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MSW STUDENTS: HOW PREPARED ARE THEY TO WORK WITH LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER YOUTH?

Evelyn I. Martinez
California State University - San Bernardino

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MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS:
HOW PREPARED ARE THEY TO WORK WITH
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER YOUTH?

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
Evelyn I. Martinez
May 2022

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Approved by:

Brooklyn Sapozhnikov, Ph.D., Faculty Supervisor, Social Work

Laurie Smith, M.S.W. Research Coordinator

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ABSTRACT

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) youth population is growing, and it is important that the social work field is prepared to serve this population. There is a lack of data regarding LGBTQ youth due to discriminatory practices that encouraged them to remain closeted or not share their gender identity/sexual orientation. Today youth are feeling more empowered to self-identify as LGBTQ and it is important that Master of Social Work (MSW) students going into the field be prepared to work with this population. This is an exploratory study guided by the critical theory paradigm that aims to capture how prepared MSW students are to work with LGBTQ youth. This quantitative study examines the perception, bias, knowledge, and preparedness of MSW students to work with LGBTQ youth. The researcher used an online program, Qualtrics to survey a total of 50 current MSW students at one research site. There data collected was analyzed using SPSS software. Results indicate that MSW students have a positive perception of LGBTQ youth, their level of bias is minimal, and they have a working knowledge of this population, yet they feel inadequately prepared to serve LGBTQ youth. Implications on both the micro and macro level are discussed. On the micro level MSW professors are encouraged to include more LGBTQ references and knowledge in the courses offered in the MSW program. On the macro level more research needs to be conducted to understand the specific needs and struggles of the LGBTQ youth and how to best prepare students to meet the needs of this vulnerable population.

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CHAPTER ONE

ASSESSMENT

Introduction

This first chapter presents the research focus: Master of Social Work (MSW) students' preparedness to work with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) youth. A comprehensive literature review is provided to explain the importance and magnitude of the topic. The literature review enhances the reader's knowledge of the research topic and why it is an important subject that needs further research. The theoretical orientation is also covered in this section. Lastly, the potential contributions of this study are explored on micro and macro levels. The goal is to present the primary ideas, focus, reasoning, and importance of the research topic in this initial chapter. Chapter one concludes with a brief recap of all the information presented in this chapter.

Research Focus

The problem focus of the research project revolves around Master of Social Work (MSW) Students and their perception, bias, knowledge, and preparedness to work with children who identify within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) youth population. The goal was to explore the preparedness of MSW students to address the needs of this population. Specifically, this research project will explore the MSW student's

views and overall perspective regarding this vulnerable population. The objective was to gather valuable quantitative data to provide insight into this topic and to begin to explore this topic to ensure new social workers are prepared to provide adequate service delivery for self-identified LGBTQ youth.

There is a lack of understanding and information on this topic from the MSW student's perspective. The unit of analysis is MSW students as the goal is to understand their perspective about this specific population and how prepared they feel to serve this population. The information MSW students provide will help provide a framework for learning how to serve LGBTQ youth as they have a unique perspective as future social workers. The intention was to have MSW students participate in the study without consideration of their sex, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or socioeconomics. It would be ideal to have a diverse representation in study participants, but there is some lack of diversity within the set population of MSW students as a whole and that is reflected on the study participants.

This research topic is of interest because there has been an increasing number of youth self-identifying as LGBTQ and as a historically discriminated population children who also identify as LGBTQ are especially vulnerable. The Gallup survey has reported a rise of 4.5 percent in the LGBTQ population since 2012 (Newport, 2018). Although these numbers refer to adults, they give us an idea of the magnitude and trend of the LGBTQ population. All human beings have biases and lenses that are used to see the world through, but

MSW students are committed to delivering services to clients without discrimination. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest organization of social workers, and it mandates social workers be competent and supportive of oppressed groups such as the LGBTQ community. The intent is to explore the MSW student's experiences, knowledge, and general preparedness to work with LGBTQ youth to begin to understand this topic.

Paradigm and Rationale

This study was designed and executed with the guidance of the critical theory paradigm. This paradigm offers a perspective that aligns with the problem focus and acknowledges that as people we cannot stand outside our own personal values while processing the world around us (Morris, 2013). This paradigm supports the use of quantitative data to explore a research topic that supports our views and offer recommendations based on the findings. The critical theory paradigm is often seen as controversial as it threatens those in power and aims to empower those who do not have power (Morris, 2013), in this study that would be LGBTQ youth. This paradigm also aligns with the theoretical orientation of the study presented in this chapter.

