A survey of social workers' cultural competency: An exploratory study

José Luis Lujano

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A SURVEY OF SOCIAL WORKERS' CULTURAL COMPETENCY:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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
José Luis Lujano
September 2005
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José Luis Lujano  
September 2005

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ABSTRACT

At the national and state level, statistics suggest that there is an overrepresentation of African American and Native American children in foster care placements. This study measured social workers' cultural competency by utilizing the California Brief Multicultural Competence Scale (modified for social workers). This exploratory study hypothesized: 1) Social workers are more culturally competent when younger in age; 2) African American social workers are more culturally competent than white social workers; 3) Female social workers are more culturally competent than male social workers; 4) Social workers with a Master's of Social Work are more culturally competent than social workers with other attained education. The results suggest that overall social workers were culturally competent in the county studied. The results of this study serve as an impetus to evaluate social workers' cultural competency who are working within the child welfare agencies.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to give my sincere gratitude to all of the individuals who provided me the knowledge and skills to get me through the Master’s of Social Work program. My sincerest gratitude goes to Michael Lau, Josie Reyes, Jessica Mojica, Yasuyo Abo, and all other fellow students who provided strength and support. I would like to acknowledge the many social workers who provided guidance and ideas for this project. I would like to thank Sally Richter and the San Bernardino County Department of Children’s Services for supporting this research project. And finally, I would like to thank Dr. Teresa Morris for the guidance, support, and patience she provided with this research project.
DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to give thanks to the Creator for providing me with life and the opportunity to complete this project. This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Paulina F. Lujano, my brothers and sisters, Alicia Lujano, Miguel Angel Lujano, Consuelo Cardenas, Margarito Lujano, Jr., Maria Janice Bernal, Ricardo Lujano, and all my nieces and nephews. This is also dedicated to Rachell Y. Enriquez and her daughter Sabrina Y. Enriquez. And finally to Mr. Enriquez, Tina Enriquez, and the Enriquez siblings who provided me with love, shelter, food, and support.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

This chapter documents the research project. The research highlights how social workers' cultural competence impacts the lives of children and families of color within the child welfare system. The purpose of the research project was to measure the social workers' knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and ability as they serve children and families of color. The California Brief Multicultural Competence Scale (CBMCS), modified for social workers by this researcher, was the measuring instrument. This exploratory study hypothesized: 1. Social workers are more culturally competent when younger in age. 2. African American social workers are more culturally competent than white social workers. 3. Female social workers are more culturally competent than male social workers. 4. Social workers with a Master's of Social Work are more culturally competent than social workers with other attained education.

Problem Statement

Social workers have contributed indirectly or directly to the placement of children of color in the child welfare system throughout the country. Statistics
from all 52 states revealed that more than 556,000 children were in some form of foster care in the year 2000. Of the 556,000 children, 327,088 (59%) were children of color (Child Welfare League of America, 2000). Children of color are disproportionately represented in child welfare and foster care systems. Albers, Reilly, and Rittner (1993) attributed serious errors in case decisions to social workers. They asserted that errors were due to social workers being poorly trained and lacking the knowledge and skills to work with children and families of color.

At the micro level of practice, where discrimination is attributed to individual actions, social workers have directly or indirectly discriminated against families of color because of lack of training or skills when working with children and families of color. Based on how effective social workers are in working with children and families of color, social workers often contribute to the overrepresentation of African American and Native American children by placing these children in the foster care system (Needell, Brookhart, & Lee, 2003; Ards, Myers, & Malkis, 2003; Coleman, Unrau, Manyfingers, 2001; Donald, Bradley, Day, Critchley, & Nuccio, 2003).
On the other hand, social workers may have overlooked other ethnic groups, i.e., Latinos and Asians, when it came to placing children in foster care (Rose & Meezan, 1995; Levine, Doueck, Freeman, & Compaan, 1996; Courtney, Barth, Berrick, & Brooks 1996; Child Welfare League of America, 2000). For example, social workers may assume that African American parents or Native American parents are not amenable to change and thus place the child in foster care, rather than exploring other alternatives to placement. In other cases, for example, social workers may assume that Latino or Asian families have an extended family support network. Thus, placement of children with extended family members is a more likely option, than placing the children in foster care. These actions have led to overrepresentation of African American and Native American children in foster care. While at the same time, these actions overlooked other ethnic groups who needed to be placed in foster care.

Research indicates that there are disparities in service delivery to children of color compared to children of white descent (Curtis & Denby, 2004; Ards et al., 2003; Donald et al., 2003; Levine et al., 1996). For example, African American children experienced disparities in areas of access, assessment, and service outcomes in the child
welfare system compared to white children (Levine et al., 1996; Ards et al., 2003). According to their findings, when African American children were compared to white children, access to services by white families was more prevalent than to African American families.

Disparities were also found when mothers of children of color were assessed. Rose and Meezan (1995) reported that mothers of color experienced a lack of proper assessment as compared to white mothers. Service outcomes by each group showed that whites had a much more positive outcome than the African American population (Courtney et al., 1996; Child Welfare League of America, 2000). Many of the disparities in access, assessment, and service outcomes experienced by children and families of color in the child welfare system are due to race, ethnicity, and cultural background (Lu, Landsverk, Ellis-Macleod, Newton, Ganger, & Johnson, 2004). It is evident that social workers' lack of understanding of race, ethnicity, and cultural background impacted their ability to effectively work with Children and families of color.

At the macro level of practice, institutional racism is practiced through policies of institutions, community members, and human service agencies. This also contributes to the overrepresentation of children of color in the
foster care system. Needell et al. (2003) found that societal discrimination practices often affect the perception for certain populations. Essentially, the perception of society often affects whether or not children of color will be referred to the child welfare system. This perception affects the role the child welfare system takes when deciding whether a child of color will come into the system or not. Sometimes, the child welfare agency may be forced or pressured by society to place children of color more so than others.

A clear example of how often this occurs is evident in the number of generated reports for suspected abuse and neglect. Many referrals are generated from responses from law enforcement officers, doctors, nurses, counselors, teachers, therapist, child care providers, and other mandated reporters. According to Child Welfare League of America (2000) and Ards et al. (2003), referrals tend to place children of color at a disproportionate rate compared to white children. It is common for African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino children to generate disproportionately higher referrals and investigations for child maltreatment than white children.

The child welfare system has implemented policies, procedures, and training to address the disproportion of
investigations and overrepresentation of children of color. These policies and training were implemented to effectively provide services to groups who have a history of being discriminated against by the child welfare system. For example, The California Department of Social Services has a policy that mandates cultural competency training to all employees in child welfare agencies (Reed & Karpilow, 2001).

