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CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-EFFICACY
AMONG MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS AND
BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

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
Sheila Joy Umeda
Amy Marie Edmonds


June 2004

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ABSTRACT

This study measured self-esteem among students in a Bachelor of Social Work program and a Master of Social Work program at California State University, San Bernardino. In terms of task performance, high self-esteem has been shown to correlate with high self-efficacy. This study measured how perceived self-esteem influences students' beliefs that they can perform certain social work tasks. Using standardized tests that measure self-esteem and specific task self-efficacy skills, the results of this study indicated similarities between beliefs of task competence and self-esteem. Students who possess high self-esteem also seem more confident in their professional skill role.

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We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all the social work students at California State University, San Bernardino who participated in the completion of this study. Their responses were necessary and vital to the data compilation and construction of our research.

This research project was supported and directed by our project advisor, Dr. Thomas Davis, to whom we are grateful for his continual guidance throughout the process.

DEDICATION

With sincere appreciation and gratitude, I dedicate this research project and the completion of graduate school to my husband. He has been a constant source of support and strength through the challenges and triumphs of the last two years. Thank you, Charlie, for tolerating my "venting" sessions and for your continual help with everything. You are the best...

-Sheila Umeda

Each challenge we face is yet another opportunity to embrace the importance of relationships in our lives - and leaves us wondering how we ever would have managed alone. This thesis project was completed with the endless patience and encouragement of my husband, Bryan, and the support of my family. It is dedicated in their honor and in loving memory of Lynn Warner, a true social worker who taught me to rise to the occasion, meeting each challenge with dignity and determination.

-Amy Edmonds

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study will examine the correlations between self-esteem and self-efficacy among students in a major Master of Social Work program and students in a major Bachelor of Social Work program. The connection between self-esteem and self-efficacy has been studied in various forms, linking the topic of self-esteem to belief in one's capabilities in a variety of contexts. While self-esteem is more individually specific, self-efficacy is situation specific and may be impacted by the perceived confidence of the individual.

Problem Statement

Self-esteem has been the focus of much research in recent years. It is considered a multifaceted construct that has a synonymous relationship to self-efficacy. While self-esteem refers to individual self-evaluations, self-efficacy is more situation specific, incorporating a belief that one can accomplish certain goals. In general, individuals with high self-esteem possess more positive efficacy beliefs than those with poor self-esteem (Brockner, 1988).

Although self-esteem has been examined in areas such as sociology, psychology, psychiatry and academia, to date there is limited investigative research in the field of social work. Understanding self-esteem among Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) students is important since it may influence their subsequent ability to perform social work skills. Social work is a challenging and ever-changing occupation and, similar to other helping professions, personal distress is a probable risk factor that can affect job performance (Strozier & Evans, 1998).

Self-esteem is associated with competence under stress, and maintaining the ability to serve clients effectively despite stressful conditions. Social workers must be capable and effective under these circumstances in order to fulfill their social work function. Because there is limited research on this topic, more studies are warranted in the area of self-esteem as it relates to the ability to perform social work tasks.

In terms of professional practice, social worker skills are essential for intervening on micro levels to enhance client functioning. Skills are also necessary on the macro level to address larger societal problems. Unfortunately, present-day social workers encounter

multiple pressures that can affect their morale. Specific demands experienced by social workers in organizations include: having more work than time to do it in; having multiple and a complexity of tasks; having too much work and administration; feeling responsible for other people's lives; and keeping up with legislative changes (Jones, Fletcher, & Ibbetson, 1991).

The field of social work encompasses a broad spectrum of services for individuals, families, groups, and communities. Often times, social workers are called upon to provide intervention in times of crisis, thus increasing the likelihood of exposure to stress infused situations. This study intends to examine the degree of confidence in which social work students feel they are able to cope with stressful situations, while simultaneously assisting the client in managing their own stress. Students who experience low self-esteem and low self-worth may have difficulty responding to highly stressful situations because of their inability to implement effective coping mechanisms. In other words, students who show a lack of confidence or efficaciousness in responding to their own needs may experience difficulty when attempting to respond to their clients' needs.

Contrasting the Bachelor of Social Work students with the Master of Social Work students in relation to self-esteem and self-efficacy is important in terms of understanding the scope of relevancy of graduate-level training, in both the classroom setting and in the field, and in determining the effects of such training in personal and professional confidence.

Given the shortage of Master level social workers, undergraduate social work students are being relied upon to fill social work positions in non-profit and governmental settings, making them an important focus for continuing research. According to a study conducted by Schwartz and Robinson (1991), "undergraduates continue to be an important group to study because of the substantial number enrolled in bachelor of social work (BSW) programs and the increasing opportunities for employment in the public sector as well as for placement in advanced-standing social work graduate programs" (p. 291).

The contrast between undergraduate and graduate level students is also significant considering the degree of responsibility inherent in current social work positions. As employees of social service protection organizations, social workers may be faced with overwhelming caseloads, family dysfunction, and myriad other issues involving the

client and the organization. Although social workers are bound by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, they are also entrusted with the privilege of advocating for client's and their family in a professional manner. As such, a certain degree of decorum is warranted when interacting with families. Graduate students may have an advantage in this area, receiving advanced training on both micro and macro levels as part of their curriculum. Specifically, they benefit from one-on-one client training from a micro perspective, and learn skills when working for a larger entity or organization from a macro perspective.

Through intense training and education, it is essential for social workers to possess a significant amount of self-esteem when working with clients and their families in order to feel efficacious in their abilities as social workers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to examine the correlations between self-esteem and self-efficacy among undergraduate and graduate level social work students in order to determine how perceived self-esteem affects student's ability to perform job tasks. Although there is

considerable research on the concept of self-esteem and its correlation to individual beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in each role or identity held, this study will explore BSW and MSW student's perceptions of self-competency as it relates to specific task performance.

Role specific self-esteem is a theoretical concept that suggests people have distinct feelings of esteem regarding individual roles they hold. Consequently, these role-specific beliefs affect the quality of task performance. Individuals who perceive themselves as competent in their role are more likely to view that role with greater significance since people prefer to view themselves positively (Ervin & Stryker, 2001).

Social work is considered a complex profession, fraught with challenges associated with overburdened and stressful work conditions. In addition, social workers serve as advocates, addressing social injustices on behalf of vulnerable populations. It is, therefore, important that future social workers not only possess confidence in their abilities, but assert skills to maintain competence under pressure.

Research suggests that high self-esteem correlates with high self-efficacy. In fact, studies have found that

individuals with a high self-efficacy are more motivated to engage in actions aimed at correcting social problems and/or injustices (Gecas, 2001). Those with high self-efficacy beliefs also seem to deal with some stresses and depression more effectively. Interestingly, self-efficacy is associated with feelings of competence, effectiveness, and power that relate to a persons conviction in mastering skills and challenges (Gecas, 2001).

This study intends to examine the perceptions of Bachelor and Master of Social Work students in relation to perceived self-esteem and self-efficacy. It involves the direct correlation between students who perceive themselves as confident and those who feel capable in their roles as social workers. In a 1984 study conducted by Specht, Britt, and Frost, liberal arts undergraduates were contrasted with social work undergraduates in an attempt to discern the differences among professional preparedness. The findings indicated that, "MSW graduates with BA educations are considered more likely to report professional achievements than are those with BSW educations" (Specht, Britt, & Frost, 1984, p. 222).

