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CULTURAL COMPETENCE TRAINING FROM A MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

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CULTURAL COMPETENCE TRAINING FROM A MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Wesley Wayne Williams

June 2018

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WORK STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

The Master of Social Work (MSW) program at California State University of San Bernardino utilizes a substantial portion of lecture hours bringing attention to areas in which racial disparities exist, as well as the negative impact that these racial disparities have on certain cultures and communities. This project focuses on the disparities involving African-American families in the public child welfare system and how cultural competence trainings may impact this overrepresentation. This research project consists of the exploration of past research relevant to this project, which pertains to cultural competence, the overrepresentation of African-American, and trainings on cultural competence. In addition, a 5-point Likert-scale survey focused on the need and effectiveness of cultural competency trainings from a student's perspective, was completed by graduate-level social work students. The data was then analyzed using SPSS statistics software employing tests that included frequencies, ANOVA, and a t-test. This project hypothesized that perspectives on cultural competence and cultural competence trainings differed along racial lines, and that there was no significant difference in response based on year in MSW program. Only the latter was support according to the data. This could also be interpreted to mean that students are not receiving much curriculum on cultural competence, which the curriculum is not meaningful enough to change their perceptions, or that students enter the program with fairly favorable perceptions of the importance of cultural competency

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I would like to acknowledge staff at San Bernardino County Children and Family Services, as well as faculty at California State University, San Bernardino who offered and provided support to me throughout this academic journey. Sincerely, thank you.

I would like give a special acknowledgement to Dr. Deirdre Lanesskog. I truly appreciate your tutelage and encouragement throughout this academic achievement. I was fortunate to have access to your patience and expertise, as is the School of Social Work at CSUSB.

DEDICATION

As with all of my accomplishments, I dedicate this to my wife and four sons. You all have been and continue to be my motivation. I love you.

“There must exist a paradigm, a practical model for social change that includes an understanding of ways to transform consciousness that are linked to efforts to transform structures.”

— bell hooks

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Formulation

The Masters in Social Work (MSW) program at California State University of San Bernardino utilizes a substantial portion of lecture hours bringing attention to areas in which racial disparities exist, as well as the negative impact that these racial disparities have on certain cultures and communities. Some of these areas with histories of racial disparity include unemployment/ poverty, disenfranchisement, arrest and criminal convictions, and involvement with the public child welfare system. This project focuses on the over-representation of African-American families in the child welfare system. According to the Government Accountability Office (2008), while making up only 15% of the population, African-American children account for 32% of children in foster care. Compared to Caucasian children, African-American children are more likely to remain in foster care longer, less likely to be reunited with families, more likely to be placed in group homes, less likely to find permanent families, and more likely to have poor educational, social, behavioral, and other outcomes (The Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare, 2011).

During a lecture at California State University of San Bernardino, a

seasoned professor was asked the question: "Why do African-American families continue to be overrepresented in the public child welfare system, if a substantial part of university graduate-level social work programs are geared towards exposing this social injustice?" This question is an important one as the largest employers of social workers in the United States is public child welfare services (NASW, 2015). If students in most graduate-level social work programs are informed of the systemic issue of racial disproportionality in the public child welfare system, as well as their responsibility to address this social injustice, why does the African-American overrepresentation in public child welfare remain virtually unchanged? African-Americans accounted for 12.8% in 2003 and 13.3% in 2016 of the total United States population (U.S. Census, 2003-2016). This data was compared to data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Adoptions and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, which showed that African-Americans represented 35% of children in foster care in 2003 and 23% in 2016 (2003-2016). Although the data reflects a decline in the percentage of African-American children in foster care, it also identifies the overrepresentation of African-Americans, compared to overall population percentage. This trend is not paralleled by any of other racial demographic in the United States. Graduate-level social work students may offer insight on this long-standing trend. Seeking the input of the graduate-level social work students is very important, as they represent the future professionals who are likely to serve families involved with the child welfare

system. This study asked social work students for their perspectives on how well their education and training prepared them to serve diverse families in their future work, as well as their expectations on cultural competence preparation.

Beyond social worker training and education, other factors may contribute to ethnic and racial disparities in the child welfare system. A lack of diversity within the social work profession may play a critical role in the overrepresentation of African-Americans in the child welfare system. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, reported that approximately 87% of their members were White or Caucasian (NASW, 2003). Of NASW members who identified public child welfare as their primary employment, just over 70% were white or Caucasian (NASW, 2003). Although NASW members do not represent the entire profession, these figures represent a troubling trend. African-Americans, who only make up approximately 13% of the U.S. population, contributed more than one third of children in foster care (NCSL, 2006). If one third of the children in foster care are African-American and the vast majority of social workers are white, one cannot help but to consider the possibility that the race of the worker and the race of the child impacts child welfare outcomes. One could assert that African American children are simply abused or neglected at a higher rate than children of any other race or ethnicity. However, the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform (NCCPR) (2015) found that social workers substantiate more

allegations of neglect involving black families versus white families, and when all data was collected, race was the only variable. Past research does not support the belief that African American children are abused at a higher rate than children of other races, nor does it identify what the driving force that is causing the disproportional presences of African Americans and their involvement with child welfare services.

Allegations that are investigated by a child welfare social worker include: caretaker absence/ incapacity, emotional abuse, exploitation, general neglect, severe neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and at risk/ sibling abused. In 2014, there were 496,972 child abuse referrals in California and of that number 79,169 were substantiated or found to be true (Lucile Packard Foundation, 2015). Of the eight allegations investigated, general neglect accounted for nearly 50% of the all substantiated referrals in San Bernardino County, as well as the state of California (Lucile Packard Foundation, 2015). General neglect is arguably the most ambiguous of the Welfare and Institutions Code 300 child maltreatment violations. Unlike sexual abuse or physical abuse, general neglect may be somewhat subjective. The definition of general neglect is the negligent failure of a parent/guardian or caretaker to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or supervision where no physical injury to the child has occurred (LAO, 1996). From this definition, one could form the opinion that the allegation of general neglect could be vulnerable to substantiation by social workers who are investigating families of cultures that differ from their own.