Literature Review

The literature review below addressed the increasing number of LGBTQ youth in the United States (U.S), explores the issues related to reliable

statistics, and the importance of recognizing the increase in this population. Another important topic covered is the lack of data regarding this specific population. Lastly, recommendations for further research are discussed followed by a summary of the information covered.

Statistics

In the United States the number of people who identify as part of the LGBTQ community is difficult to measure but we know it continues to steadily increase. Like other disproportionately discriminated minorities it is difficult to measure how many LGBTQ youth exist in the United States. Many LGBTQ organizations use the term “Ten Percent Society” as for a long time this population has been thought to be an estimated ten percent (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016). In 2017, the Gallup tracking survey gathered data from a random sample of 340,604 adults in the U.S and reported an 8.1 percent of adults identify as LGBTQ and more significantly it reported this is a 4.5% rise in this population since the first study conducted in 2012 (Newport, 2018). Although there is no agreed upon estimate of the LGBTQ population in the U.S the one certainty is that the population is growing therefore our understanding of how to serve this population must also increase.

Only recently has there been an active effort to study and collect statistical data regarding LGBTQ youth and a lot of the statistics vary widely. The California Healthy Kids Survey has collected information from middle and high school students for the last 20 years and only in 2013 did the survey

include questions regarding gender identity. They estimated there were 5.8% of middle and high school students who identify as LGBTQ (Health and Safety of LGBT Youth in California, n.d). Another estimate from the Williams Institute (2017) on the other hand reports an estimated 10% of middle and high school students in California self-identified as LGBTQ between the years 2013-2015. This report also concluded that, "LGBTQ youth across the state experienced disparities in school climate, victimization reports, and substance use" (The William Institute, 2017, p.22), which highlights the need for MSW to be prepared to work with this specific population as they have specific needs.

Lack of Data

Another barrier to obtaining statistics that pertain to self-identified LGBTQ youth is that historically there has been a "don't ask, don't tell" mantra specifically used for this population. As Wheeler (2011) explains the full extent of some of the disparities this population receives in services is not known because in the past studies have never asked about gender identity or sexuality. How can we possibly track something that we have encouraged to remain under the radar? Although this article focuses on the medical service needs of the LGBTQ community it rightfully calls, "for professional social workers, these service dilemmas and gaps point to areas for educational, practice, and policy capacity building" (Wheeler, 2011 pg.308). It is easy to see how service providers from all different fields of practice would need to

have reliable information regarding the size and needs of the LGBTQ youth to provide adequate services to this population.

Most studies and journals addressing the LGBTQ population agree that there is not enough data to develop evidenced based practices with this population. In a study of Child Protective Services (CPS) workers with self-identified LGBTQ youth in a rural area, “findings revealed lack of training, acceptance, and awareness” (Toner, 2013 pg.15). This study also reported that most workers had been in their positions for over a decade (Toner, 2013). The experience of child welfare social workers in the study is important because it highlights that the dilemma of the lack of training and acceptance among the service providers. A service provider is only as good as their education, training, and experience. Social work practice with the LGBTQ community has evolved along with politics, laws, and society views but there is still much progress needed.

Recommendations

The literature reviewed thus far has the central theme of more data needed for further understanding and awareness of the LGBTQ youth population. The social work profession under the NASW Code of Ethics has ethical obligations to serve and advocate for underrepresented populations like LGBTQ youth. In a study of LGBTQ youth and how to use existing theories to serve this population it is reported that, “it likely takes a village of people, resources, and LGBTQ affirmative climates to promote the well-being

of LGBTQ youth” (Asakura, 2016 pg. 21). Social workers are an essential part of the village LGBTQ youth need on all levels of practice whether it be on a micro, mezzo, and macro level. It is not enough to serve LGBTQ youth on a micro level, social workers must create and advocate for more training, and policy and legislative changes to help address the needs of this population on the mezzo and macro levels. As Asakura (2016) points out there is very limited knowledge in this topic and therefore the existing interventions need major improvements. This research project will attempt to add to the existing literature and provide insight into an understudied subject from the perspective of future social workers, MSW students.

Literature Review Summary

The literature review provides essential information regarding LGBTQ youth and how future social workers can meet those needs with more knowledge and improved interventions tailored to this population. So far, this study has covered the statistics of the LGBTQ population, the historical barriers regarding data collection, and the recommendations for social workers for further research. The recommendations provided in this literature review call for social workers to conduct more research and advocate in all levels of practice to improve the outcomes for LGBTQ youth on all levels of practice from micro to macro.

