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Characteristics of reentry women

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CHARACTERISTICS OF REENTRY WOMEN

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

Eleanore Lee Garces

Judith Kay Russell

June 2002

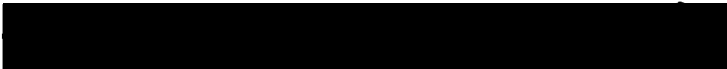# CHARACTERISTICS OF REENTRY WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The need for higher education and specialized training in child welfare is paramount, in order to effectively meet the demands for both global and domestic competency and service. The authors of this study, by use of a survey, explored the motivational factors, barriers and supports of reentry-aged female employees of San Bernardino County Department of Children's Services, who obtain their master's degree in social work and those who do not. The implications may serve to increase the number of professionals with master's degrees in social work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my incredible children who believed in the importance of my personal goals. Thank you Dylan, Rebecca and Johanna, for your love and for encouraging me to continue my education as a reentry woman. To my beautiful grandson Seth, who was clever enough not to be born during finals week. I also want to thank Eleanor Garces for her partnership in this project.

Judith Russell

I dedicate this project to my loving husband Reggie and to my family, mother, Eleanore, brother, Louis, and my two beautiful nieces Alicia and Marisa, who have taught me some of life's most valuable lessons regarding unconditional love. To my family on the east-coast, and my co-author Judy Russell. Thank-you! To my dear girlfriends Shell, Hope, Faith, Susie, Jessica, Cheryl, and Carol, Thank You for years of heartfelt friendship. To Paul Tang my supervisor, for all of his support. Last but by know means least, to Claira, my clerk, for always typing for me. To all of you, I would have never made it with out your encouragement, support and most of all your love. Thank you all for believing in the importance of my personal goals.

Eleanore L. Eckard-Garces (aka) Aunt LeeLee

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Since the mid-1970's, more than 150 studies have examined society's changing attitudes toward women's roles and the correlation between the demographics and characteristics of these changing attitudes. Most of this research however, has focused on traditional-aged, 18 to 24-year-old college students with the remainder dealing with adult non-student samples.

Little is known, however, about the attitudes regarding women of the growing population of older students (25 years and older), often referred to as "adult learners" or nontraditional students. Although there has been considerable interest in identifying the characteristics of these older students, Apps, (1981); Frances, (1980), (as cited in Mercer, 1993) few studies have systematically compared the attributes, behaviors, or attitudes of older students with those of traditional age.

The need for continued research regarding reentry women is apparent. Information issued by the Chronicle of Higher education (2000, 2001) states the total college enrollment of both men and women in the nation for 1998

was 15.5 million students. The total for women enrolled in college is 8.6 million. Women ages 25 and over who are enrolled in full time graduate school constitute 57.9% of full-time graduate enrollment, are 92% of women ages 25 years and over are enrolled in part time graduate school (2000, 2001).

Reentry students (both men and women) have become the largest consumers of the educational institution, a trend that began in the late 1960s and has continued over the past four decades. Colleges and universities across the nation are becoming more aware of the unique needs of the nontraditional students. Many universities and colleges, however, continue to have entrance requirements and schedules designed for traditional students. Often the supports that are offered for the returning student are not well advertised on campus, nor well funded.

Universities and colleges are the key stakeholders and if their institutions cannot meet the support needs of the growing numbers of reentry women, they face the risk of declining enrollments. Educators are concerned that their teaching styles and the curriculum will not fit the needs of both the adult learner and the younger traditional learner.

There are several indicators that this reentry trend will continue. The U.S. Department of Education (1990) predicted that women will earn more doctoral degrees than will men by the year 2001. Women have been and are projected to continue to earn more masters' degrees than men. In addition, women are entering the work force in greater numbers than they have at any time in the past, with the current labor force being composed of 47% women (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2001). Another factor supporting the reentry trend is the fact that many women may continue to delay establishing their vocational role until after 35 years of age when they have established their family roles (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987).

<div align="center">Problem Focus</div>

For many companies and organizations, there have been drastic changes and growth in technology and the economic structure. Beginning in the late 20th century and continuing into the 21st century, these changes have dictated a critical need for higher education and specialty training. More than ever, employers are dependent on the need for well-educated and skilled employees in order to meet the demands for both domestic

and global competency and service. Among such organizations dependent on educated and skilled employees is the San Bernardino County Department of Children's Services (SBCDCS).

In efforts to professionalize child welfare workers, the Department of Children's Services (DCS) in San Bernardino County has joined with Title IV-E and CalSWEC, in order to facilitate master's degree education and training in social work. It is a joint effort of the ten California graduate schools of social welfare, along with the Regents of the University of California that administer the CalSWEC grant. Also represented on the CalSWEC Board are the fifty-eight county directors, the National Association of Social Workers, mental health representatives, and private foundations.

Historically social work has been a profession comprised primarily of women. Within San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services (SBCDCS), the majority of caseworkers are women 25 years and older. Many women within SBCDCS choose not too return to school to obtain a master's in social work degree. There are a variety of reasons why some woman in SBCDCS choose to return to school while, others do not.

Purpose of the Study

This study looked at the potential reentry-aged women employed by the San Bernardino County Department of Children's Service. It identified the characteristics, motivations, needs and barriers of the reentry age female student. This study explored the reasons why some SBCDCS reentry-aged workers choose to further their education, while others do not. This study also examined the contributions of the Title IV-E CalSWEC grant program and it's goal to professionalize social workers. By identifying possible barriers and motivational factors, the result of this study may enhance recruitment to universities utilizing the Title IV-E CalSWEC grant program, as well as the recruitment, the professionalization and retention of social workers within the San Bernardino County Department of Children's Services.