The child welfare system, social work practice, and social workers need to reevaluate their perception and delivery of services to children of color. It is imperative that the child welfare system measure social workers’ sensitivity, knowledge, awareness, and ability to serve children and families of color, as they are the frontline workers who are the eyes and ears for the child welfare system.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to measure the social workers’ knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and ability to serve populations of color. This exploratory study hypothesized: 1. Social workers are more culturally competent when younger in age. 2. African American social workers are more culturally competent than white social
workers. 3. Female social workers are more culturally competent than male social workers. 4. Social workers with a Master’s of Social Work are more culturally competent than social workers with other attained education.

Few studies have focused on measuring the level of cultural competency of social workers. Rather, the literature focuses on a need for more cultural competency policies and training. Policies and training are meant to do away with discrimination and institutional racism in the child welfare system. However, existing research indicates that policy and training has done little to reduce discriminatory and institutionally racism practices in the child welfare system. For example, policies such as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 are covert institutional racist policies. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act have caused a disproportion in the child welfare system. For example, the policy has caused a drop in proportion for white families. Yet the policy has caused an increased for families of color since its implementation. In Ohio, there was a 12% decrease in welfare rolls for whites; yet, there was an increase 11%

According to Lu et al. (2004), access to services for children of color within the child welfare system was indicative of their racial, ethnic, and cultural background and adds significantly to differences in how they will access services. Children and families of color often do not receive fair or equal assessments, services, and outcomes. Furthermore, racial, ethnic, and cultural background of children determines the duration of time before adoption takes place. Racial, ethnic, and cultural background of children determines the access to expensive or less expensive group homes, residential treatment, and longer duration in foster care (Lu et al., 2004).

In accordance with Needell et al. (2003), it is time to move beyond explaining the differences in delivery of services to children of color. Rather, research should be geared towards measuring social workers' cultural competency, as they are in the frontlines of the child welfare system. For this reason, the study focused on the social workers' cultural competency by surveying social workers in the child welfare field in one Southern California County.
Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

Most available research which measures cultural competency has been conducted on therapists, who provide direct services by way of individual and family counseling. The findings of this research enhance social work practice by being one of the first to evaluate social workers' cultural competency. Unlike other research which addresses racism and discrimination in the child welfare system. This project's significance enhances policies, which require training for culture competency. This project evaluates social workers' cultural competency.

Keeping in mind the generalist intervention model, culturally competent social workers can engage families of color more effectively. They can address the client's issues from a perspective outside of the mainstream. The assessment phase of children and families of color can be more efficient by understanding the historical, political, economic, and social realities of specific ethnic or cultural groups. The planning phase would be more effective by generating services, which are culturally congruent with the children and families of color followed by the implementation phase. If services are not meeting the needs of families, evaluation can lead to other
services suggested during the planning phase of the generalist intervention model.

It is hoped that the desire to provide culturally congruent services would lead to increased positive service outcomes for children and families of color. The profession of social work will elevate its image knowing that social workers are culturally competent to serve populations of color. Social workers would provide better services for children and families of color if social workers were culturally competent. It is this research project’s intent to generate interest in combating the serious and continuing problems affecting children of color within the child welfare system from the individual level. The study’s results will further emphasize the importance of using an instrument such as CBMCS to measure the level of cultural competence of social workers.

Do demographic characteristics of social workers have an effect on their cultural competency? In response, this researcher hypothesized: 1. Social workers are more culturally competent when younger in age. 2. African American social workers are more culturally competent than white social workers. 3. Female social workers are more culturally competent than male social workers. 4. Social workers with a Master’s of Social Work are more culturally
competent than social workers with other attained education.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The following chapter will discuss the literature review pertaining to culture competency. It defines culture and culture competency. The chapter provides background history of the problems associated with discrimination and racism. It addresses the relevancy of cultural competency and social work education. This chapter provides an overview of the theories guiding conceptualization. A brief summary ends this chapter.

Culture and Culture Competence Defined

In order to address culture and cultural competency, the terms must be understood by definition. "Lum (1999) describes culture as 'the sum total of life patterns passed on from generation to generation with a group of people and includes institutions, language, religious ideals, habits of thinking, artistic expressions, and patterns of social and interpersonal relationships'" (as cited in Dewees, 2001, p. 34). Important to the definition of culture is that culture is fluid, learned, a life long process, and can change within the same generation. Also,
culture is within a group of people, organizations, country, and international level.

Dewees (2001) quoted Greene: "cultural competence requires that social workers carry out services that are congruent with the behaviors and expectations that are normative within the culture of the client" (p. 35). From a strength perspective, cultural competence means to "start where the client is at."

Background History

In past history, families of diverse backgrounds lacked culturally sensitive health, educational, and social services (Rounds, Weil, & Kirk-Bishop, 1994). Lum (2000) credits the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) with inaugurating the recruitment of people of color as students, and multicultural content in social work schools' curricula in the year 1970. Based on CSWE efforts, the importance of culture competence is well recognized as a part of social work practice. Brindis, Park, Paul, and Burg (2002) reported that changing demographics of the population requires awareness, understanding, and integration of culture competency within societal institutions. Social work academia and the child welfare system are two institutions which recognized
the importance of culture competence. For example, schools of social work are accredited by CSWE which requires the inclusion of cultural diversity in their curriculum (Boyle & Springer, 2001). The California Department of Social Services mandates culture competency training for all employees in the child welfare system (Reed & Karpilow, 2001).

However, cultural diversity course content and policies have not translated to culture competency. It was the intent of CSWE's efforts to help children and families of color who have a long history of dealing with discrimination. Researchers have affirmed that disproportion and disparity exists among children of color (Curtis & Denby, 2003; Rose & Meezan, 1995; Needell et al., 2003; Ards et al., 2003; Coleman et al., 2001; Donald et al., 2003; Levine et al., 1996; Courtney et al., 1996; Child Welfare League of America, 2000). For these reasons, CSWE targeted groups who have been disenfranchised based on race/ethnicity, poverty, sexual orientation, immigration status, and age (Swank, Asada, & Lott, 2001). Out of all the groups who have experienced discrimination, children and families of color have continued to endure disparity in access, assessment, service delivery, and
outcomes with comparison to whites within the child welfare system.

Efforts have been made at policy levels to ameliorate the effects of discrimination on children and families of color. Oskamp (2000) asserts that laws and widespread norms are the most powerful arena for changing patterns of human relations, especially in dealing with racism and discrimination. For example, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is one policy that emphasized early interventions in a culturally competent manner for children and their families (Rounds et al., 1994). However, IDEA’s proposed interventions of dealing with disabilities in a culturally competent manner have not reduced disproportion rates of children of color in the child welfare system.

Some would argue that the political culture of policy makers is essential to understanding why policies do not eradicate social issues such as racism or discrimination. In accordance, social workers whom are familiar with children and families of color must participate in the policy making process in order to enact policies that would render results in favor of children and families of color. Zimmerman (2003) asserts that “cultural attitudes are better predictors of policy choice than any other
influence" among policy makers (p. 276). Implied in this researcher's suggestion is that policy makers are highly resistant to change and despite cultural shifts in policy makers, cultural competency policies are residual.

