DISSERTATION

# SELECTION OF SOCIAL WORK AS AN ACADEMIC MAJOR AMONG MALE AND FEMALE UNDERGRADUATE BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirement

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE DISSERTATION PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY LATRA TRACY ROGERS ENTITLED SELECTION OF SOCIAL WORK AS AN ACADEMIC MAJOR AMONG MALE AND FEMALE UNDERGRADUATE BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

SELECTION OF SOCIAL WORK AS AN ACADEMIC MAJOR AMONG MALE AND FEMALE UNDERGRADUATE BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS

The purpose of this research was two-fold. First, this research used a questionnaire to identify factors impacting female and male undergraduate students' motivations for selection of and experiences within the social work major. Second, this research seeks to further investigate the experiences of male BSW students in a female dominated major.

There were 166 participants, 141 females and 23 males from two undergraduate social work programs in Colorado who completed a 32-item questionnaire that was divided into three parts: motivations, experiences, and demographics.

Hanson and McCullagh (1995) identified two factors from 12 items about motivation to select a social work program. Factor 1 was labeled *Service to Others* and Factor 2 was labeled *Job Self Interest.* Students in the current study rated the *Service to Others* items higher than *Job Self Interest* items, and females rated the *Service to Others* scale as more important motivators than did males.

The findings of the study revealed that there were three motivation differences based on gender, two motivation differences based on age, and one motivation difference based on marital status. There were four experience differences found

based on grade level, three experience differences based on Prior Exposure to a Social Worker, and one experience differences based on ethnicity.

Having experienced a psychosocial crisis was not rated as an important motivator to select the major, but males, older students, married students, and those with no prior exposure to a social worker were more likely to rate it as an important motivator than were females, younger, and unmarried students. There were few differences in experiences during the major based on demographics.

In conclusion, both female and male participants in this study have shed light on key motivation and experience factors impacting female and male undergraduate selection of and experiences within the social work major. The male participants who were involved in the follow-up interviews and offered their personal reflections, have helped to shed insight on male experiences within social work and how the profession can attract more males into social work programs.

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# DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to everyone, everywhere, who ever had a dream that seemed impossible to achieve. I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the ultimate test of the human spirit that simply refused to allow me to see anything but achieving and reaching my goal. I would like to dedicate this dissertation to all of my students who encouraged me at every step of the journey. I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my deceased grandmother, Gladys Streeter, who loved me with every fiber of her being and never once forgot to tell me how much I was loved. Finally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, Breanna Auree Rogers. If it had not been for her birth, I would have never thought about going back to school to get a bachelor's degree, let alone a doctorate degree. So, I dedicate all of my academic success to my daughter, Breanna since she has always been the inspiration when times were tough. May you always believe in yourself as much as, I believe in you.

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

Within higher education in the United States, college students are free to explore and choose from a broad array of academic majors (Kramer, Higley, & Olsen, 1994). It has been well established that many college students encounter difficulties with life experiences and the decision-making of selecting an academic major (Theophilides, Terenzini, & Lorang, 1984; Kramer, Higley, & Olsen, 1994). Many students are undecided about their majors and careers, and may change their academic majors numerous times while in college (Lennon, 2004). Several academic fields are characterized by a perceived gender imbalance, and it is also known that gender can impact the choice of certain academic fields of study (Butler, 1990; Chee, Pino, & Smith, 2005; Fortune & Hanks, 1988). Undergraduate social work programs clearly have a gender imbalance where approximately 6 times as many women as men select social work as their academic major. This research explored why undergraduate students selected social work as their academic major. In particular, why male undergraduate students selected social work as their academic major when this discipline has often been described as being female-dominated, having a lower social and economic status, being less prestigious, and often referred to as a touchy, feely, and caring profession. This research examined whether differences existed between women and men related to motivations during the process of choosing social work as an academic major and contributed to the continuance of

gender typing within this major. The research also sought to document experiences once in the major of social work to develop a more complete understanding of males and females who select social work as their academic major.

According to the Council on Social Work Education (Lamm, 2004), in 2001 there were 422 baccalaureate social work programs in the United States with a total enrollment of 31,443 full-time students. Freshmen and sophomores accounted for 11,148 of the full-time students, while 4,157 students were enrolled in one or more social work courses, but not working toward a social work degree. An additional 5,464 students were enrolled part-time (Lennon, 2004).

The majority of baccalaureate social work (BSW) programs do not allow incoming students to declare social work as their official major until their junior year (Lennon, 2004) therefore, only juniors and seniors were examined within this study. The gender distribution of juniors and seniors in 2001 (Lamm, 2004) revealed the majority (86%) of nationally enrolled baccalaureate social work students were female (or roughly 17,232 students), and (13%) or (roughly 2,605 students) were male (Lennon, 2004).

Rompf and Royse (1994) conducted one of the two major studies that explored why students selected social work as their major. The authors examined the mean ages of students and motivating factors for selecting social work, examined the populations students wanted to work with, and looked at prior choices of majors and factors that contributed to their decision to switch majors.

Each semester from spring 1983 to fall 1993, Hanson and McCullagh (1995) conducted a study that examined the major factors of why 746 undergraduate students, enrolled in an introductory social work course at a midwestern university, decided to enter the social work profession. The study explored whether altruism was a motivating factor in their selection of social work as a major. The primary objectives of the study were to identify the path for choosing social work as a major/career, and to gauge the importance of various factors in undergraduates' choice of social work over a 10-year period. Hanson and McCullagh's study, at that time, was believed to be the first to look at student perceptions over such an extended period. Their findings suggested that motivational dimensions for choosing social work as a major had not significantly changed over the 10 years of the study. The current research explored whether some of the same motivational factors have changed or could be substantiated since Hanson and McCullagh's publication. Their findings also suggested that altruism (the principle or practice of unselfish concern for or devotion to the welfare of others) appeared to be the benchmark for these students who selected social work as their major. According to these two authors, students were reported to have been motivated by both *Service to Others* and *Job Self-Interest*, and over the 10 years of the study the rationale or motivations for selecting social work had not significantly changed.

### *Theoretical Perspectives*

The key theoretical perspectives discussed within this brief overview are developmental theory, gender/ethnicity, and student development theory. Then,

more narrowly-focused, theoretical concepts are discussed such as: motivation, choice of major, advising theory, declaring social work as an academic major, life experiences in the social work program, gender differences in life experiences of male and female social work students, traditional verves nontraditional roles, and experiences in or with the social work profession

***Developmental Theory***

Developmental theory is based on Erik Erikson's eight stages of development (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2007), Erikson believed that each stage was built upon the stage that preceded it and paved the way for subsequent stages. Each developmental stage is characterized by psychosocial crises, which are based on physiological developments, as well as parental and/or societal demands.

Ideally, the crisis in each stage should be resolved by the ego in that stage in order for development to proceed correctly. Everyone has a mixture of the attributes and traits that were acquired and obtained during each stage of development. The outcomes of one developmental stage, according to Erikson, are not always permanent, but can be altered and modified by life experiences that occur later in a person's development (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2007).

Erikson's eight stages of development are:

- Stage 1: Infant (Trust vs. Mistrust).
- Stage 2: Toddler (Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt).
- Stage 3: Preschooler (Initiative vs. Guilt).
- Stage 4: School-Age Child (Industry vs. Inferiority).
- Stage 5: Adolescent (Identity vs. Role Confusion).

- Stage 6: Young Adult (Intimacy vs. Isolation).
- Stage 7: Middle-Age Adult (Generativity vs. Stagnation).
- Stage 8: Older Adult (Integrity vs. Despair).

Erikson's fifth stage, Identity verses Role Confusion (or diffusion) was used within this study. Identity verses Role Confusion states:

> that during this stage of development the adolescent is presently concerned with how they appear to others. Ego identity is the accrued confidence that the inner sameness and continuity prepared in the past are matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others, as evidenced in the promise of a career. The inability to settle on a school or occupational identity is disturbing (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2007, p. 258).

***Gender/Ethnicity***

There has been strong evidence within the literature that an individual's gender and ethnicity can have significant influences on a person's life experiences in regards to sex and gender role stereotypes, such as expectations, opportunities, pursuits, aspirations, motivations, and choices. In Pleck's (1981) book, *The Myth of Masculinity,* he specified ten propositions about sex role strain. Pleck asserted that gender roles were defined by gender role stereotypes. He theorized that gender role stereotypes were contradictory and inconsistent and were regularly violated by many individuals who undertook nontraditional pursuits. Pleck reported that violating gender role stereotypes was common and could lead to social condemnation, and overconformity of gender role stereotypes could have severe consequences on individual choices. This study explored whether or not some of these same consequences were reported by male students who selected social work as their major.

Cross and Bagilhole (2002), reported that gender role stereotypes can be found within professions where one gender dominates a profession by 70%, or more, of the workforce. For example, occupations like healthcare and social work where females are 81% of the workforce, and education where females are 71% of the workforce, would be considered gender-dominated professions. Predominately male gender role stereotypes can be found in professions like construction, where males are 91% of the workforce, and in agriculture and fishing where males are 78% of the workforce. In industries, such as energy and water supply, males are 77% of the workforce. In transport, storage, and communication males are 75% of the workforce, and in manufacturing males are 76% of the workforce. These would all be considered gender-dominated professions (Cross & Bagilhole, 2002).

***Student Development Theory***

Student development theory expands and builds upon Erikson's Identity verses Role Confusion stage of psychosocial development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2007). Developmental growth within the identity stage is achieved through college students' successful mastery of tasks presented to them during each stage. Both sets of authors stated that developmental growth is the process of integrating the inherent conflict or crisis between the previous ways that college students lived, compared to their newly acquired, more effective, and developmentally advanced ways of dealing with life experiences (Chickering & Reisser). According to Cross and Bagilhole (2002) far too often these students were simply left to their own

strategies in dealing with life experiences, psychosocial conflicts and academic and personal crises.

