driving organising also needs to be acknowledged.

In their review of Organisational Behaviour as an academic discipline, Heath and Sitkin examine two kinds of definitions of Organisational Behaviour. They suggest that the Big-B definition focuses on human behaviour that is relevant to the organisational setting, while the Contextualised-B definition puts emphasis on organisational contexts in which human behaviour occurs. In their view, both definitions are unsatisfactory. They propose that organisational behaviour researchers should ask themselves two kinds of questions. The first question is about the core competence in which a research topic could offer insights that are not likely to be produced by researchers from other disciplines. The second question is about the organisational centrality in which a research topic should contribute a great deal to our understanding of human organisational behaviour. They claim that the Big-B definition could not meet the requirement of the core competence, while the Contextualised-B definition does not meet the requirement of the organisational centrality. Therefore, they further propose the Big-O definition of Organisational Behaviour as the future direction for organisational behaviour studies.

They indicate that the Big-O definition of Organisational Behaviour puts emphasis on human behaviour that is central to the task of organising. They treat organising as the central concern of an organisational behaviour study. They claim that to look

at behaviour (i.e., social actor's actions) or/and to look at contexts (i.e., settings in which social actors' actions are embedded) is inadequate; in these situations, the research focus (the 'organisational') is neglected. As a way of highlighting the 'organisational', they suggest that researchers need to pay attention to organising. This is their opinion concerning why organising is worthy of study.

This study supports Heath and Sitkin's suggestion that researchers need to pay attention to organising. Thus, it argues that there is a need to relate learning to organising. However, this study further adds and argues that to merely notice organising is insufficient since the formal organisation and organising are interrelated. It is inappropriate to analyse them separately. The role of the formal organisation in driving organising also needs to be acknowledged. In this study, the formal organisation is treated as a kind of social structure (Münch and Smelser 1987) that drives the organising of learning.

It must be noted that organising is a research topic that had been studied by Weick (1979), who urges researchers to stamp out the noun (organisation) and stamp in the verb (organising). He (1979, p. 3) defines organising as 'A consensually validated grammar for reducing equivocality by means of sensible interlocked behaviours. To organise is to assemble ongoing interdependent actions into sensible sequences that generate sensible outcomes' (see also Daft and Weick 1984). This study does not adopt Weick's approach, which limits itself to investigating how people's actions are assembled to deal with the equivocality they face. Rather, the way this study views organising is in line with Heath and Sitkin. They interpret organising by looking at how organisations and their members coordinate their actions and align

goals in the face of demands from their environments. In this study, service purchasers' demanding represents demands from the service provider's environment. The service provider's planning and monitoring, practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing represent how the service provider and its members coordinate their actions and align goals in the face of demands from service purchasers. Having discussed the reason there is a need to relate learning to organising, the next section explains why the third sector organisation constitutes an appropriate research setting.

### *1.1.2 Third sector organisation*

Since there is a need to relate learning to organising, what might be an appropriate research setting in which the organising of learning could be researched? Drawing upon Jankowicz's (2005) suggestion concerning the choice of a topic with which a researcher is familiar and in light of the fact that the author of this dissertation is more familiar with the third sector organisation, this study argues that the third sector organisation constitutes an appropriate research setting.

Rashman, Withers and Hartley (2009) review literatures regarding learning in the organisational setting. They indicate that characteristics of the private sector and those of the public sector are different. Public sector organisations have undergone substantial reforms, but learning in public sector organisations is under-researched. In view of their suggestion, this study is not interested in selecting the private sector organisation as the research setting. Rather, Jankowicz (2005) suggests that one



way of choosing a research topic is to look at those topics a researcher already knows something about. He suggests that, in this way, the researcher is likely to be more aware of the issues involved. In a similar vein and in order to perform an informed in-depth analysis, Thomas (2011) suggests that one route of selecting a subject is to consider whether a researcher is familiar with it, considering whether he/she has intimate local knowledge that could enable him/her to understand social actors' actions and the contexts in which their actions happen.

This study supports Jankowicz's suggestion, which is also implied in Thomas' suggestion. In view of this suggestion concerning familiarity that could enable a researcher to perform an informed in-depth analysis and in light of the fact that the author of this dissertation has direct experience as a social worker working for and is more familiar with third sector organisations, this study argues that the third sector organisation constitutes an appropriate research setting. He is more familiar with this research setting compared with the research setting of the public/private sector in which he had no work experience. Furthermore, it researches the third sector organisation in his home country of Taiwan, rather than researching the third sector organisation in other nations and cultures. A familiar national and cultural context could enable him to make use of his intimate local knowledge to identify the issues involved, collect relevant meaningful data and make appropriate interpretations on data, performing an informed in-depth analysis. Having discussed the reason the third sector organisation constitutes an appropriate research setting, the next section explains why social work practice constitutes a proper research target.

### *1.1.3 Social work practice*

This section addresses the question: what might be a proper research target in which the organising of learning could be studied? Drawing upon Mills' (2000) suggestion, which encourages a researcher to investigate major public issues and key private troubles, and in light of the re-professionalising (Finlay 2000) and de-professionalisation (Healy and Meagher 2004) of social work practice, this study argues that social work practice constitutes a proper research target.

Mills (2000, p. 11) encourages a researcher to ask the question: 'What are the major issues for publics and the key troubles of private individuals in our time?' He encourages researchers to investigate major public issues and key private troubles by looking at the societal forces that shape them. Such a view is also revealed by Denzin (2001), who puts emphasis on studying epiphanies in a person's life and locating the epiphanies in larger historical, institutional and cultural arenas. This study supports Mills' suggestion, which is also supported by Denzin. It treats major public issues and key private troubles as meaningful phenomena for an inquiry; it does not select minor public issues and trivial private troubles, which are less prominent, as its subject of inquiry. It analyses major public issues and key private troubles by looking at the contexts from which they are shaped. Consequently, it rejects a de-contextualised analysis.

This study's investigation into major issues for and key troubles encountered by social work professionals finds that they include debates regarding social work

values, purposes, roles, knowledge and methods (e.g., Bartlett 1958; Bidgood, Holosko and Taylor 2003; Gordon 1962; Holosko 2003; Ramsay 2003; Risler, Lowe and Nackerud 2003; Turner 2003; Wakefield 2003). These debates include issues concerning the social work generalist approach and the social work specialist approach (Sallee 2003); the beginning level and the advanced level of practice (Leslie and Cassano 2003); the direct clinical/treatment tasks and the indirect management/administrative tasks (Feit 2003); inter-organisational collaboration (Myrtle and Wilber 1994); inter-professional working (Lymbery 2006); outcome-based standards of practice and consumer preferences for quasi-individualised services (Almgren 1998); and evidence-based practice (Gambrill 2003). This study proposes that these debates regarding social work values, purposes, roles, knowledge and methods are relevant to re-professionalising. Finlay (2000) suggests that while professionals need to negotiate new generic roles, expanding their areas of concern and learning new competences, the traditional role boundary blurs and re-professionalising occurs. For instance, the indirect management/administrative tasks illustrate re-professionalising since they require practitioners to develop management competence, which does not fall into traditional competence for executing direct clinical/treatment tasks, such as casework (Payne 2005).

Furthermore, this study's investigation into major public issues and key private troubles also finds that they include debates regarding job content and operation of real-world social work practice. These issues include bureaucratisation of social work (Burton and Van Den Broek 2009), proceduralised practice (D'Cruz, Gillingham and Melendez 2009), routinisation of work (McDonald, Postle and

Dawson 2008), documentation (Furness 2009) and managerial priorities (Saario and Stepney 2009). This study proposes that these issues are relevant to de-professionalisation. Healy and Meagher (2004) suggest that while social work professionals lose opportunities to exercise their creativity, reflexivity and discretion or while they are placed in a position in which their social work expertise is neither utilised nor fully utilised, de-professionalisation occurs. For instance, documentation illustrates de-professionalisation. Time spent filling out documents to report events and demonstrate effort competes for time spent carrying out practitioners' social work function, constraining their opportunities to fully utilise their social work expertise.

Moreover, this study's investigation into political–social–ideological forces (Payne 2006) and societal forces (Mills 2000), which constitute the contexts that cause re-professionalising and de-professionalisation to happen, finds that a set of terms illustrates these forces. It includes neoliberal modernity (Garrett 2008), marketisation and managerialisation (Harris 2003, 2008), increased managerial control (Lymbery 2001), quasi-businesses and consumerism (Coleman and Harris 2008), the social investment state (Lister 2004), accountability (Walker 2002), bureaucratic accountabilities (Burton and Van Den Broek 2009), instrumental accountability (D'Cruz, Gillingham and Melendez 2009) and the competence-based approach to social work education and practice (Dominelli 1996).

The aforementioned re-professionalising and de-professionalisation of social work practice and political–social–ideological forces and societal forces that cause them to happen have their counterparts in Taiwan in light of the effects of Westernisation,

applying and modifying knowledge from western nations to shape welfare policies and social work practice in Taiwan (see also Chang and Mo 2007 for influences from the West on social work education in Taiwan).

To sum up, drawing upon Mills' (2000) suggestion, which encourages a researcher to investigate major public issues and key private troubles, and in light of the re-professionalising (Finlay 2000) and de-professionalisation (Healy and Meagher 2004) of social work practice, this study argues that social work practice constitutes a proper research target. In particular, drawing upon Mills' suggestion, which looks at societal forces that shape major public issues and key private troubles, this study rejects a de-contextualised analysis. While researching the re-professionalising and de-professionalisation of social work practice, this study does not ignore governmental and organisational forces that cause them to happen.

#### *1.1.4 Section summary*

By connecting learning to organising, the third sector organisation and social work practice, this study formulates its research question as 'How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?' It must be noted that this study is a study of Organisational Behaviour, seeking to perform an analysis of the organising of learning. Though it is interested in studying learning in the organisational setting, it is neither a study of Knowledge Management nor is it a study of Education. Though it pays attention to re-professionalising and de-professionalisation, it is neither a study that performs a sociological analysis of

professionalism (see Torstendahl 1990 for a sociological discussion) nor is it a study that performs a historical analysis of professionalisation (see Rashid 2000 for a historical analysis).

Having discussed the reason its research question is worthy of study, the next section proceeds to discuss the overall argument of this study, which answers the research question.

## **1.2 The overall argument of this study: its fundamental rationale and defining the term**

This section addresses the question: since the research question has been proposed, what is this study's answer to its research question? The overall argument of this study, which offers the answer to the research question, is that learning within the context of social work practice in the third sector is organised by five kinds of structuring forces: service purchasers' demanding, the service provider's planning, the service provider's monitoring, practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing.

As will be argued in Chapter 2 (Literature Review), the way this study theorises the organising of learning is through both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis (Heath and Sitkin 2001). They constitute the fundamental rationale behind this overall argument. In this study, its cross-level analysis consists of a macro analysis and a micro analysis, while its process analysis consists of an analysis of

practitioners' direction of learning, an analysis of practitioners' methods of learning and an analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning. The definitions of these terms are as follows.

This study's macro analysis refers to an analysis of social structures, the structures in society (e.g., organisations) that enable and constrain human actions (Münch and Smelser 1987). Its micro analysis refers to an analysis of social actors' subjective mental states and objective activities (Ritzer 2001), their relationships to and their interaction with other social actors (Münch and Smelser 1987; Ritzer 2001) and their contacts with artefacts (cf. Law 1992). Its analysis of practitioners' direction of learning refers to an analysis of the competences that practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish their organisation's tasks and their own tasks. Its analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning refers to an analysis of the means that seek to ensure that practitioners have developed the expected competences. Its analysis of practitioners' methods of learning refers to an analysis of human actions that could help practitioners to develop the expected competences.

Furthermore, this study analyses practitioners' direction of learning via a macro view. It investigates service purchasers' (local governments') views and the service provider's (the Old-Five-Old Foundation's) views on the competences that practitioners are expected to develop. It also analyses the evaluation of practitioners' learning via a macro view, investigating the service provider's means that seek to ensure that practitioners have developed the expected competences. It analyses practitioners' methods of learning via a micro view. It investigates human actions of the two parties participating in learning activities: practitioners (learners)

and instructors; it looks at their actions that could help practitioners to develop the expected competences.

Based on this fundamental rationale (a cross-level analysis and a process analysis), the overall argument of this study is developed. A detailed description of this overall argument is that, at the macro level, practitioners' direction of learning is organised by service purchasers' demanding (an inter-organisational level structuring force) and the service provider's planning (an organisational level structuring force). The evaluation of practitioners' learning is organised by the service provider's monitoring (an organisational level structuring force). At the micro level, practitioners' methods of learning are organised by their puzzle solving and instructors' instructing (individual level structuring forces). As such, learning within the context of social work practice in the third sector is organised by five kinds of structuring forces. Definitions of these terms are as below.

Service purchasers' demanding refers to service purchasers' actions that specify the tasks the service provider is expected to be capable of completing, thus revealing their perspectives on the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish their organisation's (the service provider's) tasks. The service provider's planning refers to the actions of the practitioners' organisation that specify the tasks a practitioner is expected to be capable of completing, thus revealing its perspectives on the competences a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish his/her tasks. The service provider's monitoring refers to the actions of the practitioners' organisation that examine practitioners' competences so as to ensure that they are capable of accomplishing their tasks and have developed the



expected competences. Practitioners’ puzzle solving refers to the practitioners’ actions through which they accomplish and learn to accomplish their tasks, thereby helping themselves to develop the expected competences. Instructors’ instructing refers to the instructors’ actions through which an instruction is transmitted from an instructor to a practitioner (a learner) so as to help a practitioner to accomplish his/her tasks, helping a practitioner to develop the expected competences. Table 1.1 indicates its cross-level analysis and process analysis and corresponding structuring forces.

The cross-level analysis	The process analysis	Structuring forces that organise practitioners’ learning
A macro analysis	An analysis of practitioners’ direction of learning	Service purchasers’ demanding and the service provider’s planning
	An analysis of the evaluation of practitioners’ learning	The service provider’s monitoring
A micro analysis	An analysis of practitioners’ methods of learning	Practitioners’ puzzle solving and instructors’ instructing

*Table 1.1 Five structuring forces*

In this study, structuring forces’ actions (i.e., demanding from service purchasers, planning and monitoring from the service provider, puzzle solving from practitioners and instructing from instructors) are presented in the form of a verbal noun. Like the usage of ‘organising’, the form of a verbal noun places emphasis on their actions, which continuously structure the learning activities of practitioners. Having discussed the fundamental rationale behind this study’s overall argument and defined the terms, the next section discusses the structure of this dissertation, which shows how the overall argument is produced.

### **1.3 The structure of this dissertation**

This section addresses the question: since the overall argument has been proposed, how is it prudently produced? This study's overall argument builds upon the theoretical basis (preliminary frameworks formed in Chapter 2 Literature Review) and the empirical basis (see Section 3.4 for the data gathered). It brings these two bases together via the hermeneutic approach discussed in Chapter 3 (Methodology), producing conclusive frameworks (Chapter 5 to Chapter 7). Chapter 5 performs a macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning by looking at service purchasers' demanding and the service provider's planning. Chapter 6 performs a macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning by looking at the service provider's monitoring. Chapter 7 performs a micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning by looking at practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing. In Chapter 8, this study concludes that learning within the context of social work practice in the third sector is organised by five kinds of structuring forces. This offers the answer to the research question formulated in Chapter 1 Introduction. Figure 1.2 indicates how the overall argument is prudently created. The following parts briefly outline the contents of these chapters.

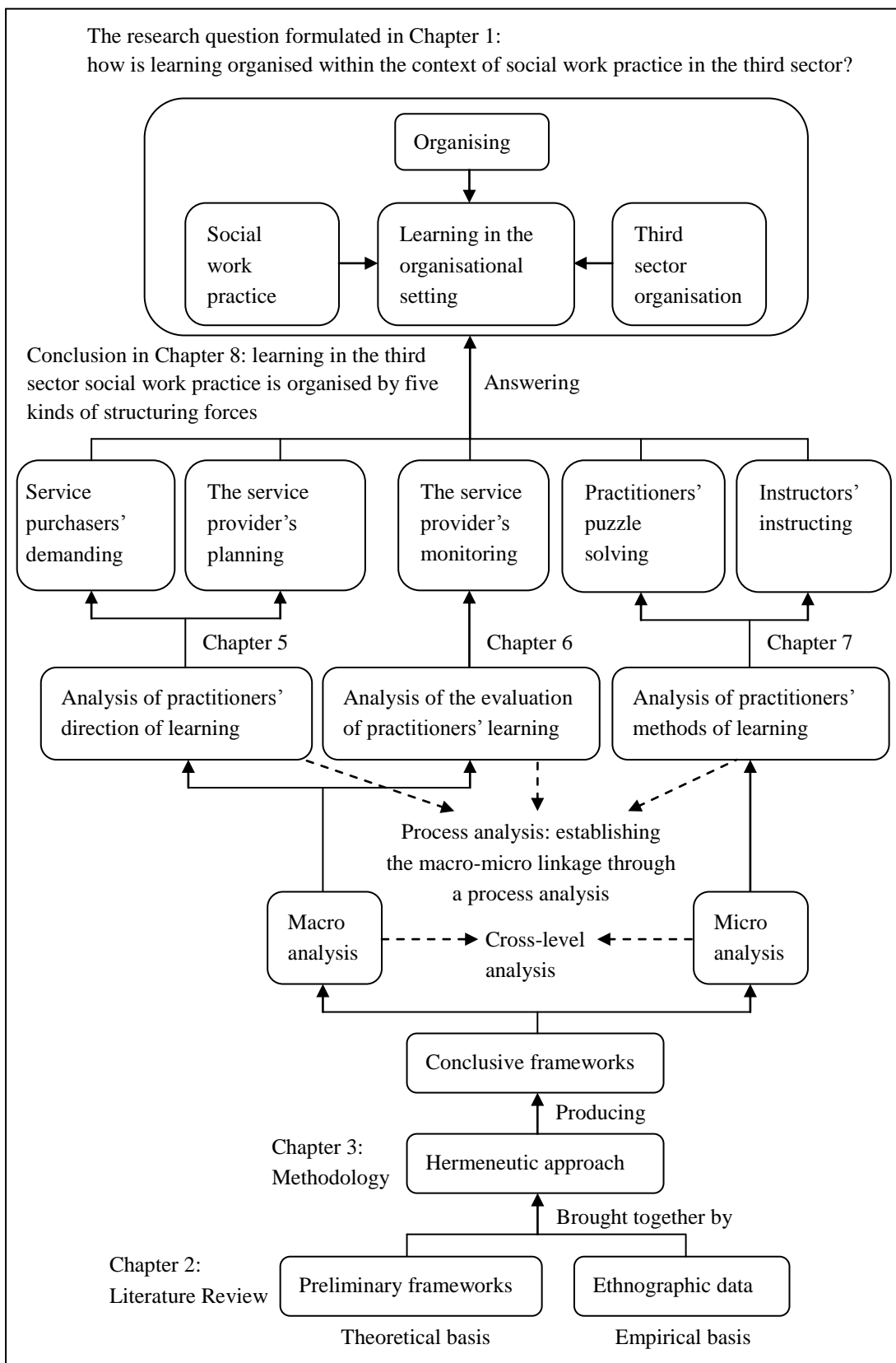


Figure 1.2 Creation of the overall argument

Chapter 2 (Literature Review) aims to identify key theoretical concepts, explore explanatory power and limitations of key theoretical concepts and synthesise strengths of key theoretical concepts to establish preliminary frameworks, which constitute the theoretical basis of this study. Five preliminary frameworks are established in this chapter: service purchasers' demanding, the service provider's planning, the service provider's monitoring, practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing. These preliminary frameworks, which offer a tentative answer to this study's research question, are tested and elaborated through its empirical research.

Chapter 3 (Methodology) aims to identify different methodological perspectives and evaluate their suitability for this study's empirical inquiry. Based on the epistemological stance of Gadamer's (2006) hermeneutical approach and the ethnographic research design (Fetterman 2010; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995), in the Old-Five-Old Foundation, this study collects documents as secondary data (Prior 2003a) and gathers primary data through participant observations (Gold 1958; Jorgensen 1989) and interviews (Carspecken 1996; DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006; Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005; King 2004a; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). The empirical data are analysed by means of King's (2004b) template analysis, making use of both deductive coding and inductive coding to analyse data. Via the template analysis, the preliminary frameworks (initial templates) are revised to produce conclusive frameworks (final templates).

Chapter 4 is a context chapter, offering information about the social policy and organisational contexts for practitioners' social work practice. Then, Chapter 5,

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 make sense of the empirical data. They analyse five kinds of structuring forces that organise the learning activities of practitioners. The final chapter (Chapter 8) is the conclusion chapter, which aims to evaluate what this study has achieved by discussing its contributions, implications and limitations. This study concludes that it makes an original contribution to previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000) by systematically analysing the organising of learning through both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis (Heath and Sitkin 2001).

#### **1.4 Chapter summary**

This chapter introduces what this study aims to do, how it realises what it aims to do, and what it has achieved. As for what it aims to do, its research question is ‘How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?’ With regard to how it realises what it aims to do, based on Gadamer’s (2006) hermeneutical approach, it integrates academic literatures with ethnographic data by utilising ideas of the author of this dissertation, producing conclusive frameworks to offer an answer to its research question. As far as what it has achieved is concerned, the overall argument is that learning within the context of social work practice in the third sector is organised by five kinds of structuring forces: service purchasers’ demanding, the service provider’s planning, the service provider’s monitoring, practitioners’ puzzle solving and instructors’ instructing. The conclusive frameworks for these five structuring forces, as a whole, do not exist in previous

studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), adding an original contribution to this field of study by systematically analysing the organising of learning through both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis (Heath and Sitkin 2001).

Having introduced how its research question is formulated, the content of its overall argument, which answers the research question, and the contents of the remaining chapters through which the overall argument is created, the next chapter discusses theoretical concepts on which the preliminary frameworks are built.

## CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter addresses the question: in the light of the research question, what frameworks might be utilised to research the organising of learning? This study takes the synthesised approach (Appendix I) to synthesise theoretical concepts from different academic disciplines, producing five sets of preliminary frameworks: service purchasers' demanding (Section 2.2), the service provider's planning (Section 2.3), the service provider's monitoring (Section 2.4), practitioners' puzzle solving (Section 2.5) and instructors' instructing (Section 2.6). This study's overall argument is developed from these preliminary frameworks. The preliminary frameworks have two aspects that are new: *new codes* and *new relations among concepts*. Firstly, in some situations, this study does not utilise initial codes offered by theoretical concepts. Rather, it develops new codes by conceptualising critical attributes shared by theoretical concepts. These new codes represent this study's intellectual effort to express theoretical concepts in a more concise way for the purpose of addressing its research question. In addition, the preliminary frameworks associate a theoretical concept with other concepts, indicating that these concepts are not irrelevant but pointing out relations among them. These newly identified relations among concepts represent this study's intellectual effort to associate and systematise relations between a theoretical concept and other concepts for the purpose of addressing its research question. Since the preliminary frameworks, which are theoretically grounded, contain new codes and new relations among the concepts, they are not merely a replication of any theoretical concept; they represent *a new synthesis* of theoretical concepts, being systematically

interrelated to perform a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the literatures from which theoretical concepts are grasped and synthesised. Literatures in relation to Organisational Behaviour, Management, Social Work, Sociology and Psychology constitute this study's intellectual sources. Service purchasers' demanding builds upon the literatures that address ecological transactions, value activities and the exercise of power (see Section 2.2). The service provider's planning builds upon the literatures that address strategic decisions, job designs, value activities and professionalism (see Section 2.3). The service provider's monitoring builds upon the literatures that address the cognitive domain, the affective domain and organisational control systems (see Section 2.4). Practitioners' puzzle solving builds upon the literatures that address problem solving, case management, the cognitive domain, the affective domain, networks, information accessibility and information comprehensibility (see Section 2.5). Instructors' instructing builds upon the literatures that address identity, communication, orientation, supervision and organisational socialisation (see Section 2.6). In each section, this study discusses definitions of theoretical concepts, how they are synthesised to produce preliminary frameworks, the concepts rejected by this study and the reason they are rejected.

Before stepping into a detailed discussion of these literatures, this chapter begins with a discussion of the definitions of its cross-level analysis and its process analysis, which constitute the fundamental rationale behind the preliminary frameworks.



## **2.1 The cross-level analysis and the process analysis**

This section addresses the question: what might be a possible fundamental rationale that could be utilised to research the organising of learning? Drawing upon Heath and Sitkin's (2001) suggestion, which encourages researchers to perform a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of organising, this section argues that there is a need to perform a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning. By performing a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning, this study could add an original contribution to previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000). Section 2.1.1 and Section 2.1.2 discuss its cross-level analysis and its process analysis respectively. Section 2.1.3 discusses the contribution of its cross-level analysis and process analysis. Section 2.1.4, given the context of the Old-Five-Old Foundation, discusses the reasons why its cross-level and process analysis does not treat service users as an immediate structuring force that could substantially organise practitioners' learning.

### *2.1.1 The cross-level analysis*

Drawing upon Heath and Sitkin's (2001) suggestion, which encourages researchers to study organising by performing a cross-level analysis, this section argues that there is a need to perform a cross-level analysis of the organising of learning. It rejects a single level analysis if this analysis is a de-contextualised analysis or ignores the linkage between different levels. However, their general suggestion

does not define the content of a cross-level analysis. Drawing upon Münch and Smelser's (1987) and Ritzer's (2001) discussions of the macro level and the micro level and making reference to Law's (1992) discussion of non-human objects, this study further defines the content of its cross-level analysis. In this study, the cross-level analysis consists of a macro analysis and a micro analysis. The following parts discuss them, including the scope of its macro and micro analyses.

Heath and Sitkin (2001) encourage researchers to study organising by performing a cross-level analysis. This study supports their suggestion. It argues that there is a need to perform a cross-level analysis of the organising of learning. However, their general suggestion does not specify the content of a cross-level analysis. Therefore, the meaning of a cross-level analysis remains unclear. There is a need to further identify the specific content of a cross-level analysis.

As for the meaning of 'level', Münch and Smelser (1987) suggest that it includes the macro level and the micro level, but 'macro' and 'micro' have diverse meanings. In their opinion, the macro level refers to the structures in society that enable and constrain human actions, such as groups, organisations and institutions. The micro level refers to people's actions and contacts among individuals, such as communication. An alternative view is proposed by Ritzer (2001). He suggests two kinds of continua: the microscopic-macroscopic continuum and the objective-subjective continuum. The microscopic-macroscopic continuum represents the scale of phenomena, which ranges from world-systems, societies, organisations and groups to human interaction and human thought and actions. The objective-subjective continuum represents phenomena that have or do not have real

material existence. Examples of objective phenomena include social actors, human actions and human interaction, while examples of subjective phenomena include people's mental construction of reality, norms and values. He suggests that varying degrees of mixed types that combine the objective aspect with the subjective aspect fall between those two ends, such as a state, a family and a work world. By utilising these two continua, he further indicates four major levels of social analyses: the macro-objective level, the macro-subjective level, the micro-objective level and the micro-subjective level. Examples of the macro-objective level include a society, a bureaucracy and a language, while examples of the macro-subjective level include cultures and norms. Instances of the micro-objective level include patterns of human actions and human interaction, while people's mental construction of reality represents an instance of the micro-subjective level.

This study suggests that Münch and Smelser's and Ritzer's discussions of the macro level and the micro level are incomplete, but their views could be complementary to each other. It also introduces Law's (1992) discussion of non-human objects to be complementary to their discussions. Law suggests that almost all human contacts are mediated through non-human objects. In light of his suggestion, in addition to humans, this study also looks at non-human artefacts. Though this study notices non-human objects, it does not adopt the actor-network perspective (Latour 2005) as the framework for its analysis. Law suggests that this perspective does not support the idea that there is a difference between humans and non-human objects; both human subjects and non-human objects are sources of act. The stance of this study is that there is still a difference between humans and non-human objects. It does not treat non-human artefacts as an actor but views humans as the only actors who

might act by means of artefacts, which are merely a medium for human actions. To sum up, drawing upon Münch and Smelser's (1987) and Ritzer's (2001) discussions and making reference to Law's (1992) discussion, this study defines its cross-level analysis as consisting of a macro analysis and a micro analysis.

Its macro analysis refers to an analysis of social structures (Münch and Smelser 1987). Yet, as for the scope of this study, it discusses the Old-Five-Old Foundation (the service provider), local governments (service purchasers) and the interaction and relationships between them. As such, it looks at the units concerning organisations, groups and institutions. It does not include an analysis of world-systems and societies. The reason is that the Old-Five-Old Foundation and local governments are significant *immediate* macro forces that organise practitioners' learning. The influences from world-systems and societies on the organising of practitioners' learning are not as direct as the influences from the Old-Five-Old Foundation and local governments since they are the broadest macro forces.

Furthermore, its micro analysis refers to an analysis of social actors' subjective mental states and objective activities (Ritzer 2001), their relationships to and their interaction with other social actors (Münch and Smelser 1987; Ritzer 2001) and their contacts with artefacts (cf. Law 1992). Yet, as for the scope of this study, it looks at humans and artefacts made available to practitioners by their organisation and local governments. It does not include an analysis of informal learning resources (e.g., practitioners' classmates) and other kinds of formal learning resources (e.g., humans and artefacts offered by professional bodies). The reason for this is that in an organisation, their influence on the organising of practitioners' learning is not as

obvious as that of formal learning resources offered by the practitioners' organisation and local governments. For instance, it is more likely to imagine that practitioners' learning activities will be structured by their supervisors and their colleagues rather than by their classmates, who work for other organisations. Besides, this study looks at those learning resources purposively made available to practitioners by their organisation and local governments. It does not include an analysis of those learning resources that are accidentally available to practitioners (e.g., a service user happens to reveal an insight into organisational/professional matters from whom a practitioner may learn). The reason is that these accidental learning resources are less likely to organise practitioners' learning since they are available to practitioners by chance.

By its macro and micro analyses, this study performs a social/cultural analysis and a cognitive/affective analysis of learning. Its macro analysis investigates social structures. Its micro analysis investigates social actors' objective activities, their relationships to and their interaction with other social actors and their contacts with artefacts. For instance, as for social structures, it utilises the literatures that address organisational control systems (e.g., Beer, Ruh, Dawson, McCaa and Kavanagh 1978). With regard to social actors' objective activities, it utilises the literatures that address communication (e.g., Berlo 1960). As for social actors' relationships to and their interaction with other social actors and their contacts with artefacts, it utilises the literatures that address networks (e.g., Granovetter 1973). As such, it performs a social/cultural analysis of learning. This social/cultural analysis encompasses the basic rationale of the social/cultural perspective on learning. For example, Lave and Wenger (1991) view learning as situated activities, which emphasise agents

acting in the socially and culturally structured world (see also Brown, Collins and Duguid 1989; Cook and Yanow 1993). Moreover, its micro analysis also investigates social actors' subjective mental states. As for human mental states, this study performs a cognitive/affective analysis of learning. It encompasses the cognitive perspective on learning since it utilises the literatures that address the cognitive domain (e.g., Bloom, Engelhart, Frust, Hill and Krathwohl 1967). It also includes the affective perspective on learning since it utilises the literatures that address the affective domain (e.g., Mayer and Salovey 1993, 1997). To sum up, by its macro and micro analyses, this study performs a social/cultural analysis and a cognitive/affective analysis of learning; these analyses encompass the social/cultural perspective, the cognitive perspective and the affective perspective on learning. Having discussed the meaning of 'level', this section proceeds to discuss the meaning of 'cross'.

With regard to the meaning of 'cross', this study suggests that it could mean the macro-micro linkage (i.e., interrelatedness between the macro level and the micro level). Ritzer (2001) suggests that the macro-micro linkage could be established by looking at dialectical relationships among the macro-objective level analysis, the macro-subjective level analysis, the micro-objective level analysis and the micro-subjective level analysis. However, this study does not apply his suggestion. Rather, since this study also engages in a process analysis, it takes this opportunity and utilises its process analysis to establish the linkage between its macro analysis and micro analysis, forming its meaning of 'cross'. The next section addresses its process analysis and how the macro-micro linkage is established through its process analysis.

### *2.1.2 The process analysis*

Drawing upon Heath and Sitkin's (2001) suggestion, which encourages researchers to study organising by performing a process analysis, this section argues that there is a need to perform a process analysis of the organising of learning. However, their general suggestion does not define the content of a process analysis. In light of academic subjects concerning Curriculum (Marsh 2009), Educational Psychology (O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith 2009) and Assessment (McMillan 2008) and by utilising the logic of induction to conceptualise the empirical learning experiences of the author of this dissertation, this study further defines the content of its process analysis. In this study, the process analysis consists of an analysis of practitioners' direction of learning, an analysis of practitioners' methods of learning and an analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning. It rejects Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model, Dixon's (1999) organisational learning cycle and Engeström's (2001) cycle of expansive learning since their frameworks of process analyses could not enable this study to simultaneously perform a process analysis and a cross-level analysis, interrelating these two kinds of analyses. The following parts discuss its process analysis by looking at the meaning of its process analysis and the units of analysis in its process analysis.

Heath and Sitkin (2001) also encourage researchers to study organising by performing a process analysis. This study supports their suggestion. It argues that there is a need to perform a process analysis of the organising of learning. However, their general suggestion does not specify the content of a process analysis. Thus,

the meaning of a process analysis remains unclear. There is a need to further identify the specific content of a process analysis in relation to learning in the organisational setting.

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model, Dixon's (1999) organisational learning cycle and Engeström's (2001) cycle of expansive learning are literatures that perform a process analysis of learning. Kolb suggests that experiential learning involves a four-stage cycle, including concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. This model pays attention to knowledge creation via grasping and transforming experience. Dixon suggests that the organisational learning cycle involves four steps, including widespread generation of information, integration of new/local information into the organisational context, collective interpretation of information and having authority to take responsible action based on the interpreted meaning. Thus, the organisational learning cycle involves generating, integrating, interpreting and acting on information. Dixon emphasises that learning at the organisational level could happen when different parts of an organisation and organisational members carry out these steps collectively (see also March and Olsen 1975 for superstitious experiential learning; Revans 1980 for action learning). Engeström suggests that the cycle of expansive learning contains seven steps; they include the conflictual questioning of the existing standard practice, deepening analyses of situations, modelling the new solution, examining the new model, implementing the new model, reflection on the process and consolidating the new practice. He suggests that, in such a cycle, the minimal unit of analysis is two interacting activity systems. He looks at interaction between collective, artefact-mediated and object-oriented activity systems such as



interaction between two organisations. In particular, he claims that the driving forces of change are the activity systems' own inner contradictions.

This study rejects frameworks proposed by Kolb, Dixon and Engeström. It aims to simultaneously perform a process analysis and a cross-level analysis, interrelating these two kinds of analyses. Their frameworks could not enable this study to achieve this aim. Kolb merely looks at the individual level process, and thus this framework is inadequate. Dixon extends an analysis to the collective level process, but it is limited to an analysis of the intra-organisational level. Thus, this framework is also inadequate. Engeström looks at interacting activity systems, performing an analysis at the inter-organisational level process. However, his framework is limited in scope, mainly focusing on solving conflictual situations and transforming existing standard practice into new practice. Thus, this framework is inadequate.

Since interrelating a process analysis and a cross-level analysis could not be accomplished by deduction from their frameworks, this study resorts to the logic of induction (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe 2004). The author of this dissertation looks at his own empirical learning experiences in school settings and looks for counterparts in workplace settings, utilising the logic of induction to produce a possible framework for analysing learning processes.

Taking a postgraduate taught course in a semester for instance, a student's learning process includes three stages. In the beginning of a course, a teacher gives a syllabus to students, which indicates learning goals, contents and issues that will be

addressed in the course, indicating what students should know or what they should be capable of doing after completing this course. Then, a teacher starts to teach, such as giving lectures or initiating a group discussion on a particular topic. These actions represent the measures a teacher takes in order to facilitate students' learning. In the last stage, an examination comes, such as writing an essay submitted for examination or participating in a paper-and-pencil test (Van Blerkom 2009). At this stage, a teacher examines whether students have learned what they should learn or whether they are capable of doing what they are expected to do. This study suggests that this kind of empirical experience was not an experience that only the author of this dissertation had experienced, but one that was common to a student who had taken a postgraduate taught course and a teacher who had taught a postgraduate taught course. Inducing from this shared common experience, the author names these three stages as direction of learning, methods of learning and evaluation of learning. In educational settings, this study suggests that these three stages have their theoretical roots in academic subjects. Direction of learning, methods of learning and evaluation of learning are relevant to Curriculum (Marsh 2009), Educational Psychology (O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith 2009) and Assessment (McMillan 2008) respectively.

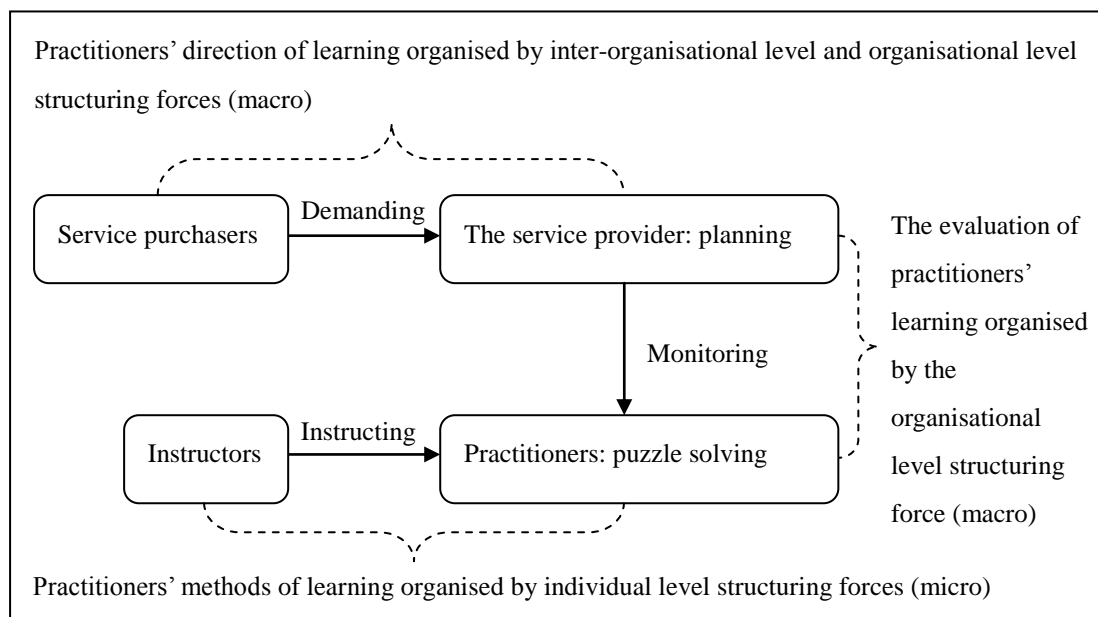
With regard to their counterparts in workplace settings, an instance of direction of learning is about the decision determining specific tasks that the author was expected to be capable of completing. An instance of methods of learning is about social work supervisors, who helped him to be capable of accomplishing his tasks. An instance of evaluation of learning is about the employee performance appraisal, which examined whether he was capable of accomplishing his tasks. Consequently,

inducing and inferring from his learning experience, this study suggests that, in work place settings, practitioners' learning also goes through a process that involves three stages: direction of learning, methods of learning and evaluation of learning. As such, in this study, the process analysis consists of an analysis of practitioners' direction of learning, an analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning and an analysis of practitioners' methods of learning. The analysis of practitioners' direction of learning refers to an analysis of the competences that practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish their organisation's tasks and their own tasks. The analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning refers to an analysis of the means that seek to ensure that practitioners have developed the expected competences. The analysis of practitioners' methods of learning refers to an analysis of human actions that could help practitioners to develop the expected competences (see Appendix II for meanings of competence in this study's process analysis). Having discussed the meaning of its process analysis, this section proceeds to discuss the units of analysis in its process analysis, which lay the foundation for interrelating a process analysis and a cross-level analysis.

The author of this dissertation had worked for the research site, the Old-Five-Old Foundation. Inferring from his learning experience in this foundation, this study analyses practitioners' direction of learning via a macro view; the units of analysis are local governments (inter-organisational level analysis) and the Old-Five-Old Foundation (organisational level analysis). It investigates local governments' (service purchasers') views and the Old-Five-Old Foundation's (the service provider's) views on the competences that practitioners are expected to develop. It also analyses the evaluation of practitioners' learning via a macro view; the unit of

analysis is the Old-Five-Old Foundation (organisation level analysis). It investigates the Old-Five-Old Foundation's means that seek to ensure that practitioners have developed the expected competences. It analyses practitioners' methods of learning via a micro view; the units of the analysis are the two parties participating in learning activities: practitioners and instructors (individual level analysis). Instructors refer to those people, who offer instructions to practitioners such as their supervisors, colleagues, mentors and advisors. It investigates their actions that could help practitioners to develop the expected competences.

As such, the linkage between its macro analysis and its micro analysis (the meaning of 'cross' in its cross-level analysis) is established by its process analysis in the sense that practitioners' direction of learning (the expected competences) is shaped by macro structuring forces (service purchasers' views and the service provider's views). In order to develop the expected competences, practitioners' methods of learning involve micro structuring forces (practitioners' actions and instructors' actions). Then, in order to ensure that practitioners have developed the expected competences, the evaluation of their learning is carried out by the macro structuring force (the service provider's evaluation means). Figure 2.1 graphically presents this fundamental rationale of its cross-level analysis and process analysis. The next section discusses the contribution of its cross-level and process analysis.



*Figure 2.1 The fundamental rationale of this study's cross-level and process analysis*

### *2.1.3 The contribution of this study's cross-level analysis and process analysis*

This study aims to systematically perform a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning in the organisational setting. It addresses the organising of learning by looking at macro and micro structuring forces (the cross-level analysis) that organise practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning (the process analysis). Such a framework is new since previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000) do not propose this framework. It fills in this knowledge gap and thus makes an original contribution to this field of study (see Easterby-Smith, Antonacopoulou, Simm and Lyles 2004, and Easterby-Smith and Lyles 2003 for

contributions made by previous studies).

For instance, Argyris and Schön (1978) view learning as a process of error detection and error correction. In this process, if organisational members correct an error by reflecting upon and changing their organisation's underlying norms, policies and goals, double-loop learning happens and, as a result, current organisational theory-in-use is changed. In their view, organising is a reflexive cognitive inquiry in which organisational members test and refresh organisational theory-in-use. They further suggest that the Model O-I learning system inhabits double-loop learning. In this learning system, people hold counterproductive Model I assumptions, and there exists counterproductive group dynamics, counterproductive inter-group dynamics and counterproductive organisational norms and activities (see also Argyris 1957).

However, as indicated by Dierkes, Marz and Teele (2001), the weakness of treating learning as a process of error detection and error correction is that this confines learning to error detection. They suggest that learning could be triggered by opportunities, creative initiatives and acquisition of new knowledge, which do not involve detection of error. Another weakness is suggested by Blackman, Connelly and Henderson (2004). In Argyris and Schön's discussion of the double loop learning process, public testing of current organisational theory-in-use leads to new organisational theory-in-use. A response is produced according to this new organisational theory-in-use. If this response corrects the error, the examination of this new organisational theory-in-use ends since this new organisational theory-in-use produces an appropriate response to correct the error. If a new error

is detected, this initiates another double loop learning process to examine this new organisational theory-in-use. Blackman, Connelly and Henderson suggest that such a double loop learning process is an unreliable learning process since it does not systematically test new organisational theory-in-use in an ongoing manner. The double loop learning process merely relies on the emergence of a new error to initiate the next phase of the examination of this new organisational theory-in-use. In light of the aforementioned weaknesses, Argyris and Schön's prescription about the double loop learning process is flawed. The weaknesses of their framework remind this study not to establish a framework that merely counts on error detection.

It is observable that Argyris and Schön handle the research topic of how to structure an organisation in a manner (i.e., the Model O-II learning system) that facilitates restructuring of organisational theory-in-use. The research question of this study is 'How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?' This research topic is different from the research topic Argyris and Schön deal with. Furthermore, they address learning and organising by looking at the double loop learning process in which organisational members engage in a reflexive cognitive inquiry to re-organise organisational theory-in-use. This study addresses learning and organising by looking at macro and micro structuring forces (the cross-level analysis) that organise practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning (the process analysis). This framework deals with learning and organising in a manner that is different from Argyris and Schön's framework. In particular, it utilises the literatures that discuss self-awareness (Kondrat 1999) and reflective thinking (Kember, Jones, Loke, McKay, Sinclair, Tse, Webb, Wong, Wong, and Yeung 1999) to address organisational

members' reflexive cognitive activities; this analysis is different from Argyris and Schön's analysis of the double loop learning process.

Senge (1990) proposes the idea of the learning organisation and advocates five disciplines that lead to a learning organisation: to enhance personal mastery, to improve mental models, to think in a way of systems thinking, to build shared vision and to engage in team learning. Furthermore, he (2006) utilises the notion of the U process (phases of co-sensing, co-presencing and co-realising) to illustrate how these five disciplines are used in time. Coopey (1995) indicates that Senge's learning organisation reveals a unitarist view about relationships among organisational members, a utopia that portrays collaborative high trust among organisational members, a rational approach to resolution of differences among organisational members and a Plato's philosopher-king view about leaders of a learning organisation. Coopey questions the learning organisation as a managerial prescription by taking power, human political behaviour and ideology into consideration. He suggests that the learning organisation as a managerial prescription has three weaknesses. Firstly, the apolitical tendency of this prescription neglects that human political behaviour may hinder the realisation of learning aims. Furthermore, the establishment of a learning organisation may benefit and enhance the power of managers, whereas it may merely produce relatively modest amount of empowerment for other employees. Lastly, dominant coalitions may utilise the ideological potential of this managerial prescription to support their interests. In light of the aforementioned weaknesses, Senge's prescription about learning organisation is flawed.



It is observable that Senge handles the research topic of how to structure an organisation in a manner (i.e., five learning disciplines) that can remove its learning disabilities and continually enhance its capacity to realise its goals. The research topic this study deals with is different from the research topic Senge deals with. He aims to make a normative prescription about how an organisation ought to be structured so as to make itself can continually learn. His study could fall within Tsang's (1997) notion of prescriptive research. On the contrary, this study aims to explain how organisational members' learning is actually structured; it is not a piece of prescriptive research (see Appendix III for what this study does not aim to do). Furthermore, Senge addresses learning and organising by looking at the process of practising five learning disciplines that organise an organisation into a learning organisation. This study addresses learning and organising by looking at the macro and micro structuring forces that organise practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning. This framework deals with learning and organising in a manner that is different from Senge's framework. In particular, as for conditions that facilitate learning, this study looks at enabling social structures and enabling learning resources (see Section 8.2); this analysis is different from Senge's analysis of five learning disciplines.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) assert that there are four modes of knowledge conversion: socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation. Socialisation represents the conversion of tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge; externalisation represents the conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge; combination represents the conversion of explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge; and internalisation represents the conversion of explicit knowledge to tacit

knowledge (see also Polanyi 1966 for tacit/explicit knowledge). They claim that knowledge creation is based on the shifts between these four modes of knowledge conversion through which tacit knowledge interacts with explicit knowledge continually and dynamically. They also propose that, in this process, knowledge creation moves from the individual level to the intra-organisational level (e.g., groups, sections, departments and divisions); then, knowledge creation reaches the inter-organisational level. In particular, they suggest that the middle-up-down management process and the organisational structure in the form of the hypertext organisation constitute the most appropriate setting that facilitates the knowledge spiral process. However, Nonaka and Takeuchi's discussion has a main weakness. In Wenger's (1998) view, it is possible that a piece of knowledge involves both the explicit aspect and the tacit aspect. For instance, he suggests that knowledge regarding keeping balance while riding a bicycle involves both explicit and tacit aspects. There are aspects an individual cannot articulate, such as pointing out which way to steer so as to avoid falling, but there are also aspects that an individual can articulate, such as pointing out holding the bar and not wiggling too much. In view of Wenger's suggestion, Nonaka and Takeuchi's discussion of knowledge creation via the knowledge spiral builds upon problematic building blocks: tacit/explicit knowledge. Thus, their framework is flawed.

It is observable that Nonaka and Takeuchi handle the research topic of how Japanese companies structure themselves in a manner (i.e., the knowledge spiral) that produces the dynamics of knowledge creation. The research topic this study deals with is different from the research topic they deal with since this study does not research knowledge creation in Japanese companies but studies the organising of learning

within the context of social work practice in the third sector. Furthermore, they address learning and organising by looking at the knowledge spiral process in which knowledge creation activities are organised to generate continuous innovation. This study addresses learning and organising by looking at the macro and micro structuring forces that organise practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning. This framework deals with learning and organising in a manner that is different from Nonaka and Takeuchi's framework. In particular, it utilises the literatures that discuss creative problem solving (Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger 2000, 2011; Mayer 1999; Noller, Parnes and Biondi 1976) to address knowledge creation; this analysis is different from Nonaka and Takeuchi's analysis of the knowledge spiral process, which builds on problematic notions of tacit/explicit knowledge.

Wenger (1998, 2000) develops the notion of community of practice as the social-cultural configuration in which its members' learning occurs and develops. He suggests that a community of practice could be viewed as nodes of strong ties in interpersonal networks (cf. Brown and Duguid 2001 for networks of practice). In a community of practice, learning is a socio-cultural process that involves interplay between its socially defined competence and its members' personal experience. A community of practice's socially defined competence (regimes of competence) includes the competence that could contribute to sustain and transform mutuality of its member's engagement, accountability to their joint enterprise and negotiability of their shared repertoire. Its members' personal experience (experiences of negotiation of meaning) occurs due to continuous interaction between participation and reification. Furthermore, he asserts that a community of practice's socially

defined competence and its members' personal experience interweave with three modes of belonging (engagement, imagination and alignment). Engagement refers to its members' active involvement in its practice (e.g., doing things together). It requires a community of practice to provide its members with authentic accesses to participation and reification. It transforms a community of practice's socially defined competence by making a member interact with other members to refresh their practice. Imagination refers to a process of expanding and transcending its own practice through the eyes of outsiders, and thus its members create a new image of their practice (e.g., reflecting upon their situations). It requires the openness to foreign forms of participation and reification. It transforms a community of practice's socially defined competence by seeing its own practice in a reflective mode. Alignment refers to coordinating their energy with other social configurations so that their practice can be effective beyond their own community of practice (e.g., following the scientific method). It requires its members to engage in participation in the form of brokering and boundary interaction, and it requires reification in the form of boundary objects. It transforms a community of practice's socially defined competence by fitting this community of practice's own practice to that of others. What's more, Wenger declares that identity formation is interplay between identification and negotiability. Identification refers to the process through which its members create bonds/distinctions with others through modes of belonging. Negotiability refers to the competence of its members to define what matters in practice through modes of belonging. To sum up, Wenger concludes that communities of practice, boundary processes among communities of practice (brokering, boundary interaction and boundary objects) and identities are constitutive elements of an organisation as a learning system.

However, Roberts (2006) suggests that communities of practice take time to develop but, in the current business environment, it is questionable whether organisational members have time to establish strong ties with one another. This implies that strong ties among organisational members are not prevalent in the current business environment, constituting a limit to the explanatory power of communities of practice. In view of this, the notion of a community of practice may explain learning in the community of practice, in which there are strong ties among its members (e.g., mutuality of its member's engagement and accountability to their joint enterprise). In the situations where such strong ties do not exist among organisational members, the notion of a community of practice loses its explanatory power and could not explain the learning of these organisational members, who have weak/absent ties with one another. Therefore, Wenger's analysis is flawed, restricting its range of use to those organisational members who develop strong ties with one another.

It is observable that Wenger handles the research topic of how learning is structured. He addresses learning and organising by looking at the process of interplay between a community of practice's socially defined competence and its members' personal experience. The unit of his analysis is communities of practice (self-organising systems). This study also deals with the research topic of how learning is structured, but the way this study addresses learning and organising is different from Wenger's framework. This study addresses learning and organising by looking at the macro and micro structuring forces that organise practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning. The units of its analysis include organisations, groups and institutions at the macro level (Münch

and Smelser 1987). At the micro level, they include social actors' subjective mental states and objective activities (Ritzer 2001), their relationships to and their interaction with other social actors (Münch and Smelser 1987; Ritzer 2001) and their contacts with artefacts (cf. Law 1992). It does not build its analysis on communities of practice that are confined to people with strong ties. Rather, this study explains learning of organisational members, who have strong ties, weak ties or absent ties with others.

To sum up, this study aims to systematically perform a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning in the organisational setting. It addresses learning and organising by looking at the macro and micro structuring forces (cross-level analysis) that organise practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning (process analysis). This framework is new since previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000) do not propose this framework. It fills in this knowledge gap and thus makes an original contribution to this field of study. Having discussed the contribution of its cross-level and process analysis, this study proceeds to discuss the reasons why its cross-level and process analysis does not treat service users as an immediate structuring force that could substantially organise practitioners' learning.

#### *2.1.4 The possibility of service users as an immediate structuring force*

This section explores the possibility of service users as an immediate structuring force that substantially organises the learning activities of practitioners. In light of possible hurdles in relation to service users' lack of willingness for greater participation, their lack of competence to carry out specialised functions and professional resistance to their influential role in decision-making (see Bovaird 2007; O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2011; Prior 2003b; Simmons and Birchall 2005), this study argues that in the context of the Old-Five-Old Foundation, it is less likely for service users to be an immediate structuring force that could substantially organise practitioners' learning. In a theoretical sense, this study suggests that literatures relevant to this issue include those discussing public/political/citizen participation and those addressing the service dominant logic. These are now discussed in sequence.

As for public/political/citizen participation, literatures discuss types of non-participation, participation and participation mechanisms (e.g., Arnstein 1969; Pestoff 2006; Simmons, Birchall and Prout 2007) as well as factors influencing non-participation/participation (e.g., Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker 2001; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Whitely and Seyd 1996). In addressing factors influencing non-participation/participation, Simmons and Birchall (2005) suggest that they include the motivation of service users, the mobilisation of service users, the dynamics of user participation as well as the prior resources and capacities of service users (i.e., time, skills or confidence service users have). In light of these factors, they suggest that both user participation and user non-participation exist. User participation can be facilitated, but it can also be fragile. Furthermore, Bovaird (2007) analyses different types of co-production but acknowledges that the

existence of a co-production trend and the feasibility of greater co-production cannot be inferred from limited case studies. He suggests that taking the balance of benefits and costs into consideration, being co-producers of public services may not be attractive to service users. In addition, professionals may not trust service users to be able to behave responsibly, and thus initial professional resistance to their co-producing role could exist. Similarly, in the context of patient involvement, Prior (2003b) suggests that even although lay people have an intimate understanding of their pains, this does not mean that their limited and idiosyncratic experiences of having illness could make them become proficient in carrying out specialised functions such as the diagnosis and management of a disease. In the case study of family group conferencing requiring the power shift from professionals to family members, Brown (2007) finds professional resistance to sharing decision-making power with family members whose children are at risk.

With regard to the service dominant logic, Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c) claim that it could be applied to both marketing and other fields, such as public policy (see Grönroos 2011 and Schembri 2006 for critiques of this logic). In their view, operant resources (e.g., specialised competences/knowledge and skills that are capable of acting on other resources) represent fundamental sources of value creation. Both the service provider and the beneficiary of service are resource providers and integrators, using their operant resources and bringing their resources into the value creation process (cf. Normann 2002 for enabling logics; Osborne 2010 for services management theories and public services management). Yet, O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2011) suggest that the co-producing relationship in the service dominant logic is not really feasible.



While acknowledging the existence of public/political/citizen participation and the potential for the service-dominant logic to be applied to public policy/services domains (e.g., see Hunter and Ritchie 2007 and Pestoff, Osborne and Brandsen 2006 for the meanings, features and examples of co-production), this study is inclined to argue that in the context of the Old-Five-Old Foundation, it is less likely for service users to be an immediate structuring force that could substantially organise the learning activities of practitioners. The following sections discuss the reasons supporting this argument.

Firstly, the hurdle in relation to service users' lack of willingness for greater participation lessens the possibility of service users as an immediate structuring force. Being an immediate force that can substantially organise practitioners' learning requires service users to carry out greater participation (cf. Leadbeater 2004 for shallow personalisation and deep personalisation; Bettencourt 1997, Lengnick-Hall, Claycomb and Inks 2000 and Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000 for different degrees of customers' participation). In a theoretical sense, as indicated by Simmons and Birchall (2005) and Bovaird (2007), user participation can be fragile (e.g., the weak motivation of service users), and being co-producers of public services may not be attractive to service users. In light of this hurdle (cf. Clary and Snyder 2002 for the problem of inaction), this study suggests that when service users lack willingness to be involved in greater participation (e.g., acting more like the recipients of public social services), it is less likely for them to substantially organise the learning activities of practitioners. Furthermore, in an empirical sense, the pre-understanding of the author of this dissertation on the participation mechanisms for service users and the scope of their participation indicates that in this research site,

service users could express their opinions via local governments' and the Old-Five-Old Foundation's service inspection and service user complaint procedures. Service users also provided practitioners with the information about their own personal situations, their needs and their service expectations; they undertook their responsibilities agreed in the service plans. Nonetheless, they did not become board members (cf. Wellens and Jegers 2011 for participatory governance mechanisms) and members of the advisory groups. They did not attend the orientation, the individual and group supervision meetings, the supervisors meetings, the service team meetings, the preparatory meetings for holding events, the meetings that decide a branch's annual plan and each social worker's work for that year, and the governmental programme coordination meetings. They did not establish user groups to collectively speak for themselves. In light of his pre-understanding of this research site, at the strategic and operational levels, since the participation mechanisms for and the scope of service users' participation were limited, this study suggests that it is less likely for them to substantially organise the learning activities of practitioners, being less likely to be an immediate structuring force. The data collected afterward (e.g., Appendix XXVI, Appendix XXXI, Appendix XXXII, Appendix XXXIII and Appendix XXXVII) is consistent with this pre-understanding of their limited participation.

Secondly, the hurdle in relation to service users' lack of competence to carry out specialised functions and the hurdle in relation to professional resistance to their influential role in decision-making also lessen the possibility of service users as an immediate structuring force. In a theoretical sense, as indicated by Simmons and Birchall (2005), Prior (2003b) and O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2011), user

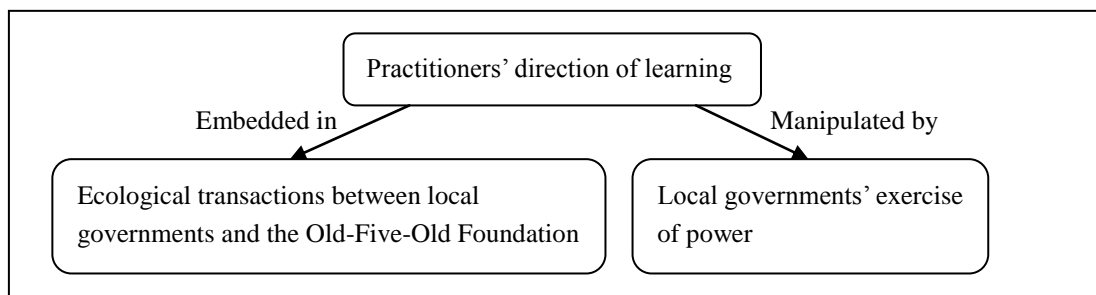
participation can be fragile (e.g., the deficient prior resources and capacities of service users), lay people are not proficient in carrying out specialised functions, and the co-producing relationship is not really feasible (cf. Kelley, Donnelly Jr. and Skinner 1990 and Von Hippel 1986 for different qualities of customers' inputs). Furthermore, as indicated by Bovaird (2007), initial professional resistance to service users' co-producing role could exist, not trusting their decisions. In light of these hurdles, this study suggests that when service users lack competence (as operant resources) to carry out specialised functions or professional resistance to their influential role in decision-making arises, which make them unable to engage in greater participation, it is less likely for them to substantially organise the learning activities of practitioners.

Having discussed the possibility of service users as an immediate structuring force, this study now proceeds to discuss the preliminary framework for service purchasers' demanding.

## **2.2 The macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning: service purchasers' demanding**

This section addresses the question: since a macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning by looking at service purchasers' views on the expected competences has been proposed, what might be a framework that could be utilised to analyse it? In order to produce a preliminary framework for analysing it, this section tackles three bodies of literature: the literatures that address ecological transactions (Gitterman

and Germain 2008), value activities (Porter 1998b) and the exercise of power (Foucault 1972, 1995; Ouchi 1979). Drawing upon these literatures, the overall argument of this section is that practitioners' learning is embedded in the ecological transactions between service purchasers (i.e., local governments) and the service provider (i.e., the Old-Five-Old Foundation). In their ecological transactions, service purchasers' exercise of power requires that the service provider performs particular value activities. This shapes the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities, thereby manipulating their direction of learning. The contribution of this section is that it proposes the preliminary framework for service purchasers' demanding, and this preliminary framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to ecological transactions, value activities and the exercise of power. This social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to this field of study.



*Figure 2.2 The preliminary framework for service purchasers' demanding*

Figure 2.2 indicates the preliminary framework for service purchasers' demanding. In Section 2.2.1, this study discusses the ecological transactions between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation; in Section 2.2.2, it discusses local

governments' exercise of power.

### *2.2.1 Ecological transactions between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation*

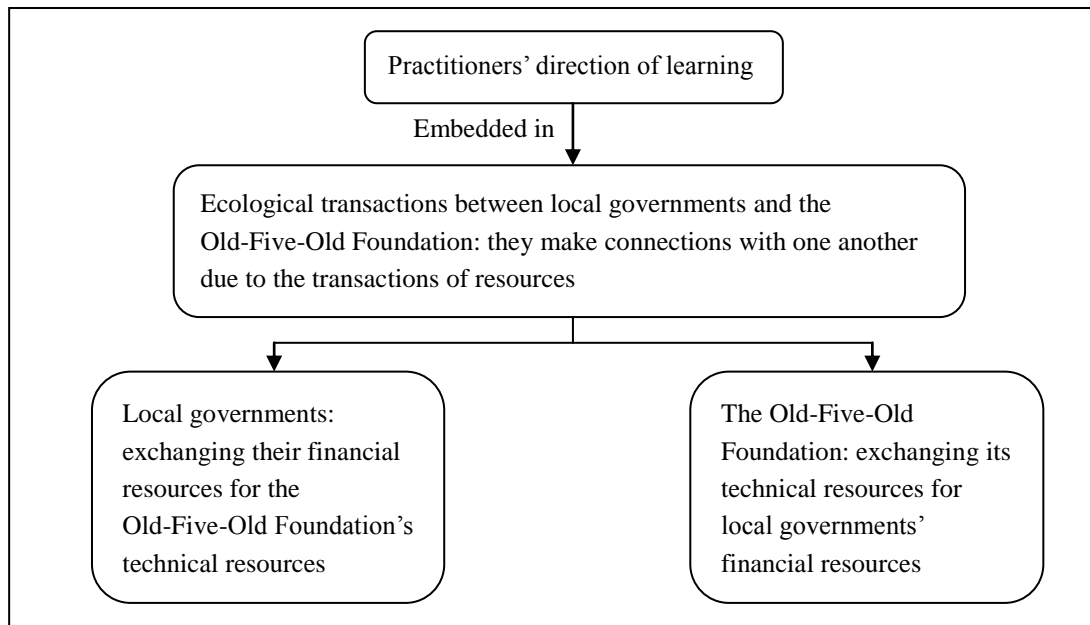
This section addresses the question: what is the fundamental relationship that brings local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation together, creating an opportunity for local governments to require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular activities? Drawing upon Gitterman and Germain's (2008) discussion of transactions of resources in ecological thinking, this study argues that local governments (service purchasers) and the Old-Five-Old Foundation (the service provider) make connections with one another due to the transactions of resources. Local governments exchange their financial resources for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's services, while the Old-Five-Old Foundation exchanges its technical resources for local governments' payment. This constitutes the fundamental relationship that brings local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation together, creating an opportunity for local governments to require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular activities. Figure I (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section.

Gitterman and Germain (2008) summarise that ecological thinking puts emphasis on reciprocity of person-environment transactions. In such exchanges, people and environments influence one another, illustrating a reciprocal view about relationships between people and environments, rather than linear cause-effect thinking. This

study supports the notion of reciprocal transactions between people and environments. In the context of public welfare services where local governments play the role of service purchasers and contractors play the role of service providers (see Pinker 1992 and Evers 1995 for welfare pluralism; Siverbo 2004 for purchaser-provider split), this study applies this notion to analyse exchanges of resources between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation. Drawing upon Gitterman and Germain's discussion of transactions of resources in ecological thinking, this study argues that local governments (service purchasers) and the Old-Five-Old Foundation (the service provider) make connections with one another due to the transactions of resources. Local governments exchange their financial resources for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's services, while the Old-Five-Old Foundation exchanges its technical resources for local governments' payment. This constitutes the fundamental relationship that brings local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation together, creating an opportunity for local governments to require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular activities. Figure 2.3 indicates the preliminary framework for the ecological transactions between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation.

However, the weakness of ecological thinking (Gitterman and Germain 2008) is that it fails to explain the functional roles played by those who engage in the transactions of resources and neglects the role of power relations in manipulating their transactions of resources. Therefore, ecological thinking lacks the capacity to enable this study to explain the types of activities the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform (i.e., functional roles it plays) and how local governments manipulate these activities (i.e., the use of local governments' power). This study

utilises Foucault's (1972) discourses, Porter's (1998b) value activities, Foucault's (1995) hierarchical observation and normalising judgement and Ouchi's (1979) bureaucratic mechanism of control and market mechanism of control to address this issue.



*Figure 2.3 The preliminary framework for the ecological transactions between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation*

### *2.2.2 Local governments' exercise of power*

This section addresses two questions. In their ecological transactions, what type of activities is the Old-Five-Old Foundation required to perform? How do local governments manipulate these activities? Making reference to Foucault's (1972) discourses, this study argues that, in their ecological transactions, local governments produce discourses to prohibit the Old-Five-Old Foundation from doing particular actions and require it to perform particular activities. Drawing upon Porter's

(1998b) value activities, this study argues that local governments' discourses point out the types of value activities that the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform. These value activities indicate local governments' perspectives on the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities. After that, drawing upon Foucault's (1995) hierarchical observation and normalising judgement and Ouchi's (1979) bureaucratic mechanism of control and market mechanism of control, this study argues that local governments' discourses are supported by the institutions consisting of the bureaucratic mechanism of control and the market mechanism of control. These involve the use of hierarchical observation and normalising judgement. Local governments could enforce their discourses through these institutions.

It concludes that local governments' exercise of power via the discourses and the institutions that support their discourses manipulates the types of value activities that the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform, and thus manipulates the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities, thereby manipulating their direction of learning. Figure II (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section.

In previous studies of learning in the organisational setting, Contu and Willmott (2000, 2003), Fox (2000) and Wenger (1998) raise the issue of power, a dimension that needs a study. As for the concept of power, Berenskoetter (2007) suggests that Steven Lukes and Michel Foucault have been influential in viewing power through the angle of shaping *normality*. Lukes (2005) proposes the third dimension of power that shapes people's perceptions, cognitions, desires, values, beliefs and



preferences, such as influences of ideological power. Foucault (1972) proposes the notion of discourses, which shape human subjects (see Foucault 1982 for the subject and power). As for these two approaches, Vogler (1998) suggests that Lukes' view builds upon the assumption of people's *real* interests, producing a difficulty of how to define and identify people's real interests (see also Barker and Roberts 1993; Hindess 1982), while Foucault's perspective does not rely on real interests but looks at discourses and associated disciplinary techniques. As for these two views of power, the focus of this study is to investigate the measures through which local governments organise practitioners' direction of learning, rather than researching latent conflicts between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation and the Old-Five-Old Foundation's real interests, which are, as suggested by Vogler, difficult to define. Consequently, it rejects Lukes' approach. It takes Foucault's approach and looks at how practitioners' direction of learning is organised by local governments via their exercise of power. It is at the inter-organisational level that this study addresses the issue of power.

Foucault (1990) views power as the multiplicity of force relations. In the multiplicity of force relations, he suggests that discourses represent an instrument of power that transmits power. He (1972) views discourses as individualisable groups of statements. This study supports Foucault's view that treats power as the multiplicity of force relations. It applies this view to the analysis of power relations between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation. It also supports his view about discourses as an instrument of power. Though he views discourses as individualisable groups of statements, in order to modify this notion to fit the research scene in which the Old-Five-Old Foundation and local governments

represent multiple power forces, this study defines discourses in a specific manner. It defines discourses as local governments' statements that prohibit the Old-Five-Old Foundation from undertaking particular actions and that request it to perform particular activities. Making reference to Foucault's (1972) discourses, this study argues that, in their ecological transactions, local governments produce discourses to prohibit the Old-Five-Old Foundation from doing particular actions and require it to perform particular activities.