Policy and practice have been problematic to the child welfare system. Policy and training have been stressed by CSWE and the California Department of Social Services. However, these policies and trainings have done little to ameliorate the problems faced by children and families of color. The child welfare system continues to be plagued by the overrepresentation of African American children and Native American children, and there continues to be a disparity of service delivery to children and families of color compared to whites (Levine et al., 1996; Ards et al., 2003; Child Welfare League of America, 2000).

In essence, Policy makers, social welfare administrators, and social workers must not only be aware of their client's culture and the need for practicing culture competency, but they must be supportive of policies and practice. In order for policy and the practice of culture competency to exist, policy makers, child welfare administrators, and social workers must be immersed in the culture of the families that they serve.
Relevancy of Cultural Competency in Social Work Education

The CSWE has been central in establishing culture competency at social work schools since the year 1970. However, Boyle and Springer (2001) reported that at “the end of the twentieth century, cultural competency remains an abstract ideal rather than a measurable outcome of social work education” (p. 54). Efforts made by preparing social work students have fallen short of impacting the child welfare system. Learning institutions have failed at preparing child service workers to make culturally competent decisions (Lu et al., 2004). Lack of knowledge of culture, cultural competency, and privilege are some of the reason why child social workers are making culturally incompetent decisions.

It seems that providing multicultural content in social work learning institutions has not equated to culturally competent students. According to Swank et al. (2001), some white students “facially approve” the virtues of cultural competency “until such principles are converted into actual programs” (p. 99). They noted that the child welfare system would benefit if social work programs screened out racially insensitive students.
However, this is highly unlikely since instruments that would be able to screen out such students are unavailable.

Nonetheless, most students in social work programs are receptive of multiculturalism (Swank et al., 2001). They reported that the majority of the students are receptive of multicultural curricula. Swank et al. (2001) did find that it was imperative that educators construct formal and informal settings that reinforce culture competency. If culture competency is expected to thrive, it is in the learning institutions. Conversely, within schools of social work there is an apparent problem in meeting cultural competency demands: unfortunately, there is a lack of professors who are of different ethnic groups. Dewees (2001) noted that it has been challenging for social work educators to build on their cultural competency repertoires because both the instructor and students are typically from the dominant culture. Swank et al. (2001) found that a larger number of students from the dominant culture felt compelled to learn about cultural diversity, but were reluctant to take such classes.

It is imperative that social work educational institutions continued to lead in the steps of CSWE in recruiting students of color. Limb (2001) indicated that American Indians students are more likely to be interested
in working with people living in poverty and are disadvantaged, like "African-American and Hispanic/Latino(a) students" (p. 60). Intuitively, students from diverse groups can help create discussions pertaining to multicultural issues in social work classes and ultimately work in the child welfare system with children and families of color.

Theory Guiding Conceptualization

The overrepresentation of African American children in foster care placements and the under utilization of services in the child welfare system by Asian and Latinos poses a concern for the social work profession. Social workers are expected to assess clients with who they come into contact based on the worker’s professional judgment. According to Albers et al., (1993), Social workers are poorly trained in knowledge and skills necessary for working with children and families of color. These social workers have possibly never been tested for the level of cultural competency they possess. There has been minimal pressure to measure social workers' level of culture competency. Instead, research has focused on the role of race, ethnicity, and culture of children and families in the child welfare system.
Measuring Cultural Competency

Very little has been written about instruments that measure social workers' level of culture competency. Boyle and Springer (2001) examined the following culture competency measuring instruments: Cross-Cultural Competency Inventory-Revised (CCCI-R), Multicultural Awareness-Knowledge-and Skills Survey (MAKSS), Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale-Form B (MCAS-B), and Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI). They found that these instruments are based on 3 dimensions: attitude/awareness, knowledge, and skills. The MCI adds a 4th dimension: multicultural counseling relationship (Boyle & Springer, 2001).

The CCCI-R, MAKSS, MCAS-B, and MCI have a few reasons, which hinder the utilization of these cultural competency measuring instruments. The first reason is that some of the available cultural competency measuring instruments are too long and cumbersome. For example, the MAKSS is a 60-question questionnaire. A second reason is that the CCCI-R, MAKSS, MCAS-B, and MCI do not focus on social workers. These instruments are geared for direct service practitioners (i.e., counselors, therapist, medical doctors, and psychiatrist). The third reason is the effectiveness of the available instruments.
Interestingly, some researchers have questioned the effectiveness of the available instruments due to social desirability. Boyle and Springer (2001) asserted that all instruments rely on self-report, which raised the issue of social desirability.

The most important reason that hinders the operation of available culture competency measuring instruments is that they fail to measure how they work with people of color. These culture competency measuring instruments are not “aimed at enhancing knowledge of predictability or services outcomes in relation to race/ethnicity” (Lu et al., 2004, p. 459). Furthermore, the culture competency measuring instruments were developed from white, middle-socioeconomic class, and highly educated populations (Boyle & Springer, 2001). These findings indicated that such instruments failed to measure cultural competency as is applicable to children and families of color.

Lu et al. (2004) asserts that current modalities have success with white children because such modalities have emerged from the dominant culture. With such evidence, then there is a need for culture competency measuring instruments to measure service delivery outcomes to children and families of color. When tests are
standardized for a client’s culture, results will be appropriate to the cultural context (Halonen & Santrock, 1996).

Social Worker as Frontline Agents of Change

Social workers are the frontline of the child welfare system. They are the agents of change. Regardless of lack of policies, practice, education, training, and/or culture competency measuring instruments, it is the duty of practicing social workers to learn cultural competency. Dewees (2001) emphasizes that it is the social worker’s responsibility to learn other cultures. Not just basic aspects of other cultures, but rather in-depth knowledge by learning from journals and clients. This should be the stance at all learning levels of culturally competent social workers when working with children and families of color.

Lo and Fung (2003) argued that service providers must have the knowledge and skills necessary to work effectively across cultures. They suggest that social workers must be well versed in one specific cultural group. Thus, social workers must assist clients to gain an understanding of the context of their everyday life, which includes, but is not limited to, the historical,
political, economic, and social realities of specific ethnic or cultural groups. For example, understanding the history of Native Americans is important (Coleman et al., 2001). For Native Americans, history, political, economic, social realities, settlements, deculturation, and the child welfare systems have affected their every way of life. Keeping the aforesaid in mind, social workers must gain knowledge and skills to provide effective and culturally competent services for Native Americans.