In the present study, self-esteem is described as self-evaluative perceptions, while self-efficacy

represents perceived ability to perform skills in social work. Relating to task performance, Bandura (1997) asserts that people need more than self-esteem to do well. "People [also] need firm confidence in their efficacy to mount and sustain the effort required to succeed" (p. 11).

Additionally, perceived self-efficacy is not about the number of skills a person possesses; rather, it relates to a person's belief that they can confidently use what they have under a complexity of circumstances.

The research design for this study will consist of a quantitative approach. An exploratory focus will examine the affects of self-esteem among BSW and MSW students, relating it to their ability to perform social work tasks. Self-esteem refers to self-evaluative perceptions which will be measured using a standardized self-esteem scale. In addition, self-efficacy, characterized by perceived ability to perform social work tasks, will be measured using an instrument that evaluates specific self-efficacy beliefs related to social work skills. Essentially, the study seeks to understand the influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy in social work practice.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

According to the NASW Code of Ethics (1999), social workers have an ethical obligation to pursue social change that improves the quality of life of disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, the mission statement of the social work profession acts to, "enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty" (NASW Code of Ethics, 1996, p. 1). As such, social worker self-esteem is an essential component of assisting families by helping them achieve their goals.

As social advocates, social workers must also possess sufficient skills, knowledge and values to serve vulnerable clients. Therefore, this study intends to examine self-esteem among future social workers and how it is associated with self-efficacy in professional practice.

This study is important in terms of understanding how self-esteem correlates with self-efficacy among future social workers. Considering the increasing challenges and difficulties faced in the profession of social work, it is essential that social workers possess the self-confidence and personal belief that they can perform the skills necessary in social work practice. The results of this

study are integral to the planning phase of the generalist intervention process.

Based on their degree of confidence in occupational performance, self-efficacious social workers may be more inclined to develop a plan for success because they perceive themselves as successful. Akin to a domino effect, social workers receive advanced training and education in their specialty, this leads to confidence in the field, which then leads to a positive outcome for a family, and corners back to the social worker who feels reassured about his or her ability to act as an effective change agent.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The correlations between self-esteem and self-efficacy among MSW students and BSW students are examined in the present study. As part of an evolutionary process, self-esteem relates to self-efficacy through a person's belief in themselves and their capabilities. Thus higher self-esteem may result in greater feelings of efficaciousness or performance ability. For the social work student, confidence in one's professionalism is crucial to their service delivery and overall effectiveness. The following studies will be reviewed to examine BSW and MSW students in areas of perceptions and attitudes and professional preparation. A subsequent review of studies will examine self-esteems and self-efficacy beliefs related to performance and motivation, social work tasks and job performance, and theories guiding conceptualization.

Perceptions and Attitudes among Bachelor and Master Social Work Students

In an effort to determine the critical thinking skills of MSW and BSW students, Clark (2002), conducted a

study of 45 MSW and 39 BSW students using, "The California Critical Thinking Skills Test (Form A)." The results indicated that MSW means were somewhat higher in all cases except "analysis," and no "statistically significant differences were found between the scores of the two samples," (Clark, 2002, p. 72). These results indicate a need to incorporate critical thinking skills as part of the graduate curriculum; otherwise, the graduate degree may prove ineffectual in this area.

In addition to critical thinking skills, hands-on practice experience in the field is essential to the professional development of social work students. In a study focused on MSW and BSW students' perceptions of their field instructors, the author noted supervisory skill as an important determinant in measuring student success (Knight, 1996). Another emerging response was an indication of field as an opportunity "to apply and to integrate theory with practice" (Tungate, Lazzari, & Buchman, 2001, p. 107).

In a few cases of reviewed literature differences were noted among BSW undergraduates versus non-BSW undergraduates or those with a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science Degree. In one study, BSW students entering the MSW program were thought to have

"aspirations" and "interests" more closely related to the "traditional mission" of social work than were non-BSW undergraduate students (Hanson & McCullagh, 1995). Another important and controversial study conducted in 1984 by Specht, Britt, and Frost, highlighted differences among BSW and BA degree holders. According to their study, "the MSW/BA graduates, as a group, outperformed the MSW/BSW graduates," and "BA students devoted almost twice as much time to humanities and English as BSW students, while BSW students spend nearly five times as much of their study time on social work/social welfare and fieldwork studies as BA students" (Specht, Britt, & Frost, 1984, p. 222).

Professional Preparation of Bachelor and Master Social Work Students

As part of the social work curriculum, emphasis is placed on the student's participation and exposure to working with groups. Due to the myriad opportunities to become engaged in the group work process either during field placement or upon graduation, students are encouraged to role-play scenarios as group facilitators or co-facilitators. However, as researcher Knight (1997) has pointed out, there may be cause for concern. In her study of BSW and MSW students' involvement with groups, the author found that "while students who participated in this

study felt that they were prepared to run groups in their field placements, the majority actually had received relatively little academic training," (Knight, 1997, p. 43). The author further suggests the need for increased group work training and supervision among field instructors.

In terms of advanced preparation for BSW students, some colleges and universities offer advanced standing in their two-year MSW program. This simply allows BSW students to bypass a portion of their foundation or first year curriculum. In their article titled, "Are Advanced Standing and Two-Year Program MSW Students Equivalently Prepared? A Comparison of BSW Licensure Examination Scores," the authors show support for the advancement of BSW students in MSW programs (Thyer, Vonk, & Tandy, 1996). Similarly, in their review of undergraduates' attitudes toward poverty, Schwartz and Robinson (1991) assert that "Undergraduates continue to be an important group to study because of the substantial number enrolled in bachelor of social work (BSW) programs and the increasing opportunity for employment in the public sector as well as for placement in advanced-standing social work graduate programs" (p. 291).

Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy Beliefs Related to Performance and Motivation

Self-esteem affects thoughts and feelings, and has a greater influence on self-perceptions than do behaviors (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Recent studies have examined self-esteem and self-efficacy in relation to task motivation and performance. To varying degrees, results indicate that individuals with high self-evaluations tend to be better performers, in addition to exercising more motivation towards personal goal-setting (Bandura, 1997; Erez & Judge, 2001; Markus & Wurf, 1987). As the research suggests, individuals with high self-esteem not only excel in their roles, they also tend to be action oriented in nature.

In his work, Zimmerman (2000) conducted a comparative study of self-efficacy beliefs, distinguishing it from other related constructs of outcome expectancies, self-concept and perceived control. He also examined the role of self-efficacy in relation to academic motivation and learning among university students. In terms of academic motivation, Bandura asserts that "...self-efficacious students participate more readily, work harder, persist longer, and have fewer adverse emotional reactions when they encounter difficulties than

do those who doubt their capabilities" (as cited in Zimmerman, 2000, p. 86).

Zimmerman (2000) found that self-efficacy is not only associated with other related constructs, it also has unique predictive factors in determining improvements in students' methods of learning and achievement outcomes. Hence, students' self-beliefs do seem to correlate with academic achievement in addition to a greater motivation level. Another study that examined self-esteem in relation to academic performance found a significant correlation between age and self-confidence. They concluded that "those that have had more real-world experience and opportunity for self-development outside the academic environment have a higher self-esteem than the average college student" (Fleming & Courtney, 1984, p. 417).