### *Research Problem*

The purpose of this study was to extend the limited research on the process by which undergraduate male and female students selected social work as their major. A number of motivating factors, such as life experiences, developmental theory, gender/ethnicity, and student development theory, have been identified as having a potential impact on an undergraduate student's selection of an academic major.

This study collected data from self-administered questionnaires and follow-up telephone interviews. The questionnaire in this study contained 32 items and 3 different sets of questions. Part One addressed major selection, utilizing 12 questions developed by Hanson and McCullagh and requests student responses to 15 questions using an 11-point scale: 10 = Very Important to 0 = Very Unimportant. Part Two asked questions related to undergraduate social work experiences using a 6-point scale: 6 = Experienced Very Often to 1 = Experienced Very Little. Part Three consisted of demographic information and requested student responses to 9 questions. The follow-up telephone interviews with male students contained 15 questions and required about 30 minutes to complete.

### *Research Questions*

The five questions posed in this research were:

1a. What motivating factors do BSW students report having impacted their selection of social work as a major?

1b. Do males and females differ on such motivating factors?

2a. What are the experiences reported by BSW students while in the social work major?

2b. Do males and females students differ on such experiences?

3. Are these differences, if any, in student responses to motivations and experiences based upon the demographic variables: (a) age, (b) marital status, (c) grade level or (d) ethnicity?

4a. Does prior experience with a change in academic major impact reported motivation or experiences within the major?

4b. Does prior exposure to the profession of social work impact reported motivation or experiences within the major?

5. What do male undergraduate BSW students report related to the experiences of being in a female dominated major?

Based upon the types of questions posed in this study, the primary approach used was quantitative non-experimental, using the comparative approach.

***Definition of Terms***

*Academic Advising* is the process by which an academic advisor is assigned to an undergraduate student based on his or her academic major. Students who do not declare a major (undeclared) were assigned an advisor who helped them develop an academic plan. The advisors' basic responsibilities included helping students set academic goals, understand degree requirements, select courses, and determine career expectations.

*Academic Major Selection* was when a student officially declared an academic major in order to earn a bachelor's degree.

*Academic Advising Theory* holds that students' choices of academic majors depended significantly on their career interests.

*Altruism* was the principle or practice of unselfish concern for or devotion to the welfare of others.

*Development Theory* was based on Erik Erikson's eight stages of development where he believed that each stage was built upon the stage that preceded it, and paved the way for subsequent stages.

*Gender Theory* holds that a students' gender, history of oppression, victimization, sense of self, femininization, and empowerment would depict their career paths.

*Minority Students* were African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Chicano/Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and "other minority" (Council of Social Work Education, 2004).

*Motivations.* A motive was an impulse that caused a person to act. Motivation was an internal process that made a person move towards a goal. Motivation, like intelligence, cannot be directly observed. Instead, motivations could only be inferred by noting a persons' behavior.

*Nontraditional Occupations* were defined by the U.S. Department of Labor as jobs in which 25% or less, of the employees in that occupation were held by females.

*Student Development Theory* expanded and built upon Erikson's Identity verses Role Confusion stage of psychosocial development. Developmental growth within the identity stage was achieved through college students' successful mastery of tasks presented to them during each stage of their education.

*Undergraduate Baccalaureate Social Work Programs* was any undergraduate social work program that was fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (Lamm, 2004).

*Undergraduate Student* was any student enrolled in a college or university and currently taking classes toward their first bachelor's degree.

***Limitations***

When considering the relatively low 13% national average of males enrolled in undergraduate social work programs across the country (Council on Social Work Education, 2004), an anticipated weakness of this study was recruiting a sufficient number of male student participants. The number of male enrollments in the educational institutions used in this study was expected to be predictably low. The pool of available male students was reduced even further because only junior and senior level male students were asked to participate. Another limitation was that the results were not generalizable because the findings in this study were specific to only two out of three undergraduate social work programs in Colorado. Therefore the results of this study could yield considerably different results depending on the demographic background of the undergraduate BSW students.

There are also discrepancies among social work programs across the country about at which grade level they should officially admit students into their academic programs. For example, Colorado State University's Social Work program admits freshmen officially into their program, while Metropolitan State College of Denver's Social Work program only admits juniors. Another limitation of this study was that there are three undergraduate social work programs in Colorado, but only two participated. These three social work programs are located at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, and Metropolitan State College of Denver, and Colorado State University in Pueblo. However, due to unsuccessful attempts to include the social work program at Colorado State University in Pueblo, their program was excluded. Therefore, only data collected from students at Colorado State University in Fort Collins and Metropolitan State College of Denver were used in this study.

***Delimitations***

A constraint of this study was that it only focused on junior and senior level, male and female, social work students. Though including freshmen and sophomore students could have potentially increased the number of males in the study. Hanson and McCullagh, and Rompf and Royse did not include freshmen and sophomores in their studies.

## *Need or Significance*

It has been established that many college students encounter difficulties with life experiences and academic major decision-making. Many majors have been characterized as having perceived gender imbalances, for example, the

distribution of junior and senior social work students, which is 86% female and 13% male (Lennon, 2004).

According to Rompf and Royse (1994), who have explored the reasons why undergraduate social work students selected the social work profession, 80.9% of social work students considered selecting another academic area before deciding to declare social work as their major. This research sought to explore the relationship between a student's life experiences, motivational factors, gender/ethnicity and their choice of selecting social work as their major.

It would be to the advantage of social work programs to understand why undergraduate students select social work as their major, therefore aiding programs in determining avenues for increasing recruitment of students and marketing options. For example, whenever this researcher has guest lectured in other departments, many students were amazed that social workers could engage in a variety of different micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practices with diverse and oppressed client populations. In the social work courses that this researcher has taught, many students readily admitted that they did not fully understand the broadness and marketability of an undergraduate social work degree compared to other socially oriented professions.

If social work programs are to do a better job in marketing the profession to both male and female students, programs must first understand the motivating factors that have been identified as having an impact on students' selection of and experiences within their academic major. In addition if there are differences between males and females on these factors, knowledge of these differences may

help to enhance the recruitment of males into the social work program and profession.

***Researcher's Perspective***

It is my ultimate goal to discover mechanisms for increasing male enrollment in the social work profession by removing perceived barriers and misconceptions that potential male students might have about social work. As a male social worker, an assistant professor of social work, and a doctoral candidate, whenever I have encountered a male student in a course that I was teaching I have always been intrigued about the motivational and experience factors that have contributed to their decision in declaring social work as their academic major. I am a male social work professional who has a vested interest in wanting to increase the number of males within social work programs. This has the potential of creating some level of unintended bias within this researcher while conducting follow up male interviews and during the interpretation of the overall results.

# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Each year in the United States, hundreds of thousands of newly accepted students enter into colleges and universities in pursuit of an academic major, hoping to graduate with a marketable degree (Kramer, Higley, & Olsen, 1994). Current literature suggests that during their higher education experience many of these students will encounter some level of psychosocial disharmony, academic impediments, career selection indecisiveness, and college life issues/problems (Theophilides, Terenzini, & Lorang, 1984; Kramer, Higley, & Olsen, 1994). Lennon (2004), examined why some college students selected an academic major while others remained undecided, and why some students frequently switched academic majors due to decision-making difficulties during their college experience (Theophilides et al, 1984; Kramer et al, 1994).

Many academic fields are characterized by a perceived gender imbalance, and it is also known that gender can impact certain academic fields of study (Butler, 1990; Chee, Pino, & Smith, 2005; Fortune & Hanks, 1988). An apparent relationship between gender imbalance within undergraduate social work programs and a student's choice of a major appears to exist since there are many more women than men selecting social work as their field of study.

### *Theoretical Perspective*

In presenting and discussing several theoretical perspectives related to the choice of major this researcher sought to contribute to the understanding of why students select social work as their declared major, and their experiences once in the major (See Figure 1).