Consequently, cultural competence is paramount among public child welfare social workers to allow for a fair assessment of abuse or neglect within any family. Lacking awareness or knowledge of diverse cultural practices can lead to the inaccurate substantiation of abuse or neglect and possibly the removal of children from their homes, which is what many attribute to the overrepresentation of African-Americans in the public child welfare system (NCCPR, 2015).

Purpose of Study

Child welfare social workers receive cultural competence training from multiple sources: their MSW programs, their agencies, and sometimes, from sources they seek out on their own. The purpose of this study is to examine university MSW students' perceptions of how well-prepared they are to work with diverse families in child welfare. The study's intention is to help identify any relationship between the disproportionality of African-Americans involved with child welfare services and the cultural competence preparation that is provided to public child welfare social workers. These future child welfare social workers, who are directly involved with and primarily responsible for the investigation, substantiation and closing of referrals/ cases, can provide the best insight on the effectiveness of training and education that they receive on the importance of cultural competence or engaging cultures other than their own.

This study used a quantitative design consisting of an online, self-administered survey of MSW students' attitudes and beliefs about cultural competency. This design was chosen as it seeks to identify trends in the perceptions of future public child welfare social workers. Quantitative data utilizes descriptive and inferential statistics to examine the study's research objectives (Hughes, 2016).

Significance of the Study on Social Work

It is important to further understand this problem, because of the negative impact that it is having on black communities in San Bernardino County, as well as other parts of California and throughout the United States. Understanding the issue allows for a more effective effort in changing the status quo. The study's findings may contribute to better oversight and training within child welfare service agencies, as well as help to jumpstart a more aggressive approach to addressing the overrepresentation of African-American children in Child Welfare Systems, as not enough has been done to correct this issue thus far.

Many children who have had stints in the child welfare system, regardless of race, tend to struggle in adulthood. These struggles may include, but are not limited to maintaining stable employment/ unemployment, substance abuse, participation in and conviction of criminal activity, and being perpetrators of child abuse or neglect themselves (Childhelp, 2018). Each of these issues,

in its own merit, has a negative impact on society, as a whole, and each issue branches out into other issues. For example, the societal impact of those who are unemployed is primarily financial, as those who are unemployed cannot contribute, financially, to society and must therefore depend on society to have all or a portion of their needs met. In addition, a number of other negative impacting issues may stem from unemployment, such as not having access to effective and affordable healthcare, an inability to maintain a healthy diet or eating habits, and an overall reduction in quality of life.

Social workers, in practice and in education should be concerned with this study, as research highlights the impact of racial discrimination in practice, and addressing this challenge may begin with cultural competence training. Unequal treatment of families based on race violates the ethical foundation that the profession is built on. These principles include service, social justice, dignity and worth of a person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence (NASW, 2016). Public child welfare agencies should also be concerned with this study, as these students represent agencies' future employees, whose work impacts the integrity of child welfare agencies' missions throughout the United States. This project seeks to answer the question: Do child welfare social work students believe they are adequately prepared by MSW curriculum and cultural competence training to engage families of differing cultural backgrounds.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter two will consist of the exploration of past research relevant to this project. The first subsection will explore cultural competence and its importance in providing service. The second subsection will examine the overrepresentation of African-Americans in the public child welfare system. A third subsection will explore past research on the effectiveness of cultural competence trainings. The fourth subsection will look into social learning theory and cognitive behavioral theory and its relevance to the target population.

Cultural Competence

Social Worker, professor, and member of the Seneca Nation of Indians, Terry Cross, is credited with coining the term "cultural competence" in 1989. Cross defined cultural competence as a collection of like behaviors, attitudes, and policies that are interconnect in a system, agency, or among professionals, and allow the system, agency, or professionals to work collectively and efficiently in cross-cultural situations, (Cross, 1989). The National Association of Social Workers more recently defined cultural competence as "the ability of

individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and faiths/ religions in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, tribes, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each", (NASW, 2013). This research study's focus is race and ethnicity, as it has historically shown some of the greatest divides. There is very little data on cultural competence that predates 1989. Cultural competence is not simply a new practice, but an optimistic effort to correct past intentional and/ or unintentional oversight of the consideration of and its impact on cultural diversity in treatment/ services. Lack of cultural understanding can lead to misunderstandings between child welfare professionals and families, which can cause conflicts and feelings by the family of being judged (Olsen et al, 2006). Although progress has been made, there is still a long road ahead. Some research has questioned the attainability of cultural competency, and ask the question: Does the United States continued segregation allow social workers to serve the public without racial bias? (Rodenborg, 2014). Arguments have also been made that cultural competence is not a goal that can ever be achieved, and it should be looked at as more of a journey, that social workers and others service providers remain on throughout their career or lifespan (Saunders et al, 2015).

Regardless of one's position on achieving cultural competence, one commonality is clear; more attention needs to be given to an ever changing and

diverse population. Lack of attention on cultural competence continues the cyclical trends pertaining to racial disparities that have engulfed public and social services providers for decades, which include law enforcement, the public school system, as well as child welfare services. According to the National Center for Cultural Competence, in order to change these trends of racial disparity and ultimately attain cultural competence, organizations must:

1) Have a defined set of values and principles and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally; 2) The capacity to value diversity, conduct self-assessment, manage the dynamics of differences, acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge, and adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve; and 3) Incorporate the above in all aspects of policymaking, administration, practice, and service delivery, and systematically involve consumers, key stakeholders, and communities (Goode, 2010, p. 21).