In other studies related to academic performance, high self-esteem has proved to be a strong predictor of college student achievement, reducing stress by promoting social resources and successful coping (Abouserie, 1994). Similarly, other research confirms that positive self-esteem increases student self-confidence in their academic performance and overall college satisfaction (Michie, Glachan, & Bray, 2001).

In terms of mental health, self-efficacy beliefs (Gecas, 2001; Zimmerman, 2000) and high self-esteem (Abouserie, 1994; Roberts & Gotlib, 1997) have shown to influence people emotionally by reducing their stress, anxiety, and depression. In their study, Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg (1995) examined the nature and relevance of global to specific self-esteem using data from a two wave longitudinal study (1966 and 1968) consisting of 1,886 adolescent boys. While global self-esteem measured individual's positive or negative attitude toward the self as a whole, specific self-esteem examined academic performance.

Rosenberg et al. (1995) found that:

Global self-esteem appears to be heavily affective in nature and tends to be associated with overall psychological well-being. Specific self-esteem, in contrast, being more judgmental and evaluative, appears to have a more cognitive component and tends to be more strongly associated with behavior or behavioral outcomes. (p. 153)

In short, the study reveals relevant findings regarding the effects of self-esteem on self-evaluations and emotional well-being.

In a final study, Judge and Bono (2001) examined the relationship of self-esteem, locus of control, neuroticism, and generalized self-efficacy to job

satisfaction and performance. The authors conducted a meta-analysis review among professionals in their work settings. Although the findings reveal a positive correlation between the four traits and job satisfaction, the results for self-esteem were less clear in connection to job performance. Despite this, the results indicate that the four traits are significant predictors of both job satisfaction and job performance. The nature in which they affect these outcomes, however, requires further research. As this study reveals, self-esteem and self-efficacy do seem to influence job performance, therefore, they may also affect social worker's ability to carry out social work skills.

Social Work Tasks and Job Performance

In social work practice, successful intervention involves the ability and efficacy beliefs to use skills well. In their study, O'Hare and Collins (1997) measured various social work practice skills, categorizing them into psychotherapeutic, case management, and evaluative dimensions. To evaluate the positive effects of practice, they used the Practice Skills Inventory (PSI) to measure the frequency in which future social workers utilized various practice skills. The PSI was completed by 285

full-time and part-time MSW students actively participating in a variety of field placement settings.

Researchers differentiated core skills for each identified dimension of social work practice. Lambert and Bergin categorized the psychotherapeutic dimension into three therapeutic components. The supportive factor entails skills that facilitate client trust through empathy, compassion, and emotional support. The learning component provides psycho-education that enhances self-awareness and coping strategies to optimize client functioning, while action factors allow clients to practice and secure new problem-solving skills, replacing previous unhealthful habits (as cited in O'Hare & Collins, 1997, p. 231-232).

Relating to the case management function of social work, Shulman and Rothman described practice skills that include: "assessing [the client's] level of material resources, monitoring the delivery of services provided by several other practitioners, advocating on behalf of clients and making referrals to other services" (as cited in O'Hare & Collins, 1997, p. 232). Finally, Bloom, Fischer, and Orme and Corcoran & Gingerich identified skills for the practice evaluation function of social work that include: "defining the client's problems in specific

terms, collaborating with clients in setting intervention goals, defining treatment objectives in specific terms, and asking clients to evaluate the effects of treatment on themselves" (as cited in O'Hare & Collins, 1997, p. 232).

Due to the current complexity of social problems within the larger social system, O'Hare and Collins (1997) conclude that social work practice must address micro and macro issues, combining both psychotherapeutic and case management interventions. Although there are increasing demands to provide treatment that optimizes client improvement, limitations exist due to cost-effective measures resulting from managed care initiatives. Consequently, competent social work practice involves practitioners who are not only skilled under pressure but are also creative in their interventions.

Holden, Meenaghan, Anastas, and Metrey (2002) examined the competence level of social workers, evaluating whether social work education is effective in developing social workers efficacy in their performance of professional tasks. Using measures that combine items from the Social Work Self-Efficacy Scale (SWSE) and the Practice Skills Inventory (PSI), they conducted a pretest-posttest design on MSW students entering and graduating from a MSW program. The study examined the

changes of self-efficacy over the course of student's graduate experience. Surprisingly, the results reveal that self-efficacy ratings are reported higher at the beginning of the program than at graduation. The researchers believe that this outcome may be attributed to student's increase awareness of the challenges in social work that create doubts in their professional capabilities.

In terms of competence and ability to perform social work skills, it is important that social workers feel confident and capable in professional practice. Therefore, it is necessary that MSW programs develop outcome and evaluative measures to determine the program's effectiveness towards student professional development.

Strozier and Evans (1998) examined distress among social workers and evaluate the affects on self-esteem and job performance. The study compared social workers to psychologists, examining physical health, interpersonal health, career-related health, and alcohol use and misuse in relation to emotional distress. The study involved a random survey of NASW members who completed a mailed Social Worker Health Questionnaire. The results revealed that many social workers in the study are healthy, satisfied, and happy professionals. In addition, "although social workers report exercising less often than

psychologists, they also smoke less and report lower recurrence of physical illness" (Strozier & Evans, 1998, p. 70).

Another interesting finding involves emotional health. Although similar findings were reported between social workers and psychologists, social workers expressed feeling less needed and useful, and rated their work as "interesting" less often than psychologists. Not surprisingly, the researchers correlate social workers feelings of job frustration to an increase risk of burnout. Social workers may enter the field with high expectations of efficacy, however, the realities of social work practice can cause discouragement and damaged self-esteem (Strozier & Evans, 1998).

In relation to profession burnout, a variety of research attests to the difficulties and stresses faced in the profession of social work (Frans, 1993; Reamer, 1992; Poulin & Walter, 1993). It is certain that the challenges experienced in practice will adversely impact the social worker's self-esteem. Nonetheless, social workers must be competent and effective under stressful conditions, and maintain the ability to fulfill their professional function.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

In addition to self-esteem and self-efficacy theories, perspectives also guiding conceptualization of the present study involve the social cognitive and identity models. Both perspectives are significant to theories of human behavior and social psychology.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is integrated into the study as it highlights the construct of self-efficacy, and theorizes how a person's belief in themselves may affect their coping strategies when faced with stressful conditions. Essentially, SCT considers how self-efficacy beliefs explain a person's competence under pressure, and the attitudes that influence their decisions and behavior (Holden et al., 2002). According to Bandura, people guide their lives by self-efficacy beliefs. He further states, "Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (1997, p. 3).

Identity theory is also considered in the study as it relates to self-esteem and role-specific behavior. This model examines the relationship between self-esteem, identity, and behavior. In addition, variables such as commitments, salience, and role performance "are defined

in relation to specific roles or role-related identities” (Ervin & Stryker, 2001, p. 44).