However, the weakness of Foucault's (1972) discourse is that it fails to categorise the content of the statements claimed by discourses. Though it could enable this study to notice local governments' discourses, it lacks the capacity to enable this study to categorise the content of the statements claimed by local governments' discourses. In the context of this study, which researches local governments' perspectives on the competences practitioners are expected to develop, this study utilises Porter's (1998b) value activities to address this issue. Categorising the content of the statements claimed by local governments' discourses is done by identifying the types of value activities the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform.

Porter (1998b) suggests that value activities represent a system of interdependent activities and consist of primary activities and support activities. Primary activities include inbound logistics, operations, outbound logistics, marketing and sales, and service (e.g., customer service). Support activities include the firm's infrastructure, human resource management, technology development and procurement. In addition, there are three activity types within each category of activity: direct activities, indirect activities and quality assurance. Drawing upon Porter's (1998b)

value activities, this study argues that local governments' discourses point out the types of value activities that the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform. These value activities indicate local governments' perspectives on the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities.

However, in its original context, Porter's value activities address the issue of competitive advantage. His discussion does not aim to explain the issue of power. Therefore, his discussion could not enable this study to explain the measures through which local governments could demand the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform these value activities. This study utilises Foucault's (1995) hierarchical observation and normalising judgement and Ouchi's (1979) bureaucratic mechanism of control and market mechanism of control to address this issue.

Foucault (1972) suggests that discourses could be supported by a system of institutions. This study suggests that these institutions could be revealed by his (1995) three means of correct training: hierarchical observation, normalising judgment and examination. Hierarchical observation represents hierarchical functional surveillance that monitors and supervises individuals, rendering individuals visible. Normalising judgment seeks to mark gaps in an individual's qualities and aptitudes by making use of ranks, which serve as the basis for a reward or a punishment. Normalising judgment pushes an individual to conform to the set model of behaviour, controlling and correcting deviant actions. Besides, examination represents a measure that combines hierarchical observation with normalising judgment.

This study applies Foucault's view about the institutions that support discourses and utilises his hierarchical observation and normalising judgment to analyse specific power techniques through which local governments could demand the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular value activities. It merely utilises hierarchical observation and normalising judgment since examination is simply a combination of these two means. However, Foucault's account fails to identify the mechanisms that support discourses. His account lacks the capacity to enable this study to explain the mechanisms through which local governments could require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular value activities. This study utilises Ouchi's (1979) bureaucratic mechanism of control and market mechanism of control to address this issue.

Ouchi (1979) suggests three kinds of control mechanisms: the market mechanism, the bureaucratic mechanism and the clan mechanism. He indicates that the market mechanism builds upon competition, while the bureaucratic mechanism builds upon rules. The clan mechanism relies on shared values and beliefs. In view of this, in the context of public welfare services where local governments establish performance evaluation measures to evaluate service providers' services (see also Martin 2007 for performance-based contracting), this study suggests that the institutions that support local governments' discourses could include the bureaucratic mechanism of control. If service providers have to engage in competition in order to get a contract (see also Domberger and Rimmer 1994 for competitive tendering and contracting), this study suggests that the institutions that support local governments' discourses could include the market mechanism of control.

Drawing upon Foucault’s (1995) hierarchical observation and normalising judgement, and Ouchi’s (1979) bureaucratic mechanism of control and market mechanism of control, this study argues that local governments’ discourses are supported by the institutions that consist of the bureaucratic mechanism of control and the market mechanism of control. These involve the use of hierarchical observation and normalising judgement. Local governments could enforce their discourses through these institutions.

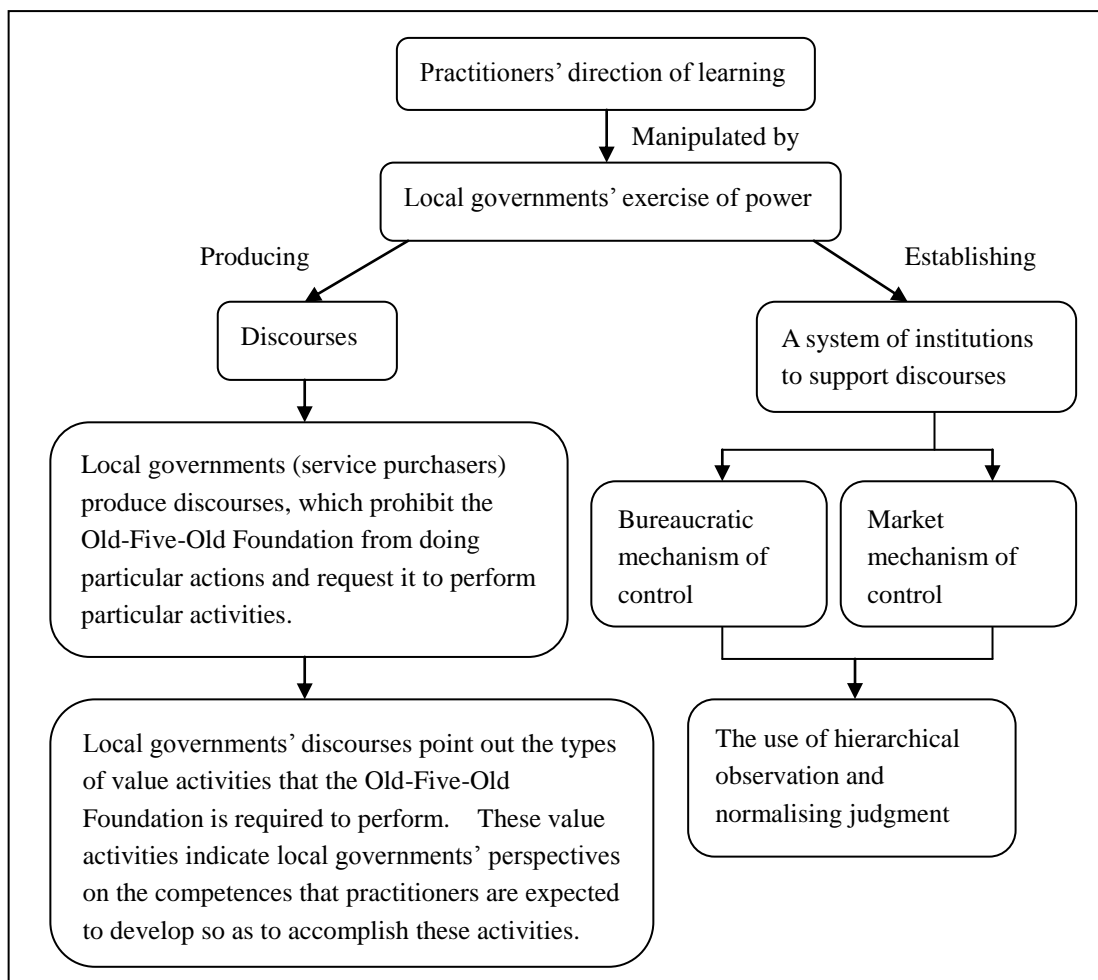


Figure 2.4 The preliminary framework for local governments’ exercise of power

To sum up, this section concludes that local governments’ exercise of power via the

discourses and the institutions that support their discourses manipulates the types of value activities that the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform, and thus manipulates the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities, thereby manipulating their direction of learning. Figure 2.4 indicates the preliminary framework for local governments' exercise of power.

### *2.2.3 Section summary*

Pfeffer and Salancik (2003, p. 43) suggest that 'Organisations engage in exchanges and transactions with other groups or organisations' (see also Alter 1990 for inter-organisational service delivery system). They also suggest that 'It is the fact of the organisation's dependence on the environment that makes the external constraint and control of organisational behaviour both possible and almost inevitable'. This study views practitioners' learning as situated in the ecological transactions between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation, and local governments' exercise of power. This analysis is in line with Pfeffer and Salancik's view. The contribution of this section is that it proposes the preliminary framework for service purchasers' demanding, and this preliminary framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to ecological transactions, value activities and the exercise of power. This social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to this field of study. Having discussed

service purchasers' demanding (the inter-organisational level structuring force), the next section discusses practitioners' direction of learning by looking at the service provider's planning (the organisational level structuring force).

### **2.3 The macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning: the service provider's planning**

This section addresses the question: since a macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning by looking at the service provider's view on the expected competences has been proposed, what might be a framework that could be utilised to analyse it? In order to produce a preliminary framework for analysing it, this section tackles four bodies of literature: the literatures that address strategic decisions (Porter 1998a; Wehrich 1982), job designs (Campion and Thayer 1987), value activities (Porter 1998b) and professionalism (Finlay 2000; Healy and Meagher 2004). Drawing upon these literatures, the overall argument of this section is that, firstly, practitioners' learning is embedded in the service provider's planning concerning *its chosen fields of practices*. Then, in this range of its chosen practices, the service provider's planning concerning *the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution* manipulates the value activities a practitioner is assigned to execute. This shapes the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish the assigned value activities, thereby manipulating his/her direction of learning. The contribution of this section is that it proposes the preliminary framework for the service provider's planning, and this preliminary framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to

strategic decisions, job designs, value activities and professionalism. This social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to this field of study. Figure 2.5 indicates the preliminary framework for the service provider's planning. In Section 2.3.1, this study addresses the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices; in Section 2.3.2, it discusses the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution.

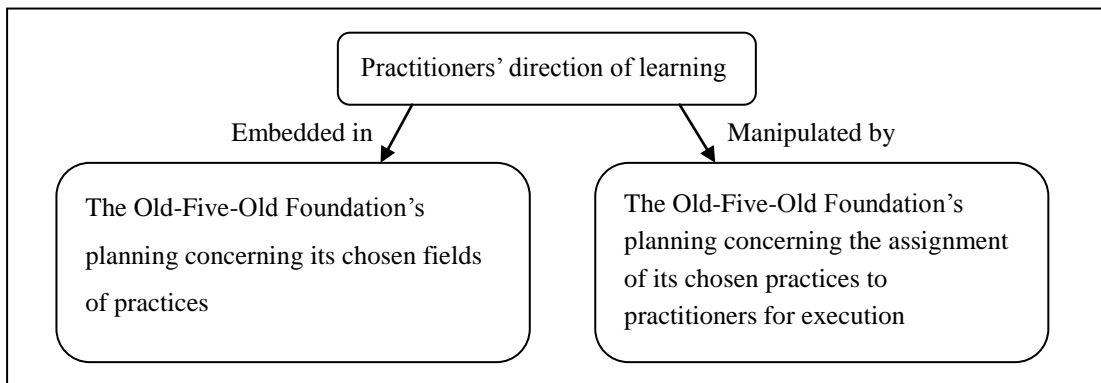


Figure 2.5 The preliminary framework for the service provider's planning

### *2.3.1 The Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices*

This section addresses the question: how does the Old-Five-Old Foundation plan its chosen fields of practices? This study seeks to identify influential factors in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's environment and its strategies that determine the range of its chosen practices.



Drawing upon Wehrich's (1982) TOWS matrix, this study argues that while planning the range of its chosen practices, the Old-Five-Old Foundation takes factors in its external and internal environments into consideration. Drawing upon Wehrich's (1982) political factors and markets and competition and Porter's (1998a) industry attractiveness, threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors, this study argues that factors in its external environment are concerned with industry attractiveness. These factors include political factors and markets and competition in terms of threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors. Drawing upon Wehrich's (1982) finance and top management orientation, this study argues that factors in its internal environment include finance and top management orientation. This study proposes that these influential factors in its external and internal environments show that practitioners' learning is value-laden. What practice options (i.e., what direction of learning) are worth pursuing is determined by the Old-Five-Old Foundation's consideration of these factors.

Furthermore, drawing upon Wehrich's (1982) discussion of the specialisation/concentration strategy and the diversification strategy, this study argues that while planning its preferred range of practices, the Old-Five-Old Foundation adopts the specialisation/concentration strategy and the diversification strategy. This study proposes that these strategies determine the Old-Five-Old Foundation's chosen fields of practices and thus specify the range of practices in which a practitioner may possibly participate. Its chosen practices represent the practices that are worth doing from its perspective and thus the direction of learning that is worthy of effort. As such, these strategies direct practitioners' direction of

learning.

To sum up, this study concludes that practitioners' learning is embedded in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices. This planning performs an analysis of its environment and considers possible strategies. Its chosen practices represent the practices in which a deepening of knowledge is required, thus indicating practitioners' possible direction of learning. Figure III (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section.

The literatures that are relevant to an organisation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices are literatures that address strategic decisions (see Ansoff 1984 and Dess, Lumpkin and Taylor 2004 for strategic management). This section looks at the literatures that address strategy formulation. However, here, this study's research focus is not to investigate whether the Old-Five-Old Foundation (as a not-for-profit social service organisation) utilises for-profit business strategic management tools to help itself plan the range of its practices. Rather, this study's research focus is to utilise for-profit business strategic management tools to identify what influential factors might impact on the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices and what strategy it might adopt while planning the range of its practices. This aims to show that these influential factors and its chosen strategies manipulate the direction of practitioners' learning.

Not every for-profit business strategic management tool can help this study to achieve this aim. These literatures may address issues that do not fit the aims of this study or the context of the Old-Five-Old Foundation (a not-for-profit social service

organisation whose main service purchasers are local governments). For instance, these literatures include the resource-based view (Barney 1991; Penrose 1995; Rumelt 1984; Wernerfelt 1984), core competence of a firm (Prahalad and Hamel 1990), organisational capabilities (Dosi, Nelson and Winter 2000; Nelson and Winter 1982), dynamic capabilities (Teece, Pisano and Shuen 1997), the generic value chain (Porter 1998b) and the use of game theory in shaping business strategy (Brandenburger and Nalebuff 1995; Shapiro 1989). These literatures are interested in researching how a firm's competitive advantage can be achieved and sustained, which is not a research issue this study aims to address. The following parts discuss strategic management literatures that could help this study to achieve this aim.

Wehrich (1982) proposes a rational systematic situational framework for strategy formulation. In this prescriptive framework, he proposes preparation of an enterprise profile as the first step. This includes identification of an organisation's past enterprises, of the geographic markets that indicate current and prospective customers, of its competitive position with regard to key success factors, and of the top management orientation that indicates top managers' individual values and goals. The next step is to analyse present and future threats and opportunities in an organisation's external environment and to investigate weaknesses and strengths in its internal environment. As for an analysis of the external environment, factors considered include economic factors (e.g., availability of credit), social and political factors (e.g., laws), technological factors (e.g., technological changes in making products and services), factors regarding markets and competition, demographic factors that influence consumers' preferences for products and services, as well as other factors (e.g., availability of raw materials). With regard to an analysis of the

internal environment, factors considered include factors regarding management and organisation (e.g., human resource management), availability and suitability of labour forces and the organisational structure, factors concerning operations (e.g., adequacy and productivity of manufacturing facilities and marketing), financial factors (e.g., capital structure), as well as other factors.

Developing strategic alternatives comes after the analyses of environments. Wehrich indicates some strategic alternatives. The specialisation/concentration strategy pursues a single enterprise or a few enterprises. The backward integration strategy acquires suppliers, while the forward integration strategy acquires outlets for products or services. The innovation strategy invents new products or new services, while the no-change strategy follows the proven enterprise and sees what happens to those who engage in innovation. The diversification strategy engages in new markets, while the liquidation strategy terminates a product or service. The retrenchment strategy seeks to reduce operating costs or restricts the scope of production or services. Other strategic alternatives include the international strategy and the joint ventures strategy (e.g., establishment of a new jointly-owned company). The remaining steps include evaluating strategic alternatives, determining the strategy and preparing contingency plans. In particular, he suggests that consistency testing is necessary in the strategy formulation process; it examines consistency among the enterprise profile, the analyses of environments, strategic alternatives, the chosen strategies, and goals of claimants. Goals of claimants represent expectations demanded by employees, purchasers, suppliers, stockholders, financial institutions, etc.

An alternative view is proposed by Porter (1998a). Regarding the external environment, he looks at competition in an industry structure, specifies five competitive forces and proposes three generic competitive strategies. Five competitive forces in a firm's external environment determine industry attractiveness and a firm's competitive position. They consist of the bargaining power of buyers and of suppliers, threats from new entrants and substitution, and rivalry amongst current competitors. Furthermore, three generic competitive strategies include the overall cost leadership strategy, the differentiation strategy and the focus strategy. The overall cost leadership strategy aims to achieve a low-cost position in an industry, while the differentiation strategy seeks to make a firm's products or services unique by offering distinctive benefits that offset a higher price. The focus strategy serves a particular buyer group or engages in a particular segment of a product line.

As for an analysis of the external environment, Wehrich's TOWS matrix sheds light on two factors in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's external environment, which are more influential: factors regarding markets and competition and political factors. The Old-Five-Old Foundation gets public welfare service programme contracts from local governments by going through competition (see also Domberger and Rimmer 1994 for competitive tendering and contracting) and service performance evaluation (see also Martin 2007 for performance-based contracting). In this context, factors regarding markets and competition (e.g., competitors for tendering) and political factors (e.g., public welfare policies and legislation) become more influential. However, the weakness of Wehrich's TOWS matrix is that it lacks the capacity to explain the nature of analysing factors regarding markets and competition and political factors. This study utilises Porter's industry attractiveness to address this

issue. In the aforementioned context, this study suggests that the nature of an analysis of factors regarding markets and competition and political factors is an analysis of industry attractiveness of public welfare services. Furthermore, another weakness of Wehrich's TOWS matrix is that it does not give an account of the specific competitive forces in markets and competition. This study utilises Porter's threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors to address this issue. This study suggests that factors regarding markets and competition include threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors.

With regard to an analysis of the internal environment, Wehrich's TOWS matrix sheds light on financial factors as influential factors in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's internal environment. The importance of financial factors is evident since it is less likely for an organisation to operate a service that it cannot afford to undertake. Furthermore, Wehrich's TOWS matrix treats identification of the top management orientation as an element in the step 'preparation of an enterprise profile'. This study disagrees with this classification. Rather, this study proposes that it is more appropriate to treat identification of the top management orientation as a part of an analysis of weaknesses and strengths in an organisation's internal environment since top managers are an integral part of an organisation's internal environment. The importance of top management orientation is also evident since top managers have formal organisational authority to determine the services they want an organisation to do. Therefore, in addition to financial factors, this study also treats the top management orientation as an influential factor in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's internal environment.

To sum up, drawing upon Wehrich's (1982) TOWS matrix, this study argues that while planning the range of its chosen practices, the Old-Five-Old Foundation takes factors in its external and internal environments into consideration. Drawing upon Wehrich's (1982) political factors and markets and competition and Porter's (1998a) industry attractiveness, threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors, this study argues that factors in its external environment are concerned with industry attractiveness. They include political factors and markets and competition in terms of threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors. Drawing upon Wehrich's (1982) finance and top management orientation, this study argues that factors in its internal environment include finance and top management orientation.

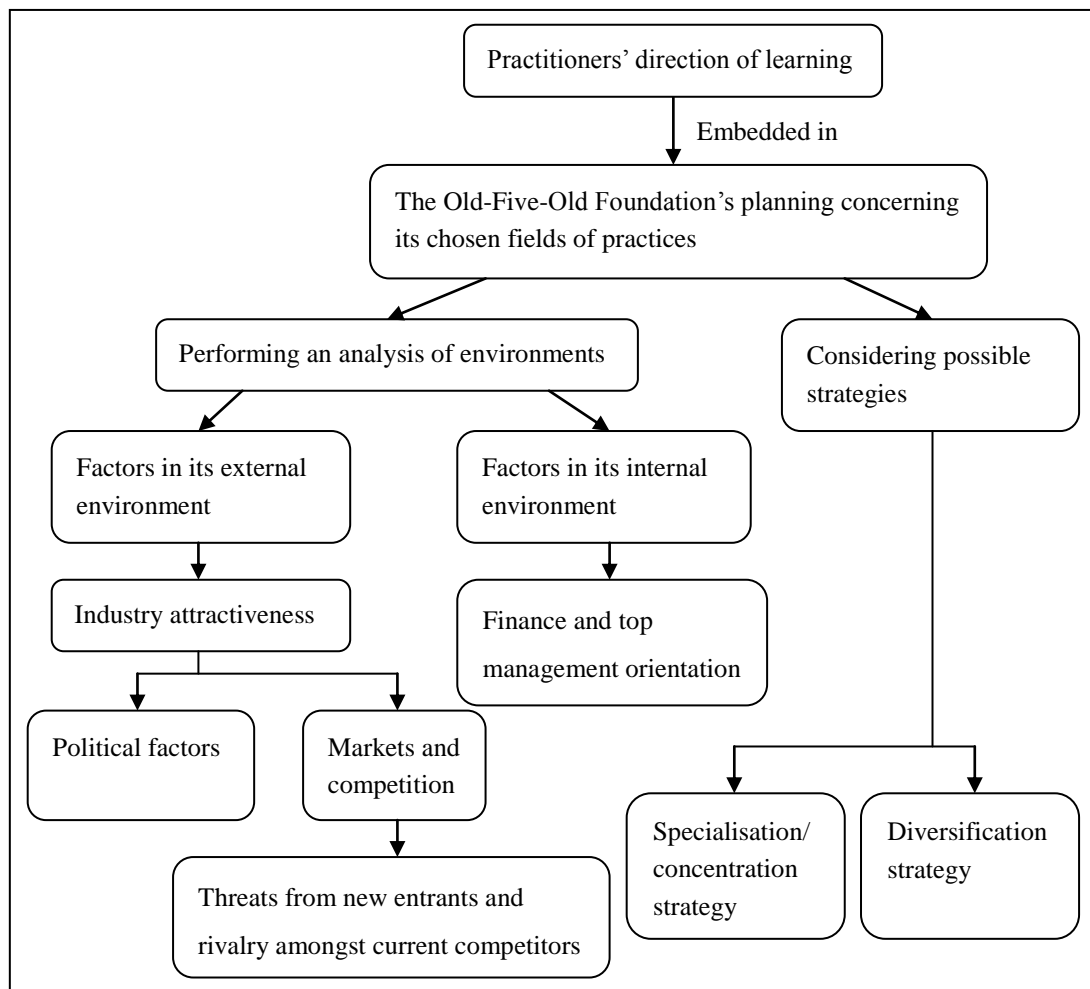
Having discussed the Old-Five-Old Foundation's consideration of influential environmental factors, which suggests that practitioners' learning is value-laden, this study proceeds to discuss its consideration of strategies.

This study's research focus looks at the strategies that functionally determine the range of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's practices and thus functionally determine the competences practitioners need to develop in order to carry out these practices. It pays attention to two strategies that are relevant to this study's research focus and fit the context of the Old-Five-Old Foundation as a social service organisation operating various public welfare services: the specialisation/concentration strategy and the diversification strategy. This study argues that while planning the range of its preferred practices, the Old-Five-Old Foundation adopts the diversification strategy and the specialisation/concentration strategy (Wehrich 1982). This study proposes

that adopting these strategies specifies the Old-Five-Old Foundation's chosen fields of practices and thus specifies the range of practices in which a practitioner may possibly participate. Its chosen practices represent the practices that are worth doing from its perspective and thus the direction of learning that is worthy of effort. As such, these strategies direct practitioners' direction of learning. For instance, if the Old-Five-Old Foundation adopts the diversification strategy but merely decides to engage in practices in relation to casework and group work, excluding community work, then, practices in relation to casework and group work (the range of its chosen practices) represent the practices that a practitioner may possibly participate in. This denotes their possible direction of learning, which does not include the direction to develop competence in carrying out practices in relation to community work.

This study does not adopt the other strategies in its analysis of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's strategies for three reasons. Firstly, the no-change strategy, the retrenchment strategy and the liquidation strategy are irrelevant to this study's research focus. In addition, the international strategy as well as the strategy of joint ventures, of backward integration, of forward integration, of overall cost leadership and of differentiation do not fit the context of the Old-Five-Old Foundation. Lastly, the innovation strategy and the focus strategy could be encompassed by the diversification strategy and the specialisation/concentration strategy respectively (see Appendix V for a discussion of these reasons).





*Figure 2.6 The preliminary framework for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices*

To sum up, this section concludes that practitioners' learning is embedded in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices. This planning performs an analysis of its environment and considers possible strategies. Its chosen practices represent the practices in which a deepening of knowledge is required, thus indicating practitioners' possible direction of learning. For instance, if the Old-Five-Old Foundation does not decide to offer services in institutional care settings (see Branch, Evashwick and Kwak 2005 for the continuum of long-term care) but merely engages in services in home care settings (e.g., home delivered meals and

home care) and if a practitioner wants to develop competence in relation to institutional care settings, there will be no such organisational option available to that practitioner since it does not engage in this kind of practice. In this situation, practitioners' direction of learning does not include developing competence in relation to institutional care settings. Rather, their *current* direction of learning is to develop competence in relation to home care settings. Figure 2.6 indicates the preliminary framework for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices. Having discussed this kind of planning, the next section proceeds to discuss another kind of planning: planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution.

### *2.3.2 The Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution*

This section addresses the question: how does the Old-Five-Old Foundation assign its chosen practices to practitioners for execution? This study seeks to identify the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish the value activities he/she is assigned to execute. Drawing upon Campion and Thayer's (1987) discussion of job specialisation, job simplification, task variety and ability/skill variety, this study argues that the varieties of competences required by the practices a practitioner is assigned to execute represent the varieties of competences he/she is expected to develop so as to execute these practices, denoting his/her direction of learning. Drawing upon Campion and Thayer's (1987) discussion of task simplification and higher-level

ability/skill requirements, this study argues that the levels of competence required by the practices a practitioner is assigned to execute represent the levels of competence he/she is expected to develop so as to execute these practices, denoting his/her direction of learning.

Furthermore, drawing upon Porter's (1998b) value activities, aforementioned notions of competence-variety and competence-level (Campion and Thayer 1987) and Finlay's (2000) discussion of re-professionalising, this study argues that when a practitioner not only performs direct activities within operations that carry out traditional direct clinical/treatment tasks but also performs other value activities that require higher-level competence (hereafter, supplementary value activities), re-professionalising occurs. In this situation, the practices a practitioner is assigned to execute require him/her to develop a variety of competences, including the competence in relation to direct activities within operations and the competence in relation to supplementary value activities. Drawing upon Porter's (1998b) value activities, the aforementioned notion of competence-level (Campion and Thayer 1987) and Healy and Meagher's (2004) discussion of de-professionalisation, this study argues that when a practitioner performs value activities that require lower-level competence to the extent that this constrains his/her opportunities to fully utilise his/her social work expertise, de-professionalisation occurs.

This section concludes that practitioners' learning is manipulated by the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution. The practices a practitioner is assigned to execute reveal the Foundation's perspective on the varieties of competences and

levels of competence that he/she is expected to develop so as to execute his/her practices, denoting his/her direction of learning. Furthermore, as a consequence of this planning, re-professionalising and de-professionalisation can occur. This study highlights that re-professionalising and de-professionalisation are essentially issues related to practitioners' direction of learning. Figure IV (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section.

Literatures that are relevant to an organisation's planning for allocation of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution are the literatures that address job designs. However, here, this study's research focus is not to investigate whether the Old-Five-Old Foundation had utilised specific job design tools. Rather, this study utilises the literatures that address job designs to identify the characteristics of a practitioner's tasks as a result of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning. This aims to identify the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish his/her tasks. This section starts with a discussion of different approaches to job designs.

Buchanan (1985) suggests that approaches to job designs include the scientific management school (e.g., Taylor 1947), the job restructuring approach (e.g., Argyris 1957; Blauner 1964; Hackman and Oldham 1976; Herzberg 1968; Morse 1973; Walker and Guest 1952), and the socio-technical systems approach (e.g., Emery and Trist 1960; Hill 1971). As for the scientific management school, for instance, Taylor deals with division of labour between individual workers, who carry out manual work but do not carry out intellectual work. Manual work is divided into small, easily learned units for workers to execute. The job restructuring approach

discusses issues such as job enlargement and job enrichment. Job enlargement puts emphasis on varieties of work that individual workers carry out. Job enrichment puts emphasis on accountability of individual workers for their own work, increasing their own control on planning and execution of their work. Unlike the job restructuring approach, which takes individual workers as the basic unit of analysis, the socio-technical systems approach takes the work group as the basic unit of analysis. This approach seeks to devise a job design that could make an organisation's social and technical subsystems achieve joint optimisation. It addresses issues such as achieving utility by grouping of interdependent jobs to form a meaningful whole duty for a work group.

An alternative view is proposed by Campion and Thayer (1987). They identify four approaches to job designs, namely the mechanistic, the motivational, the biological and the perceptual/motor job-design approaches. This study utilises Campion and Thayer's typology, which is more inclusive. Nonetheless, it merely pays attention to the mechanistic and the motivational job-design approaches. It is not concerned with the biological and the perceptual/motor job-design approaches since the job contents of social work services are less relevant to physical capabilities/limitations and perceptual and motor capabilities/limitations. They suggest that the mechanistic job-design approach puts emphasis on job specialisation, job simplification that requires relatively few skills and task simplification that calls for uncomplicated tasks. This approach also emphasises specialisation of tools and procedures, automation, repetition, etc. With regard to the motivational job-design approach, they suggest that it puts emphasis on task variety, ability/skill variety and higher-level ability/skill requirements. This approach also emphasises autonomy in

deciding methods and procedures, opportunities for growth in competence, task identity (completion of an entire piece of work from the beginning to the end), etc.

Though this study pays attention to the mechanistic and the motivational job-design approaches, its research focus is not to investigate whether the Old-Five-Old Foundation consciously utilises a particular approach in developing a job design. Rather, its research focus is to make use of these two approaches to identify the characteristics of the competences a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish his/her tasks. It pays attention to two groups of terms categorised by this study: competence-level and competence-variety. Terms relevant to competence-level include task simplification and higher-level ability/skill requirements, while terms relevant to competence-variety include job specialisation, job simplification, task variety and ability/skill variety. It applies these two categories to analyse the characteristics of the competences a practitioner is expected to develop. These are now discussed in sequence.

Drawing upon Campion and Thayer's (1987) discussion of job specialisation, job simplification, task variety and ability/skill variety, this study argues that the varieties of competences required by the practices a practitioner is assigned to execute, represent the varieties of competences he/she is expected to develop so as to execute these practices, denoting his/her direction of learning. For instance, if the Old-Five-Old Foundation's chosen fields of practices include the practices in relation to casework, group work and community work and through its planning one practitioner is assigned to undertake the practices in relation to group work and community work and the other practitioners are assigned to undertake casework, then

this practitioner's tasks would require him/her to develop the competences in relation to group work and community work. The *current* direction of his/her learning is not to develop the competences in relation to casework but in relation to group work and community work.

Moreover, drawing upon Champion and Thayer's (1987) discussion of task simplification and higher-level ability/skill requirements, this study argues that the levels of competence required by the practices a practitioner is assigned to execute, represent the levels of competence he/she is expected to develop so as to execute these practices, denoting his/her direction of learning. For instance, if a practitioner is assigned to undertake practice in relation to casework and if this practice requires him/her not only to perform an assessment of service users' needs but also to do administrative audit work, then this practitioner's tasks would require him/her to develop higher-level competence (e.g., the competence in relation to performing an assessment) and lower-level competence (e.g., the competence in relation to doing administrative audit work).

Having discussed the varieties of competences and levels of competence, this study proceeds to discuss the characteristics of the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop: re-professionalising and de-professionalisation. In its original context, Champion and Thayer's discussion deals with the issue of job design. In the context of social work practice, their discussion could not enable this study to explain the consequences of an organisation's job design: re-professionalising and de-professionalisation. This study utilises Finlay's (2000) discussion of re-professionalising, Healy and

Meagher's (2004) discussion of de-professionalisation, Porter's (1998b) value activities and the aforementioned notions of competence-variety and competence-level (Campion and Thayer 1987) to analyse these consequences.

Finlay suggests that while professionals need to negotiate new generic roles, expanding their areas of concern and learning new competences, the traditional role boundary blurs, and re-professionalising occurs. Healy and Meagher suggest that while social work professionals are placed in a position where their social work expertise is neither utilised nor fully utilised, de-professionalisation occurs. Their discussions lead this study to notice the consequences of an organisation's job design: re-professionalising and de-professionalisation. However, the weakness of their discussions is that they fail to offer any fundamental analytical units with which re-professionalising and de-professionalisation can be analysed. Porter's (1998b) value activities and the aforementioned notions of competence-variety and competence-level (Campion and Thayer 1987) could enable this study to produce fundamental analytical units.

Adding value activities and the notions of competence-variety and competence-level into Finlay's view, this study argues that while a practitioner not only performs direct activities within operations, which carry out traditional direct clinical/treatment tasks, but also performs other value activities that require higher-level competence (supplementary value activities), re-professionalising occurs. In this situation, the practitioner is required to develop a variety of competences, including the competences in relation to direct activities within operations and in relation to supplementary value activities. For instance, if a practitioner is assigned to conduct



casework and if this practice not only requires him/her to make an assessment of service users' needs (direct activities within operations) but also requires him/her to promote its casework services (marketing and sales as supplementary value activities), then this practitioner needs to develop traditional assessment competences and new competences in promoting agency services. In this situation, re-professionalising occurs.

Moreover, adding value activities and the notion of competence-level into Healy and Meagher's view, this study argues that while a practitioner performs value activities that require lower-level competence to the extent that this constrains his/her opportunities to fully utilise his/her social work expertise, de-professionalisation occurs. For instance, if a practitioner's casework practice requires him/her to do administrative audit work (value activities that require lower-level competence) and if doing administrative audit work constitutes a significant portion of the workload constraining his/her opportunities to fully utilise his/her social work expertise, de-professionalisation occurs.

To sum up, this section concludes that practitioners' learning is manipulated by the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution. The practices a practitioner is assigned to execute reveal its perspective on the varieties of competences and levels of competence that he/she is expected to develop so as to execute his/her practices, denoting his/her direction of learning. Furthermore, as a consequence of this planning, re-professionalising and de-professionalisation can occur. This study highlights that re-professionalising and de-professionalisation are essentially issues

related to practitioners' direction of learning. Figure 2.7 indicates the preliminary framework for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning with regard to the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution.

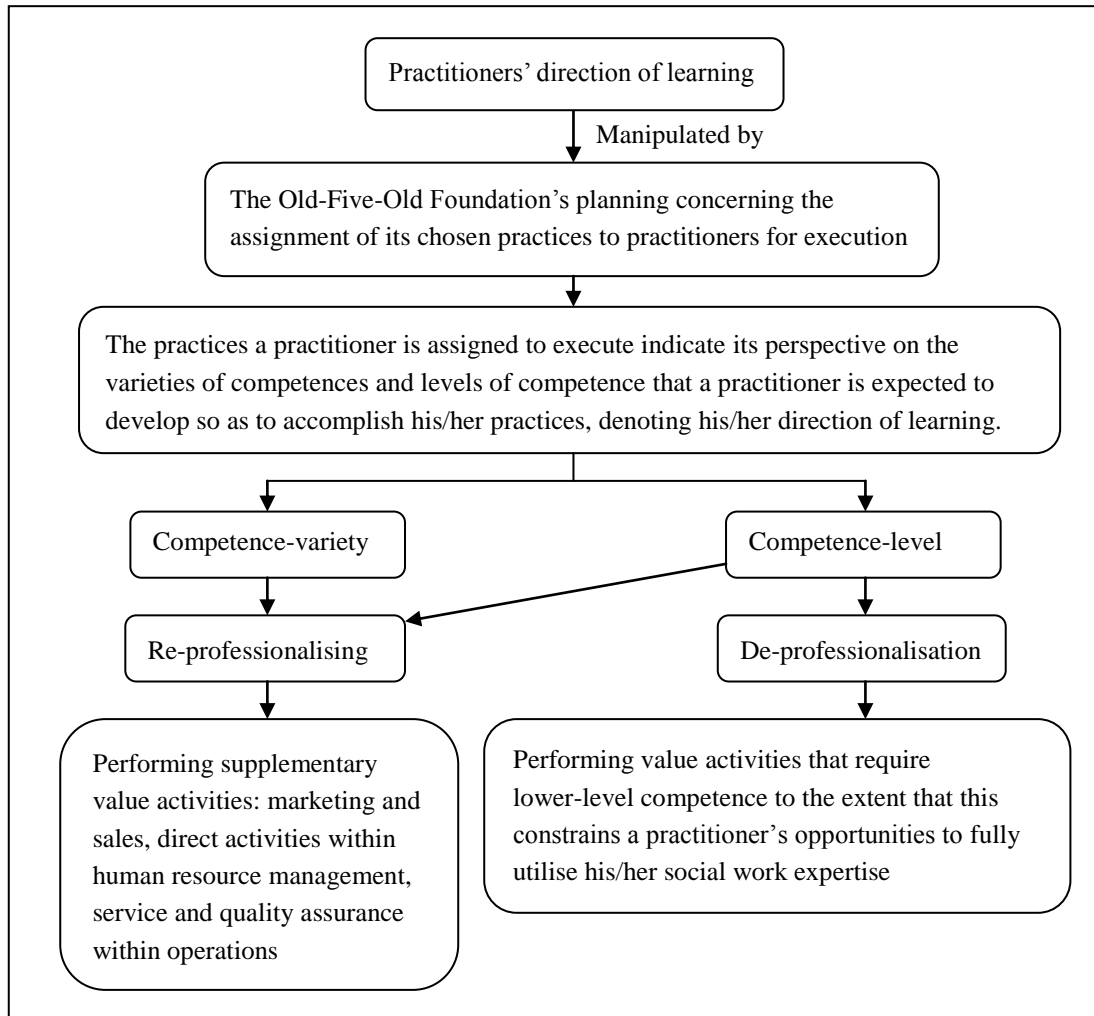


Figure 2.7 The preliminary framework for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution

### 2.3.3 Section summary

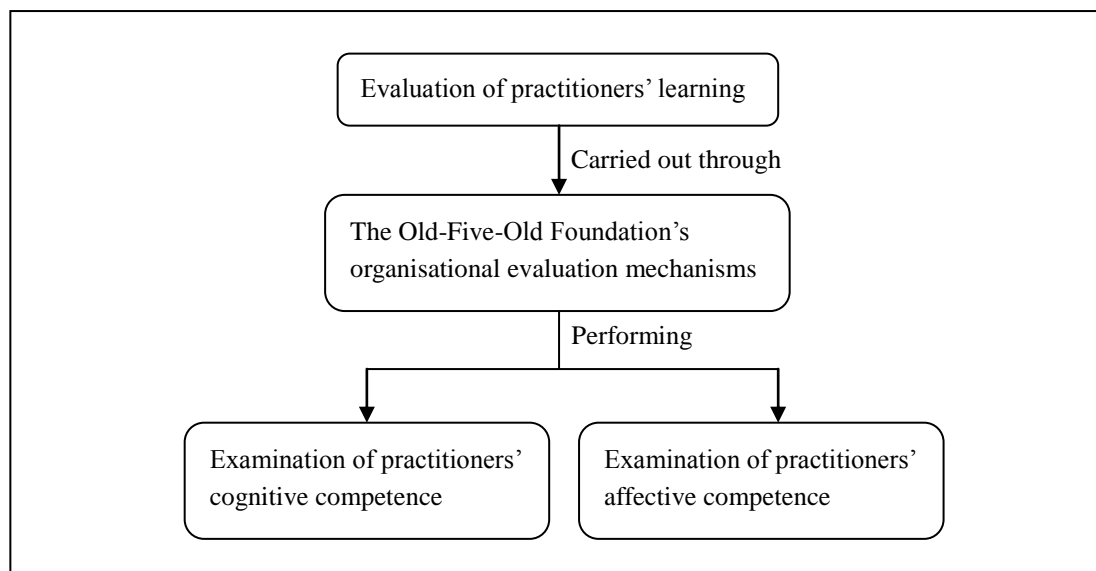
This section analyses the service provider's planning concerning its chosen fields of

practices and the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution. It views practitioners' learning as situated in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning. The contribution of this section is that it proposes the preliminary framework for the service provider's planning, and this preliminary framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to strategic decisions, job designs, value activities and professionalism. This social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to this field of study. Having discussed the service provider's planning (the organisational level structuring force) that organises practitioners' direction of learning, the next section discusses the evaluation of practitioners' learning by looking at the service provider's monitoring activities (the organisational level structuring force).

#### **2.4 The macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning: the service provider's monitoring**

This section addresses the question: since a macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning by looking at the service provider's organisational examination of practitioners' competences has been proposed, what might be a framework that could be utilised to analyse it? In order to produce a preliminary framework for analysing it, this section tackles three bodies of literature: the literatures that address the cognitive domain (Benack 1984; Bloom et al. 1967; Bruner 1957; Collins and Loftus 1975; Cross and Paris 1988; Kember et al. 1999;

Kondrat 1999; O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith 2009; Tulving 2002), the affective domain (Gardner 2004; Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia 1968; Mayer and Salovey 1993, 1997; Thorndike 1920) and organisational control systems (Beer et al. 1978; Jaworski 1988; Montanari and Freedman 1981; Poister 2003; Swiss 1991). Drawing upon these literatures, the overall argument of this section is that the evaluation of practitioners' learning is carried out through the service provider's (the Old-Five-Old Foundation's) organisational evaluation mechanisms, which examine practitioners' cognitive competence and practitioners' affective competence. The contribution of this section lies in the proposal of the preliminary framework for the service provider's monitoring, and this preliminary framework is a new synthesised framework that applies the cognitive and affective domains to the workplace setting (cognitive analysis and affective analysis) and relates learning to organisational control systems (social analysis). This cognitive, affective and social analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to this field of study. Figure 2.8 indicates the preliminary framework for the service provider's monitoring. Section 2.4.1 addresses the examination of practitioners' cognitive competence, while Section 2.4.2 addresses the examination of practitioners' affective competence. Then, Section 2.4.3 discusses the Old-Five-Old Foundation's organisational evaluation mechanisms.



*Figure 2.8 The preliminary framework for the service provider's monitoring*

#### *2.4.1 Examination of practitioners' cognitive competence*

This section deals with the question: what might constitute the targets for evaluation? It addresses this issue by looking at cognitive competence as a target for evaluation. Making reference to Bloom, Engelhart, Frust, Hill and Krathwohl's (1967) usage of the cognitive domain, this study argues that cognitive competence constitutes a target for evaluation. Drawing upon O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith's (2009) discussion of cognitive structure, cognitive development and cognitive information processing, it further argues that the targets for evaluation in relation to practitioners' cognitive competence include practitioners' cognitive structure, cognitive development and cognitive information processing.

Furthermore, drawing upon Bruner's (1957) coding system, Collins and Loftus' (1975) semantic network and Tulving's (2002) episodic memory and semantic memory, this study argues that the cognitive competence to link one concept to other

concepts and the cognitive competence to link experiences to concepts constitute the targets for evaluation in relation to cognitive structure. Drawing upon Bloom, Engelhart, Frust, Hill and Krathwohl's (1967) discussion of six major classes of thinking, Benack's (1984) discussion of relativistic thought, Kondrat's (1999) typology of self-awareness, and Kember, Jones, Loke, Mckay, Sinclair, Tse, Webb, Wong, Wong and Yeung's (1999) discussion of reflective thinking, this study argues that six major classes of thinking (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation); relativistic thought; self-awareness (simple conscious awareness, reflective awareness, reflexive awareness and critical reflexive awareness); and reflective thinking (content reflection, process reflection and premise reflection) constitute the targets for evaluation in relation to cognitive development. Drawing upon Cross and Paris' (1988) discussion of self-management of one's thinking, this study argues that this constitutes a target for evaluation in relation to cognitive information processing. Figure V (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section. It starts with a discussion of the content of the cognitive domain.

In the taxonomy of educational objectives, Bloom, Engelhart, Frust, Hill and Krathwohl (1967) suggest that the cognitive domain contains recall or recognition of knowledge, and the development of intellectual abilities and skills. Making reference to their usage of the cognitive domain, this study argues that cognitive competence constitutes a target for evaluation. However, this study does not confine its discussion to their analysis. As suggested by O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith (2009), cognitive theorists explore issues concerning cognitive structure, cognitive development and cognitive information processing. Drawing upon O'Donnell,

Reeve and Smith's discussion, this study further argues that the targets for evaluation in relation to practitioners' cognitive competence include practitioners' cognitive structure, cognitive development and cognitive information processing. The following parts discuss them in sequence.

As far as cognitive structure is concerned, Bruner (1957) indicates that human beings engage in grouping pieces of information and produce a set of contingently related categories, forming a coding system. In his view, the relationship between categories is a system relationship. However, the weakness of Bruner's coding system is that his perspective fails to explain a network relationship between categories. This study utilises Collins and Loftus' (1975) semantic network to address this issue. From their perspective, categories constitute a semantic web in which some categories are more closely linked than others; the relationship between categories is a network relationship.

This study applies Bruner's coding system and Collins and Loftus' semantic network to address the examination of practitioners' cognitive structure. It argues that the relationship between one concept and other concepts could be a system relationship or a network relationship. The competence to link one concept to other concepts (i.e., to identify the relationship between one concept and other concepts) constitutes a target for evaluation.

This study is aware of the possibility that the competence to identify the relationship between concepts is not the only target for evaluation in relation to cognitive structure. In their original contexts, Bruner's coding system and Collins and Loftus'

semantic network deal with the issue of relationships between concepts but do not have the capacity to explain relationships between concepts and experiences. This study utilises Tulving's (2002) discussion of episodic memory and semantic memory to address this issue. Tulving suggests that the episodic memory contains what people hear and see in particular events, and thus it is the memory that contains particular scenes. The semantic memory contains meanings and symbols that generally stand for facts, indicating that it is not bound by specific scenes. Drawing upon Tulving's episodic memory and semantic memory, this study argues that the competence to link experiences to concepts constitutes a target for evaluation as well. This involves linking the episodic memory (e.g., concrete experiences) to the semantic memory (e.g., abstract concepts).

To sum up, this study argues that the cognitive competence to link a concept to other concepts and the cognitive competence to link experiences to concepts constitute the targets for evaluation in relation to cognitive structure. Having discussed cognitive structure, this section proceeds to discuss competence in relation to cognitive development. It sequentially discusses six major classes of thinking, relativistic thought, self-awareness and reflective thinking.

Bloom, Engelhart, Frust, Hill and Krathwohl (1967) suggest that there are six major classes of thinking in the cognitive domain. They include knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Knowledge involves remembering information (e.g., recall of an idea). Comprehension involves grasping the meaning of a message. Application involves making use of theories, principles and ideas to handle particular situations and solve problems.



Analysis involves discovering constituent parts and their relationships. Synthesis combines elements to form certain patterns and structures, which were not clearly there before. Lastly, evaluation makes use of criteria to appraise the value of an idea, a solution, etc.

However, the weakness of their discussion is that they fail to explain post-formal thinking. This study utilises Benack's (1984) discussion of relativistic thought to address this issue. Benack suggests that in post-formal thinking, an individual with relativistic thought is able to recognise that diverse interpretative frameworks on a given topic could exist, that interpretative frameworks are not decisive standards, but that contradictions among interpretative frameworks could exist. As such, an individual with relativistic thought can think through multiple interpretative frameworks, being able to recognise that different knowledge systems could define a question from different angles, produce different answers to the same question and have different views on the same phenomenon (see also Koplowitz 1984; Labouvie-Vief 1999; Perry Jr. 1999). In addition, he suggests that an individual with relativistic thought is also able to compare and coordinate different interpretative frameworks to reach a solution to a problem. As such, an individual with relativistic thought is able to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of different interpretative frameworks and to utilise different perspectives to produce a solution (see also Arlin 1984; Basseches 1984a, 1984b; Commons and Richards 2003; Fischer, Hand and Russell 1984; Riegel 1973).

However, the weakness of Benack's relativistic thought is that it ignores self-awareness. Kondrat (1999) reviews three kinds of definitions of self-awareness,

namely simple conscious awareness, reflective awareness and reflexive awareness. In simple conscious awareness, the self is a character, who could perceive something, and awareness means that individuals are able to recognise whatever is experienced. In other words, it is about awareness of what had happened and what is happening. In reflective awareness, the self is a character, who treats himself/herself as a target for analysis; people observe and evaluate themselves. Awareness means that people are aware of themselves, as someone who had experienced and is experiencing something. Furthermore, in reflexive awareness, the self is a historical self, and awareness means that people are aware of that: how previous and present experiences shape their current selves and have influences on their perception and judgments. In addition to the aforementioned three definitions, Kondrat proposes the fourth definition, namely critical reflexive awareness. Here the self is a socially shaped self. Awareness means that people notice the influence of social, cultural, political and economic mechanisms on shaping themselves, and acknowledge that those mechanisms could confine them. In other words, people are aware of the environments that shape their understanding of the world.

However, the weakness of Kondrat's discussion is that it ignores reflective thinking. Building upon Mezirow's (1991) work, Kember, Jones, Loke, Mckay, Sinclair, Tse, Webb, Wong, Wong, and Yeung (1999) suggest that reflective action consists of content reflection, process reflection and premise reflection. Content reflection deals with 'what', reflecting on what a person acts upon, thinks and feels. Process reflection deals with 'how', reflecting on the manners in which a person acts, thinks and feels. Premise reflection refers to awareness of 'why' a person acts, thinks and feels, reflecting on the perspectives, the beliefs and the values that govern a person's

actions, thoughts and feelings.

To sum up, in order to portray a more inclusive picture of human cognitive operation in the context of work place settings, this study applies six major classes of thinking, relativistic thought, self-awareness and reflective thinking to address the examination of practitioners' cognitive development. It argues that six major classes of thinking (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation), relativistic thought, self-awareness (simple conscious awareness, reflective awareness, reflexive awareness and critical reflexive awareness) and reflective thinking (content reflection, process reflection and premise reflection) constitute the targets for evaluation in relation to cognitive development. Having discussed cognitive development, this study proceeds to discuss competence in relation to cognitive information processing.

Cross and Paris (1988) suggest that meta-cognition consists of two aspects, namely self-appraised knowledge about cognition and self-management of one's thinking. Self-appraised knowledge about cognition involves people's recognition of cognitive factors that could influence their thinking, understanding how their thinking operates and understanding about their current cognitive states and abilities. Furthermore, self-management of one's thinking includes people's ability to direct their own cognitive operation and monitor their own cognitive process so as to attain their set goals. An alternative view is proposed by Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters and Afflerbach (2006). They suggest that meta-cognitive knowledge and meta-cognitive skills constitute a common typology regarding components of meta-cognition. Meta-cognitive knowledge refers to a person's understanding

about the interplay between the person, the task and the strategy for accomplishing the task. Meta-cognitive skills refer to a person's meta-cognitive activities that regulate his/her thinking in the process of accomplishing the task. For instance, as indicated by Flavell (1979), examples of meta-cognitive skills include a person's planning before commencing a task and a person's evaluation after completing it (see also Meijer, Veenman and Van Hout-Wolters 2006).

As for the aforementioned views, this study does not aim to investigate self-appraised knowledge about cognition (Cross and Paris 1988) and meta-cognitive knowledge (Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters and Afflerbach 2006). The reason is that they are more concerned with a person's understanding of his/her cognitive operation, which is less directly relevant to the cognitive competence required by a person's tasks. Rather, this study pays attention to the self-management of one's thinking (Cross and Paris 1988), suggested by this study to be a higher-level category that could encompass meta-cognitive skills (Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters and Afflerbach 2006). In work place settings, the direct relevance of self-management of one's thinking to the cognitive competence required by a person's tasks is empirically supported by the practice experiences of the author of this dissertation. For instance, in practice, he planned a work schedule. Yet, unplanned tasks emerged (e.g., a phone call from a new service applicant) and interruptive events happened (e.g., his colleague's asking for advice). In these situations, he needed to perform self-management of his thinking to handle interruptive events and rearrange a work schedule that could lead to timely completion of all tasks. As such, drawing upon Cross and Paris' discussion of self-management of one's thinking, this study argues that self-management of one's thinking constitutes a target for evaluation in relation

to cognitive information processing.

To sum up, Figure 2.9 indicates the preliminary framework for the examination of practitioners' cognitive competence. The next section moves on to discuss another target for evaluation: the examination of practitioners' affective competence. In their original contexts, the literatures that address the cognitive domain deal with the issue of human cognition. Therefore, they lack the explanatory power required by this study to examine practitioners' affective competence. This study utilises the literatures that address the affective domain to discuss this issue.

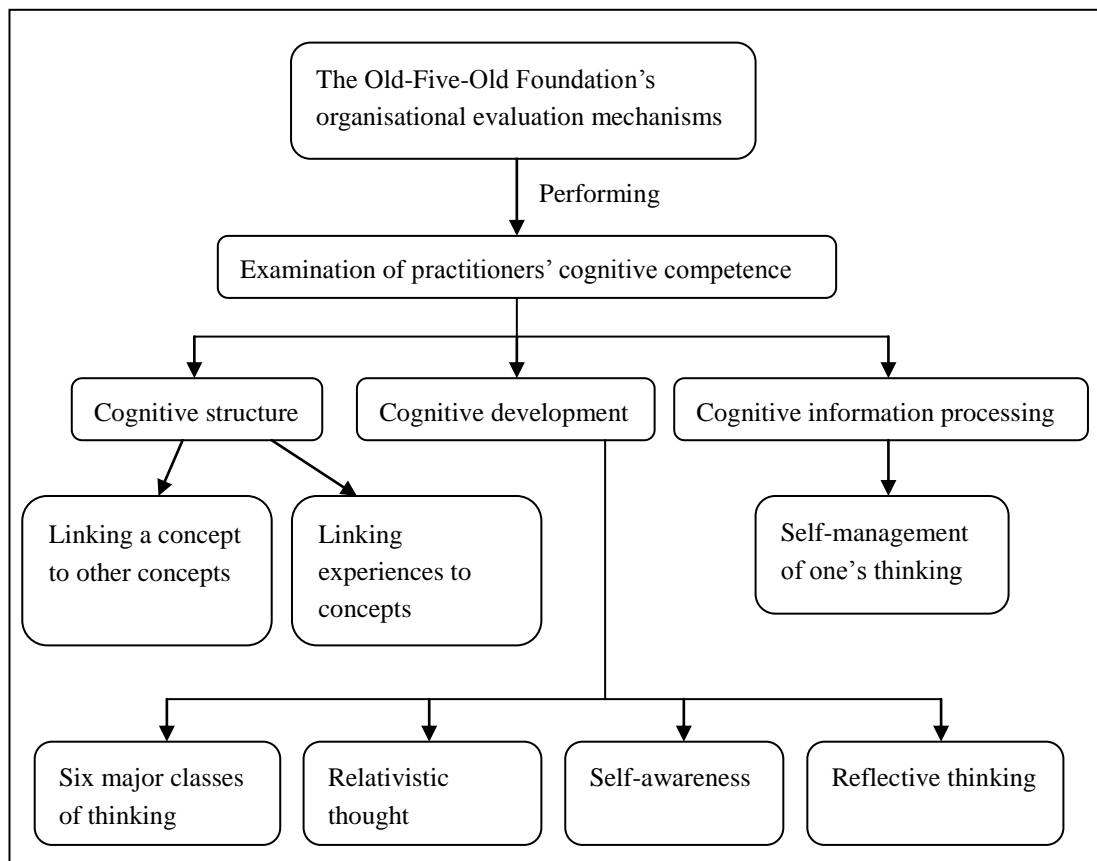


Figure 2.9 The preliminary framework for the examination of practitioners' cognitive competence

#### *2.4.2 Examination of practitioners' affective competence*

This section deals with the question: what might constitute the targets for evaluation? It addresses this issue by looking at affective competence as a target for evaluation. Making reference to Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia's (1968) usage of the affective domain, this study argues that affective competence constitutes a target for evaluation. Furthermore, drawing upon Mayer and Salovey's (1993, 1997) discussion of the four-branch model of emotional intelligence, this study argues that the targets for evaluation in relation to practitioners' affective competence include emotional competence. Emotional competence refers to the competence to deal with one's own emotions and those of others. Drawing upon Thorndike's (1920) discussion of social intelligence and Gardner's (2004) interpersonal intelligence, this study argues that the targets for evaluation in relation to practitioners' affective competence also include social competence. Social competence refers to the competence to detect and discriminate the intentions, needs and motivations of others, the competence to influence and direct people to work towards a desired goal and the competence to act wisely in human relations. Figure VI (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section. It starts with a discussion of the content of the affective domain.

In the taxonomy of educational objectives, Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1968) indicate that the affective domain contains a feeling tone, attitudes, values, emotions, interests and a degree of acceptance/rejection (cf. Illeris 2007 for the incentive dimension of learning). They suggest that there are five categories in the affective

domain: receiving, responding, valuing, organisation and characterisation by a value/a value complex. Receiving involves awareness of existence of affective stimuli, while responding involves responding regularly to affective stimuli. Valuing involves assessing affective stimuli and internalising affective stimuli to the extent that they guide an individual's behaviour. Organisation involves the organisation of various relevant affective stimuli into a system, while characterisation by a value/a value complex involves the integration of various affective stimuli into a total world-view. Making reference to Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia's usage of the affective domain, this study argues that affective competence constitutes a target for evaluation. However, this study does not adopt these five categories (receiving, responding, valuing, organisation and characterisation by a value/a value complex) since its research does not focus on investigating how a learner internalises and integrates affective stimuli but rather on the possible content of affective competence. What might constitute the possible content of affective competence? The following parts address this issue by looking at emotional intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and social intelligence.

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000) differentiate the mental ability model of emotional intelligence from the mixed model of emotional intelligence which mixes mental abilities with non-ability traits (e.g., extrovert personality). Examples of the mixed model include Bar-on (1997) and Goleman (1996), while the four-branch model of emotional intelligence (Mayer and Salovey 1997) represents the mental ability model. This study is concerned with mental abilities as the targets for evaluation rather than non-ability traits.

Mayer and Salovey (1993, 1997) suggest that the four-branch model of emotional intelligence includes four kinds of competences, ranging from more basic psychological processes to more complex psychological ones (see Mayer, DiPaolo and Salovey 1990; Mayer, Roberts and Barsade 2008; Mayer, Salovey and Caruso 2008). These four kinds of competences include the competences to perceive, appraise and express emotions, to use emotions to facilitate thinking, to understand and analyse emotions and utilise emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. The specific content of each kind of competence is summarised in Table II (Appendix VI). In a similar vein, Gardner (2004) suggests that intrapersonal intelligence refers to an individual's competence to assess their own feelings. This involves the competence to detect and discriminate feelings, the competence to symbolise feelings and the competence to make use of feelings as a means of understanding and guiding one's own actions. It is observable that the notion of intrapersonal intelligence can be encompassed by the notion of emotional intelligence.

This study applies Mayer and Salovey's four-branch model of emotional intelligence to address the examination of practitioners' affective competence. It argues that the targets for evaluation in relation to practitioners' affective competence include emotional competence. Emotional competence refers to the competence to deal with one's own emotions and the emotions of others. However, the weakness of Mayer and Salovey's model is that it inadequately addresses the question of social competence to deal with others (e.g., their emotions). This study utilises Thorndike's (1920) social intelligence and Gardner's (2004) interpersonal intelligence to address this issue.



Thorndike (1920) suggests that intelligence involves the competence to understand and manage three kinds of targets: ideas, concrete objects and people. As for the competence to understand and manage people, he defines social intelligence as the competence to act wisely in human relations. In addition, Gardner (1999, 2002, 2004, 2006) proposes multiple intelligences of which interpersonal intelligence is a part. Interpersonal intelligence involves the competence to detect and discriminate people's intentions, needs and motivations, and the competence to influence and direct people to work towards a desired goal. Drawing upon Thorndike's social intelligence and Gardner's interpersonal intelligence, this study argues that the targets for evaluation in relation to practitioners' affective competence also include social competence. Social competence refers to the competence to detect and discriminate the intentions, needs and motivations of others, the competence to influence and direct people to work towards a desired goal and the competence to act wisely in human relations.

To sum up, Figure 2.10 indicates the preliminary framework for the examination of practitioners' affective competence. In the previous section and in this section, this study discusses cognitive competence and affective competence as the targets for evaluation. In their original contexts, the literatures that address the cognitive domain and the affective domain deal with the issue of human cognition, emotional intelligence, social intelligence and interpersonal intelligence. Therefore, they could not enable this study to explain how cognitive competence and affective competence are examined by an organisation. In the next section, the literatures on organisational control systems are used to address this issue.

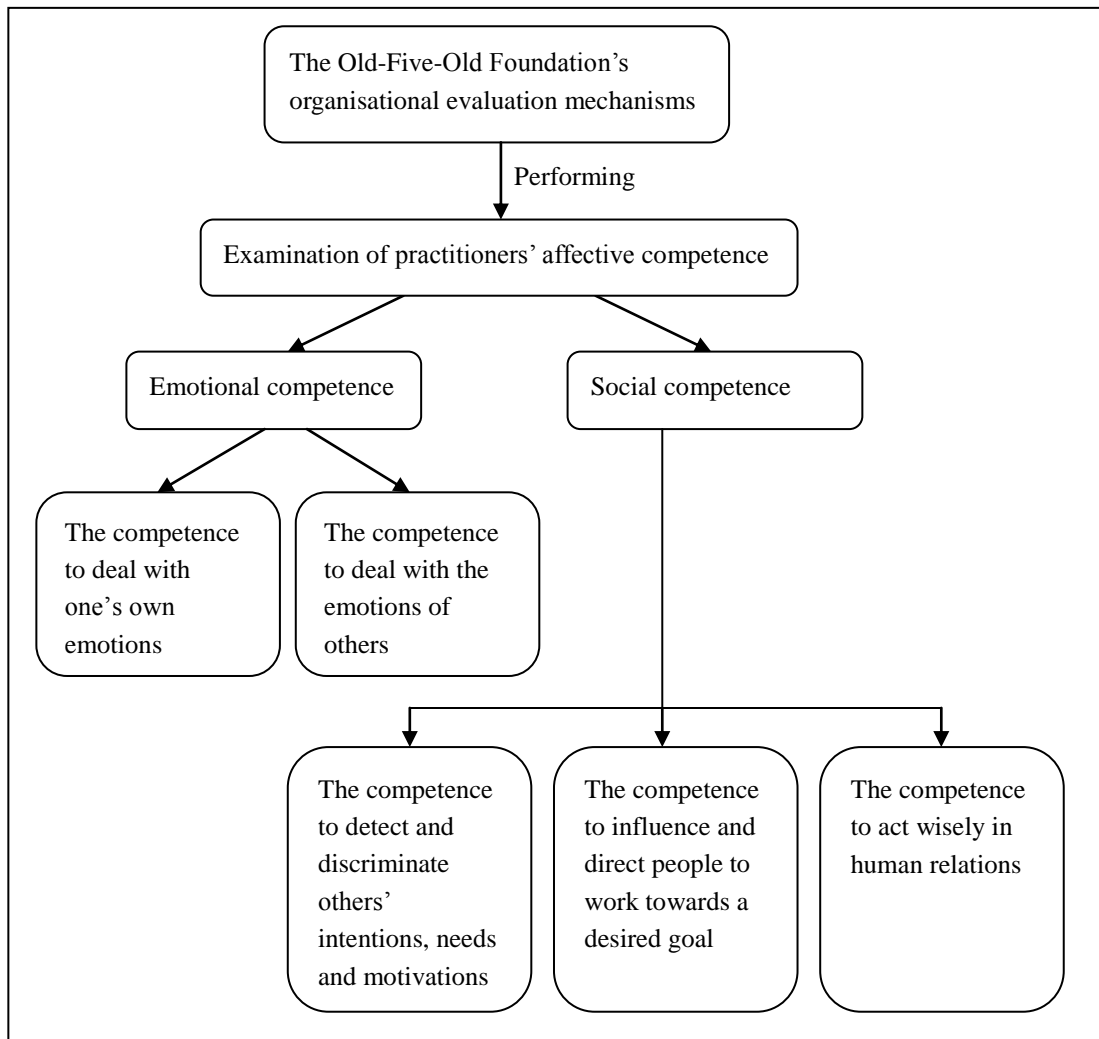


Figure 2.10 The preliminary framework for the examination of practitioners' affective competence

### 2.4.3 The Old-Five-Old Foundation's organisational evaluation mechanisms

This section deals with the question: what the organisational evaluation mechanisms might be that allow the examination of practitioners' cognitive and affective competence? Drawing upon Jaworski's (1988) discussion of output control and process control, this study argues that organisational evaluation mechanisms include output control mechanisms and process control mechanisms. Furthermore, drawing upon Swiss' (1991) discussion of the MBO-Type system and Poister's (2003)

discussion of the MBO-type system, it argues that the mechanism that evaluates individual-level task objectives constitutes one type of output control mechanism. Drawing upon Beer, Ruh, Dawson, McCaa and Kavanagh's (1978) performance development and review system, it argues that the mechanism that evaluates personal attributes also constitutes one type of output control mechanism. Drawing upon Montanari and Freedman's (1981) discussion of centralisation, it argues that the mechanism that evaluates an individual's specific decisions constitutes one type of process control mechanism. Figure VII (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section.

The literatures that are relevant to organisational evaluation mechanisms are the literatures that address organisational control systems (see Hofstede 1978, Lowe 1971, and Otley, Broadbent and Berry 1995 for management control systems). In term of objects of control, as suggested by Merchant (1998), organisational control systems include control systems that monitor financial processes and outcomes (e.g., see Mauriel and Anthony 1966 for profit centre, investment centre, return-on-investment ratio and residual income; Phillips 1997 for return-on-investment in training and performance improvement programmes). Organisational control systems also include control systems that monitor non-financial processes and outcomes. This study aims to investigate organisational evaluation mechanisms that carry out the evaluation of practitioners' cognitive competence and affective competence. The literatures that address control of financial processes and outcomes could not help this study to achieve this aim. Consequently, this study looks at the literatures that address control of non-financial processes and outcomes.

Even though this study looks at the literatures that address control of non-financial processes and outcomes, its research focus is not to investigate whether the Old-Five-Old Foundation had technically utilised specific management control tools to monitor quality of practitioners' services and their performance. For instance, it does not aim to investigate whether the Old-Five-Old Foundation had technically utilised the following quality and performance management tools: total quality control (Feigenbaum 1983), quality control circles (Juran 1992), zero defects (Crosby 1996), the balanced scorecard (Kaplan and Norton 1992), the performance prism (Neely, Adams and Crowe 2001), the 360-degree appraisal feedback process (Antonioni 1996) as well as key performance indicators (Parmenter 2007). Rather, this study suggests that the quality of the practitioners' service and their performance rely on their competence. So the research focus of this study is to investigate types of control mechanisms that the Old-Five-Old Foundation adopts to evaluate practitioners' competence. The following parts discuss the literatures that could help this study to achieve this aim, starting with a discussion of types of control.

Jaworski (1988) suggests that formal control refers to management-initiated control mechanisms, and it includes three types of control: input control, process control and output control. Examples of input control include recruitment criteria and selection of employees, training and staffing. Process control aims to influence the means through which organisationally desired results are produced. It regulates the formation of employees' activities. An example of process control is the use of standard operating procedures. In the complete form of process control, employees are required to perform their activities according to prescribed procedures, but they are not required to be responsible for outcomes, which are produced by following

prescribed procedures. Besides, output control focuses on producing organisationally desired results. An example of output control is establishment of performance standards and evaluation of employees' performance accordingly. In the complete form of output control, employees are required to produce organisationally desired results. However, an organisation does not specify the procedures through which these results are intended to be obtained. The way employees produce the desired results is delegated to and determined by employees.

This study supports Jaworski's typology of formal control. However, it does not pay attention to input control, but looks at process and outcome control, which are relevant to the evaluation of practitioners' competence after they had joined an organisation. Drawing upon Jaworski's discussion of output and process control, this study argues that organisational evaluation mechanisms include output control mechanisms and process control mechanisms.

However, Jaworski's discussion fails to categorise concrete control mechanisms in relation to process and output control. This study utilises Swiss' (1991) discussion of the MBO-Type system, Poister's (2003) discussion of the MBO-Type system, Beer, Ruh, Dawson, McCaa and Kavanagh's (1978) performance development and review system and Montanari and Freedman's (1981) discussion of centralisation to address this issue. It discusses concrete output control mechanisms and concrete process control mechanisms in sequence.