These three steps will allow for cultural competence become embedded in an organization's practices from the top (administrative-level) down (line workers or those in direct contact with the people/ public).

Overrepresentation of African-Americans in the Child Welfare System

After being excluded from early child welfare services (O'Connor, 2001),

African-Americans have become the most overrepresented racial group, with the exception of Native-Americans, throughout the United States (Padilla, 2011). Involvement with child welfare services begins with reporting. Child abuse and neglect referrals are most often reported by professional, accounting more than 60%, with law enforcement and education personnel were primary reporters of abuse and neglect, nationwide (U.S. DHHS, 2016). A number of studies have found that racial bias plays a role in the reporting of child abuse or neglect. One study found that medical personnel were five times as likely to assess accidental injury as abuse for African-American children than Caucasian-American children, and three times more likely to report those accidental injuries as abuse, for African-American children than their Caucasian-American counterparts (NCCPR, 2015). The next steps, following reporting, are investigation and disposition of the allegation. African-Americans were identified as victims at a rate of approximately 16 per 1000, while Caucasian-Americans and Hispanic-Americans were identified as victims between 8 and 9 per 1000. One study conducted on a federal level found that African-American children were more likely than Caucasian-American children to be put in foster care when allegations and circumstances were the same or similar with the primary difference in cases being race (NCCPR, 2015). Once the child has been found to be at risk and has been removed from the home, the final step is case closure. Case closure results in either the family reunifying or the child remaining in out of home care. African-American children are less likely, than any other racial

group, to receive comprehensive services which contributes to extended time in out-of-home care and reductions in family reunification (Wells et al, 2009).

Effectiveness of Cultural Competence Trainings

The ethnic and cultural landscape of the United States population has changed over the years and is projected to continue changing, with racial minorities eventually becoming the majority (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Employers, including those of public child welfare social workers, must make adjustments for these changes by preparing workers for the demographic shifts. This preparation may come in the form of or include employee training. There are many approaches to employee training. There are in-person training sessions, virtual live trainings, and self-paced e-learning, among others. Regardless of the training modality, the expectation of employee training is fairly consistent, which is to teach a behavior or a skill. According to research, adult learners would rather not be taught but would rather participate in training that they perceive will improve them, as individuals (Smith, 2017). Smith (2017) further states that adult learners are motivated to learn when they take part in identifying training needs. In applying this to cultural competence training, trainees must participate in identifying the impact of a lack of cultural competence and what is needed to make improvements. Therefore, the most effective cultural competence trainings would be those that are, in part, created by rather than only attended by the trainee. In this section, I reviewed existing

data on the effectiveness of cultural competence training.

This study's focus was to explore the effectiveness of cultural competence training in social work and/ or among social work students. In reviewing past research, the study found that there was minimal research pertaining to this subject. One of the possibilities may be that the effectiveness of training in this concentration is difficult or maybe even impossible to measure. One study, referred to the development of cultural competence as an obscure journey with no destination (Saunders et al, 2015). Another possibility could be that cultural competence is a fairly new concept in social work. Although, thought to be initiated in 1909 by social worker Helen Tucker, cultural consideration or competence has only become mainstream in social work within the past approximately twenty years (Saunders et al, 2015).

There has, however, been research conducted in other professions that have resulted in findings that may be applicable to social work. The Center for Capacity Building on Minorities with Disabilities Research created a 5-stage training model that was an ongoing process that involved changes on the individual and organizational levels (Taylor-Ritzler et al., 2008). The 5 stages are: desire to engage, development of critical awareness, knowledge and familiarization, practice of skills, and organizational support. According to Taylor-Ritzler and colleagues (2008), the desire to engage refers to the individual's openness to participate and learn about cultural diversity. The development of critical awareness stage involves identifying personal biases

toward those of differing cultures. The third stage, knowledge and familiarization, involves obtaining knowledge pertaining to factors that influences diversity while becoming familiar with characteristics, histories, values, beliefs, and behaviors of various cultures. The fourth stage or the practice skills stage includes the development of skills to work effectively with others from diverse cultural backgrounds. The fifth and final stage requires organization support in the first four stages. The center found this two-tiered training approach to be effective within this agency and has the capacity to be implemented at other institutions as well.

Another study reported a second multi-stage training used in the healthcare profession. This training, LGBT Cultural Competency Project, aims to improve the cultural competent care and sensitivity of healthcare professionals working with older adults who are a part of the LGBT population (Gendron et al., 2013). The effectiveness of the training was measured to determine its impact on the cultural competency of its participants. According to Gendron and colleagues (2013), this training, which was developed in Central Virginia, utilized didactic training, interactive exercises, and small group activities. The training content expanded upon and addressed definitions, symbols, facts, and assumptions associated with the LGBT community, in addition to, identifying barriers to inclusion and the development of skills to provide care with consideration to cultural competence. The effectiveness of this training was measured with a pre- and post-test, which concluded that

attendees felt more culturally competent after the training. However, Gendron concluded that training attendees' core beliefs about the LGBT community may not have changed and are difficult to assess.

