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A MEASURE OF AWARENESS OF ETHNIC SENSITIVE PRACTICE AND
TRAINING AMONG CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORKERS IN LA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES AND HOW IT
CONTRIBUTES TO JOB PERFORMANCE LIMITATIONS

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
Teresita Guadalupe Lopez

June 2001


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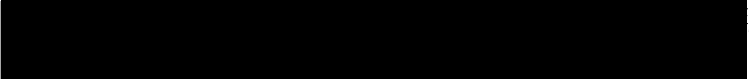
by
Teresita Guadalupe Lopez

June 2001

Approved by:


Astrid M. Reina-Patton MA, Faculty
Supervisor Social Work

6/11/01
Date


Art Lieras, Regional Administrator,
Department of Children and Family
Services, Los Angeles


Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, MSW Research
Coordinator

ABSTRACT

Protection of children who are being neglected or abused demands skilled assessment and intervention. There are many implications in delivering effective services in a child welfare system that is over represented with ethnic minority clients and their children.

Multi-cultural awareness, and cultural sensitivity provided through experience and training are essential towards equipping the front-line social worker with the skills to intervene effectively.

This study addresses the lack of effective training and awareness of Ethnic-Sensitive Practice in the social work profession that contributes tremendously to job performance limitations among children's social workers working for the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. Children's social workers completed self-administered questionnaires to measure cultural competence and the effectiveness of training provided.

The objective of this study was to improve treatment provided to multi-cultural families in the welfare system by improving training and awareness in regards to cultural sensitivity. Pearson's r correlations were used to evaluate association in the Cross-Cultural Awareness

Scale, the Occupational Barriers to Training Scale, the Organizational Barriers to Training Scale and the Self-Evaluation Scale. T-tests and one-way analyses of variance (Anova) were used to evaluate the importance of demographics and descriptive variables upon the responses to the scales included in the self-administered questionnaire.

Results from this study showed that older participants, and those who had worked for a longer length of time at DCFS, reported more organizational barriers to training than did younger participants and those who had worked less time at DCFS. Similarly, participants who reported having undergraduate degrees reported more organizational barriers than did those with Masters level degrees; Master's level participants also had higher self-evaluation scores than did the undergraduate level participants. Additionally, ethnic differences were found in cross-cultural awareness and perceived occupational barriers, with Asians reporting more barriers than African Americans and European Americans, and greater cross-cultural awareness than Latinos.

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Dr. Rosemary McCaslin for approving my project.
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My friends and family for listening to my countless complaints in regards to data entry and analyzing statistics. For the abundance of prayers that were said on my behalf throughout the past 3 years.

My co-workers and Supervisor at DCFS Pomona for supporting me, encouraging me and hanging in there when I was no where to be found.

My husband Jorge Lopez and daughter Cristina for their laughter, encouragement and countless prayers through moments of frustration and unrest. Without their prayers and understanding this project would have been an impossible task.

DEDICATION

To my dear husband Jorge, who wholeheartedly supported me in the care of our daughter and made numerous adjustments throughout the past 3 years in regards to our hectic and always changing schedules. To my daughter Cristina for her love, joyous demeanor and motivating ingenuity; to my mother, Teresa, for believing in me long before I believed in myself; to my father, Henry, for all the prayers and praise.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

As more social service agencies continue to assume global strategies and operate in international arenas, the need for effective multi-cultural training development and multi-cultural awareness among children's social workers continues to be stressed. Ayonrinde and Oyedeji (1999) state that the challenges and limitations of those working with minority ethnic populations have received wide coverage. Most current research discusses the challenges posed by ethnic and cultural differences or similarities and the need for awareness of ethnic-sensitive practice.

The challenges of providing effective and culturally sensitive services to families in the child welfare system is a critical obstacle that keeps children's social workers from meeting the needs of a culturally diverse population. The child welfare system in the United States has many ethnic minority clients and the number of minority children in the system is expected to increase (Hogan & Siu, 1989). With this increase in

minority clients, the need for effective training and awareness of ethnic-sensitive practice among social work professionals likewise increases. The overall objective of providing effective training is to improve services to ethnic-minority clients by positively influencing the cross-cultural sensitivity, attitudes, and communication skills of children's social workers.

The issue that this study seeks to address is the lack of effective training and awareness of ethnic-sensitive practice in the social work profession that contributes tremendously to job performance limitations among children's social workers working for the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Since social work practice within the DCFS in Los Angeles County involves working with children and families with expansive cultural diversities, it is essential that family dynamics, intergenerational struggles, and cultural roles be well understood by the average children's social worker.

Job performance limitations in the social work setting negatively impact staff in supervisory positions, the working environment of co-workers, and the success of the populations served. Job performance limitations are

evident in the inability of the children's social worker to provide adequate, sensitive services to ethnically diverse clients (Hogan & Siu, 1989). These limitations may lead to unmanageable case loads and chaos in the working environment of co-workers. Job performance limitations include the inability to communicate effectively, the inability to recognize the differences in cultures that require different approaches to resolving problems, and the inability to view a situation in more than one way (Chandler, 1992). Additionally, in a highly changing society, multi-cultural awareness is a crucial concept that must be utilized by children's social workers on a daily basis to counteract the negative effects of the environment on those families served by the DCFS. The implementation of ethnic-sensitive practice in the Social Work profession is essential in understanding the concerns of other cultures and empowering them with the knowledge and resources to meet their own needs. To provide Children's Social Workers with the skills that promote the principle of respect for human diversity, effective training programs must be developed and implemented on a regular

basis throughout the curriculum of the Social Work profession.