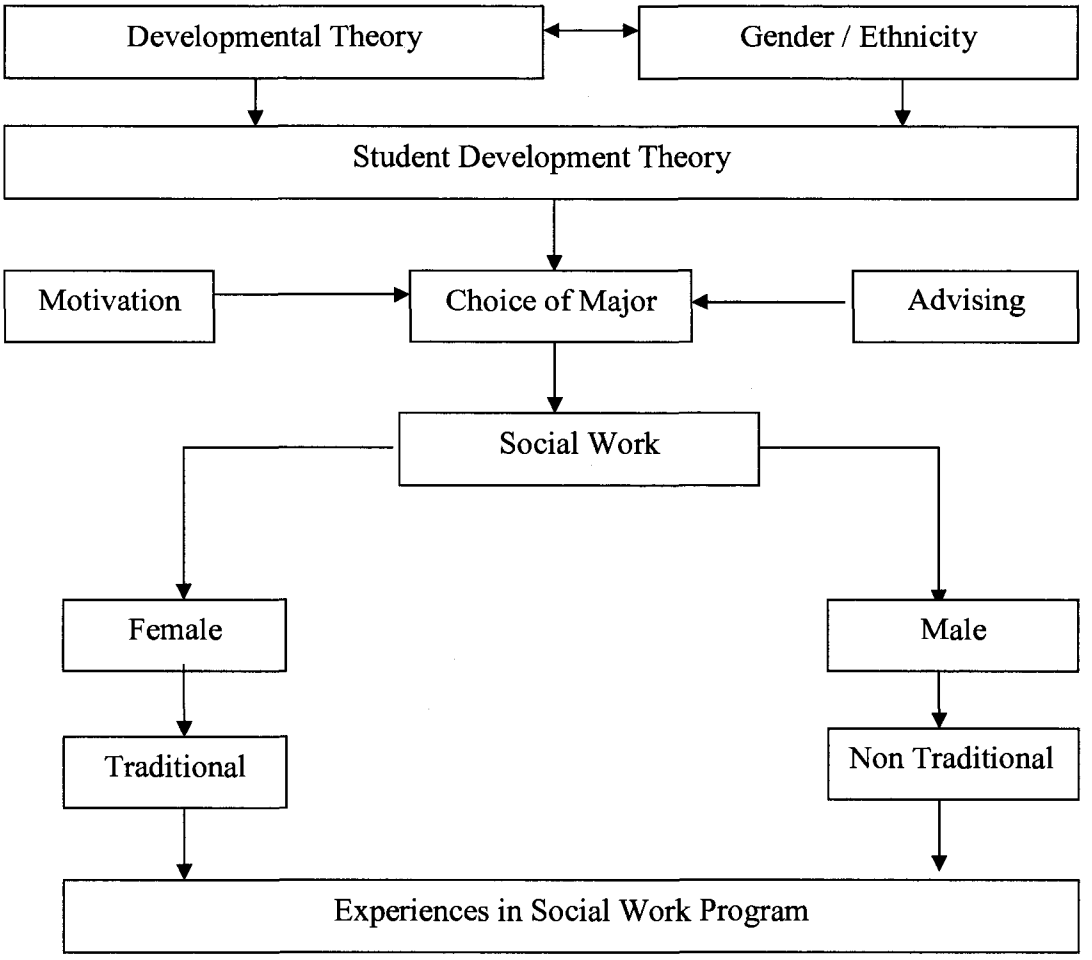


*Figure 1:*

*Theoretical Framework Used In This Study*

(Buchan, Baez & Rogers, 2007)

Theories related to gender and ethnicity and identity development help lay the foundation for student development theory and individuals motivation for a choice of major and ultimately and professional identity. Each of these theoretical components is presented separately while recognizing their integration impacts both student motivation to choose social work and experiences once in the major.

***Developmental Theory***

Erikson's theory consists of eight stages of development. Each stage is characterized by a different conflict that must be resolved by the individual. When the environment makes new demands on people, the conflicts arise. The person is faced with a choice between two ways of coping with each crisis, adaptive or maladaptive. For example, adaptive behaviors are a type of behavior that is used to adjust to another type of behavior or situation. In essence, adaptive behaviors are skills that a person learns in the process of adapting to his/her surroundings. Well maladaptive behaviors are frequently used as an indicator of abnormality or mental dysfunction, since its assessment is relatively free from subjectivity (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2007).

Erikson's eight stages of development are:

- Stage 1: Infant (Trust vs. Mistrust) - needs maximum comfort with minimal uncertainty to trust himself/herself, others, and the environment.
- Stage 2: Toddler (Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt) - works to master physical environment while maintaining self-esteem.

- Stage 3: Preschooler (Initiative vs. Guilt) - begins to initiate, not imitate, activities; develops a conscience and sexual identity.
- Stage 4: School-Age Child (Industry vs. Inferiority) - tries to develop a sense of self-worth by refining skills.
- Stage 5: Adolescent (Identity vs. Role Confusion) - tries integrating many roles (child, sibling, student, athlete, worker) into a self-image under role model and peer pressure.
- Stage 6: Young Adult (Intimacy vs. Isolation) - learns to make personal commitment to another as a spouse, parent, or partner.
- Stage 7: Middle-Age Adult (Generativity vs. Stagnation) - seeks satisfaction through productivity in career, family, and civic interests.
- Stage 8: Older Adult (Integrity vs. Despair) - reviews life accomplishments, deals with loss and preparation for death (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman).

The developmental milestones of Erikson's model, examined in this study, was Stage 5: Adolescent (Identity vs. Role Confusion), which talks about how:

- students attempt to develop identities and ideas about strengths, weaknesses, goals, occupations, sexual identity, and gender roles.
- students try on different identities when going through an identity crisis, and use their friends to reflect identities back to them such as; *Identity Achievement* (crises and commitment), *Moratorium* (crises and commitment later), *Foreclosure* (commitment without crises), and *Identity Diffusion* (no crises, no commitment). If students resolve this

> crisis, they develop *fidelity* or the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems (can be friends with very different people). If students fail to resolve the crisis, they develop *identity diffusion*; their sense of self is unstable and threatened; too little identity and they may join cults or hate groups; too much identity and they may show fanaticism (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2007, p. 258).

Development up to Stage 5 in Erikson's model, mostly depends upon what is done to us. From here on out, development depends primarily upon what we do. Adolescence in this stage is neither a child nor an adult; life is definitely getting more complex as they attempt to find their own identity, struggle with social interactions, and grapple with moral issues (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2007). Erikson stated that during this stage the task is to discover who we are as individuals, separate from our families and members of a wider society. Unfortunately for those around us, this process may cause many individuals to go into a period of withdrawing from responsibilities, which Erikson called a *moratorium.* If individuals are unsuccessful in navigating this stage they will experience role confusion, upheaval, or indecisiveness.

According to Erikson, a significant task for individuals is to establish a philosophy of life. In this process we tend to think in terms of ideas, which are conflict-free, rather than harsh reality, which is not. The problem, according to Erikson is that we do not have much experience and find it easy to substitute ideas for experience. However, we can also develop strong devotion to friends and

causes (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman). It is no surprise that students' most significant relationships are with peer groups in the formation of their personal and professional selves.

***Gender/Ethnicity***

Pleck (1981) stated that gender roles are defined by gender role stereotypes. He theorized that gender role stereotypes were contradictory and inconsistent, and were regularly violated by many individuals who went into nontraditional occupations. Pleck reported that violating gender role stereotypes is common and could lead to social condemnation, and overconformity of gender role stereotypes, which could have severe consequences on individual choices.

Nowell and Hedges's (1998) study revealed that gender differences in education persisted in the United States even after several decades of intense scrutiny and policy changes. They stated that education has been like a two edged sword for women because it has been a source of advancement, empowerment, and liberation; but it has also reproduced gender inequalities. These authors believed that there is little doubt that education serves as a key for understanding gender issues, in part, because it largely mirrors social relationships in society. For example, Nowell and Hedges reported that by examining gender roles in higher education, leading scholars and researchers have been able to learn that one's gender is related to one's educational attainment, which in turn is highly related to income.

Several studies found that the representation of women, gender, and racial segregation was another important component when selecting a college major.

Francesco and Hakel's (1981) findings revealed that men and women were differentially perceived with respect to appropriate work expectations. Luzzo (1995) suggested that little doubt existed that gender was an important moderating variable in college students' career development. Early investigations searching for simple gender differences in career development were extremely limited.

Chee, Pino and Smith (2005) stated that even after several decades of intense scrutiny and policy changes, gender differences in education still persist within the United States. They reported that education was a source of advancement, empowerment, and liberation for women, but it also produced gender inequalities.

Cross and Bagilhole (2002) reported that gender role stereotypes can be found within professions where one gender has less than a 30% representation of the total workforce in that occupation. Pleck (1981) reported that there has been strong evidence that an individual's gender and ethnicity can have significant influences on a person's life experiences in regards to sex and gender role stereotypes, such as, expectations, opportunities, pursuits, aspirations, motivations, and choices.

***Student Development Theory***

Within the literature, student development has been described as both a theory and a philosophy about the purposes of higher education. Chickering and Reisser (1993) reported that student development theory was a directional movement toward greater complexity and competence. Student development theory is integrative in nature; it requires mutuality, equality, cooperation, and collaboration among all parties such as, students, faculty, staff, and

administration. According to Chickering and Reisser, student development models should stimulate and support students as they progress through their own unique developmental process, and the more the development can be individualized the better. These researchers believed that this is why it is so important to work with students one-on-one because programs based on student development models were designed to stimulate self-understanding, to strengthen skills, and/or to increase knowledge.

Student development theory expands and builds upon Erikson's Identity verses Role Confusion stage of psychosocial development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Developmental growth within the identity stage is achieved through college students' successful mastery of tasks presented to them during that stage. Both authors stated that developmental growth is the process of integrating the inherent conflict or crisis between the previous ways that college students lived compared to their newly acquired, more effective, and developmentally advanced ways of dealing with life experiences (Chickering & Reisser).

College student development theory was a frequently utilized and accepted framework for interpreting and understanding the developmental stages college students experience while in school (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The authors addressed three broad issues of identity, which were: (1) "Career development: Who am I? What am I to become? (2) Defining one's sexuality and initiating the development of the capacity for intimacy: Whom am I to love? What does mature love mean anyway? (3) Finding and

integrating an adult philosophy of life, morality, and values: What am I to believe? Am I to accept my heritage or do I have to decide what I am really going to stand for?" (p. 231). The basic educational value is enhanced when one uses theory to inform practice by designing and providing environments that help students both learn and mature. The well-rounded development of the whole person is valued as a primary goal.

The basic assumptions guiding Chickering and Reisser's view of student development movement are:

- The individual student must be considered as a whole.
- Each student is a unique person and must be treated as such.
- The total environment of the student is educational and must be used to help the student achieve full development.
- The major responsibility for a student's personal and social development rests with the student and his/her personal resources (p. 231).

***Choice of Major***

Selecting the most appropriate academic major could be the most important decision that students can make since this will determine the path and direction that will guide them through their undergraduate education (Porter & Umbach, 2006). Hearn (1980) reported that college students tended to major in areas that were relevant to their career plans, and academic departments appeared to be the most significant college level influence on their vocation related values,

attitudes, and aspirations. Students have selected their majors due to a number of extrinsic, intrinsic, and experiential factors.