A third cultural competence training, this one involving clinical nursing staff in a medical center in the Midwest, was also assessed for effectiveness among its participants. The training consisted of a one-hour, classroom style training which aimed to promote cultural competence understanding and show its impact on quality of care (Delgado et al, 2013). According to Delgado and colleagues (2013, during this training participants explored their own cultural heritage, discussed health disparities as well as implications for health care providers. The effectiveness of this training was assessed, using Campinha-Bacote's Inventory for Assessing the Process of Cultural Competence or IAPCC-R. This tool is a 4-point Likert-scale 25 item survey style assessment that measures an individual's understanding on the 5 cultural constructs, which are the author identifies as desire, awareness, knowledge, skill, and encounters (Delgado et al., 2013). The scoring range is 91-100 (culturally proficient), 75-90 (culturally competent), 51-74 (culturally aware), and 25-50 (cultural incompetent). The results of this self-reported assessment identified the training as having a positive impact on the participants' cultural competence. Although there is no exact method to measure the effectiveness of cultural competence training, each of the above examples employed a great effort that may have the possibility to be altered and applied to social work or social work

students.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

The two theories used to conceptualize the ideas in this study are Social Learning Theory and Social Constructionism.

Social Learning Theory can be applied to this study from the role of the child welfare social worker. Social Learning Theory says that individuals tend to develop behaviors by observing and modeling the behaviors or actions of those that they can relate to and/ or are influenced by (Zastrow, 2015). With consideration to the presumed demographical make-up of the child welfare social worker profession, which is Caucasian-American and the trend of African-American children outpacing all other racial groups, for decades, in child welfare investigation and removal from families, Social Learning Theory can explain why these trends have continued for such a long time. In applying that to this study, I believe that racial bias played a significant role in child welfare services in its early inception. However, it appears that trends of the past have become so ingrained in written policy and unwritten practices within child welfare services, it continues to produce similar outcomes and maintain the status quo.

In social constructionism, a social construct is defined as an idea (theory, belief or behavior) that has been created and accepted by the people in a

society (Merriam-Webster 2016). Culture, in and of itself, is a social construct that comes along with certain accepted beliefs, traditions and behaviors. The majority or primary culture in the United States or any geographical area, sets trend or establishes "normality" simply by way of practice. Any practices outside of established and practiced norms may be met with judgment and consequence; this can also be applied to child welfare services and its assessment and response to the African-American community. For example, terms used in some African-American households, such as "whooping", can be misinterpreted as physical abuse when the word is often times used synonymously with "spanking". This is not to a claim of racism, but a limited to cultural competence.

Summary

The study explored the perceptions of California State University, San Bernardino MSW students, as it pertains to the impact of anticipated trainings to improve cultural competence. Some believe that true cultural competence is not attainable; however, awareness and acceptance of cultural difference is achievable. If current cultural competence trainings are not having the impact that is intended, child welfare service disparities for African-Americans will continue.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This study explored the need and effectiveness of cultural competency trainings, from a masters-level university social work student's perspective. In addition, this study attempted to determine if social worker students believed that cultural competence can be achieved in a training or whether alternative approaches should be sought to assist social workers in engaging people from diverse backgrounds. This chapter details the manner in which this study was implemented. The sections within this chapter are study design, sampling, data collection and instruments, procedures and protection of human subjects.

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to identify the need and anticipated effectiveness of cultural competency trainings, from the perspective of the graduate-level social work student. This study also attempted to ascertain if graduate-level social work students believed that future cultural competence trainings are necessary and will assist them in achieving cultural competency or if other more effective options should be explored and considered to replace trainings that are currently utilized. With consideration to the limited study material on students and their perspective on cultural competence training, this

survey took an applied exploratory research approach. Although the ideal population to survey regarding cultural competence trainings would be current child welfare social workers. Considering that this demographic was not available to the researcher, surveying possible future child welfare social workers may assist in identify attitudes towards cultural competence trainings and how these trainings affect child welfare social work outcomes. This project utilized quantitative data collection, which involved a Likert-scale survey questionnaire.

The primary benefit to the use of quantitative data collection is it offers a look into the general consensus of the focus group and identifies trending attitudes of potential child welfare social workers before they enter the field. If trends are identifiable, early on, the creation (or modification) and implementation of corrective actions of available trainings have a stronger probability of improving cultural competency for the graduate-level social work student and future direct service provider, therefore possibly reducing the unexplainable overrepresentation of African-Americans in the child welfare system.

The study's methodological limitations include that it involved MSW students at only one university, which is a small representation of the number of MSW students in the state, as well as the nation. In addition, the demographics of those who were surveyed may not be an accurate reflection of MSW students who may enter the social work discipline of child welfare. A second

methodological limitation was that the majority those surveyed had minimal to no experience in child welfare social work. This may hinder the participants' ability to apply cultural competency to real life situations

This project seeks to answer two questions: 1) What are graduate-level social work students' beliefs about cultural competence and cultural competency training in child welfare? and 2) Do graduate-level social work students' beliefs about cultural competence vary by foundation or advanced year status?

Sampling

This study utilized a non-probability convenience sample including current graduate students in social program at an accredited university that have been introduced to cultural competence in their graduate school education. All MSW students were invited to participate. No other inclusion or exclusion criteria were used; therefore, this sample included students from all genders, ages, ethnicities, and MSW tracks. Approval to utilize this sample group was requested from and authorized by California State University, San Bernardino School of Social Worker Director, Dr. Laurie Smith and the university Institutional Review Board (IRB), School of Social Work Subcommittee.