Swiss (1991) indicates that the output-oriented performance management system consists of two major types, namely the MBO-Type system and the performance

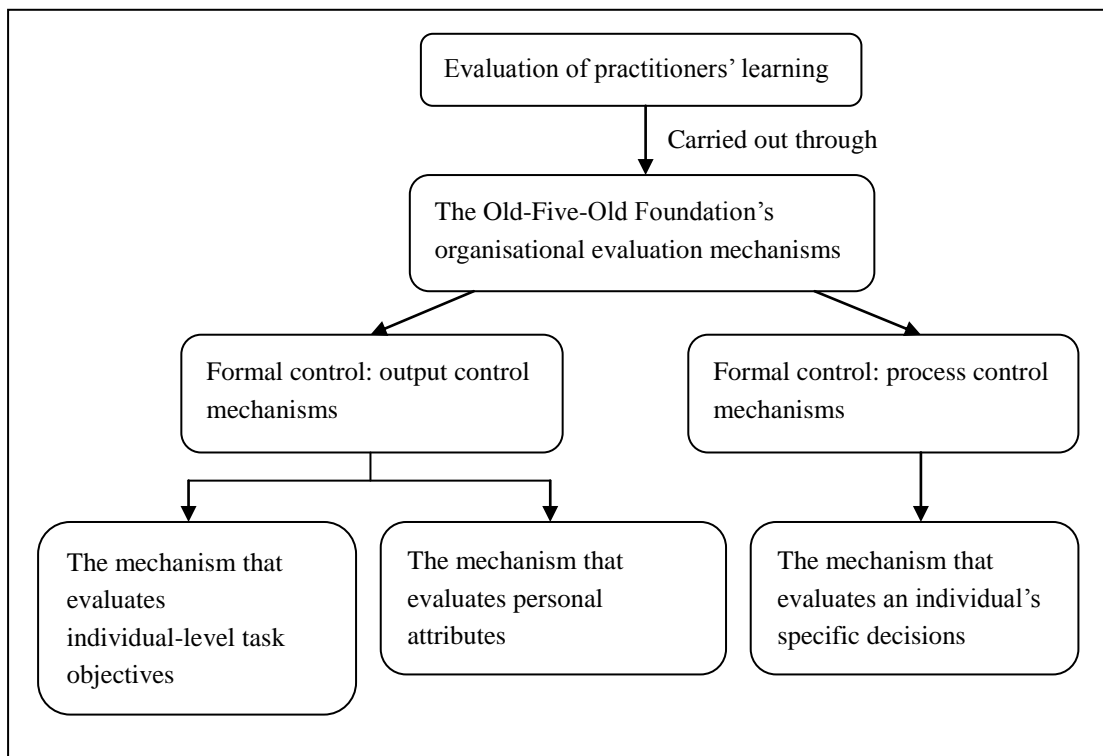
monitoring system. The MBO-Type system focuses on the management of an individual's performance. The performance monitoring system stresses management of a programme's performance and management of an organisational unit's performance. Since this study aims to investigate the examination of a practitioner's cognitive and affective competence, it pays attention to the management of an individual's performance, rather than the management of a programme's/an organisational unit's performance. Thus, it pays attention to the MBO-Type system only. With regard to the MBO-Type system, Poister (2003) further suggests that the MBO-Type system puts emphasis on setting individual-level task objectives, which align to and realise organisational goals, and on developing workable action plans to achieve the set objectives. This system adopts participative decision-making, monitors the progress of the implementation of action plans on an ongoing basis, evaluates accomplishment of the set objectives and gives feedback to employees concerning the revision of action plans and modification of the set objectives (cf. Drucker 1954, 1976 for Management by Objectives). Drawing upon Swiss' and Poister's discussions of the MBO-Type system, this study argues that the mechanism for evaluating individual-level task objectives constitutes one type of output control mechanism.

Though this study pays attention to the MBO-Type system and looks at the mechanism that evaluates individual-level task objectives, it suggests that this type of output control mechanism is insufficient for this study. Beer, Ruh, Dawson, McCaa and Kavanagh (1978) suggest that a weakness of the Management-By-Objectives approach is that it does not offer diagnostic information about an individual's attributes (e.g., strengths and weaknesses of an individual's competence) since it

merely looks at task-oriented objectives and task outcomes. Thus, they propose the performance development and review system. This system aims to identify weaknesses in an individual's personal attributes, identifying an individual's developmental needs. This study introduces the performance development and review system to be complementary to the MBO-Type system. Drawing upon Beer, Ruh, Dawson, McCaa and Kavanagh's performance development and review system, this study argues that the mechanism that evaluates personal attributes also constitutes one type of output control mechanism. As such, concrete output control mechanisms not only include the mechanism that evaluates individual-level task objectives but also contain the mechanism that evaluates personal attributes. Having discussed concrete output control mechanisms, this section proceeds to discuss concrete process control mechanisms so as to portray a more inclusive picture of organisational evaluation mechanisms.

Montanari and Freedman (1981) discuss the structural dimension of an organisation, consisting of specialisation, formalisation and centralisation. In their view, the structural dimension seeks to maintain control over decision-making processes. Specialisation refers to the number of specialties regarding occupational division of labour. Formalisation refers to the extent to which employees' function is defined by formal documentation, the degree to which employees' behaviour is regulated by written rules, and the degree to which employees are required to perform written communications. Centralisation refers to the degree to which employees have the authority to make a decision. For instance, an organisation may leave full decision-making authority on important matters to people, who are in higher-level organisational positions. This study supports Montanari and Freedman's discussion

of the structural dimension of an organisation. However, it does not pay attention to specialisation and formalisation since they are less relevant to the examination of a practitioner's competences. Thus, it looks at centralisation only. Drawing upon Montanari and Freedman's discussion of centralisation, this study argues that the mechanism that evaluates an individual's specific decisions constitutes one type of process control mechanism. For instance, a social work supervisor, who has full decision-making authority, may evaluate practitioners' decisions, examining their competence.



*Figure 2.11 The preliminary framework for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's organisational evaluation mechanisms*

To sum up, Figure 2.11 indicates the preliminary framework for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's organisational evaluation mechanisms. It suggests that the Old-Five-Old Foundation may examine practitioners' competence via evaluating the



accomplishment of their individual-level task objectives, the weakness of their personal attributes and the appropriateness of their specific decisions.

#### *2.4.4 Section summary*

This section analyses the service provider's organisational evaluation mechanisms that examine practitioners' cognitive and affective competence, evaluating practitioners' learning so as to ensure that they are capable of accomplishing their assigned practices and have developed the expected competences. The contribution of this section is that it proposes the preliminary framework for the service provider's monitoring, which is a newly synthesised framework that applies the cognitive domain and the affective domain to the workplace setting (cognitive analysis and affective analysis) and relates learning to organisational control systems (social analysis). This cognitive, affective and social analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to this field of study.

In the analysis of practitioners' direction of learning, this study views competence in a subject-specific and task-specific manner (e.g., the competences in relation to doing different value activities such as marketing and sales, casework, group work, and community work). In the analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning, this study views competence in a cognitive and affective manner. It looks at the cognitive competence and the affective competence that are necessary for

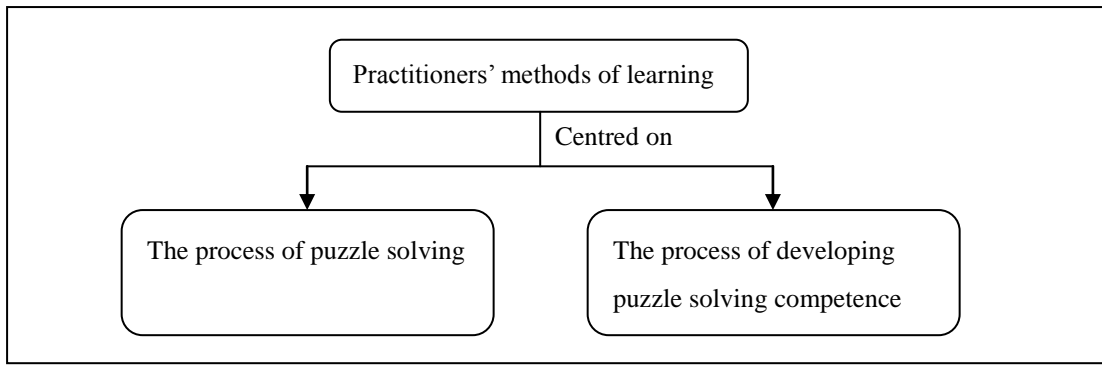
accomplishing the value activities the practitioners are assigned to execute (e.g., the cognitive competence and the affective competence necessary for doing marketing and sales, casework, group work and community work). Though cognitive competence and affective competence fall within the social actors' subjective mental states (Ritzer 2001), which belong to the micro phenomenon, they are included in this macro analysis because they constitute the targets evaluated by organisational evaluation mechanisms, which belong to the macro phenomenon. However, it must be noted that this study does not propose that the Old-five-Old Foundation consciously utilises theoretical notions (e.g., the cognitive domain and the affective domain) to perform the evaluation of practitioners' learning. Rather, it is this study that utilises theoretical notions to analyse the Old-Five-Old Foundation's evaluation of practitioners' learning.

Having discussed the service provider's monitoring (the organisational level structuring force), the next section discusses practitioners' methods of learning by looking at practitioners' puzzle solving (the individual level structuring force).

## **2.5 The micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning: practitioners' puzzle solving**

This section addresses the question: since a micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning by looking at practitioners' learning activities has been proposed, what framework might be utilised to analyse it? In order to produce a preliminary framework, this section tackles seven bodies of literature: the literatures that address

problem solving (Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger 2000, 2011; Mayer 1999; Noller, Parnes and Biondi 1976), case management (Ballew and Mink 1996), the cognitive domain, the affective domain, networks (Gould and Fernandez 1989; Granovetter 1973; Law 1992; Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; Wenger 2000), information accessibility (Fidel and Green 2004) and information comprehensibility (Fidel and Green 2004; Gagné 1985). Drawing upon these literatures, the overall argument of this section is that practitioners' methods of learning are centred on the process of puzzle solving and on the process of developing puzzle solving competence. Going through these processes, practitioners develop the competences to accomplish the value activities they are assigned to execute. The contribution of this section rests in the proposal of the preliminary framework for practitioners' puzzle solving, and this preliminary framework is a new synthesised framework that engages in a cognitive analysis of the practitioners' process of puzzle solving together with a cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of their process of developing puzzle solving competence. This cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of practitioners' methods of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to the field of study. Figure 2.12 indicates the preliminary framework for practitioners' puzzle solving. Section 2.5.1 addresses the process of puzzle solving, while Section 2.5.2 (learning need identification), Section 2.5.3 (learning resource identification) and Section 2.5.4 (learning barrier identification) discuss the process of developing puzzle solving competence.



*Figure 2.12 The preliminary framework for practitioners' puzzle solving*

### *2.5.1 The process of puzzle solving*

This section addresses the question: what might be the process of puzzle solving? Drawing upon Mayer's (1999) discussion of problem representation and problem solution, this study argues that the process of puzzle solving includes two major phases: puzzle identification and solution identification. Drawing upon Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's (2000, 2011) discussion of constructing opportunities, exploring data and framing problems, it argues that puzzle identification consists of constructing opportunities, exploring data and framing problems. Drawing upon Mayer's (1999) discussion of reproductive thinking and productive thinking, Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's (2000, 2011) discussion of generating ideas, developing solutions and building acceptance and Noller, Parnes and Biondi's (1976) discussion of divergent thinking and convergent thinking, this study argues that solution identification involves reproductive thinking and productive thinking. In productive thinking, solution identification consists of generating ideas, developing solutions and building acceptance. Generating ideas is primarily directed by divergent thinking, while developing solutions is primarily directed by convergent thinking. Figure VIII (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section. It

starts with a discussion of the different levels of puzzle solving.

Nelson and Winter (1974) take the behavioural approach to studying a firm by looking at routines through which a firm makes responses to environmental stimuli. Routines are not immutable but could be changed by the use of organisational, goal-oriented search activities. When existing routines encounter adversity and exceptions, search activities can be triggered (see also Cyert and March 1963 for a problemistic search that is triggered by a problem and seeks to find a solution to that problem). Even when existing routines go well, search activities can also be triggered by institutionalised arrangements such as those carried out by organisational research and development units. When a change of existing routines takes place, innovation occurs (Nelson and Winter 1982). It is observable that their discussion deals with the organisational level puzzle solving. Here the puzzle is how to improve existing routines; a solution to this puzzle is produced via organisational search activities. However, as indicated by Witt (1998), the behavioural approach to studying a firm is problematic in the sense that it neglects the role of cognition in the organising of information into action plans. As a micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning, this study approaches puzzle solving by looking at the individual level puzzle solving performed by practitioners, rather than the organisational level and the group level puzzle solving (see March and Simon 1966), which require a macro analysis. The following parts discuss literatures that address the individual level puzzle solving.

Mayer (1999) suggests that problem representation and problem solution constitute

two major phases in problem solving. In problem representation, a person integrates his/her understanding of each segment of the problem to establish a problem statement. In problem solution, a person devises, executes and monitors a solution plan for solving the problem. This study utilises these two phases, which deal with the problem and solving of it respectively, to analyse the process of puzzle solving. However, it disagrees with the usage of the term 'problem', and replaces the usage 'problem' with a more neutral usage 'puzzle'. Drawing upon Mayer's discussion of problem representation and problem solution, this study argues that the process of puzzle solving includes two major phases: puzzle identification and solution identification.

Since these two major phases are identified, two questions follow: 'What might be the sub-processes of puzzle identification?' and 'What might be the sub-processes of solution identification?' Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger (2000, 2011) propose a nonlinear model that has no fixed sequence of stages of problem solving. This framework consists of four components and eight stages. The four components consist of understanding the challenge, generating ideas, preparing for action and planning your approach. Planning your approach constitutes the management component, which represents a meta-cognitive component, while the rest belongs to the process component. The management component guides the process component; it plans, manages, monitors and modifies the problem solving process. The content of their framework is summarised in Table 2.1.

Component	Stage	Content
Understanding the challenge	Constructing opportunities	A problem solver seeks to establish a promising and beneficial direction for problem solving.
	Exploring data	A problem solver develops an understanding of the current situation by collecting relevant information.
	Framing problems	A problem solver considers possible problem statements, determines the focus and identifies a specific problem statement that guides the subsequent problem solving effort, avoiding deviation.
Generating ideas	Generating ideas	A problem solver searches for and produces many varied options that have the potential to solve the problem.
Preparing for action	Developing solutions	A problem solver establishes the criteria for analysing and refining the options, and applies the revised options to establish a solution.
	Building acceptance	A problem solver considers possible sources of assistance and resistance that may influence the implementation of a solution, and accordingly produces a specific action plan to solve the problem.
Planning your approach	Appraising tasks	A problem solver considers whether or not the current problem solving process is appropriate for the given task. The problem solver considers the desired outcome, the advantageous conditions and the disadvantageous conditions, and thinks about whether it is necessary to modify the current path so as to solve the problem successfully.
	Designing process	A problem solver identifies the entry point, the pathway and the exit point for the problem solving, choosing and making use of problem solving components and stages.

*Table 2.1 Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's framework for creative problem solving*

*Source: Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger (2000, 2011)*

An alternative view is proposed by Mayer (1999). He suggests that cognitive psychologists propose two sub-processes in problem representation: translating and integrating. He (1999, p. 439) indicates that 'Translating involves mentally representing each sentence or portion of the problem, whereas integrating involves putting the knowledge together into a coherent structure that can be called a situation

model'. Problem solution includes three sub-processes: planning, executing and monitoring, which constitutes the meta-cognition element (see also Mayer 1998). He (1999, p. 439) indicates that 'Planning involves devising a solution plan, executing involves carrying out the plan by engaging in action, and monitoring involves awareness and control of one's cognitive processing, including assessing the effectiveness of one's plan as it is put into action'. Furthermore, he distinguishes between reproductive thinking and productive thinking. In reproductive thinking, a problem solver applies an existing solution to solve a problem. In productive thinking, a problem solver comes up with a new solution to solve a problem.

As for sub-processes in puzzle identification, this study suggests that Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's (2000, 2011) constructing opportunities, exploring data and framing problems are more inclusive and concrete than the notions of translating and integrating (Mayer 1999). Thus, drawing upon Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's discussion, this study argues that puzzle identification consists of constructing opportunities, exploring data and framing problems.

With regard to sub-processes in solution identification, drawing upon Mayer's (1999) discussion of reproductive thinking and productive thinking, this study argues that solution identification involves reproductive thinking and productive thinking. In reproductive thinking, a puzzle solver simply applies a known solution to solve a puzzle; thus, there is no further sub-process concerning generating a solution. In productive thinking, further sub-processes exist; this study pays attention to cognitive sub-processes of producing a new solution before it is put into action. It suggests that the notion of planning, devising a solution plan (Mayer 1999), inadequately



identifies the sub-processes in productive thinking. Rather, Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's (2000, 2011) discussion of generating ideas, developing solutions and building acceptance represents the more inclusive and specific sub-processes in productive thinking. Drawing upon Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's discussion, this study argues that, in productive thinking, solution identification consists of generating ideas, developing solutions and building acceptance.

There is a need to further identify what primary cognitive operation is performed in the stages of generating ideas and developing solutions so as to portray a more inclusive picture of sub-processes in solution identification. Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger (2000, 2011) propose notions of generating and focusing to address this issue. They replace divergent thinking and convergent thinking with generating and focusing. This study disagrees with their usages. It suggests that generating and focusing do not describe the cognitive operations as vividly as divergent thinking and convergent thinking. Consequently, this study takes the usages of divergent and convergent thinking. Noller, Parnes and Biondi (1976) suggest that central to idea finding is divergent thinking which seeks to explore any possible ideas. Central to solution finding is convergent thinking that seeks to establish the best solution from possible ideas. Drawing upon Noller, Parnes and Biondi's discussion, this study argues that generating ideas is primarily directed by divergent thinking, while developing solutions is primarily directed by convergent thinking.

To sum up, drawing upon Mayer's (1999) discussion of problem representation, problem solution, reproductive thinking and productive thinking, upon Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's (2000, 2011) discussion of constructing opportunities,

exploring data, framing problems, generating ideas, developing solutions and building acceptance, and upon Noller, Parnes and Biondi's (1976) discussion of divergent thinking and convergent thinking, this study argues that the process of puzzle solving includes two major phases: puzzle identification and solution identification. Puzzle identification consists of constructing opportunities, exploring data and framing problems. Solution identification involves reproductive thinking and productive thinking. In reproductive thinking, solution identification consists of generating ideas, developing solutions and building acceptance. In productive thinking, solution identification consists of generating ideas, developing solutions and building acceptance. Generating ideas is primarily directed by divergent thinking, while developing solutions is primarily directed by convergent thinking. Figure 2.13 indicates the preliminary framework for the process of puzzle solving.

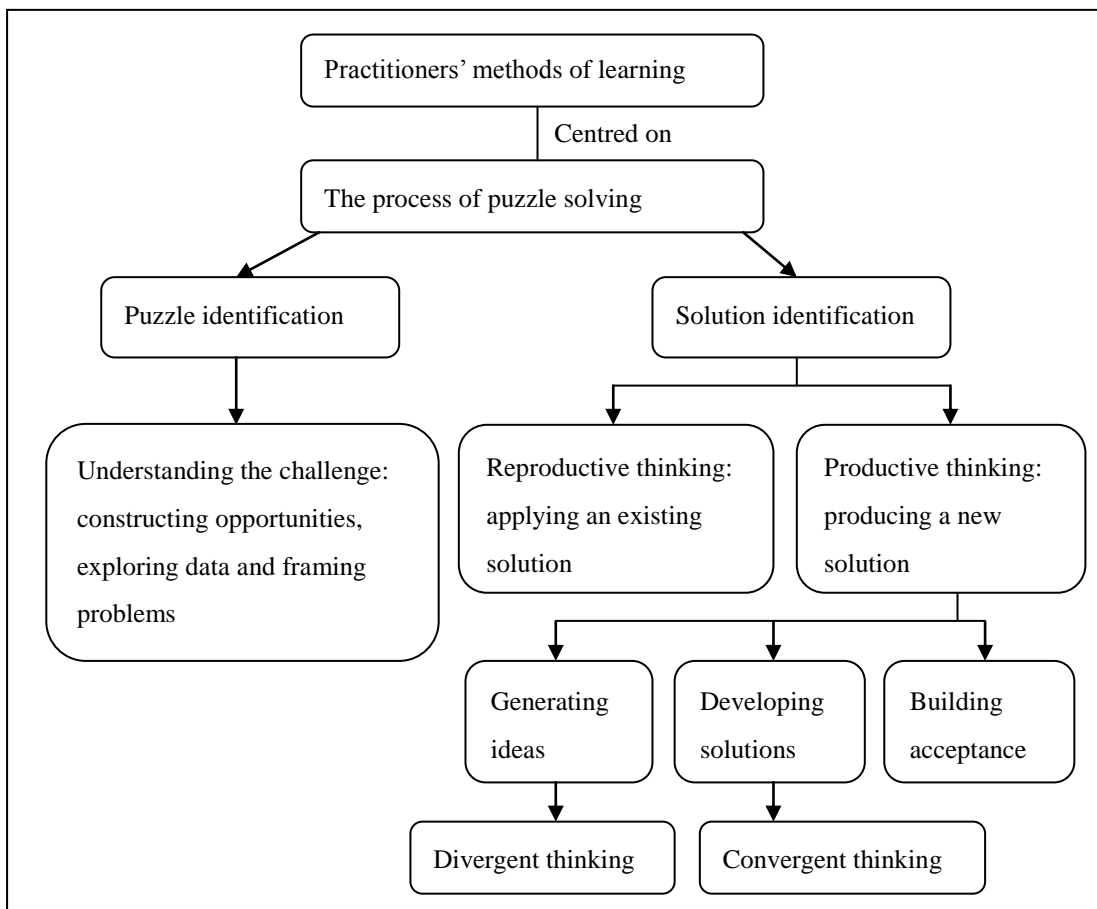
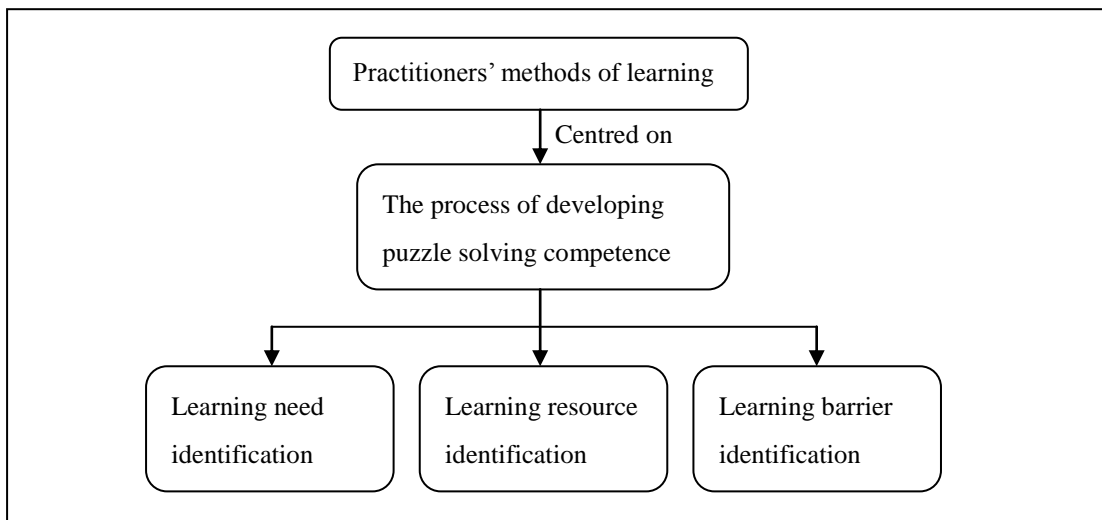


Figure 2.13 The preliminary framework for the process of puzzle solving

The literatures that address problem solving could enable this study to explain the process of puzzle solving. However, they fail to explain the process of developing puzzle solving competence; they lack the capacity to enable this study to explain, in order to solve the puzzle, what activity a puzzle solver engages in when he/she encounters a difficulty in puzzle solving. This study utilises the literatures that address case management, the cognitive domain, the affective domain, networks, information accessibility and information comprehensibility to address this issue. This study follows on with a discussion of Ballew and Mink's (1996) case management.

Although Ballew and Mink's case management represents social work professional techniques for dealing with multi-problem clients, some notions in their case management could illuminate what might happen when a puzzle solver encounters a difficulty in puzzle solving. In the assessment stage of case management, they suggest that there exist three tasks: to identify a client's *needs* (problems that a client needs to resolve), to identify *resources* that may be useful in resolving the client's problems and to identify *barriers* to the client's exploitation of resources. Drawing upon Ballew and Mink's discussion of these three tasks in the assessment stage, this study argues that when practitioners encounter a difficulty in puzzle solving, in order to continue to solve the puzzle, they engage in learning need identification, learning resource identification and learning barrier identification. This study defines these three stages as the process of developing puzzle solving competence. Figure 2.14 indicates the preliminary framework for it.

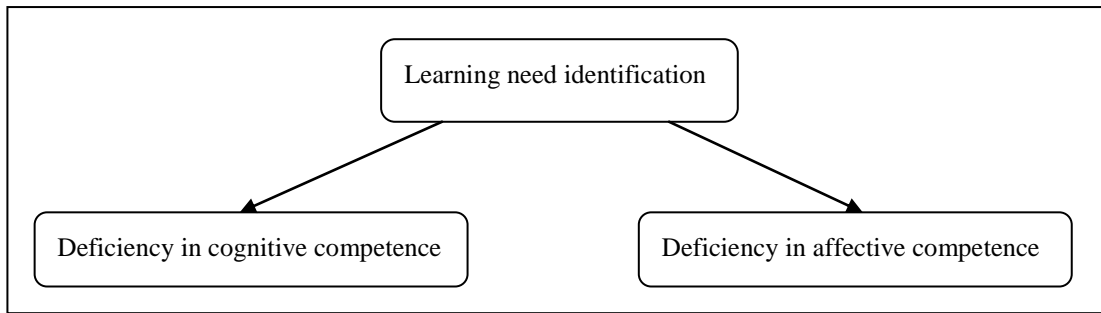


*Figure 2.14 The preliminary framework for the process of developing puzzle solving competence*

Nonetheless, in its original context, Ballew and Mink’s case management addresses the issue of social work professional techniques for dealing with multi-problem clients. It could enable this study to develop the notions of learning need identification, learning resource identification and learning barrier identification to explain the process of developing puzzle solving competence. However, it could not provide further explanation of the content of learning need identification, learning resource identification and learning barrier identification. This study utilises the literatures that address the cognitive and affective domains to explain the content of learning need identification. It utilises the literatures that address networks to explain the content of learning resource identification. It makes use of the literatures that address information accessibility and information comprehensibility to explain the content of learning barrier identification. The next three sections discuss them in sequence.

### *2.5.2 Learning need identification*

This section addresses the question: what kind of learning needs might exist? As argued in Section 2.4 (the macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning), this study proposes that the targets for evaluation consist of practitioners' cognitive and affective competence. They are the competences necessary for accomplishing the value activities practitioners are assigned to execute. Here, this study suggests that these value activities (tasks) represent the puzzles practitioners are assigned to solve. Deficiency in these competences represents their learning needs since they need to remove their deficiency so as to solve the puzzles they are assigned to solve, accomplishing the value activities they are assigned to execute. As such, drawing upon the literatures that address the cognitive domain (Benack 1984; Bloom et al. 1967; Bruner 1957; Collins and Loftus 1975; Cross and Paris 1988; Kember et al. 1999; Kondrat 1999; O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith 2009; Tulving 2002), this study argues that the discrepancy between a practitioner's actual cognitive competence and the cognitive competence that is needed for solving a puzzle represents a learning need. Drawing upon the literatures that address the affective domain (Gardner 2004; Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia 1968; Mayer and Salovey 1993, 1997; Thorndike 1920), it argues that the discrepancy between a practitioner's actual affective competence and the affective competence that is needed for solving a puzzle also represents a learning need. It concludes that while practitioners encounter a difficulty in puzzle solving, in order to continue to solve the puzzle, they engage in identifying their learning needs. Figure 2.15 indicates the preliminary framework for learning need identification.



*Figure 2.15 The preliminary framework for learning need identification*

In their original contexts, the literatures that address the cognitive domain deal with the issue of human cognition. Therefore, they do not enable this study to explain the learning need in relation to affective competence. The literatures that address the affective domain deal with the issue related to human emotions. Therefore, they do not enable this study to explain the learning need in relation to cognitive competence. This study synthesises them in order to offer a more comprehensive explanation with which to address learning need identification. Having addressed learning need identification, the next section discusses learning resource identification.

### *2.5.3 Learning resource identification*

This section addresses two questions: ‘What kind of learning resources might exist?’ and ‘How can learning resources be made available to practitioners?’ Drawing upon Nahapiet and Ghoshal’s (1998) discussion of the configurations of connections between humans and making reference to Law’s (1992) discussion of non-human objects in the network, this study argues that learning resources consist of other humans and artefacts in the practitioners’ network. Making reference to

Granovetter's (1973) discussion of a person's direct and indirect contact with others, Gould and Fernandez's (1989) discussion of the brokerage function in the transaction network and Wenger's (2000) boundary objects, boundary encounters and brokering, this study argues that learning materials can be transmitted from a person and an artefact (learning resources) to practitioners through their direct and indirect contact. The mediums that could create their direct and indirect contact include the brokerage function offered by human brokers, artefacts and events. Figure IX (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section. It starts with a discussion of socio-cultural contexts of human learning activities.

This study suggests that Vygotskiĭ's cultural-historical view of learning (1930a, 1930b, 1930c, 1935), Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning, the post-Piagetian conception of human development (Inagaki 1992), Engeström's (2001) activity theory and Hutchins' (1995) socially distributed cognition all put emphasis on humans and artefacts, as part of socio-cultural contexts of human learning activities (see also Nardi 1996 for 'context'). At the micro level, this study looks at humans and artefacts and analyses them from a more fundamental view: the network perspective. This perspective is more fundamental in the sense that it utilises a network metaphor to present connections among/between people and artefacts.

Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) suggest that the structural dimension of social capital refers to the configurations of connections among people, which indicate their network ties. This notion alerts this study to the configurations of connections between humans, and thus to investigate how learning materials can be transmitted from a person to practitioners by establishing connections between them. However,

in its original context, this notion deals with humans in the network. Therefore, it could not enable this study to explain artefacts in the network. Law (1992) suggests that almost all human interactions are mediated through non-human objects. This notion draws this study's attention to the role of non-human objects in mediating human learning, and how learning materials can be transmitted from an artefact to practitioners by establishing connections between practitioners and artefacts. Drawing upon Nahapiet and Ghoshal's discussion of the configurations of connections between humans and making reference to Law's discussion of non-human objects in the network, this study argues that learning resources consist of other humans and artefacts in the practitioners' network. This answers the question: what kind of learning resources might exist?

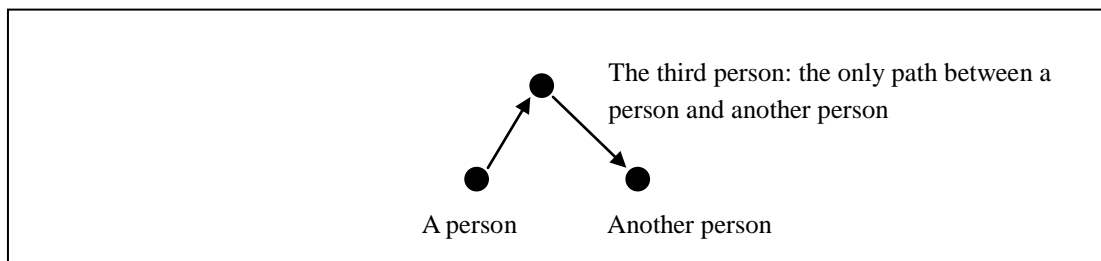
However, it must be noted that though this study makes reference to Nahapiet and Ghoshal's discussion, its research focus is not on social capital per se (see Portes 1998 for social capital) but on investigating how learning materials can be transmitted from a person to practitioners by establishing connections between them. In addition, this study makes reference to Law's discussion to highlight the role of non-human objects in mediating human learning. Nonetheless, it disagrees with the actor-network perspective (Latour 2005), which treats artefacts as having the same status as humans. The stance of this study is that humans are the only actors who might act by means of artefacts, which are merely a medium for human actions, not actors.

Though Nahapiet and Ghoshal's and Law's discussions might assist this study in identifying humans and artefacts as learning resources in the practitioners' network,



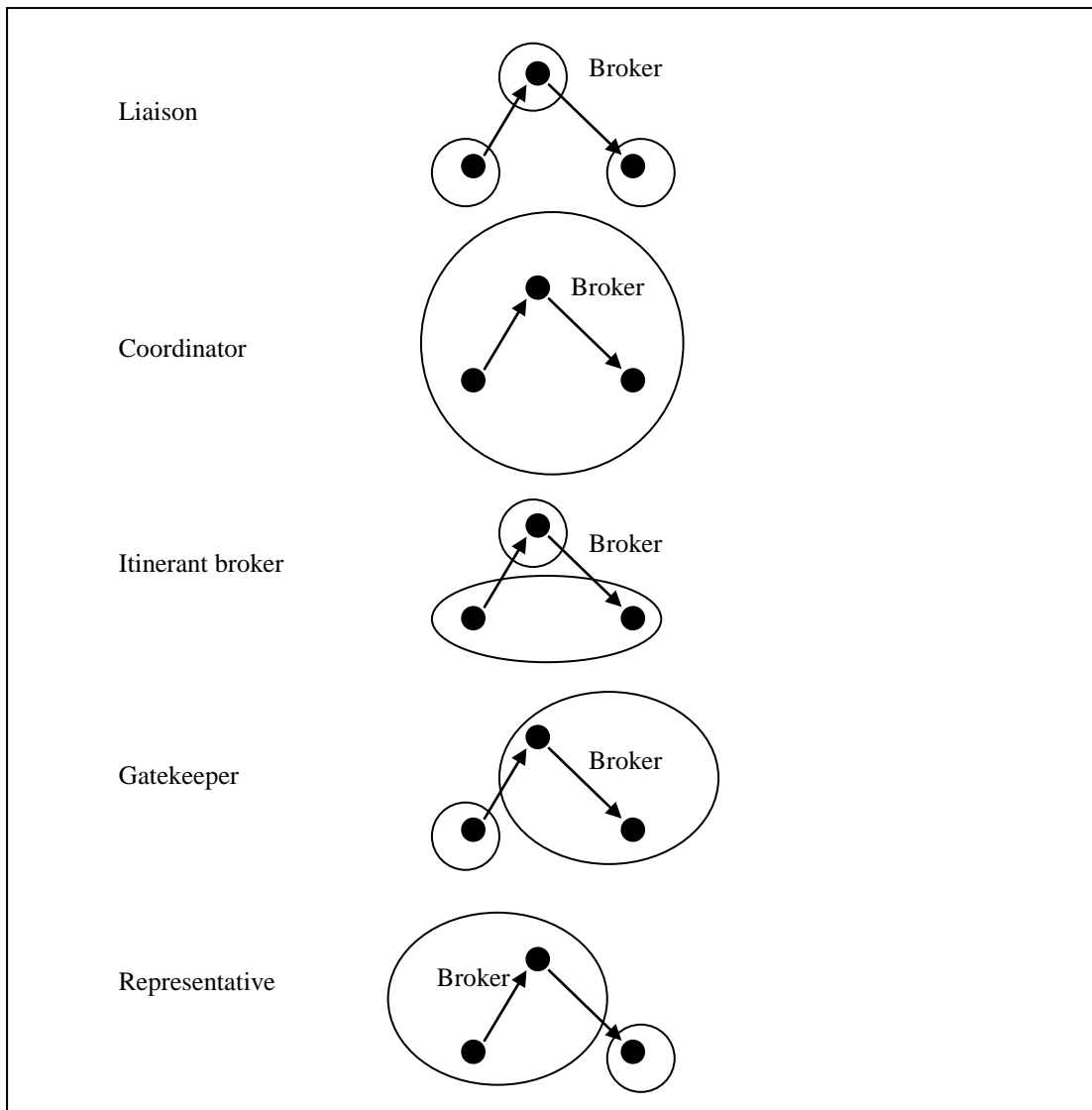
their discussions fail to further explain how connections between people and connections between people and artefacts can be made. This study utilises Granovetter's (1973) discussion of a person's direct and indirect contact with others, Gould and Fernandez's (1989) discussion of the brokerage function in the transaction network and Wenger's (2000) discussion of boundary objects, boundary encounters and brokering to address this issue.

Granovetter (1973) suggests that network ties could include direct contact and indirect contact, showing the degree of closeness between people within a social network and indicating the numbers of ties a person has. As for indirect contact, a person could have indirect contact with another person through a third person. If it is the only path between these two persons, the third person acts as a bridge, constituting the only route for sending a message from one person to another. Figure 2.16 indicates Granovetter's bridge. However, it must be noted that this study's research focus is not a discussion of the debate concerning the strength of weak ties (Granovetter 1973) and of strong ties (Krackhardt 1992). Rather, its research focus is to investigate how indirect contacts between people can be made through this bridge.



*Figure 2.16 Bridge*

*Source: Granovetter (1973)*



*Figure 2.17 Brokerage*

*Source: Gould and Fernandez (1989)*

As for indirect contact between people, Gould and Fernandez (1989) further explore the brokerage function in the transaction network. They suggest that in a triadic relationship, there exists the initiator, the broker, and the receiver; there is no direct tie between the initiator and the receiver. In a triadic relationship, there are five types of brokerage roles: those of liaison, coordinator, itinerant, gatekeeper and representative. In the liaison relationship, three persons belong to three different

groups, and the broker links the other two persons. In the coordinator relationship, three persons belong to the same group, and the broker links the initiator with the receiver. In the itinerant relationship, the initiator and the receiver belong to the same group, but the broker is an outsider, who coordinates the other two persons. In the gatekeeper relationship, the broker and the receiver belong to the same group, the initiator is an outsider, and the broker acts as a gatekeeper, who can decide whether or not to grant access to the initiator (an outsider). In the representative relationship, the initiator and the broker belong to the same group, the receiver is an outsider, and the broker acts as a representative of the initiator, attempting to establish a contact with the receiver (an outsider). Figure 2.17 indicates Gould and Fernandez's brokerage.

Wenger (2000) suggests that boundary objects, boundary interaction, cross-disciplinary projects and brokering constitute the means through which the different practices could influence one another. Boundary objects refer to the kind of objects, which link different practices. Boundary interaction includes boundary encounters, boundary practices and activities on the periphery. Boundary encounters refer to people from different practices meeting for the purpose of exposing themselves to other practices. Boundary practices refer to a kind of practice, whose goal is to bring different practices together. Activities on the periphery refer to peripheral forms of participation that are offered to an outsider so that an outsider can experience specific practices. In a cross-disciplinary project, members from different practices expose their practices to those of others and negotiate the competences of their home practice with those of other practices so as to get the cross-disciplinary task done (see also Shrivastava 1983 for participative

learning systems). Furthermore, brokering means that people make use of their participation in different practices to connect different practices by introducing one practice to another practice.

This study aims to investigate how connections between a learner and learning resources (other humans and artefacts) can be made. Granovetter's discussion and Gould and Fernandez's discussion could enable this study to notice *human brokers*, who could create indirect contact between a person and other humans. However, their discussions lack the capacity to explain other kinds of brokerage function. This study utilises Wenger's notions to probe other kinds of brokerage function. Wenger's boundary objects and boundary encounters inspire this study to notice *artefacts* and *events* that could create direct/indirect contact between a person and artefacts/other humans. Wenger's interpretation of brokering inspires this study to notice *human brokers*, who could create direct/indirect contact between a person and artefacts, and *human brokers*, who could create direct contact between a person and other humans. For instance, a book (as an artefact with brokerage function) could indicate bibliographies (artefacts) for a practitioner (learner) to refer to. A conference (as an event with brokerage function) could offer conference papers (artefacts) to a practitioner (learner), who attends this conference. A practitioner of a branch (acting as a human broker) could give the work manual (artefact) produced by his/her branch to a practitioner of another branch (learner).

To sum up, drawing upon Granovetter's discussion of a person's direct contact and indirect contact with others, on Gould and Fernandez's discussion of the brokerage function in the transaction network and on Wenger's boundary objects, boundary

encounters and brokering, this study argues that learning materials can be transmitted from a person and an artefact (learning resources) to practitioners through their direct and indirect contact. The mediums that could create their direct and indirect contact include the brokerage function offered by human brokers, artefacts and events. This answers the question: how can learning resources be made available to practitioners? Figure 2.18 indicates the preliminary framework for learning resource identification. Having discussed learning resource identification, the next section discusses learning barrier identification.

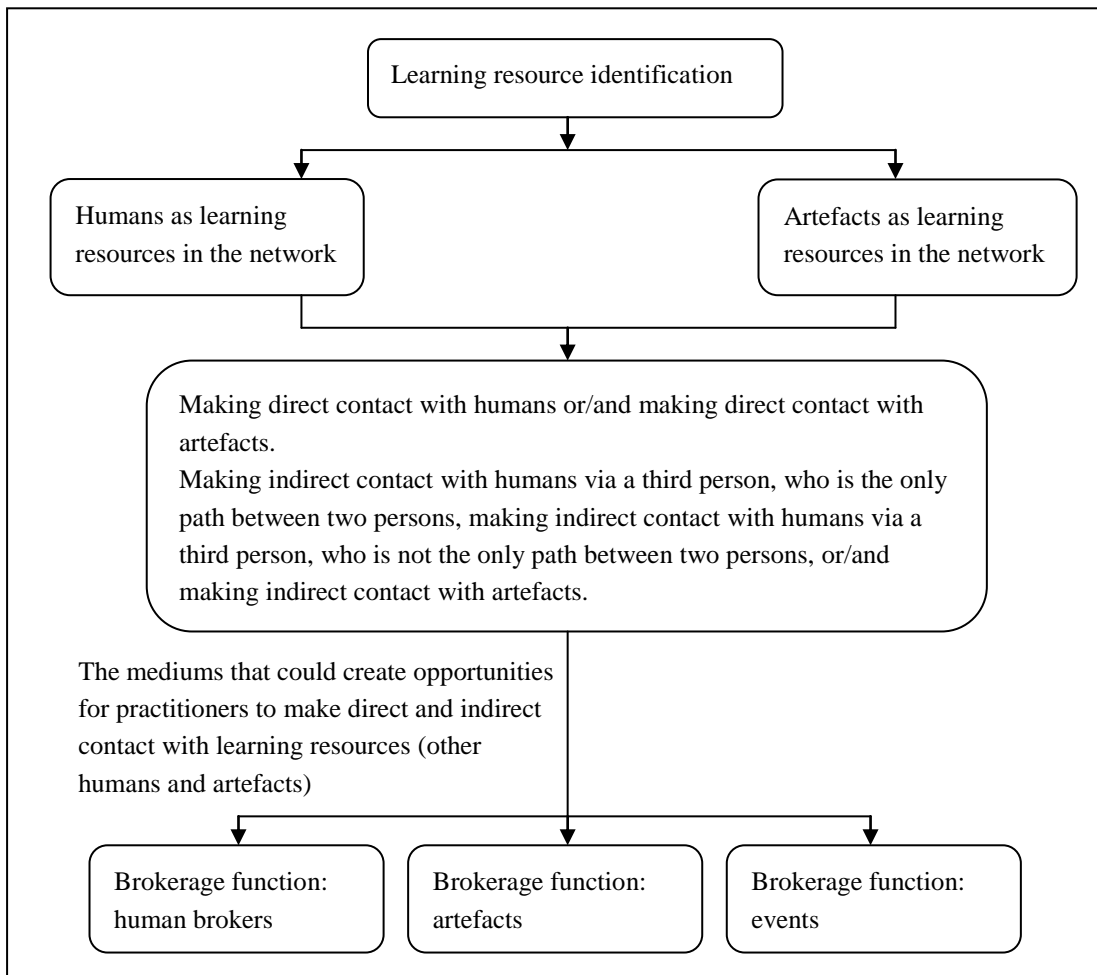


Figure 2.18 The preliminary framework for learning resource identification

#### *2.5.4 Learning barrier identification*

This section addresses the question: ‘what kind of learning barriers might exist?’ Drawing upon Fidel and Green’s (2004) discussion of information seekers’ physical effort, emotional/social effort, economic effort and the availability of information sources, this study argues that learning barriers include barriers to information accessibility, which consist of barriers relevant to information seekers’ physical, emotional/social and economic effort and barriers relevant to the availability of information sources. Drawing upon Fidel and Green’s (2004) discussion of information seekers’ intellectual effort and the quality of information as well as Gagné’s (1985) prerequisites and selective perception, this study argues that learning barriers also include barriers to information comprehensibility that consist of barriers relevant to information seekers’ intellectual effort and to the quality of information. Information seekers’ intellectual effort involves establishing prerequisites, whereas the quality of information involves accurate/definite information and presenting information in a distinctive manner. This section concludes that, by removing barriers to information accessibility, practitioners can be connected to learning resources. Furthermore, by removing barriers to information comprehensibility, learning materials will be intelligible and useful to practitioners (learners). Figure X (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section.

Gerstberger and Allen (1968) propose that costs associated with the utilisation of an information source may include many types such as economic, psychological and physical costs. Fidel and Green (2004) propose a more inclusive perspective

concerning utilisation of an information source. They discuss factors that influence human information-seeking behaviour and their selection of information sources, elaborating the notion of cost by proposing various efforts made by information seekers. They propose three kinds of effort that information seekers attempt to minimise while they search for and select information sources. These kinds of effort include physical, intellectual and emotional/social effort. An example of minimising physical effort is when information sources are physically close, while an example of minimising intellectual effort is when information sources can be searched with keywords. Minimising emotional/social effort occurs, for example, when the information sources sought are ones with which an information seeker feels comfortable. In addition, they also mention fees, which imply economic effort.

Furthermore, they also propose other possible factors that could influence human information-seeking behaviour and selection of information sources. These factors are about the availability of information sources and the quality of information. The availability of information sources refers to the fact that it is possible to utilise an information source at a particular space and time; for example, information sources are not busy and therefore available. Besides, the fact that information is accurate and that information sources give definitive answers without having to make additional speculations constitute examples of the quality of information.

The weakness of Fidel and Green's discussion is that it inadequately deals with intellectual effort and the quality of information. This study utilises Gagné's (1985) prerequisites to be complementary to their discussion of information seekers' intellectual effort. It also introduces Gagné's notion of selective perception to be

complementary to their discussion of the quality of information.

Gagné (1985) suggests that there are two kinds of conditions that could influence learning. Previously learned capabilities constitute the internal condition, while the stimulus situation outside a learner constitutes the external condition. As for the internal condition, he suggests that prerequisites represent a capability of prior learning that is incorporated into new learning; in order to learn more advanced knowledge, a learner needs to build prerequisites. In view of this, this study suggests that, in order to learn more advanced knowledge, a practitioner needs to make the intellectual effort to establish the prerequisites. Otherwise, more advanced knowledge will not be intelligible to this practitioner. Furthermore, with regard to the external condition, Gagné suggests that due to selective perception, the stimulus must be presented in instruction in a distinctive manner (e.g., using the bold print) so as to enable a learner to select the stimulus and differentiate it from other stimuli. In view of this, this study suggests that presenting information in a distinctive manner could constitute a means of enhancing the quality of the information so as to help a practitioner to identify useful messages contained in the information.

Though this study makes reference to Fidel and Green's typology and Gagné's prerequisites and selective perception, it does not employ these notions directly. Rather, it further categorises these notions into two categories: information accessibility and information comprehensibility. Drawing upon Fidel and Green's discussion of information seekers' physical, emotional/social and economic effort and the availability of information sources, this study argues that learning barriers



include barriers to information accessibility, which consist of barriers relevant to information seekers' physical, emotional/social and economic effort and barriers relevant to the availability of information sources. Drawing upon Fidel and Green's discussion of information seekers' intellectual effort and the quality of information as well as Gagné's prerequisites and selective perception, this study argues that learning barriers also include barriers to information comprehensibility that consist of barriers relevant to information seekers' intellectual effort and to the quality of information. Information seekers' intellectual effort involves establishing prerequisites, while the quality of information involves accurate/definite information and presenting information in a distinctive manner.

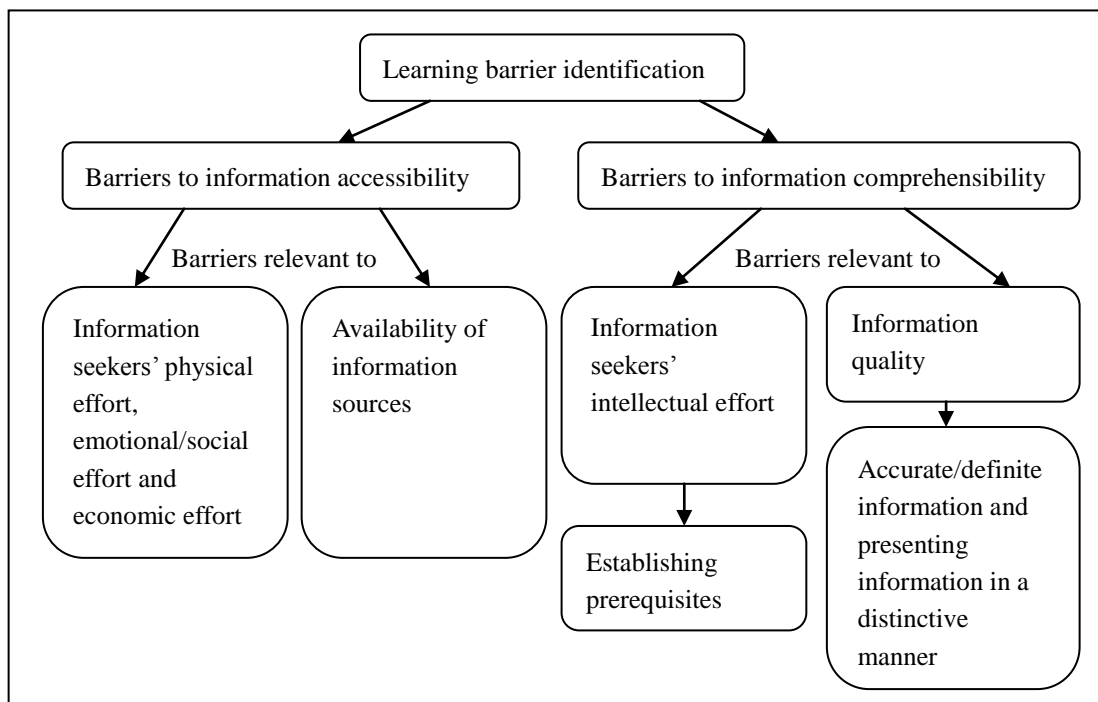


Figure 2.19 The preliminary framework for learning barrier identification

This section concludes that, by removing barriers to information accessibility, practitioners can be connected to learning resources. Furthermore, by removing

barriers to information comprehensibility, learning materials will be intelligible and useful to practitioners (learners). Figure 2.19 indicates the preliminary framework for learning barrier identification.

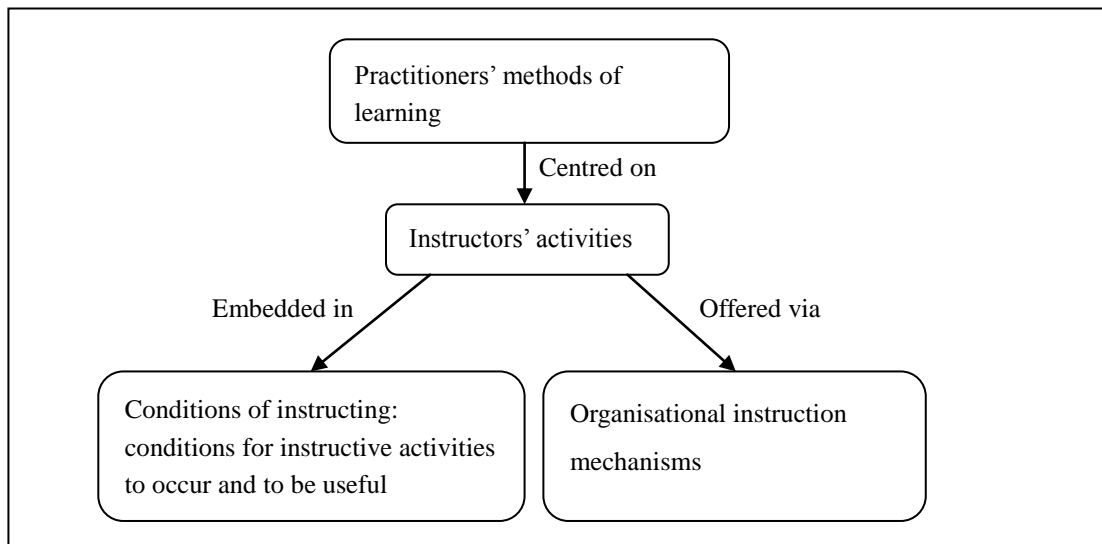
### *2.5.5 Section summary*

This section analyses practitioners' puzzle solving, which is centred on the process of puzzle solving and on the process of developing puzzle solving competence. It suggests that, going through these processes, practitioners develop the competences to accomplish the value activities assigned to them. The contribution of this section is that it proposes the preliminary framework for practitioners' puzzle solving, and this preliminary framework is a new synthesised framework that engages in a cognitive analysis of the practitioners' process of puzzle solving and a cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of their process of developing puzzle solving competence. This cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of practitioners' methods of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution the field of study. Having discussed practitioners' puzzle solving (the individual level structuring force), the next section discusses practitioners' methods of learning by looking at instructors' instructing (the individual level structuring force).

## **2.6 The micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning: instructors' instructing**

This section addresses the question: since a micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning by looking at instructors' actions that could help practitioners to develop the expected competences has been proposed, what might be a framework that could be utilised to analyse it? In order to produce a preliminary framework for analysing it, this section tackles five bodies of literature: the literatures that address identity (Edwards and Bess 1998), communication (Berlo 1960; Habermas 1984; Schramm 1955), orientation (Mathis and Jackson 2008), supervision (Kadushin and Harkness 2002) and organisational socialisation (Fisher 1986). Drawing upon these literatures, the overall argument of this section is that practitioners' methods of learning are centred on instructors' activities. Instructors offer instructions to practitioners via organisational instruction mechanisms and, for instructive activities to occur and to be useful, the conditions of instructing, which consist of psychological and communication conditions, have to be met. With instructions from instructors, practitioners develop the competences to accomplish the assigned value activities. The contribution of this section is that it proposes the preliminary framework for instructors' instructing, and this preliminary framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to identity (professional relations) and to communication and engages in an analysis of the macro organisational instruction mechanisms that form the architecture for the construction of professional relations and communications between practitioners and instructors. This social analysis of practitioners' methods of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting one of this study's contributions to the field. Figure 2.20 indicates the preliminary framework for instructors' instructing. Section 2.6.1 (the psychological condition of instructing) and Section 2.6.2 (the

communication condition of instructing) address the conditions of instructing for instructive activities to occur and to be useful, while Section 2.6.3 addresses organisational instruction mechanisms.



*Figure 2.20 The preliminary framework for instructors' instructing*

### *2.6.1 The psychological condition of instructing*

This section addresses the question: ‘What might be the conditions associated with instructing that enable instructive activities to occur?’ It addresses this issue by looking at the psychological condition: the professional relationship between a practitioner and an instructor. Developing from Edwards and Bess’ (1998) professional self, this study argues that instructive activities are embedded in the professional relations between practitioners and instructors. For instructive activities to occur, professional relations between practitioners and instructors need to exist. Figure XI (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section. It starts with a discussion of theories of the self.

Stryker and Serpe (1994) suggest that contemporary self theories tend to assume a multiplicity of selves rather than a singular self. As for classification of multiple selves, Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton's (1976) model illustrates a hierarchical classification. They suggest that self-concepts form a hierarchy and, in this hierarchy, situation-specific self-concepts are at the base, while a general self-concept is at the apex. As such, their model assumes the existence of a general self-concept. They propose that a general self-concept may consist of the academic self-concept and the non-academic self-concept. Both of them may have sub-categories. For instance, the academic self-concept may consist of various subject-matter self-concepts (e.g., history and mathematics).

In addition to a hierarchical classification, a non-hierarchical classification is illustrated by Edwards and Bess' (1998) classification together with Goffman's (1959) classification. Edwards and Bess suggest two kinds of selves: the personal self and the professional self. The personal self stands for a regular person with personality traits, belief systems and life experiences. The professional self stands for a professional with knowledge and techniques. Besides, Goffman studies the presentation of self in everyday life by looking at a social actor's front region behaviour and back region behaviour. In the front region, a social actor acts before a particular set of audiences, performing impression management by making a show. In the back region, a social actor displays the aspects that discredit the managed impression.

This study supports the concept of a multiplicity of selves. Thus, it rejects the opposite idea that suggests only a singular self. Though it acknowledges a

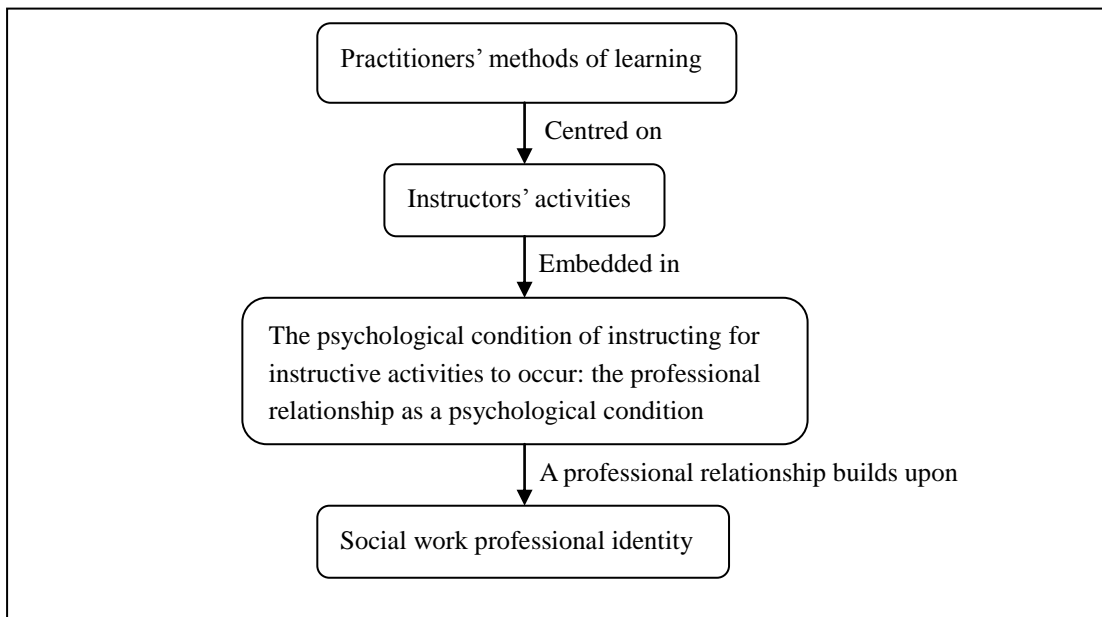
multiplicity of selves, it rejects a hierarchical relationship among multiple selves. Wenger's (1998) identity as reconciliation suggests that conflicts among different memberships may occur to a person with multi-memberships. In view of this, this study suggests that multiple selves may conflict with one another, not being in a coherent unified situation. Thus, it disagrees with a hierarchical relationship proposed by Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton since their claim concerning general self-concept implies a coherent unified relationship among multiple selves.

This study supports a non-hierarchical relationship among multiple selves. However, it does not adopt Goffman's classification since the notion of front region behaviour could not address the issue: who is interacting with whom in the front region? His explanation about the self who guides the front region behaviour lacks the capacity to explain the specific self (e.g., professional self) that is presented by a practitioner in their interaction with other professionals. This study adopts Edwards and Bess' discussion of the personal self and the professional self, which could explain the issue concerning who is interacting with whom. Nonetheless, it does not look at the personal self but pays attention to the professional self since this self is relevant to professional instruction. In the context of social work practice, this study defines the professional self in an occupationally specific manner; it replaces the usage of the professional self with social work professional identity and defines it as an individual's identity as a professional social worker.

Building upon this notion of social work professional identity, this study further suggests that the engagement of a practitioner's social work professional identity with an instructor's social work professional identity (i.e., the social interaction

between social work professionals) produces a professional relationship. It draws on professional relations in order to analyse instructors' activities (e.g., instructive activities performed by practitioners' social work colleagues and supervisors). It treats the professional relationship as a psychological condition for instructive activities to occur. For instance, according to 'The Code of Ethics for Social Workers' (Appendix VII), Article 2.1 states that: 'Licensed social workers should respect their social work colleagues, support one another, stimulate one another and collaborate with social workers and other professionals to jointly promote the wellbeing of service users'. In view of this, it is sensible that, for instructive activities to occur, a professional relationship between a practitioner and an instructor needs to exist. When a practitioner needs an instruction but a professional relationship is absent (e.g., an instructor does not want to support or stimulate a practitioner.), instructive activities will not occur since the instructor will not use his/her social work professional identity to act as a professional, offering an instruction to that practitioner.

To sum up, developing from Edwards and Bess' professional self, this study argues that instructive activities are embedded in the professional relations between practitioners and instructors. For instructive activities to occur, professional relations between practitioners and instructors need to exist. Figure 2.21 indicates the preliminary framework for the psychological condition of instructing.



*Figure 2.21 The preliminary framework for the psychological condition of instructing*

Having discussed the psychological condition of instructing, the next section proceeds to discuss the communication condition of instructing. In its original context, Edwards and Bess' discussion deals with the issue of developing effectiveness in the therapeutic use of self. Therefore, their discussion could not enable this study to explain the communication condition of instructing. This study utilises the literatures that discuss communication to address this issue.

### *2.6.2 The communication condition of instructing*

This section addresses the question: 'What might be the conditions associated with instructing in order for instructive activities to occur and to be useful?' It addresses this issue by looking at the communication conditions: clear communication, active communication and authentic communication. Drawing upon Schramm's (1955) discussion of the field of experience and feedback in the communication, Berlo's



(1960) S-M-C-R model of communication, and Habermas' (1984) discussion of the ideal speech situation, this study argues that instructive activities are embedded in the communication between practitioners and instructors. For instructive activities to occur and to be useful, clear communication, active communication and authentic communication need to exist. Figure XII (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section.

Weick (1979, 1995) treats communication as an essential component of organising and sensemaking. He proposes the enactment-selection-retention sequence in which organisational members make sense of a situation (e.g., equivocal stimuli) via sensemaking tools (e.g., the double interact between people who participate in communication) as well as make a response to that situation on the basis of their plausible interpretation of the situation. The way this study looks at the role of communication is different from Weick's discussion, which focuses on the role of communication in making sense of an equivocal situation and making a response to that situation. Rather, this study's research focus is to investigate communication elements that need to exist so as to allow for instructive activities to occur and to be useful. It achieves this aim by discussing components of a successful communication process.

Shannon (1948) suggests that communication involves the following essential components: information source, message, transmitter, signal, channel, receiver, destination and noise source. An information source produces a message, and a transmitter (the encoder) converts this message into a signal. The signal is transmitted to a receiver through a communication channel. Then, the receiver (the

decoder) converts the received signal back into a message and hands the message on to its destination. In the process of transmission, the noise source may alter the signal, and thus a mismatch between what is sent and what is received could happen. As indicated by Schramm's (1955) model, the weaknesses of this model are that it neglects the circular feedback between the information source and the destination, and it also neglects the field of experience that constitutes the common ground for encoding a message and decoding a signal.

Schramm (1955) proposes a circular model, indicating that there is a response from the destination to the information source. Besides, this model incorporates the field of experience into the analysis. The information source's field of experience guides encoding. Then, the information source sends the message to the destination, whose field of experience also guides decoding. After this, the destination's field of experience guides encoding, and the destination sends another message to the information source, whose field of experience guides decoding. In this circular process, if their fields of experience do not overlap, they will lack common backgrounds for engaging in encoding and decoding. The destination's decoding will fail; the meaning contained in a message will not be intelligible to the destination. The weakness of Schramm's discussion is that his circular model inadequately deals with the issues of messages and common grounds for encoding and decoding. This study utilises Berlo's (1960) S-M-C-R model to address this issue.

As for a discussion of messages, Berlo (1960) suggests that messages consist of content, codes, treatment, elements and structures of messages. Content is a

meaning that the source wants to convey, while codes (e.g., a group of symbols) constitute the medium that carries a meaning. Treatment refers to selection and arrangement of codes and content. As far as elements and structures are concerned, for instance, the letters, f, h, i, s, represent elements; the combination of these elements represents a structure (e.g., the word ‘fish’).

With regard to a discussion of common grounds for encoding and decoding, Berlo suggests that this involves the source’s and the receiver’s communication skills, knowledge, attitudes, social systems and cultures of which they are a member.

Table 2.2 summarises his discussion.

Component	Meaning	Implications for this study
Communication skills	Communication skills include the source’s and the receiver’s skills regarding speaking, writing, listening, reading and reasoning. Their skills denote their abilities to encode accurately what they want to convey and their abilities to decode precisely what others want to convey.	In order to achieve successful communication, the source needs to utilise his/her communication skills to facilitate the receiver’s decoding, such as using vocabularies with which the receiver is familiar so that the receiver can decode it easily and accurately.
Knowledge	The source’s and the receiver’s knowledge of the subject matter and their knowledge of the communication process, such as the source’s knowledge of the characteristics of the receiver.	In order to achieve successful communication, the source needs to consider the receiver’s background knowledge, encoding the message in a manner that the receiver is competent enough to decode it accurately.
Social systems and cultures	The source’s and the receiver’s position in a socio-cultural system and the socio-cultural reference frames they have (e.g., what counts as an	In order to ensure communication succeeds, the source and the receiver need to communicate with each other through a socially/culturally

	appropriate manner of communication in a given situation).	acceptable manner.
Attitudes	Attitudes towards themselves: the source's and the receiver's confidence in discussing a topic.	If they are not confident in discussing a topic, they may hold back their messages, resulting in unsuccessful communication.
	Attitudes towards the subject matter: the source's and the receiver's interest in discussing a topic.	In order to initiate communication and for it to successfully continue, the source and the receiver need to believe in the value of discussing the topic so that they will be motivated to communicate.
	The source's attitudes towards the receiver and the receiver's attitudes towards the source: their attitudes towards the characteristics of the other party.	In order to make communication succeed, the source and the receiver need to have a positive attitude towards the characteristics of the other party so that they will be willing to communicate with each other, feeling that it is worth communicating with the other party.

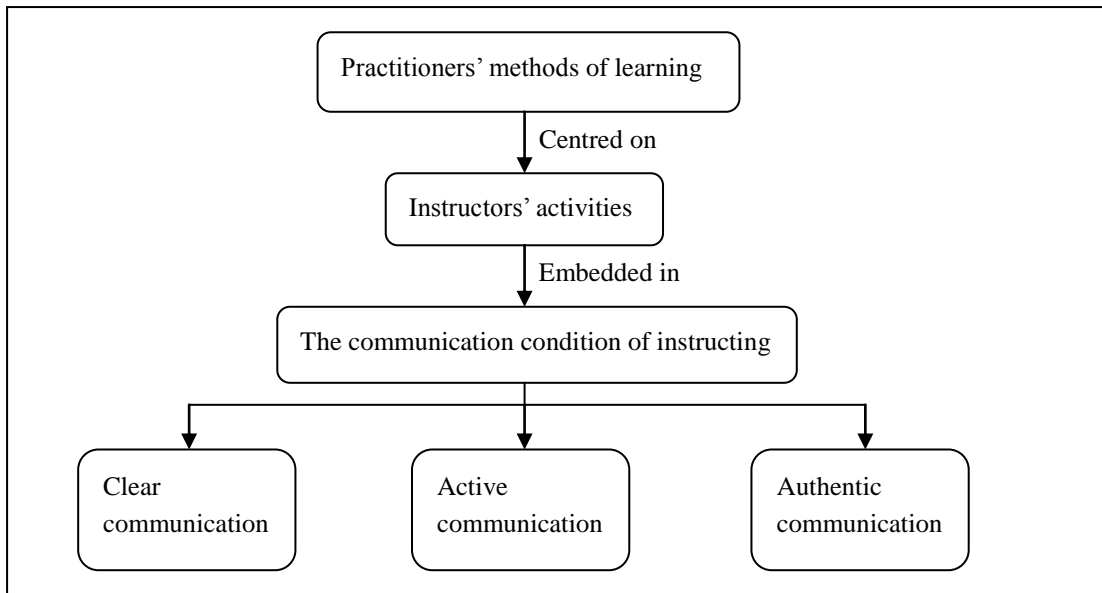
*Table 2.2 Berlo's discussion of source and receiver*

*Source: Berlo (1960)*

The weakness of Berlo's model is that it fails to explain the role of any power imbalance influencing communication. This study utilises Habermas' (1984) ideal speech situation to address this issue. He proposes that in order to prevent distorted communication from happening, those who engage in the communication need to have the symmetry of opportunities to propose their claims, creating an ideal speech situation without repression and inequality. This study suggests that this consideration of the ideal speech situation reveals a consideration of removing the power imbalance between the source and the receiver, which is not made explicit by Berlo's model.