Significance of the Project
for Social Work

There is currently a drastic shortage of professionals in public child welfare who have a master's degree in social work. This shortage exists when child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, molestation, youth violence, and adult and youth substance abuse is the

highest of any time in history. In recent years, public child welfare programs have been subject to intense media, public and political scrutiny, particularly in connection with the disruption of family preservation and the injury or death of children in placement. The need to professionalize child welfare workers through higher education and specialized training is paramount, in order to effectively meet the service needs of these populations.

The findings of this study may assist in helping to identify the characteristics, motivating factors and support needs of reentry age social workers that choose to obtain an master's in social work degree. Examination of the findings may lead to recruitment and retention of professional social workers.

<div align="center">Research Question</div>

In San Bernardino County Department of Children's Services, why do some reentry age women return to higher education while others do not?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a body of literature that explores the characteristics, multiples roles, motivations and supports and barriers, of reentry-age women. The theoretical perspectives of Life Stage Development and Person in Environment (PIE) that guided this study, is briefly discussed. The utilization of the Title IV-E CalSWEC grant by female social workers employed by San Bernardino County Department of Children's Services, and retention is also discussed.

Characteristics of Reentry Women

Reentry women are diverse in their socioeconomic backgrounds and run the gamut in their educational and career continuity and discontinuity. Reentry woman may be working class, economically deprived, upwardly mobile, or upper class. Some may have been absent from the educational setting for more than thirty years, while others left briefly to assume family and or career responsibilities. They may be single, divorced, married, or widowed, with or with out children, and may even be grandmothers.

Several studies have been done on the personality traits of reentry women. As measured by the California Personality Inventory [CPI] (Gough, 1975), reentry women have been found to be more concerned with independent activity, as compared with homemakers, married career women, and single career women (Erdwins & Mellinger, 1984, 1985) and as compared with traditional unmarried students (Erdwins et al., 1982).

Another study found older women students (ages 30 to 49 years) to be less likely to exhibit signs of depression and anxiety than younger women students, with low income being the most significant predictor of depression (Sands & Richardson, 1984). A review of eight studies in the area of personalities of reentry women, found that compared to traditional students, they exhibited stronger achievement motivation.

The authors of a study of the adaptation of university counseling centers to meet the needs of an older student body found that traditional students differ from nontraditional students. The differences were their reasons for attending, their stages of development, their perceptions of the college environment, and their view of the work place. While traditional students view college attendance as a normal progression from high school,

nontraditional students view it as a means for career changes or advancements, to obtain greater satisfaction, or life transitional assistance (Copland, 1988).

Once continuing education was considered to be a middle-class phenomenon dominated by white male enrollment, but this is no longer the case. Within the reentry population there are often many diverse and special-needs groups such as older woman, minorities, displaced homemakers, disabled woman, single parents, and rural and low-income women. Whatever her motivation, whether for self-fulfillment or to further her career opportunities, each reentry woman brings with her, her own unique traits, assets, and problems to her educational experience. She will also face her own unique challenges and barriers.

Multiple Roles of the Reentry Woman

While the traditional-aged student role primarily may be simply that of a student, nontraditional students must combine student status with the on-going responsibilities of being a wife, mother, significant other, grandparent, aging parent caregiver, wage earner, community member, or any combination thereof. Many returning students find themselves pulled in several and often conflicted

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directions by a seemingly endless stream of demands from
work, family, friends and community obligations. Despite
the sense of self-worth that often accompanies a return to
school, strain, anxiety, and stress are the inevitable
consequences of multiple roles (Greenhaus & Beutell,
1985). For returning women, lack of time to devote to
their family, home, and domestic responsibilities can
result in the need to develop a wide range of coping
behaviors (Gilligan, 1982).

For many women, reentry is a transitional time.
Educational supports are vital for helping individuals
better evaluate their commitments, manage their time and
multiple roles, and affirm the validity of their
undertakings. Certainly reentry women and their families
are concerned with services that are available to them
through the educational institutions. To what extent they
are available may mean the difference between continuing
their education or dropping out. The stressful effects of
managing multiple roles often bring reentry women to seek
help from counselors and social workers. It is important
for these professions to recognize and understand the
unique issues that reentry women experience in order to be
a supportive agent.

Researchers have reported that the life experiences of reentry women are broader and more complex because of their multiple responsibilities at home, at work and in society (King & Bauer, 1988). When involved in educational programs, reentry women have been found to have significantly higher grade point averages than traditional students and men who have reentered college (Badenhoop & Johansen, 1980; Erdwins, Tyer, & Mellinger, 1987). They have also been found to have higher educational goals and aspirations than do traditional students (Smart & Pascarella, 1987).

<center>Supports and Barriers for
Reentry Women</center>

Attitudinal, emotional, and functional supports, are frequently reported in the literature as important factors affecting educational participation. Attitudinal measures of support assesses others' perspectives of traditional or nontraditional appropriate roles for women, and the extent to which one agrees or disagrees with the roles women choose to assume or abandon. Emotional support involves the degree of support the woman receives from her friends, co-workers and family, employers and classmates, and their approval or disapproval of her educational goals. Functional support is a measure of the division of labor

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and the household responsibilities, the extent to which others assume and share responsibilities upon the woman's return to school.