Data Collection and Instruments

Quantitative data was collected with the use of a self-administered questionnaire. The survey was created by the researcher and had unknown reliability and validity. The survey included thirteen (13) closed-ended questions pertaining to the participants' individual views regarding cultural competence and cultural competence trainings, rated on a 5 point Likert-scale ranging from agree to disagree. In addition to the thirteen questions, the survey solicited demographic information. This demographic information included gender, ethnicity, year in MSW program, Title IV-E status, source of cultural competence training/ education, and number of cultural competence trainings attended. The independent variables involved questions pertaining to the need and effectiveness of cultural competence trainings, and expectations of future child welfare employers, as it pertains to cultural competence trainings. These questions were measured on the Likert-scale and a summary score was created for each individual participant. The level of measurement for the independent variable will be interval/ ratio-level. The dependent variable was race or ethnicity and year in MSW program. The level of measurement for this survey included nominal, ordinal, and interval/ratio in the form of demographic questions, categorical questions, and interval questions.

Procedures

The proposal for this project and a request to survey university MSW students was presented to and approved by a university School of Social Work and its IRB. Subsequent to obtaining approval to conduct the research, the questionnaire was created using Qualtrics software and was emailed to all registered MSW students at one university, by a school administrators. The surveys were emailed out on January 16, 2018. The email included an introduction to the research project, an informed consent form and link to the Qualtrics questionnaire. The anticipated questionnaire completion time was 10-15 minutes. The completed questionnaires were collected and stored securely and privately on Qualtrics research software; the data from the questionnaires were later transferred to SPSS analysis.

Protection of Human Subjects

The following are the steps that were taken to protect human subjects. Prior to beginning the questionnaire, the participant was presented with an electronic consent form that specified that the voluntary nature in completing the questionnaire, the participant's anonymity, and the participant's choice to discontinue their participation at any time during the survey. The identities of the participants were kept completely anonymous. University MSW program staff emailed all MSW students a link to the Qualtrics questionnaire.

Participants were not asked to give their names and the online survey did not allow for inclusion of personal identifiable information. Following data analysis, the survey data was destroyed.

Data Analysis

The researcher transferred collected data into SPSS for analysis. The researcher analyzed student demographic data using descriptive statistics. The researcher also analyzed student responses to Likert-scaled questions using descriptive statistics, which involved frequencies and percentages. The researcher used inferential statistics to compare response differentiation among two separate demographics; the two demographics were race/ ethnicity and year in MSW program.

Summary

This research study used a self-administered questionnaire to study the attitudes and opinions of cultural competence and cultural competence training in public child welfare. The quantitative data was collected from graduate-level students who were enrolled in a university social works program. Their views and perspectives are key in exploring effective dissemination of culturally appropriate services within Children and Family Services.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

In this chapter, the data collected from the Qualtrics questionnaire is presented. First, the demographics of the MSW student participants are detailed, followed by the participants' responses to the Likert-scale survey questions. This chapter then examines whether participants' responses varied by the participants' race/ethnicity and year in the MSW program.

Presentation of Statistics

Demographics

This study consisted of 91 participants (see Table 1). Of the 91 participants, 12 (13.2%) identified their gender as male and 79 (86.8%) identified as female; none of the participants identified as other. Participants were also asked to select their ethnicity from six options. Of the 91 participants, 15 (16.5%) identified themselves as Black/ African-American, 27 (29.7%) identified as White/ Caucasian-American, 44 (48.3%) identified as Hispanic/ Latino, 1 (1.1%) identified as Asian/ Pacific-Islander, 0 (0%) identified as First Nation/ Native-American and 4 (4.4%) identified as other.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Variable	Frequencies (n)	Percentages (%)
Gender		
Male	12	13.2
Female	79	86.8
Other	0	0
Ethnicity		
Black/ African-American	15	16.5
White/ Caucasian-American	27	29.7
Hispanic/ Latino	44	48.3
Asian/ Pacific-Islander	1	1.1
First Nation/ Native American	0	0
Other	4	4.4

Additionally, participants were asked which year in the MSW program they were completing, and whether or not they were Title IV-E (child welfare) stipend recipients (see Table 2). In response to the question pertaining to year in the MSW program, 40 (43.9%) were in their first year, 28 (30.8%) were in their second year, and 23 (25.3%) were in their third year. In response to Title IV-E status, 25 (27.5%) identified as Title IV-E recipients and 66 (72.5%) identified as not Title IV-E recipients.

The survey also asked participants to identify the source of cultural competence training or education they had received, as well as the number of cultural competence trainings attended during their careers (see Table 2).

Participants reported the following sources of cultural competence training or education: 15 (16.5%) listed their undergraduate institution, 42 (46.1%) listed the university MSW program, 9 (9.9%) listed their internship agency, and 25 (27.5%) listed their current or prior employer. Of the 91 participants, 13 (14.3%) stated they attended zero cultural competence trainings, 36 (39.5%) attended 1-2 trainings, 17 (18.7%) attended 3-4 trainings, and 25 (27.5%) attended 5+ trainings.

Table 2

Additional Demographics of Participants

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Year in MSW Program		
1 st Year (Part/ Full Time)	40	43.9
2 nd Year (Part/ Full Time)	28	30.8
3 rd Year (Part Time)	23	25.3
Title IV-E status		
Title IV-E	25	27.5
Not Title IV-E	66	72.5
Source of Cultural Competence Training or Education		
Undergraduate Institution	15	16.5
University MSW Program	42	46.1
Internship Agency	9	9.9
Employer (current or prior)	25	27.5
Number of Cultural Competence Trainings Attended during Career		
0	13	14.3
1-2	36	39.5
3-4	17	18.7
5+	25	27.5

Perspectives on Cultural Competence

The questionnaire included thirteen statements with 5-point Likert-scale responses to assess the participants' perspectives on cultural competence in public child welfare (see Table 3). The five response options to the statements were agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, and disagree.

The first statement was, "cultural competence plays a role in public child welfare agency outcomes." 75 (84.3%) responded agree, 11 (12.4%) responded somewhat agree, 3 (3.4%) responded neutral, 0 (0%) responded somewhat disagree, and 0 (0%) responded disagree.