This study captures the essence of these views regarding the key factors involved in successful communication, and synthesises these factors into three categories: clear communication, active communication and authentic communication. Clear communication draws upon Schramm's field of experience and Berlo's notions of message (content, codes, treatment, elements and structures of messages) and source and receiver (communication skills, knowledge, social systems and cultures). It involves encoding meanings in such a manner that a source not only encodes accurately what he/she wants to convey but also encodes meanings in a manner that facilitates the receiver's decoding. Active communication draws upon Schramm's feedback and Berlo's discussion of source and receiver (attitudes towards the subject matter, the source's attitudes towards the receiver and the receiver's attitudes towards the source). It involves being willing to communicate with the other party about a topic and carrying it out. Authentic communication draws upon Berlo's source and receiver concept (attitudes towards one's own self) and Habermas' ideal speech situation. It involves expressing what a person really wants to convey, rather than hiding it.

To sum up, drawing upon Schramm's discussion of the field of experience and feedback in the communication, Berlo's S-M-C-R model of communication, and Habermas' discussion of the ideal speech situation, this study argues that instructive activities are embedded in the communication between practitioners and instructors. For instructive activities to occur and to be useful, clear communication, active communication and authentic communication need to exist. Figure 2.22 indicates the preliminary framework for the communication condition of instructing.



*Figure 2.22 The preliminary framework for the communication condition of instructing*

Having discussed the psychological condition and the communication condition of instructing for instructive activities to occur and to be useful, the next section proceeds to discuss organisational instruction mechanisms through which instructors offer instructions to practitioners. The literatures addressing identity and communication could be relevant but in their original contexts, they could not enable this study to explain the mechanisms through which instructors offer instructions to practitioners. This study utilises the literatures that discuss orientation, supervision and organisational socialisation to address this issue.

### *2.6.3 Organisational instruction mechanisms*

This section addresses two questions: ‘What might be the organisational instruction mechanisms through which instructors offer instructions to practitioners?’ and ‘What might be the content of instructions offered through these organisational instruction

mechanisms?’ Drawing upon Mathis and Jackson’s (2008) discussion of orientation and Kadushin and Harkness’ (2002) discussion of individual supervision and group supervision, this study argues that orientation and supervision constitute organisational instruction mechanisms through which instructors offer instructions to practitioners. Drawing upon Fisher’s (1986) learning about the organisation, learning to function in the work group and learning to do the job, it argues that these subjects constitute the content of instructions offered through these organisational instruction mechanisms. Figure XIII (Appendix IV) indicates the roadmap for this section.

Mathis and Jackson (2008) suggest that, in the workplace setting, formal training methods could involve on-the-job training and off-the-job training. In addition, orientation could be offered to new employees (see also Bohlander and Snell 2010; Pynes 2009). Kadushin and Harkness (2002) suggest that, in the social work setting, formal supervisory designs could include individual and group supervision (see also Hawkins and Shohet 2006; Munson 2002; Tsui 2005). This study supports Mathis and Jackson’s typology and Kadushin and Harkness’ typology. However, it suggests that, in the social work setting, on-the-job training and off-the-job training could be operated by formal supervisory designs. As such, this study utilises the notions of orientation and supervision to address organisational instruction mechanisms. Drawing upon Mathis and Jackson’s discussion of orientation and Kadushin and Harkness’ discussion of individual supervision and group supervision, this study argues that orientation and supervision constitute organisational instruction mechanisms through which instructors offer instructions to practitioners.

However, Mathis and Jackson's and Kadushin and Harkness' discussions fail to categorise the content of instructions offered through orientation and supervision. This study utilises the literature that discusses organisational socialisation to address this issue. Schein (1968) describes this as the process of learning the ropes. New organisational members learn values, norms and required behaviour patterns of an organisation, which include basic goals of an organisation, preferred means to achieve basic goals, basic responsibilities regarding their role, behaviour patterns for achieving effective performance as well as rules regarding the maintenance of the integrity of an organisation. Feldman (1981) suggests that in the organisational socialisation process, new organisational members acquire a set of appropriate role behaviours, develop work skills and abilities as well as adjust to the work groups' norms and values.

Unlike Schein and Feldman, who propose less systematic explanations, Fisher (1986) proposes a more systematic framework and categorises the content of organisational socialisation into four important categories: learning about the organisation, learning to function in the work group, learning to do the job and personal learning. Learning about the organisation concerns understanding organisational goals, values and regulations, its administration, organisational structure and organisational culture, etc. Learning to function in the work group is to understand who is who, job responsibilities, how to get along with others, group politics, relationships between people, group norms and the group culture. Learning to do the job is to understand tasks, such as how to get tasks accomplished, and relevant knowledge and skills required for the completion of tasks. Personal learning is to understand one's own needs, desires, abilities, values, motives and so forth. This study suggests that



learning about the organisation, learning to function in the work group, learning to do the job and personal learning represent different levels of learning content such as the learning content regarding the organisational level, the work group level, the job level and the personal level. The learning content regarding the organisational level, the work group level and the job level encompasses the learning content mentioned by Schein and Feldman. Lastly, Fisher adds that some preliminary learning, such as the realisation of the need to learn, to learn what to learn and to know from whom to learn, may be necessary so as to help newcomers to master these four categories of content.

In addition to Schein, Feldman and Fisher, Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein and Gardner (1994) also discuss the content of organisational socialisation. They propose six socialisation dimensions: performance proficiency, politics, people, organisational goals/values, history (personal background and organisational background) and language, which includes a profession's technical language and terms that are unique to an organisation. However, this study suggests that, in nature, their typology does not go beyond Fisher's typology. Performance proficiency is relevant to learning to do the job. Politics, people, organisational goals/values, history and language are relevant to learning about the organisation and learning to function in the work group.

This study supports Fisher's typology, which is more inclusive and systematic. However, it is merely interested in the learning content regarding the organisational level, the work group level and the job level. As for the other two kinds of learning content, preliminary learning has been explained by the learning need identification

(e.g., to realise the need to learn and to learn what to learn) and the learning resource identification (to know from whom to learn). Thus, this section does not utilise the notion of preliminary learning. In addition, this study focuses on learning about organisational and professional matters, rather than on learning about personal matters. Thus, it does not investigate personal learning. Drawing upon Fisher's discussion, this study argues that learning about the organisation, learning to function in the work group and learning to do the job constitute the content of instructions offered through these organisational instruction mechanisms (orientation and supervision).

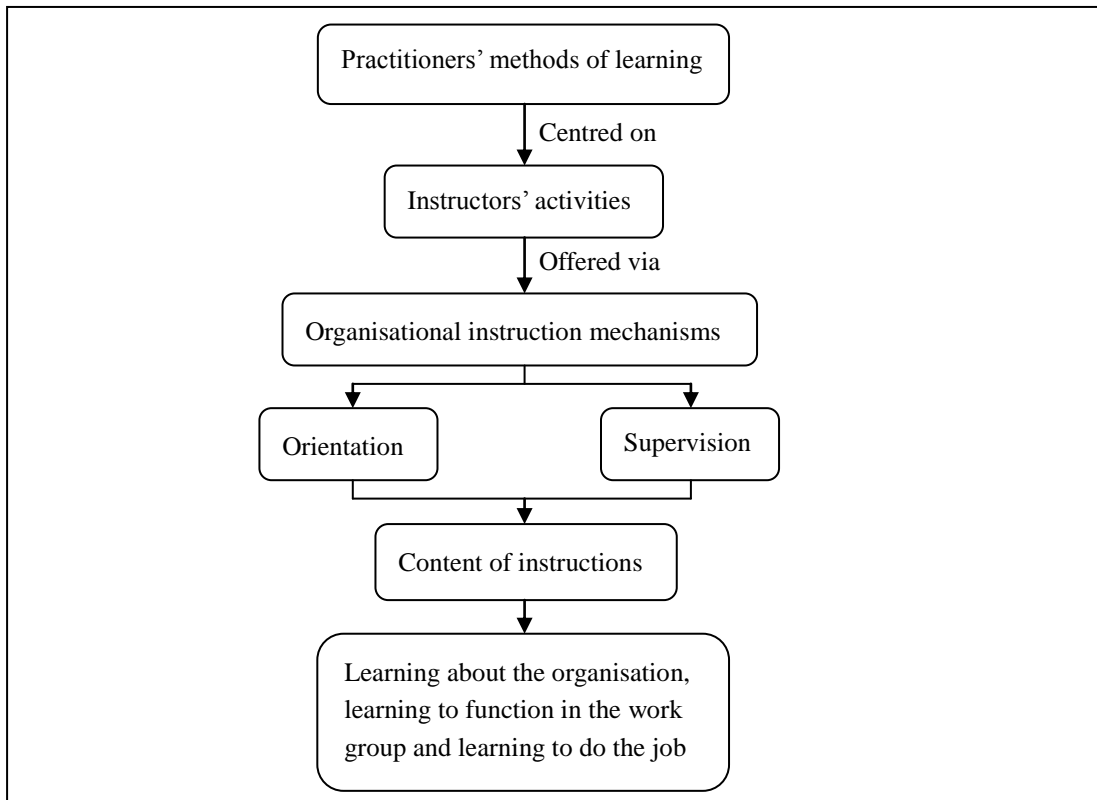


Figure 2.23 The preliminary framework for organisational instruction mechanisms

To sum up, Figure 2.23 indicates the preliminary framework for organisational instruction mechanisms. It must be noted that organisational instruction

mechanisms belong to social structures (Münch and Smelser 1987), which represent the macro phenomenon; they are included in this micro analysis because they form the architecture for the construction of professional relations and communications between practitioners and instructors.

#### *2.6.4 Section summary*

This section analyses instructors' instructing. Instructors offer instructions to practitioners via organisational instruction mechanisms and, for instructive activities to occur and to be useful, the conditions of instructing, which consist of psychological and communication conditions, have to be met. With instructions from instructors, practitioners develop the competences to accomplish their assigned value activities. The contribution of this section is that it proposes the preliminary framework for instructors' instructing, and this framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to identity (professional relations) and to communication and engages in an analysis of macro organisational instruction mechanisms that form the architecture for the construction of professional relations and communications between practitioners and instructors. This social analysis of practitioners' methods of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to the field of study. Having discussed instructors' instructing, the next section summarises this chapter.

#### **2.7 Chapter summary**

The research question of this study is: ‘How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?’ In this chapter, this study synthesises theoretical concepts from different academic disciplines (e.g., Organisational Behaviour, Management, Social Work, Sociology and Psychology) to produce five sets of preliminary frameworks that offer a tentative answer to this research question. These preliminary frameworks, as a whole, perform a cross-level analysis and a process analysis (Heath and Sitkin 2001) of the organising of learning.

It performs a macro analysis of practitioners’ direction of learning and argues that practitioners’ direction of learning is organised by service purchasers’ demanding (an inter-organisational level structuring force) and the service provider’s planning (an organisational level structuring force). In the preliminary framework for service purchasers’ demanding (Figure 2.2), this study tackles three bodies of literature: the literatures that address ecological transactions (Gitterman and Germain 2008), value activities (Porter 1998b) and the exercise of power (Foucault 1972, 1995; Ouchi 1979). Drawing upon these literatures, it argues that practitioner’s learning is embedded in the ecological transactions between service purchasers (local governments) and the service provider (the Old-Five-Old Foundation). In their ecological transactions, service purchasers’ exercise of power demands that the service provider performs particular value activities. This shapes the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities, manipulating their direction of learning. In the preliminary framework for the service provider’s planning (Figure 2.5), this study tackles four bodies of literature: the literatures that address strategic decisions (Porter 1998a; Wehrich 1982), job designs (Campion and Thayer 1987), value activities (Porter 1998b) and

professionalism (Finlay 2000; Healy and Meagher 2004). Drawing upon these literatures, it argues that, firstly, practitioners' learning is embedded in the service provider's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices. Then, in this range of its chosen practices, the service provider's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution manipulates the value activities a practitioner is assigned to execute. This shapes the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish the value activities he/she is assigned to execute, manipulating his/her direction of learning.

Furthermore, this study performs a macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning and argues that the service provider's monitoring (an organisational level structuring force) organises the evaluation of practitioners' learning. In the preliminary framework for the service provider's monitoring (Figure 2.8), this study tackles three bodies of literature: the literatures that address the cognitive domain (Benack 1984; Bloom et al. 1967; Bruner 1957; Collins and Loftus 1975; Cross and Paris 1988; Kember et al. 1999; Kondrat 1999; O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith 2009; Tulving 2002), the affective domain (Gardner 2004; Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia 1968; Mayer and Salovey 1993, 1997; Thorndike 1920) and organisational control systems (Beer et al. 1978; Jaworski 1988; Montanari and Freedman 1981; Poister 2003; Swiss 1991). Drawing upon these literatures, it argues that the evaluation of practitioners' learning is carried out through the service provider's (the Old-Five-Old Foundation's) organisational evaluation mechanisms, which examine practitioners' cognitive and affective competence.

Lastly, this study performs a micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning and argues that practitioners' methods of learning are organised by practitioners' puzzle solving (an individual level structuring force) and instructors' instructing (an individual level structuring force). In the preliminary framework for practitioners' puzzle solving (Figure 2.12), this study tackles seven bodies of literature: the literatures that address problem solving (Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger 2000, 2011; Mayer 1999; Noller, Parnes and Biondi 1976), case management (Ballew and Mink 1996), the cognitive domain, the affective domain, networks (Gould and Fernandez 1989; Granovetter 1973; Law 1992; Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; Wenger 2000), information accessibility (Fidel and Green 2004) and information comprehensibility (Fidel and Green 2004; Gagné 1985). Drawing upon these literatures, it argues that practitioners' methods of learning are centred on the process of puzzle solving and of developing puzzle solving competence. Going through these processes, practitioners develop the competences to accomplish the value activities they are assigned to execute. In the preliminary framework for instructors' instructing (Figure 2.20), this study tackles five bodies of literature: the literatures that address identity (Edwards and Bess 1998), communication (Berlo 1960; Habermas 1984; Schramm 1955), orientation (Mathis and Jackson 2008), supervision (Kadushin and Harkness 2002) and organisational socialisation (Fisher 1986). Drawing upon these literatures, it argues that practitioners' methods of learning are centred on instructors' activities. Instructors offer instructions to practitioners via organisational instruction mechanisms and, for instructive activities to occur and to be useful, the conditions of instructing, which consist of psychological and communication conditions, have to be met. With instructions from instructors, practitioners develop the competences to accomplish the value activities they are assigned to execute.

To sum up, the new synthesised framework for service purchasers' demanding performs a social analysis of learning, relating learning to ecological transactions, value activities and the exercise of power. The new synthesised framework for the service provider's planning performs a social analysis of learning, relating learning to strategic decisions, job designs, value activities and professionalism. The new synthesised framework for the service provider's monitoring performs a cognitive, affective and social analysis of learning; it applies the cognitive and affective domains to the workplace setting (cognitive analysis and affective analysis) and relates learning to organisational control systems (social analysis). The new synthesised framework for practitioners' puzzle solving performs a cognitive, affective and social-cultural analysis of learning, engaging in a cognitive analysis of the practitioners' process of puzzle solving and a cognitive, affective and social-cultural analysis of their process of developing puzzle solving competence. Lastly, the new synthesised framework for instructors' instructing performs a social analysis of learning, relating learning to identity (professional relations) and to communication and engaging in an analysis of macro organisational instruction mechanisms that form the architecture for the construction of professional relations and communications between practitioners and instructors. The aforementioned five preliminary frameworks, as a whole, systematically perform a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning by looking at macro and micro structuring forces (cross-level analysis) that organise practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning (process analysis). Such an analytical framework does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), thus denoting a contribution to

widening understanding of the subject.

Having discussed the preliminary frameworks that could be utilised to research the organising of learning, the next chapter discusses the methodology through which the preliminary frameworks are tested and elaborated to produce conclusive frameworks.



## CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

This study's research question is 'How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?' Five sets of preliminary frameworks which offer a tentative answer to this study's research question are: service purchasers' demanding, the service provider's planning, the service provider's monitoring, practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing. This chapter discusses the methodological decisions for this study's empirical inquiry in light of the research question it aims to answer and the preliminary frameworks it proposes to be tested. It addresses methodological decisions by discussing epistemology (Section 3.1), research design (Section 3.2), sampling (Section 3.3), data collection (Section 3.4), data analysis (Section 3.5), the presentation of analyses (Section 3.6), ethics (Section 3.7) and limitations on generalisation (Section 3.8). Table 3.1 summarises these methodological decisions and the literatures they draw upon.

Section	Decision
Epistemology	This study adopts Gadamer's (2006) fusion of horizons. Based on this hermeneutic approach, it engages in a fusion of academic views, practitioners' views and experiences and views and experiences of the author of this dissertation to produce conclusive frameworks.
Research design	It takes an ethnographic research design (Fetterman 2010; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Accordingly, in the time horizon, it adopts a longitudinal design (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007).
Sampling	While selecting a research site, it employs purposeful sampling (Patton 2002) and the Old-Five-Old Foundation is purposefully selected as the research site. While selecting samples from inside the Old-Five-Old Foundation, it adopts maximum variation sampling (Patton 2002).
Data collection	It is a multi-method qualitative study (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003). It

	collects documents as secondary data (Prior 2003a) and gathers primary data through participant observations (Gold 1958; Jorgensen 1989) and interviews (Carspecken 1996; DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006; Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005; King 2004a; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007).
Data analysis	It adopts the template analysis (King 2004b), which makes use of both deductive coding and inductive coding to analyse data. Furthermore, it takes hermeneutic approaches (Dilthey 1976; Gadamer 2006; Palmer 1969; Ricoeur 1972, 1981; Schleiermacher 1998) to validate its interpretation of the data.
The presentation of analyses	It structures its analyses around the themes and presents illustrative data for the themes (King 2004b).
Ethics	Informed consent is obtained. Information offered to participants includes participants' voluntary participation, risks to participants and prevention of risks, its data collection methods, participants' rights, use of data, data protection in terms of confidentiality and anonymity, reciprocity, and no conflict of interests (Bryman and Bell 2007; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007).
Limitations on generalisation	The conclusive frameworks represent substantive frameworks that offer context-specific explanations, not grand or middle-range theories (Merriam 1988). As a consequence, the conclusive frameworks may not be possible to explain the empirical phenomena that happen in other inter-organisational and organisational contexts.

*Table 3.1 Methodological decisions of this study*

In each section, this study justifies its methodological decisions. It starts with a discussion of epistemology.

### **3.1 Epistemology**

This section addresses two questions: 'In order to produce conclusive frameworks to appropriately explain the organising of learning within the context of social work practice in the third sector, what might be the source materials on which conclusive frameworks can be built?' and 'How could source materials be utilised to produce

conclusive frameworks?’ Making reference to Wallner’s (1994) micro-world, this study argues that academic views (theoretical basis) could be treated as source materials on which conclusive frameworks are built. Making reference to Wallner’s life-world, this study argues that practitioners’ views and experiences (empirical basis) as well as views and experiences of the author of this dissertation could be treated as source materials on which conclusive frameworks are built. Furthermore, using Gadamer’s (2006) fusion of horizons, this study argues that conclusive frameworks could be produced by fusing the views and experiences described above. This section starts with a discussion of Wallner’s constructive realism.

The ontological stance of this study is Wallner’s (1994) constructive realism (Appendix VIII). His constructive realism indicates that there is a difference between actualities and constructed realities. Actualities refer to the world in which human beings live, while constructed realities refer to the product of any attempt that seeks to understand actualities. Actualities are different from representations of actualities (constructed realities produced by humans). Furthermore, his constructive realism indicates that human understanding of the world consists of the micro-world and the life-world. The micro-world is a theoretical world built from scientific inquiries and consists of proposition systems through which the world is understood. The life-world is a world built from people’s every-day experiences. People sort their experiences of every-day activities to produce their understanding about the world.

In light of Wallner’s constructive realism, this study suggests that academic views belong to the micro-world, while the life-world includes practitioners’ views and

experiences and views and experiences of the author of this dissertation. Making reference to Wallner's micro-world and life-world, this study argues that academic views (theoretical basis), practitioners' views and experiences (empirical basis) and views and experiences of the author of this dissertation could be treated as source materials on which conclusive frameworks are built, since their views and experiences may reveal clues about how learning is organised, which is the actuality this study aims to investigate. This study obtains academic views via a literature review and obtains practitioners' views and experiences via an ethnographic inquiry.

Since source materials are identified, how could source materials be utilised to produce conclusive frameworks? Gadamer (2006) suggests that a horizon has its own limitations. A fusion of horizons could reduce such limitations. In light of Gadamer's suggestion, this study suggests that academic views, practitioners' views and experiences and views and experiences of the author of this dissertation could have their own limitations, since each of them alone might miss something. A fusion of them could make use of those different views and experiences to minimise one another's inadequacy. For instance, by utilising academic views, this study could pay attention to theoretically meaningful phenomena that participants may not actively notice. By utilising the author's experiences, this study could pay attention to other meaningful phenomena that participants may not actively notice; in this situation, the author could actively propose his own experiences, ask participants whether they have similar experiences and investigate their opinions about these similar experiences. Therefore, drawing upon Gadamer's fusion of horizons, this study argues that academic views (theoretical basis), practitioners' views and experiences (empirical basis) and views and experiences of the author of this

dissertation could be utilised to produce conclusive frameworks by fusing them (see Koch 1996 for an empirical study utilising fusion of horizons).

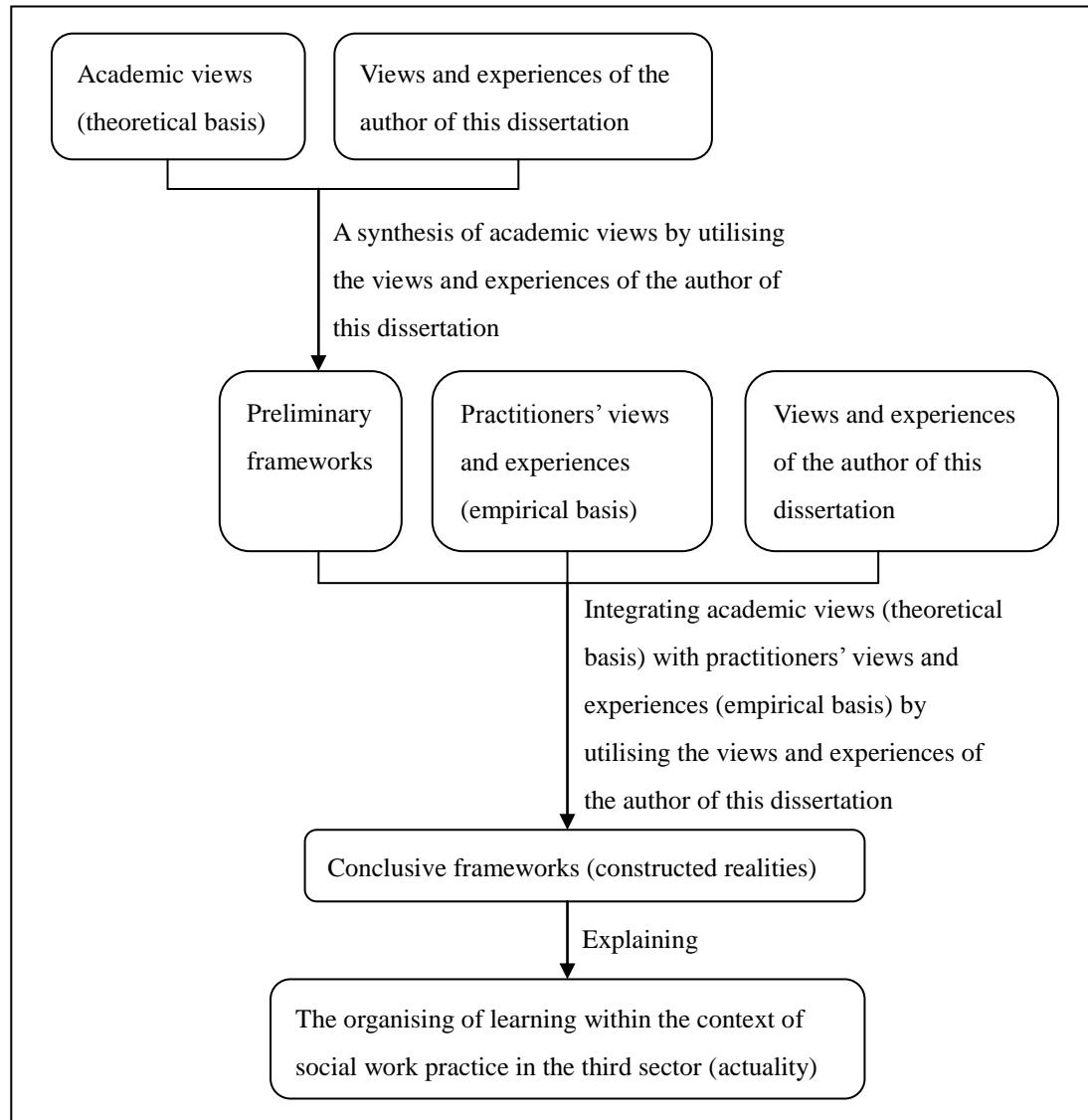


Figure 3.1 The epistemological stance of this study

The views and experiences of the author of this dissertation act to perform this fusion. Firstly, the author synthesises academic views to produce preliminary frameworks by utilising his views and experiences. Secondly, the author integrates academic views (theoretical basis) with practitioners' views and experiences (empirical basis) by

utilising his views and experiences. Figure 3.1 indicates this study's epistemological stance. Having discussed its epistemological stance, the next section discusses its research design.

### **3.2 Research design**

This section addresses the question: since practitioners' views and experiences could be treated as source materials on which conclusive frameworks are built, how can their views and experiences be obtained? It discusses this study's research strategy and the time horizon associated with it. Drawing upon Fetterman's (2010) and Hammersley and Atkinson's (1995) discussion of ethnography, this study argues that the ethnography research design, which adopts a longitudinal design in the time horizon, is appropriate to this study's inquiry.

In view of the preliminary frameworks it proposes to be tested, this study needs to collect practitioners' views and experiences in relation to macro and micro phenomena and phenomena regarding direction, methods and evaluation of learning. This involves collecting a diverse range of data so as to perform a cross-level analysis and a process analysis. Fetterman (2010) and Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest that the ethnography research design could provide researchers with the opportunity to immerse themselves in people's real worlds and collect a wide variety of their lived experiences through direct and extensive interaction between researchers and participants. In view of this, this study suggests that the ethnography research design could enable this study to collect a diverse range of

practitioners' views and experiences. Therefore, drawing upon Fetterman's and Hammersley and Atkinson's discussion of ethnography, this study argues that the ethnography research design is appropriate to this study's inquiry. This use of the ethnography research design is in line with the anthropological approach to investigating human learning activities within their socio-cultural contexts (e.g., see Lave and Wenger 1991 for an empirical study of situated learning; Hutchins 1995 for an empirical study of socially distributed cognition).

Furthermore, this study suggests that, apparently, in nature, the ethnography research design adopts a longitudinal design (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007), rather than a cross-sectional design. Thus, this study also argues that a longitudinal design in the time horizon suits this study's inquiry. The following parts proceed to discuss the reasons other types of research designs do not suit this study.

This study does not adopt a quantitative design (see Creswell 2009 for quantitative design), nor does it adopt an experimental design (see Hakim 2000 for experimental design). This study's research question is 'How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?' It proposes preliminary frameworks to answer this research question. Mathematical equations could not enable this study to examine relations among codes in the preliminary frameworks. For instance, in the preliminary framework for local governments' exercise of power (Figure 2.4 in Section 2.2.2), this study proposes that local governments' exercise of power via discourses and the institutions that support their discourses manipulates the types of value activities that the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform, and thus manipulates the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to

accomplish these value activities, thereby manipulating their direction of learning. Mathematical equations could not meaningfully describe these local governments' exercise of power. Therefore, this study does not adopt a quantitative design. Furthermore, the manipulation of factors to judge its impact on other variables could not enable this study to examine relations between codes in the preliminary frameworks. For instance, it is unlikely for the author of this dissertation to be in a position to manipulate local governments' discourses and understand this effect on the required activities of the Old-Five-Old Foundation. Therefore, it does not adopt an experimental design.

This study does not adopt a grounded theory design (see Strauss and Corbin 1998), nor does it adopt a design of action research (see Stringer 2007). This study seeks to theorise participants' lived experiences by making reference to theoretical concepts. Since it does not set theoretical notions aside but utilises theoretical concepts (e.g., value activities) to make sense of data, it does not adopt a grounded theory design. Furthermore, this study positions itself as a descriptive study (Tsang 1997), aiming to explore how learning is organised. It is not a prescriptive study (Tsang 1997) that seeks to offer a solution concerning how learning ought to be organised so as to facilitate practitioners' learning (see Appendix III for research interests of this study). Since its research interest is to theorise the organising of learning, rather than producing effective solutions to problems, it does not adopt a design of action research.

It does not adopt a design of narrative research (see Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber 1998 for narrative research). This study's research question is 'How is



learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?' Service purchasers' demanding, the service provider's planning, the service provider's monitoring, practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing constitute the storyline that answers this research question. The storyline is not constituted by an individual's or many individuals' life stories. Therefore, it does not adopt a design of narrative research.

Lastly, this study rejects a design of phenomenological research (see Moustakas 1994). This study takes the hermeneutic stance and explicitly utilises theoretical concepts (academic views) and views and experiences of the author of this dissertation, rather than setting them aside. For instance, it utilises the author's pre-understanding so as to avoid misinterpretation of the data (see Section 3.5.2 for validation of interpretations), rather than setting his pre-understanding aside. In light of utilising pre-understanding to avoid misinterpretation of data, this study disagrees with the phenomenological stance that tries to bracket a researcher's pre-understanding (see Steffy and Grimes 1986 for a comparison of phenomenology and hermeneutics). Therefore, it rejects a design of phenomenological research. Having discussed this study's research design, the next section proceeds to discuss its sampling.

### **3.3 Sampling**

This section addresses the question: since the ethnography research design has been proposed, how can the sample of practitioners' views and experiences be selected?

Drawing upon Patton's (2002) discussion of purposeful sampling, this study argues that while selecting a research site, purposeful sampling suits this study. Drawing upon Patton's discussion of maximum variation sampling, it argues that while selecting samples from inside a research site, maximum variation sampling suits this study.

While selecting a research site, this study employs purposeful sampling (Patton 2002). Stake (1995, p. 4) suggests that 'How shall cases be selected? The first criterion should be to maximize what we can learn'. This study selects the Old-Five-Old Foundation as a research site to explore a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning. By selecting the Old-Five-Old Foundation as a research site, this study could achieve this purpose: to maximise its acquisition of insights into the organising of learning. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the Old-Five-Old Foundation could grant access to the various data sources, enabling this study to collect a diverse range of data. This study is an exploratory study (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005), seeking to explore the organising of learning via a cross-level analysis and a process analysis. Without a research site that could grant access to various data sources, exploring the organising of learning via a cross-level analysis and a process analysis is unlikely to be accomplished. Secondly, selecting the Old-Five-Old Foundation as a research site could enable participants to offer quality data and enable the author of this dissertation to develop an emic understanding (Fetterman 2010) of their views and experiences. The participants and the author have similar knowledge backgrounds as well as similar work and organisational experiences. The author used to be a social worker and was an ex-employee. This offers a common background that could help the author

to build relationships with the participants and gain their trust, enabling the participants to offer quality data. This could also become the basis for the author to identify potential meaningful phenomena and develop an emic understanding of their views and experiences. For these reasons, drawing upon Patton's discussion of purposeful sampling, this study argues that while selecting a research site, purposeful sampling suits this study. Examples of empirical studies that adopt an ethnographic case study include Collin, Sintonen, Paloniemi and Auvinen's (2011) research on work, power and learning and Nidumolu, Subramani and Aldrich's (2001) research on situated learning and the situated knowledge web.

The reasons this study does not select other third sector organisations as a research site are as follows. Firstly, in his work history, the author of this dissertation had been working for two third sector organisations. One is the Old-Five-Old Foundation (leaving his job in September 2007), and the other is the Eden Social Welfare Foundation (leaving his job in February 2004). The Eden Social Welfare Foundation could not grant access to various data sources, not allowing this study to collect a diverse range of data. Secondly, if this study had selected a third sector organisation where the author had not been employed as a research site, the author and participants would not have similar work and organisational experiences that the author could draw on to identify potential meaningful phenomena and develop an emic understanding of their views and experiences. This would have increased the possibility of missing possible meaningful phenomena and risked misinterpretation of their views and experiences. In light of this, the selection of the Old-Five-Old Foundation as a research site was seen as appropriate. Having discussed selection of a research site, this section proceeds to discuss selection of samples from inside a

research site.

While selecting samples from inside a research site, this study employs maximum variation sampling (Patton 2002). As a study that performs both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis, this study explores diverse themes. This requires the collection of a diverse range of data by selecting heterogeneous samples and gathering participants' views and experiences as widely and diversely as possible. Therefore, drawing upon Patton's discussion of maximum variation sampling, this study argues that while selecting samples from inside a research site, maximum variation sampling suits this study. In order to explore diverse themes, this study collects data from the Old-Five-Old Foundation's different service branches, different service projects and different employees, thereby collecting richer data from various sources.

The reasons this study does not employ other sampling techniques are as follows. Firstly, given that this study does not aim to study a case primarily to understand other cases, it does not require the case to be representative. Secondly, as an exploratory study that seeks to explore the organising of learning via a cross-level analysis and a process analysis, this study does not specifically aim to study unusual/typical situations and similarity among potential participants. Thus, it does not adopt deviant case sampling, typical case sampling and homogeneous sampling (Patton 2002). Thirdly, in the Old-Five-Old Foundation, potential participants are not difficult to be identified; consequently, it does not need to employ snowball sampling (Bryman and Bell 2007). Lastly, testing the preliminary frameworks does not involve statistical inferences. Therefore, probability sampling (Punch 2005)

and quota sampling (Bryman and Bell 2007) do not make sense for this study. Having discussed sampling, the next section discusses data collection.

### **3.4 Data collection**

This section addresses the question: ‘What data could be gathered in relation to practitioners’ views and experiences?’ It is plausible that data in relation to practitioners’ views and experiences may reside in artefacts and humans. The way this study gathers data from artefacts is by means of collecting documentary secondary data (Prior 2003a). It collects primary data from humans via participant observations (Gold 1958; Jorgensen 1989) and interviews (Carspecken 1996; DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006; Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005; King 2004a; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). The themes indicated in the preliminary frameworks require this study to collect a diverse range of data. This study argues that these three data collection methods suit this study since they could enable this study to collect practitioners’ views and experiences from artefacts and humans, gathering a diverse range of data from diverse data sources.

Utilising three data collection methods reveals that this study is a multi-method qualitative study (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003). This not only enables this study to collect a diverse range of data but also enables comparison of data gathered from documents, participant observations and interviews (see Denzin 1989 for methodological triangulation). Examples that collect documentary secondary data and collect primary data through participant observations and interviews can be seen

in Nidumolu, Subramani and Aldrich's (2001) research on situated learning and the situated knowledge web and Lehoux, Daudelin, Lavis, Denis, Abelson and Miller's (2010) research on new knowledge production regime. The following parts discuss documents, participant observations and interviews in sequence (see Appendix IX for recording primary data).

In this study, documents gathered include organisational documents and relevant stakeholders' documents. As far as organisational documents are concerned, in terms of social work methods (Payne 2005), they include documents regarding casework, group work, community work and management. In terms of practice fields and types of services, they include documents regarding care services, community empowerment and advocacy (see Section 4.2.2 for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's service scheme). In terms of the contents of documents, they include documents concerning the Old-Five-Old Foundation's introduction booklet, its quarterly, its yearbook, service programme proposals, service programme evaluation reports, job manuals, blank assessment forms, blank individual service plan forms, supervisory meeting records, etc. Furthermore, as far as stakeholders' documents are concerned, they include documents concerning national social legislation and social policies, local governments' regulations, contracts, case discussion symposia and programme evaluation reports, and a participant's blog articles. In total, electronic documents gathered amount to 4.09 GigaByte; paper documents gathered amount to 922 pages.

As for participant observations, the Old-Five-Old Foundation provides this study with the Chunghwa branch as the location for participant observations. The

observations start from 5 January 2009 and end on 6 April 2009 (274 hours of observations). During this period, the social work supervisor of this branch was the chief executive officer herself, and there were five female social workers working for this branch. As suggested by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), it is important to identify informative subjects, who can give an account of their views and experiences and the views and experiences of the others. Consulting the recommendations from the chief executive officer, two key informants (Jorgensen 1989) were recruited: Pei-Zhen and Bi-Zhen You. The observation schedules followed key informants' tasks. Each key informant played this role for six weeks. In addition to this period of observations, a home care service team meeting was observed on 26 January 2010 (3 hours of observations). Eight social workers, whose job titles were twofold (Social Worker and Home Care Worker Supervisor), and a home care worker supervisor, who had no social work background, attended this meeting. The leader of this home care service team was the vice director of its social service department, who was also the social work supervisor of the Taipei county and the Taipei city branches.

The author of this dissertation undertook observations sitting in the places agreed by the participants. Thus, he could observe their activities but did not invade their personal space. While making observations, the role of the author is the observer-as-participant (Gold 1958). This requires him to act like a fly on the wall and does not allow him to disturb duties of participants. This aims to make his research activities become psychologically comfortable to participants and thus pave the way for obtaining their genuine actions. Types of actions observed include their making artefacts (e.g., writing a programme proposal), their communication with one

another (e.g., their conversations in the office) and their interpretations of artefacts (e.g., their understanding of a particular document and a term). Having discussed participant observations, this study proceeds to discuss interviews.

Eleven participants are interviewed. The Old-Five-Old Foundation provides this study with the Taichung county branch, the Taipei county branch and the Taipei city branch for recruiting interview participants. This study seeks to investigate learning in the organisational setting, and this requires potential participants to be organisational members, who had accumulated at least some work experience in the Old-Five-Old Foundation. It sets six months as a criterion. In these three branches, in January 2010, there were twelve social workers, and eleven of them had worked for the Old-Five-Old Foundation for six months. Nine of them agreed to participate in interviews. In addition, the Old-Five-Old Foundation provides this study with the director and the vice director of its social service department for interviews. Both the director and the vice director agreed to participate in interviews. As such, in total, eleven participants were interviewed. Interviews ranged from 79 minutes to 157 minutes, and, in total, this study gathered 1165 minutes of interviews.

As for the interview content and procedures, this study uses semi-structure face-to-face one-to-one interviews (King 2004a). Thus, it has an interview guide (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005) that directs the interviews. It does not adopt unstructured interviews (King 2004a) since this study has developed predetermined themes (e.g., themes indicated in the preliminary frameworks). The interview guide consists of two questions, which aim to initiate further discussions on predetermined



themes. The wording of the questions adopts open-ended questions (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006). The order of the questions starts with a factual question proceeding to a question regarding their opinions, values and feelings. In other words, as indicated by DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, this study moves from a less sensitive question to a more sensitive one. The contents of questions were tested and modified from a pilot study (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005) with one participant: Wan-Qi.

The first question is a factual question, easing the participants into the interview and paving the way for the second question. This first question is: ‘What is your current job content?’ It aims to gather background information regarding their work experience. The next question is: ‘What do you think of your present job?’ This question seeks to explore participants’ opinions about governmental plans and their organisation’s plans, as well as their opinions regarding the content of their tasks (their opinions about direction of learning and evaluation of learning). It also seeks to explore their opinions regarding strengths and shortcomings of their organisation and colleagues, difficulties and challenges that they had encountered in practice and how they overcome difficulties and challenges (their methods of learning).

Though this study utilises the interview guide, it must be noted that it adopts a flexible interview schedule (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). Thus, actual interviews are conducted according to the flow of interaction in the interviews. The interviews proceeded according to the interviewees’ train of thought. The author of this dissertation followed their flow of thought to make inquiries. He also allowed time for participants to make responses and did not interrupt their flow of thought.

Adopting a flexible interview schedule means that it enables this study to acquire further data whenever the flow of their thought indicated something meaningful to this study.

All interviews were conducted in January 2010. The Old-Five-Old Foundation (a social service organisation) had discussion rooms in each branch where these interviews took place. This not only avoided disturbing other participants' activities but also met ethic requirements in relation to confidentiality and safety (Robson 2002). Before each interview started, the participants chose their seats for comfort in the discussion with the author. He confirmed that their physical and emotional states were suitable for an interview since an interview was conducted during the office hours. Furthermore, in order to encourage participants to keep talking on the topics, to confirm that what the author had understood was exactly what they wanted to convey as well as to obtain data via a non-leading manner, in conducting the interviews, the author (as a talk facilitator) adopted Carspecken's (1996) suggestions: bland encouragement (e.g., nodding his head to show his attention, interest and acceptance) and low-inference paraphrasing (e.g., rephrasing information without adding additional content). Such measures aimed to make his research activities become psychologically comfortable to participants and thus pave the way for obtaining their genuine views.

To sum up, being a multi-method qualitative study, this study collects data from different data sources by means of different data collection methods. This way could help to unearth meaningful phenomena that a single data source may not reveal, thus collecting more inclusive data. These three data collection methods are

arranged according to Carspecken's (1996) multi-stage data collection design, which starts with collecting monological data and goes into collecting dialogical data (e.g., see Hardcastle, Usher and Holmes 2006 for an empirical application of the multi-stage data collection design). In order to be familiar with what participants are doing, in the first stage, this study focuses mainly on collecting documentary secondary data and gathering primary data by means of participant observations. The data collected in this stage is mainly monological. In the next stage, this study focuses on conducting interviews to collect further data. The data collected in this stage is dialogical. Table III (Appendix X) indicates the characteristics of the participants and the activities in which they participated. Having discussed this study's data collection methods, the next section discusses its data analysis.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

This section addresses two questions: 'How does this study make sense of the data gathered' and 'How does this study make quality interpretations on that data?' Section 3.5.1 (the template analysis) addresses the first question. In this section, this study argues that the template analysis, which makes use of both deductive coding and inductive coding to analyse data, suits this study. Section 3.5.2 (validation of interpretations) addresses the other question. In this section, this study argues that, in order to make quality interpretations on data, it is necessary to identify the grammatical aspect, the psychological aspect and the social-historical aspect of the practitioners' views and experiences as well as the settings in which their views and experiences are embedded. It is also necessary to utilise the

pre-understanding of the author of this dissertation so as to avoid misinterpretation of the data. This section starts with a discussion of its template analysis.

### *3.5.1 The template analysis*

This section addresses the question: how does this study make sense of the data gathered? It discusses this study's data analysis process, explaining how the preliminary frameworks are formulated and translated into the conclusive frameworks. Drawing upon King's (2004b) template analysis, this study argues that the template analysis, which makes use of both deductive coding and inductive coding to analyse data, suits this study. This section begins with a discussion of the deductive and the inductive approaches to data analysis.

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that analytical categories could be produced deductively or inductively. Researchers need to consider the time available and how much is already known about the empirical phenomena so as to determine whether a more/less structured qualitative data analysis approach is desirable. In their view, a less structured approach may lead to an indiscriminate data analysis due to information overload. A more structured approach may lead to the misinterpretation of the data due to making interpretations by using existing notions. They suggest that if a researcher investigates exotic phenomena and has sufficient time, a less structured, inductively-based approach may be applicable. If a researcher investigates the phenomena within a familiar setting and well-delineated notions are available, a more structured, deductively-based approach may be

applicable. In this regard, a qualitative study can seek to test and elaborate existing notions. They prefer a more structured, deductively-based approach to a less structured, inductively-based approach since the former could provide researchers with a focus to structure their data analysis, producing a conceptual strength that could avoid an indiscriminate data analysis.

King (2004b) proposes the template analysis. He suggests that in comparison with Strauss and Corbin's (1998) grounded theory, an advantage of the template analysis is that it is an analytical technique with fewer specified procedures that could be flexibly tailed to meet the need of a researcher's research project. In his view, Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory is too prescriptive. This is a reason he proposes the use of the template analysis. In a template analysis, researchers establish an initial template and then revise it to produce a final template. These are now discussed in sequence.

As for establishing an initial template, King suggests that it could be produced by utilising academic literatures, the researchers' own experiences, anecdotal evidence, etc. In the initial template, codes are hierarchically grouped, containing higher-order codes and lower-order codes. While establishing an initial template, researchers need to determine how specific and how tight the preliminary codes in an initial template should be, determining how many levels of lower-order codes are desirable and whether a more structured initial template is desirable. Specifically, researchers need to consider the need to significantly explain the empirical phenomenon and the need to make fine distinctions so as to determine how many levels of lower-order codes are desirable. Researchers also need to consider the

need to be responsive to the empirical data (see also Bryman 2001) and the need to establish an orderly data analysis process so as to determine whether a more structured initial template is desirable. In Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2007) view, the use of the preliminary codes leads to the deductive coding.

With regard to revising an initial template to produce a final template, King suggests that an initial template can be revised to produce a final template via insertion, deletion, changing scope and changing higher-order classification. If data is not covered by a preliminary code, insertion, which adds a new code to cover this data, is utilised. By insertion, researchers explore the issue that is relevant to the research question but is not addressed by any preliminary code. In the example he presents (the 'managing mental health' study), a new code is inductively produced, utilising the inductive coding. If a preliminary code does not cover any data or a preliminary code can be explained by other codes, deletion, which deletes a useless/redundant code, is utilised. If a preliminary code is too narrowly/broadly defined, changing scope, which re-defines a preliminary code and places it at a higher-level/lower-level order, is utilised. If a preliminary code is inappropriately placed within a higher-order code (as a sub-category of this higher-order code), changing higher-order classification, which makes this preliminary code become a sub-category of a different higher-order code that suits it, is utilised.

This study employs King's (2004b) template analysis, performing a thematic analysis (see Kent 2000 for an empirical study utilising the template analysis). The preliminary frameworks indicated in Chapter 2 represent the initial templates. Specifically, this study's data analysis consists of these phases: establishing the initial

templates and revising the initial templates to produce the final templates. The following parts discuss them in sequence.

As far as establishing the initial templates is concerned, this study adopts a more structured, deductively-based approach to data analysis. This study investigates the phenomena within a familiar setting (i.e., the Old-Five-Old Foundation in Taiwan). Besides, there is a wealth of available theoretical notions in the fields of Organisational Behaviour, Management, Social Work, Sociology and Psychology. In light of Miles and Huberman's (1994) discussion of researchers investigating the phenomena within a familiar setting and well-delineated notions being available, this study argues that a more structured, deductively-based approach to data analysis is applicable to this study. Specifically, the author of this dissertation could make use of his pre-understanding of this familiar research site and theoretical notions to define the initial templates (see Figure 3.1 for performing a fusion of academic views with views and experiences of the author to produce the preliminary frameworks). These enable this study to produce more structured initial templates with many levels of lower-order codes (i.e., the various categories shown in this study's preliminary frameworks). These initial templates provide this study with a theoretical focus to structure its data analysis, not being overwhelmed by and lost in the rich data gathered and thus avoiding an indiscriminate data analysis. By establishing the initial templates, this study communicates with various theoretical notions, seeking to test and elaborate their explanatory power. To sum up, in King's terms, these more structured initial templates with many levels of lower-order codes enable this study to establish an orderly data analysis process, to significantly explain the empirical phenomenon and to make fine distinctions. As such, in this study, the

role of the theoretical notions not only enables the formulation of its research question (i.e., identifying the knowledge gap in the existing literatures) but also enables the establishment of the preliminary frameworks that try to offer a tentative answer to the research question (cf. Yin 2003 for the role of theory in the design work of a case study). Having discussed establishing the initial templates, this study proceeds to discuss revising the initial templates to produce the final templates.

Though this study adopts a more structured, deductively-based approach to data analysis, it is not constrained by the initial templates. As suggested by King, in light of the empirical data gathered, the initial templates could be revised, fulfilling the need to be responsive to the empirical data. In this study, it is through the coding process that the initial templates are revised to produce the final templates. Specifically, the author of this dissertation read through the data. The units of data relevant to theoretical concerns were manually highlighted using coloured highlighters. According to the meaning that a unit of data denoted, that unit of data was deductively assigned to the preliminary code that suited it, relating the data to a theme. The unit of data relevant to a theoretical concern but not covered by a preliminary code was not neglected; it was also marked, being labelled by a new code. In King's terms, this study performed insertion to add a new code to cover this data. This was done by conceptualising this data inductively. In addition to insertion, while a preliminary code did not cover any data, this study utilised deletion to delete this useless code. To sum up, by insertion and deletion, the initial templates are revised to produce the final templates (i.e., this study's conclusive frameworks). The following sections discuss which codes were added/removed and the reasons they were added/removed.



As for insertion, in the preliminary framework for the examination of practitioners' cognitive competence (Figure 2.9), initially, drawing upon Bruner's (1957) coding system, Collins and Loftus' (1975) semantic network and Tulving's (2002) episodic memory and semantic memory, this study argues that the cognitive competence to link one concept to other concepts and the cognitive competence to link experiences to concepts constitute the targets for evaluation in relation to cognitive structure. However, some data cannot be explained by these two preliminary codes. This study conceptualised these data inductively, adding two new codes to explain these data. It additionally argues that the cognitive competence to recognise rationales behind concrete tasks and the cognitive competence to recognise purposes of specific actions also constitute the targets for evaluation in relation to cognitive structure (see Section 6.2.1 for the examination of practitioners' cognitive structure). This means that it is not sufficient for practitioners to merely see appearances (e.g., concrete tasks and specific actions); they need to recognise rationales and purposes that are behind those appearances.

With regard to deletion, in the preliminary framework for the process of puzzle solving (Figure 2.13), initially, drawing upon Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's (2000, 2011) discussion of constructing opportunities, exploring data and framing problems, this study argues that puzzle identification consists of constructing opportunities, exploring data and framing problems. However, the empirical data shows that practitioners' tasks are framed and defined by their organisation, and these tasks are definite. Puzzle identification could be done by identifying their definite task assignment. Therefore, this study does not utilise the codes for constructing opportunities, exploring data and framing problems to analyse data. It replaces

them with the code for identifying the definite task assignment (see Section 7.2.1 for puzzle identification). Deleting these three codes means that they are not suitable for analysing the data collected by this study, but this does not imply that these three deleted codes will also be useless in analysing puzzle identification in other social work settings (e.g., engaging in the academic research practice to define a research question).

To sum up, drawing upon King's (2004b) template analysis, this study argues that the template analysis, which makes use of both deductive coding and inductive coding to analyse data, suits this study. This study performs a thematic analysis. Its data analysis process consists of establishing the initial templates and revising the initial templates to produce the final templates. In establishing the initial templates, this study adopts a more structured, deductively-based approach to data analysis, producing more structured initial templates with many levels of lower-order codes. Then, it performs insertion to add new codes to the initial templates and utilises deletion to delete useless preliminary codes, revising the initial templates to produce the final templates. This data analysis process considers the need to significantly explain the empirical phenomenon, the need to make fine distinctions, the need to be responsive to the empirical data and the need to establish an orderly data analysis process. However, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), such a more structured approach may lead to misinterpretation of the data due to using existing notions to make interpretations. The next section discusses the measures taken by this study to validate its interpretations, avoiding misinterpretation of the data.

### *3.5.2 Validation of interpretations*

This section addresses the question: how does this study make robust interpretations on data? It discusses how ethnographic data is appropriately deciphered. The way this study validates its interpretations of the data is via the hermeneutic approach (see Webb and Pollard 2006). Drawing upon Schleiermacher's (1998) discussion of the grammatical aspect of a text and the psychological aspect of a writer, this study argues that it is necessary to notify the grammatical aspect and the psychological aspect of the practitioners' views and experiences. Drawing upon Dilthey's (1976) discussion of interpreters' empathy with a writer's life experiences, this study argues that it is necessary to notify the social-historical aspect of the practitioners' views and experiences. Drawing upon Ricoeur's (1972, 1981) discussion of hermeneutic holism, this study argues that it is necessary to identify the settings in which the practitioners' views and experiences are embedded. Furthermore, drawing upon Gadamer's (2006) discussion of pre-understanding, this study argues that it is necessary to utilise the pre-understanding of the author of this dissertation so as to avoid misinterpretation of the data.

As for validation of interpretations, Schleiermacher (1998) puts emphasis on the grammatical aspect of a text and the psychological aspect of a writer. Dilthey (1976) notices that a writer is a social-historical being, which constitutes a social-historical context for his/her expressions. Dilthey puts emphasis on interpreters' empathy with a writer's life experiences, which implies that interpreters seek to think as if they were situated in the same social-historical conditions as the writer. Interpreters

seek to re-enact the writer's life experiences and understand the writer's expressions by locating these expressions in their social-historical contexts (see also Kepnes 1988). In addition to Schleiermacher and Dilthey, Ricoeur (1972, 1981) stresses hermeneutic holism, which suggests that a text or a person's action is a whole, constituting a totality. In his stance, understanding the totality involves understanding the parts through understanding the whole, whereas understanding the whole also builds upon understanding the parts, forming a circular process of hermeneutic construction of meanings. In its validation of interpretations, this study applies perspectives proposed by Schleiermacher, Dilthey and Ricoeur; it suggests that each perspective alone is inadequate, but that they could complement one another's inadequacy. The following parts discuss them in sequence.

Drawing upon Schleiermacher's discussion of the grammatical aspect of a text, this study argues that it is necessary to identify the grammatical aspect of the practitioners' views and experiences. It recognises two aspects. One is about different meanings attached to the same term. It is possible that personal interpretations, professional interpretations and other interpretations of the same term may produce different meanings. For example, Arnold (1998) and Mooney (1987) suggest that impairment, disability and handicap have different meanings in the medical setting, and that there are different definitions for each term. This study suggests that a person may give the term a meaning that is different from that given by medical professionals. At the grammatical level, this study notes the practitioners' usage of a term to avoid misinterpretations. Furthermore, the other is about the arrangement and sequences of an expression. This study notes the structures and formats of a text (e.g., the structure of a service programme proposal).

It also notes whether a text has conveyed completely what a practitioner wanted to convey, or whether they are simply unfinished expressions. As such, at the grammatical level, by noticing the arrangement and sequences of an expression, misinterpretations of their expressions and actions could be avoided. Having discussed the grammatical aspect of a text, this section proceeds to discuss the psychological aspect of a writer, the interpreters' empathy with a writer's life experiences and hermeneutic holism.

Drawing upon Schleiermacher's discussion of the psychological aspect of a writer, this study argues that it is necessary to take account of the psychological aspect of the practitioners' views and experiences. It notes the practitioners' reasoning processes through which the texts were produced, and it also takes note of the initial purpose a text was made for (see Phillips and Brown 1993 for an empirical study that notices the psychological aspect of a writer in terms of making sense of a text by paying attention to the intent of the producer of a text and its intended recipient). Furthermore, drawing upon Dilthey's discussion of interpreters' empathy with a writer's life experiences, this study argues that it is necessary to note the social-historical aspect of the practitioners' views and experiences. It takes into account the practitioners' socio-economic positions, their roles and their past educational and work experiences (see Kets De Vries and Miller 1987). What is more, drawing upon Ricoeur's discussion of hermeneutic holism, this study argues that it is necessary to take account of the settings in which the practitioners' views and experiences are embedded. It takes note of the places, the timing, the occasions, the social/cultural/political/financial conditions and the era in which the practitioners' expressions occurred (see Thompson 1997). Thus, by noting the psychological and

the social-historical aspects of the practitioners' views and experiences as well as the settings in which the practitioners' views and experiences are embedded, misinterpretations of their expressions could be avoided.

Though this study takes into account all the above aspects, it is possible that practitioners' expressions appear to be vague, contradictory, inauthentic or incorrect. This study suggests that contradictions may exist in what they say or between what they do and what they say. In those situations, the author of this dissertation may not be quite sure about what practitioners' expressions mean. The same might apply to vague expressions. As far as these contradictory and vague expressions are concerned, the author found that in situations where he could make contact with practitioners, he could seek clarifications from them directly. In situations where he did not make contact with practitioners (e.g., making interpretations on the documents with unknown makers), he could refer to others' interpretations (e.g., the participants who interpreted these documents with unknown makers) to identify probable interpretations. In addition to vague and contradictory expressions, this study is aware that practitioners may hide their true views, producing inauthentic expressions. In this situation, the author utilises confrontation (Kadushin and Kadushin 1997) to elicit their true views. Lastly, the content of their expressions may be incorrect, being inconsistent with objective facts (e.g., indicating a wrong date of an event). In this situation, the author examined these incorrect statements by making reference to relevant facts so as to check accuracy of their expressions.

Having discussed clarifying practitioners' vague, contradictory, inauthentic or incorrect expressions, the following parts proceed to discuss the role of the

pre-understanding of the author of this dissertation in making robust interpretations. Gadamer (2006) suggests that pre-understanding is a necessary condition for performing interpretations, and that it is not inherently a negative term (see also Kögler 1999). This study applies his view. Drawing upon Gadamer's discussion of pre-understanding, this study argues that it is necessary to utilise the pre-understanding of the author of this dissertation so as to avoid misinterpretation of the data (see Koch 1996 for an empirical study utilising pre-understanding). In this study, the beneficial aspect of pre-understanding is revealed by the fact that the participants and the author share similar characteristics, which could help this study to avoid misinterpretation. These characteristics include a shared professional language, similar work and organisational experiences and the same era. As for a shared professional language, practitioners use professional terms to make expressions and communication. The author used to be a social worker, and this helps this study to understand the academic context of their practice and to note the professional symbols they utilise. As such, he understands what the participants mean regarding professional terms, which may not be understandable to those researchers, who are not familiar with social work jargon. With regard to similar work and organisational experiences, the author had been working for the Old-Five-Old Foundation, and this helps this study to understand the participants' tasks and the organisational context of their practice. As such, he understands what the participants mean regarding their work and organisational experiences, which may not be easily understandable to those researchers, who are complete outsiders. As for the same era, the participants and the author live in the same historical, cultural, social, political and economic conditions, and this helps this study to understand the broader contexts of their practice and activities, which may not be

easily understandable to those researchers, who come from other cultural groups and nations. In summary, in this study, the author's pre-understanding is regarded as being beneficial, as it could help this study to avoid misinterpretation of the data.

To sum up, as part of the validation of its interpretations, this study takes account of the grammatical aspect, the psychological aspect and the social-historical aspect of the practitioners' views and experiences as well as the settings in which their views and experiences are embedded. It also clarifies the practitioners' vague, contradictory, inauthentic or incorrect expressions. Furthermore, it utilises the author's pre-understanding to assist in making appropriate interpretations. In an ethnographic term, the purpose of these measures is to obtain an emic understanding (Fetterman 2010) of the practitioners' views and experiences. Having discussed this study's data analysis, the next section discusses the presentation of its analyses.

### **3.6 The presentation of analyses**

This section addresses the question of how this study presents its analyses. Making reference to King's (2004b) discussion of the presentation of the template analysis, this study argues that to structure the analyses around the themes and to present illustrative data for the themes suit this study.

King (2004b) proposes that a researcher could structure the analysis around the themes and use various or a small number of participants/cases to illustrate them. As discussed in Section 3.5.1, this study employs King's template analysis to analyse



data. Therefore, while presenting its data analyses, this study also employs King's suggestion, structuring its analyses around the themes and presenting illustrative data for the themes. Furthermore, Bryman and Bell (2007) suggest that researchers could use the research questions to structure the presentation of the findings. In this study, Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 thematically present its data analyses, constituting the Discussion chapters (Bryman and Bell 2007) offering theoretical judgments on the data. Since each Discussion chapter answers a specific question, the presentation of this study's template analysis also follows the research questions to structure the presentation of the findings. Specifically, these three chapters answer the following questions respectively: within the context of social work practice in the third sector, how is practitioners' direction of learning organised, how is the evaluation of practitioners' learning organised, and how are practitioners' methods of learning organised?

The reasons the illustrative data are selected from the data set are as follows. Firstly, data presented must be typical in terms of illustrating this study's codes. In particular, the evidence that is relevant to many themes is selected as a priority and is placed in the section where it appears for the first time. The next consideration is that different empirical evidence, as a whole, must illustrate the diversity of the participants' views and experiences. They must show data from different participants, different service branches, different service programmes and different stages of their activities. Lastly, the amount of data presented must offer sufficient information to understand the meanings conveyed by participants and documents. In the Discussion chapters, the illustrative data is presented in English (see Appendix XI for data translation), and the original Chinese texts of the data are placed in the

appendices. Various data presented includes governmental regulations, organisational regulations and views and experiences from participants.

As for governmental regulations, since the home care service was the Old-Five-Old Foundation's primary service (see Section 4.2.1), this study utilises public home care service programmes as the main examples and presents data regarding governmental programme evaluation regulations and job content mentioned in the governmental contract. With regard to organisational regulations, at the programme level, and for the same reason, it also utilises public home care service programmes as the main examples and presents the Old-Five-Old Foundation's job specifications. At the individual level, it presents the Old-Five-Old Foundation's regulations regarding annual performance appraisal. As far as views and experiences from participants are concerned, participants who are in front-line practitioner positions include practitioners who operate public home care service programmes, the public home delivered meals service programme, festival celebration activities, health promotion station programmes, the community work project regarding building a safe and healthy community, volunteer services and training courses for home care services. Participants who are in social work supervisor positions include Shu-Fen Wang and Su-Lan Lin. Participants who are in executive positions are Li Li You (the chief executive officer) and Mei-Shu Zhang (the director). In the Discussion chapters, this study presents the participants' opinions about governments, the Old-Five-Old Foundation, their branches, their tasks, their co-workers, their service users and their past experiences of being a social worker, illustrating the diversity of their views and experiences.

It must be noted that, as for the presentation of the documentary secondary data, in the Discussion chapters, in some cases, in order to show their meanings in a clearer and more systematic way, this study summarises the content of the original data and presents them in tables. With regard to the presentation of the primary data, the flow of participants' thoughts and actions cannot be seen as systematic as a written form of data. In this situation, in order to convey their meanings adequately, in the Discussion chapters, this study puts relevant data together to form a quotation unit. In a quotation unit, relevant data are separated by double quotation marks.

To sum up, making reference to King's (2004b) discussion of the presentation of the template analysis, this study argues that to structure the analyses around the themes and to present illustrative data for the themes suit this study. The illustrative data presented in the Discussion chapters includes various data that are collected from documents, participant observations and interviews (cf. Nidumolu, Subramani and Aldrich 2001 for an example of the empirical studies that build their analysis on these three types of data). Having discussed the presentation of this study's analyses, the next section discusses the way this study fulfils ethical requirements.

### **3.7 Ethics**

This section addresses the question: what ethical requirements had been fulfilled by this study? Bryman and Bell (2007) and Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) suggest that the principal ethical issues include the participants' voluntary participation, risks to the participants and the prevention of risks, the participants'

rights, use of data, data protection in terms of confidentiality and anonymity, reciprocity, any conflicts of interests and the participants' informed consent. This study addresses these principal ethical issues in this section.

The way this study fulfils these principal ethical requirements is through the process of establishing the participants' informed consent. This process can be divided into two stages that are complementary to one another. Firstly, an electronic research invitation letter and its appendix were sent to the Old-Five-Old Foundation, which distributed them to potential participants via their organisational e-mail system. Secondly, a presentation was made to potential participants. The following parts discuss them in sequence.

In the electronic research invitation letter (Appendix XII), this study mentions the name of the author of this dissertation, the name of his supervisor, the research topic of this study, his academic research project as a self-funded project and the outcome his research project aims to produce. It also mentions its data collection methods, the need for their participation in this study, an invitation to their participation in this study, appreciation of their participation, welcoming their questions and suggestions and contact details of the author. In the appendix of the electronic research invitation letter (Appendix XII), this study further addresses four issues: data collection methods, data processing and storage, data reporting and potential risks.

As for data collection methods, this study offers a brief explanation of its data collection methods. It explains its purposes, the intended participants, duration and the content of each data collection method. It indicates what data might be

collected from them, possible personal information that may be gathered and their permission to gather them. It shows no conflict of interests by clarifying the academic role of the author as a full-time PhD student, who is not a consultant for their practice. It also clarifies that the role of the author is not an inspector regarding their performance; this aims to make his research activities psychologically comfortable for the participants and thus to pave the way for obtaining their genuine views and actions. It points out that data is to be used for academic purposes and for giving general recommendations to their organisation in reciprocity for its support. It highlights the practitioners' voluntary participation, their right to withdraw and their right to refuse to share experiences and views in relation to a particular topic. It proposes data recording techniques and emphasises their permission to record data. It ensures confidentiality in relation to data collection and encourages them to feel free to share views and experiences with the author.

With regard to data processing and storage, it indicates the author as the only person who holds and processes data. It ensures confidentiality in relation to data storage (e.g., storing data in locked drawers and the author's laptop, which requires a password to access it). It highlights the participants' right to get access to their own data, and proposes his supervisors and examiners as the entitled persons, who can have access to data. As far as data reporting is concerned, it ensures anonymity by using aliases to present their data and highlights their right to refuse a direct quotation.

Lastly, as for potential risks, it points out that participants may recall unsuccessful/bad experiences, and indicates the situations in which these unsuccessful/bad

experiences might happen. It must be noted that although participants may recall unsuccessful/bad experiences, this does not mean that their recall of unsuccessful/bad experiences is inevitably harmful and dysfunctional. This could mean that they may initiate a process of positive reflection on their unsuccessful and bad experiences. However, in order to prevent psychological discomfort, the right to withdraw and the right to refuse to share experiences and views in relation to a particular topic were made known to the participants as protective measures.

Then, a presentation was made to potential participants (Appendix XIII). In the presentation, this study introduced the author's educational and work backgrounds so as to establish initial research relationships through this face-to-face contact. It further explained his research project by discussing an empirical example that illustrated the cognitive dimension, the emotional dimension and the social-societal dimension of learning (see Illeris 2003 for a discussion of three dimensions of learning). As for an explanation of his research project, as suggested by Jorgensen (1989), this study adopted the approach that presented an overview of this study (e.g., exploring the cognitive dimension and the social-societal dimension of learning) and offered opportunities for participants to raise their questions about his research project, rather than giving a detailed description of this study; this aimed to offer sufficient information for the participants to give informed consent but avoided disclosing too much information, which may influence the participants' thoughts and actions or lead the participants to act in a particular way.

In the presentation, the Old-five-Old Foundation also pointed out its stance that the participants' participation in this study should be voluntary, and that there would be

no specific consequence following a decision of non-participation/participation. Before data collection commenced, participants who agreed to participate in this study signed an informed consent form (Appendix XIV) without requesting financial or other benefits.

To sum up, Gummesson (2000) suggests that researchers need to get physical access to data sources as well as establish mental access so that informants are willing to express their views and experiences. This process of establishing participants' informed consent represents the way this study fulfils principal ethical requirements, obtaining physical access and establishing mental access in an ethical manner. Having discussed fulfilling the ethical requirements, the next section proceeds to discuss this study's limitations in terms of generalisation.

### **3.8 Limitations on generalisation**

This section addresses the question: what are the limitations on generalisation of this study's conclusive frameworks? Drawing upon Merriam's (1988) discussion of grand theory, middle-range theory and substantive theory, this study suggests that, in nature, this study's conclusive frameworks represent substantive frameworks, not grand/middle-range theories. As such, its conclusive frameworks may not be possible to explain the empirical phenomena, which happen in other inter-organisational and organisational contexts. This section starts with a discussion of Llewelyn's (2003) typology of theorising.

Llewelyn (2003) proposes five different ways of theorising: metaphor theorising, differentiation theorising, concept theorising, theorising settings and theorising structures. Metaphor theorising utilises metaphors with which people are familiar to theorise phenomena (e.g., the use of the organism metaphor). Differentiation theorising theorises phenomena by utilising categories that illustrate pairings, contrasts, dualities and dualism (e.g., the use of mind-body, public-private and objective-subjective). Concept theorising theorises phenomena by utilising a set of categories to explain people's actions and intentions for their actions. Theorising settings theorises local settings in which people's actions are embedded (e.g., the organisational setting in which human actions take place) by looking at the linkage and interaction between local settings and human actions. Theorising structures theorises the grand structural contexts in which people's actions are embedded (e.g., class).

Although this study utilises metaphors, such as the organism metaphor (see Bredo 1994 for the organism metaphor and cognition as situated), and makes use of the categories that illustrate pairings and contrasts (e.g., cognitive-affective), the aim of this study is not to engage in metaphor theorising and differentiation theorising. Rather, it engages in concept theorising and theorising settings.

In this study, the micro analysis refers to an analysis of social actors' subjective mental states and objective activities, their relationships to and their interaction with other social actors and their contacts with artefacts. The macro analysis refers to an analysis of social structures; yet, as for the scope of this study, it looks at the units concerning organisations, groups and institutions; it does not include an analysis of



world-systems and societies (see Section 2.1.1 for this study's cross-level analysis). As such, its conclusive frameworks engage in concept theorising (e.g., its micro analysis) and theorising settings (e.g., its macro analysis). However, the scope of this study does not engage in theorising structures (e.g., to analyse world-systems and societies).