According to Rouillier and Goldstein (1991), over the last several years, organizational analysis has been reconceptualized from providing information about where and when training was needed, to an examination of systemwide components that determine whether a training program can yield behavior change on the job. Training courses should support the ethical direction of the agency, and training objectives should agree with departmental goals (Carnevale, 1990). Further, Black and Mendenhall (1990) conclude that the empirical research on cross-cultural training can be effective in developing skills, facilitating cross-cultural adjustment, and enhancing job performance.

Problem Focus

Throughout the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, social workers are concerned about the lack of multi-cultural awareness that is increasingly demonstrated among fellow co-workers when dealing with diversity in the families being serviced. The lack of training for such awareness has become

increasingly evident as co-workers have attempted to deliver services to people of various cultural backgrounds for which they have little knowledge. Barriers to effectively serving the needs of culturally diverse populations, are worldviews, values, attitudes, behaviors and cultural biases (Coll, 1998). These barriers pose limitations on job performance and produce cultural destructiveness (Chandler, 1992). Effective training to assure multi-cultural awareness in the workplace is essential in helping Social Workers adapt to changing environments and to serving families in the community with respect, understanding, and appreciation of personal cultural preferences. Aside from professional development, supportive supervision and job autonomy are effective contributors towards high levels of success, and cultural competence on the job (Winefield & Barlow, 1995).

Presently within the Department of Children and Family Services, research specifically related to multi-cultural training and its effects on job performance is almost non-existent. A related study is presently being conducted by the Inter-University Consortium (IUC), in collaboration with the Department of

Children and Family Services (DCFS), on providing a, Culturally Competent Casework training program. The IUC, has conducted yearly surveys for children's social workers in LA County to express their training needs, in hopes of eliminating barriers that prevent staff from attending training seminars (Donnelly, 2000).

Recently, in acknowledging problems with cultural competence, the LA County Department of Children and Family Services has sponsored a Cultural Competence Program. This LA County Cultural Competence Program provides educational training via a Multi-Cultural Steering Committee, and is undergoing developments to organize a Conflict Resolution Team in 2001. In collaboration with the Office of Affirmative Action and California State Polytechnic University, the Department of Children and Family services (DCFS) has provided annual training titled Diversity and Unlearning Prejudice Training, and Strategic Communication Training. The Multi-Cultural Steering Committee is made up of representatives of the eight regional offices in LA County who assist in the annual Multicultural Conference that deals specifically with diversity and cultural competence. Lastly, a Conflict Resolution Team is being

developed to assist each region to offset major challenges and resolve conflict at a preventative stage, rather than in a re-active stage as attempted in the Department's past. Thus, by exploring this agency problem and establishing the viability of increasing employee awareness of ethnic-sensitive practice, future training programs developed to enhance multi-cultural awareness may also serve to emphasize principles that support the department's goals without unethical contradictions.

Based on the above areas specified, it was expected that this research project would begin to provide relevant information to develop effective training that would provide: 1) approaches to multicultural issues that respect the contents of all cultures, 2) the ability to understand the needs and views of people from different cultural backgrounds, and 3) the conviction to eliminate personal cultural biases and prejudice in the workplace and with the communities served.

This study's primary research question thus was as follows: What are the perceptions of limitations in job performance and effective training and awareness of ethnic-sensitive practice among Children's Social Workers working for the Department of Children and Family

Services? Job Performance limitations exist in the worker's inability to effectively provide early intervention services in a culturally competent manner due to the agencies that fail to value cultural diversity, and thus undermine the worker's efforts (Green's, 1982).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Meeting the needs of a culturally diverse population is a critical demand in the social work profession. The need for ethnic-sensitive services and awareness is increasingly pertinent due to the growth of ethnic minority populations in the United States (Hogan & Siu, 1989). According to Green (1982), the lack of cross-cultural knowledge among practicing social workers and the persistence of institutional forms of discrimination and insensitivity amplify the importance of the social work profession to acquire cross-cultural knowledge and capabilities.

Currently, it is presumed that the Department of Children and Family Services has done little research on the significance between job performance limitations and the lack of effective training on ethnic-sensitive practice when working with multi-cultural populations. Although the Department of Children and Family Services has not specifically focused on this particular training need, the Inter-University Consortium, has touched on this particular training topic (Donnelly, 2000). The

Inter-University Consortium (IUC), comprised of the four graduate programs in social work at California State University Long Beach (CSULB), California State University Los Angeles (CSULA), University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), and the University of Southern California (USC), offers the majority of training programs within the DCFS. Additionally, the IUC has conducted yearly surveys for children's social workers to express their training needs and to provide feedback as to what barriers prevent staff from attending training seminars. At this time the IUC is planning the next three-year cycle of training programs. In last year's survey conducted by IUC, ethnic-sensitive practice as a training topic was referred to as Culturally Competent Casework.