Summary

The literature presented in this chapter provided a review of information relevant to BSW and MSW students and social work professionals. Research regarding the perceptions and attitudes, professional preparation of BSW and MSW students was reviewed. In addition research on self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs in performance and motivation, social work tasks and job performance, and theories guiding conceptualization were reviewed. The information provided in this chapter is intended to examine the correlations between self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs as they relate to task performance, confidence, and motivation. Self-esteem and self-efficacy may be considered protective factors that preserve and enhance psychological well-being. It is likely that social workers who possess high self-esteem and self-efficacy may assert more self-assurance when performing professional tasks under a variety of circumstances.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

The present study consists of a quantitative survey design that intends to detect correlations between self-esteem and self-efficacy among BSW and MSW students. Students used in this survey are attending California State University San Bernardino in both the BSW and MSW programs. Data collection will be extrapolated from survey questionnaire results designed to measure self-esteem and specific self-efficacy beliefs. The research design will consist of both a convenience and purposive sampling strategy, and the study will seek to understand the influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy in relation to performing social work tasks. Variables such as age, gender, marital status, and professional experience will be examined to determine possible influences on self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Study Design

The purpose of the present study is to identify correlations between self-esteem and self-efficacy among BSW and MSW students. The sample population will consist of BSW and MSW students attending California State

University San Bernardino (CSUSB). The research design will consist of a quantitative exploratory focus that examines self-evaluative perceptions and perceived task performance among BSW and MSW students. The sampling strategy will include a selection of BSW and MSW students. Self-administered questionnaires will be distributed to prospective participants.

Limitations of the study include respondent self-report. Maintaining anonymity will be crucial not only for ethical purposes, but also to minimize the pressure for socially desirable responses. Limitations may exist in relation to other systematic errors that can affect survey results such as reactive responses.

The hypothesis of the study posits that MSW students, who possess high self-esteem and self-efficacy in conjunction with graduate-level social work training and experience, may feel more confident than the BSW students in their ability to perform social work skills. Factors such as age, gender, and professional experience may also effect self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs.

Sampling

The student population used in this study consisted of full-time first and second year MSW students, as well

as first, second, and third year part-time MSW students. In addition, full-time BSW students from the first year program were sampled.

The sample used in the study included 89 adult subjects who varied in age, ethnicity and gender. Approximately 16 BSW students and 73 MSW students from CSUSB were surveyed with prior approval from both the Social Work Department and the Institutional Review Board.

The study also examined professional experience, gender, marital status, and professional area of interest as other variables that possibly influenced self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs. Correlated significance between all variables were examined in the study.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data collection was obtained through completed questionnaires generated from two sources. Selected questions from two scales were used to develop a reliable instrument (see Appendix A). The first instrument was the Self-Esteem Rating Scale (SERS) developed by W. Nugent and J. Thomas which measured self-esteem. In terms of reliability, the SERS is considered to have excellent internal consistency, with an alpha of .97. The standard error of measurement was 5.67. In addition, the SERS is

reported to have good content and factorial validity (Corcoran & Fischer, 2000).

The Social Work Self-Efficacy Scale (SWSE) was the second instrument which included questions that assessed social work skills and behavioral performance for specific self-efficacy. The instrument was derived from two sources. The first source included a generated list of important skills developed by five chairpersons at the Ehrenkranz School of Social Work (ESSW) in New York. The second source consisted of the Practice Skills Inventory (PSI) designed by O'Hare and Collins (1997). "In terms of reliability, the Cronbach's alphas for the SWSE total scale and subscales ranged from .86 to .97" (Holden et al., 2002).

The research instrument was a four page questionnaire. The response format for the first two pages included a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = never to 5 = always. Ten questions were selected from each standardized instrument, creating a scale that consisted of twenty questions. An additional two pages of the survey included student socio-demographics consisting of age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, professional and educational background, professional area of interest, and family and social supports.

Some proposed sample questions from the SERS were as follows: "I feel confident in my ability to deal with other people," "I feel that I am likely to fail at things I do," "I feel that I am a very competent person," "I feel confident in my ability to cope with difficult situations," "I feel relaxed meeting new people," and "I feel embarrassed to let others hear my ideas."

Some proposed sample questions from the SWSE subscale included: "How confident are you that you can intervene effectively with individuals?," "How confident are you that you can advocate on others behalf?," "How confident are you that you can point out client successes to increase their self-confidence?," "How confident are you that you can teach clients how to manage their own problem behaviors?," and "How confident are you that you can network with agencies to coordinate services?" These questions were based on four important practice tasks in social work: therapeutic, case management, supportive, and treatment planning and evaluation skills.

The independent variables for this research included: gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, professional experience and interest, and primary supports since these are factors that may influence the dependent variable. The dependent variable included both self-esteem and

self-efficacy since they were considered similar constructs and relevant for the present study. Independent variables of gender, ethnicity, marital status, professional area of interest, undergraduate major, previous professional and volunteer experience, and areas of support were nominal in level of measurement. Interval areas of measurement included age and years of professional and volunteer social work experience, while variables for student status were ordinal.

Procedures

Data was obtained from completed survey questionnaires given to MSW graduate students and BSW students. Information was obtained about BSW and MSW students from the Social Work Department. For MSW students, 128 questionnaires were distributed to the student's mailboxes in the social work lounge. All questionnaires were placed in a manila envelope that was used for sealing the completed questionnaires. Each envelope contained a candy bar as a token of appreciation for completing the survey. A two-week deadline was specified in the return of all completed questionnaires, and instructions were provided regarding where to submit the sealed questionnaires.

For BSW students, questionnaires were administered during an approved class time. After the BSW students placed the questionnaires back in their manila envelopes, they were handed to the researcher. All of the manila envelopes contained candy bars as a way of thanking the students for completing the surveys.

Protection of Human Subjects

To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, questionnaires were anonymously distributed to the MSW students in their student mailboxes. The students were instructed to exclude their names from the survey. A cover letter was attached that explained the project and that obtained the potential respondents' informed consent (see Appendix B). A cover letter also explained what the subjects were about to complete. A debriefing statement was included that explained the purpose of the study, and the location where the group level results could be obtained (see Appendix C). Since the survey questionnaires were administered to the BSW and MSW students through different procedures, two separate informed consents and debriefing statements were used. In terms of participation, prospective subjects were informed that there are no foreseeable risks to their physical and

mental health. BSW and MSW students were voluntary subjects. Participants completing the questionnaire were asked to exclude their name, ensuring subject anonymity. Identification numbers were assigned to the questionnaires. All information obtained from the questionnaires has remained confidential to ensure participant protection.

The research project was approved for protection of human subjects by the Department of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino.

Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis was used to evaluate the correlated strengths between the independent and dependent variables. All data was entered in the SPSS program, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were used to measure categorical and continuous variables.

Statistical tests were used to determine and compare continuous and categorical predictors. For continuous variables, strengths of relationships between variables were evaluated using independent-samples t-test analysis. In the content analysis, percentages of subjects,

frequencies, standard deviations, and bivariate (t-tests) comparisons among groups were evaluated for statistical significance. Finally, Cronbach alpha values were examined and obtained for internal reliability of selected research scales.