One study of low-literate reentry adults reveals how negative support can affect attendance and success. Lewis (1985), during interviews with over two-hundred enrolled adult basic students, found that among those students experiencing counter supports, the most negative reactions came from family members and friends. The largest group who encouraged students were significant others. Hispanics and Black students reported the greatest number of counter supporters. Widowed, divorced, separated and single students reported fewer positive supports than married students did. The study revealed that the women without supporters continually expressed concerns about their ability to persevere in the face of negative feedback and opposition.

Related literature suggests that different agents of support are needed over the life cycle, and change over time. While friends may be the primary support agents for the traditional student, spouses, family, employers, coworkers and professors act as primary support agents for the nontraditional student. Therefore, it behooves educational providers to ensure a variety of resources and

support services, in order to counterbalance the negative pressures that may be exerted on the adult learner.

Cross (1981) identified three types of barriers to adult education. These barriers are situational, institutional, and dispositional. Situational barriers consist of circumstances that may be beyond the individual's control, such as lack of access to affordable daycare services. Institutional barriers consist of those policies and practices within colleges and universities that discourage working adults from enrolling. Such barriers include lack of financial aid for part-time study or inconvenient course schedules. Dispositional barriers refer to the learner's self-concept as a learner feeling too old or lacking in self-confidence to academically achieve.

By using this premise, one study attempted to assess the differences between older women who persisted with their higher education and those who dropped out. Of the 584 women surveyed, the reasons given for leaving school in ranked order were (1) family responsibilities, (2) lack of time, (3) job responsibilities, and (4) finances. Further analyses of this study proved to accurately predict graduate versus dropout status (Mercer, 1993).

Another important research finding is a lack of satisfaction in the student role. With the exception of financial and personal counseling, reentry women do not use available campus services as often as traditional students (Badenhoop & Johnsen, 1980). Reentry women have reported being significantly less satisfied with the advertisement and counseling services available than have reentry men (Malin, Bray, Dougherty, & Skinner, 1980).

Motivating Factors of Reentry Women

Smart and Pascarella (1987), in one of the few longitudinal studies on reentry students, examined motives for educational reentry. They found that in addition to vocational factors, previous college attendance and preparation and employment in large organizations were influences on the intention to return to school.

Financial resource availability (Sewall, 1984), increasing knowledge (Clayton & Smith, 1987; MacKinnon-Slaney et al., 1988; Sewall, 1984), self-actualization, self-improvement, and social and humanitarian motives (Clayton & Smith, 1987) have also been identified as reasons for reentry women to return to college.

.In seven studies reviewed in the areas for reentry, vocational factors were found to be an important reason in all seven. In addition, family variables were found to be important motivating factors in four of the studies, with increasing knowledge to be an important factor in three studies (Padula, 1994).

Houle's (1961) theoretical typology of three main types of motivations was based on in-depth interviews with adult students. Goal-oriented individuals were described as motivated to participate in order to achieve some specific, concrete outcome. Activity-oriented learners were interested in participating for the sake of the activity. Learning-oriented participants were interested in learning for learning's sake. Different scales have been developed based on Houle's typology.

Boshier (1971, 1991) developed an instrument to further investigate and refine the Houle typology. Boshier's (1991) version of the Educational Participation Scale (EPS) suggests there are seven factors underlying motivation to participate in adult education: (a) communication improvements, (b) social contact, (c) educational preparation, (d) professional advancement, (e) family supports, (f) social stimulation, and (g) cognitive interest in a particular topic. These factors add onto

Houle's original factors and other studies have found
similar factor structures for the EPS (Fujita-Starck,
1996; Morstain & Smart, 1974).

Davis (1964) concluded that prestige, promotion,
income, and the potential for occupational rewards were
important considerations in deciding between attending
graduate school or seeking employment. Cost and financial
aid also influenced the decision-making process (Davis,
1964; Gropper & Fitzpatrick, 1959).

According to the findings of Arches (1991), Jayarante
and Chess (1984), Jayarante, Chess, and Kunkel (1986),
perceived job and personal characteristics, such as
bureaucratization, conflict, autonomy and social supports,
have been related to job satisfaction of social workers
(as cited in Belcastro and Koeske, 1996).

Himle and Jayarante (1990), in a rare study of
employed undergraduate and graduate social work students,
found that for undergraduates, "job challenge related
positively to job satisfaction, and self-reported
knowledge of subject matter in one's practice area
minimally but significantly related to lower job
satisfaction" (as cited in Belcastro & Koeske, 1996) This
finding raises the possibility that workers who feel
overqualified and under-challenged may become less

satisfied with their jobs, and may be motivated to pursue master's in social work degrees. An important research finding by Keon and McDonald, (1982) was the reciprocity between job satisfaction and life satisfaction; that is, higher job satisfaction appears to enhance life satisfaction and vice versa.

Theories that Guided the Study

In reviewing the research literature regarding reentry age women returning to school and the work place, there are distinct theoretical perspectives that arise. One such theory is the Person in Environment (PIE). The theory suggests a holistic or unitary approach which views the relationship with the individual and the individual's environment as not necessarily being separate from the other, but rather an intricate part of one another. The extent, to which an individual adapts to the environment, is dependent on the individual's bio-psycho-socio-cultural development and their environment (Germain & Bloom, 1999).