Most recent educational training topics provided to DCFS employees, are titled, Diversity and Unlearning Prejudice, and Strategic Communication Training, developed by the LA County Cultural Competence Program. Also organized by the Cultural Competence Program is the Multi-cultural Steering Committee made up of representatives from the eight regional offices in LA County. Another team that is presently being developed is

the Conflict Resolution Team, with a goal to assist with major challenges regarding personnel issues.

Strategically, LA county Department of Children and Family Services is looking at the next five years and working with a consultant to formulate a mission statement and proposal regarding strategic planning and diversity issues (Donnelly, 2000).

Research regarding employee competence and job performance have studied the population of child protective service workers in the county of San Bernardino, and among intake social service practitioners in child protection services in a southern California county (Parras, 1998).

The studies measuring the effectiveness of cultural awareness training, cross-cultural competence, and employee perceptions of their own cross-cultural competence, have studied the populations of social service agency employees in Orange county, child protective services workers in a central California county and school social workers' in northern/central California, LA, Orange and San Diego counties (Wintering, 1990). Present research being conducted by the Inter-University Consortium, includes a survey collected

from children's social workers in the county of Los Angeles for the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of training and the barriers preventing staff from attending such programs (Donnelly, 2000).

Research among child protective services workers in San Bernardino County identified personal and organizational influences as major contributors affecting worker performance and client outcomes. Organizational factors include inadequate training and unrealistic expectations among employees, leading to defensiveness, helplessness, and loss of self-esteem (Winefieldd & Barlow, 1995). Personal and professional self-growth is an essential component in the field of social work. In order for the social worker to grow and learn more about their profession and the work they perform, they need to regularly attend classes and training in their field (Parras, 1998). When adequate training is not readily available, worker performance and client outcomes will be gravely affected (Parras, 1998; Wintering, 1990).

Previous research shows that the need for effective multi-cultural training and multi-cultural awareness in the social work profession is essential (Parras, 1998; Wintering, 1990). In addition to background and culture,

professional training influences the individuals understanding of human behavior and expectations regarding social interactions (Rounds, Weil, & Bishop, 1994). Thus, practice methods that do not value certain behaviors in clients from some cultural groups, may be an ineffective training focus. Principles of cultural self-assessment, that is, recognizing and understanding the dynamics of difference, acquiring cultural knowledge, and adapting to diversity (Cross , Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989), guide the development of preservice and inservice training.

Ayonrinde and Oyediji (1999) describe the challenges posed by ethnic and cultural differences and similarities in the therapeutic process in the form of vignettes. According to Ayonrinde and Oyedeji (1999), the differences can be described as the specific needs of the clients that require culturally sensitive services to be provided. Examples of the specific needs include early intervention services, maternal prenatal care, prenatal nutrition, and adequate health care. Several authors have recommended services such as cross-cultural training, the hiring of more bilingual staff, information facilities

and accessible resources to meet the diverse gamut of needs (Bhui & Bhugra 1995; Littlewood & Lipsedge, 1997).

According to research measuring employee competence, training in the workplace is important to help organizations maintain productive working environments and to adapt to changing environments (Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). Social workers need knowledge of family's struggles for survival in a cluster of governmental, educational, economic, and religious institutions that profess to serve the interests of the family but in actuality often transact with the family in ways that weaken it emotionally, financially, and structurally (Munson, 1980). The goal of training is to facilitate the learning of the organization and employees so that both may continue to perform in a competitive and changing work environment (Wintering, 1999). In recognizing the goal, agencies must additionally assess how cultural beliefs are reflected in their staffing patterns and hiring practices, relationships with the communities that they serve, and in agency policies and procedures (Rounds, Weil, & Bishop, 1994).

Barriers that impede on the children's social workers ability to effectively service the needs of

culturally diverse populations, are worldviews, values, attitudes, behaviors and cultural biases (Coll, 1998). Davis and Proctor (1989) describe how differences in race and culture between clients and practitioners influence interactions.

According to Lewis and Hayes (1991) through the study of different cultures, one comes to recognize both the common and unique conditions and experiences, which all people share. Earlier research conducted by Green (1982) emphasizes that the best way to develop ethnic competency is to familiarize oneself with the literature on cultural differences and then to move beyond the agency and learn through direct observation and participation in daily routines.

Research on barriers that prevent individuals from growing in cultural competence as social work professionals emphasizes the cultural destructiveness of attitudes, policies/procedures and practice (Chandler, 1992). The cross-cultural social work model has many implications for social work practice and education by emphasizing cultural variation in client needs as well as the need for modification of traditional intervention techniques and strategies (Chau, 1990). The underlying

theories that have guided this study are those elements related to supportive supervision, job autonomy, and professional development. Thus, the literature suggests that in order to provide services in a culturally competent manner, change must occur at the affective, cognitive, and skill levels (Winefield & Barlow, 1995; Parras, 1998).