Rounds et al. (1994) stressed the importance of self-assessment by social workers and agency orientation and training for better social work skills when working with the client’s culture. Such efforts left it up to the social workers to self-assess. Based on the evidence provided in Chapter One, social workers are not as effective when working with children and families of color. Applying cultural variations are essential in the field of social work; otherwise, social workers are only doing a disservice to children and families by negating their uniqueness.

Summary

With the long history of discrimination of children and families of color within the child welfare system,
CSWE and the California Department of Social Services have enacted policies, education, and training to help ameliorate discrimination. However, it is social workers who are at the frontline of the child welfare system, the agents of change, who can equate the disparity of services received by children and families of color compare to whites. Regardless of lack of policies, education, training, and instruments, it is the duty of a practicing social worker to learn cultural competency.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

Chapter Three documents the steps used in carrying out this research project. This research was quantitative in nature. The 21-item California Brief Multicultural Competence Scale (CBMCS) questionnaires were distributed to 300 randomly chosen social workers in a Southern California County. The 21-item CBMCS questionnaires were collected and inputted into an analysis program.

Study Design

The purpose of the study was to measure social workers' knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and ability to serve populations of color by using the CBMCS, a 21-item questionnaire. Along with the 21-item questionnaire, there was a demographic section. The survey was recently published in the journal of Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 2004, 37, 3. One of the creators, Dr. Der-Karabetian, gave written permission to modify the CBMCS for social workers by changing the term "mental health" to "social welfare."

The original CBMCS was constructed from five self-report cultural competency instruments: The CCCI-R,
MAKSS, MCAS-B, and MCI (Gamst, Dana, Der-Karabetian, Aragon, Arellano, Morrow, & Martenson, 2004). The CCCI-R, MAKSS, MCAS-B, and MCI are self-reporting and are known for biases towards social desirability.

The 21-item questionnaire was constructed exclusively to measure self-reported cultural competency of human service practitioners. Because of its short length, construction from a theoretical foundation, and ability to be applied to numerous practitioners from different racial, ethnic, cultural backgrounds, educational levels, ages, and experience, it is a useful measurement tool that has a promising future unlike the other scales, which are cumbersome (Gamst et al., 2004).

This study measured the cultural competency of social workers. This exploratory study hypothesized: 1. Social workers are more culturally competent when younger in age. 2. African American social workers are more culturally competent than white social workers. 3. Female social workers are more culturally competent than male social workers. 4. Social workers with a Master’s of Social Work are more culturally competent than social workers with other attained education.
Sampling

The sample consisted of 300 randomly selected social workers working from a child welfare agency in a southern California County. The participants were from various age groups, ethnic backgrounds, educational levels, held different positions, had different years of experience in the field of social work, spoke different languages, and had varying citizenship status. The criterion for being included in the sample was that they worked for the child welfare agency, and that they held a position titled Social Worker II or above, with "Other" being used for Social Service Aides, Concurrent Planning Workers, or Relative Approval Unit Workers, according to the County's position guidelines.

Demographics of the Sample

The social workers ranged in age from 25 to 65 and over. Their median age fell within the mid-forties and early-fifties. The gender reported in this research study consisted of 82.9% females (n = 68) and 17.1% were males (n = 14). The ethnicity reported in the sample consisted of 51.25% White/Caucasian, not Latino (n = 42), 18.3% African/Black/Latino (n = 15), 14.6% Hispanic/Latino (n = 12), and were 2.4% Mixed Race (n = 2). The
distribution for education demonstrated that 48.8% of the respondents in the sample had a Master’s of Social Work (n = 40), 9.8% had a Master’s in MFT (n = 8), 9.8% had a Master’s in other fields (n = 8), and 19.5% had a Bachelor’s (n = 16). In terms of positions, 61% of social workers in this study held a position of Social Service Practitioner (n = 50), 18.3% were Supervising Social Service Practitioner (n = 15), 15.9% were Social Worker II’s (n = 13), and 3.7% were Social Service Aides, Concurrent Planning Workers, or Relative Approval Unit Worker (n = 3) (see Table 1).

The social workers in this research study had a mean average of 8.9 years of experience working in the child welfare system since highest degree. A total of 85.4% of social workers had attended course work related to multicultural issues during their educational attainment (n = 70). The majority of social workers in the study (89.0%) attended workshops or trainings seminars on multicultural issues. Only 26.8% of social workers in the sample spoke another language other than English (n = 22). The majority of social workers were born in the United States (86.6%, n = 71), with only 13.4% born outside of the United States (n = 11).
Table 1. Demographics

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<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>35-44</td>
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<td>45-54</td>
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<td>55 and Over</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>Male</td>
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<td>17.1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian, not Latino</td>
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<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
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<td>African/Black/Latino</td>
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<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Race</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t Know/Not Reported</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
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<td>High School</td>
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<td>Bachelor’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctorate-Clinical/Counseling</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>15.9</td>
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<td>SSSP</td>
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<td>18.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>CWSM</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of experience in field of social welfare since highest degree</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ranged from 1 to 27 years of experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special course work on multicultural issues</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended special workshops or training seminars on multicultural issues</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak language other than English</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you born in the United States</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procedures

A packet, which included survey instructions, informed consent (Appendix B), CBMCS background information (Appendix D), the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire (Appendix A), and a debriefing statement (Appendix C) were stapled together. From a list of over 500 social workers, 300 survey packets were mailed out to every two social worker. The 21-item CBMCS questionnaire packet included a self-addressed stamped envelope for return purposes. From February 2005 to March 2005, the packets were collected and inputted into a database. Eighty-two packets were returned to the researcher. The response rate was 27.3 percent.

Data Collection and Instruments

The data collected was in a questionnaire format for social workers. The CBMCS used four Point Likert-type responses. According to Gamst et al. (2004), the responses ranged from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), and Strongly Agree (4). The answers to the questions are combined into a Four-Factor model (see Table 2).
Table 2. Four-Factor Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Measured By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Questions 7, 12, 15, 17, and 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Questions 1, 8, 10, 11, 14, and 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>Questions 2, 4, and 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ethnic Ability</td>
<td>Questions 3, 5, 6, 13, 18, 20, and 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were ten general demographic questions at the beginning, which were answered before the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. Social workers who completed the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire were given permission by their supervisors to complete the survey during work hours. It was estimated that 10-20 minutes was needed to complete the survey on average.

The data was collected and analyzed using SPSS 11.5 for Window.

Protection of Human Subjects

The confidentiality and anonymity of the participant was the foremost concern of the researcher. All efforts were made to assure confidentiality. In order to assure complete confidentiality to those who participated in this research study, the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire did not have a section for identification. The 21-item CBMCS questionnaire was identified by a numbering system and no
independent variables, age, gender, ethnicity, and education gathered from the demographics section.