Summary

This research examined the correlations between self-esteem and self-efficacy among BSW and MSW students. This survey design used two combined standardized instruments that measured the effects of self-esteem and specific self-efficacy beliefs in relation to performing a broad range of social work tasks. Data collection was drawn from self-administered questionnaires completed by voluntary students at CSUSB in the BSW and MSW programs in San Bernardino County. Other variables such as gender, professional experience, area of professional interest, and marital status were of interest since they had a predicted affect on self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs. A convenience and purposive sampling strategy was used since it included the availability of participants who were considered important sources of information for the present study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

Included in Chapter Four is a presentation of the results. It includes a summary of respondent demographics and six tables that reflect bivariate correlations between self-esteem and efficacy beliefs in relation to social work tasks. Using independent samples t-tests, the Chapter concludes with a comparison of self-esteem and self-efficacy scores between BSW and MSW students, in addition to students scores in relation to gender, marital status, professional experience, and professional area of interest.

Presentation of the Findings

Table 1 represents the demographic characteristics of the respondents (see Table 1). The age of the respondents ranged from 20-55 years with the largest group (46.1%) listed within the age category of 18-29. The majority of the respondents were female (85.4%) with only 13 male respondents (14.6%). The ethnic groups varied with the majority of respondents categorized as Anglo (40.4%). The second largest category included Latino/Hispanic (28.1%). The sample group was also comprised of African American

(6.7%), Asians (7.9), and other (11.2%). In terms of marital status, almost half of the respondents were listed as married or coupled (49.4%), while the second largest category included respondents who were single (36.0%).

Full-time MSW students in the first year program made up the largest percentage of respondents (28.1%), while full-time BSW students and full-time MSW students in the second year program included an equal number of respondents with 18.0% respectively. In this study, the majority of respondents were MSW students (82.0%). BSW students made up 18.0% of the entire sample.

Also listed in Table 1 includes the respondents primary area of professional interest. While the majority of respondents identified there area of interest as child welfare (37.1%), the second largest group consisted of mental health (24.7%). Most respondents listed their undergraduate major as Sociology (36.0%), while the second largest group for this category listed Social Work (BSW) as their undergraduate major (29.2%).

Based on the years of work experience, more respondents reported having 1-3 years of volunteer social work experience (36.0%) then 1-3 years of paid professional work experience (31.5%).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age (N = 85)		
18-29	41	46.1%
30-44	27	30.3%
45+	17	19.1%
Sex (N = 89)		
Male	13	14.6%
Female	76	85.4%
Ethnicity (N = 84)		
African American	6	6.7%
Anglo	36	40.4%
Asian	7	7.9%
Latino/Hispanic	25	28.1%
Other	10	11.2%
Marital Status (N = 87)		
Single	32	36.0%
Married or Couple	44	49.4%
Separated	1	1.1%
Divorced	10	11.2%
Academic Year (N = 89)		
Full-time BSW Student	16	18.0%
Full-time MSW Student (1 st Year)	25	28.1%
Full-time MSW Student (2 nd Year)	16	18.0%
Part-time MSW Student (1 st Year)	14	15.7%
Part-time MSW Student (2 st Year)	12	13.5%
Part-time MSW Student (3 st Year)	6	6.7%
Professional Area Of Interest (N = 88)		
Mental Health	22	24.7%
School Counseling	9	10.1%
Developmental Disabilities	2	2.2%
Child Welfare	33	37.1%
Family Service Agency	5	5.6%
Substance Abuse	2	2.2%
Domestic Violence	2	2.2%
Elderly Services	3	3.4%
Health Care	5	5.6%
Other	5	5.6%

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Undergraduate Major (N = 87)		
Psychology	18	20.2%
Sociology	32	36.0%
Human Services	5	5.6%
Social Work (BSW)	26	29.2%
Other	6	6.7%
Prior Professional Social Work Experience (N = 87)		
Yes	52	58.4%
No	35	39.3%
Paid Professional Social Work Experience (N = 87)		
Less Than One Year	6	6.7%
1-3 Years	28	31.5%
4-6 Years	14	15.7%
7-9 Years	3	3.4%
More Than 10 Years	5	5.6%
Not Applicable	31	34.8%
Prior Volunteer Social Work Experience (N = 87)		
Yes	62	69.7%
No	24	28.1%
Years of Volunteer Social Work Experience (N = 89)		
Less Than One Year	18	20.2%
1-3 Years	32	36.0%
4-6 Years	9	10.1%
7-9 Years	3	3.4%
More Than 10 Years	5	5.6%
Not Applicable	31	34.8%
Number of Close Friends and Close Relatives (N = 77) Mean = 8.04 Std Dev. = 9.4		
Minimum 1		
Maximum 80		

Correlations Between Self-esteem and Self-efficacy

The relationship between self-esteem (as measured by the Self-esteem Rating Scale) and efficacy beliefs (as measured by the Social Work Self-efficacy Scale) was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient.

The results of Table 2 indicate a modest, positive correlation between confidence in dealing with other people and confidence in networking with other agencies to coordinate services [$\underline{r} = .45$, $\underline{n} = 89$, $\underline{p} < .001$]. Confidence in dealing with other people also reflects a modest, positive relationship to confidence in advocating on others behalf [$\underline{r} = .38$, $\underline{n} = 89$, $\underline{p} < .001$], and confidence in analyzing social problems relevant to client problems [$\underline{r} = .35$, $\underline{n} = 89$, $\underline{p} < .001$] (see Table 2).

Table 2. Correlations between Self-esteem and Case Management Skills

Confidence in dealing with other people	Students (n = 89)	<u>R</u>	<u>p</u>
Confidence in networking with other agencies to coordinate services		.45	.000
Confidence in advocating on others behalf		.38	.000
Confidence in analyzing social problems relevant to client problems		.35	.000

Table 3 indicates a strong, positive relationship between confidence in advocating on others behalf and feeling like a very competent person [$\underline{r} = .54$, $\underline{n} = 89$, $\underline{p} \leq .001$], in addition to confidence in networking with agencies to coordinate services [$\underline{r} = .59$, $\underline{n} = 89$, $\underline{p} < .001$] (see Table 3).

Table 3. Correlations between Case Management Skills and Self-esteem

Confidence in advocating on others behalf			
	Students (n = 89)	\underline{r}	\underline{p}
Feeling like a very competent person		.54	.000
Confidence in networking with agencies to coordinate services		.59	.000

The results of Table 4 indicate a modest, positive relationship between capability to count on oneself to manage things well and confidence in teaching clients how to manage problem behaviors [$\underline{r} = .40$, $\underline{n} = 89$, $\underline{p} < .001$]. A persons capability to count on themselves to manage things well also reflects a modest, positive correlation in confidence advocating on others behalf [$\underline{r} = .43$, $\underline{n} = 89$, $\underline{p} < .001$], and a strong, positive correlation in feeling like a very competent person [$\underline{r} = .61$, $\underline{n} = 89$, $\underline{p} < .001$] (see Table 4).

Table 4. Correlations between Therapeutic and Case Management Skills and Self-esteem

Capability to count on oneself to manage things well	Students (n = 89)	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Confidence in teaching clients how to manage problem behaviors		.40	.000
Confidence in advocating on others behalf		.42	.000
Feeling like a very competent person		.61	.000

Table 5 indicates a modest, positive relationship between confidence in ones ability to cope with difficult situations and confidence in defining client problems in specific terms [r = .33, n = 89, p < .005], in addition to collaborating with clients in setting intervention goals [r = .38, n = 88, p < .001]. Confidence in ones ability to cope with difficult situations also reflects a strong, positive correlation to confidence in dealing with other people [r = .56, n = 89, p < .001] (see Table 5).