As an exploratory study that seeks to theorise the organising of learning within the context of social work practice in the third sector, this study engages in concept theorising and theorising settings. It theorises the organising of learning by collecting data from a single case via purposeful sampling. Then, it produces substantive frameworks that offer context-specific explanations, rather than building a grand theory or a middle-range theory (Merriam 1988). As a consequence, in terms of the limitations on generalisation, it may not be possible to explain the empirical phenomena that happen in other inter-organisational and organisational contexts. Some factors that influence learning may exist in this study's research context (the Old-Five-Old Foundation) but may not exist in other inter-organisational and organisational contexts. On the contrary, some factors may exist in other inter-organisational and organisational contexts but may not exist in this study's research context. For instance, in terms of different inter-organisational contexts, while an organisation does not undertake public welfare service provision, there will be no ecological transaction (Gitterman and Germain 2008) between that organisation and local governments. Thus, local governments will not constitute a factor that could shape practitioners' direction of learning. Having discussed limitations on generalisation, the next section summarises this chapter.

### 3.9 Chapter summary

This study's research question is 'How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?' At the epistemological level, in order to produce an answer to this research question, it engages in a fusion of horizons (Gadamer 2006). In a fusion of horizons, it utilises views and experiences of the author of this dissertation to integrate academic views (theoretical basis) with practitioners' views and experiences (empirical basis). By this fusion of horizons, it formulates the conclusive frameworks that offer an answer to its research question.

In order to obtain academic views, this study conducts a literature review, while it adopts an ethnographic research design (Fetterman 2010; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995) to collect practitioners' views and experiences. In view of the research question this study seeks to answer, which involves a cross-level analysis and a process analysis (Heath and Sitkin 2001), it needs to collect practitioners' views and experiences in relation to micro and macro phenomena and phenomena regarding direction, methods and evaluation of learning. This involves collecting a diverse range of data, and an ethnographic research design could help this study to achieve this aim. Essentially, this ethnographic research design is a longitudinal design (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). In this ethnographic research design and by purposeful sampling (Patton 2002), this study selects the Old-Five-Old Foundation as the research site in order to maximise its gaining insights into the organising of learning. In order to collect a diverse range of data, it adopts a multi-method qualitative study (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003). It collects documents as

secondary data (Prior 2003a) and gathers primary data through participant observations (Gold 1958; Jorgensen 1989) and interviews (Carspecken 1996; DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006; Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005; King 2004a; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007).

Data gathered is analysed via the use of the template analysis (King 2004b), which utilises both deductive coding and inductive coding to analyse data. A fusion of academic views with views and experiences of the author of this dissertation produces the preliminary frameworks, which function as initial templates. By a further fusion of horizons, which utilises views and experiences of the author to integrate academic views (theoretical basis) with practitioners' views and experiences (empirical basis), the preliminary frameworks are revised to produce conclusive frameworks. The conclusive frameworks represent final templates that offer an answer to the research question. Having discussed the methodology through which its conclusive frameworks are produced, the next chapter indicates the contextual background of practitioners' social work practice.

## **CHAPTER FOUR SOCIAL POLICY AND ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXTS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

The Old-Five-Old Foundation is a social welfare foundation commissioned by local governments to operate various public welfare services, mainly elderly welfare services. This chapter is a context chapter, offering information about the social policy and organisational contexts for practitioners' social work practice (cf. Stake 1995 for describing the case and its settings). Section 4.1 and Section 4.2 indicate the social policy context and the organisational context for practitioners' practice respectively. It proposes that practitioners' social work practice in relation to public welfare provision was governed by 'The Social Welfare Policy Guideline', constituting the social policy context for their practice. The structure of its human resources and the structure of its professional service provision represent the human resources environment and the professional service system in which practitioners carried out their tasks, constituting the organisational context for their practice.

### **4.1 The social policy context for practitioners' social work practice**

This section discusses the social policy context for social work practice in Taiwan, indicating how social work practice in relation to public welfare provision was structured. At the time the ethnographic data was collected, the policy document that stipulated the basic national policy framework for public welfare provision was 'The Social Welfare Policy Guideline' (Appendix XV). This guideline dealt with two main issues: the functions of the national welfare provision and the principles for

designing national social policies (cf. Chou, Haj-Yahia, Wang and Fu 2006 for the influences of the development of social policies on the development of social work in Taiwan; Huang and Ku 2011 for the development of the social welfare system in Taiwan). This section proposes that practitioners' social work practice in relation to public welfare provision was governed by this guideline, constituting the social policy context for their practice.

As for the functions of the national welfare provision, this guideline indicated the following functions: to secure citizens' basic living conditions, to promote family harmony and stability, to promote mutual help and solidarity in society, to enhance the quality of human resources, to accumulate economic capital and to stabilise the democratic polity. The public welfare provision intended to make citizens lead a stable and healthy life with dignity (cf. Esping-Andersen 1990 for liberal, conservative-corporatist and social democratic regime-types; Holliday 2000 for the productivist welfare capitalism in East Asia). In particular, it indicated that in the face of the challenges derived from low economic growth and governmental financial difficulties, to retrench public welfare supplies is not the only option; alternative solutions include enhancing the efficiency of the welfare provision, resources integration, etc.

With regard to the principles for designing national social policies, the guideline indicated nine principles. It is observable that the principles of people's wellbeing as a priority, the inclusion of disadvantaged citizens and supporting different types of families discussed the beneficiaries of the national welfare provision such as disadvantaged citizens and families. The principles of establishing a sound social

welfare system and investments in positive welfare indicated the welfare measures taken by national social policies. The principles of specifying the division of labour between central and local governments, the partnerships between government and non-government sectors and the integration of resources specified the relationships between the suppliers of the welfare provision. Lastly, the principle of needs satisfied by local provision indicated the manner for offering welfare provision. The following parts discuss them in sequence.

The principle of people's wellbeing as a priority declared that the state shall actively make plans to cope with people's needs derived from political, economic and social changes. The first priority is to secure the disadvantaged citizens' right to survival (see Cox 1998 for the conceptualisation of social rights). For instance, in social assistance, the government shall regularly review the eligibility criteria and the amount of the benefits, ensuring those in need receive adequate assistance. The principle of the inclusion of disadvantaged citizens declared that in order to establish a friendly and inclusive society, the state shall actively prevent and put a stop to discrimination and exploitation that are derived from differences in people's age, gender, races, physical and psychological conditions and so on (see Ferrera, Matsaganis and Sacchi 2002 for social exclusion). For instance, the government shall establish friendly living environments for senior citizens, actively protecting their dignity and autonomy. The principle of supporting different types of families declared that regardless of their differences in sexual orientations, family structures, etc., public policies made shall respect different types of families. The state shall support families to fulfil their functions in relation to procreation, education, nurture and protection, actively offering assistance to the disadvantaged families so as to

secure their family quality of life (see Holliday 2000 for the state-market-family relationships in East Asia). For example, the state shall offer assistance to children's carers who need economic support.

The principle of establishing a sound social welfare system declared that the state shall secure people's basic economic security by social insurance, sustain citizens' life dignity by social assistance, enhance their family quality of life by welfare services, eliminate the distress of the homeless through social housing, secure citizens' income security and social participation by employment measures, sustain citizens' health and the quality of human resources by health care, and establish fine living environments by community empowerment (cf. Merriam 1962 for social insurance, allowances, public assistance and social services). For example, the state shall clearly specify the functional differences between social insurance and social assistance so as to avoid overlapping or fragmented welfare provision. The principle of investments in positive welfare declared that in addition to passive relief, the state shall offer positive welfare: making social investments to accumulate human capital and promoting steady economic growth on the basis of social justice and solidarity so as to widely enhance people's quality of life (see Giddens 2000 for the social investment state). For instance, the state shall actively assist low-income households in accumulating human capital so as to help them to escape from poverty.

The principle of specifying the division of labour between central and local governments declared that central and local governments shall promote welfare provision on the basis of their collaborative relationships. The central government is responsible for planning the programmes that fit in with nationwide situations and

shall actively step in minimising the injustice resulted from the development gaps between urban and rural areas. The local governments are responsible for planning and implementing the programmes that suit local circumstances (cf. Yilmaz, Beris and Serrano-Berthet 2010 for decentralisation and local governance). For example, in response to social changes and government re-engineering, the state shall modulate the central and local governments' roles in welfare administration and adjust the deployment of the welfare workforce. The principle of the partnerships between government and non-government sectors declared that the government sector shall encourage the non-government sector to collaborate with it, offering sound welfare provision through their partnerships (cf. Pestoff, Osborne and Brandsen 2006 for co-governance and co-management; Pinker 1992 and Evers 1995 for welfare pluralism). For example, the government and the society shall collaborate with each other to establish communal environments that facilitate children's physical and psychological development. The principle of the integration of resources declared that in order to facilitate comprehensive welfare provision and enhance the efficiency of the utilisation of resources, the state shall promote performance management, merge the competent authority in charge of health with that in charge of social welfare and strengthen the coordination and corporation between different ministries and councils (cf. Fisher and Elnitsky 2012 for services integration). For example, the government shall integrate social welfare, health and education departments to offer the early intervention services to children with the developmental delays.

Lastly, the principle of needs satisfied by local provision declared that welfare provision shall be human-friendly and be offered locally, appropriately meeting



specific needs of those who are served (cf. Bookman 2008 for independent/assisted living and aging in place). For example, the main measures to take care of the elderly shall be home-based or community-based services, supplemented by institution-based services.

To sum up, this section proposes that ‘The Social Welfare Policy Guideline’ constitutes the social policy context for practitioners’ social work practice. Take the public home care service for the elderly for example, practitioners operated this service. The major document regulating this service was ‘The Executive Plan for Strengthening the Promotion of the Home Care Service and the Content of Education and Training Courses for the Home Care Service’ (Appendix XVI). This document explicitly stated that it is written in accordance with ‘The Social Welfare Policy Guideline’. For instance, it could be observed from this document that the public home care service echoes the function of the national welfare provision to secure citizens’ basic living conditions since it is a care service. This service also responds to the principle of needs satisfied by local provision since it is a home-based service. As such, practitioners’ practice in relation to the public home care service for the elderly was governed by this guideline. Thus, the guideline constitutes the social policy context for this practice (see Lin 2010 for social policies in Taiwan in response to the coming of an aged society). Having discussed the social policy context for practitioners’ social work practice, the next section discusses the organisational context for their practice.

#### **4.2 The organisational context for practitioners’ social work practice**

This section discusses the organisational context for practitioners' social work practice, indicating the nature of the Old-Five-Old Foundation and how it worked by discussing the structure of its human resources (Section 4.2.1) and the structure of its professional service provision (Section 4.2.2). It proposes that the structure of its human resources and the structure of its professional service provision represent the human resources environment and the professional service system in which practitioners carried out their tasks, constituting the organisational context for their practice.

#### *4.2.1 The structure of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's human resources*

This section discusses the structure of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's human resources by looking at its departmentalisation and its social service workforce. The Old-Five-Old Foundation adopted both departmentalisation by geographic area and departmentalisation by service (cf. Montana and Charnov 2008 for departmentalisation by geographic area and by product). Its departmentalisation by geographic area is illustrated in Figure 4.1 (Appendix XVII). The branches of its social service department were established according to geographic area. As for its departmentalisation by service, as indicated by the chief executive officer (Appendix XVIII), across different local service branches, it had established four kinds of service teams: the day care service team, the home care service team, the volunteer service team and the community service team. Its departmentalisation by service complements its departmentalisation by geographic area since it aims to facilitate the communication between social workers who execute the same service but belong to

different local branches. Having discussed its departmentalisation, this study proceeds to discuss its social service workforce.

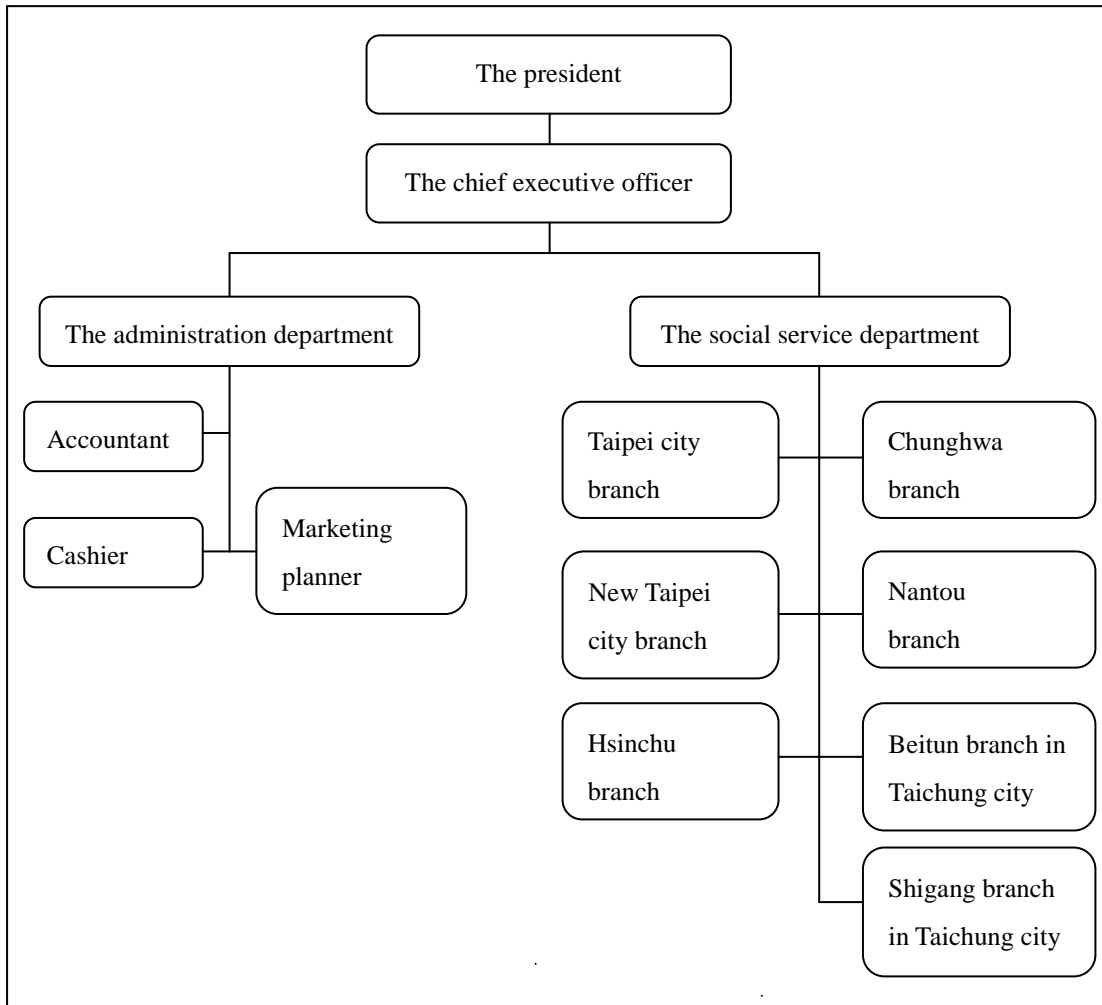


Figure 4.1 The organisational chart

*Note: at the time this study conducted the interviews, the New Taipei city branch was called the Taipei county branch, the Beitun branch in Taichung city was called the Taichung city branch, and the Shigang branch in Taichung city was called the Taichung county branch.*

Branch	Social work supervisor	Social worker	Nurse	Social work assistant or administrative personnel	Home care worker supervisor	Care worker
Taipei city	1	5		1		
Taipei county	(vice director)	3	1			26
Hsinchu	1		1	1		1
Taichung city	1	4				22
Taichung county		4				44
Nantou	1	2			1	10
Chunghwa	1 (assistant supervisor)	6				24
Total	5	24	2	2	1	127

*Table 4.1 The workforce of each social service branch*

Organisational position	Education			Gender	
	Masters degree	Studying for Masters degree	Bachelor degree	Female	Male
Chief Executive Officer	1			1	
Director		1		1	
Social Work Supervisor (Including Vice Director and Assistant Supervisor)		3	2	5	
Social Worker			24	20	4
Total	1	4	26	27	4

*Table 4.2 Backgrounds of the social work workforce*

As for its social service workforce, Table 4.1 shows the workforce of its social service branches (Appendix XIX), while Table 4.2 indicates the backgrounds of its social work workforce (Appendix XX). It could be observed from these two tables that it was an organisation operated by social work professionals (cf. Healy 2002 for social workers' management training needs), the majority of its social work

workforce held a bachelor degree and were female (cf. McPhail 2004 for the social work profession with female majority), and the home care service was its primary service (see Cox 1992 for social workers' roles in home care; Lin 2010 for the governmental policy encouraging not-for-profit and for-profit organisations to engage in the care-services industry).

To sum up, this study proposes that the structure of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's human resources constitutes the organisational context for practitioners' social work practice since practitioners were grouped by its departmentalisation and were surrounded by its social service workforce, signifying the human resources environment in which they carried out their tasks. Having discussed the structure of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's human resources, the next section proceeds to discuss the structure of its professional service provision.

#### *4.2.2 The structure of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's professional service provision*

This section discusses the structure of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's professional service provision by looking at its service scheme and measures for supporting this service scheme. The Old-Five-Old Foundation was established in 1997, and it pursues the Five-Old Ideals (cf. Hill and Jones 2008 for mission statement). Its Five-Old Ideals promote the healthy body, the wise management of time and money, a barrier-free and friendly living environment, harmonious family life and an abundance of interpersonal relationships (Appendix XXI).

In order to realise its Five-Old Ideals, the Old-Five-Old Foundation had established its service scheme. This service scheme consisted of three types of services that contain diverse services for various kinds of intended service users: care services, community empowerment and advocacy (cf. Chew and Osborne 2009 for the core positioning strategy and the key target audiences). Care services aim to serve people who have care needs (e.g., home care service). Community empowerment aims to service community members, developing community resources and linking community members so as to bring them to participate in the provision of elder welfare (e.g., offering training to community members). Advocacy aims to serve the public, encouraging them to build a positive attitude towards the elderly and to prepare for their own elderly life in advance (e.g., inviting them to practice the mutual help) (Appendix XVII).

Furthermore, as for measures for supporting its service scheme (cf. Chew and Osborne 2009 for positioning dimensions), the Old-Five-Old Foundation had set three directions for effort (Appendix XVII). Firstly, it sought to make its local service branches able to offer diverse service options so as to satisfy local service users' varied needs. This was done by requiring each branch to establish a community service network, to advance its competence for service programme planning and to expand its service items and the amount of the services offered to users. Secondly, it sought to establish a professional image for its social services for the elderly. This was done by deploying professional personnel and by enhancing the quality and the quantity of its workforce. Lastly, it sought to establish a quality management system for its professional services. This was done by establishing the framework and the indicators for measuring the quality of its

services and by establishing standardised procedures for its service provision (cf. Johnston and Clark 2008 for process mapping; Palmer 1975 for a generic design for the social service delivery process).

To sum up, this section proposes that the structure of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's professional service provision constitutes the organisational context for practitioners' social work practice since practitioners operated the services that fall within its service scheme and worked towards realising the measures for supporting this scheme. It signifies the professional service system in which practitioners carried out their tasks. Having discussed the organisational context for practitioners' social work practice, the next section summarises this chapter.

### **4.3 Chapter summary**

This chapter discusses the social policy and organisational contexts for practitioners' social work practice, indicating the contextual background of their practice. As for the social policy context, it discusses how social work practice in relation to public welfare provision was structured in Taiwan by looking at 'The Social Welfare Policy Guideline'. This guideline indicated the functions of the national welfare provision and declared the nine principles for designing national social policies, stipulating the basic national policy framework for public welfare provision. This study proposes that 'The Social Welfare Policy Guideline' constitutes the social policy context for practitioners' social work practice since their practice in relation to public welfare provision was governed by this guideline.

With regard to the organisational context, it discusses the nature of the Old-Five-Old Foundation and how it worked by looking at the structure of its human resources (its departmentalisation and its social service workforce) and the structure of its professional service provision (its service scheme and the measures for supporting this scheme). This study proposes that the structure of its human resources and the structure of its professional service provision represent the human resources environment and the professional service system in which practitioners carried out their tasks, constituting the organisational context for their practice. Having discussed the contextual background of practitioners' social work practice, the following three chapters, as a whole, interpret the empirical data in a structured way, making sense of these data.



## CHAPTER FIVE THE MACRO ANALYSIS OF PRACTITIONERS' DIRECTION OF LEARNING

### 5.1 Introduction

The research question of this study is ‘How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?’ The answer to this research question is that practitioners’ learning is organised by five kinds of structuring forces. At the macro level, practitioners’ direction of learning is organised by service purchasers’ demanding (an inter-organisational level structuring force) and the service provider’s planning (an organisational level structuring force). The evaluation of practitioners’ learning is organised by the service provider’s monitoring (an organisational level structuring force). At the micro level, practitioners’ methods of learning are organised by practitioners’ puzzle solving and instructors’ instructing (individual level structuring forces). The overall contribution of this study is that it systematically analyses the organising of learning through both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis (Heath and Sitkin 2001). This is achieved by examining the macro and micro structuring forces (cross-level analysis) that organise practitioners’ learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning (process analysis). Such an analytical framework does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), thus denoting a contribution to widening understanding of the subject.

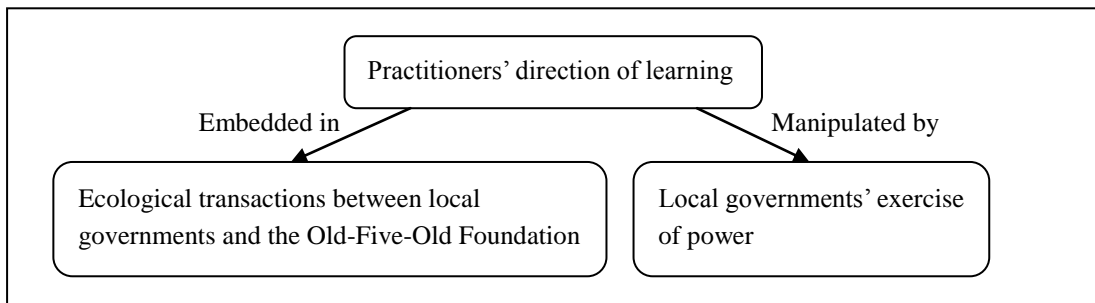
For instance, Argyris and Schön (1978) address learning and organising by looking at the double loop learning process in which organisational members engage in a reflexive cognitive inquiry to re-organise organisational theory-in-use. Senge (1990) addresses learning and organising by looking at the process of practising five learning disciplines that organises an organisation into a learning organisation. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) address learning and organising by looking at the knowledge spiral process in which knowledge creation activities are organised to generate continuous innovation. Wenger (1998, 2000) addresses learning and organising by looking at the process of interplay between a community of practice's socially defined competence and its members' personal experience. The unit of his analysis is communities of practice (self-organising systems). This study addresses learning and organising by looking at macro and micro structuring forces (cross-level analysis) that organise practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning (process analysis). It deals with learning and organising in a manner that is different from their frameworks, making an original contribution by specifically formulating a new framework to address a particular research topic: the organising of learning within the context of social work practice in the third sector (see Section 2.1.3 for the contribution of this study's cross-level analysis and process analysis).

As a part of this study's cross-level analysis and process analysis, this chapter performs the macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning. The conclusive argument of this chapter is that practitioners' direction of learning is organised by service purchasers' demanding (an inter-organisational level structuring force) and the service provider's planning (an organisational level structuring force). This

answers the question: how is practitioners' direction of learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?

In the analysis of service purchasers' demanding, this study tackles three bodies of literature: the literatures that address ecological transactions (Gitterman and Germain 2008), value activities (Porter 1998b) and the exercise of power (Foucault 1972, 1995; Ouchi 1979). The literature that addresses ecological transactions could enable this study to explain the reason local governments get an opportunity to require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular activities. However, it lacks the capacity to enable this study to explain the types of activities the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform (i.e., functional roles it plays) and how local governments manipulate these activities (i.e., the use of local governments' power). These could be explained by the literatures that address value activities and the exercise of power. However, they could not enable this study to explain the reason local governments get an opportunity to require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular activities, while the literature that addresses ecological transactions could do so. In order to produce a more comprehensive explanation, this study synthesises these three bodies of literature. Drawing upon these literatures, the conclusive argument for service purchasers' demanding is that practitioners' learning is embedded in the ecological transactions between service purchasers (i.e., local governments) and the service provider (i.e., the Old-Five-Old Foundation). In their ecological transactions, service purchasers' exercise of power requires that the service provider performs particular value activities. This shapes the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities, thereby manipulating their direction of learning. The contribution

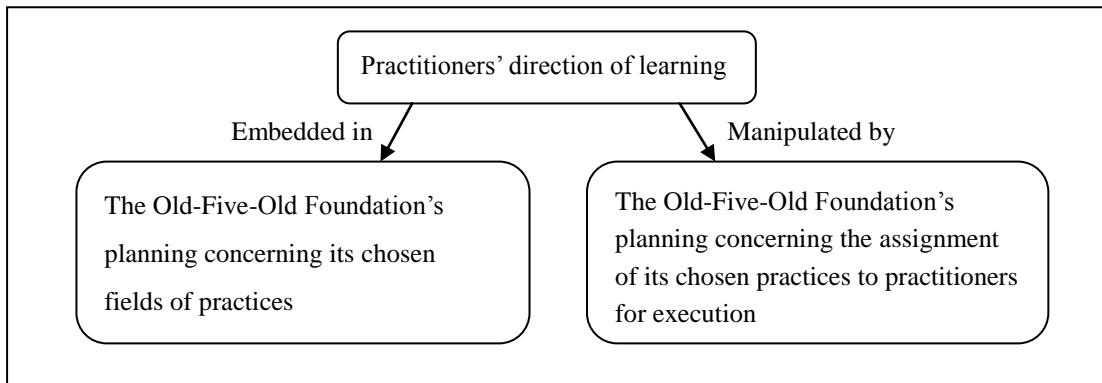
of this analysis is that it proposes the conclusive framework for service purchasers' demanding, and this framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to ecological transactions, value activities and the exercise of power. This social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to this field of study. Figure 5.1 indicates the conclusive framework for service purchasers' demanding.



*Figure 5.1 The conclusive framework for service purchasers' demanding*

In the analysis of the service provider's planning, this study tackles four bodies of literature: the literatures that address strategic decisions (Porter 1998a; Weihrich 1982), job designs (Campion and Thayer 1987), value activities (Porter 1998b) and professionalism (Finlay 2000; Healy and Meagher 2004). The literatures that address strategic decisions could enable this study to explain the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices. However, they could not enable this study to explain the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution. Specifically, they could not enable this study to explain the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish

the value activities he/she is assigned to execute. These could be explained by the literatures that address job designs, value activities and professionalism. However, they could not enable this study to explain the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices, while the literatures that address strategic decisions could do so. In order to produce a more comprehensive explanation, this study synthesises these four bodies of literature. Drawing upon these literatures, the conclusive argument for the service provider's planning is that, firstly, practitioners' learning is embedded in the service provider's planning concerning *its chosen fields of practices*. Then, in this range of its chosen practices, the service provider's planning concerning *the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution* manipulates the value activities a practitioner is assigned to execute. This shapes the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish the value activities he/she is assigned to execute, manipulating his/her direction of learning. The contribution of this analysis is that it proposes the conclusive framework for the service provider's planning, and this framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to strategic decisions, job designs, value activities and professionalism. This social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to the field of study. Figure 5.2 indicates the conclusive framework for the service provider's planning.



*Figure 5.2 The conclusive framework for the service provider's planning*

Section 5.2 (ecological transactions between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation) and Section 5.3 (local governments' exercise of power) discuss service purchasers' demanding. Section 5.4 (the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices) and Section 5.5 (the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution) discuss the service provider's planning. In each section, there is an indication of the sub-framework for each section and the literatures upon which each sub-framework is built. Then, this study presents the empirical data and its interpretations of the data, utilising each sub-framework to make these interpretations. This chapter starts with a discussion of the ecological transactions between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation.

## **5.2 Ecological transactions between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation**

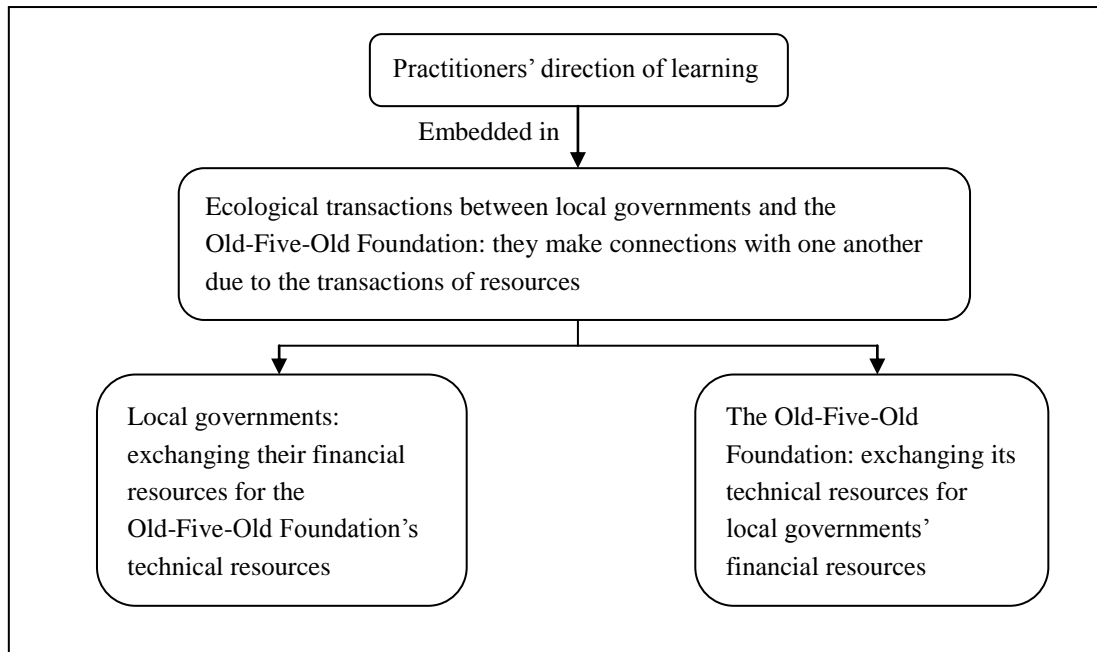
This section addresses the question: what is the fundamental relationship that brings local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation together, creating an

opportunity for local governments to require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular activities?

Gitterman and Germain (2008) indicate that, in the ecological thinking, there is reciprocity of person-environment transactions. In such exchanges, people and environments influence one another. This study applies the notion of reciprocal transactions between people and environments to analyse exchanges of resources between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation. Drawing upon Gitterman and Germain's discussion of transactions of resources in ecological thinking, this study argues that local governments (service purchasers) and the Old-Five-Old Foundation (the service provider) make connections with one another due to the transactions of resources. Local governments exchange their financial resources for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's services, while the Old-Five-Old Foundation exchanges its technical resources for local governments' payment. This constitutes the fundamental relationship that brings local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation together, creating an opportunity for local governments to require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular activities.

Figure 5.3 indicates the conclusive framework for the ecological transactions between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in the following parts, justifying its usefulness. The contribution of this section is that, as a part of a social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning, it relates learning to ecological transactions. It explains the fundamental ecological relationship that creates an opportunity for local governments to require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular activities, thereby

manipulating practitioners' direction of learning.



*Figure 5.3 The conclusive framework for the ecological transactions between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation*

The Old-Five-Old Foundation is purposely created for realising the Five-Old Ideals. The Five-Old Ideals aim to encourage people to keep a healthy body, to achieve the wise management of time and money, to create a barrier-free and friendly living environment, to establish harmonious family life and to build abundant interpersonal relationships. In order to realise the Five-Old Ideals, the Old-Five-Old Foundation engages in recruiting personnel and establishes its workforce, such as having 24 social workers in the year 2009 (see Table 4.1). However, it was not a financially self-sufficient foundation. Its endowment and other assets could not produce sufficient financial resources for all of its expenditures. This leads to financial dependence on its financial suppliers. In order to sustain its existence and realise its Five-Old Ideals, the Old-Five-Old Foundation has to figure out what financial



resource it needs and seek to acquire these financial resources.

It needs others' financial resources and thus motivates itself to interact with financial suppliers. As for financial suppliers, its welfare services have been sponsored by local governments. It relies heavily on governmental financial resources, revealing its financial dependence on local governments. This financial dependence is revealed by the director's description:

*“The Old-Five-Old Foundation has always relied on governmental programmes for its survival!”* (Mei-Shu Zhang 2010, Interview, 28 January; Appendix XXII)

On the one hand, the Old-Five-Old Foundation needs local governments' financial resources. On the other hand, its technical resources stand for what it can do for local governments. Local governments also need the Old-Five-Old Foundation's technical resources, and thus they need to establish contact with it. For instance, in the public home care services, local governments do not take executive roles but contract out service provision by means of tendering procedures. Table 5.1 indicates an example of a basic qualification for participating in the tendering procedure for public home care services. In this example, if a current service provider obtains a mark at least at Grade B, it will receive an invitation to attend the next year's tender.

Grade	Mark	Award and penalty
A	90~100	A certificate of award and trophies An invitation to attend the next year's tender
B	80~less than 90	A certificate of award

		An invitation to attend the next year's tender
C	70~less than 80	Exclusion from tender
D	Less than 70	Exclusion from tender

*Table 5.1 The award and penalties for a service provider's performance*

*Source: The 2009 Programme Evaluation Executive Plan for the Public Social Welfare Service Programmes Commissioned by the Taichung County Government to Non-Governmental Organisations (Appendix XXIII)*

As indicated by Su-Lan Lin, the Taichung county branch had maintained at least at Grade B since 2003. Since then, her branch has got a contract from the Taichung county government every year (Appendix XVIII). This means that, as a qualified service provider, the Old-Five-Old Foundation is a technical resource for the Taichung county government. The Taichung county government needs the Old-Five-Old Foundation's technical resources to execute this public home care service, revealing its technical dependence on the Old-Five-Old Foundation, while the Old-Five-Old Foundation also needs the Taichung county government's financial resources so as to sustain its existence and realise its Five-Old Ideals. This example illustrates that local governments (service purchasers) and the Old-Five-Old Foundation (the service provider) make connections with one another due to the transactions of resources (Gitterman and Germain 2008). Local governments exchange their financial resources for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's services, while the Old-Five-Old Foundation exchanges its technical resources for local governments' payment. This constitutes the fundamental relationship that brings local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation together, creating an opportunity for local governments to require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular activities.

Nonetheless, the weakness of ecological thinking (Gitterman and Germain 2008) is that it fails to explain the functional roles played by those, who engage in the transactions of resources and neglects the role of power relations in manipulating their transactions of resources. Therefore, ecological thinking lacks the capacity to enable this study to explain the types of activities the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform (i.e., functional roles it plays) and how local governments manipulate these activities (i.e., the use of local governments' power). This study utilises Foucault's (1972) discourses, Porter's (1998b) value activities, Foucault's (1995) hierarchical observation and normalising judgement and Ouchi's (1979) bureaucratic mechanism of control and market mechanism of control to address this issue.

### **5.3 Local governments' exercise of power**

This section addresses two questions. In their ecological transactions, what type of activities is the Old-Five-Old Foundation required to perform? How do local governments manipulate these activities?

Foucault (1972) views discourses as individualisable groups of statements, and he (1990) treats discourses as an instrument of power. This study utilises this notion to analyse local governments' statements. In order to modify this notion to fit the research scene in which the Old-Five-Old Foundation and local governments represent multiple power forces, this study defines discourses in a specific manner. It defines discourses as local governments' statements that prohibit the Old-Five-Old

Foundation from undertaking particular actions and that request it to perform particular activities. Making reference to Foucault's discourses, this study argues that, in their ecological transactions, local governments produce discourses to prohibit the Old-Five-Old Foundation from doing particular actions and require it to perform particular activities. However, the weakness of Foucault's discourse is that it fails to categorise the content of the statements claimed by discourses. Though it could enable this study to notice local governments' discourses, it lacks the capacity to enable this study to categorise the content of the statements claimed by local governments' discourses. In the context of this study, which researches local governments' perspectives on the competences practitioners are expected to develop, this study utilises Porter's (1998b) value activities to address this issue. Categorising the content of the statements claimed by local governments' discourses is done by identifying the types of value activities the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform.

Porter (1998b) suggests that value activities are the activities by which a company creates a product valuable to its buyers and consist of primary activities (e.g., operations, marketing and sales, and service) and support activities (e.g., human resource management). In addition, there are three activity types within each category of activity: direct activities, indirect activities and quality assurance. Making reference to Porter's (1998b) value activities, in this study, value activities refer to the activities through which a service/product is produced, the activities that facilitate the production of a service/product and the activities that facilitate people's utilisation of a service/product. This study argues that local governments' discourses point out the types of value activities that the Old-Five-Old Foundation is

required to perform. These value activities indicate local governments' perspectives on the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities. However, in its original context, Porter's value activities address the issue of competitive advantage. His discussion does not aim to explain the issue of power. Therefore, his discussion could not enable this study to explain the measures through which local governments could require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform these value activities. This study utilises Foucault's (1995) hierarchical observation and normalising judgement and Ouchi's (1979) bureaucratic mechanism of control and market mechanism of control to address this issue.

Foucault (1972) suggests that discourses could be supported by a system of institutions, including hierarchical observation and normalising judgment. Hierarchical observation represents hierarchical functional surveillance that monitors and supervises individuals, rendering individuals visible. Normalising judgment seeks to mark gaps in an individual's qualities and aptitudes by making use of ranks, which serve as the basis for a reward or a penalty. This study utilises Foucault's hierarchical observation and normalising judgment to analyse specific power techniques through which local governments could require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular value activities. Nonetheless, Foucault's account fails to identify the mechanisms that support discourses. His account lacks the capacity to enable this study to explain the mechanisms through which local governments could require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular value activities. This study utilises Ouchi's (1979) bureaucratic mechanism of control and market mechanism of control to address this issue. The market mechanism builds upon competition, while the bureaucratic mechanism builds upon rules. This

study suggests that the bureaucratic mechanism of control could be illustrated in this situation: local governments establish performance evaluation measures to evaluate service providers' services (see Martin 2007 for performance-based contracting). The market mechanism of control could be illustrated in this situation: service providers have to engage in competition in order to get a contract (see Domberger and Rimmer 1994 for competitive tendering and contracting). Drawing upon Foucault's hierarchical observation and normalising judgement and Ouchi's bureaucratic mechanism of control and market mechanism of control, this study argues that local governments' discourses are supported by the institutions consisting of the bureaucratic mechanism of control and the market mechanism of control. These involve the use of hierarchical observation and normalising judgement. Local governments could enforce their discourses through these institutions.

It concludes that local governments' exercise of power via the discourses and the institutions that support their discourses manipulates the types of value activities that the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform, and thus manipulates the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities, thereby manipulating their direction of learning. Figure 5.4 indicates the conclusive framework for local governments' exercise of power. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness. The contribution of this section is that, as a part of a social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning, it relates learning to value activities and the exercise of power. It explains the power measures through which local governments manipulate particular value activities the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform, manipulating practitioners' direction of learning. This section

starts with a discussion of local governments' discourses.

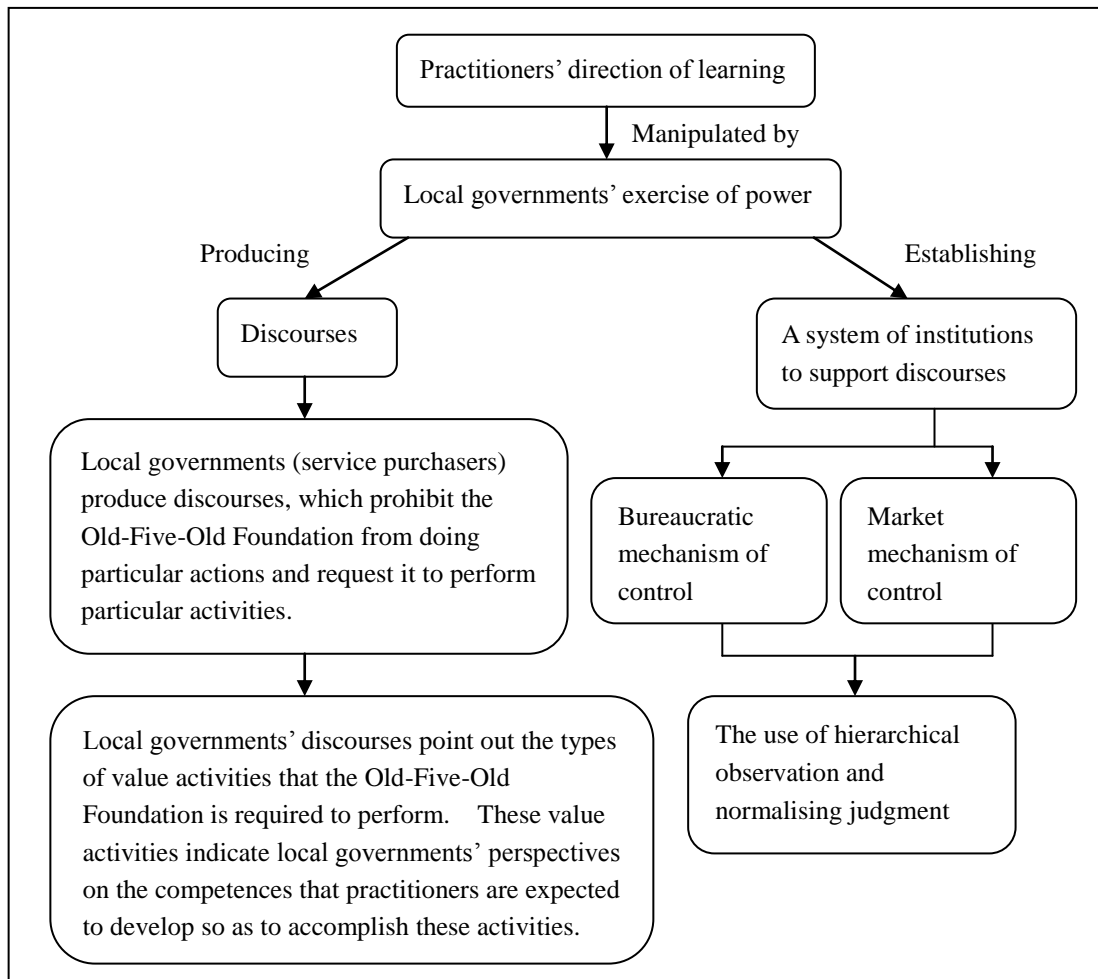


Figure 5.4 The conclusive framework for local governments' exercise of power

### 5.3.1 Local governments' discourses

Local governments' discourses (Foucault 1972) could be illustrated in Shen-Mei's description, Table 5.2, Table 5.3 and Su-Lan Lin's description.

*“For example, the governmental official sent us an e-mail, stating, ‘We have more than two thousand cases at the moment. You, start to perform screening and check whether these persons need the home care service or not’. And then, they sent us forms. And, alright, we filled out the forms.”* (Shen-Mei 2010,

Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXIV)

Aspect (percentage)	Criteria
Carrying out and analysing promotional activities (4)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Holding at least two promotional activities and at least 200 persons had obtained service information from those activities.</li> <li>2. Making outcome evaluations regarding promotional activities.</li> <li>3. Analysing promotional activities for home care service.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The contents and the means of the promotional activities held.</li> <li>(2) Frequencies of the promotional activities held.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Producing evident promotional outcomes.</li> </ol>
Efficiency of service provision (3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Referring applicants' applications to care managers on the day of receiving their applications.</li> <li>2. Starting care service provision within five days after receiving care managers' case assignments, and informing the government of execution of the assignments within the same duration.</li> </ol>
Planning and execution of individual service plans (3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Making individual service plans for service users.</li> <li>2. Executing service provision according to individual service plans.</li> <li>3. An analysis of execution of individual service plans.</li> </ol>
Dealing with complaints (4)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishing procedures for making complaints and mechanisms for dealing with complaints.</li> <li>2. Recording the contents of complaints accurately and dealing with complaints properly. (Illustrating how complaints were dealt with by presenting one or two examples.)</li> <li>3. Making follow-ups regarding disposal of complaints.</li> </ol>
Professional personnel training (4)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On-the-job training every year.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Each home care worker should receive 20 hours of training.</li> <li>(2) Each home care worker supervisor should receive 12 hours of training.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Content of training.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The content of training should be in accordance with service users' needs.</li> <li>(2) Designing training activities according to the organisation's internal needs.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

*Table 5.2 The abridgement of performance indicators for annual programme evaluation*  
*Source: The 2009 Programme Evaluation Executive Plan for the Public Social Welfare Service Programmes Commissioned by the Taichung County Government to*



*Non-Governmental Organisations (Appendix XXV)*

Tasks	Content
Making files	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Old-Five-Old Foundation should establish service users' files and lists of its personnel. It should update files at all times.</li> <li>2. Cases closed must be recorded accurately, and it should establish criteria for closing cases.</li> </ol>
Monitoring quality of home care service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Old-Five-Old Foundation should make at least one telephone visit to each client every month and should undertake at least one home visit to each client every three months.</li> <li>2. The Old-Five-Old Foundation should supervise and monitor care workers' home care services, doing on-site checks without a fixed schedule according to clients' situations.</li> </ol>
Audit	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The full subsidy for care workers' home care services is 180 New Taiwan Dollars per hour. Service users should pay the fees that are not covered by the subsidies.</li> <li>2. The subsidy for home care worker supervisors' work is 500 New Taiwan Dollars every case every month.</li> <li>3. As far as home care service fees and case supervision fees are concerned, every month, the Old-Five-Old Foundation should make a list of service users and a list of requested subsidies for the purpose of requesting the government's payment.</li> <li>4. The Old-Five-Old Foundation should preserve original documents regarding relevant outlay and accept sample inspections from the audit unit and the social service unit of the Chunghwa county government.</li> </ol>

*Table 5.3 The abridgement of job content for public home care service*

*Source: The 2009 Chunghwa County Government's Public Welfare Service Contract concerning Home Care Service for the Disabled Physically Challenged (Appendix XXVI)*

As indicated by Shen-Mei, the Taichung county government requires the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform extensive investigations so as to reach potential service users. Furthermore, in Table 5.2, the Taichung county government requires the Old-Five-Old Foundation to hold promotional activities and refer applicants' applications to care managers for making assessment and care plans. It also requires the Old-Five-Old Foundation to execute care managers' care plans, while at

the same time performing its own assessment and making its own individual service plans for service users. The Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to execute service provision according to the individual service plans, start care service provision and deal with complaints. What is more, in Table 5.3, the Chunghwa county government requires the Old-Five-Old Foundation to make telephone visits and home visits to service users and do on-site checks without a fixed schedule so as to monitor care workers' home care services. It offers subsidies to purchase the Old-Five-Old Foundation's home care services and requires the Old-Five-Old Foundation to do administrative audit work for the purpose of requesting its payment. Lastly, in Table 5.2, the Taichung county government requires the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform on-the-job training for home care workers and home care worker supervisors. As indicated by Su-Lan Lin (Appendix XVIII), the Taichung county government also sponsored the Old-Five-Old Foundation to hold an official training programme regarding the home care worker supervisor advanced training certificate. The advanced training courses were predetermined by the central government. To hold this training mainly involves arranging time, place and schedule for training, finding lecturers, editing training handbooks, producing training certificates and doing receptions.

It is observable that referring applicants' applications to care managers for making assessment and care plans; executing care managers' care plans while at the same time performing its own assessment and making its own individual service plans for service users; executing service provision according to individual service plans; and starting care service provision belong to direct activities within operations (Porter 1998b) since an individual service plan for a service user is produced and executed

via these activities. Furthermore, it is observable that performing extensive investigations so as to reach potential service users and holding promotional activities belong to marketing and sales (Porter 1998b) since they aim to spread information about its services to the general public, relevant personnel and relevant organisations and promote public welfare services to potential service users, who may need and buy its services (if not fully subsidised by local governments).

Furthermore, it is observable that making telephone visits and home visits to service users and doing on-site checks without a fixed schedule so as to monitor care workers' home care services belong to quality assurance within operations (Porter 1998b) since these activities monitor provision of a care service. It is also observable that dealing with complaints belongs to service activities (Porter 1998b) since these activities receive service users' opinions and suggestions and make sure their problems are resolved. What is more, it is observable that performing on-the-job training for home care workers and home care worker supervisors requires that the content of training should be in accordance with the service users' needs and the Old-Five-Old Foundation's internal needs. Therefore, these activities involve designing training. In this sense, performing on-the-job training for home care workers and home care worker supervisors belongs to direct activities within human resource management (Porter 1998b). On the contrary, holding an official training programme regarding the home care worker supervisor advanced training certificate belongs to indirect activities within human resource management (Porter 1998b) since it does not involve designing training but merely involves clerical work for holding a training course, such as editing training handbooks and doing receptions. Lastly, it is observable that doing administrative audit work for the purpose of

requesting the local government's payment belongs to indirect activities within operations (Porter 1998b) since it involves clerical work, such as making a list of requested subsidies.

Value activities	Activities the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform
Marketing and sales	1. Performing extensive investigations so as to reach potential service users. 2. Holding promotional activities.
Direct activities within operations	1. Referring applicants' applications to care managers for making assessment and care plans. 2. Executing care managers' care plans while at the same time performing its own assessment and making its own individual service plans for service users. 3. Executing service provision according to individual service plans and starting care service provision.
Service	Dealing with complaints.
Quality assurance within operations	Making telephone visits and home visits to service users and doing on-site checks without a fixed schedule so as to monitor care workers' home care services.
Direct activities within human resource management	Performing on-the-job training for home care workers and home care worker supervisors.
Indirect activities within human resource management	Holding an official training programme regarding the home care worker supervisor advanced training certificate.
Indirect activities within operations	Doing administrative audit work for the purpose of requesting the local government's payment.

*Table 5.4 Value activities in the home care services*

To sum up, in the example of public home care services, Table 5.4 indicates the types of value activities that the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform. These value activities indicate local governments' perspectives on the competences that practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities.

Though Porter's (1998b) value activities could enable this study to explain the types of value activities the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform, his discussion could not enable this study to explain the measures through which local governments could require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform these value activities. In the next section, this study utilises Foucault's (1995) hierarchical observation and normalising judgment and Ouchi's (1979) bureaucratic mechanism of control and market mechanism of control to address this issue.

### *5.3.2 The institutions that support local governments' discourses*

Tasks	Content
Receiving inspection and evaluation	<p>The Old-Five-Old Foundation should receive the Chunghwa county government's inspection and evaluation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In addition to regular or random inspection, it should also receive the annual programme evaluation executed by experts and scholars, who are commissioned by the Chunghwa county government.</li> <li>2. For the purpose of making a programme review, it should provide the Chunghwa county government with an annual work report before the end of the year. The content of the report should include the contents of the services offered in the year, outcomes produced by service provision, the cost-benefit evaluation, professional training received, promotional activities held, and photos related to them.</li> </ol>

*Table 5.5 Job content in relation to receiving inspection and evaluation*

*Source: The 2009 Chunghwa County Government's Public Welfare Service Contract concerning Home Care Service for the Disabled Physically Challenged (Appendix XXVI)*

As indicated in Table 5.5, in the example of the public home care service, the Chunghwa county government has established the inspection mechanism and the annual programme evaluation mechanism to evaluate the Old-Five-Old Foundation's performance. In this sense, this local government's discourses are supported by

these two kinds of institutions. This local government exercises its power through the inspection mechanism and the annual programme evaluation mechanism to ensure its discourses become practitioners' real practice, determining their direction of learning.

The inspection mechanism inspects whether the Old-Five-Old Foundation's service provision is in accordance with the set regulations, such as whether the Old-Five-Old Foundation does establish service users' files and update these files and whether the Old-Five-Old Foundation does make at least one telephone visit to each client every month and undertake at least one home visit to each client every three months (Table 5.3). In this sense, this aspect of the inspection mechanism denotes the bureaucratic mechanism of control (Ouchi 1979). In addition, the inspection mechanism makes use of regular inspection and random inspection to observe and monitor the Old-Five-Old Foundation's service provision, rendering actual situations of its service provision visible. In this sense, this aspect of the inspection mechanism represents the use of hierarchical observation (Foucault 1995).

Furthermore, the annual programme evaluation mechanism makes use of grades as the basis for a reward or a penalty (e.g., Table 5.1). If a service provider gets a poor grade, such as Grade C, it will not be allowed to attend the next year's tender, being excluded from competition for a governmental contract. In this sense, this aspect of the annual programme evaluation mechanism represents the market mechanism of control (Ouchi 1979). In addition, if a service provider gets Grade B, it will receive rewards, such as winning an invitation to attend the next year's tender. In this sense, this aspect of the annual programme evaluation mechanism represents the use of the

normalising judgment (Foucault 1995).

To sum up, this study argues that local governments' discourses are supported by the institutions consisting of the bureaucratic mechanism of control and the market mechanism of control. These involve the use of hierarchical observation and normalising judgment. The inspection mechanism and the annual programme evaluation mechanism represent these institutions.

On the basis of the discussions about local governments' discourses (Section 5.3.1) and the institutions that support local governments' discourses (Section 5.3.2), this study concludes that local governments' exercise of power via the discourses and the institutions that support their discourses manipulates the types of value activities that the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform, and thus manipulates the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities, thereby manipulating their direction of learning.

In Section 5.2 and Section 5.3, this study discusses service purchasers' demanding (an inter-organisational level structuring force), which is not the only macro force that manipulates the direction of practitioners' learning. The next two sections discuss another macro force that manipulates the direction of practitioners' learning: the service provider's planning (an organisational level structuring force). It starts with a discussion of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices.

## **5.4 The Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices**

This section addresses the question: how does the Old-Five-Old Foundation plan its chosen fields of practices? This study seeks to identify influential factors in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's environment and its strategies that determine the range of its chosen practices.

Wehrich's (1982) TOWS matrix indicates various steps for strategy formulation, including preparation of an enterprise profile (e.g., identification of the top management orientation that indicates top managers' individual values and goals), an analysis of present and future threats and opportunities in an organisation's external environment (e.g., political factors and factors regarding markets and competition), an analysis of weaknesses and strengths in its internal environment (e.g., financial factors), developing strategic alternatives, etc.

As for an analysis of the external environment, Wehrich's TOWS matrix sheds light on two factors in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's external environment, which are more influential: factors regarding markets and competition (e.g., competitors for tendering) and political factors (e.g., public welfare policies and social legislation). However, the weakness of Wehrich's TOWS matrix is that it lacks the capacity to explain the nature of analysing factors regarding markets and competition and political factors. This study utilises Porter's (1998a) industry attractiveness to address this issue. Furthermore, another weakness of Wehrich's TOWS matrix is



that it does not give an account of the specific competitive forces in markets and competition. This study utilises Porter's (1998a) threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors to address this issue.

With regard to an analysis of the internal environment, Wehrich's TOWS matrix sheds light on financial factors as influential factors in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's internal environment. Furthermore, Wehrich's TOWS matrix treats identification of the top management orientation as an element in the step of preparation of an enterprise profile. This study disagrees with this classification. Rather, this study proposes that it is more appropriate to treat identification of the top management orientation as a part of an analysis of weaknesses and strengths in an organisation's internal environment since top managers are an integral part of an organisation's internal environment. Therefore, in addition to financial factors, this study also treats the top management orientation as an influential factor in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's internal environment.

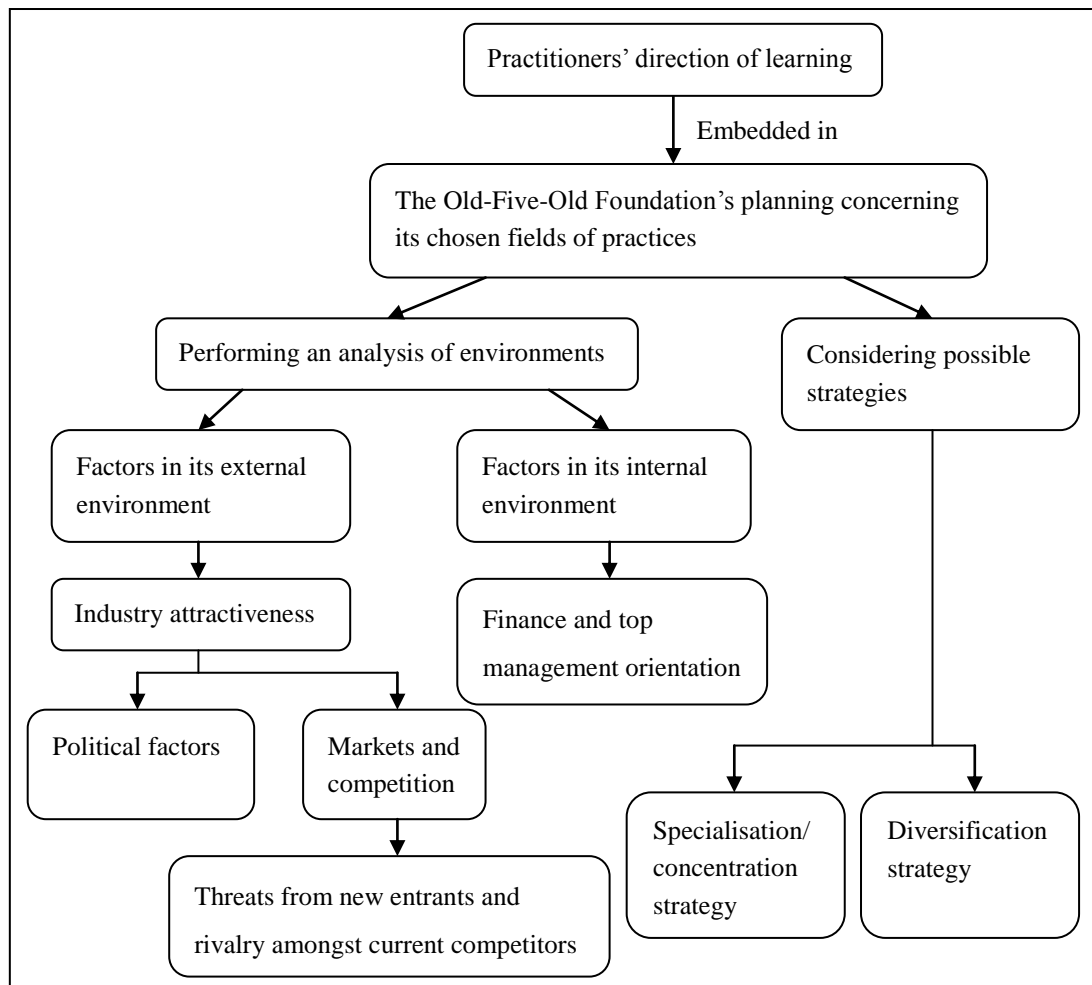
To sum up, drawing upon Wehrich's (1982) TOWS matrix, this study argues that while planning the range of its chosen practices, the Old-Five-Old Foundation takes factors in its external and internal environments into consideration. Drawing upon Wehrich's political factors and markets and competition and Porter's (1998a) industry attractiveness, threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors, this study argues that factors in its external environment are concerned with industry attractiveness. These factors include political factors and markets and competition in terms of threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors. Drawing upon Wehrich's finance and top management orientation,

this study argues that factors in its internal environment include finance and top management orientation.

This study proposes that these influential factors in its external and internal environments show that practitioners' learning is value-laden. What practice options (i.e., what direction of learning) are worth pursuing is determined by the Old-Five-Old Foundation's consideration of these factors. Having discussed the Old-Five-Old Foundation's consideration of influential environmental factors, this study proceeds to discuss its consideration of strategies.

This study's research focus looks at the strategies that functionally determine the range of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's practices and thus functionally determine the competences practitioners need to develop in order to carry out these practices. It pays attention to two strategies that are relevant to this study's research focus and fit the context of the Old-Five-Old Foundation as a social service organisation operating various public welfare services: the specialisation/concentration strategy and the diversification strategy (see Appendix V for the reasons the other strategies are not adopted in its analysis of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's strategies). Drawing upon Wehrich's (1982) discussion of the specialisation/concentration strategy and the diversification strategy, this study argues that while planning its preferred range of practices, the Old-Five-Old Foundation adopts the specialisation/concentration strategy and the diversification strategy. This study proposes that these strategies determine the Old-Five-Old Foundation's chosen fields of practices and thus specify the range of practices in which a practitioner may possibly participate. Its chosen practices represent the practices that are worth doing from its perspective and thus

the direction of learning that is worthy of effort. As such, these strategies direct the direction of practitioners' learning.



*Figure 5.5 The conclusive framework for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices*

In conclusion, this study proposes that practitioners' learning is embedded in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices. This planning performs an analysis of its environment and considers possible strategies. Its chosen practices represent the practices in which a deepening of knowledge is required, thus indicating practitioners' possible direction of learning. Figure 5.5

indicates the conclusive framework for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness. The contribution of this section is that, as a part of a social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning, it relates learning to strategic decisions. It explains influential factors in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's environment and its strategies that determine the range of its chosen practices, which direct the direction of practitioners' learning.

#### *5.4.1 The Old-Five-Old Foundation's analysis of environments*

As far as the trajectory of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's development is concerned, it had been involved for a period in the practice regarding post-earthquake reconstruction. This is an unexpected natural disaster and produces environmental opportunities (Wehrich 1982) for the Old-Five-Old Foundation. The Old-Five-Old Foundation participated in this practice to sustain its existence even if this practice is irrelevant to its organisational goals, which put emphasis on elderly welfare provision. When these programmes came to an end, as indicated by the director, it did not want to lay off its social workers. Thus, it had to find or produce other programmes to support its social work personnel expenditure. It started to bid for other programmes, such as the public home care programme and the public home delivered meals programme, as long as there was an opportunity out there.

*“If the post-disaster reconstruction programmes were really terminated in 2002, then, we would have had six social workers unemployed. Therefore, we began to come up with what to do next, whatever it was; we started to take any project,*

*all the projects that related to elderly welfare. We would take them as long as there was an opportunity. In fact, at that time, we worked very hard to take home care programmes and home delivered meals programmes.”* (Mei-Shu Zhang 2010, Interview, 28 January; Appendix XXII)

Since then, as indicated by the director, the Old-Five-Old Foundation experienced a period of turmoil. It was not until the Old-Five-Old Foundation became more stable that it had time and energy to think about the positioning of the Old-Five-Old Foundation and the roles that it could play.

*“It was between 2001 and 2005; during these four years, the Old-Five-Old Foundation had experienced a period of turmoil. It was actually very unstable, though it kept expanding.” “In the course of settling down, we had to start to think about the positioning and the roles of the Old-Five-Old Foundation. We only had the time and energy to think about it by then.”* (Mei-Shu Zhang 2010, Interview, 28 January; Appendix XXII)

However, the external environment does not stop changing. As indicated by the director, the central government is planning a national social insurance plan for long-term care. The Old-Five-Old Foundation notices the development of the social legislation and social policies. This reveals that it considers political factors in its external environment (Weihrich 1982).

*“The long-term care policy in Taiwan has been in an unstable state; the government started to promote it a couple of years ago.” “For us, we felt very unstable since we relied on governmental programmes too much, and the governmental policies kept fluctuating and changing! Look at the national long-term care ten-year programme; the government is promoting it, and it’s just the second year of that ten-year programme. You would think that there are eight years left, right? However, even so, there could be massive changes*

*in the next eight years, because there is also a national social insurance plan for long-term care.” (Mei-Shu Zhang 2010, Interview, 28 January; Appendix XXII)*

As indicated by the director, in the face of possible future changes in the social legislation and social policies, one of the concerns is about how the Old-Five-Old Foundation could compete with other organisations, such as hospitals and nursing homes. This indicates that, as for its external environment, it considers markets and competition (Wehrich 1982) in terms of threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors (Porter 1998a).

*“Then, if the social insurance plan for long-term care is implemented in the future, this is what we worry about most!” “Because, we heard that there might be too many for-profit organisations, all entering this field. In comparison, they are, in fact, very competitive. Given that they are very competitive, would we have sufficient abilities to compete with those for-profit organisations?” “Can we survive under the situation that we lose competitiveness? Right! That’s something we worry about very much!” “In fact, we also have been pondering, given that we are a non-profit organisation, how do we distinguish ourselves from them? Why would this person choose us to serve him instead of choosing this hospital or that nursing home?” (Mei-Shu Zhang 2010, Interview, 28 January; Appendix XXII)*

In view of these factors in its external environment, the current ecological transactions (Gitterman and Germain 2008) between local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation seem likely to change. The Old-Five-Old Foundation ponders its prospective path, reconsidering the long-term-care care services’ industry attractiveness (Porter 1998a). Under such possible future circumstances, what decisions will be made is still unknown at present. Logically, this study would

suggest two possible paths. One is to continue to engage in the long-term-care care services and seek to survive possible competition. The other is to terminate its long-term-care care services and look for other services. The former keeps its present direction of learning on the path of long-term care, while the latter shifts from its current direction of learning on the path of long-term care to another direction. Having discussed factors in its external environment, this section proceeds to discuss factors in its internal environment.

As indicated by Su-Lan Lin (Appendix XVIII), each social worker in the Taichung county branch is responsible for a programme, which offers a personnel subsidy for social workers. Then, other programmes that do not offer a personnel subsidy are allocated to social workers. This indicates that, as for its internal environment, the Old-Five-Old Foundation considers financial factors (Wehrich 1982). Service programmes, which could meet its financial needs regarding social work personnel expenditures, can enable it to hire social workers. Then, it further makes use of social workers, who are sponsored by these service programmes, to execute other programmes that do not offer a personnel subsidy.

In addition to finance, the Old-Five-Old Foundation considers its top management orientation (Wehrich 1982). As implied by the director, the practice regarding the volunteer service credit bank, which has a theoretical justification, empirically does not work. However, the Old-Five-Old Foundation decides to continue to do it due to the fact that Liang Cheng (the founder of the Old-Five-Old Foundation) always wanted to realise the volunteer service credit bank, which represents the top management orientation from the founder.

*“That was an ideal that Liang Cheng [the founder of the Old-Five-Old Foundation] always wanted to make come true.” “The reason we had not closed down the volunteer service credit bank was that he had not given up!” “We thought that such an idea was very good! However, it was very difficult to promote it! By nature, it was quite impracticable!” “In fact, the idea of the volunteer service credit bank is deduced from the Exchange Theory.” (Mei-Shu Zhang 2010, Interview, 28 January; Appendix XXII)*

Top management orientation could also be revealed by the vice director’s description. The headquarters (i.e., the chief executive officer) supports the practice designed to build and develop a safe and healthy community and prefers to deepen its knowledge in this direction. This represents the top management orientation from the headquarters. However, the vice director’s opinion is different from that of the headquarters. Though this practice empirically works at present, she is more inclined to change the direction of this service programme. She thinks that this practice is problematic in logic and doubts its sustainability.

*“Actually, I also have to admit that I gradually became familiar with this programme after I joined this branch. I do not mean that I was not able to implement the programme merely because I didn’t plan it. Rather, actually, the programme is problematic in logic. [laugh] I also discussed this matter with the headquarters, that it will be very toilsome and dangerous if we go ahead under the circumstance that some things seemed not to be planned well. What I mean by dangerous is that it is less likely to be durable or sustainable.” (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)*

To sum up, these influential factors in the Old-Five-Old Foundation’s external and internal environments (political factors, markets and competition in terms of threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors, finance and top management orientation) show that practitioners’ learning is value-laden. What



practice options (i.e., what direction of learning) are worth pursuing is determined by the Old-Five-Old Foundation's consideration of these factors. Having discussed the Old-Five-Old Foundation's analysis of its environment, the next section discusses the strategies considered by the Old-Five-Old Foundation.

#### *5.4.2 Strategies considered by the Old-Five-Old Foundation*

As far as the development of the range of the Old-Five-Old Foundation's chosen practices is concerned, as indicated by the chief executive officer (Appendix XVIII), the Five-Old Ideals reveal that the Old-Five-Old Foundation concentrates on elderly welfare provision. In this sense, it adopts the specialisation/ concentration strategy (Wehrich 1982). It does not aim to offer welfare services for other life stages. For instance, it does not aim to participate in youth welfare services. Furthermore, within elderly welfare provision, in order to realise the Five-Old Ideals, the Old-Five-Old Foundation gradually develops and engages in different kinds of social work interventions. As indicated by the chief executive officer (Appendix XVIII), it takes two general strategies to realise the Five-Old Ideals: to build multiple services along macro and micro interventions and to build various services within macro and micro interventions. In this sense, it adopts the diversification strategy (Wehrich 1982).

As for diverse services along macro and micro interventions, it engages in advocacy, community empowerment (macro interventions) and care services (micro interventions). As for diverse services within macro and micro interventions, take

diverse services within care services (micro interventions) for example, it currently has three different kinds of care services: the services for disabled elders, the services for elders living alone and the services for elders in general. Examples of care services for disabled elders include general day care, dementia day care, home care and adult foster home. Examples of care services for elders living alone include home delivered meals, visiting and friendly phone calls, festival celebration activities and an emergency call service. Examples of general care services for elders include the elderly college and health promotion stations.