Theoretical Orientation

The theoretical orientation that will be utilized in this study will be the Social Dominance Theory (SDT). This theory was created by Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto in 1999 and it states that social hierarchies are built on age, sex, and one other social construct like sexual preference. The theory is rooted in discrimination based in socially constructed factors that maintain social hierarchies. In essence, this theory proposes that through institutional and individual discrimination along with behavioral asymmetry society works hard to maintain the status quo. These socially constructed hierarchies help keep hegemonic groups in power while oppressing minority groups using a divide and conquer approach. SDT explains how cultural ideologies are strengthened to favor the hegemonic group to consolidate and maintain power over the minority group. This theory can be applied to the LGBTQ youth population as they have been historically marginalized by society through discrimination in an effort maintain the status quo.

The research topic of MSW student preparedness to work with LGBTQ youth lends itself to this theory because there are inevitable biases students have regarding the client's they serve and there is often a self-awareness learning curve. It is quite possible that the social construct of the LGBTQ youth as a less-deserving minority affects the way future social workers will serve this population in their respective fields. As part of a larger society, we are all exposed to societal hierarchies and our actions either maintain or disrupt the

status quo. As MSW students we have pledged to advocate for justice and anti-discriminatory practices, but the question remains: how prepared are MSW students to serve LGBTQ youth? The goal of this research project is to understand how feasible it is for MSW students to uphold this pledge specifically towards LGBTQ youth and begin to explore this topic to address the needs of LGBTQ youth in the field of social work.

Contribution of Study to Social Work Practice

This research topic adds to the existing literature and offers the perspective of MSW students who are getting ready to provide services to an understudied population, LGBTQ youth. It is important to understand the impact this research project has on both the micro and macro levels. On a micro level this research project adds new information to an MSW student's personal library while encouraging some self-reflection and self-awareness practices. This research leads to personal analysis and possible growth for future social workers in the field encountering a rising number of LGBTQ youth with specific needs. On the macro level, this research can motivate policy makers and legislators to expand the research on this topic to ensure adequate training and education for MSW students to be prepared to serve LGBTQ youth in their practice. The potential contributions on a macro level will inevitably impact the social work field on every level. At the mezzo level educational organizations will need to interpret the hypothetical legislation resulting from this information and create opportunities for MSW students

entering the field to gain the necessary knowledge and practice to serve this population.

Summary

This chapter introduced the research focus and the potential biases of MSW students regarding LGBTQ youth. Then, the literature review discussed the limited existing data on this topic and highlighted the need for further research to be completed. The potential contributions of this study on the micro, mezzo, and macro level were also explored to complete the assessment chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

In this chapter the process of engagement for this research project is outlined and the study site described. There is a plan of action presented for the interaction with the gatekeepers of the research study site. This plan includes the necessary self-preparation on behalf of the researcher and the different issues that may arise during this research project. Specifically, the topics of diversity, ethical issues, and political issues are discussed in detail to ensure the ethics and validity of the research project. This chapter also covers the role of technology in the engagement processes. Chapter two concludes with a summary of the topics covered in this chapter.

Research Site

The study site for this research project is a higher learning institution, a university that prepares MSW students to practice social work. The study site is comprised of MSW students of all economic backgrounds, communities, ethnicities, ages, sex, and capacities to ensure there is diversity among the unit of analysis.

The researcher has chosen a high education organization that offers the necessary dynamics to fit the needs of this research project. This organization is in a county in Southern California that provides higher

educational services to a wide population of students both in-person and virtually. Since the organization offers educational services to students both in person and virtually the students can be located anywhere. The age of the MSW students enrolled in this organization also varies as there are students who start their graduate studies right after earning their undergrad degree and others who decide to return to school after many years. The services offered for students include no-credit courses, undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, and doctorate degrees but for this specific study we will be focused on MSW graduate students only. The students will either be in their first, second, or third year of their MSW program.

Engagement Strategies for Gatekeepers at Research Site

The primary gatekeeper was identified as Director of the Social Work Department. The researcher presented this director with the name and focus of the research project, the importance of this study, the reason for focusing on MSW students and the methods of this project. The focus on the valuable insight the research project may have for the education field and the possibility of improved service delivery for LGBTQ youth was also thoroughly explained. For example, this study may find that there is a need for additional training or knowledge of the LGBTQ youth population for MSW students to feel prepared to meet the needs of this population within their scope of practice. There were also ethical and political aspects to address to ensure the protocol was being followed and to prove the validity of the research project.