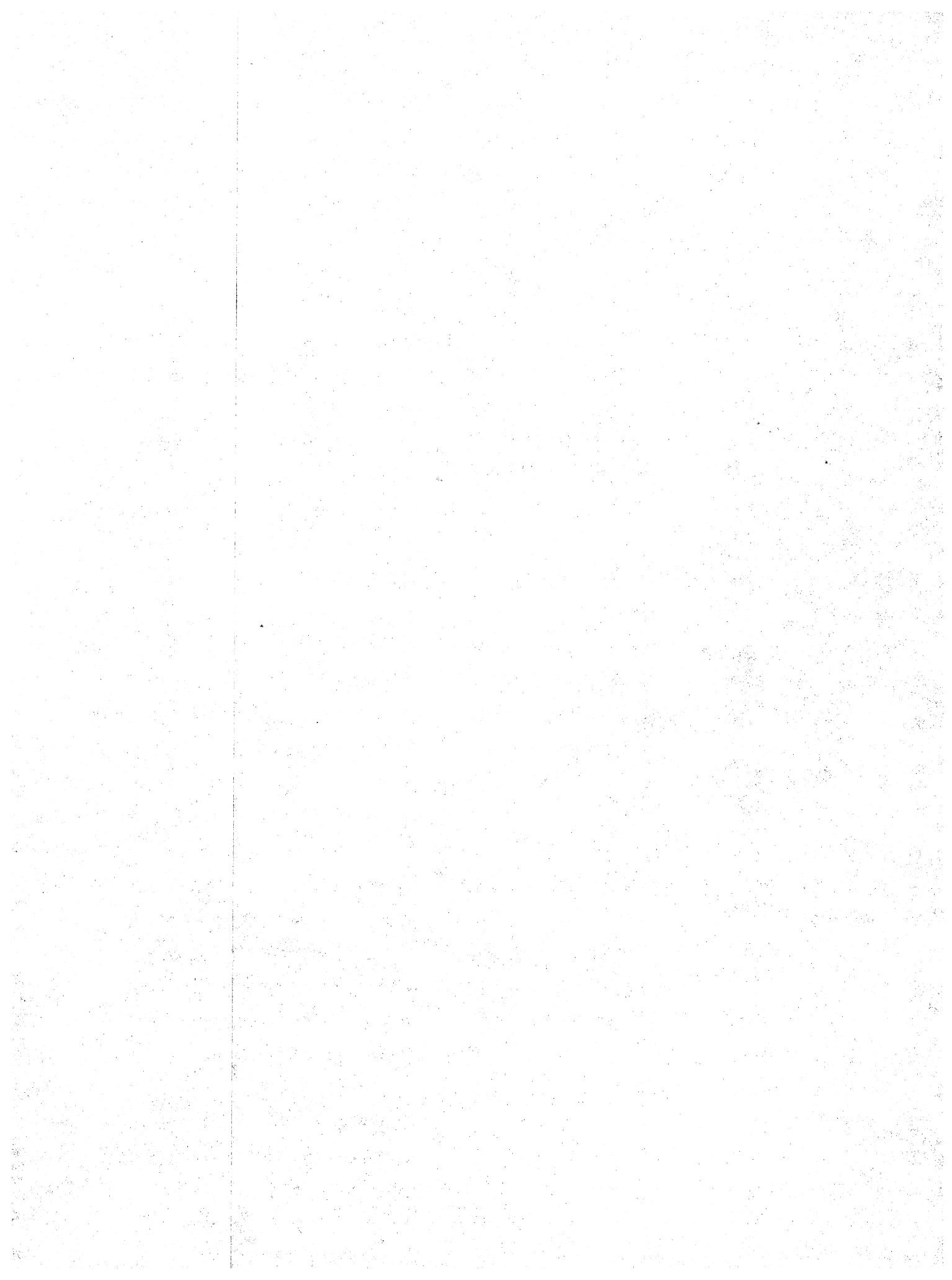
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to explore the lack of effective training and awareness of ethnic-sensitive practice in the social work profession that contributes to perceived job performance limitations among children's social workers working for the LA County Department of Children and Family Services.

The type of research design that best addressed the problem was a positivist approach, via the use of the self-administered questionnaire. This particular paradigm allowed the researcher to collect the data, using a non-interactive/objective approach, which in turn increased validity (Guba, 1990). In obtaining the data from the children's social worker's using a survey approach, the researcher was able to determine the findings without being influenced by preconceived values or biases. Limitations of the study would be the reliability of the data based on the subject's willingness to be open and truthful in their responses.



Thus the main research question posed by the present study was: What are the perceptions of limitations in job performance and awareness of ethnic-sensitive practice among children's social workers working for the Department of Children and Family Services?

Sampling

This study surveyed DCFS workers from two regional offices in the county of Los Angeles. The regional offices that were surveyed are located in Pomona and Covina. The data were collected in the form of survey questionnaires distributed in the two regional offices. The researcher distributed approximately 175 survey questionnaires. A total of 77 surveys went to the Pomona office, and 98 went to the Covina office. The researcher received a total of 99 questionnaires, resulting in a 57% response rate.

The sample from which data were obtained was selected based on employment as a children's social worker for DCFS with a bachelor or master's level of college education. Other employees working for the Department of Children and Family services with the

positions of clerical, technical assistant or eligibility worker were excluded from the sample group.

The total number in the sample of children's social worker's involved in this study amounted to only about 20% of all children's social workers in Los Angeles County. The small size of the sample was chosen due to the time constraints of the graduate research project, and the convenience in gathering the data at a location accessible to the researcher.