The research supports critical areas of support the reentry women must draw from in order to successfully meet their educational and career goals. If her immediate environmental community of supports areas, such as, family, employment, financial means and instructors will

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provide the support she needs, she in turn can achieve the success and motivation to utilize her knowledge and skills within the community environment.

According to major developmental theories, life progresses sequentially along a continuum of stages from birth to death with one stage built on the other. Deficits during earlier stages can hinder full development in later life. The life issues that emerge at each stage derive from biological, social and psychological sources. According to Erikson 1950), middle age is generally regarded as one of the series of developmental stages that characterize the human life cycle (as cited in McCaslin, 1993).

Jung was one of the first of the psychoanalytical theorists to discuss adulthood and particularly middle age (Sands & Richardson, 1986). Jung stated that some time between 35 and 40, an individual begins to undergo an inner transformation, during which aspects of the individual's personality that were submerged during youth seek expression (Jung, 1960). Social obligations and demands that were central in life no longer preoccupy the person in midlife. Instead, the individual at this point in life becomes introspective and concerned about the meaning of life. During middle age, individuals confront

inner polarities and try to integrate both poles. "Storm and stress," are associated with this confrontation, however successful resolution results in a sense of inner harmony. Jung also said that as a person grows older, they become more individuated, whole and androgynous.

Erikson, who built a conceptual framework for the life cycle on the foundation laid by Freud, is the prototype of a developmental theorist. He described eight life stages, and states that the conflict that occurs during the crisis of middle age is "generativity versus stagnation." Erikson defines "generativity" as the giving of one's energies to others (as cited in MaCaslin, 1993).

During this stage, the individual is concerned with the welfare of the next generation, including, but not limited to, one's children. The other end of the spectrum is stagnation, or self-absorption. When an individual successfully manages this stage and resolves the conflict in favor of generativity this individual has been in touch with feelings of stagnation.

Vaillant, modified Erikson's life stage theory. Vaillant added career consolidation verses self-absorption to Erikson's generativity verses stagnation. Career consolidation is identification with a specialized career, measured by occupation satisfaction, commitment and skill,

Vaillant and Milofsky, 1980 (as cited in McCaslin, 1993).

Most adult development summaries place career

consolidation in the fourth decade of life.

According to developmental theorists, between the

ages of 22 and 60, the stages of intimacy verses isolation

and generativity verses stagnation are negotiated. The

developmental tasks for reentry age women are exploring

intimate relationships, childbearing, work, lifestyle,

managing a career, nurturing the marital relationship,

expanding caring relationships and managing a household.

Research reveals that these are the tasks or multiple

roles reentry women have identified as critical areas for

support when returning to school.

Title IV-E

A study of retention in public child welfare reveals

that those who were not county employees prior to graduate

training were less likely than expected to stay in public

child welfare; 87.5% who were county employees compared to

70.0% who were not county employees stayed in public child

welfare following their contractual obligation to do so

(Dickenson & Perry, 1998). This study suggests that

"employment in the county agency immediately prior to the

start of graduate studies increases the likelihood that an

individual participating in the Title IV-E program will remain in public child welfare" (Dickenson & Perry, 1998 p. 3).

The Department of Children's Services has joined with California State University San Bernardino and Loma Linda University in a collaborative effort to meet the growing need for master's in social work graduates in public child welfare. This need and similar needs throughout the state, led to the creation of the California Social Work Educational Center (CalSWEC) in 1990.

> Through a contract in 1992 with the California Department of Social Services, using federal Title IV-E training funds, CalSWEC was able to provide financial support for social work graduate students who will pursue careers in public child welfare. These graduate students participated in a specialized curriculum based on knowledge, skills and attitudes. These specialized skills are needed for public child welfare practice. When these students graduate, the student is required to work one year in a public child welfare agency for each year of Title IV-E CalSWEC funds they received. (Dickenson & Perry, 1998, p.1)

This effort by the County of San Bernardino Department of Children's Services, California State University, San Bernardino and Loma Linda University, Loma Linda hopes to increase the employment and retention rate of master's on social work graduates in public child welfare.

This study of reentry age women employed by the county of San Bernardino Department of Children's Services, identified key motivational factors and supports needed to increase retention and expand social work knowledge and skills through obtaining an MSW degree.

Summary

The literature presented in this chapter identified multiple roles, supports and barriers, motivations and characteristics unique to reentry age women from the perspective of PIE and Developmental Stage Theories. The literature discussed some significant differences between the traditional and non-traditional student. The implications of the literature can be applied to the reentry age females employed at SBCDCS when exploring reasons why some choose to obtain a mater's in social work degree and others do not.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

Chapter Three documents the steps used in developing
the project. Specifically, the study design, sampling,
data collection and instruments, the procedures, the
protection of human subjects, and data analysis are
discussed.

Study Design

This study looked at the reentry-age women employed
by the San Bernardino County Department of Children's
Service. It identified the characteristics, motivations,
needs and barriers and multiple roles of the reentry age
female student. It explored the reasons why some SBCDCS
reentry-aged workers choose to further their education,
while others do not. This study also examined the
contributions of the Title IV-E CalSWEC grant program and
it's goal to professionalize social workers.

The method chosen for this study was a survey. It
consisted of twenty-five questions, both qualitative and
quantitative, using a combination of both nominal and
ordinal levels of measurement. This method was chosen to
obtain information on motivating factors, supports and

barriers and multiple roles of reentry age women employed
by the San Bernardino County Department of Children's
Services.