Hu reported that, "student selection of a major is in general, a product of the combination of the students' perceptions of labor market variables, conditions and personality orientation, which are facilitated and enhanced by college experiences" (Hu, 1996, p. 41). Hu stated that economic perceptions and personality together accounted for 77.5 % of the variance in students' choices of a major. For many students the process of deciding on an undergraduate major typically involved making the selection, and later changing their minds one or more times before graduating (Peterson, 2006).

Kramer, Higley, and Olsen (1994) reported that approximately 75% of students would change their major at least once. Theophilides, Terenzini, and Lorang (1984) reported that most students changed their majors in their first two years of college. They said that 32% of those who switched their majors did so during the junior year and as many as 13% during the senior year. Of particular interest, their study revealed that the number of students changing majors seemed to be increasing over time.

Peterson (2006) claimed that students who switched majors did not exhibit peculiar traits that would distinguish them from students who never changed majors. According to Kramer, Higley, and Olsen (1994), female students changed majors slightly less often than males. However, Anderson, Creamer, and Cross (1989) reported finding no differences based on either race or gender. However there was significant disagreement within the literature

about whether students who changed their majors tended to switch to less academically challenging fields. Feldman, Smart and Ethington (2004) found that nearly two-thirds of the students who changed their majors still remained in their academic college or the school they initially chose, although not necessarily in the same major. An example of this would be a student changed his major from psychology to social work, or from chemistry to biology. The student switched majors but still remained within similar fields. Smart et al., compared the intentions of those who first declared their major with their final major at graduation and found that, "students in their sample who initially selected a social academic environment were the most likely to remain with their choice, while those choosing an enterprising academic environment were least likely to do so" (p. 528). Likewise other studies have shown that, "when students chose a major on their college application and later became dissatisfied with that choice, the majority of these students then migrated to a totally different area of study" (Kramer et a1., 1994, p. 92).

There were two major points of view expressed in the literature about undecidedness. According to Anderson, Creamer and Cross (1989) student undecidedness in their selection of a major was a prevalent condition on college campuses in the 1980's. The number of entering undecided students varied from 22% to 50%, and the percentage of students who changed their major at least once after their initial enrollment in college varied from 50% to 70% (Anderson, Creamer & Cross, 1989; Gordon, 1984; Titley & Titley,1980). Anderson et al., talked about several studies where

being undecided about selecting an academic major was associated with undesirable qualities such as lower grade performance, higher attrition rates, and troublesome personal qualities like, dependency and uncertain identity. The researchers defined "undecided" as an administrative term that identifies students who have not chosen a major field of study. Undecided students were reported to not only need assistance in planning academic courses, but also needing career and academic advising services.

***Role and Types of Advising***

Bertram (1996) stated that a major role of academic advisors involved assisting undecided students with the selection of their academic majors. Research has indicated that most students with declared and undeclared majors acknowledged some level of uncertainty or tentativeness about how to progress through college (Titley & Titley, 1980). Bertram reported that it is the role of advising professionals to adhere to a rational choice model. Advising undecided students follows a general career-planning model, where the model consists of personal interviews and exercises aimed at gathering information about students' interests, aptitudes, values, and personalities. Bertram then compared this information against known work characteristics of individuals in those respective positions. This matching process attempted to maximize major selection by predicting the likelihood of successfully declared majors to those professions. Bertram stated that deciding on a major requires students to think about themselves and that this was a significant challenge since many college students had just begun to make

sense out of their lives. Deciding on a major may demand a developmental stage, which some students have not reached yet, therefore they require academic advising to guide them (Bertram, 1996).

There are many different types of advising theories that were found in the literature. The three most prominent ones are; student centered advising, academically centered advising, and developmental advising.

*Student Centered Advising* is an approach to advising that aids the student in developing the skills and behaviors needed to become an active learner and expands the domain of concern to include learning through the whole college experience. The main focus of student centered advising was to merge the curricular and co-curricular aspects together in order to allow for an holistic development of a student learner (Melander, 2002).

*Academically Centered Advising* exhibits some merit (Lowenstein, 1999). This model facilitates the student's ability to interact with and benefit from institutional academic programs, course sequencing, complementary course scheduling, and aims towards gaining the tools for lifelong learning (Lowenstein). This model displays a requisite focus on the academic core of advising and on fostering a love of learning. This includes advising students about subcategories of advising which are course, program, and scheduling choices (Melander, 2002).

According to Melander (2002) course choice is concerned with students gaining knowledge: of courses available, any special information regarding courses, perequisities, graduation requirements, the appropriate sequence for the university, of rules and regulations of the college regarding probation and

suspension, limit on course load (academic and work limitations), of honors courses or remedial courses, of instructors and their teaching styles, of student ability through test scores and high school record, and of course content. Program choice is concerned with students gaining knowledge: of programs available in the college, program requirements, university requirements for transfer programs, how others have performed in the program, and the follow-up success of those who have completed the program. Scheduling courses is concerned with students gaining knowledge: of schedules, the systems of scheduling and changing the schedule, work and commuting requirements.

*Developmental Advising* focuses on helping students identify life goals and acquire skills and attitudes, which promotes intellectual and personal growth and helps them to become successful students in a way that is uniquely theirs (Melander, 2002).

Melander (2002) proposed seven conditions that are essential to developmental advising which were: 1) Academic advising is a continuous process with an accumulation of personal contacts between advisor and student; these contacts have both direction and purpose. 2) Advising must be concerned with quality of life issues, and the advisor has a responsibility to attend to the quality of the student's experience in college. 3) Advising is goal related; the goals should be established and owned by the student and should encompass academic, career, and personal development areas. 4) Advising requires the establishment of a caring human relationship, one in which the advisor must take primary responsibility for its initial development. 5) Advisors should be models for

students to emulate, specifically demonstrating behaviors that lead to self-responsibility and self-directedness. 6) Advisors should seek to integrate the services and expertise of both academic and student affairs professionals. 7) advisors should seek to utilize as many campus and community resources as possible.

### *Motivations*

Brooks and Bertz (1990) reported that when college students chose careers, it was considered related to high expectancy, value and attractiveness.

### *Student Motivations*

Student motivation has to do with students' desire to participate in the learning process, but it also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement or noninvolvement in academic activities (Rubin & Johnson, 1984; Rubin, Johnson, & De Weaver, 1986). Although students may be equally motivated to perform tasks, the sources of their motivation may differ. For example, a student who is intrinsically motivated will undertake academic learning activities for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits, or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes within them (Rubin & Johnson, 1984). On the other hand, an extrinsically motivated student performs an academic task in order to obtain some reward or avoid some punishment external to the activity itself, such as grades, class rank, or scholarship award potential (Rubin & Johnson).

### *Motivations for Selecting Social Work*

Students have different motivations and aspirations about why they pursue certain academic majors. In social work, although the desire to help others is an

obvious prerequisite, a wide range of other personal and social determinants can affect motivation for undertaking a career in social work. These include previous employment experience; interest in specific areas, such as working with children and families; therapeutic work; a desire to address social problems; the influence of role models; financial remuneration; job security; and opportunities for career development (Rubin & Johnson, 1984; Rubin, Johnson, & De Weaver, 1986; Butler, 1990).

A study conducted by Getzel (1983), found that a desire to help others was the top reason often cited by social work students in selecting social work, whereas, Marsh's (1988) study revealed that working with people, and a need to better understand oneself were among the most frequent influential and motivational factors. Butler's (1990) study reported that most students wanted to work with disadvantaged client populations while embracing social work's professional values, concepts, principles, philosophies, and code of ethics.

A study by Rompf and Royse (1994) found that social work students were, "more likely than a comparison group to report having grown up in a family where there was psychosocial trauma" (p. 169). It was also found that a significant proportion of students (87%) were influenced in their choice of a social work career by strong/moderate religious values (Rompf & Royse, 1994). Other studies, focused on the relative significance of various motivating factors, and have been linked to debates around the impact of professional socialization in sustaining commitment to social work and shaping career choices (Rubin & Johnson, 1984; Rubin, Johnson, & De Weaver, 1986).

Reamer (1992) explored whether or not social work students believed that their decision to major in social work was similar to a religious calling or a career of medicine. Reamer revealed that what motivated students to go into social work had to do with why people choose any career. He explained that traditional gender roles and expectations were based on the assumption that females were more nurturing and emotional, which explained why certain professions have more females than males. He also talked about the natural tendency for males and females to select certain occupations in early childhood. Males were guided and motivated by society to go into masculine professions and females were oriented towards homemaking or going into female professions (Reamer).

***Social Work***

Gibelman and Schervish (1993) conducted a national study of the labor market and concluded that social workers would be in high demand for the next decade due to high turn-over rates, burnout, retirement of aging baby boomers, rising health care costs, the increase of home health care, and the cost effectiveness of using social workers. Lennon (2004) reported that the demand for social workers would be in medical hospitals, mental health facilities, for profit and nonprofit social welfare agencies, and in schools. Gibelman and Schervish reported that this demand was due to cost saving measures driven by managed care and hospitals in an effort to address growing needs.

Students have many different motivations and aspirations in selecting certain academic majors over others. This researcher speculated that a sincere desire to help others, to work with disadvantaged and oppressed populations, along with a

wide range of other personal and social determinant factors affect the ultimate rationale for undertaking a career in social work.

According to Lennon (2004), some students enrolled into social work programs because they perceived it to be an easier major compared to psychology, medicine, law, or business. Cole and Lewis (1993) asserted that the national acceptance rates in social work departments were generally high, thereby reducing selectivity. They commented that some scholars had written that social work departments, in most cases, were very lax about admissions and graduation requirements because they did not fail students, ask students to withdraw for poor attendance, or for poor practicum performance in the field, out of fear of legal repercussions. Both researchers even questioned if there were any rigorous procedures in place to assess students at the beginning and at the end of their social work program to make sure that they were suitable for the profession. Therefore coupled with the lax graduation requirements, students might view social work as a very easy and substandard academic major (Cole & Lewis, 1993).