The second statement was, "public child welfare duties can be completed without consideration to culture." 1 (1.12%) responded agree, 7 (7.9%) responded somewhat agree, 5 (5.6%) responded neutral, 14 (15.7%) responded somewhat disagree, and 62 (69.7%) responded disagree.

The third statement was, "I expect my future employer to provide me with cultural competency training once a year." 48 (53.9%) responded agree, 28 (31.5%) responded somewhat agree, 10 (11.2%) responded neutral, 2 (2.3%) responded somewhat disagree, and 1 (1.1%) responded disagree.

The fourth statement was, "culture is the primary factor in the overrepresentation of certain groups in public child welfare." 33 (37.1%) responded agree, 21 (23.6%) responded somewhat agree, 23 (25.8%)

responded neutral, 8 (9.0%) responded somewhat disagree, and 4 (4.5%) responded disagree.

The fifth statement was, “more emphasis needs to be placed on child welfare workers and their cultural competence development.” 60 (67.4%) responded agree, 22 (24.7%) responded somewhat agree, 6 (6.7%) responded neutral, 1 (1.1%) responded somewhat disagree, and 0 (0%) responded disagree.

The sixth statement was, “I expect my future employer to provide me with opportunities other than training to enhance my cultural competence.” 56 (62.9%) responded agree, 26 (29.2%) responded somewhat agree, 5 (5.6%) responded neutral, 0 (0%) responded somewhat disagree, and 2 (2.3%) responded disagree.

The seventh statement was, “I am culturally competent.” 16 (18.0%) responded agree, 50 (56.2%) responded somewhat agree, 16 (18.0%) responded neutral, 6 (6.7%) responded somewhat disagree, and 1 (1.1%) responded disagree.

The eighth statement was, “I expect my future employer to require child welfare social workers to attend cultural competency training.” 60 (67.4%) responded agree, 21 (23.6%) responded somewhat agree, 8 (9.0%) responded neutral, 0 (0%) responded somewhat disagree, and 0 (0%) responded disagree.

The ninth statement was, “I expect my future employer to make attendance at cultural competency trainings voluntary.” 17 (19.1%) responded

agree, 16 (18.0%) responded somewhat agree, 10 (11.2%) responded neutral, 15 (16.9%) responded somewhat disagree, and 31 (34.8%) responded disagree.

The tenth statement was, “cultural competence, for public child welfare social workers, should be sought through other means, in addition to trainings.” 52 (58.4%) responded agree, 27 (30.3%) responded somewhat agree, 7 (7.9%) responded neutral, 2 (2.3%) responded somewhat disagree, and 1 (1.1%) responded disagree.

The eleventh statement was, “cultural competence, for public child welfare social workers, should be sought through other means, instead of trainings.” 14 (15.9%) responded agree, 19 (21.6%) responded somewhat agree, 22 (25.0%) responded neutral, 15 (17.1%) responded somewhat disagree, and 18 (20.5%) responded disagree.

The twelfth statement was, “cultural competency is not important and trainings on the subject should be voluntary.” 0 (0%) responded agree, 2 (2.8%) responded somewhat agree, 3 (3.4%) responded neutral, 9 (10.2%) responded somewhat disagree, and 74 (84.1%) responded disagree.

The thirteenth statement was, “cultural competence is not attainable.” 4 (4.5%) responded agree, 12 (13.5%) responded somewhat agree, 9 (10.1%) responded neutral, 17 (19.1%) responded somewhat disagree, and 47 (52.8%) responded disagree.

Table 3

Participants Response to Likert-Scale Questions

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Cultural competence plays a role in public child welfare agency outcomes		
Agree	75	84.3
Somewhat Agree	11	12.4
Neutral	3	3.4
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Public child welfare duties can be completed without consideration to culture		
Agree	1	1.1
Somewhat Agree	7	7.9
Neutral	5	5.6
Somewhat Disagree	14	15.7
Disagree	62	69.7
I expect my future employer to provide me with cultural competency training once a year		
Agree	48	53.9
Somewhat Agree	28	31.5
Neutral	10	11.2
Somewhat Disagree	2	2.3
Disagree	1	1.1
Culture is the primary factor in the overrepresentation of certain groups in public child welfare		
Agree	33	37.1
Somewhat Agree	21	23.6
Neutral	23	25.8
Somewhat Disagree	8	9.0
Disagree	4	4.5
More emphasis needs to be placed on child welfare workers and their cultural competence development		
Agree	60	67.4
Somewhat Agree	22	24.7

Neutral	6	6.7
Somewhat Disagree	1	1.1
Disagree	0	0
I expect my future employer to provide me with opportunities other than training to enhance my cultural competence		
Agree	56	62.9
Somewhat Agree	26	29.2
Neutral	5	5.6
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Disagree	2	2.3
I am culturally competent		
Agree	16	18.0
Somewhat Agree	50	56.2
Neutral	16	18.0
Somewhat Disagree	6	6.7
Disagree	1	1.1
I expect my future employer to require child welfare social workers to attend cultural competency training		
Agree	60	67.4
Somewhat Agree	21	23.6
Neutral	8	9.0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
I expect my future employer to make attendance at cultural competency trainings voluntary		
Agree	17	19.1
Somewhat Agree	17	18.0
Neutral	10	11.2
Somewhat Disagree	15	16.9
Disagree	31	34.8
Cultural competence, for public child welfare social workers, should be sought through other means, in addition to trainings		
Agree	52	58.4
Somewhat Agree	27	30.3
Neutral	7	7.9
Somewhat Disagree	2	2.3
Disagree	1	1.1