The implications of this study revealed the
motivational factors, supports and barriers identified by
re-entry aged women employed by the Department of
Children's Services in San Bernardino County, in obtaining
an master's in social work degree. The study also
identified areas that may assist in future recruitment and
retention to the San Bernardino County Department of
Children's Services and the utilization of the Title IV-E
CalSWEC grant program.

Sampling

The data was obtained from fifty women, ages 25 years
and older, who are employed with San Bernardino County
Department of Children Services (SBCDCS). The researchers
randomly selected one hundred and fifty women out of 316
social workers employed at four separate offices in SBCDCS
to survey. The women sampled were social work trainees,
social worker II's and social service practitioners. Out
of those surveyed the researchers received a sample of
fifty completed surveys. The time frame for completion of
the surveys was 10 working days.

The sample group was chosen because the research study is relevant to reentry age women employed by the San Bernardino County Department of Children's Services. The sample group represented a population of women who could increase the availability of masters' level social workers employed by SBCDCS. A second component of this study is the utilization of the Title IV-E CalSWEC federal grant program by the sample group.

Data Collection and Instruments

The data was designed to elicit information from female social workers employed at SBCDCS regarding the demographics, characteristics, motivations for obtaining an master's in social work degree, supports, educational backgrounds and the utilization of Title IV-E federal grant funds.

The instrument used was a 25-question survey (See Appendix A) randomly distributed to 150 female social workers employed within the Department of Children's Services in San Bernardino County. The participants voluntarily completed the surveys, 52 surveys were returned, 2 surveys were incomplete and discarded. The' survey measured age, ethnicity and marital status (See Appendix D). Attached to each survey was an Informed

Consent (See Appendix B) and a Debriefing Statement (See Appendix C).

The researcher created a measurement. The face validity of the instrument was tested by sampling ten Social Service Practitioners within SBCDCS for review and research administrator approval.

Procedures

The surveys were given to a clerk in each office to be distributed randomly to female social workers. Each survey included an information sheet instructing the participant to return the anonymous survey to the designated clerk upon completion. The completed surveys were placed in a large manila envelope for collection by the researchers.

Each participant was given a written guarantee of confidentiality and contact phone numbers for participants to obtain the outcome of the surveys and data collected after June, 2002. Each participant was given, along with the debriefing statement, a list of referrals for educational counseling, counseling and admissions departments to California State University of San Bernardino and Loma Linda University, including the Title IV-E CalSWEC federal grant program information.

Protection of Human Subjects

The confidentiality and anonymity of the study participants was a primary concern of the researcher and all efforts were made on their part to accomplish this. For the sake of protecting the participants' anonymity and inputting the data, a numbering system was utilized. No participant names were used. Study participants were asked to sign informed consents before they participated in the study and they were told that they could stop at any time during the study (See Appendix B). The participants were given debriefing statements with the names of the researcher and the advisor along with phone numbers to contact the researchers if they had any questions concerning the study (See Appendix C).

Data Analysis

Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences format frequencies were run to measure demographic information including age, ethnicity and marital status. Gender was female only. Frequencies were also run on college educational backgrounds and degrees held by the participants. Frequencies were run on the ordinal ranking data to test the motivation and support factors for obtaining an master's in social work degree or a master's

degree in any discipline. Frequencies and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were run from data to test the age verses motivational factors but there were no significant findings. Because of the large grouping sizes, a T test could not be run.

Frequencies were run on the Title IV-E questions and data was collapsed in order to measure utilization of Title IV-E federal grant funds.

Summary

Chapter three reviewed the research design and the instrument used to elicit information regarding the characteristics, supports, multiple roles and motivating factors of female social workers that have obtained an master's in social work or masters degree in any disciple, and the utilization of the Title IV-E federal grant. The sample was drawn from 50 female social workers employed with the San Bernardino County Department of Children's Services. Data collection, procedures, protection of human subjects and the data analysis were briefly discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

Included in Chapter Four is a presentation of the results. First data and analysis are discussed for reentry age female social workers employed at San Bernardino County Department of Children's Services. This is followed by a discussion of the data and analysis of the utilization of Title IV-E CalSWEC federal grant funds. Last, the chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

Presentation of the Findings

The participants were 50 reentry age female social workers employed by San Bernardino County Department of Children's Services with the mean age being 40. The following is the age group breakdown.

25 – 30 years = 20.0 %

31 – 36 years = 16.2 %

37 – 42 years = 20.3 %

43 – 48 years = 28.5 %

49 – 54 years = 4.0 %

55 & over = 10.2 %

The ethnic breakdown of the participants were 31

(62%) Euro-American, 12 (24%) African-American/Black, 5

(10%) Hispanic and 2 (4%) Asian. The women surveyed were

predominately married 22 (44.9%), 14 (28.6%) were divorced

and 13 (26.5%) were single and 1 response was missing.

Educational Degrees

The educational degrees held by the participants were

measured by data obtained from the survey (Appendix A).

Almost half of the participants, 23 (46%) had a master's

in social work degree, 18 (36%) Bachelor's degrees, 6

(12%) Master degrees in any discipline, and other degrees

3 (6%). Of all the participants those who did not have an

master's in social work degree, and would consider

obtaining one in the future were 14 (28.6%) while 7

(14.3%) would not consider getting an master's in social

work degree. Twenty-eight (57.1%) replied that the

question was not applicable to them and 1 participant did

not respond.