Self-Preparation

To prepare for this research project, the researcher completed a comprehensive literature review of the research topic. The scholarly literature resources available online through the California State University of San Bernardino (CSUSB) library were utilized to collect all necessary data. Throughout this research study there are many resources cited and the full references can be found on the reference page.

In addition to the literature review and journals discussed above there is intrapersonal work completed by the researcher before beginning this project. The researcher planned to remain objective throughout the study by remaining present and maintaining an awareness of personal opinions and biases towards the research topic. The goal was for the researcher to understand and remain in their role and ensure it does not interfere with the data collection process or the evaluation of the data. There are also other equally important topics discussed below that require consideration on behalf of the researcher.

Diversity Issues

The diversity issues for this research project as in all realms of social work involve people and the social constructs in our society. This research project asked questions about MSW student's experience, knowledge, and general preparedness to serve LGBTQ youth with the purpose of collecting quantitative data. These questions may have been perceived as intrusive or unnecessary to some participants and they may even have had an emotional

reaction when answering the questions. In the initial page of the electronic survey there is a brief explanation of the reason for this study to address any general concerns of the participants. The questions included in the survey are necessary to understand the MSW student's perspective and preparedness to work with LGBTQ youth. The researcher aimed to prepare participants and provide some insight as to why the information requested is being collected to create a safe space for MSW students to share. The researcher practiced cultural humility by being aware of their personal biases, approaching the data collection process with an open mind, and treating all participants with respect by informing them of the research process.

Ethical Issues

As with any research project there are ethical considerations that the researcher needs to address both before and throughout the research project. The first ethical issue to consider is the need for informed consent to be discussed early. The researcher covered informed consent including the purpose, direction, length, participant's privacy, confidentiality, and its limitations in the initial page of the electronic survey. The participant's privacy is a priority and is maintained as much as possible. The first measure taken to ensure participant's privacy was to collect data anonymously. The anonymity of participants was easy to ensure as the survey allowed for the gathering of data without capturing the identity of the students using an anonymous link to direct MSW students to the survey. The researcher did not have access to any

participant names or email addresses and did not discuss the data collected with anyone using any personal identifiable information provided in responses.

Political Issues

This research topic led to some political issues that also needed to be addressed. First, the researcher ensured all professional boundaries were kept intact and were clear to all parties involved from the beginning to the end of this research study. The researcher provided participant with an explanation of the intention of the research project and informed them that participation was completely voluntary prior to beginning the survey. Another political issue is the researcher's role as a peer to participants as an MSW student, but also a leader in the research project as the main researcher. It was necessary for the researcher to remember that participants are a source of data and are not to make decisions that affect the structure or design of the study as they are not collaborators in this research project. The researcher has remained clear about their position as the leader of this research project throughout the entire process. In addition, the researcher had planned to consult with the gatekeepers if the roles need to be redefined or upheld, but this was not an issue that presented itself during the research project.

The Role of Technology in Engagement

Technology was utilized throughout the life of the research project as it was deemed necessary. The researcher utilized electronic messages in the

form of emails to contact gatekeepers and an electronic survey to collect the necessary data from the participants. The only source of data collection will be the electronic survey provided to MSW students. The researcher used technology to assist in all stages of the research project as technology facilitated the process. Technology was a big resource for this research project especially considering the project was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic that encouraged social distancing and the use of virtual platforms.

Summary

In this chapter the engagement phase of the interview was introduced but it is critical to highlight that engagement continued to be an important part of the process throughout the research project. The plan executed for engaging with the gatekeepers was outlined. The diversity, ethical, and political issues that were addressed during this research project were explored and discussed. The use of technology throughout the life of the research project was also outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

The implementation chapter covers the process of selecting the study participants, gathering quantitative data through an online program, data recording, and data analysis procedures. The use of the Qualtrics online survey program and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software will be introduced. The many decisions made regarding these topics and rationales are discussed in this chapter.

Study Participants

The research project involved MSW students enrolled in an accredited MSW program in their first, second or third year of study. The total amount of MSW students at the chosen study site could not be obtained. A full online search was completed, and emails were sent to gatekeepers in attempts to obtain statistical information regarding the size of the MSW student population, but there was no information provided. There were many efforts to obtain this information during the research project but unfortunately this information remains unknown.