Ninety-nine men and women (24 men and 75 women) from various cultural backgrounds, recruited from two Los Angeles regional offices of DCFS, completed a questionnaire packet consisting of questions relating to Cross-Cultural Awareness, Occupational Barriers to training, Organizational Barriers to training and Self-Evaluation.

Included in this sample were 24 African Americans (24.2%) 6 Asian/Pacific Islanders (6.1%), 24 European Americans (24.2%), 39 Latin Americans (39.4%), 3 who classified themselves as a combination of the above ethnic groups, choosing Mixed Ethnicity (3.0%), and 3 who classified themselves as Other (3.0%) and specified their ethnicity with a derivative of the above ethnic groups.

No Native Americans were reported and therefore did not generate on the frequency scale. Ages for the participants ranged from 24 to 65 (Mean = 39.7813, SD = 11.1669). With respect to highest academic degree, 8 participants had graduated with a bachelor's degree in social work (8.1%), 31 participants had graduated with a BA (31.3%), 5 participants had graduated with a BS (5.1%), 3 participants had a license in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) (3.0%), 33 participants had a masters degree in social work (33.3%), 14 participants had masters degrees in an indicated discipline (14.1%), and 5 participants indicated their highest academic degree as (other) indicating one of the aforementioned degrees with the inclusion of one participant with a judicial degree and another with an MPA (5.1%). Finally, number of years employed by DCFS as a children's social worker ranged from 1 year to 37 years of employment (Mean = 7.7368, SD = 6.2317).

Data Collection and Instruments

The data that were collected for this study was taken from survey questionnaires distributed to the Covina and Pomona DCFS offices. Participants completed a

demographic questionnaire, a cultural awareness scale, a measure of perceived occupational barriers, a measure of perceived organizational barriers, and an employee self-evaluation.

Examples of demographic variables that were included in the study were gender, age, ethnicity, highest level of education and number of years employed by DCFS. Other demographic variables inquired about present licensure as a LCSW, MFT or Clinical Psychologist, and if the participants had any future intentions of obtaining a clinical license.

Cultural awareness was assessed using a scale adopted from a Master's thesis, conducted by Evelyn Miller (1992). The present scale consisted of 16 questions that measured perceived cultural competence. An average question from this scale was as follows: The social worker can use the same techniques with all clients to counteract their distress. All questions were measured using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5, with one representing strong disagreement and five representing strong agreement (see Appendix E).

A scale measuring perceived occupational barriers was adapted from the Inter-University Consortium training

program (Donnelly, 2000). This scale consisted of 16 questions measuring staff perceptions of on the job barriers that prevent them from attending cultural competence training. A typical question on this scale is as follows: Supervisors do not always support training (see Appendix A and B). All items were measured using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5, with one representing completely false, and five representing completely true.

A scale measuring organizational barriers to training was completed by all participants. This measure consisted of five questions (see Appendix E). An example of one of these items is as follows: The agency provides staff members with adequate training to advocate for programs, policies, and services that directly or indirectly impact the cultural groups it serves. All items were measured on a Likert-Type scale ranging from 1 to 5, with one representing strong disagreement and five representing strong agreement.

Lastly, an employee self-evaluation (Liederman, 1993) instrument was also completed by all participants. This scale consisted of eight questions measuring participants' perceptions of their on-the-job performance

(see Appendix C). An example of a question on this scale is as follows: How closely does case management and service delivery consider the cultural factors of language, race, ethnicity, customs, family structure, and community dynamics? All items were measured using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5, with one representing unsatisfactory performance and five representing outstanding performance.

Procedure

The data for this research project were gathered using a self-administered questionnaire (see Appendixes A, B, C, D and E). Collection of this data took approximately one month. The researcher distributed the surveys to the subjects during their monthly unit meetings at the Pomona, and Covina offices of Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. The researcher briefly discussed the purpose of the study and gave each children's social worker a consent form and questionnaire. The data were then collected after completion, during the time of the unit meeting. For those staff members who were unable to complete the 15-20 minute questionnaire during the time of the meeting, a

self-addressed, stamped envelope was provided. A separate self-addressed, stamped envelope was provided to the participants to return the signed consent form, both within a 2-week period. The convenience in collecting the data was made possible due to the researchers access as both an employee and MSW intern at the two locations. A reminder letter was sent to participants specifying the importance of completing the surveys during the monthly unit meeting; this was done to insure success in data collection. The researcher additionally made a follow up visit to each office. Agency permission to distribute and collect the surveys was granted, and a letter of approval is attached to this proposal (Appendix H).

Protection of Human Subjects

The protection of the welfare and the rights of all participants in regards to confidentiality and anonymity via the self-administered questionnaires were respected. All participants remained anonymous, as identifying data was not requested and discussion of the nature of this study was not permitted. Any activity contrary to those previously specified resulted in immediate removal from

the study. All participants' answers were held in strict confidence.

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) was presented with a proposal discussing the procedures that would be used in collecting and measuring the data to be studied before the research began. The study received official approval by the Regional Administrator of the Pomona and Covina DCFS offices and was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in the Fall of 2000, before initiation of the data collection.