Cultural competence, for public child welfare social workers, should be sought through other means, instead of trainings		
Agree	14	15.9
Somewhat Agree	19	21.6
Neutral	22	25.0
Somewhat Disagree	15	17.1
Disagree	18	20.5
Cultural competency is not important and trainings on the subject should be voluntary		
Agree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	2	2.3
Neutral	3	3.4
Somewhat Disagree	9	10.2
Disagree	74	84.1
Cultural competence is not attainable		
Agree	4	4.5
Somewhat Agree	12	13.5
Neutral	9	10.1
Somewhat Disagree	17	19.1
Disagree	47	52.8

Presentation of Bivariate Statistics

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether participants' perspectives on cultural competence. First, a summary score, the sum of all answers to the Likert-scale questions, was created for each participant. Participants' perspectives on cultural competence were operationalized using this summary score. The independent variable was the participant's race/ethnicity, while the dependent variable was the participant's summary score. There was no significant difference between MSW students' race/ ethnicity and their perspectives on cultural competence, $F(4,84) = .777$,

p=.543). An independent sample t-test was conducted to examine the relationship between MSW students' year in the MSW program and their perspectives on cultural competence. Again, participants' perspectives on cultural competence were operationalized using this summary score. There was no significant difference in students' perspectives on cultural competence based on participants' year in the MSW program ($t(85) = -.730, p=.467$).

Summary

In this chapter, collected data was presented pertaining to MSW students' demographics and their perspectives on cultural competence and cultural competence training in child welfare. Almost 75% of participants were non-Title IV-E students, which means that their focus is not certain to be child welfare. In addition, the source of more than 60% of participants' cultural competence trainings or education derived from their college education. Overall, the majority of participants' responses reflected an expectation of future public child welfare employers to require attendance to cultural competence trainings. The research outcomes also showed that the majority of participants found that cultural competence and trainings focused on such is a vital part of public child welfare social work. The results obtained from the ANOVA and the t-Test were used to test the two hypotheses. The ANOVA test showed that there was no significant difference by race or ethnic groups related to MSW students' perspectives on cultural competence. These results suggest

that there was no significant relationship between MSW students' year in the MSW program and their perspectives on cultural competence.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings presented and detailed in chapter four. In addition, this chapter will explore opportunities for better understanding on the impact of cultural competence trainings on public child welfare social work. Finally, this chapter will discuss limitations to this research project, as well as recommendations for social work curriculum and research.

Discussion

The researcher intended to sample practicing social workers for this study; however, as that was not possible, the study sampled MSW students, who will soon be working as social workers. The survey participants varied by gender, ethnicity/ race, year in MSW program, Title IV-E status, and individual experience with cultural competence training. More than six times the number of participants identified as female versus those who identified as male. Almost 80% of survey participants identified as Hispanic/ Latino or White/ Caucasian-American, with only approximately 17% identifying as Black/ African-American. The majority of survey participants obtain cultural competence training or education from their college education rather than employment. The majority of participants were in their first or foundation year of university graduate school.

The findings from this research project revealed that most participants believed that cultural competence plays an important role in public child welfare. In fact, more than 85% of participants agreed, to some degree, that child welfare duties cannot be carried out without consideration of clients' cultures. Similarly, the vast majority of participants expressed a desire for more emphasis on this topic. These results are not adequately addressed in the researched literature and represent a subject that warrants further exploration and explanation.

One surprising finding from the research was that approximately 75% of participants identified on some level as being culturally competent. This statistic was surprising due to more than 50% of participants having only attended between 0-2 cultural competence trainings with 60+% of cultural training or education sources deriving from college attendance. These findings, also represent an area not sufficiently detailed in literature and further research is necessary.

The study also revealed that MSW students view cultural competence development as key in public child welfare social work. More than 90% of participants expect future child welfare employers to mandate cultural competence training. From the data, it appears that participants believed that cultural competence trainings may not be enough, with more than 90% of survey respondents believing, to some degree, that cultural competence should be sought through other means, in addition to training. Oddly, there was a

mixed response whether cultural competence should be sought instead of training. Approximately 38% either agree or somewhat agree that the cultural competence should be sought through means other than training; almost 38% believe the contrary with 25% having a neutral response. These findings suggest that social work students, and perhaps social workers, may have different preferences related to how they want cultural competence to be addressed. Some may prefer formal trainings, while others may prefer other learning methods. This topic is not adequately addressed in the literature, suggesting that it is an area for further study.

Perhaps surprisingly, this study found no significant differences in responses among students of different ethnic or racial groups, or between foundation and advanced year students. Literature on the topic of perceptions (whether student or non-student) on the effectiveness of cultural competence trainings is insufficient. The lack of differences between foundation and advanced year students' perceptions might be interpreted to mean that students' perceptions are not changing as a result of exposure to curriculum. This could also be interpreted to mean that students are not receiving much curriculum on cultural competence, that the curriculum is not meaningful enough to change their perceptions, or that students enter the program with fairly favorable perceptions of the importance of cultural competency. These possible explanations warrant further study. In addition, the literature on the

effectiveness of cultural competency trainings in public child welfare is fairly limited, underscoring the need for more research in this area.

Limitations

This study is limited in several ways. First, the study is limited in that the participants included only MSW students from one university. In looking at perspectives on cultural competence training and its impact on public child welfare, the ideal population to survey would be those with direct experience in both areas, which would be current or past public child welfare social workers. As stated earlier, public child welfare social workers were the initial target. However, a request to survey public child welfare social workers was denied. The limited experience of MSW students with direct public child welfare social work practice may have netted an otherwise different response to the survey questions. Second, the study's sample size was small and its demographic make-up fairly restricted. The convenience sample size was small, involving eighty-eight complete responses. In addition, the ethnic or racial make-up of those surveyed was not an accurate reflection of the university MSW student body nor public child welfare make-up. Consequently, the study may not generalize to all social work students or to social workers, and may not represent the perceptions of social work students and practitioners from diverse groups.