Selection of Participants

All MSW students enrolled at the research site were invited to participate in this research study. The intention was to target MSW students at the research site for their perspective while not violating any confidentiality laws regarding youth and their association with the LGBTQ status. The gatekeepers were asked to assist in the distribution of the survey to ensure all MSW students were presented with the opportunity to participate. MSW students at this research site received an email from the Social Work Department head requesting their voluntary participation in this research study with a link directing them to an online survey.

Data Gathering

Prior to gathering any data, the researcher deemed it important to inform and prepare the interviewee. Each participant that chose to click on the survey link was presented with an informed consent document, an explanation of the research study, and the survey itself. The informed consent page included a brief introduction to the study, the purpose, a brief description, a voluntary participation statement, confidentiality, the anticipated duration of the survey (10minutes), the risk, benefit, contact information for researcher and research supervisor, and how to view the results once published. The informed consent emphasized the efforts taken to protect the participant's privacy and the explanation outlined the purpose of the information being gathered through this research study. Each participant had to read the

informed consent and purpose of the study to continue to the survey. The informed consent is attached for further information.

The electronic survey was created and delivered through the Qualtrics program. Qualtrics is an electronic survey tool offered free of charge to CSUSB students to utilize in their pursuit of data collection. This online program facilitated the process of distributing the survey to MSW students at the research site via email. As previously mentioned, the department head of the social work department distributed the survey to MSW students. The complete online survey is attached for more information.

The questions asked in the survey directly address the topic of the participant's preparedness to work with LGBTQ youth. There were some demographic questions that were designed as a fill in the blank or multiple choice in the beginning of the survey. The essential questions addressing the purpose of the study all utilized the Likert scale to gather information. There was a total of eleven questions that used a multiple choice of fill in the blank design and twenty-one questions that utilized a seven-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree). The Likert was used to present scaling questions to participants to capture their views and perspective towards their preparedness to work with LGBTQ youth.

Data Collection

The only information collected was from MSW students using an online survey. Keeping in mind the research topic of MSW student's preparedness to work with LGBTQ youth the most appropriate data collection would focus on the MSW students' perspective. Their perspective is the only one of interest in this research project therefore it is the only means of data collection. In addition, interviewing LGBTQ youth about their experience may do more harm than good as we discussed in the literature review this population has been historically discriminated against and is difficult to identify due to societal stigma.

The next step of the data collection process is the actual interview itself. To get to this step participants had to have received an email from the department of social work, read the informed consent statement, agreed to participate, and provide answers to most of the questions in the survey. Please refer to the attached survey for more detailed information.

Data Recording

All information was collected using the Qualtrics web-based program. The goal is to have the participants consent to participation and present all necessary information in the informed consent and explanation of the study to avoid any misunderstanding or violations of their rights. Participants were reassured that their privacy would remain intact, and the sole purpose of the survey was to capture information provided regarding the preparedness of

MSW students to work with LGBTQ youth. The Qualtrics program captured and stored all of the data obtained from MSW students. There was a total of fifty participants in the study. Their responses were captured in the Qualtrics program and then transferred to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures

The quantitative data gathered was analyzed using the SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the study's participants and their responses to the study questions to remain true to the exploratory nature of this study. The questions asked were grouped into four different variables: perception, preparedness, bias, and knowledge. Grouping these questions together allowed for more clear reading of the data set.

The data was collected and analyzed using a bottom-up approach. According to Morris (2013) there is two different well-known types of analysis that can be utilized, and they are the "top down" or "bottom-up approach". The "bottom up" approach allows for the data to lead to the framework, and the goal is to develop theories about the research topic. This approach allows the information to guide the process. The "bottom up" approach is more appropriate for this research project as the goal is to develop the framework because of the data collected.

Summary

This chapter addressed participation, data gathering, data recording, and the first steps in the data analysis procedures. The study participants and the selection of this study sample was explained in detail along with the reasoning behind the study design. The informed consent provided to participants and the importance of this step were discussed. The web-based survey tool, Qualtrics was presented and explained. The SPSS software utilized was also introduced but will be further discussed in the next chapter regarding the results it produced in the analyzing of the data set collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION

Introduction

The section will provide an explanation of the data analysis, data interpretation, and the implications of the information on the micro and macro practice of social work with LGBTQ youth. The purpose of this study was to explore how prepared MSW students are to work with LGBTQ youth and this chapter will explore the findings in detail. The demographic information of the participants will be shared. The variables of perception, preparedness, bias, and knowledge will be defined and explored. Lastly, tables and figures will be used to illustrate the findings using the SPSS software.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data gathered from the 50 MSW students was analyzed using the SPSS software. The demographic characteristics of the participants showed that the majority were female (85%) and they mostly between the ages of 18-35 years old (70%). The participants were equally part-time and full-time students (50%) and the majority were in their first year of their MSW education (47%), followed by the second year (32%), and the third year (20%). Almost all of the participants resided in the state of California

with the exception of one participant that stated they live in Nevada. These findings were the participant demographics.