The 28 (57.1%) can be accounted for because 23

already had a master's in social work degree, and a skip

pattern was used to differentiate questions specific to

degrees held by participants. The skip pattern could have

proved confusing to some participants. A nominal scale

would have increased accuracy within the sample group. Limitations using the skip pattern are further discussed in chapter five.

Motivation Factors For Obtaining A Master of Social Work Degree

A Likert scale (Appendix A) was used to measure motivational factors for obtaining a master's in social work degree. One participant did not answer this question.

24	Career Advancement	48%
23	Professional Status	46%
22	Self-improvement	44%
20	Increased Income	40%
16	Licensure	32.7%

Career advancement ranked the highest motivating factor. Increase in income and licensure as motivating factors, were ranked the lowest in the findings.

Motivations For Obtaining A Master's Degree In Any Discipline

Using a Likert scale to measure motivation factors for obtaining a Master's degree in any discipline (Appendix A) revealed the following motivators:

9	Career Advancement	18%
9	Increased Income	18%
8	Self Improvement	16%

8	Licensure	16%
7	Professional Status	14%

Of the 50 (N = 50) participants who had master's degrees in any disciplines, n = 6 participants had master's degrees in disciplines other than social work master's in social work. Career advancement and increased income was shown to be the highest motivators for obtaining a master's degree. Self-improvement and licensure were both the second highest motivators with professional status being the least motivating factor.

Adequate Supports While Obtaining
A Master of Social Work Degree

A Likert scale was used to measure areas of adequate supports while obtaining a master's in social work degree (Appendix A). The findings are as follows:

24	Family	48%
23	Classmates	46%
21	Friends	42.8%
21	Professors	42%
20	Financial	40%
16	Employer	33.3%
14	Children	29.8%
14	Co-worker	29.1%
12	Spouse/partner	25%

Those who were undecided about receiving adequate
support are as follows: Friends 26 (53.1%), undecided in
all areas of support 26 (52%), classmates 23 (46%).

Of the participants (N = 50), adequate support was
found to be received from family more than any other
areas. Support received from classmates was rated second
to family supports. An important finding to note was the
areas of support received from friends n = 23, and n = 21
received from professors. In addition, a surprising
finding was only 12 out of 48 participants received
adequate support from spouse/partner.

Adequate Supports While Obtaining A
Master's Degree In Any Discipline

A Likert scale was used to measure areas of adequate
supports when obtaining a Master's Degree in any disciple
(Appendix A). The findings were as follows:

9	Classmates	18%
8	Professor	16.3%
8	Family	16%
7	Co-worker	14.2%
6	Children	12.5%
6	Employer	12.2%
6	Spouse	6.4%
5	Financial	10%

Family, friends and professors as means of support were equally important.

Title IV-E Funds

Of re-entry women who participated in this survey, 8 (16.3%) were currently using CalSWEC Title IV-E federal grant funds to obtain their master's in social work degrees, and 41 (83.7%) were not using CalSWEC Title IV-E funds. Seventeen (34%) consider using the funds in the future. Twenty (40%) had used Title IV-E funds to obtain their master's in social work degree, 10 (20%) did not utilize CalSWEC Title IV-E funds. Four (8.2%) responded that CalSWEC Title IV-E funds were not offered at their college/or university. One (2%) was unaware of CalSWEC Title IV-E funds, 2 (4.1%) had other reasons for not utilizing CalSWEC Title IV-E funds. For 42 (85.7%) the CalSWEC Title IV-E questions did not apply.

Fourteen (28%) felt that the re-payment through employment for the utilization of CalSWEC Title IV-E funds was fair, 3(6%) felt that the re-payment was unfair.

Summary

Chapter Four reviewed the results extracted from the project. Data obtained from female social workers employed with San Bernardino County Department of Children's

Services and utilization of Title IV-E federal grant funds were discussed. There were no significant findings due to sample size and the limitations of the instrument. However, there were important findings regarding adequate support and the utilization of Title IV-E federal grant.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

·Included in Chapter Five is the discussion on the
findings from this project. Limitations of the findings,
recommendations for social work practice, policy and
research are also discussed. Finally, this chapter ends
with conclusions.

Discussion

Over all, this study was consistent with the findings
of other research regarding areas of support and
motivational factors of reentry women. The majority were
Euro-American, married and the mean age was 40. Almost
half·of the women who participated in the study held
master's in social work degrees. In this study there were
no statistically significant findings, however there was
some interesting discoveries.

Career advancement showed to be the largest
motivating factor for women in obtaining a master's in
social work degree. This supports the trend identified by
Betz & Fitzgerald (1987) that women are delaying
establishing their vocational role until after age 35,
when they have established their family roles.

The findings for motivational factors for obtaining a master's degree in any discipline or a master's in social work revealed that career advancement, professional status and self-improvement were the highest ranked. These finding are consistent with past research using the Educational Participation Scale (EPS) that showed professional advancement as being an underlying motivation of non-traditional students, (Fujita-Starck, 1996; Marstain & Smart, 1974). The findings that self-improvement and professional status are also important as motivators for returning to school, is supported by the research of Himle and Jayarante (1990). Their study of employed undergraduate and graduate social work students found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and knowledge of one's practice area. Another research finding by Keon and McDonald (1982) was the reciprocity between job satisfaction and life satisfaction (as cited in Belcastro and Koeske, 1996).