Table 5. Correlations between Treatment Planning/Evaluation Skills and Self-esteem

Confidence in coping with difficult situations			
	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>n</u>
Confidence in defining client problems in specific terms	.33	.002	89
Confidence in collaborating with clients in setting intervention goals	.40	.000	88
Confidence in dealing with other people	.56	.000	89

Finally, the results of Table 6 indicate a strong correlation in relation to social work therapeutic skills. Specifically, confidence in teaching clients skills to relieve stress has a positive relationship to confidence in teaching client how to accomplish tasks more effectively [r = .75, n = 87, p < .001] and confidence in teaching clients how to manage problem behaviors [r = .65, n = 87, p < .001] (see Table 6).

Table 6. Correlations Related to Therapeutic Skills

Confidence in teaching clients to relieve stress		
Students (n = 87)	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Confidence in teaching clients how to accomplish tasks more effectively	.75	.000
Confidence teaching clients to manage problem behaviors	.65	.000

Differences between Bachelor and
Master Social Work Scores

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine differences in self-esteem and specific self-efficacy scores between BSW and MSW students.

Based on equal variances assumed, a statistical difference was found in the way BSW ($\bar{M} = 4.31$) and MSW ($\bar{M} = 3.93$) answered the question that pertained to ability to deal with other people ($t = 2.62$, $df = 87$, $p = .01$). This question relates to perceptions of self-esteem (see Table 7).

Table 7. Differences in Self-esteem Perceptions

Ability to Deal With Others				
	\bar{M}	SD	t	p
Bachelor Social Work	4.31	.602	2.62	.010*
Master Social Work	3.93	.509		

* $p < .05$.

Based on equal variances assumed, a statistical difference was found in the way BSW ($\bar{M} = 4.38$) and MSW ($\bar{M} = 3.93$) answered the question that pertained to capability to count on oneself to manage things well ($t = 2.20$, $df = 87$, $p = .03$). This question also relates to perceptions of self-esteem (see Table 8).

Table 8. Differences in Self-esteem Perceptions

Capability to Count on Oneself to Manage Things Well				
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Bachelor Social Work	4.38	.719	2.20	.030*
Master Social Work	3.93	.733		

* p < .05.

Based on equal variances not assumed, a significant difference was found in the way BSW (M = 4.06) and MSW (M = 3.53) answered the question that related to confidence in teaching clients how to manage problem behaviors (t = 3.26, df = 87, p = .003). This question relates to perceptions about specific self-efficacy tasks (see Table 9).

Table 9. Differences in Specific Self-efficacy Tasks

Confidence in Teaching Clients to Manage Problem Behaviors				
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Bachelor Social Work	4.06	.574	3.26	.003*
Master Social Work	3.53	.647		

* p < .05.

Also based on equal variances not assumed, a statistical difference was found in the way BSW (M = 2.00) and MSW (M = 2.73) answered the question that related to

trusting the competence of others more than ones own abilities ($\underline{t} = -4.014$, $\underline{df} = 87$, $\underline{p} = .000$). This question relates to perceptions about specific self-efficacy tasks (see Table 10).

Table 10. Differences in Specific Self-efficacy Tasks

Trusting the Competence of Others More Than Ones Own Abilities				
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Bachelor Social Work	2.00	.632	-4.01	.000*
Master Social Work	2.73	.750		

* $\underline{p} < .05$.

Independent-samples t-tests were also used to compare the self-esteem and specific self-efficacy scores between students in relation to gender, marital status, professional experience, and professional area of interest. Although there were no significant difference in scores related to marital status and professional area of interest, a statistical difference was found in the way males ($\underline{M} = 3.23$) and females ($\underline{M} = 3.69$) answered the question that pertained to confidence in teaching clients skills to relieve stress ($\underline{t} = -2.34$, $\underline{df} = 85$, $\underline{p} = .022$). This question relates to perceptions about specific self-efficacy tasks (see Table 11).

Table 11. Differences in Specific Self-efficacy Tasks

Confidence in Teaching Clients Skills to Relieve Stress				
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Male	3.23	.725	-2.34	.022*
Female	3.69	.750		

* $p < .05$.

Finally, based on equal variances not assumed, a statistical difference was found in the way those with prior professional experience ($M = 4.10$) and those without prior professional experience ($M = 3.71$) answered the question that related to confidence in advocating on others behalf ($t = 2.82$, $df = 85$, $p = .007$). This question relates to perceptions about specific self-efficacy tasks (see Table 12).

Table 12. Differences in Specific Self-efficacy Tasks

Confidence in Advocating on Others Behalf				
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Prior Experience	4.10	.454	2.81	.007*
No Prior Experience	3.71	.710		

* $p < .05$.

Summary

Chapter Four included a description of the research findings based on the data collected by the respondents. The results included a summary of respondent demographics and six tables that provided bivariate correlations between self-esteem and specific efficacy beliefs related to social work tasks. Independent-samples t-tests were used to compare self-esteem and specific self-efficacy scores between BSW and MSW students. They were also used to determine differences in the student's scores in relation to gender, marital status, professional experience, and professional area of interest.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Included in Chapter Five is a discussion of the data results and overall relevance of the study. Namely, the Pearson Correlations used to measure self-esteem and self-efficacy tasks and the Independent T-tests comparing both MSW and BSW students will be discussed. In addition, limitations surrounding the study will be highlighted with a discussion regarding challenges of the research. Finally, recommendations for the field of social work practice and future research will be discussed, followed by a concluding summarization.

Discussion

This study examined the correlations between self-esteem and self-efficacy among MSW and BSW students. It was designed to question the relevance of student confidence and self-efficacy in performing social work tasks at both the bachelor's and master's level of social work experience. Contrary to our hypothesis, bachelor level social work students rated themselves higher in areas of self-esteem and efficacy in completing social work tasks.

The results of chapter 4 indicated a correlation between self-esteem and case management skills in many areas. Those who reported feeling confident in advocating on others behalf reported feeling like competent people in general, with a strong correlation between confidence in advocacy skills and confidence in networking abilities. This may indicate that social work educators teaching case management skills should also consider student self-esteem development as part of their curriculum.

Several correlations between self-esteem, therapeutic skills, and case management skills were found. A strong relationship existed between those who felt capable to count on themselves and those felt competent in relation to social work tasks. This relationship between self-reliance and feelings of competency suggests that self-reliance may be a variable in predicting social workers' success in their profession. Individuals with higher levels of self-reliance may have better abilities to perform with greater competencies in their case management function.

A correlation existed between confidence in coping with difficult situations and treatment planning/evaluation skills. The ability to cope with challenging situations signifies an ability to be flexible

and to work well under pressure. In effect, this may indicate a greater capability to develop and execute complete treatment plans. When preparing students for professional treatment planning, social work educators should take into account the students' ability to adapt and cope with difficult situations.