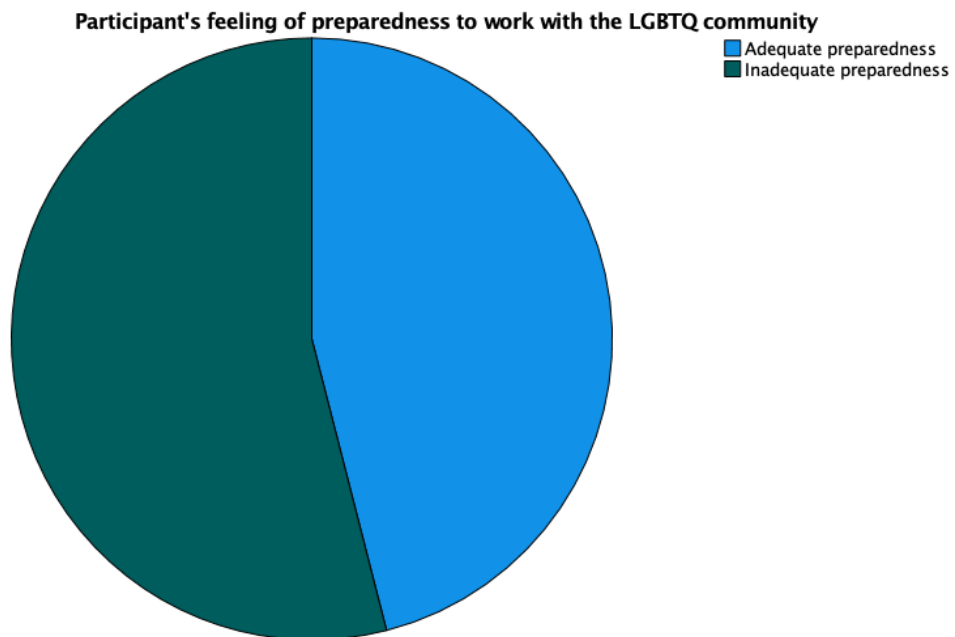
The essential questions captured the MSW student's views of their perception, preparedness, bias, and knowledge of LGBTQ youth. These four variables were captured in the data set and analyzed using the SPSS software. The statistics show that 100% of the participants had positive perceptions of the LGBTQ community. The evidence of bias towards LGBTQ youth among the participants was reported to only be 8% and 92% of participant reported no biases. Lastly, 82% of participants felt they have adequate knowledge of the LGBTQ community in comparison to 18% that reported they had inadequate knowledge. However, the majority (n=27, 54%) feel inadequately prepared to work with LGBTQ youth (See Table 1).

Table 1

Participant's feeling of preparedness to work with the LGBTQ community

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adequate preparedness	23	46.0	46.0	46.0
	Inadequate preparedness	27	54.0	54.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Figure 1



Data Interpretation

The data illustrates that the majority of MSW students have a positive outlook towards the LGBTQ community. This further implies that MSW students are following the NASW Code of ethics by putting any potential personal bias aside and committing to working with this underserved and historically discriminated population. This study concluded that only 8% out of 50 students feel a bias towards the LGBTQ community. Considering the role of social workers as part of a large society with historically negative views of the LGBTQ community this is a major win. MSW students are part of the larger society that is exposed to the discriminatory lenses used against this

population, yet their reported bias is significantly low. It would be interesting to see how this measure of bias compares to the general population.

Considering the main research question of how prepared do MSW students feel to work with LGBTQ youth? In short, the majority of MSW students feel inadequately prepared to work with LGBTQ youth. A little more than half of MSW students in this study do not feel prepared to work with the growing population of LGBTQ youth.