Because of the change in the term "mental health" to "social welfare" modification of the CBMCS, the researcher tested for internal consistency (Chronbach's alpha). The CBMCS' reliability tested at .8679. Also tested, were the Chronbach's alphas for the four factors model for reliability. Factor one—Knowledge had an alpha of .8065, Factor two—Awareness had an alpha of .6626, Factor three—Sensitivity had an alpha of .5678, and Factor four—Non-Ethnic Ability had an alpha of .8441. According to Gamst et al. (2004), the external validity, internal validity, and reliability of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire have been tested.

Summary

The modified 21-item CBMCS questionnaire was disseminated among 300 randomly selected social workers in a southern California county. Eighty-two surveys were returned, a response rate of 27.3 %, and were entered into a dataset utilizing SPSS 11.5 for Windows. The study design measured social workers' knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and ability to be culturally competent when working with children and families of color by using the
21-item CBMCS questionnaire, which was the dependent variable. The dependent variable was compared to independent variables, age, ethnicity, gender, and education.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

Included in this chapter is a presentation of this research's findings. Descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, T-Values, degrees of freedom, and significance at the 2-tail) were computed for all variables in the hypotheses. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

Presentation of the Findings

Results from the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire found significant findings in two hypotheses. The relationship between ethnicity and dependent variables, knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and ability was tested and was found to be significant for three of the four factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. The relationship between education and dependent variables, knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and ability was tested and was found to be significant for one of the four factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. There were two independent and dependent variables that did not have significant relationships. However, there were significant trends in these relationships. These were the age and gender
hypotheses. All four hypotheses in this research study are discussed below.

Relationship between Cultural Competency and Age

Even though there was no significant relationship between age and the four factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire, there was a significant trend based on the research findings. The hypothesis posited that younger social workers would be more culturally competent than older social workers. There were no significant relationship findings in this hypothesis. But, younger social workers fared better in the survey than older social workers in the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. However, that was not the case for the other factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire (see Table 3).

Table 3. Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>T Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13.08</td>
<td>.545</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18.55</td>
<td>-1.75</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0.084</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>-.347</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0.730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18.59</td>
<td>-.547</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0.586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Knowledge Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and age, but it was not significant. The findings were not enough to confirm a significant relationship. However, the relationship found was a trend within the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. The trend in the knowledge factor was that younger social workers (25-44 years old) had a higher computed mean of 13.08 compared to older social workers (45 and over in age) who had a lower computed mean of 12.76.

Awareness Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and age. The relationship found between age and awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire was the reverse of the relationship anticipated by the hypothesis. Older social workers were more aware of cultural competency issues than younger social workers. The means for awareness were 19.39 for older social workers and 18.55 for younger social workers.

Sensitivity Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the sensitivity and age, but it was not significant. In the
sensitivity factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire, the relationship found between age and sensitivity was also the reverse of the relationship anticipated by the hypothesis. The sensitivity means were 10.09 to 10.00 for older to younger social workers, respectively.

**Ability Factor**

There was a trend in the relationship between the ability factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and age, but it was not significant. Similarly, the relationship found between age and ability was the reverse of the relationship anticipated by the hypothesis. The mean for ability was 19.00 for older social workers. The mean for younger social workers was 18.59.

**Relationship between Cultural Competency and Ethnicity**

As for the second hypothesis, there were significant relationships found between cultural competency and ethnicity. The significant relationships were in the knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. The ability factor did not generate a significant relationship. However, there was a trend across the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire in which African American social workers had higher computed means.
in all factors, i.e., knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and ability, compared to white social workers (see Table 4).

Table 4. Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>T Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>-2.16</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.035</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African/Black/Latino</td>
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<td>14.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>White/Caucasian, not Latino</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18.76</td>
<td>-1.99</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African/Black/Latino</td>
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<td>20.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>White/Caucasian, not Latino</td>
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<td>9.76</td>
<td>-3.77</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African/Black/Latino</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
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<td>18.69</td>
<td>-1.01</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African/Black/Latino</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge Factor

There was a significant relationship between the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and ethnicity. The relationship found between knowledge and ethnicity confirmed the hypothesis. For the knowledge factor, the T-test results indicated that there was a significant relationship between culture competency and the ethnicity of social workers. The relationship found between knowledge and ethnicity confirmed the hypothesis. These findings indicated that there was a relationship.
between African American social workers’ culture competency and that of white social workers at the p < 0.05 level (t = -2.16, df = 55, p = .035). A trend in the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire revealed that African American social workers had a higher computed mean of 14.20; whereas, white social workers had a lower computed mean of 12.59.

**Awareness Factor**

There was a significant relationship between the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and ethnicity. The relationship found between awareness and ethnicity confirmed the hypothesis. For the awareness factor, the T-test results indicated that there was a significant relationship between culture competency and the ethnicity of social workers at the p < 0.05 level (t = -1.99, df = 54, p = .051). This study found a significant relationship between African American social workers and white social workers in awareness of cultural competency issues. The awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire also revealed a trend in which African American social workers had a higher computed mean at 20.06 and white social workers had a lower computed mean at 18.76.
Sensitivity Factor

There was a significant relationship between the sensitivity factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and ethnicity. The relationship found between sensitivity and ethnicity confirmed the hypothesis. The sensitivity factor’s T-test’s results indicated that there was a significant relationship between culture competency and the ethnicity of social workers at the $p < 0.01$ level ($t = -3.77$, df = 55, $p = .000$). Hence, African American social workers tend to be more sensitive to issues of culture than white social workers. A trend for the means in the sensitivity factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire was also evident. African American social workers had a higher computed mean of 11.00 as compared to white social workers’ lowered computed mean of 9.76.

Ability Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and education, but it was not significant. There was a trend in the relationship between ability and the ethnicity of social workers. The trend in the ability factor was a higher mean for African American social workers compared to white social workers: 19.80 to 18.69, correspondingly.
Relationship between Cultural Competency and Gender

The third hypothesis, proposed that female social workers would be more culturally competent than male social workers. The analysis, however, revealed no significant relationship between these variables. In fact, the trend found between culture competency and gender was completely the reverse of the relationship anticipated by the hypothesis. The trend was in all factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. Male social workers were more culturally competent than female social workers in all factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire (see Table 5).

Table 5. Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>T Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>.348</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.729</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>18.89</td>
<td>.721</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>0.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.35</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>18.64</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.162</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.00</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and
gender, but it was not significant. It was proposed that female social workers would be more culturally competent than male social workers. The relationship found between gender and knowledge was completely opposite of what was anticipated by the hypothesis. The trend was male social workers were more culturally competent than female social workers in the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. The trend showed males social workers to have a mean of 13.14 compared to female social workers who had a mean of 12.88.

**Awareness Factor**

There was a trend in the relationship between the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and gender, but it was not significant. The trend in the awareness factor was the reverse of the relationship anticipated. The trend was male social workers were more culturally competent than female social workers in the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. The trend showed males social workers to have a mean of 19.35 compared to female social workers who had a mean of 18.89.