Confidence in therapeutic skills such as stress relief also correlated with greater confidence in other therapeutic skills. This may indicate that students who master certain social work skills will also be able to adapt and manage other tasks in professional practice. *

Overall, the correlations indicated a parallel relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy in performing social work tasks. High self-esteem seemed to translate to efficacy beliefs in performing a variety of social work skills related to micro and macro-related tasks. In terms of social work tasks, there seemed to be a consistent correlation between efficacy beliefs in one social work skill area (i.e. case management skills) and confidence in performing skills in other social work skill areas (i.e. supportive, therapeutic, and treatment planning/evaluation skills). Most BSW and MSW students rated themselves high in areas of self-esteem and specific self-efficacy beliefs. However, for a small majority of

the sample there seemed to be a correlation between poor self-esteem and those who indicated a lack of confidence in performing social work tasks.

The results of Independent T-tests indicate differences among MSW and BSW students' self-esteem and self-efficacy tasks. Most notably, BSW students rated themselves higher in their ability to deal with others and their capability to count on themselves to manage things well. BSW students also reported a higher level of confidence in teaching clients to manage problem behaviors. When responding to the question of trusting the competence of others more than one's own abilities, BSW students rated themselves lower than MSW students. This is consistent with the BSW students' high rating of competence.

As previously mentioned, the higher scores of self-esteem and self-efficacy reported by BSW students were not anticipated in the results, and may have occurred for a few reasons. One, unlike MSW students, BSW students may be unaware of the challenges in social work, resulting in a false sense of confidence. Moreover, their confidence may indicate an absence of experience in social work related fields. There also may be issues pertaining to time reality in terms of having limited knowledge about

professional time constraints related to demanding work loads. According to a study conducted by Holden, Meenaghan, Anastas, and Metrey (2002), MSW students who rated themselves higher in self-efficacy at the beginning of their program than at graduation may have done so based upon an increased awareness of social work challenges. The authors further explain that these kinds of challenges may be the catalyst for self-doubt, causing MSW students to reevaluate their professional capabilities.

Gender differences in self-efficacy tasks were also examined. Females reported a higher level of confidence than males in teaching clients stress relief skills. This statistical difference may suggest that females who feel capable in teaching this therapeutic skill may have greater knowledge through personal experience or professional training regarding stress reduction.

In terms of self-efficacy tasks, those with prior social work experience rated themselves higher in their confidence in advocating on others behalf. The results suggest that educators teaching case management skills should also consider prior work experience as a factor that enhances student confidence.

Limitations

The results of this study were limited by the disproportionate number of female versus male respondents, differences in ethnicity, and disparity among the number of MSW and BSW student participants. Females outnumbered the males in this study by a wide margin of 76 females to 13 males. Caucasians comprised 40.4 percent of the study with Latino/Hispanic listed as the second highest ethnic group of 28.1 percent. Due to the limited number of BSW students enrolled in the program, MSW students constituted the majority of respondents with a participation rate of 82 percent.

Additional limitations included respondent self-report and desirable responses. Since the students were rating their responses based on subjective experience, their responses were one-sided and based solely on the participants' interpretation. Taking into account the nature of the study - correlations among MSW and BSW students, respondents were also subject to answering the questions in favor of their academic category in order to enhance study results.

Another limitation of the study included the extraction of insignificant study results. When initially generating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the total

score was .69, less than the desired score of .7 for optimal reliability. Due to our scale's overall low Cronbach alpha, items with low item-total correlations had to be removed. Therefore, the question, "I feel that I get pushed around more than others," was discarded due to a low item-total correlation of -.13, bringing the Cronbach alpha coefficient to a good internal consistency of .72.

Other limitations of the study included the necessary removal of a flawed survey question. The survey initially contained a question regarding primary areas of social support, directing students to check all applicable categories instead of the most significant area of social support. As instructed, most students selected several areas of support instead of one. Due to the multitude of answers, student responses were not recorded and the question was later removed.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

As a result of the data obtained from this study, the researchers have the following recommendations for social work practice. In regard to social work educators, the findings may be of interest to those who question the role of professional experience with their students. While over half of the participants indicated having prior

professional social work experience, only 31.5 percent had between 1-3 years of paid professional social work experience. Educators may be interested to learn how confidence in professional social work experience impacts student self-esteem and self-efficacy. The present study indicated that confidence in supportive, case management, therapeutic, and treatment planning skills all correlated with student self-esteem and self-efficacy.

The two most popular areas of professional interest were listed as Child Welfare and Mental Health, respectively. When dealing with children and families in a child welfare setting, case management skills are essential components of successful case coordination and planning. Likewise, social worker confidence in their ability to advocate on others behalf is integral to the success of both the client and the social worker. As results of this study show, there is a correlation between confidence in advocating on others behalf and feeling like a very competent person. Additional results indicated a significant correlation in the capability to count on oneself to manage things well and the personal feeling of competency. Certain macro level case management skills also denoted relevancy such as confidence in dealing with

other people and confidence in networking with agencies to coordinate services.

In the mental health arena, therapeutic and treatment planning skills are equally important to levels of social work competence. Confidence in teaching clients to relieve stress correlated significantly with confidence in teaching clients how to accomplish tasks more effectively. In addition, the capability to count on oneself to manage things well correlated with confidence in teaching clients how to manage problem behaviors. Confidence in coping with difficult situations correlated strongly with confidence in dealing with other people.

Most notably in the areas of Child Welfare and Mental Health, the concepts of self-esteem and self-efficacy translated to higher levels of self-confidence and professional competence in all social work skill areas. The research suggests that social workers who feel competent in their professional area of interest, may also feel capable in other areas of social work. In terms of professional education and training, the results of this study suggests that it would be of value for educators to consider integrating both constructs of self-esteem and specific self-efficacy into their academic curriculum.

The results of this study are useful in the area of social work scholarship and professional competence. In comparing self-esteem and efficacy beliefs, the research provided insight into determining factors that might predict a student's success in the field of social work. The research findings also suggest that the parallel relationship between high self-esteem and specific self-efficacy may be protective factors that preserve psychological well-being. Furthermore, students who possess high efficacy beliefs and self-evaluative perceptions may exhibit more self-assurance when performing in a professional capacity.

Conclusions

In summary, the findings of this study indicated a positive and similar correlation between self-esteem and self-efficacy among MSW and BSW students. Positive correlations of significant value existed between self-esteem and the following areas: Case management, therapeutic, and treatment planning/evaluation skills. Overall, BSW students rated themselves higher in self-esteem perceptions and self-efficacy tasks. These findings are relevant for social work educators who have

assumed the challenge of preparing students for the multiple tasks and challenges of social work practice.

Considering the findings of this study, further research is warranted in understanding the differences between self-evaluative perceptions and efficacy beliefs among BSW and MSW students. Future studies might focus on predictive factors that lead to higher rates of professional success that extend beyond self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs. In terms of scholarship and professional training, advance research would also be beneficial in understanding factors related to generational differences, professional experience, and age disparities that might contribute to BSW student's confidence level.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Using a 5-point scale, please circle the answer after each statement that most agrees with your response.