Self-improvement, career advancement and professional status as motivators to return to graduate school, are also consistent with Erikson and Vaillant's life stage development theories. Erikson described the middle years as Generativity versus Stagnation: the investment of one's time, energy and guidance of the next generation. Vaillant

added additional adult stages. He hypothesized Career Consolidation versus Self-absorption to emerge between Erikson's Intimacy and Generativity. Career Consolidation involves the mature refinement of one's career goals or other life commitments (McCaslin, 1993)

This study revealed that support from families was ranked the highest area of in which support was received. Spouse/partner support was ranked the lowest. This was interesting because the literature suggests that divorced, widowed, separated and single students reported fewer supports than do married students. In one study of low-literate reentry adults, Lewis (1985), the most negative reactions to a return to school came from family and friends, while the largest encouragement was from significant others.

Supports received by professors was ranked third highest. Related literature suggests that professors are included as primary support agents for nontraditional students. Reentry students have become the largest consumers of the educational institutions and the support received from professors plays a critical role in the completion of a graduate program.

Eight out of forty-nine women were currently using Title IV-E federal grant funds. Seventeen would consider

using the funds in the future. Twenty had used the Title

IV-E funds which accounted for nearly half of the sample.

While the sample was small, the findings indicate

that social workers employed by the County of San

Bernardino Department of Children's Services utilize the

Title IV-E funds or would utilize the funds in fairly

significant numbers. Although this study did not measure

retention, research indicates that retention is higher

with County employees who utilize the Title IV-E grant

funds (Dickenson & Perry, 1998).

Limitations

One of the limitations was a small sample size. This

prevented statistical comparison of most subgroups.

A skip pattern was used in the instrument in efforts

to differentiate the questions pertaining to specific

degrees. This however, further reduced the sample on other

questions asked. It also proved confusing to the

participants and the phrasing of certain questions proved

limiting. The Likert scale used gave five options when

four would have been optimal. Another limitation was that

retention was not measured. Role strains were not

measured, however the literature reviewed in this study

shows multiple roles and role strains to be an important

factor reentry women face in completion of master's degrees. The majority of this sample were Euro-American women. This study did not represent a diverse population of reentry woman.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

Previous research findings indicate that employment in the county agency immediately prior to graduate studies increases the likelihood that those utilizing Title IV-E funds will remain in public child welfare. Findings from this study showed nearly half the sample utilized or would utilize the CalSWEC Title IV-E funds to obtain a master's in social work degree. Continued support from management by reduction of caseloads, supporting block placement of internships, and promoting educational advancement through utilizing Title IV-E funding needed.

This study found a lack of support from spouses/partners of reentry women returning to graduate studies. The findings suggest a need for universities to develop programs that are inclusive of spouses/partners of reentry women. Invitations to orientation, family events held on campus, co-op day care and extended hours daycare, could be made available. Further research is needed in order to develop a variety of resources and support

services to counter balance the negative pressures
nontraditional students encounter.

Findings from this study and other research show that
support from professors is critical to reentry women.
Different agents of support are needed over the life
cycle, and change over time. Of the supports, professors
were ranked equal to friends and family.

Further support needed from professors may include
evening office hours for non-traditional students, off
campus communication via email, off-campus classroom
instruction and extended course availability for the
non-traditional student. In addition, educational
institutions can increase support to the non-traditional
student by providing extended business hours for student
support services. Information and recruitment regarding
the Title IV-E grant funds could be better publicized. The
Universities could hold informative meeting to the county
employees.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to identify
characteristics, supports and motivational factors of
reentry female social workers that obtain master's in
social work degrees and those that do not. The study found

areas of support and motivational factors that were
consistent with other research on reentry women. Findings
of the utilization of Title IV-E funds were positive.

Reentry students will continue to be the largest
consumers of educational institutions in years to come and
the need for providing support to meet the unique needs of
non-traditional students is vital. Continuing to
professionalize social worker is paramount to procuring
the services of the growing needs of clients.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY

SURVEY

Please answer the following questions:

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is your ethnic or cultural background?

   _____ Euro-American   _____ African-American/Black
   _____ **Asian-American/Pacific Islander**   _____ Hispanic/Latina
   _____ Native-American   _____ Arab American
   _____ Other _____

3. What is your marital status?

   _____ Single   _____ Divorced
   _____ Married   _____ Living with Partner

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

4. What educational degree(s) do you hold? _____

5. How many years has it been since you received an undergraduate degree? _____

6. At what age did you receive an undergraduate degree? _____

7. Are you currently enrolled in an MSW program?

   _____ Yes   _____ No

   If (Yes), at what University are you currently enrolled at? _____

8. Are you currently utilizing Title IV-E/CalSWEC federal grant funds?

   _____ Yes   _____ No

9. If you do not hold a Master degree in Social Work (MSW), would you consider obtaining one in the future?

   _____ Yes   _____ No

Beside each of the statements presented below, please indicate whether you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), or are Undecided (U).