### *Findings of the Center for Health Workforce Studies School of Public Health, and the NASW Center for Workforce Studies National Association of Social Workers*

There were three prior major studies that helped set the stage for this research, which were the; Center for Health Workforce Studies School of Public Health and

the NASW Center for Workforce Studies National Association of Social Workers, Rompf and Royse, and Hanson and McCullagh.

In 2004 the Center for Health Workforce Studies School of Public Health (CHWS), and the NASW Center for Workforce Studies National Association of Social Workers (NASW), conducted a collaborative study that gathered information about social workers in the United States (CHWS & NASW, 2004). Their findings and conclusions are based primarily on the responses to a survey of a stratified random sample of approximately 10,000 social workers employed in numerous settings in the United States (CHWS & NASW).

According to CHWS and NASW (2004) social work is the largest and most important social service profession in the United States. Their joint report revealed that social workers help people function better in numerous ways, such as in their environments, improving their relationships with others, and helping them to solve personal and family problems through individual, social, and psychological counseling. Their report indicated that social workers may provide counseling, education, psychotherapy, and/or other services to help their clients in a wide range of settings, including public agencies, private organizations, and private practice arrangements. Some social workers function as members of interdisciplinary teams that evaluate and manage the care of patients in health care settings like hospitals and long-term care facilities (CHWS & NASW, 2004).

Since significantly more women than men are employed in the social work profession, the likelihood that traditional social work roles and functions will be performed by female social workers is a strong possibility. CHWS and NASW's

(2004) joint report discussed their findings in terms of traditional experiences in social work, gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, highest degree, employment, and roles. Each one will be outlined below.

***Experiences in the Social Work Profession***

CHWS and NASW's (2004) report revealed that social workers are disproportionately women (81%) compared to (51%) of the population. CHWS and NASW reported that 79% of National Association of Social Workers are women. The report revealed social workers were most likely to be involved with the tasks of screening/assessments (93%), information/referrals (91%), crisis intervention (89%), individual counseling (86%), and client education (86%), though their report also revealed that these were not necessarily tasks on which they spent a majority of their time. However, there were only four tasks where a significant amount of social workers reported spending more than half of their time. These tasks were individual counseling (29%), psychotherapy (25%), case management (12%), and screening/assessments (10%). According to their report, fewer than 10% of social workers reported spending more than half their time on any other task (CHWS & NASW).

***Experiences by Age***

CHWS and NASW's (2004) report revealed that social workers would become significantly older when compared to the U.S. civilian labor force in 2004. Their report indicated that nationally a higher percentage of social workers were between the ages of 45 and 54 (33% compared to 23%), ages 55 to 64 (24%

compared to 11%) and 65 and older (5% compared to 3%). It also means that many social workers will bring significant previous life experiences to their work.

### *Experiences by Educational Background*

CHWS and NASW's (2004) report revealed that a Masters of Social Work (MSW) was the most common first degree earned when entering into the social work profession. They also reported that 59% of social workers entered the field with a MSW degree, and another 31% entered with a Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) degree. Younger social workers were far more likely to have entered the field of social work through a BSW program, which reflects the national growth in social work programs, particularly at the undergraduate BSW level. Non-degreed social workers accounted for most of the remaining (8%), with a very small number of social workers reporting a Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) or PhD as their first social work degree (CHWS & NASW).

## *Rompf and Royse*

One of the few significant studies that examined students' selection of social work was done by Rompf and Royse (1994), who explored the influence of selected life experiences in students' declaration of social work as their academic major. The life experience factors that they explored were prior employment, volunteering, and the influence of significant professionals. At the time of Rompf and Royse's study, the literature on the reasons students chose to major in social work was virtually nonexistent. An earlier study conducted by Pins (1963), explored factors that led to undergraduate students choosing social work as a career. Pins's study supported the general belief that altruism, social idealism, and

a commitment to social change were major factors for students in opting to select social work as their career choice.

To address this gap, Rompf and Royse's (1994) study surveyed undergraduate baccalaureate (BSW) and graduate (MSW) social work students about family dysfunction and selected influences that may have affected their decision to enter social work. They compared the responses of social work students with a sample of students enrolled in first-year English classes. They surveyed 415 social work students and a comparison group of 203 nonsocial work students. Their data revealed that social work students were more likely to report experiencing problems such as alcoholism and emotional illness within their families as a contributing attribute when considering a choice of majors.

During the fall semester of 1990, Rompf and Royse (1994) took convenience samples of undergraduate social work majors from five universities. The universities were; Moorhead State University, Moorhead, MN ($n$ = 75), University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY ($n$ = 91), Morehead State University, Morehead, KY ($n$ = 40), Spalding University, Louisville, KY ($n$ = 19), and Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY ($n$ = 18).

To obtain a comparison group of varied majors, Rompf and Royse sampled students enrolled in first-year English classes at the University of Kentucky and 203 surveys were obtained. Their surveys were completed anonymously and collected during class time. No students were reported to have refused to participate in the survey. Rompf and Royse attempted to make sure that the samples of undergraduate (BSW), and graduate social work students (MSW) were

equally distributed in both groups. In comparison the gender of both groups were equivalent, 58% of the MSW students, and 56% of the BSW students were female (Rompf & Royse, 1994).

The first portion of Rompf and Royse's instrument was designed to measure childhood trauma and adult life satisfaction in random adult samples. One of the questions on their instrument read, "While you were growing up, did you experience any of the following within your family?" (a) Death of a parent, brother, or sister, (b) Family break-up, (c) Parents unhappily married, (d) Child abuse or neglect, (e) Serious or life-threatening illness, (f) Alcoholism or drug addiction, and (g) Emotional problems. Students had three choices of answers, "Yes," "No," or "Don't Know" (p. 3).

In the second portion of Rompf and Royse's instrument, students were asked what impact the questions posed had on their career choice. Other questions were designed to elicit student responses about working for social service agencies as an employee or volunteer, influential role models, religious values, and gender and age when deciding upon a career in social work. To protect students, no personal or identifying information was sought. Rompf and Royse omitted the questions on social work employment and influential role models in the comparison group's questionnaire.

The seven variables that Rompf and Royse examined were:

Rompf and Royse's Variables

1 Age
2 Emotional Problems, Addiction and Abuse
3 Family Experiences
4 Volunteering Experience
5 Social Work Experience
6 Influential Persons
7 Religious Influences

### *Rompf and Royse's Seven Demographics*

**Age** The MSW students were older with a median age of 25 when they decided upon a career in social work. The BSW students were predictably younger with a median age of 20 when they decided upon a career in social work (Rompf & Royse, 1994).

***Emotional Problems, Addiction and Abuse*** Rompf and Royse's (1994) findings revealed that 37% of the social work students, at both levels, identified emotional problems within their families, whereas only 25% of the comparison group did, chi-square (1, $n = 618$) = 9.4, $p<.002$. Alcoholism or drug addictions within families was found to be statistically significant. Both levels of social work students indicated family dysfunction with greater frequency (32% versus 21%) than nonsocial work students, chi-square (1, $n = 618$) = 9.0, $p = .003$. Experiencing child abuse or neglect within their families of origin was found to be statistically significant, chi-square (1, $n = 618$) = 8.9, $p = .003$. More than twice as many social work students (17%) as nonsocial work students (8%) reported experiencing this while growing up. There were no significant differences noted in numbers among social work students and nonsocial work

students in the areas of family break up, death of close relatives, or life-threatening illnesses.

To further explore their data, Rompf and Royse (1994) summed the affirmatives to each of the first seven questions about potentially traumatic family stressors in the lives of social work students and the comparison group. The results revealed that 71% of both levels of social work students had experienced one or more of the seven traumatic life events. This result was substantially higher than the percentage in the comparison group (58%) who had experienced one or more of these events, chi-square (1, $n = 618$) = 9, $p = .005$. It should not be assumed social work students are more drawn to the profession because of their own mental health issues and problems since Rompf and Royse's study did not address the issues of personal competence or impairment.

***Family Experiences*** Following the seven questions inquiring about childhood family experience, Rompf and Royse's (1994) instrument asked every student in their study whether this experience (or experiences) influenced their choice about selecting their occupation as a career. Both levels of social workers (39%) reported, "Yes." But only 14% of the comparison group reported, "Yes." This was a statistically significant difference, chi-square (2, $n = 614$) = 45.8 $p < .001$. However there were no statistically significant differences reported between the responses of BSW and MSW students for this question, chi-square (2, $n = 413$) = .86, $p > .05$.

***Volunteering Experience*** The next question Rompf and Royse asked the students was if they ever volunteered in a social service agency Their results indicated that

more MSW social work students (51%) than BSW social work students (40%) reported having prior volunteer experience, chi-square (1, $n = 415$) = 4.3, $p < .05$. However, the social work sample as a whole (45%) had not volunteered significantly more than the undergraduate English students in the comparison group (40%), chi-square (1, $n = 618$), = .97, $p = .34$.

***Social Work Experience*** Only social work students were asked if they were ever employed in a social work function prior to pursuing a degree in social work. Both levels of social work students reported that 77% had no such prior employment (Rompf & Royse, 1994). Nine percent reported that they had been employed a in a social work function before pursuing the BSW, and 14% had been employed in a social worker function before beginning the MSW program. There were no significant differences noted between the amount of BSW and MSW students who were employed in a social work function prior to declaring an undergraduate major, chi-square (1, $n = 356$) = .00, $p>.05$.