**Sensitivity Factor**

There was a trend in the relationship between the sensitivity factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and gender, but it was not significant. The trend in the
sensitivity factor was the reverse of the relationship anticipated. The trend was male social workers were more culturally competent than female social workers in the sensitivity factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. The trend showed males social workers to have a mean of 10.43 compared to female social workers who had a mean of 9.95.

**Ability Factor**

There was a trend in the relationship between the ability factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and gender, but it was not significant. The trend in the ability factor was the reverse of the relationship anticipated. The trend was male social workers were more culturally competent than female social workers in the ability factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. The trend showed males social workers to have a mean of 20.00 compared to female social workers who had a mean of 18.64.

**Relationship between Cultural Competency and Education**

The last analysis revealed a significant relationship between cultural competency and education. Here the researcher proposed that social workers with a Master’s of Social Work would be more culturally competent than social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor’s, or other Master’s degrees. In the awareness
factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire, there was a significant relationship found. Although, there were no significant relationships in the other factors, there was a trend in the knowledge, awareness, and ability factors (see Table 6).

Table 6. Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>T Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School to other Masters</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12.78</td>
<td>-.029</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School to other Masters</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18.25</td>
<td>-2.25</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School to other Masters</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.988</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
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<td>9.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School to other Masters</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19.35</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.113</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18.25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and education, but it was not significant. The trend in the knowledge factor: social workers with Master's of Social Work would be more culturally competent than social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor's, or other Master's degrees. Social workers with
Master's of Social Work had a mean of 12.80 compared to social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor's, or other Master's degrees had a mean of 12.78.

**Awareness Factors**

There was a significant relationship between the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and education. The relationship found between awareness and education confirmed the hypothesis. The awareness factor's T-test indicated that there was a relationship between culture competency and education of social workers at the p < 0.05 level (t = -2.25, df = 74, p = .027). A trend also revealed that social workers with Master's of Social Work would be more culturally competent than social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor's, or other Master's degrees. Social workers with Master's of Social Work had a higher mean of 19.27 compared to social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor's, or other Master's degrees had a lower computed mean of 18.25.

**Sensitivity Factor**

There was a no trend in the relationship between the sensitivity factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and education, and it was not significant. It was proposed that social workers with a Master's of Social Work would
be more culturally competent than social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor’s, or other Master’s degrees. However, social workers with a Master’s of Social Work had a similar mean of 9.95 to social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor’s, or other Master’s degrees.

**Ability Factor**

The relationship found between the ability factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and education was completely opposite of what was anticipated by the hypothesis. It was proposed that social workers with Master’s of Social Work would be more culturally competent than social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor’s, or other Master’s degrees. However, social workers with Master’s of Social Work had a lower mean of 18.25 compared to social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor’s, or other Master’s degrees had a higher mean of 19.35.

**Summary**

Chapter Four presented the extracted results from the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. The social workers’ results were computed and generated significant relationships in two hypotheses. The researcher found significant
relationships between the dependent variable, the four factors 21-item CBMCS questionnaire, and the independent variables, age, gender, ethnicity, and education. The hypothesis, which predicted that African American social workers were more culturally competent than white social workers, had the significant relationship in the knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity factors. However, the ability factor was not significant, but a trend was evident. There was a trend between the relationship on cultural competency and most of the factors in the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. However, the gender hypothesis had a trend completely opposite of what the research predicted.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

Introduction
Included in Chapter Five is a presentation of the conclusions reached as a result of the computed data. The limitations and recommendations of the research are described. Finally, Chapter Five concludes with a brief summary of the research study.

Discussion
Results from the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire found significant findings and trends in some hypotheses. Two hypotheses were not supported. These were the age and gender hypotheses. The hypothesis comparing African American social workers to white social workers was supported in three of the four factors in the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. The gender hypothesis was supported in one significant finding in one factor of the four factors in the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. All four hypotheses in this research study are discussed below. The four factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire are discussed under their respective subheadings.
Relationship between Cultural Competency and Age

The first hypothesis stated that younger social workers were more culturally competent than older social workers. This researcher speculated that younger social workers would be more culturally competent because of the emphasis on culture competence in recent years at educational institutions and training. The results of the four factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire are discussed under their respective heading and subheading.

Knowledge Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and age, but it was not significant. This is in congruence with what was anticipated by the hypothesis. The results indicated that there was a trend. The trend was younger social workers were a bit more knowledgeable of cultural competency issues; but, not enough to confirm a significant finding. This implies that recent emphasis on the educational institutions or training has provided knowledge of issues on cultural competency for younger social workers.
Awareness Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and age, but it was not significant. However, the relationship found between age and the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire was the reverse of the relationship anticipated by the hypothesis. Older social workers were more aware of cultural competency issues than younger social workers. Intuitively, this implies that experience has provided older social workers with more awareness of issues on cultural competency than younger social workers.

Sensitivity Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the sensitivity and age, but it was not significant. In the sensitivity factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire, the relationship found between age and sensitivity was also the reverse of the relationship anticipated by the hypothesis. Older social workers tended to be more sensitive to cultural competency issues. This could be the result of experience in the field of social welfare.

Ability Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the ability factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and age, but it was not significant. Similarly, the relationship
found between age and ability was the reverse of the relationship anticipated by the hypothesis.

In this study, the results indicated that older social worker tended to be more aware, sensitive, and able to address cultural competency issues than younger social workers. Based on the results, older social workers score higher in three of the four factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. Intuitively, this means that through experience older social workers are more aware, sensible, and able to manage cultural competency issues than their counterpart in this study, younger social workers.

**Relationship between Cultural Competency and Ethnicity**

The second hypothesis stated that African American Social workers would be more culturally competent than white social workers. It was theorized that African American social workers would be more culturally competent than white social workers. This proposal was based on the experience of racism and discrimination faced by African American at the hands of the dominant white society. Significant relationships were found in this hypothesis. Ironically, the ability factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire did not generate a significant relationship
between ethnicity. There was a trend in all four factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire.

Knowledge Factor

There was a significant relationship between the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and ethnicity. The relationship found between knowledge and ethnicity confirmed the hypothesis. For the knowledge factor, the T-test results indicated that there was a significant relationship between culture competency and the ethnicity of social workers as it was anticipated by the hypothesis. These findings indicated that there was a relationship between African American social workers' culture competency and that of white social workers. African American social workers were more knowledgeable in issues on culture in this study.

Awareness Factor

There was a significant relationship between the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and ethnicity. The relationship found between awareness and ethnicity confirmed the hypothesis. For the awareness factor, the T-test results indicated that there was a significant relationship between culture competency and the ethnicity of social workers as it was anticipated by the hypothesis. African American social workers were more
aware of issues on cultural competency. Direct experience in racism and discrimination brings forth awareness.