10. What would be your motivation (s) for obtaining an MSW degree?

_____ NA

    a. Increase Income   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
    b. Increase professional status (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
    c. Self Improvement   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
    d. Career Advancement   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
    e. Obtain licensure   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__

11. Would you consider utilizing Title IV-E/CalSWEC federal grant funds to finance your MSW degree?

_____ Yes   _____ No   _____ NA

IF YOU DO NOT HOLD A MASTER'S DEGREE IN ANY DISCIPLINE PLEASE STOP HERE. THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY.
****

IF YOU HOLD A MASTERS DEGREE IN ANY DISCIPLINE PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS 12-16. IF YOU HOLD AN MSW DEGREE PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS 17-25.

12. How old were you when you received your Masters degree? _____

13. How many years elapsed between your undergraduate degree and your **Masters degree**?

Did you attend a full-time _____ or part-time _____ program?

Beside each of the statements presented below, please indicate whether you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), or are Undecided (U).

14. Has your Master's degree provided you with employment mobility?

(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__

15. What was your motivation (s) for obtaining a Master's degree?

a. Increase Income   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
b. Increase professional status (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
c. Self Improvement   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
d. Career Advancement   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
e. Obtain licensure   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__

16. While obtaining my Master's degree, I felt that I received adequate support from the following area(s).

a. Family   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
b. Spouse/Partner (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
c. Children   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
d. Employer   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
e. Co-workers   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
f. Professors   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
g. Friends   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
h. Classmates   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
i. Financial   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IF YOU HOLD AN MSW DEGREE

17. Where did you receive your MSW degree? _____

Beside each of the statements presented below, please indicate whether you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), or are Undecided (U).

18. What was your motivation(s) for obtaining an MSW degree?

a. Increase Income   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
b. Increase professional status (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
c. Self Improvement   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
d. Career Advancement   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__
e. Obtain licensure   (SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__

19. Has obtaining an MSW degree increased your professional status?

(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__

20. Has your MSW degree enhanced your social work skills?

(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__

21. Do you agree that an MSW degree should be required to perform Social Service Practitioner duties?

(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__

22. While obtaining my MSW degree, I felt that I received adequate support from the following area(s).

a. Family	(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__	
b. Spouse/Partner	(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__	
c. Children	(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__	
d. Employer	(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__	
e. Co-workers	(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__	
f. Professors	(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__	
g. Friends	(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__	
h. Classmates	(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__	
i. Financial	(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__	

23. Did you utilize the CalSWEC/Title IV-E funds to obtain your **MSW degree**?

_____ Yes   _____ No

24. If (No) please check all that applies:

a. Program not offered ___
b. Unaware of the CalSWEC/Title IV-E Program ____
c. Not interested in using the CalSWEC/Title IV-E program ___
d. Unable to fulfill CalSWEC/Title IV-E program requirement obligations ____
e. Unwilling to fulfill CalSWEC/Title IV-E program requirements ___
f. Other _____

25. If you have utilized Title 4-E funds, do you feel that the repayment of employment is fair? (3 yrs. P/T - 2 yrs. F/T).

(SA)__ (A)__ (D)__ (SD)__ (U)__

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are about to participate is designed to explore differences in educational objectives among female social workers employed by the Department of Children's Services in San Bernardino County. Eleanore Garces and Judy Russell, graduate students in the Social Work Program at California State University, San Bernardino are conducting this research study for our master's project.

The information will be gathered by completion of a questionnaire. The questionnaire takes approximately five to ten minutes to complete and examines themes related to education and perceived attitudes of support and professionalism. The questionnaire does not contain any identifying marks and all responses will be anonymous. The survey is purely for the purpose of the research study, which is about women employed by San Bernardino County Child Protective Services and utilization of the Title IV-E/CalSWEC federal grant program. In no way will this survey identify you individually.

Your participation in this study is totally voluntary. If you choose to participate in this study, or not, it will not in any way affect your status as a social worker within San Bernardino County Department of Child Protective Services. Our research advisor and the researchers will be the only individuals reviewing the completed surveys. If you should have any questions regarding this study, you may contact our research advisor, Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, MSW Research Coordinator at California State University, San Bernardino at 909-880-5507. This research proposal has been approved by the Department of Social Work Sub-Committee of the San State University Institutional Review Board.

My mark ("X") below indicates that I have been informed of, and I understand the nature of the study and I volunteer to participate.

_____   Date _____

APPENDIX C

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

The study you have participated in is designed to investigate the issues facing re-entry women whom return to higher education to obtain a MSW degree or do not. All information collected will be kept confidential. If any of the questions you have been asked to complete cause you any emotional stress, which might require discussion with a professional mental health worker, please contact one of the agencies listed below that handle women's issues with sensitivity. Listed below are universities that offer MSW programs within the local area and the university Title IV-E coordinators' names and phone numbers. You may receive the final findings of the study by contacting Eleanore Garces at (909) 945-3725 or Judith Russell at (909) 383-2020 after June 2002.

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San Bernardino, CA 92404-5413
9909) 381-2404

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Behavioral Health Resource Center
850 Foothill Blvd.
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(909) 421-9200

Loma Linda University
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California State University
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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

This was a two-person project where authors collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:

    Team Effort: Eleanore Garces and
                                Judith Russell

2. Data Entry and Analysis:

    Team Effort: Eleanore Garces and
                                Judith Russell

3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:

    a. Introduction and Literature

        Team Effort: Eleanore Garces and
                            Judith Russell

    b. Methods

        Team Effort: Eleanore Garces and
                            Judith Russell

    c. Results

        Team Effort: Eleanore Garces and
                            Judith Russell

    d. Discussion

        Team Effort: Eleanore Garces and
                            Judith Russell