There are several limitations that need to be addressed in this research project. This study had to be modified due to complicating factors (social distancing, mandated mask wearing, and working remotely) of the COVID-19 pandemic that made in-person interviews impossible. Secondly, this quantitative research project had a small sample size due to the time restrictions. Third, the close ended survey questions offer a limited view of the study topic. An open-ended survey or the original qualitative interviews may have produced more information regarding the perception, bias, knowledge, and preparedness of MSW students to work with the LGBTQ community. This is something to consider for future research on this topic.

Implication of Findings for Micro and Macro Practice

These findings reveal that MSW students at this research site feel good about working with LGBTQ youth, but they do not feel prepared. This information has some direct implications on the micro and macro levels of

practice in social work. On the micro level it would be in the best interest of MSW students for professors at the research site to include more LGBTQ references and knowledge in the courses offered in the MSW program. This could be done by including learning materials that discuss the specific needs and struggles of the LGBTQ community as well as encouraging internship sites to expose MSW students to working with a diverse population that includes LGBTQ clients.

On the macro level, these findings suggest there needs to be more research about how prepared MSW are to serve the LGBTQ community and what can be done about it. As previously discussed, this is a growing population, and it would be wise for MSW programs to prepare students to serve this population. This is an exploratory research project that offers some data regarding the perspective of MSW students regarding the LGBTQ population. There is a need for more research into this topic in order to better inform the field of social work what should be done to ensure students feel prepared to serve LGBTQ youth.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher provided descriptive statistics to address how prepared MSW students feel about working with LGBTQ youth. The demographic statistics of the participants showed most students are female and under the age of 35 years old. MSW students at this research site feel

positive about working with this population but more than half feel inadequately prepared to do so. The micro and macro implications of this study were discussed and emphasize a need for a more inclusive curriculum to better prepared MSW students to work with LGBTQ youth.

CHAPTER FIVE

TERMINATION AND FOLLOW UP

Introduction

This final chapter will include termination, communication of findings, and relationship with participants, and the dissemination plan will be covered. Marking the end of this study will include reporting the results through publication and communicating the findings in the research symposium. The relationship with the participants will be concluded and the plans for disseminating the research project will be explained.

Termination of Study

The plan for termination involves reporting back to parties involved on a formal platform. It is important to mark the end of the study. The researcher will work closely with the research advisor to complete the research project and submit the manuscript for publication. The researcher will submit the research project for publication in the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database at CSUSB. The research project will live on only in this database as the study has been completed and there are no plans to continue this study further.

Communication of Findings

In the informed consent participants were informed that the results of this study will be published in the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database at CSUSB

after July 2022. The findings will also be shared with the entire MSW student body, which includes the participants, at the annual MSW research symposium held in a hybrid (in-person and online) fashion at CSUSB. The researcher will provide an informational poster to disseminate the findings of the study at the symposium.

Relationship with Study Participants

There will not be an ongoing relationship with study participants. The survey that was provided to participants was the one and only time there was direct communication with participants and the delivery was completed by the department of social work of the study site. The researcher can only communicate with the participants through the gatekeepers of the study site. The researcher does not have access to contact the participants directly but does know the participants will have access to the information presented at the research symposium if they so wish to participate. The dissemination of the finding of the research project will be shared and can be accessed by any participant.

Dissemination Plan

The plan for dissemination relies entirely on the annual MSW research symposium to distribute the findings of the research project. The researcher is grateful to all participants and did include a thank you message at the end of the survey. This researcher looks forward to participants participating in the research

symposium at CSUSB so they can see how the information they provided was used in this research project. The MSW research symposium date is yet to be determined by CSUSB.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY

Survey

I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study, have read and understood the consent document above, and agree to participate in this study.

I agree to participate

I do not agree to participate

For the following questions please fill in the blanks:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your race or ethnicity?
4. Are you a full time or part time student?
5. What was your Bachelor Major?
6. What year are in your MSW degree (1st, 2nd, or 3rd)?
7. What state do you live in?
8. What is your current job title (If non applicable type NA)?
9. What job title will you be seeking once you are an MSW graduate (If non applicable type NA)?