**Sensitivity Factor**

There was a significant relationship between the sensitivity factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and ethnicity. The relationship found between sensitivity and ethnicity confirmed the hypothesis. The significant relationship between culture and ethnicity was found in the sensitivity factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. African American social workers were more sensitive to issues on culture as it was anticipated by the hypothesis.

**Ability Factor**

The ability factor did not generate a significant relationship between culture competency and ethnicity. Overall, a trend is that African American social workers were more knowledgeable, aware, sensitive, and able than white social workers of cultural competency issues in this study. Ironically, being more knowledgeable, aware, and sensitive does not lead to ability. Hence, African American social workers were not any better in the ability factor. This is interesting because implicitly that is why discrimination is in existence.
It can be generalized that the direct experience from racism and discrimination provides a greater experience on cultural competency. This may be the experience of being a minority. Past research has indicated that social worker students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to be more sensitive to populations that are poor and disadvantaged (Limb, 2001). For example, African American social workers have a greater experience in dealing with racism and discrimination because they live with discrimination on a daily basis. A conclusion that can be drawn from these findings is that a need for more ethnic social workers must be readily available to meet the demands of the changing demographics in the county of this study, especially for the increasing population of color.

Relationship between Culture Competency and Gender

The third hypothesis hypothesized that female social workers would be more culturally competent than male social workers. This was speculated as females tend to be discriminated by the dominant male society. However, the data revealed a trend that was not anticipated by the hypothesis. Female social workers tended to score means lower than their counterpart. If fact, a trend in this hypothesis was completely opposite of what was proposed by
the researcher: male social workers were more culturally competent than female social workers in all four factors of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire.

Knowledge Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and gender, but it was not significant. The relationship found between gender and knowledge was completely opposite of what was anticipated by the hypothesis. The trend was male social workers were more culturally competent than female social workers. Male social workers are more knowledgeable on issues on culture competency.

Awareness Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and gender, but it was not significant. The trend in the awareness factor was the reverse of the relationship anticipated. The trend was male social workers were more culturally competent than female social workers in the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. This implies that male social workers are more aware of issues on culture competency.
Sensitivity Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the sensitivity factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and gender, but it was not significant. The trend in the sensitivity factor was the reverse of the relationship anticipated. The trend was male social workers are more sensitive on issues on culture competency than female social workers.

Ability Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the ability factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and gender, but it was not significant. The trend in the ability factor was the reverse of the relationship anticipated. The trend was male social workers were more culturally competent than female social workers in the ability factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire.

It was speculated that female social workers would be more culturally competent than male social workers. But, the results from this study revealed the complete opposite of what was posited. The trend in this study found male social workers to be more knowledgeable, aware, sensitive, and able to deal with issues of cultural competency than female social workers. The means for knowledge, awareness,
sensitivity, and ability were all higher for male social workers compared to female social workers.

Intuitively, this suggests that more male social worker must be readily available in human service agencies. However, the opposite is the case in the child welfare agency studied, as female social workers represent 82.9 percent of the sample of this study.

Relationship between Culture Competency and Education

The last hypothesis revealed a significant finding in the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. Here the researcher proposed that social workers with Master’s of Social Work would be more culturally competent than social workers with high school, Bachelor’s, or other Master’s degrees. A significant trend was evident in knowledge, awareness, and ability.

Knowledge Factor

There was a trend in the relationship between the knowledge factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and education, but it was not significant. The trend in the knowledge factor placed social workers with Master’s of Social Work higher on cultural competency issues than social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor’s, or other Master’s degrees.
Awareness Factors

There was a significant relationship between the awareness factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and education. The relationship found between awareness and education confirmed the hypothesis. The awareness factor's T-test indicated that there was a relationship between culture competency and education of social workers. The inference in this finding is that social workers with Master’s of Social Work were more aware of issues related to cultural competency than social workers with other education.

Sensitivity Factor

There was a no trend in the relationship between the sensitivity factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and education, and it was not significant. It was proposed that social workers with Master’s of Social Work would be more culturally competent than social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor’s, or other Master’s degrees. However, the sample scored an even mean in the sensitive factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. It is possible that working and training in the child welfare agency influences everyone involved regardless of the education social workers possess.
Ability Factor

The relationship found between the ability factor of the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire and education was completely opposite of what was anticipated by the hypothesis. Social workers with Master’s of Social Work scored lower means than social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor’s, or other Master’s degrees. This implies that social workers who possessed an education of high school, Bachelor’s, or other Master’s degrees are more culturally competent than social workers with Master’s of Social Work in regards to ability.

It was hypothesized that social workers with Master’s of Social Work would be more culturally competent than social workers with high school, Bachelor’s, or other Master’s degrees. Here the logic was that the more education equals more knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and ability. The trend results were indicative that social workers working in the child welfare agency are more knowledgeable, aware, sensitive, and able to apply their skills in the field of child welfare. This is in accordance with the steps taken by CSWE in the year 1970 to integrate multicultural content into social work schools’ curricula (Lum, 2000). It is an effort that continues to appeal to the social work profession. The
importance of culture competency is continuously stressed in the social work profession.

The findings in this research project are important because culturally competent social workers make up the frontlines of the child welfare agency. Although the literature suggested that there was a lack of policies, culturally competent social workers, and/or instrumentations for measuring culture competency, the findings in this study suggested that the respondents in this sample are culturally competent. Regardless of the lack of policies, which may alleviate the effects racism and discrimination in the child welfare system, culturally competent social workers in this study are providing culturally competent services to the population they serve.

Limitations

The following limitations apply to the project: one limitation was that it is based on a small sample from a Southern California County. While this county is comparable to the state’s demographics, it is highly unlikely to be able to generalize from these research findings because of geographical reasons. For example, compared to Los Angeles County, the proximity of its
population in this county are distantly apart. Social workers in the county studied are centralized in different regions. These regions have different demographics due to their geographical location.

Another limitation was the study was based on a self-reported questionnaire. This self-reported questionnaire was similar to other existing measurement instruments. Gamst et al. (2004) efforts of statistical control of social desirability in the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire were successful to a certain degree; however, the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire remains vulnerable to social desirability because it is a self-report survey.

The last limitation was that the findings are based on service providers and not clients. The modified 21-item CBMCS questionnaire measured what social workers reported. But no instrument is available that measures if clients' service outcomes are met accordingly to their race, ethnicity, or culture.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

Future recommendations for social work practice should explore creating policies, which would allow for measuring the culture competence of social workers.
utilizing the 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. Most instruments, which measure culture competency, are geared towards direct service practitioners, which exclude social workers without a LCSW. These practitioners are therapist, counselors, medical doctors, and psychiatrists. The instruments available in the field of human services are the CCCI-R, MAKSS, MCAS-B, and MCI. Regardless, these instruments do not focus on social welfare issues, are too long, and are cumbersome. For example, the MAKSS is a 60-question questionnaire.