1.	I feel confident in my ability to deal with other people. 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
2.	I feel relaxed meeting new people. 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
3.	How confident are you that you can point out client successes to increase their self-confidence? 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
4.	How confident are you that you can help clients feel like they want to open up to you? 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
5.	I feel that I get pushed around more than others. 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
6.	How confident are you that you can teach clients skills to relieve their own stress? 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
7.	How confident are you that you can teach clients how to accomplish tasks more effectively? 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
8.	I feel that others do things much better than I do. 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
9.	I feel embarrassed to let others hear my ideas. 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
10.	How confident are you that you can teach clients how to manage their own problem behaviors? 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always

11.	I feel confident in my ability to cope with difficult situations. 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
12.	How confident are you that you can define the client's problems in specific terms? 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
13.	How confident are you that you can collaborate with clients in setting intervention goals? 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
14.	I feel that I am a very competent person. 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
15.	I trust the competence of others more than my own abilities. 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
16.	How confident are you that you can advocate on others' behalf? 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
17.	How confident are you that you can analyze social problems relevant to the client's problems? 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
18.	I feel that other people are smarter than I am. 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
19.	I feel that I can count on myself to manage things well. 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always
20.	How confident are you that you can network with agencies to coordinate services? 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Some of the Time 4) Most of the Time 5) Always

1. Age _____

2. Gender:

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

3. Ethnicity:

- 1. African/American
- 2. Anglo
- 3. Asian
- 4. American Indian
- 5. Eastern Indian
- 6. Latino/Hispanic
- 7. Other _____
please specify

4. Marital Status:

- 1. Single
- 2. Married or Couple
- 3. Separated
- 4. Divorced
- 5. Widowed
- 6. Other _____
please specify

5. Are you a:

- 1. Full-time BSW student
- 2. Full-time MSW student (First Year)
- 3. Full-time student (Second Year)
- 4. Part-time student (First Year)
- 5. Part-time student (Second Year)
- 6. Part-time student (Third Year)

6. What is your professional area of interest?

- 1. Mental Health
- 2. School Counseling
- 3. Developmental Disabilities
- 4. Child Welfare
- 5. Family Service Agency
- 6. Substance Abuse
- 7. Domestic Violence
- 8. Forensic
- 9. Elderly Services
- 10. Health Care
- 11. Other _____
please specify

7. What was your undergraduate major?

- 1. Psychology
- 2. Sociology
- 3. Liberal Arts
- 4. Human Services
- 5. Social Work (BSW)
- 6. Other _____
please specify

8. Do you have prior professional social work experience?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

9. Please indicate the amount of paid professional social work experience.

- 1. Less than one year
- 2. 1-3 years
- 3. 4-6 years
- 4. 7-9 years
- 5. More than 10 years
- 6. Not applicable

10. Do you have prior volunteer social work experience?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

11. Please indicate the amount of volunteer social work experience.

- 1. Less than one year
- 2. 1-3 years
- 3. 4-6 years
- 4. 7-9 years
- 5. More than 10 years
- 6. Not applicable

12. Primary areas of social support (please check all that apply).

- 1. Friends
- 2. Spouse
- 3. Significant other
- 4. Other students
- 5. Relatives
- 6. Professional colleagues
- 7. Other _____

please specify

13. About how many close friends and close relatives to you have (people you feel at ease with and can talk to about what is on your mind):

Write in number of close friends and close relatives _____

****THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION****

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to evaluate social work students' self-evaluative perceptions and efficacy beliefs regarding social work tasks. This survey is limited to graduates of MSW programs only. Sheila Umeda, a graduate student, is conducting this study, under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Davis. This study has been approved by the Department of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board at California State University, San Bernardino.

In the study, you will be asked to respond to questions that involve self-evaluations and efficacy beliefs regarding performing social work tasks. There are no foreseeable risks to the participants' physical and/or mental health. Participation in this study will take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time.

Please DO NOT put your name on the questionnaire. Your anonymity will be protected. All of your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence by the researcher. All data will be reported in-group form only. You may receive the group results of the study at Pfau Library in the Fall of 2004.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during the study. You are free to not answer any questions, however, we hope that you will answer all of the questions to make the results useful. Any questions about your participation in the study should be directed to Dr. Thomas Davis at (909) 880-3839.

By placing a check mark in the space below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purpose of this study and I freely consent to participate. I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age. Please place a check mark here _____ Date _____.

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to evaluate social work students' self-evaluative perceptions and efficacy beliefs regarding social work tasks. This survey is limited to graduates and undergraduates of MSW and BSW programs only. Amy Edmonds, a graduate student is conducting this study, under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Davis. This study has been approved by the Department of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board at California State University, San Bernardino.

In the study, you will be asked to respond to questions that involve self-evaluations and efficacy beliefs regarding performing social work tasks. There are no foreseeable risks to the participants' physical and/or mental health. Participation in this study will take approximately 15-20 minutes of your time.

Please DO NOT put your name on the questionnaire. Your anonymity will be protected. All of your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence by the researcher. All data will be reported in-group form only. You may receive the group results of the study at Pfau Library in the Fall of 2004.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during the study. You are free to not answer any questions, however, we hope that you will answer all of the questions to make the results useful. Any questions about your participation in the study should be directed to Dr. Thomas Davis at (909) 880-5501 extension 3839.

By placing a check mark in the space below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purpose of this study and I freely consent to participate. I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

Please place a check mark here _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Debriefing Statement

The study you have just completed was designed to evaluate social work students' self-evaluative perceptions and efficacy beliefs regarding specific task performance. In this study, selected questions from the Self-Esteem Rating Scale (SERS) were used to measure self perceptions. In addition, selected questions the Social Work Self-Efficacy Scale (SWSE) were used to measure specific self-efficacy tasks. Combining self-evaluations with efficacy beliefs, the purpose of the study is to evaluate how future social workers feel about performing social work tasks.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the contexts of the survey instrument with other students. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Thomas Davis at (909) 880-3839. Group level results from this study will be available in the Fall of 2004 at Pfau Library, California State University, San Bernardino.

Thank you again for participating in this study.

Debriefing Statement

The study you have just completed was designed to evaluate social work students' self-evaluative perceptions and efficacy beliefs regarding specific task performance. In this study, selected questions from the Self-Esteem Rating Scale (SERS) were used to measure self perceptions. In addition, selected questions from the Social Work Self-Efficacy Scale (SWSE) were used to measure specific self-efficacy tasks. Combining self-evaluations with efficacy beliefs, the purpose of the study is to evaluate how future social workers feel about performing social work tasks.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the contents of this questionnaire with other students. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Thomas Davis at (909) 880-5501 extension 3839. If you experience feelings of distress upon completing this survey, please contact the Psychological Counseling Center at (909) 880-5040. Group level results from this study will be available in the Fall of 2004 at Pfau Library, California State University, San Bernardino.

Thank you, again, for participating in this study.

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

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

1. Data Collection:

Team Effort: Amy Edmonds & Sheila Umeda

2. Data Entry and Analysis:

Team Effort: Amy Edmonds & Sheila Umeda

3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:

a. Introduction and Literature

Team Effort: Amy Edmonds & Sheila Umeda

b. Methods

Team Effort: Amy Edmonds & Sheila Umeda

c. Results

Team Effort: Amy Edmonds & Sheila Umeda

d. Discussion

Team Effort: Amy Edmonds & Sheila Umeda