Data Analysis

The responses to the Cross-Cultural Awareness Scale, the Occupational Barriers to Training Scale, the Organizational Barriers to Training Scale and the Self-Evaluation Scale were analyzed using Pearson's r correlations to evaluate degree of association. T-tests were used to assess for demographic differences on the Cross-Cultural Awareness Scale, the Barriers to Training Scale, the Organizational Barriers to Training Scale, and the Self-Evaluation Scale. A one-way analysis of variance

(Anova) was also utilized to compare multiple groups on the aforementioned scales.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Data Screening

To verify that no errors had been made in data entry, all demographic and research variables were examined using frequency analyses. Results from these initial analyses showed four input errors in regards to ethnicity, gender and age of participants. Following correction of these errors, the data were again examined using frequency analyses and found to be acceptable.

Correlational Analyses

Bivariate correlations were conducted to assess the relationship between years employed by DCFS and scores on the Occupational Barriers to Training, Self-Evaluation, Cross-Cultural Awareness, and Organizational Barriers Scales. Results showed that years of employment was significantly related to perceived occupational barriers to training ($r = .368$, $p < .001$), indicating that participants who reported longer length of employment also reported higher perceived occupational barrier to training scores. No other significant relationships were found.

To assess the relationship between participants ages and scores on the four previously mentioned scales, a second series of bivariate correlations were run. A significant relationship between age and perceived organizational barriers was found ($r = .32$, $p < .001$), showing that older participants reported more perceived barriers at the organizational level. No other relationships were found.

Gender Differences

To assess for gender differences on the Occupational Barriers to Training, Self-Evaluation, Cross-Cultural Awareness and Organizational Barriers Scales, a series of t-tests were conducted using gender as the independent variable and each of the four total scale scores as separate dependent variables. Results for these four t-tests were not significant showing that there were no gender differences in perceived occupational and organizational barriers, cross-cultural awareness, and self-evaluation. See Table 1 for results.

Table 1.

Gender Differences on Occupational Barriers to Training, Cross-Cultural Awareness, Self-Evaluation, and Organizational Barriers to Training Scales

Variables	df	<u>T</u>
Occupational Barrier	97	-.131
Self-Evaluation	97	-.131
Cross-Cultural	97	-.663
Organizational Barrier	97	-.466

Ethnic Differences

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess for ethnic differences in the Occupational Barriers to Training, Self-Evaluation, Cross-Cultural Awareness, and Organizational Barriers Scales using ethnicity as the grouping variable, and the four previously mentioned scales as the dependent variables. Results were significant only for the Cross-Cultural Awareness Scale ($F(5,93) = 3.77, p < .004$) and the perceived Organizational Barriers Scale ($F(5,93) = 2.60, p < .03$). Examination of post-hoc tests showed that Asian

participants reported higher cultural awareness scores than did either African-Americans and European-Americans; there were no significant differences between these two groups. For Perceived Organizational Barriers, post-hoc tests showed that Asian American subjects reported higher perceived organizational barrier scores than did Latinos; no other differences were found. See Table 2 for results.

Table 2.

Ethnic Differences on Occupational Barriers to Training, Cross-Cultural Awareness, Self-Evaluation, and Organizational Barriers to Training Scales

Variables	df	F
Occupational Barrier	98	0.360
Self-Evaluation	98	1.119
Cross-Cultural	98	3.779**
Organizational Barrier	98	2.608*

*p < .05, **p < .01

Academic Degree Differences

To assess for academic degree differences in the Barriers to Training, Self-Evaluation, Cross-Cultural Awareness, and Organizational Barriers to Training Scales

a series of t-tests were conducted. First, participants were categorized as having either an undergraduate degree or a master's degree. This variable was then used as the independent variable and the four previously mentioned scales as separate dependant variables. Results were significant for the perceived barriers to training scale ($t(92) = 2.23, p < .02$) and the Self-Evaluation Scale ($t(92) = 3.88, p < .001$), showing that participants with undergraduate degrees perceived more Occupational Barriers to Training than did those with a master's degree and that participants with a master's degree had higher Self-Evaluation scores than did those with undergraduate degrees. See Table 3 for results.

Table 3.

Academic Degree Differences in Perceived Occupational Barriers to Training and Self-Evaluation Scores

Variables	df	T
Occupational Barrier	92	2.236*
Self-Evaluation	92	-3.888**
Cross-Cultural	92	-0.551
Organizational Barrier	92	0.345

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

The study examined the perceived limitations in job performance and awareness of ethnic-sensitive practice among children's social workers working for the Department of Children and Family Services in Los Angeles County. In particular, the study explored the DCFS social workers' perceived cross-cultural awareness, occupational and organizational barriers to training, and self-evaluation concerning services provided to different ethnic minority groups.

The perceived limitations in job performance and awareness of ethnic sensitive practice in relation to occupational and organizational barriers to training were found to be relatively congruent with past studies of DCFS children's social workers. This study found that years of employment, level of education, and age were significantly related to perceived occupational and organizational barriers to training, thus posing potential limitations on performance and cultural awareness.

In this study, participants who were employed with DCFS for a longer length of time were found to report higher perceived occupational barriers to training, which was also supported by Chandler (1992). Similar to the results from the present study, Chandler (1992) found that with longer length of time employed, organizational and occupational barriers would tend to impact the employees perception of the need for culturally sensitive practice and training.