***Influential Persons*** Because role models may influence the choice of one's profession, social work students were asked who was the person most influential in your choice of career. Rompf and Royse's results indicated that 24% of all social work students reported that they were influenced by a social worker and that for 5% of that same group, the social worker was actually a family member or relative. Another 14% of social work students indicated that the most influential person for them was a psychologist, psychiatrist, therapist, or counselor (non-social worker). Another 17% indicated that their most influential person was a teacher, college professor, or career or school counselor. Fifteen percent reported

that a family member, who was not a social worker, exerted the most influence over their decision. Fourteen percent named some other helping professional or person (though not specifically identified by Rompf and Royse). Two percent named several specific persons by name, and 15% did not identify an influential person at all.

***Religious Influences*** Because of social work's professional values in terms of altruism, social justice, and concern for the public welfare, many social work students come into social work programs already embracing many strong religious orientations. Rompf and Royse (1994) reported that students were asked how strongly religious values were espoused in their families while they were growing up. Eighty-seven percent of both levels of social work students reported "very strong" or "moderate" influence of religious values during their childhood experiences. Eighty percent of the comparison group reported similar influences, thus the findings between these two groups were not statistically significant, chi-square $(1, n = 617) = 3.5, p = .06$.

### *Hanson and McCullagh*

A third significant study that examined students' selection of social work was done by Hanson and McCullagh (1995), who examined major motivations and life experiences involved in students selection of social work as their major. Hanson and McCullagh studied 746 different undergraduate students over a 10-year period, which was the first longitudinal study on social work student choice. Their analysis revealed that altruism was one of the primary reasons why students

selected social work, however, many of them were also motivated by a variables/factors relating to job self-interest.

The two main objectives of Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) study were to identify the path students took on their road towards declaring social work as their major, and to gauge the importance of various motivational factors in undergraduates' choice of social work over a decade.

Over a 10-year period, starting in the spring semester of 1983 to the fall of 1993, Hanson and McCullagh (1995) recruited social work students in a first-year sequential introductory social work course at a midwestern university. Students were asked to complete and to return their instrument in class. The questionnaire they used was designed to gather information on student decisions in selecting social work, their satisfaction with their career choice, factors important to them in choosing social work, and to collect demographic information. Their instrument requested students to rate the importance of 12 factors on a 11-point scale asking why they selected social work as a career, with 10 representing "very important" and 0 "very not important." Hanson and McCullagh stated that they worked with 746 undergraduate students, but received a total of 804 questionnaires from students enrolled in the introductory social work course. As a researcher I am unsure what to make of this irregularity in their return response rates. Hanson and McCullagh's response rate for any given year of their study, ranged from 71% to 91%, with an overall response rate of 84.3%.

The majority of students who returned Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) questionnaire were Caucasian (97%) and 83.2% were female. Gender distribution

samples in their study were reported to have paralleled national BSW distribution levels of enrolled students.

The average age of students was 23.4 years old with an age range between 18 and 56 years. The majority of the respondents (51.7%) were juniors, (35.1%) were sophomores, (7.9%) were seniors, and (5.3%) were freshmen (Hanson & McCullagh, 1995). The majority of the students grew up in small towns or in rural communities, and 92% of the students lived within 200 miles of the unnamed midwestern university.

***Awareness of Social Work***

On Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) instrument they addressed the issues of when, how, and why students became aware of, considered, and decided to major in social work. Their results revealed that the mean age of awareness of social work as a profession was 17.2 years old, with an age range between 4 and 51. Twenty-two and one-half percent of the students indicated that they first became aware of the social work profession because either they or friends and family members had received prior social work services. Approximately 19% reported that they had relatives or friends who worked in social work and 19.5% reported that they had prior experiences with high school guidance courses or counselors, who mentioned social work as a possible career choice.

The mean age when students first considered social work as a possible career was 20.6 years old, with a range between 10 and 54 years. Twenty-eight percent of the students indicated that they wanted to major in social work to help others

and 14% of the students stated they had a desire to help a specific population (Hanson & McCullagh).

Overall, 80.9% of the students had considered a different major before deciding on social work. Eighty-four percent had taken college courses in another major prior to deciding on social work, 24.1% had considered teaching, 20.3% considered business, and 19.6% considered psychology. The reasons students cited for changing majors were because they wanted to work more with people, found more personal satisfaction in social work, or did not enjoy their previous subject matter (Hanson & McCullagh).

The responses to Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) twelve likert scaled questions are shown in Table 1.

*Table 1*

*Responses to Hanson and McCullagh's Motivation Scale*

| **Mean Score** | **Reason for Choosing Social Work** |
|---|---|
| 9.35 | Want to work with people |
| 9.08 | Want to work with individuals |
| 8.95 | Help society |
| 8.61 | Could succeed in this type of work |
| 8.53 | Effect social change |
| 8.26 | Interesting and challenging aspects |
| 7.31 | To become a better person |
| 5.96 | Good job opportunities |
| 5.35 | Job security |
| 4.18 | Good working conditions |
| 3.56 | Status and prestige |
| 3.18 | Good salaries |

### *Gender, Age, and Marital Status*

Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) results revealed that with an overall mean of 6.63, men tended to view good job opportunities as more important than did women (5.84). Men also placed more importance on job security, good working conditions, believing in their own success, and contributing to society, than did women.

In regards to the importance of working conditions and status/prestige, Hanson and McCullagh's data suggested that students who were 24 years of age and younger attributed more to these factors than did those older than 24. Also, students 24 years old and younger attached less importance to effecting social change than did students over 24. It is worth noting that marital status proved to be a statistically significant determinant for a number of factors.

### *Importance of Individual Items*

Hanson and McCullagh (1995) used an analysis of variance to gain better insight into whether or not the importance that students attached to the various motivating factors had changed over the 10-year time period. Among the 10 items, the variance between the means of the items over time, such as working with people was ($F[9, N = 741] = 3.30, p < .001$) and good working conditions in social work was ($F[9, N = 740] = 2.16, p < .03$), which would suggest that the differences reported between the yearly means are not necessarily due to chance alone. An examination of yearly means for wanting to "work with people" showed a decrease in importance over the 10-year time period, but this was only a

slight decrease. The mean for the first five years was 9.51, compared to 9.18 for the last five years.

Hanson and McCullagh (1995) analysis also revealed that there were significant differences between men and women on two key motivational factors. On average, male students scored higher on the *Service to Others* factor than did female students, as indicated by total mean scores, of 61.38 and 59.86 ($p < .026$).

Male students also scored significantly higher on the *Job Self-Interest* motivational factor than did female students, with respective means of, 32.47 and 29.02 ($p< .001$). Finally, married students rated *Job Self-Interest* as being a more important motivational factor than did unmarried students (Hanson & McCullagh).

Hanson and McCullagh's sample was not representative of all undergraduate social work students, particularly in regards to ethnicity and rural/urban issues. Therefore their findings are not generalizable. Collecting data over a 10-year time period would be considered a strength, even though no effort to control for extraneous variables was mentioned in their study.

Of the students in Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) study who chose social work as a career, more than 85% made their decision during the first three years of college. Nearly half (49.2%) indicated that they made the choice out of a desire to work with either people in general or with specific populations. Two-thirds had considered other majors before choosing social work. Since the vast majority of the undergraduate students in this study were in the beginning phase of their BSW program, it does not seem probable that the pattern of their interests is the result

of social work program socialization, a notion consistent with the findings of studies on MSW students. Their findings suggested that undergraduate students entering social work are motivated by both *Service to Others* and *Job Self-Interest*, and that with a few exceptions the patterns of their motivation did not change significantly over in the 10 year span of their study.

### *Academic Experiences in Social Work*

Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) study also explored academic experiences of students who declared social work as their academic major. These academic experiences were also factors used in the current research and consisted of: a) being treated like an individual, b) being valued as a student, c) being academically challenged, e) being encouraged to explore values and principles, d) being prepared to enter the profession, e) receiving timely and consistent feedback, f) being encouraged to explore and express oneself, and g) being accepted regardless of one's gender (See Appendix A, Part 2).

## *Experiences As a Social Worker*

CHWS and NASW's (2004) report revealed that women were more likely than men to spend at least some time on information/referrals, screening / assessments, treatment planning, crisis intervention, case management, family counseling, medication adherence, advocacy / community organizing, client education, supervision of staff, discharge planning, and home visits (CHWS & NASW, 2004). Their report revealed that there were no social work tasks in which men were more likely to be involved in than women.

The report stated that there were also significant differences between male and female social workers in the percentages of their time spent on social work tasks. However their report indicated that men spent significantly more time than women on couples counseling, psychotherapy, supervision of staff, and program management.

CHWS and NASW (2004) stated that although men and women reported similar career interests, women were more likely than men to pursue non-degree training in social work and to increase their social work hours. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to plan for their retirement (8% of men versus 5% of women).

The 2004 study revealed that the motivating factors most frequently cited by social workers, which influenced their decision to change their current position, were higher salaries (73%), lifestyle/family concerns (52%), pursuit of more interesting forms of work (37%), and the stressors of their current job (35%).

Although their report indicated that there were fewer gender differences in career plans, there were still several significant differences in the factors that motivated male and female social workers to change positions. CHWS and NASW (2004) reported that men were more likely than women to say that they would change positions for more interesting forms of work, to have increased mobility, for better locations, or for agency mission's more in tuned with their own. On the other hand, their report revealed that women were more likely than men to report that they would change positions due to lifestyle/family concerns, quality of supervision, or stresses in their current job (CHWS & NASW).

***Experiences by Race/Ethnicity***

Social work, like most professions is less ethnically diverse than the U.S. population. The 2004 study indicated that 85% of new social workers (i.e., those 30 or younger) were likely to be White (Non-Hispanic) compared to 86% in the U.S. population, and 3% of new social workers indicated their race as "other" compared to 1% in the U.S. population (CHWS & NASW, 2004). It is worth noting that the implications of racial ethnic balance are often linked to the cultural competence of the frontline social workers providing services to racial ethnic minorities.