To sum up, these strategies (the specialisation/concentration strategy and the diversification strategy) determine the Old-Five-Old Foundation's chosen fields of practices and thus specify the range of practices in which a practitioner may possibly participate. Its chosen practices represent the practices that are worth doing from its perspective and thus the direction of learning that is worthy of effort. As such, these strategies direct the direction of practitioners' learning.

On the basis of the discussions about the Old-Five-Old Foundation's analysis of its environment (Section 5.4.1) and the strategies considered by the Old-Five-Old Foundation (Section 5.4.2), this study concludes that practitioners' learning is embedded in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices. This planning performs an analysis of its environment and considers possible strategies. Its chosen practices represent the practices in which a deepening of knowledge is required, thus indicating practitioners' possible direction of learning.

Having discussed the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices, the next section discusses the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution. In their original contexts, Wehrich's (1982) TOWS matrix and Porter's (1998a) industry attractiveness, threats from new entrants and rivalry amongst current competitors deal with the issue of strategic decisions. Their discussions do not aim to handle the issue of job design, an operational issue. Therefore, their discussions could not enable this study to explain the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution. Specifically, they could not enable this study to explain the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish the value activities he/she is assigned to execute. This study utilises the literatures that discuss job designs (Campion and Thayer 1987), value activities (Porter 1998b) and professionalism (Finlay 2000; Healy and Meagher 2004) to address this issue.

### **5.5 The Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution**

This section addresses the question: how does the Old-Five-Old Foundation assign its chosen practices to practitioners for execution? This study seeks to identify the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish the value activities he/she is assigned to execute.

Campion and Thayer (1987) suggest that the mechanistic job-design approach puts

emphasis on aspects such as job specialisation, job simplification that requires relatively few skills and task simplification that calls for uncomplicated tasks. They also suggest that the motivational job-design approach puts emphasis on aspects such as task variety, ability/skill variety and higher-level ability/skill requirements. Their discussion of the mechanistic and the motivational job-design approaches leads this study to notice two groups of terms categorised by this study: competence-level and competence-variety. The terms relevant to competence-level include task simplification and higher-level ability/skill requirements, while the terms relevant to competence-variety include job specialisation, job simplification, task variety and ability/skill variety. This study applies these two categories to analyse the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish the practices he/she is assigned to execute. Drawing upon Campion and Thayer's discussion of job specialisation, job simplification, task variety and ability/skill variety, this study argues that the varieties of competences required by the practices a practitioner is assigned to execute represent the varieties of competences he/she is expected to develop so as to execute these practices, denoting his/her direction of learning. Moreover, drawing upon Campion and Thayer's discussion of task simplification and higher-level ability/skill requirements, this study argues that the levels of competence required by the practices a practitioner is assigned to execute represent the levels of competence he/she is expected to develop so as to execute these practices, denoting his/her direction of learning.

Having discussed the varieties of competences and levels of competence, this study proceeds to discuss the characteristics of the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop: re-professionalising and

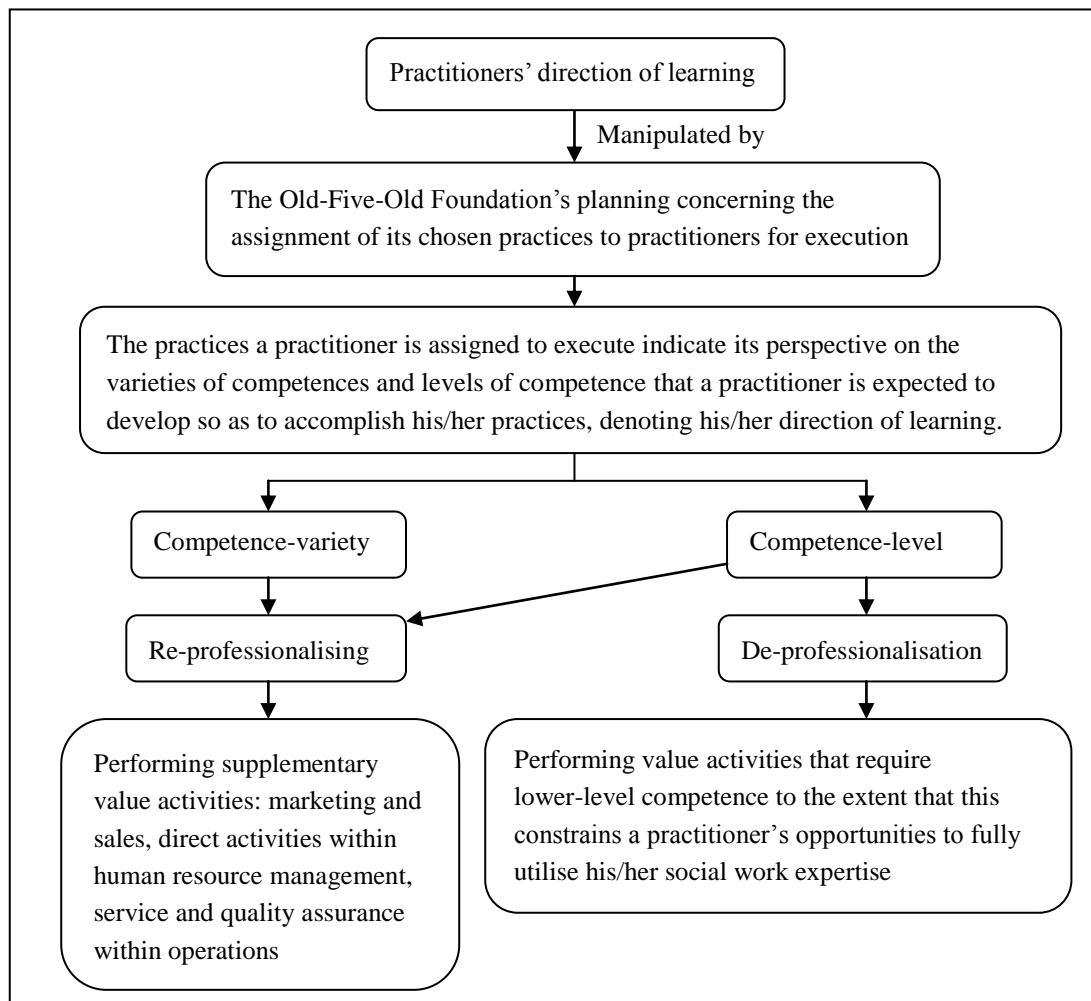
de-professionalisation. In its original context, Campion and Thayer's discussion deals with the issue of job design. In the context of social work practice, their discussion could not enable this study to explain the consequences of an organisation's job design: re-professionalising and de-professionalisation. This study utilises Finlay's (2000) discussion of re-professionalising, Healy and Meagher's (2004) discussion of de-professionalisation, Porter's (1998b) value activities and the notions of competence-variety and competence-level (Campion and Thayer 1987) to analyse these consequences.

Finlay suggests that while professionals need to negotiate new generic roles, expanding their areas of concern and learning new competences, the traditional role boundary blurs, and re-professionalising occurs. Healy and Meagher suggest that while social work professionals are placed in a position where their social work expertise is neither utilised nor fully utilised, de-professionalisation occurs. Their discussions lead this study to notice the consequences of an organisation's job design: re-professionalising and de-professionalisation. However, the weakness of their discussions is that they fail to offer any fundamental analytical units with which re-professionalising and deprofessionalisation can be analysed. Porter's (1998b) value activities and the notions of competence-variety and competence-level (Campion and Thayer 1987) could enable this study to produce fundamental analytical units. Adding value activities and the notions of competence-variety and competence-level into Finlay's view, this study argues that when a practitioner not only performs direct activities within operations that carry out traditional direct clinical/treatment tasks but also performs other value activities that require higher-level competence (hereafter, supplementary value activities),

re-professionalising occurs. In this situation, the practitioner is required to develop a variety of competences, including the competences in relation to direct activities within operations and in relation to supplementary value activities. Moreover, adding value activities and the notion of competence-level into Healy and Meagher's view, this study argues that when a practitioner performs value activities that require lower-level competence to the extent that this constrains his/her opportunities to fully utilise his/her social work expertise, de-professionalisation occurs.

In conclusion, this study proposes that practitioners' learning is manipulated by the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution. The practices a practitioner is assigned to execute reveal the Foundation's perspective on the varieties of competences and levels of competence that he/she is expected to develop so as to execute his/her practices, denoting his/her direction of learning. Furthermore, as a consequence of this planning, re-professionalising and de-professionalisation can occur. This study highlights that re-professionalising and de-professionalisation are essentially issues related to practitioners' direction of learning. Figure 5.6 indicates the conclusive framework for this planning. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness. The contribution of this section is that, as a part of a social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning, it relates learning to job designs, value activities and professionalism. It explains this planning, which determines the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop and thus manipulates the direction of his/her learning. Then, it further utilises analytical units (varieties of competences, levels of competence and value activities) to explain re-professionalising and de-professionalisation (the

consequences of this planning).



*Figure 5.6 The conclusive framework for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution*

### *5.5.1 Competence-variety and re-professionalising*

In the Old-Five-Old Foundation, there are two kinds of factors that determine the varieties of competences (Campion and Thayer 1987) a practitioner is expected to develop: programme assignment and case assignment.

Programme assignment concerns whether a practitioner is assigned to do only one service programme or a practitioner is assigned to operate multiple service programmes. The latter means that a practitioner will extend his/her range of practices by this way. As indicated by Su-Lan Lin (Appendix XVIII), Ya-Ru's main job is to operate the public home delivered meals programme and manage volunteers. In this sense, Ya-Ru is responsible for multiple service programmes. Operating the public home delivered meals programme requires the competence in relation to casework, and managing volunteers requires the competence in relation to community work. As such, Ya-Ru's assigned tasks require her to develop the competence in relation to casework and the competence in relation to community work, developing various competences (Campion and Thayer 1987). These various competences denote her direction of learning.

As for case assignment, this concerns whether a practitioner is responsible for diverse kinds of cases or a particular kind of cases is reserved to a particular person. As indicated by Su-Lan Lin (Appendix XVIII), in the public home care service programme, she adopts the former approach. In doing so, she lets Shen-Mei and Xin-Chun accumulate work experiences of dealing with various kinds of service users, such as those with a spinal-cord injury, on dialysis or with a mental illness. Thus, Shen-Mei and Xin-Chun need to develop various competences (Campion and Thayer 1987) that deal with various kinds of service users, such as developing the casework competence to deal with people who have a spinal-cord injury/mental illness or require dialysis. These various competences denote their direction of learning. Having discussed competence-variety, this section proceeds to discuss re-professionalising.



In Table 5.4 (Value activities in the home care services), this study suggests that local governments require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to carry out direct activities within operations (Porter 1998b). These activities belong to traditional direct clinical/treatment tasks. Furthermore, local governments also require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to carry out marketing and sales, service (e.g., customer service), quality assurance within operations and direct activities within human resource management (Porter 1998b). These supplementary value activities require higher-level competence (Campion and Thayer 1987) but do not belong to traditional direct clinical/treatment tasks. When a practitioner is assigned to carry out not only direct activities within operations but also supplementary value activities, re-professionalising (Finlay 2000) occurs. However, not all participants are comfortable with carrying out supplementary value activities in relation to marketing and sales, service and quality assurance within operations.

As for feeling uncomfortable with carrying out marketing and sales, an example is illustrated by Shen-Mei's description, which indicates that she does not want to act like that she is selling a service to potential service users.

*“I don't want to work merely for money, an interest-based relationship. I hope that I could do something that brings changes into people's lives or brings changes into... I am not saying that huge changes must take place or that people have to change in a particular way. I don't mean that. I am talking about making them have an idea, a new idea, making them achieve some small changes, etc.” “However, what I don't want to do is to act like I am selling a product to you. Well, it does happen recently.” “That's the appearance, and what I want is at the spiritual level.” (Shen-Mei 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXIV)*

With regard to feeling uncomfortable with service, an example is illustrated in Bi-Zhen You's blog article (Appendix XXVIII), which reveals that dealing with aggressive service users' complaints wears down her enthusiasm and devotion to the social work occupation.

*“First, a complaint was publicly issued towards me along with the complainant fabricating facts....” “Besides, communicating with family members of a client, who has a manic-depressive psychosis; I was scolded as a ‘low level, very difficult to communicate with’.....” “Social workers are required to keep high moral standards. They have to have empathy, keep non-judgmental attitudes, be professional, etc.” “Every day, being scolded, but not being allowed to say something back. I am going to have dual personalities.” “What is needed in this occupation is lots of enthusiasm and devotion. Yet, I am afraid that mine will be totally worn down someday.”*

As for feeling uncomfortable with quality assurance within operations, an example is illustrated in Xin-Chun's description, which indicates that to supervise and monitor care workers' home care services belongs to the nursing profession's work, being irrelevant to social work.

*“I am surprised that, in the home care programme, the home care worker supervisor and the social worker are the same person!” “We don't have a background in nursing.” “I think that the home care worker supervisor should be separated from the social worker. However, I think that it is certainly impossible for us, the Old-Five-Old Foundation, to achieve this, because we do not have many funds.” “I prefer to call myself a social worker; I do not prefer to call myself a home care worker supervisor.” “I totally have no idea of some of the care skills that home care workers are capable of.” “While supervising, I am unable to instruct them in something like care skills.” (Xin-Chun 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXIX)*

In the home care programme, the reason the home care worker supervisor and the social worker are the same person is revealed by the chief executive officer (Appendix XVIII). She indicates that if the Old-Five-Old Foundation hires a person with a nursing background to take the role of the home care worker supervisor, this person is unable to perform other tasks related to social work, such as writing a social service programme proposal and performing social service programme evaluation. To make a social worker take the role of the home care worker supervisor is its current way of operating home care services. However, this manner surprises Xin-Chun, feeling uncomfortable with her role as a home care worker supervisor, who needs to do quality assurance within operations.

In the above examples, as for re-professionalising, it is observable that these social workers do not treat these supplementary value activities as the social work profession's duty. They are comfortable with direct activities within operations, but they are not comfortable with supplementary value activities in relation to marketing and sales, service and quality assurance within operations. In their definition, these supplementary value activities do not belong to social work. Yet, the director proposes a different view about what social work is and what social work is for. In her opinion, as long as a task serves the elderly, it is a task that a social worker should do. She is comfortable with doing supplementary value activities. Due to her past experiences, she establishes a broader definition of social work, and she views it as openness beyond the fixed image regarding social work.

*“I think that this was, actually, also a kind of flexibility, relatively!” “You would truly feel that you would do anything; you would not be limited to the*

*frames concerning what a social worker should do! I think that, in this process, for instance, when you led practicum students or new social workers, especially new social workers, you would feel that they would often have a fixed frame of thought taught by school concerning what a social worker should do. Since I joined the Old-Five-Old Foundation in its period of turmoil and went through it, as for me, I never had any fixed frame in my mind in relation to what a social worker should do. I think that, as long as it is what an organisation should do, as long as it is what serving the elderly requires, it is what a social worker should do. I don't restrict myself, saying that this task should not be a social work task, and it should not be my job. A fixed frame like this. Therefore, relatively speaking, in terms of doing work, I am flexible in many aspects." "I think that it is also a kind of openness to myself." (Mei-Shu Zhang 2010, Interview, 28 January; Appendix XXII)*

In particular, in her executive position, she believes that openness beyond the fixed social work image makes a difference in a social work practitioner's work attitude. Social work practitioners, who have a fixed image about social work, make her feel that they are always fussing about what they do not want to do. In her opinion, to fuss about whether this is a social work task is not a positive work attitude.

*"I think that, actually, I really met a lot of new staff members who could not get used to it, because they would think, 'Why do we, social workers, have to do these things? I am a professional social worker! Why should I do this?' Therefore, they would think that... When they could not overcome the fixed frame, they would choose to leave the jobs! However, you have to clean the toilet on your own, particularly if you are in a small organisation, wouldn't you? [laugh]" "So, relatively speaking, this trained your work attitude as well." "As for me, my work attitude is that, I would do my best to do it, as long as it is good for elders. That's my work attitude. No matter how hard it would be or something else, it is okay for me! I will do it! I won't distinguish whether this is what a social worker should do or not! I don't distinguish it! This is what I mentioned earlier! I am free from the fixed frame. However, when you limit yourself to the fixed frame, your work attitude will appear and start to tell you,*

*'This is not what I am supposed to do'. This attitude would give people an impression that you are always fussing about what you want to do and what you don't want to do. Just an attitude would make a difference, right?'* (Mei-Shu Zhang 2010, Interview, 28 January; Appendix XXII)

However, in the situation of re-professionalising, if a practitioner's real-world tasks are not in accordance with his/her definition of social work, a practitioner may choose to leave the job. This circumstance can be illustrated by Shen-Mei, who considers leaving the job. In her opinion, she is assigned to do the administration work as well as other tasks (e.g., supplementary value activities). According to her definition of social work, in her job, tasks related to Social Work are gradually removed, making her feel that she is not doing a social work job.

*"I have been wondering about how long I could stay in this job." "There are other things involved, and this makes what you do become even more altered." "Sometimes, it's even further away from Social Work." "You do the administration work as well as other tasks." "Rather than doing social work. Tasks related to Social Work are gradually removed."* (Shen-Mei 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXIV)

Having discussed competence-variety and re-professionalising, this study proceeds to discuss competence-level and de-professionalisation.

### *5.5.2 Competence-level and de-professionalisation*

In the previous section, this study indicates that the service programmes Ya-Ru is assigned to execute require her to develop the competence in relation to casework and the competence in relation to community work. These competences belong to

higher-level competence (Campion and Thayer 1987). However, in the Old-Five-Old Foundation, not every service programme requires higher-level competence. For instance, in the Chunghwa branch's service concerning the Lunar New Year's celebration meal for the elders, who live alone (Appendix XVIII), the tasks involved in holding this event include investigating who wants to join in this event, planning transportation routes, making appointments with the elderly, choosing a suitable restaurant for holding this event, preparations for reception and so forth. It is observable that carrying out these tasks merely requires lower-level competence (Campion and Thayer 1987). Practitioners are assigned to carry out these tasks (developing lower-level competence), which could be executed by non-professionals as well. Having discussed competence-level, this section proceeds to discuss de-professionalisation.

In Table 5.4 (Value activities in the home care services), this study suggests that local governments require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to carry out indirect activities within human resource management and indirect activities within operations (Porter 1998b). These activities merely require lower-level competence (Campion and Thayer 1987). When a practitioner is assigned to carry out these value activities, which merely require lower-level competence, to the extent that this constrains his/her opportunities to fully utilise his/her social work expertise, de-professionalisation (Healy and Meagher 2004) occurs. De-professionalisation is revealed by Xin-Chun's description, which indicates that the administrative audit work results in making her spend very little time doing casework.

*“The audit work for home care service is more complicated than the others.”*

*“Since half of the time is spent on that, in effect, I felt that I spent very little time on casework.” “Then, nowadays, the county government is asking us to fill out more and more statistics forms; it probably wants to present more and more statistics.” “So, we get more tasks to do.” “In practice, too much time is spent dealing with these administrative affairs.” (Xin-Chun 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXIX)*

Shen-Mei also points out this situation. She indicates that, in her public home care service programme, the administrative tasks have become trivial to the extent that she feels that operating this programme is like doing a common job, rather than a professional job in social work.

*“I think that this task, the home care service programme, is too varied, and it demands too many tasks and details.” “For example, in the home care service programme, the county government requests some statistics, such as the audit work we do every time, making the monthly statistical tables.” “Sometimes, it feels like it is like a common job, rather than a job in social work.” “You would think that they are merely common jobs done by ordinary people.” “It feels like, if you replace this person with someone else, that person can do it as well.” “I think that a social work job should be more than that.” (Shen-Mei 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXIV)*

To sum up, on the basis of the discussions about competence-variety and re-professionalising (Section 5.5.1) and competence-level and de-professionalisation (Section 5.5.2), this study concludes that practitioners’ direction of learning is manipulated by the Old-Five-Old Foundation’s planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution. The practices a practitioner is assigned to execute reveal the Foundation’s perspective on the varieties of competences and levels of competence that he/she is expected to develop so as to execute his/her practices, denoting his/her direction of learning. Furthermore, as a

consequence of this planning, re-professionalising and de-professionalisation can occur. This study highlights that re-professionalising and de-professionalisation are essentially issues related to practitioners' direction of learning.

In Section 5.4 and Section 5.5, this study discusses the service provider's planning (an organisational level structuring force), while in Section 5.2 and Section 5.3, it discusses service purchasers' demanding (an inter-organisational level structuring force). The next section summarises this chapter.

## **5.6 Chapter summary**

This chapter answers the question: how is practitioners' direction of learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector? The conclusive argument of this chapter is that practitioners' direction of learning is organised by service purchasers' demanding (an inter-organisational level structuring force) and the service provider's planning (an organisational level structuring force). It performs the macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning, investigating social structures that organise practitioners' direction of learning. This macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning in conjunction with the macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning (Chapter 6) and the micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning (Chapter 7) systematically perform both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning, adding an original contribution to previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998,



2000).

In the analysis of service purchasers' demanding, this study tackles three bodies of literature: the literatures that address ecological transactions (Gitterman and Germain 2008), value activities (Porter 1998b) and the exercise of power (Foucault 1972, 1995; Ouchi 1979). Section 5.2 and Section 5.3 indicate the limitations of these literatures. In order to produce a more comprehensive explanation, this study synthesises these three bodies of literature. Drawing upon these literatures, the conclusive argument for service purchasers' demanding is that practitioners' learning is embedded in the ecological transactions between service purchasers (i.e., local governments) and the service provider (i.e., the Old-Five-Old Foundation). In their ecological transactions, service purchasers' exercise of power requires that the service provider performs particular value activities. This shapes the competences practitioners are expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities, manipulating their direction of learning. The contribution of this analysis is that it proposes the conclusive framework for service purchasers' demanding, and this framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to ecological transactions, value activities and the exercise of power. This social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning denotes a contribution to the field of study. It explains the fundamental ecological relation that creates an opportunity for local governments to require the Old-Five-Old Foundation to perform particular activities. It also explains the power measures through which local governments manipulate particular value activities the Old-Five-Old Foundation is required to perform, manipulating practitioners' direction of learning.

In the analysis of the service provider's planning, this study tackles four bodies of literature: the literatures that address strategic decisions (Porter 1998a; Wehrich 1982), job designs (Campion and Thayer 1987), value activities (Porter 1998b) and professionalism (Finlay 2000; Healy and Meagher 2004). Section 5.4 and Section 5.5 indicate the limitations of these literatures. In order to produce a more comprehensive explanation, this study synthesises these four bodies of literature. Drawing upon these literatures, the conclusive argument for the service provider's planning is that, firstly, practitioners' learning is embedded in the service provider's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices. Then, in this range of its chosen practices, the service provider's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution manipulates the value activities a practitioner is assigned to execute. This shapes the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop so as to accomplish the value activities he/she is assigned to execute, manipulating his/her direction of learning. The contribution of this analysis is that it proposes the conclusive framework for the service provider's planning, and this framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to strategic decisions, job designs, value activities and professionalism. This social analysis of practitioners' direction of learning denotes a contribution to the field of study. It explains influential factors in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's environment and its strategies that determine the range of its chosen practices, which direct the direction of practitioners' learning. It also explains the Old-Five-Old Foundation's planning concerning the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution, which determines the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner is expected to develop and thus manipulates the direction of his/her learning.

Having discussed macro forces that organise practitioners' direction of learning, the next chapter discusses the macro force that organises the evaluation of practitioners' learning: the service provider's monitoring.

## CHAPTER SIX THE MACRO ANALYSIS OF THE EVALUATION OF PRACTITIONERS' LEARNING

### 6.1 Introduction

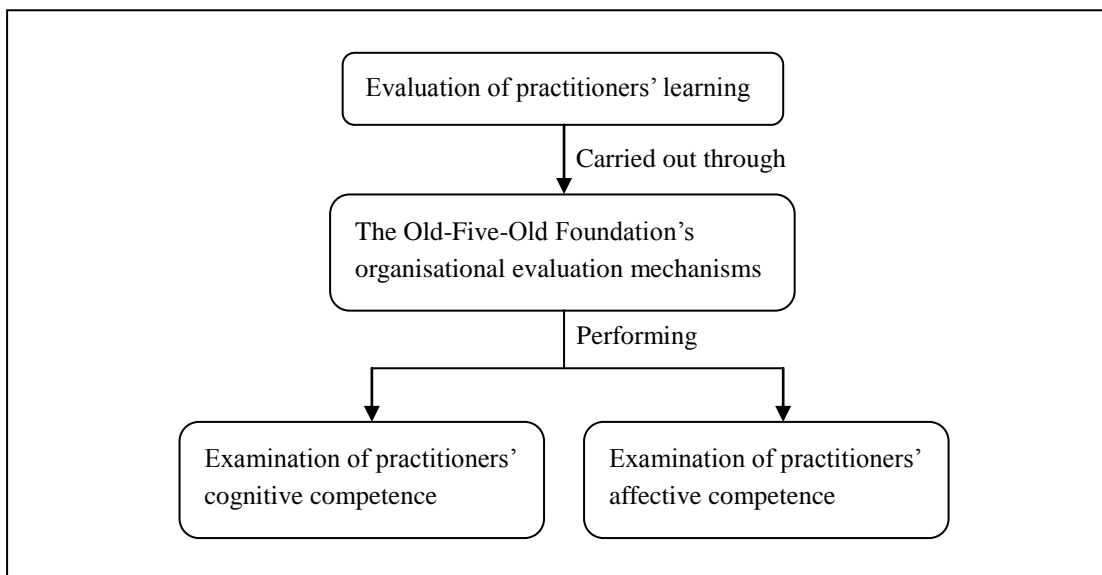
This chapter answers the question: how is the evaluation of practitioners' learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector? The conclusive argument of this chapter is that the evaluation of practitioners' learning is organised by the service provider's monitoring (an organisational level structuring force). It performs the macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning, investigating the social structure that organises the evaluation of practitioners' learning. This analysis in conjunction with the macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning (Chapter 5) and the micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning (Chapter 7) systematically perform both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning, adding an original contribution to previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000).

In the analysis of the service provider's monitoring, this study tackles three bodies of literature: the literatures that address the cognitive domain, the affective domain and organisational control systems. The literatures that address the cognitive domain (Benack 1984; Bloom et al. 1967; Bruner 1957; Collins and Loftus 1975; Cross and Paris 1988; Kember et al. 1999; Kondrat 1999; O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith 2009; Tulving 2002) could enable this study to explain cognitive competence as a target for

evaluation. The literatures that address the affective domain (Gardner 2004; Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia 1968; Mayer and Salovey 1993, 1997; Thorndike 1920) could enable this study to explain affective competence as a target for evaluation. However, they could not enable this study to explain how cognitive competence and affective competence are examined by an organisation, while the literatures that address original control systems (Beer et al. 1978; Jaworski 1988; Montanari and Freedman 1981; Poister 2003; Swiss 1991) could do so. They could enable this study to identify organisational evaluation mechanisms that evaluate individual-level task objectives, personal attributes and an individual's specific decisions; these mechanisms examine practitioners' cognitive competence and affective competence via evaluating the accomplishment of their individual-level task objectives, the weakness of their personal attributes and the appropriateness of their specific decisions. However, they could not enable this study to explain which target for evaluation is examined by an organisation, while the literatures that address the cognitive domain and the affective domain could do so. In order to produce a more comprehensive explanation, this study synthesises these three bodies of literature.

Drawing upon these literatures, the conclusive argument for the service provider's monitoring is that the evaluation of practitioners' learning is carried out through the service provider's (the Old-Five-Old Foundation's) organisational evaluation mechanisms, which examine practitioners' cognitive competence and practitioners' affective competence. The contribution of this analysis is that it proposes the conclusive framework for the service provider's monitoring, and this framework is a new synthesised framework that applies the cognitive and affective domains to the workplace setting (cognitive analysis and affective analysis) and relates learning to

organisational control systems (social analysis). This cognitive, affective and social analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to understanding in the field. Figure 6.1 indicates the conclusive framework for the service provider's monitoring.



*Figure 6.1 The conclusive framework for the service provider's monitoring*

Section 6.2, Section 6.3 and Section 6.4 discuss the examination of practitioners' cognitive competence, the examination of practitioners' affective competence and the Old-Five-Old Foundation's organisational evaluation mechanisms respectively. In each section, there is an indication of the sub-framework for each section and the literatures upon which each sub-framework is built. Then, this study presents the empirical data and its interpretations of the data, utilising each sub-framework to make these interpretations.

In the macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning (Chapter 5), this study views competence in a subject-specific and task-specific manner (e.g., the competences in relation to doing different value activities, such as marketing and sales, casework, group work and community work). In the macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning, this study views competence in a cognitive and affective manner. It looks at the cognitive competence and the affective competence that are necessary for accomplishing the value activities the practitioners are assigned to execute (e.g., the cognitive competence and the affective competence necessary for doing marketing and sales, casework, group work and community work). This chapter starts with a discussion of the examination of practitioners' cognitive competence.

## **6.2 Examination of practitioners' cognitive competence**

This section deals with the question: what might constitute the targets for evaluation? It addresses this issue by looking at cognitive competence as a target for evaluation. It tackles three bodies of literature: the literatures that address cognitive structure, cognitive development and cognitive information processing (O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith 2009).

As far as cognitive structure is concerned, Bruner (1957) indicates that human beings engage in grouping pieces of information and produce a set of contingently related categories, forming a coding system. In his view, the relationship between categories is a system relationship. However, the weakness of Bruner's coding

system is that his perspective fails to explain a network relationship between categories. This study utilises Collins and Loftus' (1975) semantic network to address this issue. From their perspective, categories constitute a semantic web in which some categories are more closely linked than others; the relationship between categories is a network relationship. This study applies Bruner's coding system and Collins and Loftus' semantic network to address the examination of practitioners' cognitive structure. It argues that the relationship between one concept and other concepts could be a system relationship or a network relationship. The competence to link one concept to other concepts (i.e., to identify the relationship between one concept and other concepts) constitutes a target for evaluation.

In their original contexts, Bruner's coding system and Collins and Loftus' semantic network deal with the issue of relationships between concepts but do not have the capacity to explain relationships between concepts and experiences. This study utilises Tulving's (2002) discussion of episodic memory and semantic memory to address this issue. Tulving suggests that the episodic memory contains what people hear and see in particular events, and thus it is the memory that contains particular scenes. The semantic memory contains meanings and symbols that generally stand for facts, indicating that it is not bound by specific scenes. Drawing upon Tulving's episodic memory and semantic memory, this study argues that the competence to link experiences to concepts constitutes a target for evaluation as well. This involves linking the episodic memory (e.g., concrete experiences) to the semantic memory (e.g., abstract concepts).

To sum up, this study argues that the cognitive competence to link one concept to



other concepts and the cognitive competence to link experiences to concepts constitute the targets for evaluation in relation to cognitive structure. However, some data cannot be explained by these two predetermined codes. Thus, this study further adds two codes to explain these data. It argues that the cognitive competence to recognise rationales behind concrete tasks and the cognitive competence to recognise purposes of specific actions also constitute the targets for evaluation in relation to cognitive structure. This means that practitioners should not merely see appearances (e.g., concrete tasks and specific actions) but need to recognise rationales and purposes that are behind those appearances. Having discussed cognitive structure, this study proceeds to discuss cognitive development.

Bloom, Engelhart, Frust, Hill and Krathwohl (1967) propose six major classes of thinking: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Knowledge involves remembering information. Comprehension involves grasping the meaning of a message. Application involves making use of theories, principles and ideas to handle particular situations and solve problems. Analysis involves discovering constituent parts and their relationships. Synthesis combines elements to form certain patterns and structures, which were not clearly there before. Evaluation makes use of criteria to appraise the value of an idea, a solution, etc. However, the weakness of their discussion is that they fail to explain post-formal thinking. This study utilises Benack's (1984) discussion of relativistic thought to address this issue.

Benack suggests that, in post-formal thinking, an individual with relativistic thought is able to recognise that diverse interpretative frameworks on a given topic could

exist, that interpretative frameworks are not decisive standards, but that contradictions among interpretative frameworks could exist. In addition, an individual with relativistic thought is also able to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of different interpretative frameworks and compare and coordinate different interpretative frameworks to reach a solution to a problem. However, the weakness of Benack's relativistic thought is that it ignores self-awareness.

Kondrat (1999) suggests that, in simple conscious awareness, individuals are able to recognise whatever is experienced. In reflective awareness, people are aware of themselves, as someone who had experienced and is experiencing something. In reflexive awareness, people are aware of that: how previous and present experiences shape their current selves and have influences on their perception and judgments. In critical reflexive awareness, people are aware of the environments that shape their understanding of the world. However, the weakness of Kondrat's discussion is that it ignores reflective thinking. Kember, Jones, Loke, Mckay, Sinclair, Tse, Webb, Wong, Wong, and Yeung (1999) suggest that reflective action consists of content reflection, process reflection and premise reflection. Content reflection is about reflecting on what a person acts upon, thinks and feels. Process reflection is about reflecting on the manners in which a person acts, thinks and feels. Premise reflection is about reflecting on the perspectives, the beliefs and the values that govern a person's actions, thoughts and feelings.

To sum up, in order to portray a more inclusive picture of human cognitive operation in the context of work place settings, this study applies the aforementioned notions to address the examination of practitioners' cognitive development. It argues that six

major classes of thinking (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation); relativistic thought; self-awareness (simple conscious awareness, reflective awareness, reflexive awareness and critical reflexive awareness); and reflective thinking (content reflection, process reflection and premise reflection) constitute the targets for evaluation in relation to cognitive development. Having discussed cognitive development, this study proceeds to discuss competence in relation to cognitive information processing.

Cross and Paris (1988) suggest that self-management of one's thinking includes people's ability to direct their own cognitive operation and monitor their own cognitive process so as to attain their set goals. In work place settings, the direct relevance of self-management of one's thinking to the cognitive competence required by a person's tasks is empirically supported by the practice experiences of the author of this dissertation. Therefore, this study applies Cross and Paris' (1988) self-management of one's thinking to address the examination of practitioners' cognitive information processing. It argues that this constitutes a target for evaluation in relation to cognitive information processing.

To sum up, Figure 6.2 indicates the conclusive framework for the examination of practitioners' cognitive competence. It argues that the targets for evaluation in relation to practitioners' cognitive competence include practitioners' cognitive structure, cognitive development and cognitive information processing. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness. The contribution of this section is that, as a part of a cognitive, affective and social analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning, it applies the cognitive

domain to the workplace setting. This cognitive analysis explains the examination of the cognitive competence required for accomplishing workplace tasks. This section starts with a discussion of the examination of practitioners' cognitive structure.

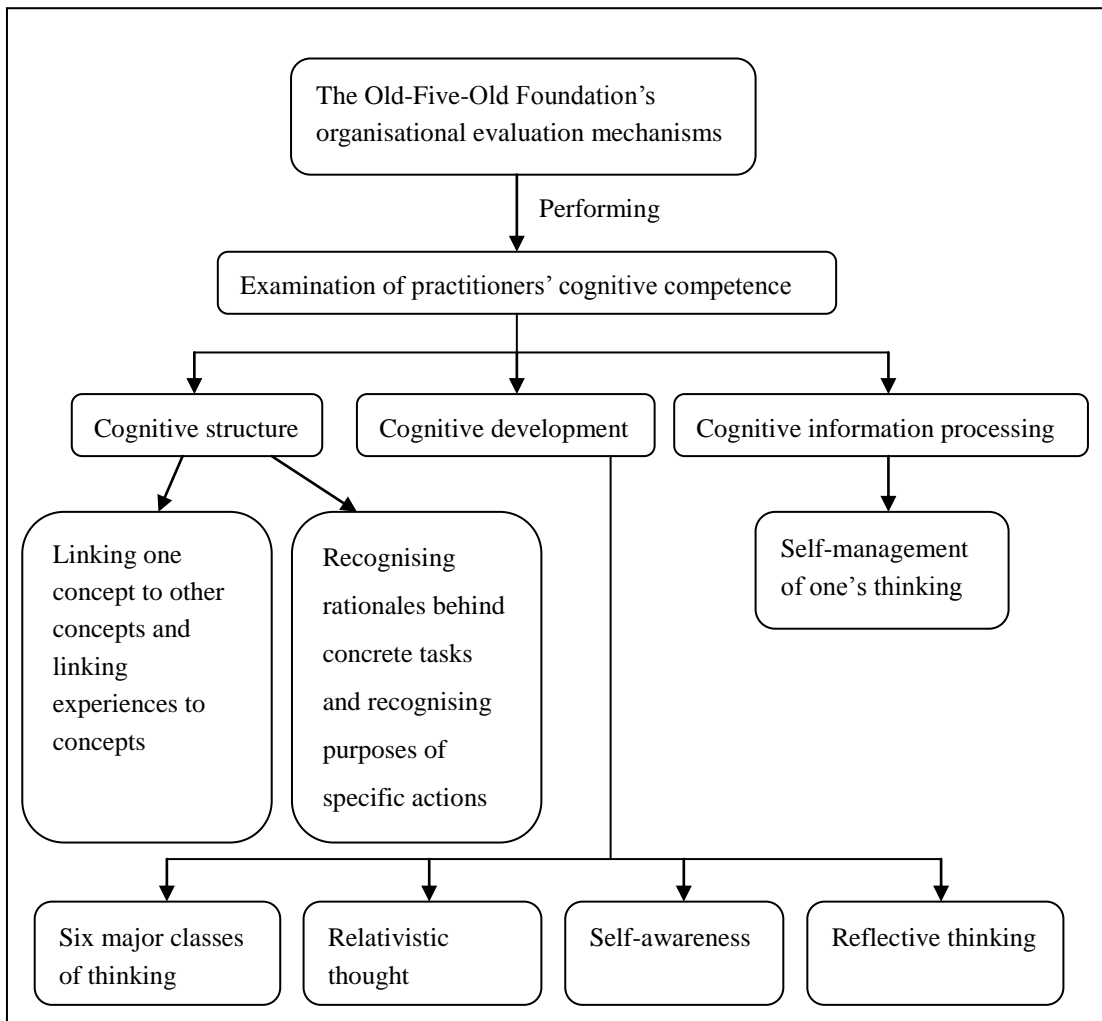


Figure 6.2 The conclusive framework for the examination of practitioners' cognitive competence

### 6.2.1 Examination of practitioners' cognitive structure

The examination of the cognitive competence to link one concept to other concepts

(Bruner 1957; Collins and Loftus 1975) is illustrated by the vice director's comment. In the home care service team's team meeting, she expects that practitioners should be able to link one concept (e.g., intervention for service users) to other concepts (e.g., assessment of service users' physical, psychological and social functions).

*"Sometimes, I totally didn't have any idea of where your intervention came from. Your intervention had no connection with your assessment of the client's physical, psychological and social functions, which were recorded on the top side of the form."* (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Team Meeting, 26 January; Appendix XXX)

The cognitive competence to link experiences to concepts (Tulving 2002) is illustrated by the conversation between the vice director, Pei-Wen and Jia-Xin. In the home care service team's team meeting (Appendix XXX), the vice director utilised an imaginary case to explain the linkage between assessment of a client's current conditions and assessment of a client's needs. This conversation reveals that while dealing with a real case, practitioners should be able to link experiences (e.g., a specific case, who had had a stroke and had a fractured hipbone) to concepts (assessment of service users' physical functions and assessment of service users' needs).

Shu-Fen Wang: *"Probably, we started from summarising a client's current conditions and then jumped into assessing a client's needs immediately. For instance, it was mentioned that a granny had had a stroke probably in the year 2000; then, she continued to take rehabilitation therapies, but she fell down last month or some time ago. So, at present, she has difficulties in mobility."*  
*"However, though she was not totally paralysed, in comparison, her left side, the body parts on the left side, had less strength. Then, she also fell down; as for falling down, she probably had a fractured hipbone. Then, in the past three*

*months, she has been recovering her health, lying in bed. Because she was very old, an operation was probably not applicable to her. The doctor's judgment was to let her take a conservative treatment for now, which means letting her hipbone recover by itself. Therefore, as far as her physical condition is concerned, what problems might she encounter, and what might she need?"*

Pei-Wen: *"Lying in bed?"*

Shu-Fen Wang: *"Yes, she was lying in bed."*

Pei-Wen: *"Decubitus."*

Shu-Fen Wang: *"Pressure sores. So, at the moment, she might need someone to..."*

Jia-Xin: *"Turn her body over and pat her on the back."*

Shu-Fen Wang: *"That is, she needed someone to turn her body over and pat her on the back regularly. This was probably her current need. Since it is an imaginary case now, you can discuss it on the basis of your own experience. Anything else?"*

Furthermore, the examination of the cognitive competence to recognise rationales behind concrete tasks is illustrated by the vice director's description. She expects that practitioners should be able to recognise values or logic behind concrete tasks, seeing their own roles from the plan beforehand, instead of defining their roles in the course of doing their tasks.

*"It was not until we discussed social work ethics and other things that I found that their understanding of that part was, actually, not that adequate." "Take the easiest task, intake, for example; later, I found that social workers were merely concerned about whether they could assign care tasks to home care workers within the time limit. They only cared about the time limit." "As for me, I would want to know not only plans that precede actions, namely planning, but also foreground parts in the project that indicated the so-called origins and backgrounds of the project. In fact, they were also what I wanted to have a clear idea of. You needed to know what you were fighting for! Thus, you would understand why we needed to get a task done within three days. I*

*intended to feel the mood of a caregiver. Of course, most social workers didn't have these care experiences. However, you must understand that, when caregivers had encountered a situation in which their family members needed their assistance, time passed fast over three days in the office; however, the same three days were long and insufferable for them. This was what social workers didn't realise. What they realised was, probably, merely the expected working days required by the county government, and they simply complied with the time limit." "Therefore, in that process, sometimes, I was very shocked that these social workers didn't recognise the values or logic behind it." "I would demand of myself to know what kind of position I was in whenever I encountered a situation. It was the same whenever I looked at a matter. I hope that social workers could see their own roles from the plan, instead of defining their roles in the course of doing their tasks; in this way, they really would not be able to see their roles." (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)*

The examination of the cognitive competence to recognise purposes of specific actions is illustrated by the vice director's description. In this example of the client, who lives alone and has hypertension, asthma and a heart disease, as far as performing an assessment of this client's needs is concerned, the real issue should be to understand how this client copes with his daily life. In the vice director's opinion, this is what an assessment should pay attention to. However, while doing an assessment, that social worker merely copied this piece of information from a care manager's assessment report and simply treated it as an item that recounts the names of diseases the client has. That social worker did not seek to inquire more, missing the real issue: under such circumstances, how would that client cope with his daily life? She expects that practitioners should be able to recognise purposes of specific actions (e.g., recognising purposes of doing an assessment).

*"At the moment, our social workers still rely on the assessment data offered by*

*the Long-Term Care Care Management Centre. What I mean by reliance is that it was actually more like secondary data, but the social workers treated them as the only background data. Then, this made their inquiries not profound enough when they were doing home visits.” “A while ago, I still felt that our social workers understood clients very partially in terms of understanding different aspects of a client. For instance, when I read the assessment data and the approved service items, they revealed that the client lived alone and was suffering from hypertension and something else. My concern was, ‘Oh, the client lives alone! The client has hypertension and asthma! How does that client manage his health, and how does that client cope with his daily life?’ However, our social worker’s record only showed that the client lives alone and has hypertension and heart disease... She merely copied those pieces of information into her record from the data offered by the Long-Term Care Care Management Centre!” (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)*

Having discussed the examination of practitioners’ cognitive structure, the next section discusses the examination of practitioners’ cognitive development.

### *6.2.2 Examination of practitioners’ cognitive development*

Six major classes of thinking (Bloom et al. 1967) can be illustrated by practitioners’ doing an assessment and making and reviewing an individual service plan. Table 6.1 shows an example of the assessment forms, while Table 6.2 illustrates an example of the individual service plan forms (see Appendix XXX in which the vice director and team members of the home care service team discussed this assessment form and this individual service plan form).



Analysis regarding a service user's current situations	Problem and need assessment	Urgency (0-5 point)
1. Summary of personal situations (1) Physical situation (health, diseases, treatments, etc.) (2) Psychological situation (characteristics of personality, cognition, emotion, etc.) (3) Financial situation (incomes, expenditures, etc.) (4) Human relations and social intercourse.		
2. Situations concerning family and community support (1) Family (spiritual support/material support) (2) Neighbours, relatives and friends (spiritual support/material support)		
3. Situations concerning utilisation of formal resources		
4. Genogram and Eco-Map		
5. Overall objectives of intervention		

*Table 6.1 Parts of the contents in the assessment form for home care service*

*Source: The Taipei County Branch's Assessment Form for Home Care Service (Appendix XXXI)*

In Table 6.1, professional terms are listed on the left column and the first row. In order to perform an assessment, a practitioner has to recognise and comprehend these professional terms (e.g., utilisation of formal resources). A practitioner also has to recognise and comprehend relationships between professional terms (e.g., the relationship between utilisation of formal resources and the Eco-Map). In this step, a practitioner needs to perform knowledge and comprehension (Bloom et al. 1967). Then, performing an assessment is an action of applying these professional terms to analyse a service user's specific situation, establishing a systematic understanding of the service user's situation. The results of a practitioner's analysis are written down on the blank cells. In this step, a practitioner needs to perform application and

analysis (Bloom et al. 1967).

Objectives of each stage (short-term, middle-term and long-term objectives):					
Specific needs and problems					
Objectives of intervention					
Service strategies and tasks					
Person taking charge of the tasks					
Expected date for accomplishment of the tasks					
Actual date for accomplishment of the tasks					
Attainment of objectives	Unaccomplished				
	Accomplished partly				
	Accomplished				

Reasons for Unaccomplished: 1. The service user lacks motivation. 2. Lack of resources. 3.

Regression. 4. Other reasons.

*Table 6.2 Parts of the contents in the individual service plan form*

*Source: The Taipei County Branch's Individual Service Plan Form for Home Care Service (Appendix XXXII)*

As indicated in Table 6.2, the next step is to produce objectives of intervention by considering the overall conclusion synthesised from the results of the analysis of the service user's situation, integrating what is known about the service user's situation so as to produce corresponding objectives of intervention. In this step, a practitioner needs to perform a synthesis (Bloom et al. 1967). Then, having set objectives of intervention, a practitioner makes use of available solutions or develops new solutions to form service strategies and tasks, which aim to satisfy the service user's needs and remove his/her problems. The last step is to evaluate attainment of the set objectives and to plan further actions accordingly. In this step, a practitioner needs to perform evaluation (Bloom et al. 1967). As such, to assess a service user's specific situation, to make an individual service plan, to take actions accordingly and

to review the individual service plan involve six major classes of thinking. A practitioner is expected to be able to perform knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

In addition to six major classes of thinking, a practitioner is also expected to be able to perform relativistic thought (Benack 1984). In their practice, practitioners are surrounded by various opinions from various sources. As a social work professional, they are surrounded by professional opinions. As an executor of public welfare service programmes, they are surrounded by local governments' opinions. As a front-line social worker, they are surrounded by service users' opinions. As an employee, they are surrounded by their organisation's opinions. As themselves, they have their own opinions. Such a circumstance requires a practitioner to notice different opinions and become aware of the contradictions that may exist among different opinions. In addition, while contradictions exist among different opinions and a decision has to be made, such a situation requires a practitioner to compare different opinions, evaluate the relative adequacy of different opinions as well as coordinate and relate different opinions to reach a decision. In short, surrounded by various opinions from various sources, this requires a practitioner to perform relativistic thought. Performing relativistic thought to notice different opinions and become aware of any contradictions that may exist among different opinions can be illustrated by Ya-Ru's description.

*“I didn't want to play the bad part; why should I play the bad part?”  
“Because, if I terminate a case, and then a complaint is issued, it will still be regarded as my fault.” “Because the county government is very afraid of pressure from the complainants, then, I will be asked to re-open the cases. So*

*I would rather not terminate the cases.” “Because we are the persons who directly face the clients, it would put us, the Old-Five-Old Foundation, in an awkward situation. Take the home care service as an example; we could say, ‘Oh, the decision was made by the Bureau of Health; thus, we have to terminate the service’. We won’t say, ‘The Old-Five-Old Foundation decided to terminate the service’. But when it comes to the home delivered meals service, if we make an assessment that leads to the termination of a service, when the client asks the county government the reason, the county government would tell the client, ‘It is the Old-Five-Old Foundation that performed the re-assessment, and you did not meet the eligibility criteria’.” “Since the client would blame the Old-Five-Old Foundation, I just felt that it’s not a good thing for us to play the bad part.” (Ya-Ru 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXXIII)*

In this example of doing a re-assessment of that service user’s need, Ya-Ru is surrounded by various opinions. As a social work professional, she needs to make a real assessment that leads to the termination of a service if that service user does not really need it. As an executor of the public welfare service programme, she needs to make a decision that follows the local government’s will; in this case, the local government is afraid of the pressure from that service user’s complaint and will ask her to continue the service. As a front-line social worker, she needs to face that service user’s request, which demands the service to continue. As herself, she does not want to put herself in danger, such as that service user’s complaint being held against her even if she is right. As an employee, she thinks that she has to prevent the Old-Five-Old Foundation from being slandered. In this case, Ya-Ru’s task requires her to perform relativistic thought to notice different opinions and become aware of any contradictions that exist among different opinions. She notes the professional opinion, the local government’s opinion, the service user’s opinion and her own opinion; she also conjectures her organisation’s opinion. She is aware of the contradiction that exists between the professional opinion, which demands

termination of the service, and opinions of the local government and the service user, which demand the service to continue.

With regard to performing relativistic thought to compare different opinions, evaluate the relative adequacy of different opinions as well as coordinate and relate different opinions to reach a decision, this study suggests that there are public and private means to coordinate conflicting opinions. As far as public means are concerned, when conflicts of different opinions happen, a practitioner may raise the issue of concern and become a communication facilitator, who transmits one's opinion to the others and facilitates their communication on the subject of their interests. For instance, Pei-Zhen indicates that a social worker could phone governmental officials or participate in the governmental programme coordination meeting to discuss issues of concern and coordinate different opinions (Appendix XVIII). On the contrary, a practitioner may not raise issues of concern publicly, but may choose to coordinate different opinions by his/her own private means. For instance, in the aforementioned example, Ya-Ru does not resort to public means but chooses to coordinate different opinions by her own private means. The contradiction exists between the professional opinion and opinions of the local government and the service user, and a decision has to be made. She uses relativistic thought, trying to compare different opinions and evaluate different parties' interests so as to reach a decision. She reaches a decision that she believes to be acceptable: to make a false re-assessment and thus to let the service for that service user to continue. This decision is in accordance with the local government's will and the service user's wish, but it is not in accordance with professional standards. She believes that this decision could prevent the Old-Five-Old Foundation from being slandered by that

service user and could keep her away from trouble.

It must be noted that, as for Ya-Ru's decision, this study does not suggest that making a false re-assessment is a bad/good decision. This study only suggests that while contradictions exist among different opinions and a decision has to be made, a practitioner, who is surrounded by various opinions, needs to develop relativistic thought so as to balance different opinions and reach a decision. Having discussed relativistic thought, this study proceeds to discuss self-awareness and reflective thinking.

The examination of simple conscious awareness (Kondrat 1999) is illustrated by the vice director's description.

*“Take scabies, for example; it is something you must know about in the home care service. I told her, ‘Basically, you have to ask the home care worker to stop her service!’ She responded, ‘The home care worker said that scabies were fine for her’. Then, in the end, she didn't know what scabies were. I told her, ‘Why don't you Google it? Look up transmission routes of scabies and things like that’. Then, she started to be aware that, ‘Oh, it seemed something a bit serious’. However, she did not take an action right away, which made me feel anxious.”* (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)

In this example, this practitioner is expected to be able to be aware of what is happening and notice her own thoughts and behaviour. However, the practitioner did not know what scabies is. This does not simply mean that she did not know this medical term. The real issue is that she was not aware of something serious that was happening: the home care worker was at risk of being infected. She was unable

to perform simple conscious awareness.

The examination of reflective awareness (Kondrat 1999) and content reflection (Kember et al. 1999) is also illustrated by the vice director's description.

*“When they were talking to clients’ family members on the phone, in these processes, I usually heard their conversations. According to my understanding of the values of Social Work, I would ponder, ‘Where was the voice of the client?’ In fact, in today’s team meeting discussion with Bi-Zhen and the others, I also wanted to ask them, ‘What did the client say in this process?’ The clients’ voices were actually not heard.”* (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)

In this example, while those practitioners were talking to service users’ family members on the phone, the vice director heard their talks and treated their actions as the targets for analysis. However, those practitioners did not treat themselves as a target for analysis at that time. In this situation, those practitioners did not observe and evaluate themselves, being unable to perform reflective awareness. They were not aware that what they heard merely represented family members’ voices, and service users’ voices were ignored. This also illustrates that they were unable to perform content reflection on the content of their talks on the phone.

Furthermore, reflexive awareness (Kondrat 1999) and process reflection (Kember et al. 1999) are illustrated by Zi-En’s description.

*“However, after you have worked for another organisation, you would reflect on the experience and think, ‘When working for the St. Martin De Porres Hospital, I could actually do it in another manner, making an improvement’.”* “As far

*as that day care centre is concerned, I would do it with a different idea now.”*  
*“It was probably because, in the past, it was so easy to acquire resources. We could hold whatever activities we wanted; if we wanted to hire a magician to put on a show, it was okay.”* *“But here, the items the budget could be spent on were predetermined, and they certainly could not be changed.”* *“It turned out that you had to search for free resources.”* *“Then, I would think about how, when I worked for the St. Martin De Porres Hospital, I did not think about these issues.”* *“However, I felt it was such a pity that I had such a good resource at my disposal, but I didn’t make better use of it. It was sort of a waste!”*  
(Zi-En 2010, Interview, 19 January; Appendix XXXIV)

In this example, Zi-En compares her work experience in the hospital with that in the Old-Five-Old Foundation. She finds that in the period when she worked for the hospital, she had resources at her disposal, but she didn’t improve her services. In this situation, as a historical being, she is able to perform reflexive awareness, being aware of how previous and present work experiences influence her perception and utilisation of resources. This example also illustrates that she is able to perform process reflection on the planning process and the executive processes of her past service provision. By reflexive awareness and process reflection, she finds something that could be improved in her past service provision.

Lastly, the examination of critical reflexive awareness (Kondrat 1999) and premise reflection (Kember et al. 1999) is illustrated by the vice director’s description.

*“What I want to say is that the welfare centre for the elderly can be understood through two aspects. One is the aspect about assigned tasks, and the other is the aspect about the general public. The so-called assigned tasks mean these tasks that were demanded by the city government; you had to work towards them.”* *“To be honest, our social workers were more likely to stay on this aspect! They would think about what the city government would want them to*



*do. What the city government demanded us to do could normally be known from programme evaluation performance indicators. Then, the other aspect that we need to think about is, 'What does the general public want the welfare centre for the elderly to be?'*” “*I would treat myself as if I were one of the elderly and imagine their expectations of the welfare centre for the elderly. What came to my mind was, 'When they think of this place, when they need something, or when they need information relevant to elderly life, they could phone us or come to this centre in person; or, it could be a very relaxed open space; they could come to make enquiries or, if they don't have any question, they could come here to read newspapers or have some tea'.*” “*To welcome every elder, or, let me put it this way: we want to give the elderly an impression that we welcome them; then, they will become willing to come here. Yes. I think that these two aspects need to be linked up.*” “*The elderly love to come here, but social workers merely did the tasks demanded by programme evaluation performance indicators.*” (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)

In this example, the vice director indicates that it would be a pity if the elderly, who love to come to the welfare centre, are prevented from this because practitioners are too busy with the tasks required by the governmental programme evaluation performance indicators. In this case, those practitioners were unable to perform critical reflexive awareness. They were not aware of the influences of the governmental programme evaluation performance indicators on shaping their understanding of the welfare centre and thus limiting their imagination about this welfare centre. This example also illustrates that those practitioners were unable to perform premise reflection on the governmental requirements that govern their thinking. Governmental requirements lead those practitioners to merely think about ‘What does the local government want the elderly welfare centre to be?’ They did not think about ‘What do the elders want the elderly welfare centre to be?’

Having discussed the examination of practitioners' cognitive development, the next section discusses the examination of practitioners' cognitive information processing.

### *6.2.3 Examination of practitioners' cognitive information processing*

This study analyses self-management of one's thinking (Cross and Paris 1988) by looking at three aspects: to accomplish tasks under interruptive events, to accomplish tasks within time limits and to be cautious in processing a message.

As for accomplishing tasks under interruptive events, it is observable that the participants sit in a shared office, working in front of their computers; phone calls come in, and the participants ask their colleagues questions. In such a work environment, as suggested by Shen-Mei, to answer phone calls and to answer her colleagues' questions posed interruptions to what she was doing. This means that practitioners need to be able to accomplish their tasks under interruptive events, being able to deal with unexpected tasks and at the same time being able to keep working on the initial task. As such, in response to a disturbing work environment, practitioners need to be able to execute self-management of their thinking so that their initial task and interruptive events may all be handled.

*“It's not that I was careless, but in the course of accomplishing tasks, there were always things that came out and distracted me from doing the task at hand, such as telephone calls coming in, etc...” “I think that it's simply my own problem! Other people also have to answer phone calls, but they can still do it...” “I mean, I prefer to have a period of quiet time to work on them, but working here, it had never been quiet!”* (Shen-Mei 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix

#### XXIV)

In addition, in a work environment that consists of a heavy workload, the participants need to deal with various tasks and accomplish each of their tasks within time limits. In response to a work environment with a tight schedule, as implied by the vice director, the participants need to improve their current methods of getting their tasks done and find a more efficient way of getting their tasks done. This requires them to execute better self-management of their thinking.

*“At the current stage, I will seek to get administrative work on track first, things like what documents we should submit at a certain point of time.” “To be honest, at present, I can only always chase deadlines since, behind the scenes, the county government is controlling deadlines for submitting documents; I can only tell them, ‘Speed up! It’s already the fifth of the month. Quick! We need to submit the documents!’ Then, in the course of submitting documents, I also sought to understand difficulties. Then, I found that they could go back to review some of their current methods of getting things done in order to find ways to complete it faster.” (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)*

Lastly, while a message is perceived but a practitioner does not process it cautiously, that practitioner may interpret the message in a way that does not capture the real issue. This is illustrated by the vice director’s description.

*“In my opinion, I cannot accept that you go straightforwardly to do something without even thinking about it.” “One day, the client told us, ‘I am not available today; please tell the home care worker that she doesn’t need to come today’. In the past, our social worker would really say, ‘Oh, OK! I got it!’ I was sitting next to her and asked her, ‘What happened to the client?’ ‘She said that she is not feeling well today’. ‘Is she not feeling well today? You have to*

*know why she is not feeling well! How can you merely say, "Oh! You are not feeling well today.?"' In the past, she didn't even ask for a reason! Therefore, later, I demanded that the social worker inquire about the reasons home care workers or clients had cancelled their service appointments. It's not that I want to know the reasons, but that I want to know what I can do about it!" "I probably would coordinate with the home care worker, saying, 'Hey, the granny seems not to feel well today. She was meant to go to see a doctor, but she said that she didn't want to go. Shall we go to visit her? She should go to see a doctor if she is not feeling well, right? She should not determine not to see a doctor, because she's not feeling well'. We would discuss the context of a situation."* (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)

In this example, that practitioner received the granny's message and agreed with her decision to cancel the service appointment, decoding the message as simply a fact reported by the granny. However, as suggested by the vice director, the message ('I am not available today; please tell the home care worker that she doesn't need to come today'.) is not merely a reported fact, but implies that the granny's decision to stay at home did not really benefit herself. In the vice director's opinion, that practitioner should not process the message without even thinking about it. In short, in order to identify what role a social worker should play regarding a particular event, a practitioner is expected to be able to process and decode a message cautiously. This requires that practitioner to better execute self-management of one's thinking.

Having discussed the examination of practitioners' cognitive competence, the next section proceeds to discuss the examination of practitioners' affective competence. In their original contexts, the literatures that address the cognitive domain deal with the issue of human cognition. Therefore, they lack the explanatory power required by this study to examine practitioners' affective competence. This study utilises the

literatures that address the affective domain to discuss this issue.

### **6.3 Examination of practitioners' affective competence**

This section deals with the question: what might constitute the targets for evaluation? It addresses this issue by looking at affective competence as a target for evaluation.

Mayer and Salovey (1993, 1997) suggest that the four-branch model of emotional intelligence includes four kinds of competences. They include the competences to perceive, appraise and express emotions, to use emotions to facilitate thinking, to understand and analyse emotions and utilise emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (see Table II in Appendix VI). This study applies Mayer and Salovey's four-branch model of emotional intelligence to address the examination of practitioners' affective competence. It argues that the targets for evaluation in relation to practitioners' affective competence include emotional competence. Emotional competence refers to the competence to deal with one's own emotions and those of others. However, the weakness of Mayer and Salovey's model is that it inadequately addresses the question of social competence to deal with others (e.g., their emotions). This study utilises Thorndike's (1920) social intelligence and Gardner's (2004) interpersonal intelligence to address this issue.

Thorndike (1920) defines social intelligence as the competence to act wisely in human relations. Gardner (2004) proposes that interpersonal intelligence involves

the competence to detect and discriminate people's intentions, needs and motivations, and the competence to influence and direct people to work towards a desired goal. This study applies the notions of social intelligence and interpersonal intelligence to address the examination of practitioners' affective competence. It argues that the targets for evaluation in relation to practitioners' affective competence also include social competence. Social competence refers to the competence to detect and discriminate the intentions, needs and motivations of others, the competence to influence and direct people to work towards a desired goal, and the competence to act wisely in human relations. As such, in this study, the meaning of affective competence includes emotional competence and social competence.

Figure 6.3 indicates the conclusive framework for the examination of practitioners' affective competence. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in the following parts, justifying its usefulness. The contribution of this section is that, as a part of a cognitive, affective and social analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning, it applies the affective domain to the workplace setting. This affective analysis explains the examination of the affective competence required for accomplishing workplace tasks.

It is observable that, in their tasks, the participants deal with various kinds of people. They deal with governmental officials, governmental programme evaluators, service users and their care givers, and subordinates (e.g., home care workers). This study analyses the examination of practitioners' affective competence by looking at the ways the participants deal with various kinds of people.

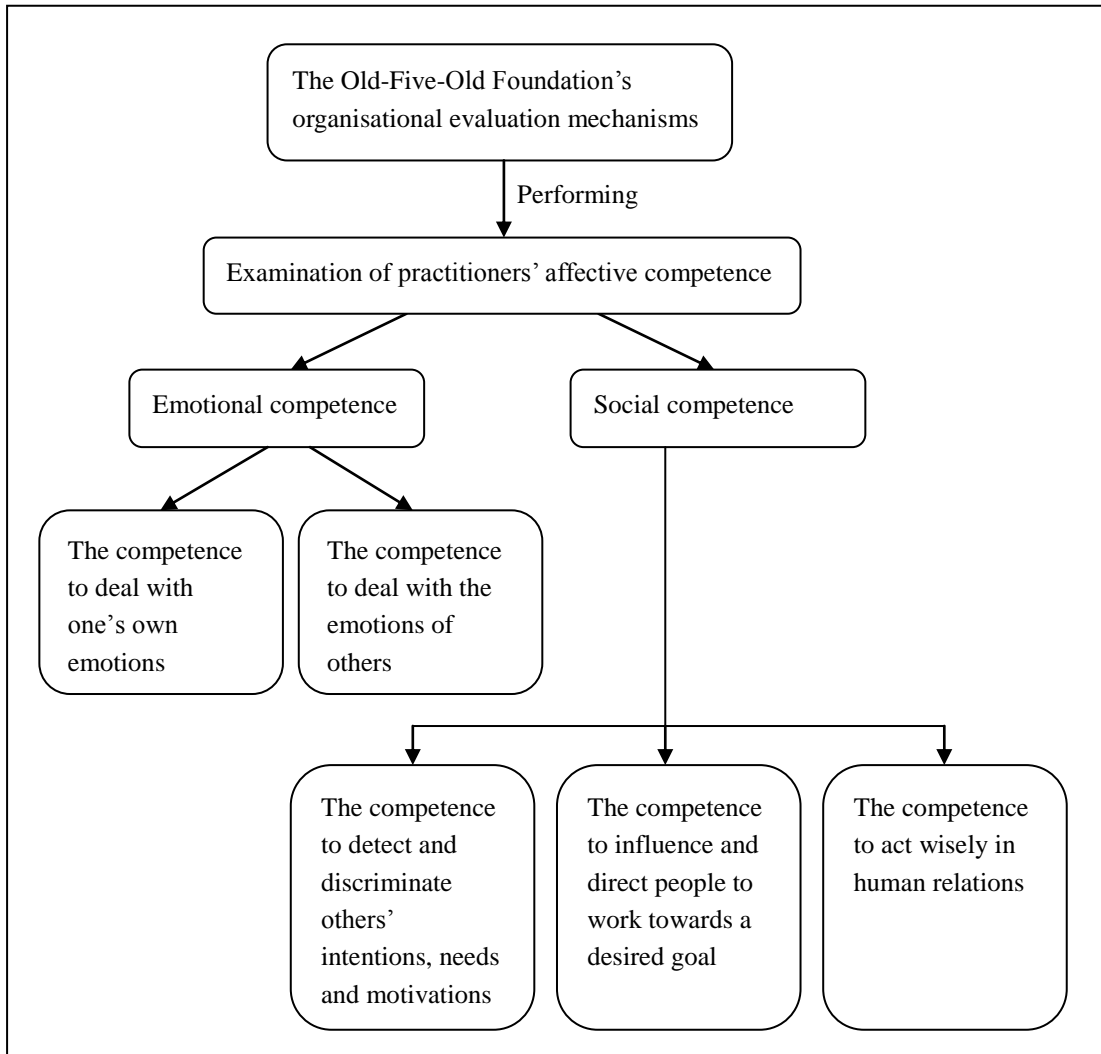


Figure 6.3 The conclusive framework for the examination of practitioners' affective competence

As far as dealing with funding bodies is concerned, this is illustrated by Ya-Ru's description.

*“Because sometimes, it's really odd to demand these details. The programme evaluator once said, ‘The thermometer in the fridge was broken, so the temperature could not be monitored; you need to put a thermometer inside it’. Then, I put a thermometer inside it; I bought one and hung it in the fridge. But then, the government official said, ‘You, it is too casual doing this!’ So, I took it out. But did you know what happened? When we were evaluated, we were*

*told, 'You simply have monitored the upper compartment but not the lower... Because there are two compartments, you must monitor the temperature in the lower compartment as well'. I really wanted to tell the programme evaluator, 'It is the government official who asked me to remove the thermometer!'" "I can't say that it was the government official's fault, can I?" "I am not that brave." "There is no need to damage the relationship with the government officials." "Just be amenable!" "Don't make troubles that worry the government officials." (Ya-Ru 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXXIII)*

In this example, Ya-Ru suggested that what the governmental official wanted was that a practitioner causes no trouble, being amenable. In this sense, as a general principle, making efforts toward this end is a necessity on the subject of how to get along with the governmental official. This does not mean that being amenable and thus hiding her true opinion represent a wrong action. Rather, it shows that Ya-Ru is able to be aware of power relationships, being aware of her position in comparison to the governmental official's and the governmental programme evaluator's positions. She was able to anticipate what emotional reaction might occur if she raised doubts in front of the governmental official and the governmental programme evaluator. Then, she took a response that she believed to be appropriate, such as hiding her opinion. In front of them, she did not say that 'It's really odd to demand these details.' or 'It is the government official who asked me to remove the thermometer!' Borrowing from Ya-Ru's example, hiding her true opinions may not be brave behaviour, but it could be behaviour that could keep her from trouble.

In addition, while dealing with governmental programme evaluators, as indicated in Table 6.3, the Old-Five-Old Foundation's guideline suggests that, as a general principle, to show respect, hospitality and a humble attitude is necessary.



Item	Tips
Personnel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proper reception is the foundation of building relationships.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The chief's opening marks and welcome shall convey respect.</li> <li>(2) Greeting evaluators with hospitality.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Social workers, who accompany evaluators, need to be professional, earnest, and good at expression.</li> <li>3. The tasks on the day of the programme evaluation must be allocated properly in advance.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The person, who will make the presentation.</li> <li>(2) Lighting on and off, photographing and preparing drinks.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. All social workers must know the general information about the Old-Five-Old Foundation.</li> </ol>
Presentation and making responses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To choose a proper person to make the presentation.</li> <li>2. Rehearsing before making the presentation, and noticing timing.</li> <li>3. Do not be eager to try to defend yourself or do not be eager to clarify one's responsibilities regarding the weaknesses indicated by evaluators.</li> <li>4. Please write down evaluators' opinions.</li> <li>5. To answer questions timely and to offer explanations.</li> <li>6. Attitudes must be humble.</li> </ol>

*Table 6.3 Parts of the contents in relation to preparation for programme evaluation*

*Source: Service Performance (Appendix XXXV)*

To sum up, the aforementioned two examples reveal that practitioners' tasks require them to develop the social competence to detect and discriminate governmental officials' and governmental programme evaluators' intentions, needs and motivations (Gardner 2004), such as being able to detect the governmental official's need concerning causing no trouble. These two examples also reveal that practitioners' tasks require them to develop the social competence to act wisely in human relations (Thorndike 1920), such as behaving in a way that shows a humble attitude in front of governmental programme evaluators.