With regards to education, the majority of the participants with an undergraduate degree perceived more occupational barriers to training than those participants with a master's degree of education. Similarly, Winefield and Barlow (1995) noted that children's social workers did identify level of education as a major contributor affecting worker performance and client outcomes.

This study also showed that participants with a master's degree had higher self-evaluation scores when working with minorities than those with undergraduate degrees. This finding suggests that those with a higher level of education may perceive that they have a better understanding of ethnic minority issues, and thus feel more competent about servicing their needs. This finding

also was supported by Winefield and Barlow (1995) who found that increased training opportunities and advancement in level of education were essential components towards self-growth in the field of social work.

With respect to age, it is interesting to note that the majority of older participants reported more organizational barriers to training than did younger participants. Although such findings are not clarified in the literature it is possible that older participants were better able to identify, and voice their concern about, organizational barriers than were younger ones. Since this idea is offered only as a hypothesis, more research would be needed in order to truly understand the age result found in this study.

Additionally, ethnic differences were found in the present study concerning perceived cross-cultural awareness and organizational barriers. Specifically, Asian-Americans were found to report higher cultural awareness scores than either African-Americans and European-Americans, and higher perceived organizational barrier scores than Latinos. The present findings are very unclear especially since the total sample size

included only six Asian-American participants (6.1% of the total sample). As with the previously mentioned age finding, further research is needed with a larger sample size to clarify these findings.

Conclusion

Possible limitations to this study include sample size, generalizability, and social desirability. Specifically, the small sample size does not allow for these results to be generalized to social workers other than those working in the Pomona and Covina offices of DCFS. Regarding social desirability, participants may have tended to respond favorably because of familiarity with the researcher.

Overall, results from the present study indicate that organizational and occupational barriers to training and level of academic degree may directly affect the social worker's perception of him or herself as culturally competent. In this study, participants who reported working a longer length of time and those who identified themselves as only having an undergraduate degree perceived more frequent organizational and agency barriers to training than did other groups. This finding

suggests that a higher level of education provided through training and continued education can be instrumental in decreasing the perceived impact of organizational barriers on overall training, and thus potentially influence the growth of cultural sensitivity, competence and cross-cultural awareness.

APPENDIX A
DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics

1. My gender is: a. Male b. Female
2. My age is _____
3. My ethnicity is:
 - a. African-American
 - b. Asian American/Pacific Islander
 - c. European American
 - d. Latino
 - e. Mixed Ethnicity
 - f. Native American
 - g. Other (specify)
4. My highest academic degree is:
 - a. BSW _____
 - b. BA _____
 - c. BS _____
 - d. MFT _____
 - e. MSW _____
 - f. MA _____ (please specify discipline)
 - g. Other ____ (please specify)

I am licensed as a:

- a. Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
 - b. Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT)
 - c. Clinical Psychologist
 - d. I am not currently licensed
 - e. Other _____
- 5a. I intend to obtain a clinical license in the future:
 - a. Yes b. No
6. I have worked for DCFS for _____ years _____ months

APPENDIX B

BARRIERS TO TRAINING SCALE

Barriers to Training Scale

	Completely False					Completely True
1. Caseload size does not permit time for training	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Supervisors sometimes do not approve training even when It is mandated	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Supervisors do not always support training	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Training bulletins are not clear about the content of training	1	2	3	4	5	
5. I have attended all mandatory seminars required by my job	1	2	3	4	5	
6. The training bulletin topics are not relevant to my responsibilities at DCFS	1	2	3	4	5	
7. Training often does not address situations found in front-line case work	1	2	3	4	5	
8. I often know more than the person giving the training seminar	1	2	3	4	5	
9. I can rarely apply what I learn in training to my Actual job	1	2	3	4	5	

APPENDIX C

SELF-EVALUATION SCALE

Self-Evaluation Scale

Evaluation definitions:

- 1 Unsatisfactory
 - 2 Improvement needed
 - 3 Meets performance standard
 - 4 Exceeds performance standard
 - 5 Outstanding performance
-

Circle the number that most clearly describes you as an employee.

Quality of work:

How closely does work meet standards for accuracy, completeness, reliability, consistency and care?

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

How closely does case management and service delivery consider the cultural factors of language, race, ethnicity, customs, family structure, and community dynamics?

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

How closely does work involve other community resources in advocacy in behalf of relevant cultural client groups?

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

Communication:

How effective are you as an employee in meeting the multi-cultural needs of the client?

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

How effective are you as an employee in expressing and understanding ideas presented in dealing with families of particular ethnicity's?

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

How effective are you as an employee in protecting the right of children to their own culture and to the customs, beliefs, and practices that comprise that culture?

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

How effective are you as an employee in respecting the diversity and rights of the individual served?

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

How effective are you as an employee in striving to understand and value cultural heritages that differ from your own?

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

APPENDIX D
CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS
SCALE

Cross-Cultural Awareness Scale

Questionnaire definitions:

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Undecided
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

Members of an ethnic group have a sense of a shared past and similar origins.

1 2 3 4 5

Human distress is the same regardless of the situation in which it is found.

1 2 3 4 5

The social worker can use the same techniques with all clients to counteract their distress.

1 2 3 4 5

Members of an ethnic minority group believe themselves to be distinctive from others in some significant way.