CHWS and NASW's (2004) report revealed Hispanic social workers were more likely than White social workers to have some involvement in crisis intervention (81% compared to 68%), case management (71% compared to 57%), and psycho-education (68% versus 58%). Black American social workers were less likely than either Hispanic social workers or White social workers to have any involvement in psycho-education (28%). Their report revealed that Black American social workers devoted more of their time, on average, than White social workers to information/referrals; screening / assessments, treatment planning, crisis intervention, case management, group counseling, advocacy/community organizing, client education, supervision of staff, program development, program management, and home visits. Black American social workers tended to devote less of their time to psychotherapy. Similarly, the 2004 study reported that Hispanic social workers devoted more of their time than the White social workers to information/referrals; screening / assessments; treatment

planning; crisis intervention; and advocacy/community organizing. Asian social workers devoted more time than White social workers to screening/assessments, treatment planning, and case management.

CHWS and NASW's (2004) report revealed Black American social workers were more likely than Whites to cite several important motivational factors in influencing whether they would change position, such as to seek a higher salary (81% compared to 72%), for better opportunities for education or training (26% compared to 18%), due to ethical challenges (11% compared to 6%), and to increase mobility (26% compared to 18%). Hispanic/Latino and Asian social workers (26%) were also more likely than White social workers (22%) to report mobility as a potential reason for changing positions.

### *Males in Social Work*

Gillingham (2006) stated that because there are relatively fewer men than women in social work, it is considered a nontraditional occupation for men, and the public perceives it as a feminine profession. Christie (1998) believed that this characterization of social work has led to speculation that male social workers experience a sense of discord between their personal identity as men and their professional identity. Christie reported that male social workers may adopt various strategies to cope with this discord, notably specializing in areas that involve the exercise of statutory power, such as mental health and child protection, rather than, for example, gerontology and hospital social work. According to Gillingham, male social workers adopted an important strategy to move into management, a process assisted by the glass elevator which speeds

their ascent in comparison to their female colleagues. Christie questioned whether such strategies to reduce this discord overemphasized the ability of male social workers to negotiate their positions in the organizations that employed them. Christie believed that there may be other understated contributing factors affecting male social worker's employment, such as, labor market changes, and career structures.

One understated contributing factor that perhaps explained why men in caring professions tended to become managers more quickly is the distinction between "caring for" and "caring about" people (Gillingham, 2006). Caring for people involves intimate and personal relationships and is perceived as a task for women, whereas caring about people is an intellectual activity that does not denote intimacy, indeed the opposite, making distance integral to the process of taking an objective view. Therefore, one may conclude that within social welfare agencies that reproduce the patriarchal relations of society, caring about people becomes more of a suitable "male" task. Gillingham, stated that the female task of caring for individuals becomes devalued, while the male "task" of caring about people is elevated due to a masculine association with firmness, level-headedness and knowledge. The author says that through this process, male social workers are more likely to end up in positions associated with the allocation of resources and the exercise of power and control.

Analysis of an early study by Kadushin (1976) reported that motivations for students selecting social work as their major were influenced by the nation's economic situation, which differentially affected the job opportunities for both

men and women. He also revealed that when the economy was bad, more males looked to the social work profession for job security, opportunities, and good working conditions, while women looked to social work for jobs that emphasized service to others. The increase in students applying to graduate schools reflected that a student's desire to obtain a graduate degree was a key motivational factor in the decision to seek career advancement. Kadushin's findings suggested that students had an interest in higher pay and job security and that this was evidenced by the proportionately higher number of people applying to MSW programs as compared to BSW programs.

Krill's (1992) study of male social work students found that some male students went into social work because they appeared to lack satisfactory father identifications; they then found themselves resisting male occupational stereotypes that stressed competitiveness and assertiveness. Krill suggested that the search for a male identity propelled men towards careers that called for more flexibility and creativity. He also reported that these men tended to have had fathers who were distant figures, aloof, and alienated from them, and that they had conflicting relationships. Krill stated that social work was a profession in which male occupational stereotypes could be resisted and used to enhance their individual creativity.

***Nontraditional Occupations and Choices***

Chusmir (1990) reported that women entering male dominated professions have triggered a great deal of research literature in recent years, however, the emergence of a male movement into female dominated professions has not

created an expanding research body of knowledge. He believed that what little has been written about the male emergence into female dominated professions was based mostly on anecdotal data or impressionistic findings. He reported that more men were moving into nontraditional female dominated occupations in larger numbers and as more men entered into nontraditional fields, the salary and status of the occupations have also increased. According to Pleck (1981) the trend of men seeking jobs in female dominated occupations was expected to increase in strength because new role models for men within these professions have grown alongside the old models, and men today were exploring new options in their work environments and paying more attention to their physical and emotional health.

Chusmir (1990) defined nontraditional occupations for either sex as any workforce that had less than 30% of the same-sex workers employed, they were gender atypical, and may be seen by society, in general, as gender inappropriate. The four major nontraditional occupations men were going into that are held by 57% of working women were social work, nursing, elementary school teaching, and office work.

Men were also emerging into other traditional female dominated occupations such as daycare workers, librarians, modeling, hairdressers, customer service workers, and retail store clerks, which fit the 30% percent criteria (Chusmir).

Chusmir's findings reported three major motivational influences that contributed to why men selected nontraditional careers: background, attitudes and values, and intrinsic needs. His findings suggested that there were particular

contributing factors such as, birth order, parental characteristics, race, age, and education. All seem to differentiate between men who would and would not select a nontraditional career.

McPhail (2004) took the position that social work was not a nontraditional occupation and that society had a misconception that social work was a female dominated profession because schools of social work had failed to write about the significant contributions that men made to the social work profession (McPhail, 2004). The social work profession did not emerge from a single source and it would be very difficult to precisely define when and where the social work profession began. McPhail also believed that this complexity made the question of which gender founded or dominated the social work profession all the more difficult to consider.

McPhail reported that the social work profession was never a profession led and dominated by women, and he reported that women played an important role in the early days of social work, however, he believed that women did not solely found, lead, or dominate the social work profession. Chusmir (1990) stated that such an analysis would be even more complex because women and men may have dominated the literature in the social work profession during different times, in different cities, or in different subspecialties.

McPhail (2004) examined the role of men in predominately female professions and described their position as riding a glass escalator rather than bumping into a glass ceiling. He reported that men within predominately female professions often received preference in hiring, are closely mentored by men in the profession, and

were actively encouraged to move up in rank and position. He also noted that men often took their gender privilege with them when they entered predominantly female occupations, which translates into an advantage in spite of their small numbers.

According to Pleck (1981) sex role strain or gender role conflict occurs when there are discrepancies between an individual's "real self" and aspects of his "ideal self-concept" which is rooted in sex role norms (p. 276). Pleck believed that sex role strain was an intrapsychic process that led to poor adjustment and low self-esteem.

Therefore, in order for the social work profession to prosper and continue to serve at-risk populations, the disadvantaged, the oppressed, the poor, minorities, and the disenfranchised, it is this researcher's belief that the social work profession needs to actively set out to attract more men into a predominately female profession. It is inconsistent for a profession to embrace the concept of providing culturally competent practices to clients, but fail to address and combat a significant gender gap in the delivery of services to male clients. Therefore, it is important for social work departments to comprehend and understand the gender role conflicts that male students have been subjected to by societal influences, and to find effective ways to overcome them. This researcher also believes that the social work profession needs to do a much better job in marketing and defining exactly what types of jobs, roles, and functions social workers actually perform, in efforts to overcome this gender role conflict and attract more men into the

profession by eliminating gender roles that have been reinforced from stereotypes, expectations and societal pressures from parents, teachers, peers, and the media.

# CHAPTER THREE

# METHODS

## *Design*

It was important to select the most appropriate research questions since they dictated the approach and how those questions should then be answered. The types of questions posed in this study were intended to compare motivating factors and experiences of male and female social work students. The five research questions were:

1a. What motivating factors do BSW students report having impacted their selection of social work as a major?

1b. Do males and females differ on such motivating factors?

2a. What are the experiences reported by BSW students while in the social work major?

2b. Do males and females students differ on such experiences?

3. Are these differences, if any, in student responses to motivations and experiences based upon the demographic variables: (a) age, (b) marital status, (c) grade level and (d) ethnicity?

4a. Does prior experience with a change in academic major impact reported motivation or experiences within the major?

4b. Does prior exposure to the profession of social work impact reported motivation or experiences within the major?

5. What do male undergraduate BSW students report related to the experiences of being in a female dominated major?

Based upon the types of questions, the primary approach was quantitative non-experimental, using the comparative approach (See Tables 2 and 3). The descriptive approach and statistics was also used for research questions 1a, 2a, and 5.

*Table 2:*

*Quantitative Non-Experimental, Using the Comparative Approach*

| | |
|---|---|
| General Purpose | Explore Relationships Between Variables |
| General Approach | Non-experimental |
| Specific Approach | Comparative |
| Specific Purpose | Compare Groups |
| Types of Questions / Hypothesis | Difference (To compare groups) |
| General Types of Statistic | Difference<br>Inferential Statistics (t-test, ANOVA) |

(Morgan, Gliner & Harmon, 2006, p. 5)

Gender was the main attribute independent variable used within this study, and it had two levels, male and female. There were six other independent variables implied by research questions 3 and 4. These variables and categories were: (a) age in years (recoded into three levels), (b) prior exposure to a social worker (2 levels), (c) marital status (recoded into three levels) (d) grade level (2 levels), (e) ethnicity (recoded into two levels), and (f) social work as first major declared (2 levels).