For the Following Questions Please Answer Yes or No

10. Do you have personal experience with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) community? **yes** **no**
11. Have you ever worked with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) community? **yes** **no**
12. Do you plan to work with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) community? **yes** **no**

For the following statements please Circle a letter for your level of agreement/disagreement using the following scale:

- A. Strongly agree**
- B. Agree**
- C. Somewhat agree**
- D. Neither agree nor disagree**
- E. somewhat disagree**
- F. Disagree**
- G. Strongly disagree**

13. There is a growing number of people identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) in the United States.
14. The LGBTQ population is an underserved population that needs more advocacy.
15. Social work services should be available and offered to all people who identify as LGBTQ.
16. People of any age can be part of the LGBTQ community.
17. The LGBTQ community has specific needs.
18. The LGBTQ community has all the rights and protections they need in the United States.
19. I have received specific LGBTQ training at work and/or school.
20. I feel prepared to work with LGBTQ clients.
21. My education has adequately prepared me to work with the LGBTQ population.
22. There needs to more educational information regarding the LGBTQ population in the MSW program.
23. My work experience has adequately prepared me to work with the LGBTQ population.
24. I have a basic understanding of the LGBTQ community and their specific needs.
25. I have a strong understanding of LGBTQ discrimination issues.

26. I can identify and assess for safety concerns specifically regarding the LGBTQ population.
27. I understand the difference between gender identity, preferred pronouns, and sexual preference.
28. I would feel comfortable discussing gender identity, preferred pronouns, and sexual preference with clients.
29. I would feel comfortable providing social services to the LGBTQ community.
30. My personal beliefs would make it difficult for me to provide social services for anyone who is LGBTQ.
31. I have a working knowledge of the services and resources available for the LGBTQ community in my local area.
32. There are no resources for the LGBTQ community in my area.
33. There needs to be more funding, resources, and services available for the LGBTQ community.

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. Your responses have been recorded.

Survey developed by Evelyn Martinez

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

MSW Student Informed Consent

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to explore the professional experience, knowledge, and preparedness of MSW students to work with the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) community. This study is being conducted by Evelyn Martinez under the supervision of Brooklyn Sapozhnikov, Research Supervisor, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this survey is to study the readiness of MSW students to serve children who identify as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) community.

DESCRIPTION: Once you consent to participate as a participant you will be asked to answer questions about your experience, knowledge, and plan for working with LGBTQ youth.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. You may skip or not answer any questions and can freely withdraw from participation at any time. There are no consequences for lack of participation.

CONFIDENTIAL: The information collected will be completely anonymous and the data will not include any personal identifiable information.

DURATION: This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and will consist of only multiple-choice questions in a drop-down menu format.

RISKS: There is no personal risk identified but the questions and/or topic of LGBTQ youth may be a trigger for some people. Just as a reminder you are not required to answer all questions and can end your participation at any time as it is a voluntary survey.

BENEFITS: There is no direct benefit for participating in this study. The goal is for this study to add information to an understudied area of research, service delivery for LGBTQ youth.

CONTACT: If you should have any questions or concerns regarding this survey please contact Dr.Sapozhnikov at Brooklyn.Sapozhnikov@csusb.edu

RESULTS: The results of this study will be published in the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database at CSUSB after July 2022. Direct link: <http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu>

CONSENT: I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study, have read and understood the consent document above, and agree to participate in this study.

APPENDIX C
IRB APPROVAL

September 24, 2021

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Administrative/Exempt Review Determination

Status: Determined Exempt

IRB-FY2020-227

Brooklyn Sapozhnikov Evelyn Martinez
CSBS - Social Work, Users loaded with unmatched Organization affiliation.
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Brooklyn Sapozhnikov Evelyn Martinez:

Your application to use human subjects, titled “Are MSW Students Ready to Work with the LGBTQ Community?” has been reviewed and determined exempt by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. An exempt determination means your study had met the federal requirements for exempt status under 45 CFR 46.104. The CSUSB IRB has weighed the risks and benefits of the study to ensure the protection of human participants.

This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses. Investigators should consider the changing COVID-19 circumstances based on current CDC, California Department of Public Health, and campus guidance and submit appropriate protocol modifications to the IRB as needed. CSUSB campus and affiliate health screenings should be completed for all campus human research related activities. Human research activities conducted at off-campus sites should follow CDC, California Department of Public Health, and local guidance. See CSUSB's [COVID-19 Prevention Plan](#) for more information regarding campus requirements.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy. The forms (modification, renewal, unanticipated/adverse event, study closure) are located in the Cayuse IRB System with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in disciplinary action. The Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is due for renewal. Ensure you file your protocol renewal and continuing review form through the Cayuse IRB system to keep your protocol current and active unless you have completed your study.

- **Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.**
- **Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study.**
- **Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.**
- **Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.**

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2020-227 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive from participants and/or others related to your research may be directed to Mr. Gillespie.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Nicole Dabbs

Nicole Dabbs, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

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