1 2 3 4 5

Each ethnic minority population has color, language, and behavioral characteristics that distinguish it as a unique group in a multi-racial society.

1 2 3 4 5

In ethnic minority cultures, the value of the family is usually emphasized over that of individual members.

1 2 3 4 5

For Native Americans, grandparents retain official and symbolic leadership in family communities.

1 2 3 4 5

In Black American families, there is limited extended family involvement.

1 2 3 4 5

In the Latino community, religion and church have an extensive influence.

1 2 3 4 5

In the Latino family:

Fathers have prestige and authority;

1 2 3 4 5

sons have more and earlier independence than daughters;

1 2 3 4 5

sex roles are rigidly defined;

1 2 3 4 5

the aged receive respect and reverence.

1 2 3 4 5

Religion and the church have an extensive influence in the Black community.

1 2 3 4 5

Asian Americans tend to value respect for one's ancestors.

1 2 3 4 5

In the Asian culture, to share negative information outside the home is perceived as bringing possible disgrace to the family name.

1 2 3 4 5

Ethnicity and social class shape life's problems and influence problem resolution.

1 2 3 4 5

Parenting classes often fail to benefit Black parents because their culture reinforces "whipping" as a disciplinary method.

1 2 3 4 5

Asian Americans require fewer services because they tend to have fewer problems than other ethnic minority groups.

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX E
ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS TO
TRAINING SCALE

Organizational Barriers to Training Scale

Evaluation definition:

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Undecided
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

The agency provides all supervisors and service delivery staff with annual training in issues relating to cultural diversity and competency.

1 2 3 4 5

The agency trains its staff in regard to cross-cultural communication, culturally diverse family customs, and conflict resolution in different cultural groups.

1 2 3 4 5

The agency's staff members are continually presented with opportunities to examine their own cultural beliefs and attitudes to better understand the dynamics of cultural difference and interaction.

1 2 3 4 5

The agency's staff members learn as much as possible about the cultures of their clients and the cross-cultural patterns that affect the way in which individuals communicate, cope with problems, and use survival strategies.

1 2 3 4 5

The agency provides staff members with adequate training to advocate for programs, policies, and services that directly or indirectly impact the cultural groups it serves.

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX F
INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent

The purpose of this study is to explore the lack of effective training and awareness of ethnic-sensitive practice in the social work profession that contributes to job performance limitations among Children's Social Workers working for the Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services.

The study is being conducted by Terri G. Lopez, Master of Social Work student, under the supervision of Astrid M. Reina-Patton, MA under the guidance of Dr. Rosemary Mc Caslin, CSUSB (909) 880-5800. This project has been approved by the Department of Social Work 2nd Committee of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of California State University, San Bernardino.

In the present study, you will be asked to answer questions used to measure cultural competence, along with demographic questions. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Please be assured that any information you provide will be held in strict confidence, and will be used only for the purpose of expanding knowledge around multi-cultural awareness. This survey is designed to maintain your anonymity, and at no time will you be asked to identify yourself. Also, please be assured that you may withdraw from this study at any time. Neither your decision to participate nor your responses will in any way affect your employment.

The university requires that your consent be given before participating in this research project that will conclude after June 2001. At this time, you may receive a report of the results by contacting California State University of San Bernardino, Pfau library.

Please place a check mark in the space provided below, to acknowledge that you have been informed, and understand the nature of the purpose of the present study.

("I am at least 18 years of age, and freely consent to participate in this study.") _____ . Date _____

APPENDIX G
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Debriefing Statement

The primary goal of this study is to measure how lack of effective training and awareness of ethnic-sensitive practice can contribute to job performance among children's social workers at two DCFS offices in LA County.

The researcher will be measuring the proposed hypothesis by using a descriptive statistical design and r correlations to evaluate employee responses to cross-cultural awareness scale, self-assessment scale and the barriers to training scale, in the form of a self-administered questionnaire. The researcher anticipates the findings will help the agency improve the treatment received by minority families in the child welfare system by improving training and awareness in regards to cultural sensitivity.

Please be assured that your answers will be held in strict confidence and the researcher asks that you do not discuss the nature of this study with other participants. This information will only be used for the purpose of this study.

If you are interested in the results of this study or have any questions about the research at any time, you may contact Dr. Rosemary Mc Caslin at the Department of Social Work at California State University San Bernardino, at (909) 880-5507.

APPENDIX H

LETTER OF AGENCY APPROVAL



ANITA M. BOCK
Director

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District
YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE
Second District
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District
DON KNABE
Fourth District
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

June 2, 2000

Dr. Teresa Morris
Department of Social Work
Cal-State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Park Way
San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397

This letter serves as notification to the Department of Social Work at California State University San Bernardino, that Teresita G. Lopez has obtained approval from the Department of Children and Family Services, Los Angeles County to conduct the research project entitled " A measure of awareness of ethnic sensitive practice and training among Children's Social Workers in LA County, Department of Children and Family Services and how it contributes to job performance limitations."

This letter also serves as notification to the Department of Social Work that the Department of Children's Services, Los Angeles County is giving approval to allow staff employed by the Department of Children and Family Services to participate in this research project.

If you have any questions regarding this letter of agency approval, you may contact Teresita Lopez at (909) 868-4409.



Art Lieras, Regional Administrator

6/2/00
Date

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