A recommendation for the social work practice is for future research to explore outcomes of measuring the culture competence of social workers who utilized the modified 21-item CBMCS questionnaire. More research needs to be available pertaining to how culturally competent social workers are in the child welfare system. There has been a long history of racism and discrimination for children and families of color within the child welfare system (Ards et al., 2003; Curtis & Denby, 2004; Donald et al., 2003). The focus of research should not be whether there is racism and discrimination. Rather, concentration should be emphasized on the social workers who are in the frontlines working with children and families of color. An impetus for research must be generated to measure how
culturally competent social workers are to be able
generalize their findings.

Conclusions

This research study made an attempt to steer away
from studying the effects of racism and discrimination by
focusing on the social workers who are at the frontlines
of the child welfare system. The study measured how
culturally competent social workers were compared to their
demographics. These research findings indicated that
ethnicity and education had a significant relationship
among social workers. But, the significant relationship
existed within certain factors of the 21-item CBMCS
questionnaire. Hence, social workers' cultural competence
varies according to knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and
ability. The study found that the Southern California
County had culturally competent social workers.
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
California Brief Multicultural Competence Scale (CBMCS): Social work Modification Model

Below is a list of statements dealing with multicultural issues within a social welfare context. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement by circling the appropriate number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am aware that being born a minority in this society brings with it certain challenges that White people do not have to face.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am aware of how my own values might affect my client.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have an excellent ability to assess, accurately, the social welfare needs of persons with disabilities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am aware of institutional barriers that affect the client.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I have an excellent ability to assess, accurately, the social welfare needs of lesbians.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I have an excellent ability to assess, accurately, the social welfare needs of older adults.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I have an excellent ability to identify the strengths and weaknesses of psychological tests in terms of their use with persons from different cultural, racial and/or ethnic backgrounds.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am aware that counselors frequently impose their own cultural values upon minority clients.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My communication skills are appropriate for my clients.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am aware that being born a White person in this society carries with it certain advantages.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I am aware of how my cultural background and experiences have influenced my attitudes about psychological processes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I have an excellent ability to critique multicultural research.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I have an excellent ability to assess, accurately, the social welfare needs of men.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I am aware of institutional barriers that may inhibit minorities from using social welfare services.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I can discuss, within a group, the differences among ethnic groups (e.g., low socioeconomic status (SES), Puerto Rican client vs. high SES Puerto Rican client).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I can identify my reactions that are based on stereotypical beliefs about different ethnic groups.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I can discuss research regarding social welfare issues and culturally different populations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I have an excellent ability to assess, accurately, the social welfare needs of gay men.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I am knowledgeable of acculturation models for various ethnic minority groups.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I have an excellent ability to assess, accurately, the social welfare needs of women.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I have an excellent ability to assess, accurately, the social welfare needs of persons who come from very poor socioeconomic backgrounds.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT
INFORMED CONSENT

You have been chosen to participate in the study through a random selection process. The study is designed to explore social workers’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes/awareness regarding cultural competency in the Department of Children’s Services (DCS). José-Luis Lujano, a graduate student in social work at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), is conducting this study under the supervision of Dr. Teresa Morris, Faculty Supervisor, CSUSB. The Department of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board of CSUSB has approved the study.

The information you provide will be anonymous. Any code number or identifying information will be destroyed when data collection is completed. The rights and welfare of all the participants will be protected in this study. This information will not be used for service performance appraisal or any other personnel decisions. There are no perceived risks involved for participating in this study. This study will add to the body of knowledge pertaining to cultural competency and identify training needs.

It will take 8-10 minutes to complete the survey. There are two pages in the survey, one front and one back. The completed forms will be maintained at CSUSB Department of Social Work until the information is entered into a database. Only the researcher, support staff, and research supervisor will see your questionnaire.

If you chose to participate in the study, you have the right to refuse to answer any questions. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Teresa Morris at (909) 880-5501. The results will be available after June 2005 at CSUSB’s Pfau library.

By placing a check mark in the line below, I acknowledge that I have been informed and understand the reason for completing the CBMCS. Also, I agree to the anonymous use of my responses for research purposes.

Mark: __________ Date: ________________
APPENDIX C

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

The study you have just participated in is designed to gather information about social workers’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes/awareness regarding cultural competency in the child welfare agency. It is hoped that this study will increase current knowledge on cultural competency in child welfare agencies throughout the State of California. We hope to reveal whether there exists a need for training in cultural competency. The instrument you completed was a modified 21-item questionnaire entitled California Brief Multicultural Competence Scale (CBMCS). The CBMCS was recently developed by researchers at University of La Verne with support from the California Department of Mental Health to identify training needs in the delivery of culturally competent mental health services. The CBMCS was modified, with permission from Dr. Der-Karabetian on December 3rd, 2004, to be used with child welfare services’ social workers.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the contents of the study. It is hoped that this research study did not caused any distress. However, if you seek more information pertaining to cultural issues, feel free to contact:

Cross Cultural Center
California State University, San Bernardino
Student Union, Room 128
San Bernardino CA, 92407
(909) 880-7204

Based on the results, we also hope to unravel areas where more training is needed. The results will benefit the child welfare agency as well as clients of the agency. Furthermore, the results of this research study will add to the knowledge of cultural competency. If you have any questions or concerns about the research study, you may contact Dr. Teresa Morris, Project Advisor, (909) 880-5501. You are welcome to view the final results in the California State University, San Bernardino’s John M. Pfau Library after September 2005.
APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC
CBMCS Background Information
Social Work Modified Model
(with permission from Dr. Der-Karabetian Dec. 3rd, 2004)

1. Age: __________

2. Sex:
   ___ 2. Female
   ___ 1. Male

3. Ethnic Background: _______________________________________________________

4. Highest Degree or Diploma:
   ___ 8. M.D.
   ___ 7. Doctorate—Clinical/Counseling
   ___ 6. Doctorate—Other
   ___ 5. Master’s in Social Work
   ___ 4. Master’s in MFT
   ___ 3. Master’s—Other
   ___ 2. Bachelor’s
   ___ 1. High School

5. Years of experience in the field of social welfare since highest degree: __________

6. Did you have any special course work on multicultural issues in social welfare while in school?
   ___ 2. Yes
   ___ 1. No

7. Have you attended special workshops and/or training seminars on multicultural issues in social welfare?
   ___ 2. Yes
   ___ 1. No

8. Do you speak a language other than English well enough to provide social welfare services in that language?
   ___ 2. Yes; please specify: __________________________________________________
   ___ 1. No

9. Were you born in the United States?
   ___ 2. Yes
   ___ 1. No
REFERENCES