Recommendations

Although this research project had its limitations, its results generate recommendations for social work practice, policy, and research in the area of cultural competence in public child welfare.

Research

Research, on a larger scale, is needed to identify the true effectiveness of cultural competence trainings in public child welfare. This research should involve educational institutions and government agencies associated with child welfare to ensure better understanding of what types, frequency, and delivery models of cultural competence training are most effective. Research should also be conducted to identify how differences in social work students' and practitioners' perspectives about cultural competency vary by racial, economic, and geographical characteristics. Better understanding of these issues will improve our ability to develop training tailored to specific groups' needs.

Practice

This study's findings suggest that further development and prioritization of cultural competency training is warranted. These trainings should be evidence-based and should focus more clearly on addressing social workers' needs and interests. African-American families are clearly over-represented in the child welfare system. Therefore, trainings should focus on this specific issue, and should address social workers' understanding of the

factors that result in this over-representation and the strategies they can use to address this problem. Clearly, this study suggests that social work students, who are future practitioners, see this topic as important and in need of further attention.

Policy

The final recommendation should involve policy modifications or changes that reflect a commitment to address all disparities. Similar to case review in public child welfare, which ensures that existing policies and procedures are followed by social workers, a unit, department or committee should be established to ensure that civil rights are not violated and no particular racial, economic, or other group is over-represented or underrepresented in any stage of public child welfare involvement; if any group is overrepresented or underrepresented, the unit, department or committee would be tasked with finding out why to ensure that engagement is fair and equitable at every level of public child welfare intervention.

Conclusion

The evidence shows that child abuse and abuse occurs fairly evenly across all walks of life. A substantial amount of evidence also supports that some public child welfare social worker responses to abuse and neglect are based solely on racial bias. From educational advancement, to employment practice, cultural competence development must be a priority in social work. If

we fail to address social workers' cultural competence, disparities similar to current trends will continue.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT



California State University, San Bernardino
Social Work Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee
APPROVED 12/4/2017 VOID AFTER 12/3/2018
IRB# SW1775 CHAIR *[Signature]*

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
School of Social Work

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

You have been identified as an eligible participant in the following study due to your status as a graduate student in the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino. The study is being conducted by Wesley Williams, an MSW student under the supervision of Dr. Deirdre Lanesskog, Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino. The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board Social Work Sub-committee, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study is to examine the opinions and future expectations of masters level social work students, regarding cultural competence in the profession of public child welfare social work, as it pertains to readiness in engaging families from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

DESCRIPTION: Participants will be asked to respond to demographic questions inquiring basic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, length of child welfare social work, number of cultural competence trainings, and exposure to clients from cultural backgrounds that are different from one's own. After completion of the demographic section, participants will be provided with a self-administered 15 question survey consisting of statements on your perception of how cultural competence training(s) has/ have prepared you engaging families from diverse cultural backgrounds or the participant may be asked to participate in a one-to-one semi-structured interview that will be audio recorded.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in the study is totally voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

ANONYMITY: No identifying information will be collected in the demographic portion of this study. Your responses will remain anonymous and data will be reported in group form only.

DURATION: It will take 10-15 minutes to complete the survey.

RISKS: Foreseeable risks associated with participating in study are minimal and consist of awareness of personal beliefs or attitudes about mental illness that may produce negative feelings.

BENEFITS: There will not be any direct benefits to the participants.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Deirdre Lanesskog at Deirdre.Lanesskog@csusb.edu.

909.537.5501

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College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
School of Social Work

RESULTS: Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks
(<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2018.

This is to certify that I read the above and I am 18 years or older.

Place an X mark here

Date

909.537.5501

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APPENDIX B
SURVEY

Questionnaire on Cultural Competence from the MSW Student Perspective

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Gender

Male Female Other

Ethnicity

Black/ African American White/ Caucasian-American Hispanic/ Latino
Asian/ Pacific Islander First Nation/ Native-American Other

Year in MSW Program

First Year (Part/ Full Time) Second Year (Part/ Full Time) Third Year (Part Time)

Title IV-E Status

Title IV-E Non-Title IV-E

From which sources have you received training or education in cultural competency?

Undergraduate Institution CSUSB MSW program Internship Agency
Employer (current of prior)

How many professional cultural competence trainings have you attended over the course of your career?

0 1-2 3-4 5+

SURVEY

1. Cultural competence plays a role in public child welfare agency outcomes.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree
2. Public child welfare duties can be completed without consideration to culture.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree
3. I expect my future employer to provide me with cultural competency training once a year.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree
4. Culture is the primary factor in the overrepresentation of certain ethnic groups in public child welfare.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree

5. More emphasis needs to be placed on child welfare workers and their cultural competence development.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree
6. I expect my future employer to provide me with opportunities other than training to enhance my cultural competence.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree
7. I am culturally competent.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree
8. I expect my future employer to require child welfare social workers to attend cultural competency training.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree
9. I expect my future employer to make attendance at cultural competency trainings voluntary.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree
10. Cultural competence, for public child welfare workers, should be sought through other means, in addition to trainings.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree
11. Cultural competency, for public child welfare workers, should be sought through other means, instead of trainings.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree
12. Cultural competency is not important and trainings on the subject should be voluntary.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree
13. Cultural competency is not attainable.
Agree Somewhat Agree Neutral Somewhat Disagree Disagree

Developed by Wesley Wayne Williams, 2017

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