As far as dealing with service users and their care givers is concerned, service users

and their care givers may press local governments to give them what they want. In addition, they may slander the Old-Five-Old Foundation and its social workers if they do not get what they want. The way practitioners deal with this situation is illustrated by Xin-Chun's description and Shen-Mei's description.

*“When clients phoned us to make a request, they would say, ‘If you don’t do it in this way, I will resort to the county government to make the request. Let us see if this way is better!’ They might talk to us in this manner, and then, I would try my best to...” “To try our best to cool them down first, saying ‘We will not! We will definitely take your needs into consideration and certainly will deal with it quickly’.” “In case they say, ‘Oh, it is you, social workers of the Old-Five-Old Foundation’.” “‘They are not willing to help us’. Something like that. I am very afraid of being labelled as such.” (Xin-Chun 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXIX)*

*“There were cases, such as those who obviously relied on social welfare, or it was evident that the clients caused the situation and could improve it by themselves. When dealing with these cases, I would not pay much attention to them. If they complained to me, I would say, ‘Oh, okay, okay, right, right’. Sometimes, I would talk back as well... I would talk back because, sometimes, I did not like to do whatever they wanted me to do.” (Shen-Mei 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXIV)*

Xin-Chun deals with this situation by showing appreciation of service users' requests (e.g., discoursing that her foundation will definitely take their needs into consideration and certainly will deal with their requests quickly) and avoiding irritating them (e.g., trying to cool them down). Shen-Mei deals with this situation by putting off their requests (e.g., making a response that says 'Oh, okay, okay, right, right. '), or she would question reasonableness of their requests by saying something back. Moreover, while a complaint is issued against the Old-Five-Old Foundation,

as indicated in ‘The Taichung City Branch’s Annual Programme Evaluation Report for the Public Home Care Service in the Year 2007’ (Appendix XXXVI), practitioners are required to give a positive and responsible response to the complainant; being positive indicates appreciation of the complainant’s opinions and wishes, while being responsible conveys its will to take the initiative to respond to their opinions and wishes. This aims to ease the complainant’s emotional reaction and prevent the situation from getting worse.

To sum up, the aforementioned three examples illustrate that practitioners’ tasks require them to develop the emotional competence to deal with their own emotions as well as the emotions of service users and their care givers (Mayer and Salovey 1993, 1997), such as controlling one’s own emotions so as to show a positive response to the complainant and then trying to cool the complainant down.

As far as dealing with subordinates is concerned, home care workers may violate regulations. The way practitioners deal with this situation is illustrated by the conversation between the vice director and Bi-Zhen You in the home care service team’s team meeting (Appendix XXX).

Shu-Fen Wang: *“They mentioned something, blah blah blah. We would go to investigate it and then handle it. However, sometimes, it did happen to us that it was totally our fault, without a doubt. It was really our fault. In this situation, how did you deal with it?”*

Bi-Zhen You: *“When I started to work here, I was afraid to clash with home care workers directly. Therefore, I used to handle it very euphemistically. However, I found that was ineffective, because, sometimes, people’s heads need to be knocked by a rock so that they will wake up! As for now, that is, from last*

*year, my manner was that I would tell a home care worker that... Anyway, I would tell a home care worker, 'You are very clever. I don't want to play a guessing game with you: you guess what is in my head whilst I guess what you had done'. I just told the home care worker the issue directly." "It depended on how serious the situation was. I mean, I would not punish a home care worker very severely straight away or do something like this."*

Shu-Fen Wang: *"Actually, like what Bi-Zhen just mentioned, if you don't sort it out immediately and unequivocally, some things will go..."*

When home care workers violated regulations, from Bi-Zhen You's perspective, to handle it euphemistically was ineffective, and in the vice director's opinion, to sort this situation out immediately and unequivocally is a must. This reveals that practitioners' tasks require them to develop the social competence to influence and direct their subordinates to work towards a desired goal (Gardner 2004), such as sorting home care workers' misconduct out immediately and unequivocally.

Having discussed the targets for evaluation in relation to cognitive competence and affective competence, the next section discusses the organisational evaluation mechanisms that carry out the evaluation of practitioners' cognitive and affective competence. In their original contexts, the literatures that address the cognitive domain and the affective domain deal with the issue of human cognition, emotional intelligence, social intelligence and interpersonal intelligence. Therefore, they could not enable this study to explain how cognitive competence and affective competence are examined by an organisation. This study utilises the literatures on organisational control systems to address this issue.

#### **6.4 The Old-Five-Old Foundation's organisational evaluation mechanisms**

This section deals with the question: what the organisational evaluation mechanisms might be that allow the examination of practitioners' cognitive and affective competence?

Jaworski (1988) suggests that, in management-initiated formal control mechanisms, process control aims to influence the means through which organisationally desired results are produced. It regulates the formation of employees' activities. In addition, output control focuses on producing organisationally desired results. In the complete form of output control, employees are required to produce organisationally desired results. However, an organisation does not specify the procedures through which these results are intended to be obtained. This study utilises the notions of process control and output control to address organisational evaluation mechanisms. However, Jaworski's discussion fails to categorise concrete control mechanisms in relation to process and output control. This study utilises Swiss' (1991) discussion of the MBO-Type system, Poister's (2003) discussion of the MBO-Type system, Beer, Ruh, Dawson, McCaa and Kavanagh's (1978) performance development and review system and Montanari and Freedman's (1981) discussion of centralisation to address this issue.

As for concrete output control mechanisms, Swiss (1991) indicates that, in the output-oriented performance management systems, the MBO-Type system focuses on the management of an individual's performance. With regard to the MBO-Type system, Poister (2003) further suggests that the MBO-Type system puts emphasis on setting individual-level task objectives, which align to and realise organisational goals, and on developing workable action plans to achieve the set objectives. This

system monitors the progress of the implementation of action plans on an ongoing basis, evaluates accomplishment of the set objectives and gives feedback to employees concerning the revision of action plans and modification of the set objectives. However, Beer, Ruh, Dawson, McCaa and Kavanagh (1978) suggest that a weakness of the Management-By-Objectives approach is that it does not offer diagnostic information about an individual's attributes (e.g., strengths and weaknesses of an individual's competence) since it merely looks at task-oriented objectives and task outcomes. Thus, they propose the performance development and review system. This system aims to identify weaknesses in an individual's personal attributes, identifying an individual's developmental needs. In view of these, this study suggests that concrete output control mechanisms not only include the mechanism that evaluates individual-level task objectives but also contain the mechanism that evaluates personal attributes. Having discussed concrete output control mechanisms, this section proceeds to discuss concrete process control mechanisms so as to portray a more inclusive picture of organisational evaluation mechanisms.

Montanari and Freedman (1981) suggest that, in the structural dimension of an organisation, which seeks to maintain control over decision-making processes, centralisation refers to the degree to which employees have the authority to make a decision. For instance, an organisation may leave full decision-making authority on important matters to people, who are in higher-level organisational positions. In view of this, concrete process control mechanisms could include the mechanism that evaluates an individual's specific decisions. For instance, a social work supervisor, who has full decision-making authority, may evaluate practitioners' decisions,

examining their competence.

To sum up, drawing upon Jaworski's discussion of output and process control, this study argues that organisational evaluation mechanisms include output control mechanisms and process control mechanisms. Furthermore, drawing upon Swiss' and Poister's discussions of the MBO-type system, it argues that the mechanism for evaluating individual-level task objectives constitutes one type of output control mechanism. Drawing upon Beer, Ruh, Dawson, McCaa and Kavanagh's performance development and review system, it argues that the mechanism that evaluates personal attributes also constitutes one type of output control mechanism. Drawing upon Montanari and Freedman's discussion of centralisation, it argues that the mechanism that evaluates an individual's specific decisions constitutes one type of process control mechanism. Figure 6.4 indicates the conclusive framework for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's organisational evaluation mechanisms. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness.

The contribution of this section is that, as a part of a cognitive, affective and social analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning, it relates learning to organisational control systems. This social analysis explains the examination of practitioners' cognitive and affective competence carried out through organisational evaluation mechanisms that evaluate individual-level task objectives, personal attributes and an individual's specific decisions. An organisation could examine practitioners' competence via evaluating the accomplishment of their individual-level task objectives, the weakness of their personal attributes and the

appropriateness of their specific decisions. This section starts with a discussion of the mechanism that evaluates individual-level task objectives.

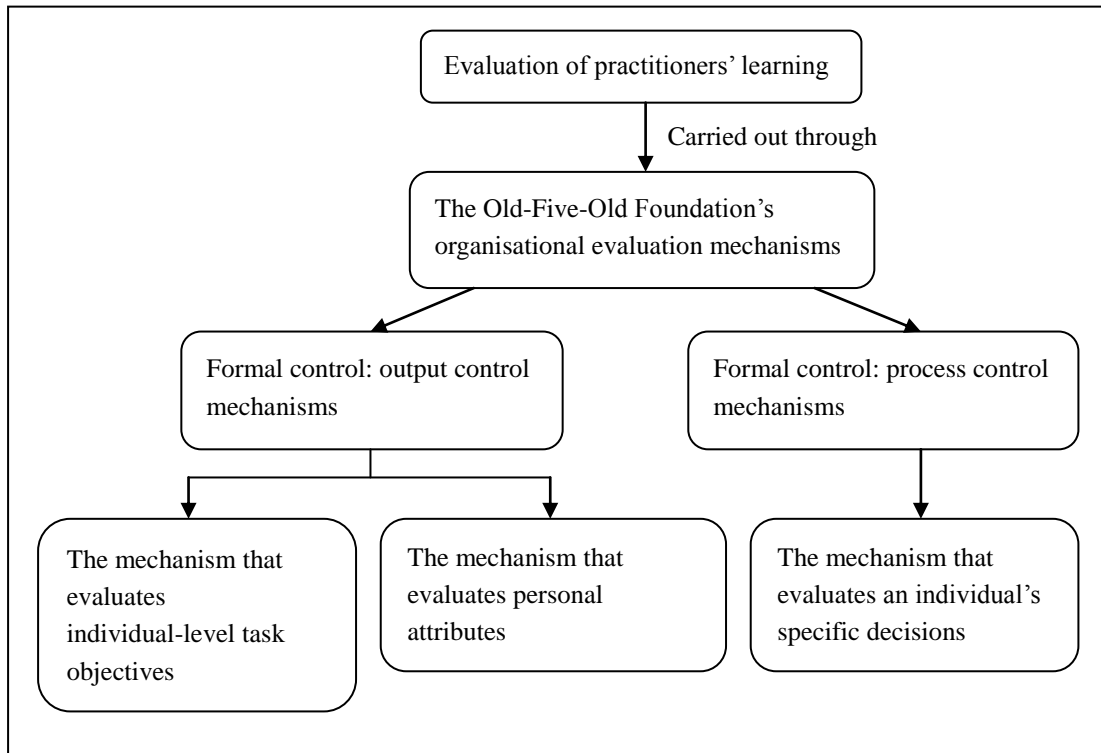


Figure 6.4 The conclusive framework for the Old-Five-Old Foundation's organisational evaluation mechanisms

#### 6.4.1 The mechanism that evaluates individual-level task objectives

This study suggests that the service user complaint mechanism represents the mechanism that evaluates individual-level task objectives (Poister 2003; Swiss 1991).

Step	Content
Receiving complaints	1. Those, who may issue a complaint, include service users, their family members, volunteers, other organisations, other persons, etc.



	2. Once a complaint is issued, fill out the complaint disposal form.
Collecting information	To understand the reasons for making a complaint, and to collect relevant information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The content of a complaint.</li> <li>2. The time, the place, the process and the frequency that the alleged event had happened.</li> <li>3. Whether there was any witness.</li> <li>4. The way the alleged event was handled by the persons involved at that time, and the complainant's opinions about this.</li> </ol>
Undertaking an investigation	Within three working days, to collect further oral evidence from the persons involved and investigate it, and to collect material evidence that could demonstrate whether the alleged event did happen.
Finding out the truth	Within the 4 <sup>th</sup> to the 7 <sup>th</sup> working days, to find out the truth by evaluating the investigation process, and the information, the material evidence and the documents gathered.
Giving an explanation, clarifying the misunderstanding, and giving a reply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Within the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> working days, to give a reply and an explanation to the persons involved concerning the outcomes of the investigation and the future action plan.</li> <li>2. To understand the opinions of the persons involved about the future action plan.</li> </ol>
Action	To take action according to the agreement made by the persons involved and the Old-Five-Old Foundation.
Making records and making a review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To complete the complaint disposal form.</li> <li>2. If it is the Old-Five-Old Foundation's fault, to make a review, to produce improvement measures for the fault and, if necessary, to revise relevant regulations or institutions.</li> </ol>
Closing the case	To put all data in a file and to close the case.
Follow-up and discussion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If it is necessary, to make a follow-up so as to understand whether the problem is really solved.</li> <li>2. To review the process of dealing with the complaint and to find out whether there was any shortcoming in this process, which needs to be improved.</li> <li>3. To review the alleged event.</li> </ol>

*Table 6.4 The summary of the procedure for dealing with complaints*

*Source: The Chunghwa Branch's Annual Programme Evaluation Report for the Public Home Care Service in the Year 2008 (Appendix XXXVII)*

As indicated in Table 6.4, the Chunghwa branch had set the guideline and the specific procedures for dealing with service users' complaints. The service user complaint mechanism may reveal possible weaknesses in its service provision, and thus it may learn from service users' and their care givers' complaints. For instance, a practitioner needs to set objectives for his/her intervention in his/her individual service plan for a service user. If a service user issues a complaint about a practitioner's individual service plan and if it is that practitioner's fault, as illustrated in Table 6.4, a review needs to be conducted, and improvement needs to be made. Thus, that practitioner's cognitive competence to make an individual service plan and set the objectives of an intervention will be reviewed and improved. The next section proceeds to discuss the mechanism that evaluates personal attributes.

#### *6.4.2 The mechanism that evaluates personal attributes*

This study suggests that the internal performance appraisal mechanism represents the mechanism that evaluates personal attributes (Beer et al. 1978).

Item		Mark
Goal Attainment	Accomplishing job tasks (including professional services, administration, etc.) on time and correctly	10
	Having good communication with relevant units or people (governments, donators, service users, home care workers, etc.) so as to facilitate attainment of organisational goals and the objectives of the tasks	10
	To live up to the task missions, which are determined and assigned by the chief of the branch, well	10
	Having good resource linking abilities and good resource developing abilities	10

	To effectively enhance the programmes assigned, having quality services and good performance	10
Contribution	Identifying oneself with the Old-Five-Old Foundation and its goals	5
	Having an awareness of making a contribution to, and making substantial contributions to the Old-Five-Old Foundation (including tasks, fund-raising, defending the Old-Five-Old Foundation's reputation, facilitating volunteer services, etc.)	10
Work Attitudes	Taking the initiative and having a positive attitude toward the tasks and the work team	10
	Having a team-work spirit, offering members of the work term maximum support and having harmonious collaborative relationships with other members	10
	Working flexibly so as to help oneself or other members of the team to accomplish tasks more smoothly	5
	Having the spirit to make a thorough study so as to improve the tasks and produce originality	5
	Demanding own personal growth and continuing life-long learning; being better than last year (including tasks, interpersonal relations, etc.)	5

*Table 6.5 Performance criteria for the annual performance appraisal*

*Source: The Old-Five-Old Foundation's Annual Performance Appraisal Form for Social Workers for the Year 2008 (Appendix XXXVIII)*

The internal performance appraisal mechanism sets performance criteria, indicating an organisation's overall expectations of its employees. These performance criteria indicate to its employees the attributes that they are required to develop. For instance, Table 6.5 indicates the performance criteria, which set out the key aspects that practitioners should attempt to achieve. In this example, as for the competences practitioners are expected to develop, for instance, the Old-Five-Old Foundation requires them to have good resource linking competence and good resource developing competence. This requires practitioners to develop affective

competences since tasks in relation to resource linking and resource developing involve building relationships with other human beings. As such, practitioners' affective competence will be evaluated in the internal performance appraisal mechanism. The next section proceeds to discuss the mechanism that evaluates an individual's specific decisions.

#### *6.4.3. The mechanism that evaluates an individual's specific decisions*

This study suggests that the approval mechanism represents the mechanism that evaluates an individual's specific decisions (cf. Montanari and Freedman 1981). Practitioners submit their decisions to their social work superiors for approval. The approval mechanism lays the foundation for social work supervisors to review practitioners' decisions, evaluating whether they have the competence to make a proper decision. In the Old-Five-Old Foundation, the nature of the tasks determines what decision needs to be approved. The decisions that are relevant to vital consequences and the decisions that involve sensitive issues need to be approved. For instance, as for the decisions that are relevant to vital consequences, Bi-Zhen You indicates that her service programme proposals need to be approved by her social work supervisor before they become the documents that speak on behalf of the Old-Five-Old Foundation. As for the decisions that involve sensitive issues, her complaint disposal records have to be approved by her social work supervisor (Appendix XVIII). As such, her cognitive and affective competence to produce service programme proposals and deal with a complainant is examined in the approval mechanism.

Having discussed the Old-Five-Old Foundation's organisational evaluation mechanisms, the next section summarises this chapter.

## **6.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter answers the question: how is the evaluation of practitioners' learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector? The conclusive argument of this chapter is that the evaluation of practitioners' learning is organised by the service provider's monitoring (an organisational level structuring force). It performs the macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning, investigating the social structure that organises the evaluation of practitioners' learning. This analysis in conjunction with the macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning (Chapter 5) and the micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning (Chapter 7) systematically perform both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning, adding an original contribution to previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000).

In the analysis of the service provider's monitoring, this study tackles three bodies of literature: the literatures that address the cognitive domain (Benack 1984; Bloom et al. 1967; Bruner 1957; Collins and Loftus 1975; Cross and Paris 1988; Kember et al. 1999; Kondrat 1999; O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith 2009; Tulving 2002), the affective domain (Gardner 2004; Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia 1968; Mayer and Salovey 1993, 1997; Thorndike 1920) and organisational control systems (Beer et al. 1978;

Jaworski 1988; Montanari and Freedman 1981; Poister 2003; Swiss 1991). Section 6.2, Section 6.3 and Section 6.4 indicate the limitations of these literatures. In order to produce a more comprehensive explanation, this study synthesises these three bodies of literature. Drawing upon these literatures, the conclusive argument for the service provider's monitoring is that the evaluation of practitioners' learning is carried out through the service provider's (the Old-Five-Old Foundation's) organisational evaluation mechanisms, which examine practitioners' cognitive competence and practitioners' affective competence.

The contribution of this analysis is that it proposes the conclusive framework for the service provider's monitoring, and this framework is a new synthesised framework that applies the cognitive and affective domains to the workplace setting (cognitive analysis and affective analysis) and relates learning to organisational control systems (social analysis). This cognitive, affective and social analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning denotes a contribution to understanding in the field. It explains the examination of the cognitive and affective competences required for accomplishing workplace tasks. It also explains the examination of practitioners' cognitive and affective competence carried out through organisational evaluation mechanisms that evaluate individual-level task objectives, personal attributes and an individual's specific decisions. An organisation could examine practitioners' competence via evaluating the accomplishment of their individual-level task objectives, the weakness of their personal attributes and the appropriateness of their specific decisions.

Having discussed the macro force that organises the evaluation of practitioners'

learning, the next chapter discusses micro forces that organise practitioners' methods of learning: practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing.

## CHAPTER SEVEN THE MICRO ANALYSIS OF PRACTITIONERS' METHODS OF LEARNING

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter answers the question: how are practitioners' methods of learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector? The conclusive argument of this chapter is that practitioners' methods of learning are organised by practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing (individual level structuring forces). It performs the micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning. This analysis in conjunction with the macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning (Chapter 5) and the macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning (Chapter 6) systematically perform both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning, adding an original contribution to previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000).

In the analysis of practitioners' puzzle solving, this study tackles seven bodies of literature: the literatures that address problem solving, case management, the cognitive domain, the affective domain, networks, information accessibility and information comprehensibility. The literatures that address problem solving (Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger 2000, 2011; Mayer 1999; Noller, Parnes and Biondi 1976) could enable this study to explain the process of puzzle solving. However, they fail to explain the process of developing puzzle solving competence; they lack

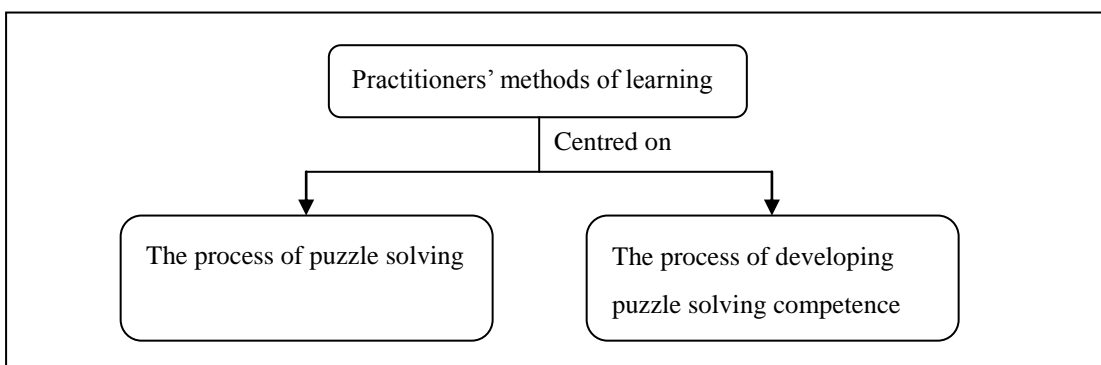


the capacity to enable this study to explain, in order to solve the puzzle, what activity a puzzle solver engages in when he/she encounters a difficulty in puzzle solving. This could be explained by the literatures that address case management, the cognitive domain, the affective domain, networks, information accessibility and information comprehensibility.

Ballew and Mink's (1996) discussion of case management could enable this study to develop the notions of learning need identification, learning resource identification and learning barrier identification to explain the process of developing puzzle solving competence. Yet, it could not provide further explanation of the content of learning need identification, learning resource identification and learning barrier identification. The literatures that address the cognitive domain (Benack 1984; Bloom et al. 1967; Bruner 1957; Collins and Loftus 1975; Cross and Paris 1988; Kember et al. 1999; Kondrat 1999; O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith 2009; Tulving 2002) and the affective domain (Gardner 2004; Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia 1968; Mayer and Salovey 1993, 1997; Thorndike 1920) could enable this study to explain the content of learning need identification. The literatures that address networks (Gould and Fernandez 1989; Granovetter 1973; Law 1992; Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; Wenger 2000) could enable this study to explain the content of learning resource identification. The literatures that address information accessibility (Fidel and Green 2004) and information comprehensibility (Fidel and Green 2004; Gagné 1985) could enable this study to explain the content of learning barrier identification. Nonetheless, these literatures could not enable this study to explain the process of puzzle solving, while the literatures that address problem solving could do so. In order to produce a more comprehensive explanation, this study synthesises these

seven bodies of literature.

Drawing upon these seven bodies of literature, the conclusive argument for practitioners' puzzle solving is that practitioners' methods of learning are centred on the process of puzzle solving and on the process of developing puzzle solving competence. Going through these processes, practitioners develop the competences to accomplish the value activities assigned to them. The contribution of this analysis is that it proposes the conclusive framework for practitioners' puzzle solving, and this framework is a new synthesised framework that engages in a cognitive analysis of the practitioners' process of puzzle solving together with a cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of their process of developing puzzle solving competence. This cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of practitioners' methods of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting a contribution to the field of study. Figure 7.1 indicates the conclusive framework for practitioners' puzzle solving.



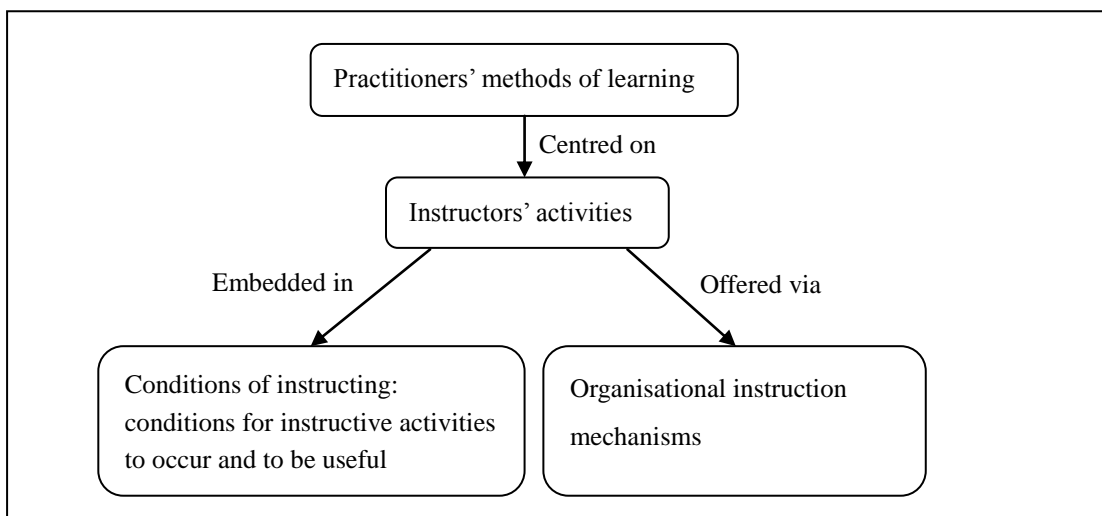
*Figure 7.1 The conclusive framework for practitioners' puzzle solving*

In the analysis of instructors' instructing, this study tackles five bodies of literature:

the literatures that address identity (Edwards and Bess 1998), communication (Berlo 1960; Habermas 1984; Schramm 1955), orientation (Mathis and Jackson 2008), supervision (Kadushin and Harkness 2002) and organisational socialisation (Fisher 1986). The literatures that address identity and communication could enable this study to explain the psychological condition of instructing and the communication condition of instructing. However, they could not enable this study to explain the mechanisms through which instructors offer instructions to practitioners. This could be explained by the literatures that address orientation, supervision and organisational socialisation. Nonetheless, these literatures could not enable this study to explain the conditions of instructing in order for instructive activities to occur and to be useful, while the literatures that address identity and communication could do so. In order to produce a more comprehensive explanation, this study synthesises these five bodies of literature.

Drawing upon these five bodies of literature, the conclusive argument for instructors' instructing is that practitioners' methods of learning are centred on instructors' activities. Instructors offer instructions to practitioners via organisational instruction mechanisms and, for instructive activities to occur and to be useful, the conditions of instructing, which consist of psychological and communication conditions, have to be met. With instructions from instructors, practitioners develop the competences to accomplish their assigned value activities. The contribution of this analysis is that it proposes the conclusive framework for instructors' instructing, and this framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to identity (professional relations) and to communication and engages in an analysis of macro organisational instruction mechanisms that form the architecture for the construction

of professional relations and communications between practitioners and instructors. This social analysis of practitioners' methods of learning does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), denoting one of this study's contributions to the field. Figure 7.2 indicates the conclusive framework for instructors' instructing.



*Figure 7.2 The conclusive framework for instructors' instructing*

Section 7.2 (the process of puzzle solving) and Section 7.3 (the process of developing puzzle solving competence) discuss practitioners' puzzle solving. Section 7.4 (the psychological condition of instructing), Section 7.5 (the communication condition of instructing) and Section 7.6 (organisational instruction mechanisms) discuss instructors' instructing. In each section, there is an indication of the sub-framework for each section and the literatures upon which each sub-framework is built. Then, this study presents the empirical data and its interpretations of the data, utilising each sub-framework to make these interpretations. This chapter starts with a discussion of the process of puzzle solving.

## 7.2 The process of puzzle solving

This section addresses the question: what might be the process of puzzle solving? Mayer (1999) suggests that problem representation and problem solution constitute two major phases in problem solving. This study utilises these two phases to analyse the process of puzzle solving. However, it disagrees with the usage of the term ‘problem’, and replaces the usage ‘problem’ with a more neutral usage ‘puzzle’. Drawing upon Mayer’s discussion of problem representation and problem solution, this study argues that the process of puzzle solving includes two major phases: puzzle identification and solution identification.

As for puzzle identification, in the preliminary framework, this study argues that puzzle identification consists of constructing opportunities, exploring data and framing problems (Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger 2000, 2011). The empirical data shows that practitioners’ tasks are assigned by their organisation, and these tasks are definite. Their task is framed and defined by their organisation; puzzle identification could be done simply by identifying their definite task assignment. Thus, this study does not utilise the notions of constructing opportunities, exploring data and framing problems to analyse data. However, this does not mean that these three notions are rejected by the empirical data, but that they are not suitable for analysing the data collected by this study. This study would like to propose a possible situation in which these three notions may be applicable: if practitioners engage in academic research activities and have to define a research question, constructing opportunities, exploring data and framing problems may be applicable.

With regard to solution identification, this study utilises Mayer's (1999) discussion of reproductive thinking and productive thinking, Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's (2000, 2011) discussion of generating ideas, developing solutions and building acceptance, and Noller, Parnes and Biondi's (1976) discussion of divergent thinking and convergent thinking to analyse it. Mayer suggests that, in reproductive thinking, a problem solver applies an existing solution to solve a problem. In productive thinking, a problem solver comes up with a new solution to solve a problem. Drawing upon Mayer's discussion, this study argues that solution identification involves reproductive thinking and productive thinking.

In reproductive thinking, a problem solver simply applies a known solution to solve a problem; thus, there is no sub-process concerning generating a solution. As such, this study proceeds to discuss possible sub-processes in productive thinking. It pays attention to cognitive processes of producing a solution before it is put into action. This study suggests that the notion of planning, which devises a solution plan (Mayer 1999), inadequately identifies the sub-processes in productive thinking. Rather, Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's (2000, 2011) discussion of generating ideas, developing solutions and building acceptance represents the more inclusive and specific sub-processes in productive thinking. In generating ideas, a problem solver searches for and produces many varied options that have the potential to solve the problem. In developing solutions, a problem solver establishes the criteria for analysing and refining the options, and applies the revised options to establish a solution. In building acceptance, a problem solver considers possible sources of assistance and resistance that may influence the implementation of a solution, and accordingly produces a specific action plan to solve the problem. Drawing upon

Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger's discussion, this study argues that, in productive thinking, solution identification consists of generating ideas, developing solutions and building acceptance.

Furthermore, there is a need to further identify what primary cognitive operation is performed in the stages of generating ideas and developing solutions so as to portray a more inclusive picture of solution identification. Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger (2000, 2011) propose the notions of generating and focusing to address this issue. They replace divergent thinking and convergent thinking with generating and focusing. This study disagrees with their usages. The reason for this is that generating and focusing do not describe the cognitive operations as vividly as divergent thinking and convergent thinking. Thus, this study takes the usages of divergent and convergent thinking. Noller, Parnes and Biondi (1976) suggest that central to idea finding is divergent thinking which seeks to explore any possible ideas. Central to solution finding is convergent thinking that seeks to establish the best solution from the ideas. Drawing upon Noller, Parnes and Biondi's (1976) discussion, this study argues that generating ideas is primarily directed by divergent thinking, while developing solutions is primarily directed by convergent thinking.

To sum up, this study argues that the process of puzzle solving includes two major phases: puzzle identification and solution identification. Puzzle identification could be done by identifying the definite task assignment. Solution identification involves reproductive thinking and productive thinking. In productive thinking, solution identification consists of generating ideas, developing solutions and building acceptance. Generating ideas is primarily directed by divergent thinking, while

developing solutions is primarily directed by convergent thinking. Figure 7.3 indicates the conclusive framework for the process of puzzle solving. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness. The contribution of this section is that, as a part of a cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of practitioners' methods of learning, it engages in a cognitive analysis of the practitioners' process of puzzle solving. It explains the process of puzzle solving through which practitioners develop the competences to accomplish the value activities they are assigned to execute. This section starts with a discussion of puzzle identification.

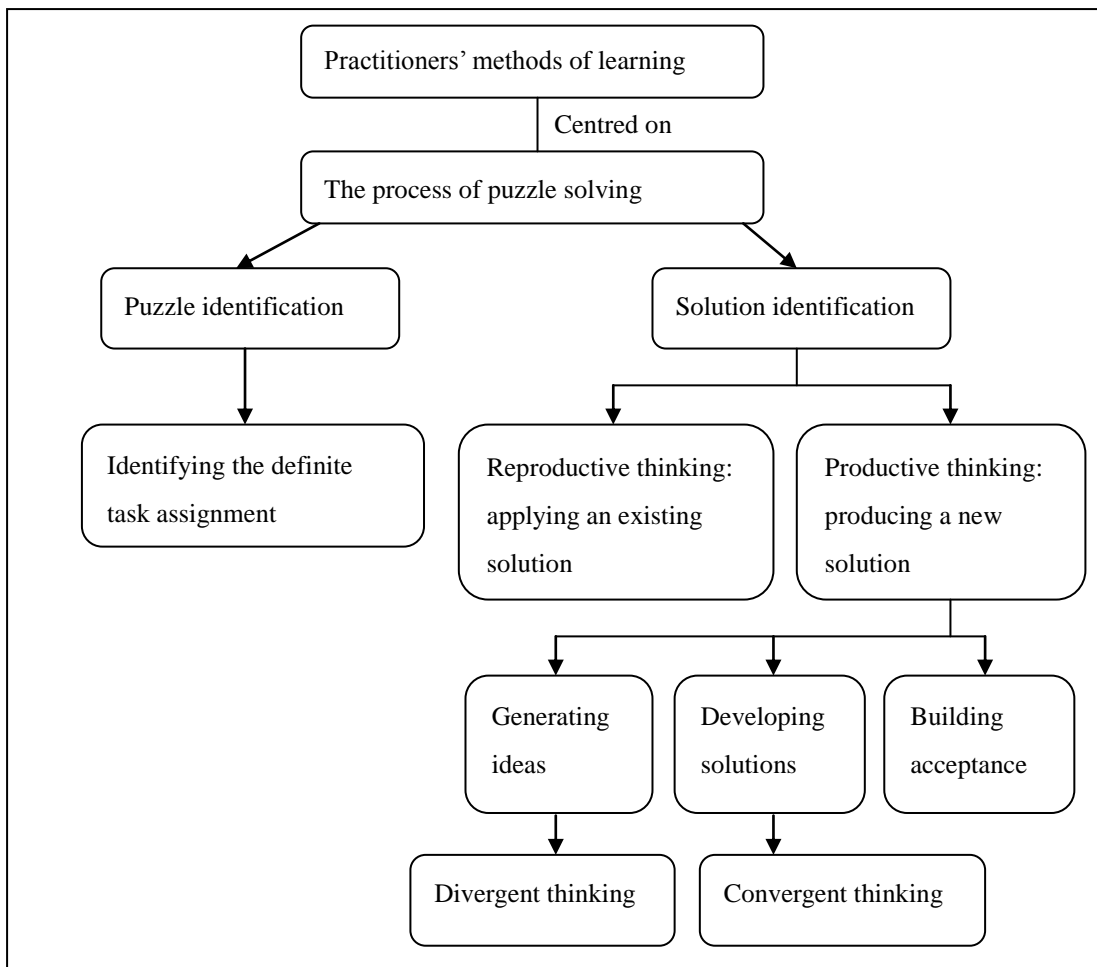


Figure 7.3 The conclusive framework for the process of puzzle solving



### *7.2.1 Puzzle identification*

This study proposes that a practitioner's tasks indicate what kind of puzzle he/she is expected to be capable of solving. The contents of practitioners' tasks could be classified into two categories: to deal with cognitive puzzles and to deal with affective puzzles. Making an individual service plan for a service user, which involves practitioners' cognitive competence in relation to synthesis and evaluation (see Section 6.2.2), is an example of cognitive puzzles. Dealing with a complainant, which involves practitioners' affective competence to deal with their own emotions as well as service users' and their care givers' emotions (see Section 6.3), represents an example of affective puzzles.

These two examples reveal that practitioners' tasks are assigned by their organisation, and these tasks are definite: making an individual service plan for a service user or dealing with a complainant. As such, a task is framed and defined by the practitioners' organisation; puzzle identification could be done simply by identifying the definite task assignment. Since the task which represents a cognitive puzzle or an affective puzzle is identified, the next step is to identify the solution to accomplish a task.

### *7.2.2 Solution identification*

As for reproductive thinking (Mayer 1999), this study proposes that practitioners may make reference to their own previous work experience to find an existing

solution or they may acquire an existing solution from other sources (e.g., their colleagues). Zi-En's description illustrates the former situation, while Xin-Chun's description illustrates the latter situation.

*"As for the health promotion station, I could operate it by making reference to my previous work experience in the hospital."* (Zi-En 2010, Interview, 19 January; Appendix XXXIV)

*"I encountered different situations each time and then asked my supervisor how to sort it out. Next time, when I encounter similar situations, I would know how to handle them."* (Xin-Chun 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXIX)

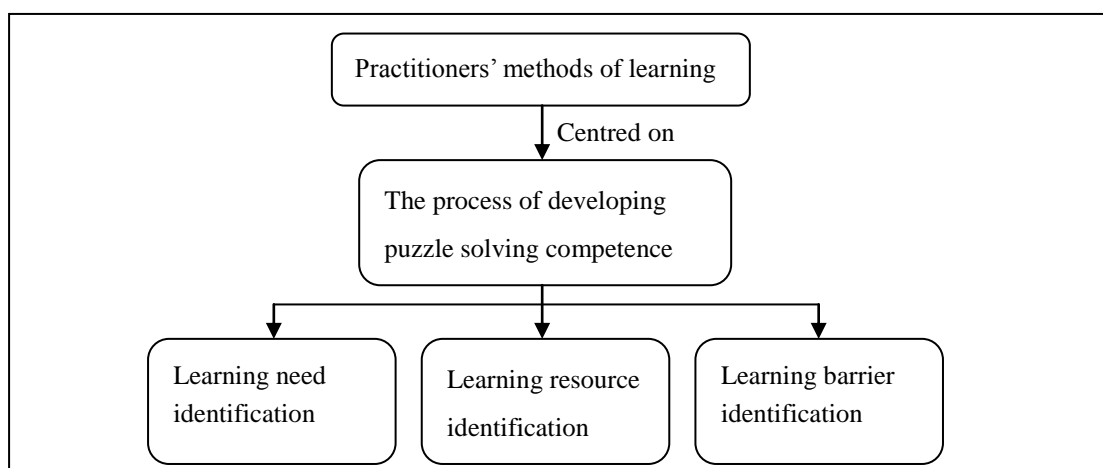
With regard to productive thinking (Mayer 1999), practitioners may acquire, modify and incorporate their and others' solutions to produce an integrated solution that fits into the specific task they are coping with. An example is illustrated by Pei-Zhen's task concerning editing a public quarterly publication for volunteer services (Appendix XVIII). While she acquires other counties' quarterly publications and tries to propose other themes, which are not covered by these quarterly publications, she performs divergent thinking (Noller, Parnes and Biondi 1976) to generate ideas (Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger 2000, 2011). While she selects some of the themes from other counties' quarterly publications and adds other themes to produce a proposal, she performs convergent thinking (Noller, Parnes and Biondi 1976) to develop a solution (Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger 2000, 2011). While she seeks the opinion of her social work supervisor so as to determine the final version of her proposal, she engages in building acceptance (Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger 2000, 2011).

Having discussed puzzle identification and solution identification that constitute the process of puzzle solving, the next section proceeds to discuss the process of developing puzzle solving competence. The literatures that address problem solving could enable this study to explain the process of puzzle solving. However, they fail to explain the process of developing puzzle solving competence; they lack the capacity to enable this study to explain, in order to solve the puzzle, what activity a puzzle solver engages in when he/she encounters a difficulty in puzzle solving. This study utilises the literatures that address case management, the cognitive domain, the affective domain, networks, information accessibility and information comprehensibility to address this issue.

### **7.3 The process of developing puzzle solving competence**

This section addresses the question: in order to solve the puzzle, what activity does a puzzle solver engage in when he/she encounters a difficulty in puzzle solving? This study applies Ballew and Mink's (1996) case management to address this issue. In the assessment stage of case management, they suggest that there exist three tasks: to identify a client's *needs* (problems that a client needs to resolve), to identify *resources* that may be useful in resolving the client's problems and to identify *barriers* to the client's exploitation of resources. Drawing upon Ballew and Mink's discussion of these three tasks in the assessment stage, this study argues that when practitioners encounter a difficulty in puzzle solving, in order to continue to solve the puzzle, they engage in learning need identification, learning resource identification and learning barrier identification. This study defines these three stages as the

process of developing puzzle solving competence. Figure 7.4 indicates the conclusive framework for the process of developing puzzle solving competence. Nonetheless, in its original context, Ballew and Mink's case management addresses the issue of social work professional techniques for dealing with multi-problem clients. It could enable this study to develop the notions of learning need identification, learning resource identification and learning barrier identification to explain the process of developing puzzle solving competence, but it could not provide further explanation of the content of the identification of learning needs, learning resources and learning barriers. This study utilises the literatures that address the cognitive and affective domains to explain the content of learning need identification. It utilises the literatures that address networks to explain the content of learning resource identification. It makes use of the literatures that address information accessibility and information comprehensibility to explain the content of learning barrier identification. Section 7.3.1, Section 7.3.2 and Section 7.3.3 discuss learning need identification, learning resource identification and learning barrier identification respectively.



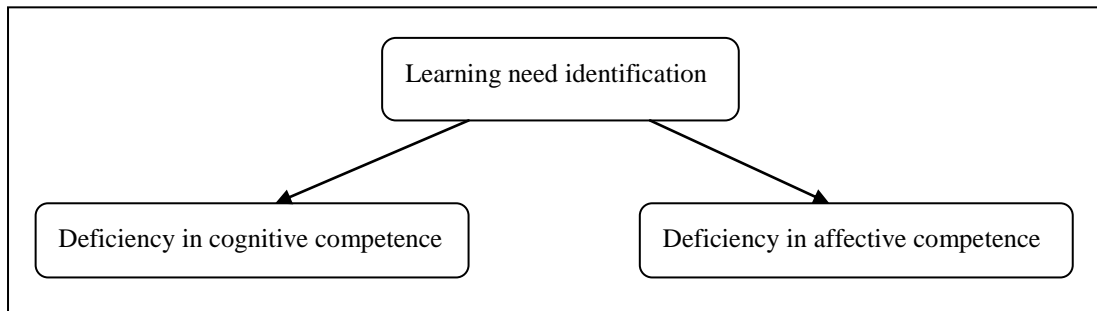
*Figure 7.4 The conclusive framework for the process of developing puzzle solving competence*

The contribution of this section is that, as a part of a cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of practitioners' methods of learning, it engages in a cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of the process of developing puzzle solving competence. Specifically, it proposes learning need identification, learning resource identification and learning barrier identification as the phases of this process. Then, it performs a cognitive and affective analysis of learning need identification and a socio-cultural analysis of learning resource identification and learning barrier identification. This explains the process of developing puzzle solving competence through which practitioners develop the competences to accomplish the value activities they are assigned to execute.

### *7.3.1 Learning need identification*

This section addresses the question: what kind of learning needs might exist? In Chapter 6, this study proposes that, in the evaluation of practitioners' learning, the targets for evaluation consist of practitioners' cognitive and affective competence. They are competences necessary for accomplishing the value activities practitioners are assigned to execute. Here, this study suggests that these value activities (tasks) represent the puzzles practitioners are assigned to solve. Deficiency in these competences represents their learning needs since they need to remove their deficiency so as to solve the puzzles they are assigned to solve, accomplishing the value activities they are assigned to execute. As such, drawing upon the literatures that address the cognitive domain, this study argues that the discrepancy between a practitioner's actual cognitive competence and the cognitive competence that is

needed for solving a puzzle represents a learning need. Drawing upon the literatures that address the affective domain, this study argues that the discrepancy between a practitioner’s actual affective competence and the affective competence that is needed for solving a puzzle also represents a learning need. It concludes that when practitioners encounter a difficulty in puzzle solving, in order to continue to solve the puzzle, they engage in identifying their learning needs. Figure 7.5 indicates the conclusive framework for learning need identification. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness.



*Figure 7.5 The conclusive framework for learning need identification*

The learning need in relation to deficiency in cognitive competence is illustrated by Yi-Xin’s description. In this example, Yi-Xin’s learning need, which represents the discrepancy between her actual cognitive competence to write a programme proposal and the cognitive competence that is needed for writing a programme proposal, was detected by the approval mechanism, in which Yi-Xin submitted her work to the vice director for approval.

*“The vice director would really read my work.” “As for a specific piece of work, if I didn’t write it well, the vice director would tell me which part could be*

*done better and how to make it better.”* (Yi-Xin 2010, Interview, 19 January; Appendix XXXIX)

Furthermore, the learning need in relation to deficiency in affective competence is illustrated by Ya-Ru’s description. In the task concerning managing volunteers, Ya-Ru identifies that the real challenge is social intercourse, as her personality is unsociable. This learning need, which represents the discrepancy between her actual affective competence to manage volunteers and the affective competence that is needed for managing volunteers, was detected by herself during the process of accomplishing her tasks.

*“Learning how to deal with people!” “Because I am a very unsociable person.” “That is, I still have to interact with volunteers; I need to learn it little by little. I think that I am still not good enough.” “For me, this is the biggest challenge.”* (Ya-Ru 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXXIII)

Having discussed learning need identification, the next section discusses learning resource identification.

### *7.3.2 Learning resource identification*

This section addresses two questions: ‘What kind of learning resources might exist?’ and ‘How can learning resources be made available to practitioners?’

Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) suggest that the structural dimension of social capital refers to the configurations of connections between people, which indicate their

network ties. This notion alerts this study to the configurations of connections between humans and thus to investigate how learning materials can be transmitted from a person to practitioners by establishing connections between them. However, in its original context, this notion deals with humans in the network. Therefore, it could not enable this study to explain artefacts in the network. Law (1992) suggests that almost all human interactions are mediated through non-human objects. This notion draws this study's attention to the role of non-human objects in mediating human learning, and how learning materials can be transmitted from an artefact to practitioners by establishing connections between practitioners and artefacts. However, it must be noted that though this study makes reference to Law's discussion, this study disagrees with the actor-network perspective (Latour 2005), which treats artefacts as having the same status as humans. The stance of this study is that humans are the only actors who might act by means of artefacts, which are merely a medium for human actions, not actors.

To sum up, drawing upon Nahapiet and Ghoshal's discussion of the configurations of connections between humans and making reference to Law's discussion of non-human objects in the network, this study argues that learning resources consist of other humans and artefacts in the practitioners' network. This answers the question: what kind of learning resources might exist? Though Nahapiet and Ghoshal's and Law's discussions might assist this study in identifying humans and artefacts as learning resources in the practitioners' network, their discussions fail to further explain how connections between people and connections between people and artefacts can be made. This study utilises Granovetter's (1973) discussion of a person's direct and indirect contact with others, Gould and Fernandez's (1989)



discussion of the brokerage function in the transaction network and Wenger's (2000) discussion of boundary objects, boundary encounters and brokering to address this issue.

Granovetter (1973) suggests that network ties could include direct and indirect contact. As for indirect contact, a person could have indirect contact with another person through a third person. If it is the only path between these two persons, the third person acts as a bridge, constituting the only route for sending a message from one person to another (see Figure 2.16 in Section 2.5.3). As for indirect contact between people, Gould and Fernandez (1989) further explore the brokerage function in the transaction network. They suggest that in a triadic relationship, there exists the initiator, the broker, and the receiver; there is no direct tie between the initiator and the receiver. In a triadic relationship, there are five types of brokerage roles: those of liaison, coordinator, itinerant, gatekeeper and representative (see Figure 2.17 in Section 2.5.3).

This study aims to investigate how connections between a learner and learning resources (other humans and artefacts) can be made. Granovetter's discussion and Gould and Fernandez's discussion could enable this study to notice *human brokers*, who could create indirect contact between a person and other humans. However, their discussions lack the capacity to explain other kinds of brokerage function. This study utilises Wenger's notions to probe other kinds of brokerage function. Wenger (2000) suggests that boundary objects refer to the kind of objects, which link different practices. Boundary encounters refer to people from different practices meeting for the purpose of exposing themselves to other practices. Brokering

means that people make use of their participation in different practices to connect different practices by introducing one practice to another practice. Wenger's boundary objects and boundary encounters inspire this study to notice *artefacts* and *events* that could create direct/indirect contact between a person and artefacts/other humans. His interpretation of brokering inspires this study to notice *human brokers*, who could create direct/indirect contact between a person and artefacts, and *human brokers*, who could create direct contact between a person and other humans.

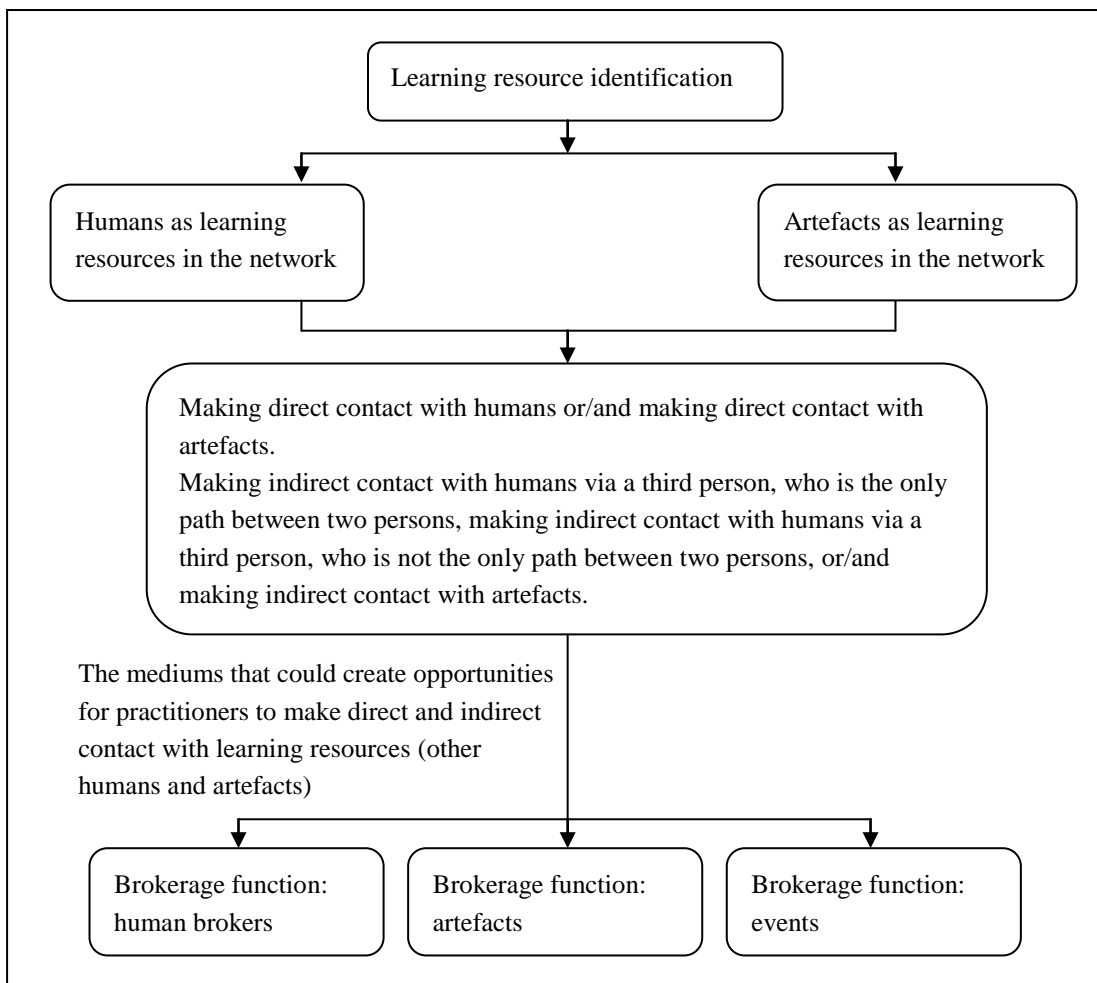


Figure 7.6 The conclusive framework for learning resource identification

To sum up, making reference to Granovetter's discussion of a person's direct and

indirect contact with others, Gould and Fernandez's discussion of the brokerage function in the transaction network and Wenger's boundary objects, boundary encounters and brokering, this study argues that learning materials can be transmitted from a person and an artefact (learning resources) to practitioners through their direct and indirect contact. The mediums that could create their direct and indirect contact include the brokerage function offered by human brokers, artefacts and events. This answers the question: how can learning resources be made available to practitioners? Figure 7.6 indicates the conclusive framework for learning resource identification. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness.

As for human brokers (Gould and Fernandez 1989; Granovetter 1973; Wenger 2000), a person might function as a resource search engine, which could help others to identify learning resources and tell others about his/her opinions regarding the quality of a particular learning resource. By indicating knowledgeable persons, better literatures or key words that point out the information for further understanding, a person could save others time and energy in exploring where useful learning resources are. For example, Bi-Zhen You becomes a search engine for I-Wen, and she indicates that among the versions of home care service operational manuals, the Taichung city government's version is better (Appendix XVIII). In doing so, Bi-Zhen You acts as a human broker; she links I-Wen to the Taichung city government's home care service operational manual (a learning resource), which is an artefact (cf. Law 1992).

With regard to artefacts having a brokerage function (Wenger 2000), an example is

illustrated by the aforementioned Yi-Xin's description. She submitted her programme proposal to the vice director for approval. The programme proposal represents an artefact that has a brokerage function. It links Yi-Xin to the vice director, who is a human (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998); as a learning resource, the vice director tells her which part of the programme proposal could be done better and how to make it better.

As far as events having a brokerage function (Wenger 2000) are concerned, this study identifies three types of events: visits, team meetings and instructive programmes. As for visits, as indicated by Xiao-Yong, he went to visit the Taichung county branch to see how it operated a health promotion station. This visit, which represents a kind of event, linked Xiao-Yong to the practitioners of the Taichung county branch (learning resources).

*“Many branches in our foundation operate a health promotion station, don't they? For instance, the Taichung county branch also operates one. When I joined the branch, I felt very puzzled and had no idea of how to start to do it.”*  
*“We went to visit the Taichung county branch to observe and learn from it.”*  
(Xiao-Yong 2010, Interview, 18 January; Appendix XL)

As for team meetings, it is about the manipulation of organisational substructures. In the Old-Five-Old Foundation, its service branches are established according to geographic area. In order to create contacts between those who are responsible for the same practice, across different service branches, as indicated by the chief executive officer (Appendix XVIII), the Old-Five-Old Foundation established four kinds of service teams: the day care service team, the home care service team, the

volunteer service team and the community service team. In the Old-Five-Old Foundation, practitioners are allocated to different service teams according to their current tasks, and social work supervisors are also allocated to different teams so as to take charge of the teams. The purposes of establishing the service teams are to offer an opportunity for practitioners, who execute the same service, to share their work experience and discuss the future development of that service. They meet quarterly. As such, a team meeting (i.e., an event) links a practitioner to practitioners of other branches (learning resources).

With regard to instructive programmes, local governments and the Old-Five-Old Foundation may sponsor or design instructive programmes that aim to enhance practitioners' competence to make service provision. For instance, the Chunghwa county government sponsors an instructive programme regarding volunteer services. As shown in Table 7.1, this programme offers opportunities for volunteer teams to share local experiences with other volunteer teams and brings in scholars to join in discussions. As such, holding an instructive programme (i.e., an event) links a practitioner to other volunteer teams and scholars (i.e., learning resources), learning from their experiences and advice.

Measures	Content
Studying specific themes	To invite the cadre members of volunteer teams, who have professional expertise, to give a lecture on specific themes so that their experience could be passed down to other volunteer teams, who need it, learning from their work.
Group discussion	To invite scholars to direct discussions of specific themes so as to help the volunteer teams, which encounter the same difficulties, to work together to develop the problem-solving models and produce solutions to these difficulties; to establish written examples for reference.

Individual treatment	The teams, who had attended the study of specific themes and the group discussion and were assessed to have an individual need, could apply for experts and scholars from different disciplines to visit them so as to perform a concrete diagnosis and offer consultation and recommendations.
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*Table 7.1 Examples of measures for helping volunteer teams' service provision*

*Source: The 2009 Assistance Plan for Volunteer Services: the Tour throughout Chunghwa County (Appendix XLI)*

Having discussed learning resource identification, the next section discusses learning barrier identification.

### *7.3.3 Learning barrier identification*

This section addresses the question: 'what kind of learning barriers might exist?' Fidel and Green (2004) suggest three kinds of effort that information seekers attempt to minimise while they search for and select information sources. These kinds of effort include physical, intellectual and emotional/social effort. In addition, they also mention fees, which imply economic effort. Furthermore, they also propose other possible factors that could influence human information-seeking behaviour and selection of information sources. These factors are about the availability of information sources and the quality of information (e.g., information is accurate, and information sources give definite answers without having to make additional speculations). However, the weakness of Fidel and Green's discussion is that it inadequately deals with intellectual effort and the quality of information. This study utilises Gagné's (1985) prerequisites to be complementary to their discussion of information seekers' intellectual effort, and it also introduces Gagné's notion of selective perception to be complementary to their discussion of the quality of

information.

Gagné (1985) suggests that prerequisites represent a capability of prior learning that is incorporated into new learning; in order to learn more advanced knowledge, a learner needs to build prerequisites. In view of this, this study suggests that, in order to learn more advanced knowledge, a practitioner needs to make the intellectual effort to establish the prerequisites. Otherwise, more advanced knowledge will not be intelligible to this practitioner. Furthermore, Gagné suggests that due to selective perception, the stimulus must be presented in instruction in a distinctive manner (e.g., using the bold print) so as to enable a learner to select the stimulus and differentiate it from other stimuli. In view of this, this study suggests that presenting information in a distinctive manner could constitute a means of enhancing the quality of the information so as to help a practitioner to identify useful messages contained in the information.

Though this study makes reference to Fidel and Green's typology and Gagné's prerequisites and selective perception, it does not employ their notions directly. Rather, it further categorises their notions into two categories: information accessibility and information comprehensibility. Drawing upon Fidel and Green's discussion of information seekers' physical, emotional/social and economic effort and the availability of information sources, this study argues that learning barriers include barriers to information accessibility, which consist of barriers relevant to information seekers' physical, emotional/social and economic effort and barriers relevant to the availability of information sources. Drawing upon Fidel and Green's discussion of information seekers' intellectual effort and the quality of information as

well as Gagné’s prerequisites and selective perception, this study argues that learning barriers also include barriers to information comprehensibility that consist of barriers relevant to information seekers’ intellectual effort and to the quality of information. Information seekers’ intellectual effort involves establishing prerequisites, whereas the quality of information involves accurate/definite information and presenting information in a distinctive manner. It concludes that, by removing barriers to information accessibility, practitioners can be connected to learning resources. Furthermore, by removing barriers to information comprehensibility, learning materials will be intelligible and useful to practitioners (learners). Figure 7.7 indicates the conclusive framework for learning barrier identification. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness. It starts with a discussion of barriers to information accessibility.

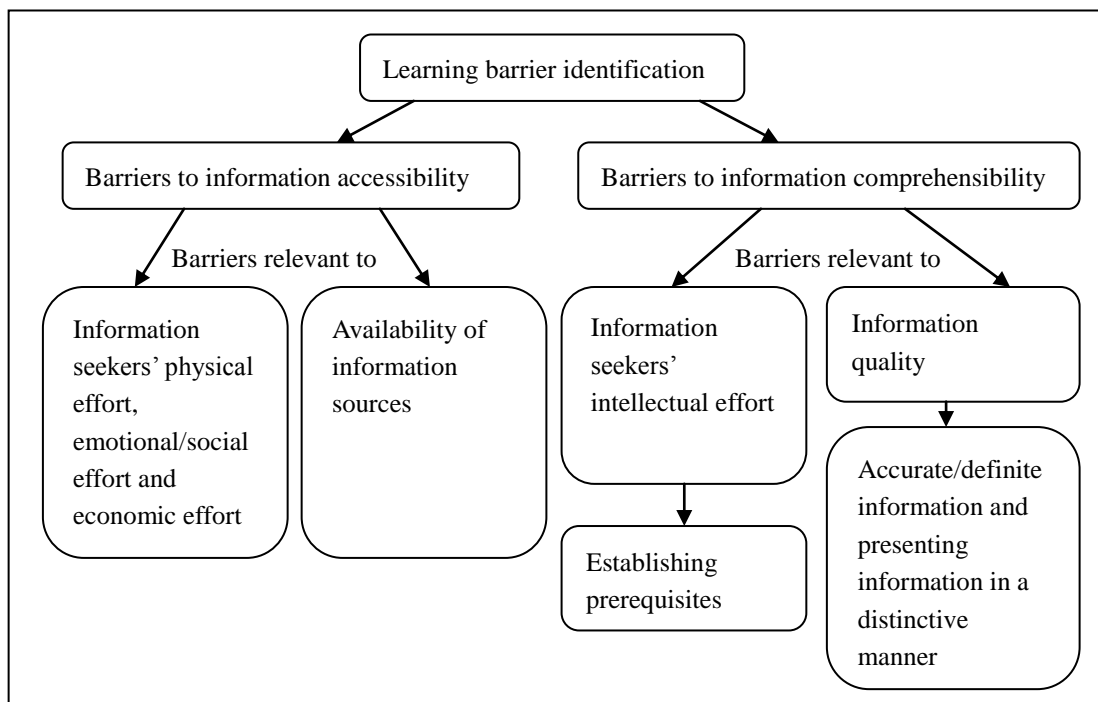


Figure 7.7 The conclusive framework for learning barrier identification



As for information seekers' physical effort (Fidel and Green 2004), an example is illustrated in Shu-Mei's description. She indicates that the Taipei city branch and the Taipei county branch share a social work supervisor, and she prefers a branch to have its own social work supervisor, which allows a social work supervisor to be physically close to social workers. In other words, they share a social work supervisor and when they want to discuss with the social work supervisor, the social work supervisor may be in the other office, not being physically close and thus posing physical barriers.

*“However, the present situation turns out that the social work supervisor needs to supervise both branches. Then, we would think, ‘Why can't the Taipei city branch have its own social work supervisor?’”* (Shu-Mei 2010, Interview, 19 January; Appendix XLII)

With regard to information seekers' emotional/social effort (Fidel and Green 2004), an example is illustrated in Xiao-Yong's description. It could be inferred from this description that if a learner does not make the emotional/social effort to build a proper social relation with an instructor, due to this emotional/social barrier (e.g., being in a tense relationship with an instructor), an instructor may not be willing to offer an instruction to a learner.

*“In the new employee training, the chief executive officer shared with everyone that she hopes that everyone in our organisation develops good relationships with one another. Due to competition or that sort of reason, someone talks behind people's backs or that sort of thing happens; she does not allow this kind of thing to happen here.”* (Xiao-Yong 2010, Interview, 18 January; Appendix XL)

As far as information seekers' economic effort (Fidel and Green 2004) is concerned, an example is illustrated in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's training course. It invites a fee-paid social work professional to give a lecture on 'Problems Encountered by Elders and Skills for Terminal Care: Getting through Hard Times in One's Life. A Discussion on Coping with Bereavement' (Appendix XLIII). If the Old-Five-Old Foundation does not have a budget for this training course and if practitioners are not willing to pay the fee, economic barriers will exist, and thus they will not be linked to the expert. In addition to paying fees, an alternative means of getting access to learning resources is to make instructors or learning resources holders become members of its professional service advisors, who serve in these positions without remuneration (Appendix XVIII).

As for the availability of information sources (Fidel and Green 2004), an example is indicated by Zi-En. She indicates that it was not that other social workers were not willing to give help but probably that they were busy as well. In this situation, learning sources were not immediately available to her.

*"I think that it was not that my colleagues were probably unwilling to offer assistance, but that they were probably busy as well."* (Zi-En 2010, Interview, 19 January; Appendix XXXIV)

Having discussed barriers to information accessibility, this study proceeds to discuss barriers to information comprehensibility. As for information seekers' intellectual effort (Fidel and Green 2004), this study suggests that it involves learners' intellectual effort to take active information-seeking action and to build prerequisites (Gagné 1985).

An example of lack of active information-seeking action is indicated by the vice director's description. In this example, she does not see any move from practitioners, such as doing some research on the internet. In this situation, though learning resources are out there on the internet, if practitioners do not make any intellectual effort to do some research on the internet, learning resources will not be linked to them.

*"I would often warn them, 'Why don't you do some research on the internet? Since there are some reference books in the branch, why don't you have a look at them?' Then, I felt anxious when I didn't see them make any moves. In fact, I already had an answer in my mind, and I already searched the internet quietly."* (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)

As for the barriers relevant to learners' intellectual effort to build prerequisites, an example is shown in the Chunghwa branch's social day care service programme proposal (Appendix XLIV). In this proposal, there is a description indicating that 'As for the reasons the disabled reside in caring institutions, McFall and Miller (1992) discover that the disabled elders' caregivers' burden constitutes a significant decisive factor'. In order to understand McFall and Miller's (1992) article on the subject of the caregiver burden (Appendix XLIV), it is observable from their article that a learner needs to know about logistic regression (Menard 2002) and the knowledge on which logistic regression is built, such as the theory of scales of measurement (Stevens 1946). In this case, if a practitioner does not have such a prerequisite, he/she will not comprehend accurately the statement made in this proposal and McFall and Miller's (1992) article.

With regard to the barriers relevant to the quality of information (Fidel and Green 2004), an example is illustrated in Yi-Xin's description. In this example, her previous social work supervisor did not point out which parts of her work she didn't write well and did not offer a concrete comment on her work. In other words, her previous social work supervisor did not present information in a distinctive manner (Gagné 1985) and did not give definite information (Fidel and Green 2004).

*“It was probably because my previous social work supervisor would modify my work herself that it turned out I wouldn't know which part I didn't write well. I didn't get a concrete comment, such as what I should do to make this part better the next time.”* (Yi-Xin 2010, Interview, 19 January; Appendix XXXIX)

To sum up, this study concludes that, by removing barriers to information accessibility, practitioners can be connected to learning resources. By removing barriers to information comprehensibility, learning materials will be intelligible and useful to practitioners (learners).

In Section 7.2 and Section 7.3, this study discusses practitioners' puzzle solving (an individual level structuring force), which is not the only micro force that structures practitioners' methods of learning. The next three sections discuss another micro force that structures practitioners' methods of learning: instructors' instructing (an individual level structuring force). It starts with a discussion of the psychological condition of instructing.

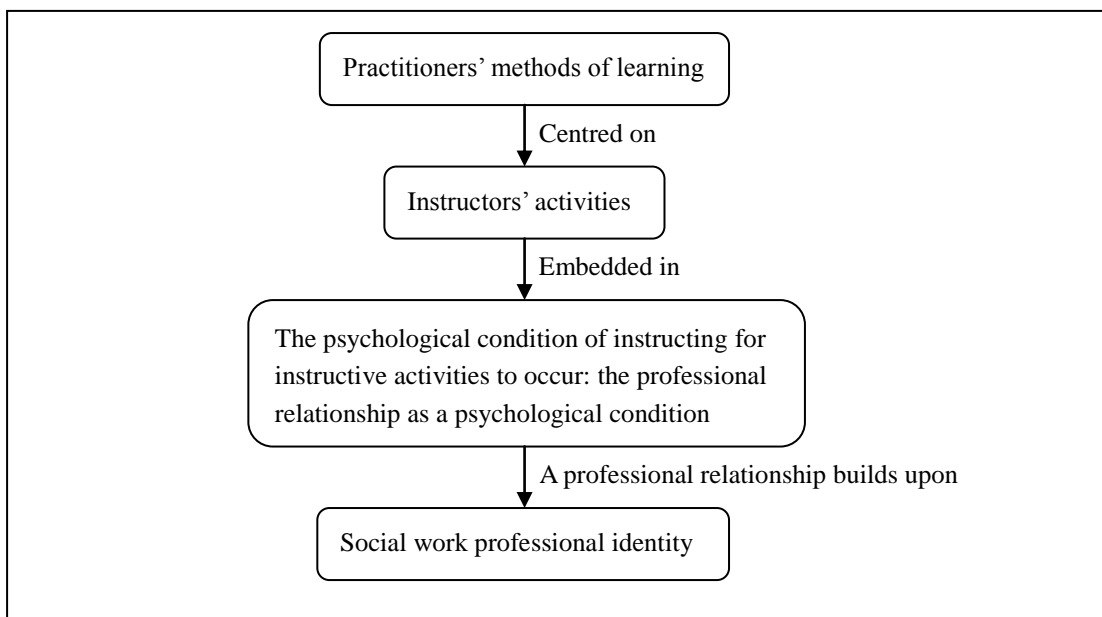
#### **7.4 The psychological condition of instructing**

This section addresses the question: ‘What might be the conditions associated with instructing that enable instructive activities to occur?’ It addresses this issue by looking at the psychological condition: the professional relationship between a practitioner and an instructor.

Edwards and Bess (1998) suggest that the professional self stands for a professional with knowledge and techniques. In its original context, the professional self is utilised to analyse professional-client interaction and relationships. In the context of this study, the notion of the professional self, which is relevant to professional instruction, leads this study to look at professional-professional interaction and relationships. In this study, it defines the professional self in an occupationally specific manner, defining it as an individual’s identity as a professional social worker. Building upon this notion of social work professional identity, this study further suggests that the engagement of a practitioner’s social work professional identity with an instructor’s social work professional identity (i.e., the social interaction between social work professionals) produces a professional relationship. This study draws on professional relations in order to analyse instructors’ activities (e.g., instructive activities performed by practitioners’ social work colleagues and supervisors). It treats the professional relationship as a psychological condition for instructive activities to occur.

To sum up, developing from Edwards and Bess’ (1998) professional self, this study argues that instructive activities are embedded in the professional relations between practitioners and instructors. For instructive activities to occur, professional relations between practitioners and instructors need to exist. Figure 7.8 indicates

the conclusive framework for the psychological condition of instructing. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness. The contribution of this section is that, as a part of a social analysis of practitioners' methods of learning, it relates learning to identity. It explains professional relations that are needed for instructive activities to occur. This perspective is different from the perspective that views identity from the angle of learning as becoming (e.g., Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998, 2000). Rather, it views professional identity as the basis for establishing professional relations between practitioners and instructors, which pave the way for instructive activities to occur.



*Figure 7.8 The conclusive framework for the psychological condition of instructing*

This study suggests that performing instruction involves both parties, who participate in the interaction. People's identity reveals who they are (i.e., the subject who interacts with others). Practitioners' social work professional identity (Edwards and

Bess 1998) is illustrated by Shen-Mei's description. As a more senior practitioner, due to her social work professional identity, she would think that it is normal that junior social work practitioners ask her questions. She would take this responsibility to instruct junior practitioners, using her social work professional identity to interact with them.

*"Here, I am a little bit senior in executing the home care service programme."  
"So, my colleagues would consult me whenever they have a question, and then it turned out that I would be interrupted again..." "They asked me questions, and I thought that it was normal and it was fine." (Shen-Mei 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXIV)*

Using their social work professional identity, practitioners develop professional relations with each other. However, the absence of professional relations could occur, and this study proposes two reasons for the absence of professional relations. One reason is that practitioners may not reach a consensus regarding professional teamwork. Thus, they do not actively try to complement each other's deficiencies. In other words, they did not use their social work professional identity to act like a professional colleague. The vice director's opinion indicates the following reason.

*"If it is developed well, the Taipei city branch will be a very strong team since, in terms of their work experience and qualifications, the social workers, on the one hand, have their own expertise; on the other hand, basically, they are not fresh graduates; they have more than two years of work experience." "There are some poorly matched parts amongst the social workers due to the division of labour. That is to say, I think that the whole team is a very new team."  
"Since it is a new team, in theory, we need to spend more time reaching a consensus regarding working together." "Actually, the spirit of teamwork is mutual help, dividing labour and then having cooperation. However, at the*

*moment the social workers merely paid attention to the division of labour but were less likely to attend to cooperation and mutual help. The premise of mutual help is to utilise a person's own strengths to be complementary to others' weaknesses. It is not merely about doing the same thing together. It is about: when they notice that others need assistance in an aspect, they will offer support to one another in an attempt to be complementary to others' weaknesses.”* (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)

The other reason is that an instructor abandons his/her professional responsibility to enable learners to accomplish their tasks. For instance, Yi-Xin indicates that the function of her previous social work supervisor did not operate the way it was expected to be. In her opinion, there was a social work supervisor out there, but that social work supervisor didn't really do her job. In other words, her previous social work supervisor did not use the social work professional identity to act like a social work supervisor.

*“There was a social work supervisor there, but, actually, she didn't really do her job. I mean, the function of supervision didn't really serve the way it is expected.” “As for certain papers I proposed, including the United Way project, the volunteer training projects I planned or that sort of material, I would be requested to work out a very detailed structure of the content. I would seek the social work supervisor's approval in advance.” “However, I would think to myself, ‘Is there really nothing that needs to be modified in my work?’”* (Yi-Xin 2010, Interview, 19 January; Appendix XXXIX)

To sum up, the above situations reveal that instructive activities are embedded in the professional relations between practitioners and instructors. For instructive activities to occur, professional relations between practitioners and instructors need to exist. Having discussed the psychological condition of instructing, the next section discusses another condition of instructing: the communication condition.



This study proposes that the psychological condition of instructing is not the only condition of instructing. For instructive activities to occur and to be useful, the communication condition of instructing has to be met. In its original context, Edwards and Bess' discussion deals with the issue of developing effectiveness in the therapeutic use of self. Therefore, their discussion could not enable this study to explain the communication condition of instructing. This study utilises the literatures that discuss communication to address this issue.

### **7.5 The communication condition of instructing**

This section addresses the question: 'What might be the conditions associated with instructing in order for instructive activities to occur and to be useful?' It addresses this issue by looking at the communication conditions: clear communication, active communication and authentic communication.

Schramm (1955) proposes that, in the communication between the destination and the information source, the information source sends a message to the destination, and that there is a response from the destination to the information source, constituting a circular communication. He also incorporates the field of experience into the analysis. The information source's field of experience guides encoding. Then, the information source sends the message to the destination, whose field of experience also guides decoding. If their fields of experience do not overlap, they will lack common backgrounds for engaging in encoding and decoding. The absence of common backgrounds could make the destination unable to make sense of

a message. The weakness of Schramm's discussion is that his circular model inadequately deals with the issues of messages and common grounds for encoding and decoding. This study utilises Berlo's (1960) S-M-C-R model to address this issue.

As for a discussion of messages, Berlo (1960) suggests that messages consist of content, codes, treatment, elements and structures of messages. Content is a meaning that the source wants to convey, while codes (e.g., a group of symbols) constitute the medium that carries a meaning. Treatment refers to selection and arrangement of codes and content. As far as elements and structures are concerned, for instance, the letters, f, h, i, s, represent elements; the combination of these elements represents a structure (e.g., the word 'fish').

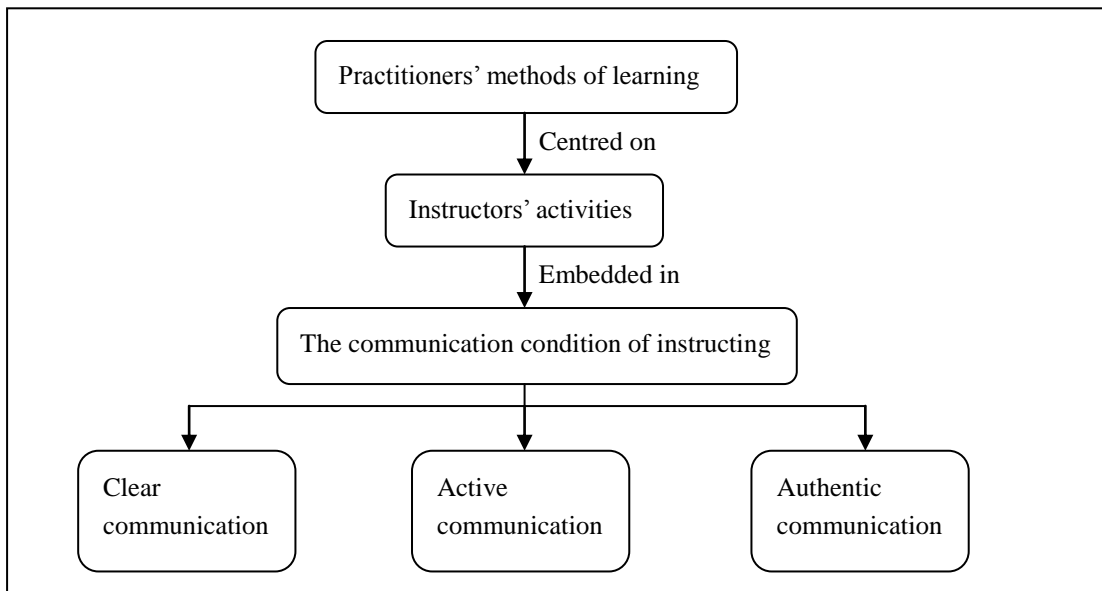
With regard to a discussion of common grounds for encoding and decoding, Berlo suggests that this involves the source's and the receiver's communication skills, knowledge, attitudes, social systems and cultures of which they are a member. The implications of these components are as follows. In order to achieve successful communication, the source needs to utilise his/her communication skills to facilitate the receiver's decoding, such as using vocabularies with which the receiver is familiar so that the receiver can decode it easily and accurately. The source needs to consider the receiver's background knowledge, encoding the message in a manner that the receiver is competent enough to decode it accurately. Furthermore, the source and the receiver need to have positive attitudes towards themselves and thus are confident in discussing a topic, rather than holding back their messages. The source and the receiver need to have positive attitudes towards the subject matter and

thus believe in the value of discussing the topic so that they will be motivated to communicate. The source and the receiver need to have a positive attitude towards the characteristics of the other party so that they will be willing to communicate with each other, feeling that it is worth communicating with the other party. Besides, the source and the receiver need to communicate with each other through a socially/culturally acceptable manner (see Table 2.2 in Section 2.6.2).

The weakness of Berlo's S-M-C-R model is that it fails to explain the role of any power imbalance influencing communication. This study utilises Habermas' (1984) ideal speech situation to address this issue. Habermas (1984) proposes that in order to prevent distorted communication from happening, those who engage in the communication need to have the symmetry of opportunities to propose their claims, creating an ideal speech situation without repression and inequality. This study suggests that this consideration of the ideal speech situation reveals a consideration of removing the power imbalance between the source and the receiver, which is not made explicit by Berlo's model.

This study captures the essence of these views regarding the key factors involved in successful communication, and synthesises these factors into three categories: clear communication, active communication and authentic communication. Clear communication draws upon Schramm's field of experience and Berlo's notions of message (content, codes, treatment, elements and structures of messages) and source and receiver (communication skills, knowledge, social systems and cultures). It involves encoding meanings in such a manner that a source not only encodes accurately what he/she wants to convey but also encodes meanings in a manner that

facilitates the receiver's decoding. Active communication draws upon Schramm's feedback and Berlo's discussion of source and receiver (attitudes towards the subject matter, the source's attitudes towards the receiver and the receiver's attitudes towards the source). It involves being willing to communicate with the other party about a topic and carrying it out. Authentic communication draws upon Berlo's source and receiver concept (attitudes towards one's own self) and Habermas' ideal speech situation. It involves expressing what a person really wants to convey, rather than hiding it.



*Figure 7.9 The conclusive framework for the communication condition of instructing*

To sum up, this study argues that instructive activities are embedded in the communication between practitioners and instructors. For instructive activities to occur and to be useful, clear communication, active communication and authentic communication need to exist. Figure 7.9 indicates the conclusive framework for the communication condition of instructing. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness. The contribution of this

section is that, as a part of a social analysis of practitioners' methods of learning, it relates learning to communication. It explains the clear communication, active communication and authentic communication that are needed for instructive activities to occur and to be useful. This section starts with a discussion of clear communication.

### *7.5.1 Clear communication*

This study argues that, for instructive activities to be useful, clear communication (Berlo 1960; Schramm 1955) needs to exist. It discusses clear communication by looking at logical expression and concrete expression. By clear communication, an instructor expresses what he/she knows logically and concretely and thus helps learners to understand an instruction.

As for logical expression, this concerns expressing an instruction in a way that shows the structure of its components and their relations. For instance, Figure 7.10 indicates the Chunghwa branch's job specification for dealing with complaints. It indicates the flow of different steps logically. By logical expression, practitioners could clearly understand the procedures for dealing with complaints.

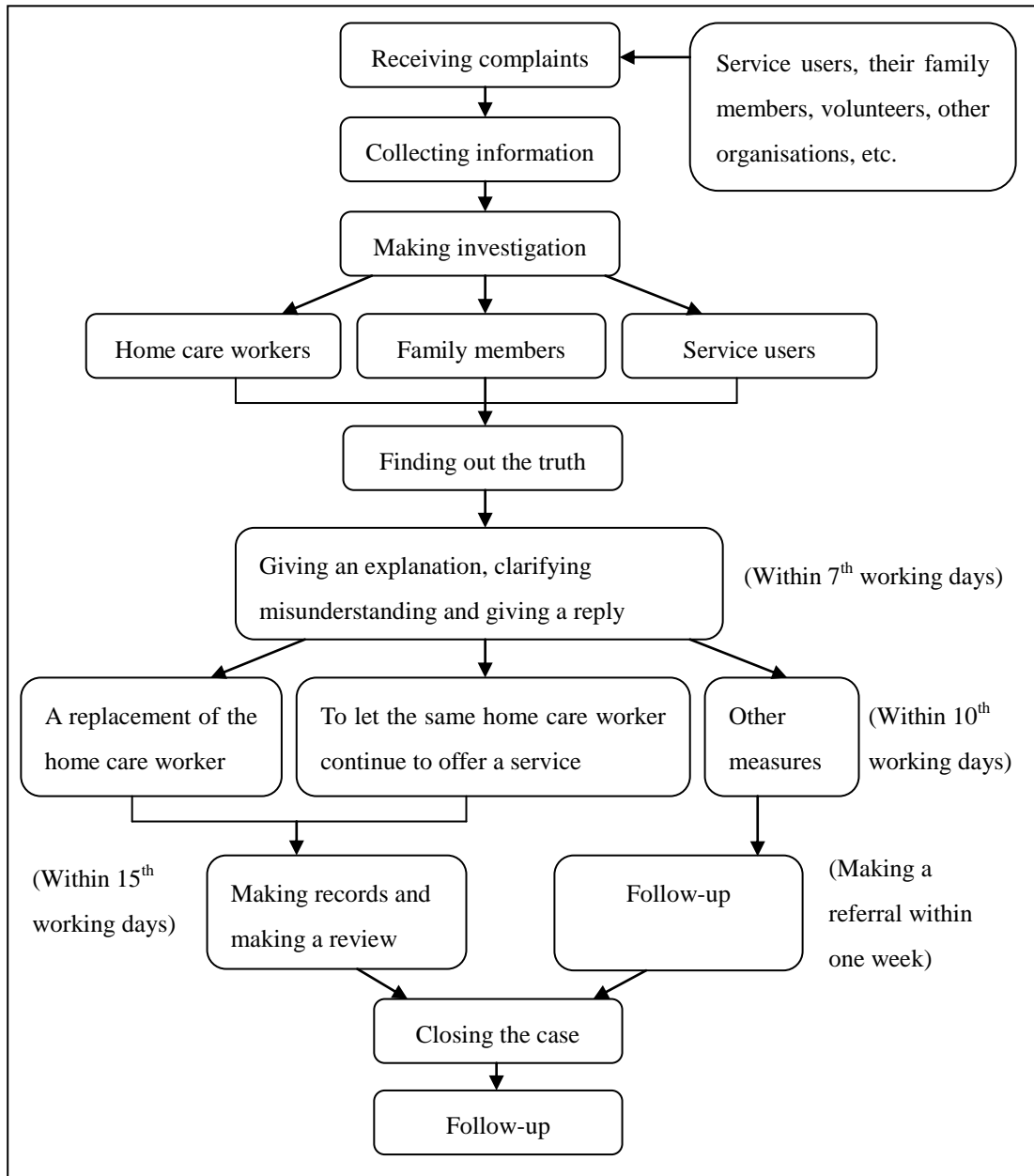


Figure 7.10 The flowchart for dealing with complaints

Source: The Chungwa Branch's Annual Programme Evaluation Report for the Public Home Care Service in the Year 2008 (Appendix XXXVII)

As far as concrete expression is concerned, this situation concerns the general framework for accomplishing tasks and the illustrations of how the general framework could be utilised to deal with a specific case. It is possible that to merely indicate the general framework may be too abstract to be easily understood.

Thus, concrete examples may be useful. For instance, the vice director wants to write an example that explains how the assessment form, which represents the general framework, could be used to assess specific service users' situations.

*“I wanted to improve the depth of their assessments and...” “I want to establish a so-called written example, and, in this example, it explains the reasons social workers need to gather these pieces of information and fill them in.”* (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)

Having discussed clear communication, this study proceeds to discuss active communication.

#### *7.5.2 Active communication*

This study argues that, for instructive activities to occur, active communication (Berlo 1960; Schramm 1955) needs to exist. This study discusses active communication by looking at expressing an individual's own opinions actively. In this situation, an instructor actively raises issues of concern to others for further discussion. An example is illustrated in the conversation between the vice director and Xin-Chun in the home care service team's team meeting (Appendix XXX).

Xin-Chun: *“Actually, we didn't have much time to perform phone visits. Therefore, actually, we asked community service workers to do phone visits for us.”*

Shu-Fen Wang: *“Would community service workers do it for you?”*

Xin-Chun: *“Yes!”*

Shu-Fen Wang: *“However, would they know clients well enough, if it was done by community service workers? I mean, they might, at most, follow the*

*questions in the questionnaire and ask, 'Granny, are you okay recently?' 'Oh, I am very well!' Thus, a community service worker would tick the option: 'Good'. However, what does the granny mean by 'Very well'? Does it mean that, 'I went to have a hairdo yesterday, so I am very well.'? Or, does it mean that, 'I feel great today, so I am very well.'?' "I mean, it turned out that the piece of information the listener got might not match very well to what the speaker wanted to convey."*

In this example, the vice director evaluated and questioned the way Xin-Chun made use of community service workers to perform follow-up phone visits. She raised the problem that may arise. In her opinion, these personnel did not know the clients, and therefore simply performed the follow-ups by using the closed-ended questionnaire; this manner may result in superficial inquiries. The vice director actively questioned Xin-Chun's decision, enabling Xin-Chun to reconsider the appropriateness of her decision (i.e., utilising community service workers to perform follow-up phone visits).

Active communication may save a practitioner's time spent on developing his/her competence. This benefit of active communication is illustrated in the vice director's opinion. She suggested that some social work supervisors believe that it is necessary for practitioners to stumble and learn from mistakes. She does not agree with this idea, but prefers active communication that could save their time in stumbling.

*"Actually, some social work supervisors have the idea that it is necessary to stumble, and it is also necessary to learn from mistakes. However, I never liked this idea very much."* (Shu-Fen Wang 2010, Interview, 26 January; Appendix XXVII)



Having discussed active communication, this study proceeds to discuss authentic communication.

### *7.5.3 Authentic communication*

This study argues that, for instructive activities to occur and to be useful, authentic communication (Berlo 1960; Habermas 1984) needs to exist. This study suggests that people may hide some competences so that additional tasks will not come to them more and more. In this situation, authentic communication is not performed; in order to keep themselves from additional work, practitioners may not let others know their real competence. This situation is illustrated in Yi-Xin's description.

*“I was also requested to give my colleagues in the Taipei county branch a very detailed structure of the content for their reference.” “However, I would feel that, each time, I was always asked to share with others what I knew, but I did not get something in return. Thus, I would start to think that I do not want to show my abilities.” “I mean, if I present too much of what I am capable of doing, actually, it will not contribute that much to my personal growth.” “The response I got was in my workload. My workload would become heavier or I had to share more stuff with others.” (Yi-Xin 2010, Interview, 19 January; Appendix XXXIX)*

If a practitioner does not let others know his/her real competence, others will lose the opportunities to learn from him/her since he/she holds back useful learning materials that may enable others to develop their competence. Having discussed the psychological condition and the communication condition of instructing, the next section discusses organisational instruction mechanisms through which instructors

offer instructions to practitioners. The literatures addressing identity and communication could be relevant but in their original contexts, they could not enable this study to explain the mechanisms through which instructors offer instructions to practitioners. This study utilises the literatures that discuss orientation (Mathis and Jackson 2008), supervision (Kadushin and Harkness 2002) and organisational socialisation (Fisher 1986) to address this issue.

## **7.6 Organisational instruction mechanisms**

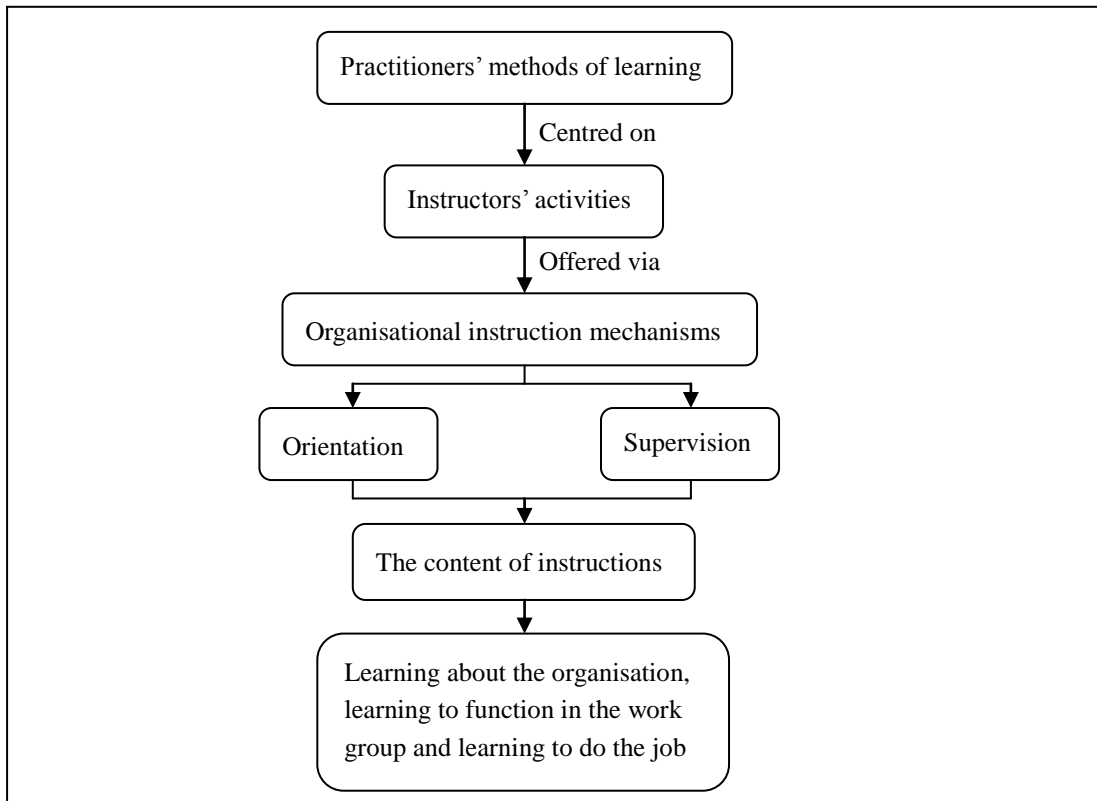
This section addresses two questions: ‘What might be the organisational instruction mechanisms through which instructors offer instructions to practitioners?’ and ‘What might be the content of instructions offered through these organisational instruction mechanisms?’

Mathis and Jackson (2008) suggest that, in the workplace setting, formal training methods could involve on-the-job training and off-the-job training. In addition, orientation could be offered to new employees. Kadushin and Harkness (2002) suggest that, in the social work setting, formal supervisory designs could include individual and group supervision. This study suggests that, in the social work setting, on-the-job training and off-the-job training could be operated by formal supervisory designs. Therefore, this study utilises the notion of orientation (Mathis and Jackson 2008) and supervision (Kadushin and Harkness 2002) to address organisational instruction mechanisms. However, Mathis and Jackson’s and Kadushin and Harkness’ discussions fail to categorise the content of instructions

offered through orientation and supervision. This study utilises Fisher's (1986) content of organisational socialisation to address this issue. Fisher (1986) proposes the notions of learning about the organisation, learning to function in the work group and learning to do the job. Learning about the organisation concerns understanding organisational goals, values and regulations, its administration, organisational structure and organisational culture, etc. Learning to function in the work group is to understand who is who, job responsibilities, how to get along with others, group politics, relationships between people, group norms and the group culture. Learning to do the job is to understand tasks, such as how to get tasks accomplished, and relevant knowledge and skills required for the completion of tasks. This study utilises these three notions to analyse the content of instructions offered through orientation and supervision.

To sum up, drawing upon Mathis and Jackson's discussion of orientation and Kadushin and Harkness' discussion of individual and group supervision, this study argues that orientation and supervision constitute organisational instruction mechanisms through which instructors offer instructions to practitioners. Drawing upon Fisher's content of organisational socialisation, it argues that learning about the organisation, learning to function in the work group and learning to do the job constitute the content of instructions offered through these organisational instruction mechanisms. Figure 7.11 indicates the conclusive framework for organisational instruction mechanisms. This sub-framework is supported by the data presented in this section, justifying its usefulness. The contribution of this section is that, as a part of a social analysis of practitioners' methods of learning, it engages in an analysis of macro organisational instruction mechanisms that form the architecture

for the construction of professional relations and communications between practitioners and instructors. This explains organisational instruction mechanisms through which instructors offer instructions to practitioners and the content of instructions offered through these mechanisms.



*Figure 7.11 The conclusive framework for organisational instruction mechanisms*

The Old-Five-Old Foundation has institutional designs that provide practitioners with instructions so that when encountering a puzzle or receiving a task, practitioners could know where they could start from and how to accomplish their tasks. This section discusses orientation (Section 7.6.1) first; after that, it discusses supervision (Section 7.6.2).

### *7.6.1 Orientation*

This study suggests that, in the Old-Five-Old Foundation, orientation (Mathis and Jackson 2008) functions to give an overview of it and its practice to newcomers, developing newcomers' readiness for their tasks. Orientation addresses two types of issues: administrative issues and professional issues. Administrative issues are relevant to learning about the organisation and learning to function in the work group (Fisher 1986). Professional issues are relevant to learning about the organisation and learning to do the job (Fisher 1986). This section discusses administrative issues and professional issues in sequence.

As for administrative issues relevant to learning about the organisation, in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's orientation plan, there are courses named 'Administrative and Personnel Regulations' and 'Financial Affairs and Audit' (Appendix XLV). As indicated by Su-Lan Lin (Appendix XVIII), the 'Administrative and Personnel Regulations' course introduces the organisation's regulations in relation to issues such as office hours, asking for leave, the salary scale and fringe benefits, introducing its human resource management system to newcomers. The 'Financial Affairs and Audit' course introduces the regulations regarding issues such as the procedures for cash advance applications and monthly salary payment requests, introducing its financial system to newcomers.

With regard to administrative issues relevant to learning to function in the work group, orientation deals with two aspects: to introduce who is who so as to pave the

way for establishing social relations amongst newcomers and the others, and to define what appropriate social relations in the workplace are. As far as introducing who is who is concerned, in the Old-Five-Old Foundation's orientation plan, there is a course named 'Knowing Your Work Environment and Staff Members' (Appendix XLV). As indicated by Su-Lan Lin (Appendix XVIII), this course introduces social workers, social work supervisors and other personnel to the newcomer, paving the way for establishing social relations amongst newcomers and other employees. As far as defining appropriate social relations in the workplace is concerned, this is illustrated by the aforementioned Xiao-Yong's description. He remembered that, in orientation, the chief executive officer told newcomers that practitioners should develop good relationships with one another. She does not allow a practitioner to talk behind people's backs; she does not countenance this sort of thing in the Old-Five-Old Foundation (Appendix XL).

As for professional issues relevant to learning about the organisation, in its orientation plan, there is a course named 'Introduction to the Old-Five-Old Foundation' (Appendix XLV). As indicated by Su-Lan Lin (Appendix XVIII), this course explains the Five-Old Ideals to a newcomer and talks about the Old-Five-Old Foundation's services regarding advocacy, community empowerment and care services, introducing its professional service system to newcomers by discussing what it plans to do and what it can do for service users.

As far as professional issues relevant to learning to do the job are concerned, orientation deals with two aspects: general training and specific training about a practitioner's assigned tasks. In its orientation plan, there are courses named

‘Introduction to Elderly Social Welfare’ and ‘Home Care Service Programme’ (Appendix XLV). As indicated by Su-Lan Lin (Appendix XVIII), the ‘Introduction to Elderly Social Welfare’ course discusses different kinds of elders’ needs and the measures that satisfy their needs; it includes an introduction to current governmental measures. It is observable that, in nature, this course offers general training about a practitioner’s assigned tasks. The ‘Home Care Service Programme’ course introduces those people who need the home care service, the assessment criteria, the content of the home care service and the forms utilised in the programme. A newcomer, who is going to take over this programme, will attend this course. It is observable that, in nature, this course offers specific training about a practitioner’s assigned tasks.

Having discussed orientation, the next section discusses supervision.

### *7.6.2 Supervision*

This study suggests that supervision (Kadushin and Harkness 2002) is mainly relevant to learning to do the job (Fisher 1986). It functions to enable practitioners to raise any difficulties encountered in practice, to help them to overcome these difficulties and thus to reduce their deficiency, enabling them to do the job. In the Old-Five-Old Foundation, there are two important types of supervision mechanisms: individual and group supervision (Kadushin and Harkness 2002). In comparison to the more general design to which orientation belongs, individual supervision is a more customised design. A more customised design means that instructors might

handle a learner's individual learning needs. It is observable that, in the Old-Five-Old Foundation, individual supervision takes two forms: supervisors/mentors and consultation with peers/advisors. In comparison to individual supervision, it is sensible that group supervision may offer broader information sources since there are more than two persons participating in the communication. It is observable that, in the Old-Five-Old Foundation, there are two types of group supervision: group supervision that aims to find out solutions and group supervision that aims to comprehend learning materials. This section discusses individual supervision first and then discusses group supervision.

As for supervisors/mentors, it is observable that this type of individual supervision operates through two means: the annual individual development plan and the individual supervision discussion. In the annual individual development plan, a social work supervisor and a practitioner set their own expectations regarding that practitioner's annual professional development, setting the expected development and the content they are going to do in the year (e.g., to list items that indicate what needs to be improved regarding a practitioner's tasks). For instance, Pei-Zhen indicates that the chief executive officer required her to write an annual individual development plan, and one of the items she wrote was about the volunteer service. In the past year, some volunteers had not participated in the Chunghwa branch's volunteer service, and she had less contact with those volunteers. She plans to create events for them to interact with one another and encourage them to participate in the branch's volunteer service (Appendix XVIII). Unlike the annual individual development plan, which puts emphasis on long-term outcomes, the individual supervision discussion focuses on identifying a practitioner's deficiency in their daily



activities. While there is a challenging event, a practitioner raises his/her difficulties actively, or a social work supervisor actively detects a practitioner's difficulties by inspection. An example of the individual supervision discussion is illustrated in Ya-Ru's description.

*“Because there was a case; although he was an elder, he was very healthy. The slope in front of his house was very steep, but he was still able to walk up the slope.” “Because, nowadays, in the assessment, at least an item in ADL needs to be assessed as disabled; otherwise, at least an item in IADL needs to be assessed as disabled, plus as living alone.” “Then, I put a full mark on both scales, but the case still passed.” “I wrote a report indicating that the elder just wants money and the like; however, because he issued a complaint earlier, that is to say, visiting the department director’s office to complain about it, then, in the end, they decided to open this case.” “At that time, I did discuss it with Su-Lan; she said that the elder lived in a quite remote area, so he still needed assistance. However, since he was physically very healthy and went around but didn’t just stay at home, subsequently, our volunteer delivered a meal box to his house and often found him not at home.” (Ya-Ru 2010, Interview, 16 January; Appendix XXXIII)*

In this example, Ya-Ru puts emphasis on the elder's physical condition and mobility, and thus she believes that that elder does not need the home delivered meals service. She discussed this challenging case with her social work supervisor, Su-Lan Lin. Su-Lan Lin proposed a different opinion that as he lives in a remote area, he needs the service. With regard to Su-Lan Lin's assessment criteria, she had considered the geographic location, which implies issues about convenience, cost and safety in the transportation process for acquiring food. In their individual supervision discussion, though Ya-Ru did not accept her social work supervisor's opinion, she was exposed to an alternative view that considered a further geographic location,

which she had not noticed before. Having discussed supervisors/mentors (the annual individual development plan and the individual supervision discussion), this study proceeds to discuss another type of individual supervision: consultation with peers/advisors.

As for consultation with peers/advisors, a practitioner's colleagues or the professional service advisors from its advisory groups could offer suggestions about specific problems a practitioner has encountered. An example of consultation with peers/advisors is illustrated in Zi-En's description. In this example, Zi-En consulted her colleagues; they discussed assessment criteria issues: whether a particular service applicant should become an actual client or not.

*“Of course, there are social work ethics and that sort of thing for me to follow. However, I think that, when I encountered these situations, which are beyond ethics, and faced the contradictory situations, which made it hard for me to make a judgment and an assessment, I would think that I should consult my colleagues' opinions.” “After listening to my colleagues' opinions, it's still my call to make a decision to determine what should be done.” “We often discuss issues, such as whether we should make the applicant become an actual client.”*  
(Zi-En 2010, Interview, 19 January; Appendix XXXIV)

Having discussed individual supervision, this study proceeds to discuss group supervision. As for group supervision that aims to find out solutions, the case discussion meeting, which aims to discuss challenging cases, falls within this category. For instance, in a case discussion meeting, Jia-Yu proposes a challenging case for discussion (Appendix XLVI). She indicates that a home care service user has been drinking to excess and glue-sniffing. He has two brothers, and his

caregiver is the second youngest brother, who also is glue-sniffing. He lives with his second youngest brother, but there is a conflictual relationship between his second youngest brother and him. Recently, his second youngest brother was violent towards him, and he was hospitalised as a consequence. Jia-Yu plans to discuss the question: 'How to coordinate the way family members treat him under such an environment whose atmosphere is permeated by conflictual family relationships?' Through a case discussion meeting, she wants to find a solution that could coordinate his family members to give him care.

With regard to group supervision that aims to comprehend learning materials, this type of group supervision seeks to understand particular themes. In the Old-Five-Old Foundation, it consists of two types: the training course regarding a particular topic and the discussion meeting regarding particular books/articles. The training course regarding a particular topic is illustrated by an in-service training course named 'Understanding the Long-Term Care Ten-Year Programme' (Appendix XLV). As for the discussion meeting regarding particular books/articles, in this type of group supervision, a practitioner has to report chapters or articles, summarise his/her understanding of key points and point out its clinical implication for their current practice. Those, who participate in the discussion, may clarify their confusion or misconceptions and deepen their understanding of a topic. An example is indicated by Su-Lan Lin. She indicates that, in the Taichung county branch, they were reading the book named 'Social Work Theory: Intervention Models and Case Analyses'. Social workers were assigned to report the content of a chapter or two chapters, discussing how the content can be utilised in their services (Appendix XVIII).

In Section 7.4, Section 7.5 and Section 7.6, this study discusses instructors' instructing (an individual level structuring force), while, in Section 7.2 and Section 7.3, it discusses practitioners' puzzle solving (an individual level structuring force). The next section summarises this chapter.

## **7.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter answers the question: how are practitioners' methods of learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector? The conclusive argument of this chapter is that practitioners' methods of learning are organised by practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing (individual level structuring forces). It performs the micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning, investigating the social actors' subjective mental states and objective activities, their relationships to and their interaction with other social actors and their contacts with artefacts, which organise practitioners' methods of learning. This micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning in conjunction with the macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning (Chapter 5) and the macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning (Chapter 6) systematically perform both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning, adding an original contribution to previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000).

In the analysis of practitioners' puzzle solving, this study tackles seven bodies of

literature: the literatures that address problem solving (Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger 2000, 2011; Mayer 1999; Noller, Parnes and Biondi 1976), case management (Ballew and Mink 1996), the cognitive domain, the affective domain, networks (Gould and Fernandez 1989; Granovetter 1973; Law 1992; Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; Wenger 2000), information accessibility (Fidel and Green 2004) and information comprehensibility (Fidel and Green 2004; Gagné 1985). Section 7.2 and Section 7.3 indicate the limitations of these literatures. In order to produce a more comprehensive explanation, this study synthesises these seven bodies of literature. Drawing upon these literatures, the conclusive argument for practitioners' puzzle solving is that practitioners' methods of learning are centred on the process of puzzle solving and on the process of developing puzzle solving competence. Going through these processes, practitioners develop the competences to accomplish the value activities assigned to them. The contribution of this analysis is that it proposes the conclusive framework for practitioners' puzzle solving, and this framework is a new synthesised framework that engages in a cognitive analysis of the practitioners' process of puzzle solving together with a cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of their process of developing puzzle solving competence. This cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of practitioners' methods of learning denotes a contribution to the field of study. It explains the process of puzzle solving and the process of developing puzzle solving competence through which practitioners develop the competences to accomplish the value activities they are assigned to execute.

In the analysis of instructors' instructing, this study tackles five bodies of literature: the literatures that address identity (Edwards and Bess 1998), communication (Berlo

1960; Habermas 1984; Schramm 1955), orientation (Mathis and Jackson 2008), supervision (Kadushin and Harkness 2002) and organisational socialisation (Fisher 1986). Section 7.4, Section 7.5 and Section 7.6 indicate the limitations of these literatures. In order to produce a more comprehensive explanation, this study synthesises these five bodies of literature. Drawing upon these literatures, the conclusive argument for instructors' instructing is that practitioners' methods of learning are centred on instructors' activities. Instructors offer instructions to practitioners via organisational instruction mechanisms and, for instructive activities to occur and to be useful, the conditions of instructing, which consist of psychological and communication conditions, have to be met. With instructions from instructors, practitioners develop the competences to accomplish their assigned value activities. The contribution of this analysis is that it proposes the conclusive framework for instructors' instructing, and this framework is a new synthesised framework that relates learning to identity (professional relations) and to communication and engages in an analysis of macro organisational instruction mechanisms that form the architecture for the construction of professional relations and communications between practitioners and instructors. This social analysis of practitioners' methods of learning denotes a contribution to the field of study. It explains professional relations, clear communication, active communication and authentic communication that constitute the conditions needed for instructive activities to occur and to be useful. It also explains organisational instruction mechanisms through which instructors offer instructions to practitioners and the content of those instructions offered through these mechanisms.

Having systematically performed a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the

organising of learning (Chapter 5 to Chapter 7), the next chapter evaluates what this study has achieved by discussing this study's contributions, implications and limitations.

## CHAPTER EIGHT CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses this study's contribution to the studies of learning in the organisational setting (Section 8.1), its implications for social work practice (Section 8.2) and its limitations (Section 8.3). The research question at the heart of this study is 'How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?' The answer to this research question is that practitioners' learning is organised by five kinds of structuring forces. At the macro level, practitioners' direction of learning is organised by service purchasers' demanding (an inter-organisational level structuring force) and the service provider's planning (an organisational level structuring force). The evaluation of practitioners' learning is organised by the service provider's monitoring (an organisational level structuring force). At the micro level, practitioners' methods of learning are organised by practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing (individual level structuring forces). The overall contribution of this study is that it systematically analyses the organising of learning through both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis (Heath and Sitkin 2001). This is achieved by examining the macro and micro structuring forces (cross-level analysis) that organise practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning (process analysis). Such an analytical framework does not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), thus denoting an original contribution to the field of study (see Section 2.1.3 for the contribution of this study's cross-level analysis and process analysis).



This chapter proposes two suggestions as implications of this study's contribution. Firstly, it is necessary for social work organisations (as service providers) and governments (as service purchasers) to establish enabling social structures so that the direction of practitioners' learning may be driven in appropriate directions. Secondly, it is necessary for social work teams/organisations, practitioners and instructors to establish enabling learning resources so that practitioners can be connected to learning resources and so that instructive activities may occur and be useful to practitioners (learners), helping practitioners to develop their competence efficiently.

After that, this chapter discusses the limitations of this study. Firstly, this study has a theoretical limitation in relation to its analyses of the macro level context of practitioners' learning. It does not include an analysis of indirect influences of world-systems and societies on the organising of practitioners' learning. Secondly, it has a theoretical limitation on generalisation. This study has produced substantive frameworks that offer context-specific explanations, rather than building a grand/middle-range theory (Merriam 1988). As a consequence, in terms of the limitations on generalisation, it may not be possible to explain the empirical phenomena that happen in other inter-organisational and organisational contexts. Having discussed the content of this chapter briefly, this chapter begins with a discussion of this study's contribution.

## **8.1 Contribution**

This section begins with an overview of this study's research question, the knowledge gap it aims to fill in, the preliminary frameworks that emerged and the methodology through which the preliminary frameworks were tested and elaborated to produce the conclusive frameworks. Then, it reviews the conclusive frameworks and their contributions.

*8.1.1 Overview of the research question, the knowledge gap, the preliminary frameworks and the methodology through which the preliminary frameworks were tested and elaborated*

In Chapter 1 (Introduction), this study consulted research topics in Organisational Behaviour. Drawing upon Heath and Sitkin's (2001) suggestion, which puts emphasis on researching the activity of organising, this study has argued that there is a need to relate learning to organising, studying the organising of learning. Furthermore, drawing upon Jankowicz's (2005) suggestion concerning the choice of a topic with which a researcher is familiar and in light of the fact that the author of this dissertation is more familiar with third sector organisations, this study argued that third sector organisations constitute an appropriate research setting. Drawing upon Mills' (2000) suggestion, which encourages a researcher to investigate major public issues and key private troubles, and in light of the re-professionalising (Finlay 2000) and de-professionalisation (Healy and Meagher 2004) of social work practice, which signify major public issues and key private troubles, this study argued that social work practice constitutes a proper research target.

On the basis of the aforementioned arguments, by connecting learning in the organisational setting to organising, third sector organisations and social work practice, this study formulated its research question as ‘How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?’ The research objective of this study was ‘To establish conceptual frameworks capable of theorising how learning is organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector’.

Following the establishment of the research question, in Chapter 2 (Literature Review), this study proceeded to establish the preliminary frameworks that could be utilised to research the organising of learning within the context of social work practice in the third sector. Drawing upon Heath and Sitkin’s (2001) suggestion, which encourages researchers to perform a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of organising, this study has argued that there is a need to perform a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning.

This study defined the content of its cross-level analysis and its process analysis. Drawing upon Münch and Smelser’s (1987) and Ritzer’s (2001) discussions of the macro level and the micro level and Law’s (1992) discussion of non-human objects, the cross-level analysis in this study consisted of a macro analysis and a micro analysis. In light of the academic subjects concerning Curriculum (Marsh 2009), Educational Psychology (O’Donnell, Reeve and Smith 2009) and Assessment (McMillan 2008) and by making use of the logic of induction to conceptualise the empirical learning experiences of the author of this dissertation, the process analysis in this study consisted of an analysis of practitioners’ direction of learning, an

analysis of practitioners' methods of learning and an analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning. In short, this study aimed to perform a cross-level analysis and a process analysis (Heath and Sitkin 2001) of the organising of learning by looking at the macro and micro structuring forces that organise practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning. Such an analytical framework did not exist in previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000); it fills in this knowledge gap and thus adds an original contribution to previous studies of learning in the organisational setting.

Having defined this study's cross-level analysis and process analysis, drawing upon Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) logic of synthesis, this study further took the synthesised approach (Appendix I) to synthesise theoretical concepts from different academic disciplines, producing five sets of preliminary frameworks, which as a whole perform both a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning. Intellectual sources from which theoretical concepts were grasped and synthesised include literatures in relation to Organisational Behaviour, Management, Social Work, Sociology and Psychology. These five sets of preliminary frameworks so derived were: service purchasers' demanding, the service provider's planning, the service provider's monitoring, practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing. Service purchasers' demanding and the service provider's planning performed a macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning, while the service provider's monitoring performed a macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning. Practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing performed a micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning. The linkage

between this study's macro analysis and its micro analysis was established by this study's process analysis in the sense that practitioners' direction of learning (the competences they were expected to develop) was shaped by macro structuring forces (service purchasers' demanding and the service provider's planning). In order to develop the expected competences, practitioners' methods of learning were moulded by micro structuring forces (practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing). Then, in order to ensure that practitioners had developed the expected competences, the evaluation of practitioners' learning was carried out by the macro structuring force (the service provider's monitoring).

These five sets of preliminary frameworks were tested and elaborated through this study's empirical investigation, producing the conclusive frameworks that answer this study's research question. This empirical investigation took the epistemological stance of hermeneutical inquiry. In Chapter 3 (Methodology), drawing upon Gadamer's (2006) fusion of horizons, this study argued that academic views (theoretical basis), practitioners' views and experiences (empirical basis) and the views and experiences of the author of this dissertation could be utilised to produce conclusive frameworks by fusing them. The author integrated academic views with the practitioners' views and experiences by utilising his views and experiences. The way this study obtained academic views was through a literature review. The way this study obtained practitioners' views and experiences was via an ethnographic inquiry (Fetterman 2010; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). In the Old-Five-Old Foundation, this study collected documentary secondary data (Prior 2003a) and gathered primary data via participant observations (Gold 1958; Jorgensen 1989) and interviews (Carspecken 1996; DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006; Ghauri

and Grønhaug 2005; King 2004a; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). Data collected included governmental regulations, organisational regulations and views and experiences from participants, who were in front-line practitioner positions, social work supervisor positions and executive positions.

This study utilised King's (2004b) template analysis to make sense of the data gathered. In the template analysis, the preliminary frameworks represented initial templates. Categories in the preliminary frameworks represented predetermined codes. It attached these predetermined codes to units of ethnographic data, relating the data to a theme. If data were not covered by a predetermined code, this study inserted a new code to cover this data. This was done by conceptualising the data inductively. In addition to insertion (adding a new code), this study also utilised deletion (deleting a predetermined code) to revise the preliminary frameworks to fit the data. As such, the preliminary frameworks (initial templates) were revised to produce the conclusive frameworks (final templates).

Having given an overview of the research question, the knowledge gap, the preliminary frameworks and the methodology through which the preliminary frameworks were tested and elaborated, this study proceeds to discuss the conclusive frameworks and their contributions.

### *8.1.2 Conclusive frameworks and their contributions*

The research question of this study is 'How is learning organised within the context

of social work practice in the third sector?’ On the basis of the analyses performed in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, the answer to this research question is that practitioners’ learning is organised by five kinds of structuring forces. At the macro level, practitioners’ direction of learning was organised by service purchasers’ demanding (an inter-organisational level structuring force) and the service provider’s planning (an organisational level structuring force). The evaluation of practitioners’ learning was organised by the service provider’s monitoring (an organisational level structuring force). At the micro level, practitioners’ methods of learning were organised by practitioners’ puzzle solving and instructors’ instructing (individual level structuring forces).

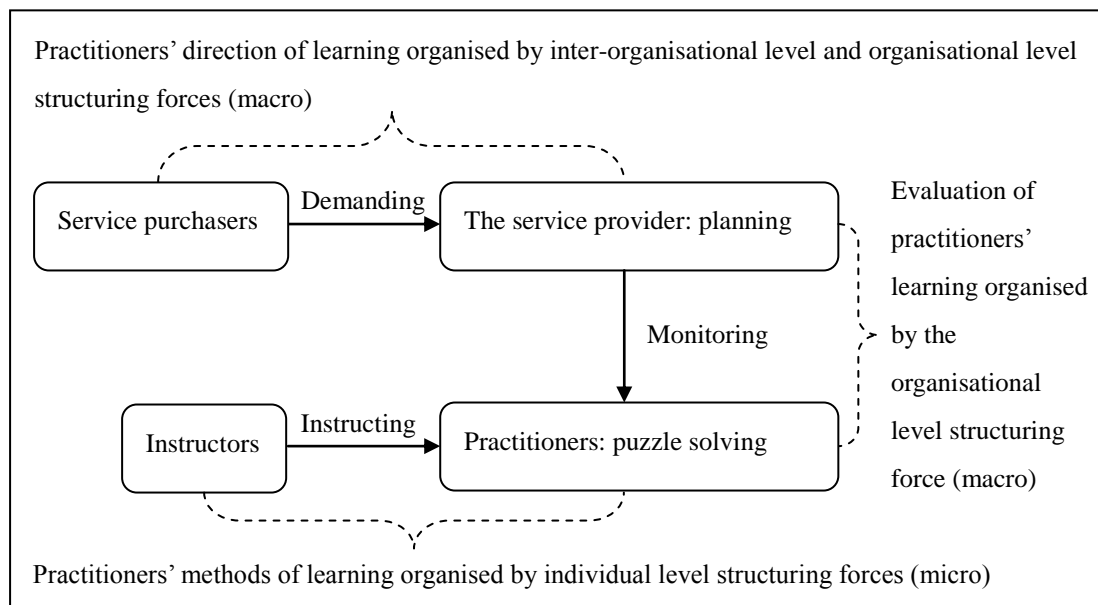


Figure 8.1 The fundamental rationale of this study's conclusive frameworks

Figure 8.1 indicates the fundamental rationale of this study's conclusive frameworks. The following sections discuss the macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning, the macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning and the micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning.

This study performed a macro analysis of practitioners' direction of learning, investigating social structures that organised practitioners' direction of learning. The overall argument of this analysis is that practitioners' direction of learning was organised by both service purchasers' demanding and the service provider's planning.

In the analysis of service purchasers' demanding (Chapter 5), drawing upon the literatures that addressed ecological transactions (Gitterman and Germain 2008), value activities (Porter 1998b) and the exercise of power (Foucault 1972, 1995; Ouchi 1979), this study has argued that practitioners' learning was embedded in the ecological transactions between service purchasers (local governments) and the service provider (the Old-Five-Old Foundation). In their ecological transactions, service purchasers' exercise of power required the service provider to perform particular value activities. This shaped the competences practitioners were expected to develop so as to accomplish these value activities, thereby manipulating their direction of learning.

In the analysis of the service provider's planning (Chapter 5), drawing upon the literatures that addressed strategic decisions (Porter 1998a; Wehrich 1982), job designs (Campion and Thayer 1987), value activities (Porter 1998b) and professionalism (Finlay 2000; Healy and Meagher 2004), this study has argued that, firstly, practitioners' learning was embedded in the service provider's planning concerning its chosen fields of practices. Then, in this range of its chosen practices, the service provider's planning with regard to the assignment of its chosen practices to practitioners for execution manipulated the value activities a practitioner was



assigned to execute. This shaped the varieties of competences and levels of competence a practitioner was expected to develop so as to accomplish the value activities he/she was assigned to execute, manipulating his/her direction of learning.

Furthermore, this study performed the macro analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning, investigating the social structure that organised the evaluation of practitioners' learning. Drawing upon the literatures that addressed the cognitive domain (Benack 1984; Bloom et al. 1967; Bruner 1957; Collins and Loftus 1975; Cross and Paris 1988; Kember et al. 1999; Kondrat 1999; O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith 2009; Tulving 2002), the literatures that addressed the affective domain (Gardner 2004; Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia 1968; Mayer and Salovey 1993, 1997; Thorndike 1920) and the literatures that addressed organisational control systems (Beer et al. 1978; Jaworski 1988; Montanari and Freedman 1981; Poister 2003; Swiss 1991), this study argued in Chapter 6 that the evaluation of practitioners' learning was organised by the service provider's monitoring. That is, the evaluation of practitioners' learning was carried out through the service provider's (the Old-Five-Old Foundation's) organisational evaluation mechanisms, which examined practitioners' cognitive and affective competence.

Lastly, this study performed the micro analysis of practitioners' methods of learning, investigating the social actors' (practitioners' and instructors') subjective mental states and objective activities, their relationships to and their interaction with other social actors and their contacts with artefacts, which organised practitioners' methods of learning. The overall argument of this analysis is that practitioners' methods of learning were organised by both practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors'

instructing.

In the analysis of practitioners' puzzle solving (Chapter 7), drawing upon the literatures that addressed problem solving (Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger 2000, 2011; Mayer 1999; Noller, Parnes and Biondi 1976), case management (Ballew and Mink 1996), the cognitive domain, the affective domain, networks (Gould and Fernandez 1989; Granovetter 1973; Law 1992; Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; Wenger 2000), information accessibility (Fidel and Green 2004) and information comprehensibility (Fidel and Green 2004; Gagné 1985), this study argued that practitioners' methods of learning were centred on the process of puzzle solving and on the process of developing puzzle solving competence. Going through these processes, practitioners developed the competences to accomplish the value activities assigned to them.

In the analysis of instructors' instructing (Chapter 7), drawing upon the literatures that addressed identity (Edwards and Bess 1998), communication (Berlo 1960; Habermas 1984; Schramm 1955), orientation (Mathis and Jackson 2008), supervision (Kadushin and Harkness 2002) and organisational socialisation (Fisher 1986), this study argued that practitioners' methods of learning were centred on instructors' activities. Instructors offered instructions to practitioners via organisational instruction mechanisms and, for instructive activities to occur and to be useful, the conditions of instructing, which consist of psychological and communication conditions, had to be met. With instructions from instructors, practitioners developed the competences to accomplish their assigned value activities.

To sum up, the new synthesised framework for service purchasers' demanding performed a social analysis of the direction of practitioners' learning, relating learning to ecological transactions, value activities and the exercise of power. The new synthesised framework for the service provider's planning performed a social analysis of the direction of practitioners' learning, relating learning to strategic decisions, job designs, value activities and professionalism. The new synthesised framework for the service provider's monitoring performed a cognitive, affective and social analysis of the evaluation of practitioners' learning, applying the cognitive and affective domains to the workplace setting (cognitive analysis and affective analysis) and relating learning to organisational control systems (social analysis). The new synthesised framework for practitioners' puzzle solving performed a cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of practitioners' methods of learning, engaging in a cognitive analysis of the practitioners' process of puzzle solving together with a cognitive, affective and socio-cultural analysis of their process of developing puzzle solving competence. Lastly, the new synthesised framework for instructors' instructing performed a social analysis of practitioners' methods of learning, relating learning to identity (professional relations) and to communication and engaging in an analysis of macro organisational instruction mechanisms that formed the architecture for the construction of professional relations and communications between practitioners and instructors. The aforementioned five conclusive frameworks, as a whole, systematically performed a cross-level analysis and a process analysis of the organising of learning by looking at the macro and micro structuring forces (cross-level analysis) that organised practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning (process analysis). Such an analytical framework did not exist in previous studies of learning in the

organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), thus denoting an original contribution.

Having discussed this study's contribution, the next section discusses its implications.

## **8.2 Implications**

This section indicates learning problems identified in this study's macro and micro analyses and accordingly proposes the implications of these problems for social work teams/organisations as a whole. Specifically, this study's macro analysis refers to an analysis of social structures, the structures in society (e.g., organisations) that enable and constrain human actions (Münch and Smelser 1987). Its micro analysis refers to an analysis of social actors' subjective mental states and objective activities (Ritzer 2001), their relationships to and their interaction with other social actors (Münch and Smelser 1987; Ritzer 2001) and their contacts with artefacts (cf. Law 1992) where human social actors and artefacts stand for learning resources. In Section 8.2.1, based on its macro and micro analyses, this study theoretically identifies learning problems that constrained practitioners' learning: a lack of enabling social structures and a lack of enabling learning resources. Then, in Section 8.2.2, generalised from its macro and micro analyses, this study proposes two implications for social work teams/organisations: to establish enabling social structures and to establish enabling learning resources.

### *8.2.1 A lack of enabling social structures and a lack of enabling learning recourses*

This study identifies three learning problems in relation to a lack of enabling social structures: re-professionalising, de-professionalisation and top management's preferred fields of practice that may be misleading.

As for re-professionalising, drawing upon Porter (1998b), Campion and Thayer (1987) and Finlay (2000), this study argued that when a practitioner not only performs direct activities within operations that carry out traditional direct clinical/treatment tasks but also performs other value activities that require higher-level competence (i.e., supplementary value activities: marketing and sales, direct activities within human resource management, service and quality assurance within operations), re-professionalising occurs. As indicated in Section 5.5.1 (competence-variety and re-professionalising), the empirical data revealed that re-professionalising had occurred but not all participants were comfortable with carrying out supplementary value activities in relation to marketing and sales, service (e.g., customer service) and quality assurance within operations. For instance, the social worker, Xin-Chun, felt uncomfortable with carrying out quality assurance within operations. In her opinion, to supervise and monitor care workers' home care services belonged to the nursing profession's work, thus being irrelevant to social work.

With regard to de-professionalisation, drawing upon Porter (1998b), Campion and

Thayer (1987) and Healy and Meagher (2004), this study argued that when a practitioner performs value activities that require lower-level competence to the extent that this constrains his/her opportunities to fully utilise his/her social work expertise, de-professionalisation occurs. As indicated in Section 5.5.2 (competence-level and de-professionalisation), the empirical data revealed that de-professionalisation had occurred. Practitioners performed indirect activities within human resource management and indirect activities within operations, such as performing activities in relation to the administrative audit work. Performing these de-professionalising activities merely required practitioners to develop lower-level competence, and participants felt uncomfortable with carrying out these activities. For instance, the administrative tasks had become trivial to the extent that the social worker, Shen-Mei, felt that she did a lay job, rather than a professional job in social work.

Regarding top management's preferred fields of practice, drawing upon Wehrich (1982), this study argued that while planning the range of its chosen practices, the research site takes factors in its external and internal environments into consideration, and top management orientation constitutes a factor in its internal environment. As indicated in Section 5.4.1 (the Old-Five-Old Foundation's analysis of environments), the empirical data revealed that top management orientation influenced this planning. The founder of the research site preferred to continue with the practice related to the volunteer service credit bank. The chief executive officer preferred to support the practice designed to build and develop a safe and healthy community and to deepen its knowledge in this direction. However, the director thought that the founder's preferred practice had a theoretical justification but empirically did not work. The

vice director thought that the chief executive officer's preferred practice was problematic in logic and doubted its sustainability.

Having identified a lack of enabling social structures, this study proceeds to discuss a lack of enabling learning resources. It identifies three learning problems in relation to inhibiting learning resources: the learning barrier relevant to information seekers' physical effort, the absence of professional relations and a lack of authentic communication.

As for the learning barrier relevant to information seekers' physical effort, drawing upon Fidel and Green (2004), this study argued that learning barriers include barriers to information accessibility comprising of barriers relevant to information seekers' physical, emotional/social and economic effort. As indicated in Section 7.3.3 (learning barrier identification), the empirical data revealed that the learning barrier relevant to information seekers' physical effort existed. In the research site, when two branches shared a social work supervisor and that social work supervisor was in the office of one of the branches, the social work supervisor was not physically close to practitioners in the other branch. In the situation where practitioners of that branch were not fairly familiar with their tasks and did not handle their tasks very well, in Shu-Mei's view (Appendix XLII), it would be more appropriate for the research site to place a social work supervisor in that branch, providing dedicated supervision to that branch only.

With regard to the absence of professional relations, developing from Edwards and Bess (1998), this study argued that instructive activities are embedded in the

professional relations between practitioners and instructors. For instructive activities to occur, professional relations between practitioners and instructors need to exist. As indicated in Section 7.4 (the psychological condition of instructing), the empirical data revealed that the absence of professional relations occurred. In the vice director's opinion (Appendix XXVII), practitioners did not reach a consensus regarding professional teamwork. Thus, they did not actively try to complement each other's deficiencies. The consequence was that they had to search from their own experiences to produce a suitable way of completing their tasks. This made practitioners exhausted since they had to carry out their tasks on their own without their colleagues' professional advice that may have helped them to get tasks done more easily.

Regarding a lack of authentic communication, drawing upon Schramm (1955), Berlo (1960) and Habermas (1984), this study argued that instructive activities are embedded in the communication between practitioners and instructors. For instructive activities to occur and to be useful, clear communication, active communication and authentic communication need to exist. Authentic communication involves expressing what a person really wants to convey, rather than hiding it. As indicated in Section 7.5.3 (authentic communication), the empirical data revealed that a lack of authentic communication occurred. The social worker, Yi-Xin, did not share with others what she knew by hiding some competences so that additional tasks would not increasingly fall to her. As a result, others lost the opportunities to learn from her since she held back useful learning materials that may have enabled them to develop their competence.



Having theoretically identified a lack of enabling social structures and a lack of enabling learning resources, the next section proceeds to discuss their implications for social work teams/organisations as a whole.

### *8.2.2 Establishing enabling social structures and establishing enabling learning resources*

Generalised from learning problems identified in its macro and micro analyses, this study suggests two implications for social work teams/organisations: to establish enabling social structures and to establish enabling learning resources. These are now discussed in sequence.

As far as establishing enabling social structures is concerned, this study proposes three suggestions: to re-evaluate whether re-professionalising can give social workers a unique and irreplaceable attribute in comparison to other occupations; to reduce de-professionalising activities that constrain social workers' opportunities to fully utilise their social work expertise; and to re-evaluate top management's preferred fields of practice that may undermine their organisation's effective service contribution. In so doing, social workers' direction of learning may be driven in appropriate directions.

As for re-professionalising, this study is concerned about performing what kinds of value activities may make social workers a unique and irreplaceable profession. This study proposes that, in re-professionalising, on the one hand, social workers

may extend their areas of concern and develop the competences that belong to other disciplines, such as marketing and sales. On the other hand, while performing traditional direct clinical/treatment tasks decreases and performing supplementary value activities increases, social workers may spend their energy playing the increasing roles that in fact could have been played by other kinds of personnel (such as marketing and sales personnel). Here, the problem is: 'Can performing supplementary value activities make social workers a unique and irreplaceable profession?' Thus, this study suggests that in the context of public social services where re-professionalising occurs, it is necessary for social work organisations (as service providers) and governments (as service purchasers) to re-evaluate whether re-professionalising can give social workers a unique and irreplaceable attribute in comparison to other occupations.

With regard to de-professionalisation, this study is concerned with those kinds of value activities that may lead social workers to engage in the tasks for which they are trained. Thus, this study suggests that in the context of public social services where de-professionalisation occurs, it is necessary for social work organisations and governments to reduce de-professionalising activities that constrain social workers' opportunities to fully utilise their social work expertise. In so doing, social workers can then spend most of their energy doing the professional social work tasks.

Regarding re-evaluating re-professionalising and reducing de-professionalisation, at the public policy level, this study proposes that governments could seek to design a service programme and offer financial support to other kinds of personnel (e.g., social work assistants), assigning them to execute supplementary value activities or

the value activities that require lower-level competence. At the organisational policy level, social work organisations could develop human resources (e.g., volunteers) or hire other kinds of personnel, assigning them to accomplish these value activities. Through such a change at the public policy/organisational policy level, social workers can concentrate on accomplishing direct activities within operations (traditional direct clinical/treatment tasks), rather than being diverted into accomplishing other value activities.

Lastly, as for top management's preferred fields of practice that may be misleading, this study is concerned with those kinds of practices that may enable social workers to accumulate knowledge in a promising direction. Thus, this study suggests that in the context of social work organisations where top management's preferred fields of practice may be misleading, it is necessary for social work organisations' top management to re-evaluate their preferred fields of practice that may undermine their organisation's effective service contribution. In so doing, social workers may be reoriented towards accumulating knowledge in a promising direction, rather than wasting their energy in a possibly misleading direction. In the situation where top management is not aware of their personal preferences, those who notice this situation could make an effort to present empirical evidence and logical reasoning that may persuade top management to give up these misleading fields of practice (see Hedberg 1984 for unlearning that discards obsolete knowledge, such as abandoning founders' ideas).

Having discussed establishing enabling social structures, this study proceeds to address establishing enabling learning resources. It proposes three suggestions: to

remove the learning barrier relevant to information seekers' physical effort (a barrier to information accessibility); to establish professional relations (the psychological condition of instructing); and to promote authentic communication (a communication condition of instructing). In so doing, social workers can be connected to learning resources, and instructive activities may occur and be useful to them (learners), helping social workers to develop their competence efficiently.

As for the learning barrier relevant to information seekers' physical effort, this study is concerned about how to make learning resources physically accessible to learners. Thus, this study suggests that in the context of social work teams/organisations where the learning barrier relevant to information seekers' physical effort occurs, it is necessary for them to remove this barrier to information accessibility so that learning resources can be physically accessible to learners, connecting social workers to learning resources. For instance, in the situation where social workers of an office are not proficient in their tasks, deploying a social work supervisor to provide dedicated supervision to that office only can make this human learning resource physically accessible to learners.

With regard to the absence of professional relations, this study is concerned about how to make learners and human learning resources draw on their social work professional identity to make instructive activities occur. Thus, this study suggests that in the context of social work teams/organisations where the absence of professional relations occurs, it is necessary for social workers and their instructors to establish this psychological condition of instructing, establishing professional relations to make instructive activities occur. In the situation where social workers

or instructors do not use their social work professional identity to actively try to complement other's deficiencies, those who notice this could make an effort to remind them to draw on their social work professional identity.

Lastly, regarding a lack of authentic communication, this study is concerned about how to make human learning resources not hold back useful learning materials. Thus, this study suggests that in the context of social work teams/organisations where a lack of authentic communication occurs, it is necessary for them to promote this communication condition of instructing, promoting authentic communication to make instructive activities occur and be useful to social workers (learners). For instance, social work teams/organisations could make an effort to create an organisational environment that encourages social workers to make authentic communication, thereby avoiding making additional tasks become a social worker's duty simply because this social worker authentically reveals that he/she is capable of doing it.

To sum up, based on its macro and micro analyses, this study theoretically identifies learning problems that constrained practitioners' learning: a lack of enabling social structures and a lack of enabling learning resources. Generalised from its macro and micro analyses, this study proposes two implications for social work teams/organisations: to establish enabling social structures and to establish enabling learning resources. By establishing enabling social structures, social workers' direction of learning may be driven in appropriate directions. By establishing enabling learning resources, social workers can be connected to learning resources, and instructive activities may occur and be useful to them (learners), helping social

workers to develop their competence efficiently. Having discussed the implications, the next section discusses this study's limitations.

### **8.3 Limitations**

This section discusses the limitations of this study. These limitations constitute the areas of inquiry for future research. Firstly, this study has a theoretical limitation in relation to its analyses of the macro level context of practitioners' learning. In its macro analysis, this study looked at the units concerning organisations, groups and institutions. It did not include an analysis of world-systems and societies. The reason is that the Old-Five-Old Foundation and local governments are significant immediate macro forces that steer organising. The influences of world-systems and societies on steering organising were less direct than the influences of the Old-Five-Old Foundation and local governments since they were the broadest macro forces. Nonetheless, this does not exclude the indirect influences of world-systems and societies on steering organising. For instance, an example of the indirect influences from world-systems is about Westernisation (see Chang and Mo 2007). World-systems in which a nation is embedded may shape what technical resources will be produced and introduced into a nation's social work education and research. To import Western knowledge may influence what academic literatures (learning resources) social workers will read in their school education and practices. Future research could explore the indirect influences of world-systems on steering organising.

Secondly, this study has a theoretical limitation on generalisation (see Section 3.8). As an exploratory study (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005) that sought to theorise the organising of learning within the context of social work practice in the third sector, this study theorised the organising of learning by collecting data from a single case via purposeful sampling (Patton 2002). Then, it produced substantive frameworks that offered context-specific explanations, rather than building a grand/middle-range theory (Merriam 1988). As a consequence, it may not be possible to explain the empirical phenomena that happen in other inter-organisational and organisational contexts. Some factors that influence learning may/may not exist in this study's research context (the Old-Five-Old Foundation) but may not/may exist in other inter-organisational and organisational contexts. For instance, in terms of different inter-organisational contexts, while an organisation does not undertake public welfare service provision, there will be no ecological transaction (Gitterman and Germain 2008) between that organisation and local governments. Thus, local governments will not constitute a factor that could shape practitioners' direction of learning. Future research could explore the organising of learning in other inter-organisational and organisational contexts. This may lead future research to examine the usefulness of this study's conclusive frameworks in explaining the organising of learning in similar inter-organisational and organisational contexts. This may also lead future research to develop those frameworks that suit dissimilar inter-organisational and organisational contexts.

In conclusion, this study's research question is 'How is learning organised within the context of social work practice in the third sector?' The overall argument of this study, which offers the answer to the research question, is that learning within the

context of social work practice in the third sector is organised by five kinds of structuring forces: service purchasers' demanding, the service provider's planning, the service provider's monitoring, practitioners' puzzle solving and instructors' instructing. By looking at the macro and micro structuring forces (cross level analysis) that organised practitioners' learning, including their direction and methods of learning and the evaluation of their learning (process analysis), this study makes an original contribution to previous studies of learning in the organisational setting (e.g., Argyris and Schön 1978; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Senge 1990; Wenger 1998, 2000), deepening an understanding of the organising of learning.



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