### *Sample*

A number of motivating factors have been identified as potentially having an impact on undergraduate students' selection of and experiences within an academic major. This study sought to explore these motivating factors and experiences with junior and senior level, male and female students at both undergraduate social work programs used in this study. This researcher attempted to survey all potential participants who were enrolled in junior and senior level courses at both Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD) and Colorado State University-Fort Collins (CSU). At MSCD the junior and senior level courses used within this study were Human Behavior and the Social Environment-I (SWK 3050) and Field Practicum Experience-I (SWK 4790). At CSU the junior and senior level courses used within this study were Generalist Practice (SWK 340 and 342) and Senior Seminar (SWK 492).

Although participants were not expected to benefit directly by their participation in this study, it was hoped that the results provided them with insight into why students select social work as their academic major, as well as the students' experiences in that major. Based upon responses to both instruments, the questionnaire and a subset of interviews, the research questions were addressed.

### *Instrument*

One instrument for collecting research data was a self-administered questionnaire. Questionnaires are used to collect participant's perceptions about

the various variables being measured. Questionnaire items 1 through 12 on Part 1 of the instrument are replications of Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) study.

Their questionnaire asked students to rate on an 11-point scale the importance of 12 factors in choosing social work as a career, with 10 representing very important and 0 very unimportant. For comparative analysis this researcher added three additional questions (numbers 13, 14 and 15) to the end of Part One of the instrument:

13. I experienced favorable contacts with a social worker

14. I experienced a psychosocial crisis

15. I believed that social work was academically less challenging

Hanson and McCullagh's examination of students' motivations for selecting social work as a career led them to inquire about possible dimensionality within the 12 questions related to career choice. To test this, Hanson and McCullagh used a principal-components factor analysis with varimax rotation with the 12 questions. The rotated structure produced two factors with eigenvalues above 1 (p.5).

Factor 1 incorporated the first seven questions on the instrument related to contributing to individuals and society, effecting social change, working with people, social work as interesting and challenging, belief in own success in social work, and becoming a better person. They labeled this as *Service to Others* factor. Factor 2 incorporated questions 7-12 about the importance of status and prestige, good salaries, good working conditions, job opportunities, job security, and becoming a better person. This factor was labeled *Job Self-Interest* factor. Hanson

and McCullagh established cumulative scores based on the seven items composing Factor 1 and the six items composing Factor 2. The items in the Factor 1 scale, *Service to Others,* had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency of .84, while the items composing Factor 2, *Job self-Interest,* had an internal consistency coefficient of .82.

Students, who chose to participate in this study, were asked to complete the questionnaire, which should took about fifteen minutes. The whole questionnaire contained 32 items and three sets of questions. Part 1 was motivation for selecting social work as a major. Part 1 of the questionnaire as stated above was based primarily on Hanson and McCullagh's 1995 instrument. Part 2 was based on undergraduate social work experiences. Part 3 was based on demographics.

Part 1 requested student responses to 15 questions using an 11-point scale: 10 = Very Important to 0 = Very Unimportant. Part 2 requested student responses to eight questions using a 6-point scale: 1 = Experienced Very Often to 6 = Experienced Very Little. Part 3 requests student responses to nine demographic questions.

Once students completed filling out their questionnaire they were instructed to insert it face down into the envelope labeled, "Completed Questionnaires." Male students were asked if they were interested in participating in a brief telephone follow-up interview to further explore their individual decision for selecting social work as their academic major. An information follow-up consent to contact form was provided. Follow-up telephone interview schedules contained 15 questions, and took about 30 minutes to complete.

### *Research Validity*

Research validity, according to Morgan, Gliner, and Harmon (2006), is categorized into four aspects, "(a) measurement reliability and statistics, (b) internal validity, (c) overall measurement validity of the constructs, and (d) external validity" ( p. 113). In this study, some evidence for the validity and reliability of the instrument were known for Part 1 of the questionnaire, since items 1 through 12 were replications of Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) instrument. Questions 13 through 23 were designed by this researcher and, therefore, needed support for both validity and reliability of the instrument.

According to Creswell (2003) the advantages of using questionnaires to obtain quantitative data is that they are: an inexpensive way to collect data, can reach a large number of potential participants, provide a specific means of collecting data effectively, can standardize questions, can reduce research biases, and provide data that can be entered into a Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. According to Morgan et al. (2006), "quantitative data are said to be 'objective,' which indicates that the reported behaviors are easily classified or quantified by the researcher" (p. 12). Creswell, stated that the advantages of collecting data from quantitative research is that quantitative data can be suitable to more sophisticated statistical analyses and modeling procedures that can uncover interesting and important relationships that are not visible to the naked eye. He also asserted that these are but a few of the strengths of well-conducted studies in quantitative research.

Based upon the quantitative, non-experimental, comparative approach used in this study, this researcher believed the most appropriate methodological approach in addressing this study's comparative research questions was survey research.

***Pilot Testing of the Instrument***

In an effort to increase instrumentation validity and reliability, Hanson and McCullagh used part 1 of their questionnaire over a 10-year period from 1983 to 1993. A pilot test of part 2 and 3 was conducted with ten graduating social work seniors at Metropolitan State College of Denver during the spring semester of 2007. Participants were all enrolled in a Field Practicum Experience-II course. Nine female students and one male student responded and agreed to be volunteer pilot test questionnaire takers. After completing the questionnaire, all ten students volunteered to participate in individual 20 minute follow-up interviews with this researcher to discuss their feedback about the instrument. Their insights and suggestions were incorporated into reformatting more straightforwardly worded questions.

***Data Collection***

The questionnaire and the cover letter was passed out in both undergraduate social work programs used in this research. This researcher read a short script in each classroom, collected the instruments which took about 15 minutes and obtained signed consent-to-contact forms from all interested male participants. Schedules to complete the interview from male participants were obtained, a brief follow-up telephone interview with male participants was arranged, and this researcher inputted and encoded all data into a SPSS statistical computer program.

***Data Analysis***

The five research questions were answered using descriptive and inferential statistics such as a *t* test and an ANOVA to answer research questions (See Table 3).

*Table 3:*

*Research Questions, Variables and Data Analysis*

| | Research Question | *Dependant Variables* | *Appropriate Statistical Analysis* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (a) What motivating factors do BSW students report having impacted their selection of social work as a major?<br>• No Independent variable | • Motivating Factors<br>• Items 1-15 | • Descriptive statistics (i.e., percentages, means, standard deviations)<br>• Cronbach alphas<br>• Principal components Factor analysis<br>• Summated scales |
| 1 | (b) Do males and females differ on such motivating factors?<br>• Independent variable = Gender (2 levels) | • Motivating Factors<br>• Items 1-15 | • Independent samples *t*-tests |
| 2 | (a) What are the experiences reported by BSW students while in the social work major?<br>• No Independent variable | • Items 16-23 | • Descriptive statistics (i.e., percentages, means, standard deviations)<br>• Cronbach alphas<br>• Principal components analysis<br>• Summated scales, if meaningful |
| 2 | (b) Do males and females students differ on such experiences?<br>• Independent variable = Gender (2 levels) | • Items 16-23 | • Independent samples *t*-tests |
| 3 | Are these differences, if any, in student responses to motivations and experiences based upon the demographic variables?<br><br>Age in years:<br>• Independent variable (Age was recoded into three different age | • Motivating Factors<br>• Items 1-23 | • One-Way ANOVAs |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | groups) | | |
| | Marital status:<br>Single / Never Married<br>Married<br>Married But Separated<br>In a committed relationship<br>Divorced<br>Other<br>• Independent variable = Marital status (6 levels were recoded into three levels) | • Motivating Factors<br>• Items 1-23 | • One-Way ANOVA |
| | Grade level:<br>Junior<br>Senior<br>• Independent variable = Grade level (2 levels) | • Motivating Factors<br>• Items 1-23 | • Independent samples *t*-tests |
| | Ethnicity:<br>Black<br>White<br>Hispanic/Latino<br>Asian<br>Other<br>Independent variable = Ethnicity (5 levels were recoded into 2 levels) | • Motivating Factors<br>• Items 1-23 | • Independent samples *t*-tests |
| 4 | (a) Does prior experience with a change in academic major (b) or prior exposure to the profession of Social Work impact reported motivation or experiences within the major?<br>Yes<br>No<br>• Independent variable = Changed majors (2 levels)<br>• Independent variable = Prior exposure to social work (2 levels) | • Motivating Factors | • Independent samples *t*-tests |
| 5 | What do male undergraduate BSW students report related to the experiences of being in a female dominated major. | | • Descriptive statistics (i.e., percentages, means, standard deviations)<br>• Open coding analysis<br>• Narrative reporting |

# CHAPTER FOUR

# RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to identify the major factors impacting a student's choice of social work as their academic major for the degree of Bachelor of Social Work (BSW). Several key motivation and experience factors were identified from a review of the literature, as having a possible impact on an undergraduate student's selection of an academic major and on their experiences within the major.

The theories used in this study were life experiences, developmental theory, gender/ethnicity, and student development theory. Table 1, presented in Chapter Two, Literature Review, shows the theoretical framework used in this study and outlines the key concepts and conceptual map utilized in this research.

Gender was the main attribute independent variable used within this study, and it has two levels, male and female. There were six other independent variables implied by research questions 3 and 4. These variables and categories are: (a) age in years (continuous), (b) prior exposure to a social worker (2 levels), (c) marital status (initially 6 levels), (d) grade level (2 levels), (e) ethnicity (initially 5 levels), and (f) social work as first major declared (2 levels).

In this chapter the results of the study will be reported. The descriptive demographics and the results of testing each of the specific research questions will be discussed, ending with a summary of the results.

### *Descriptive Demographics*

A total of 166 subjects from two undergraduate social work programs in Colorado participated in the research study. As illustrated in Table 4, 83 of the participants were from Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD), and 83 were from Colorado State University (CSU). Roughly 86% of the participants were females and 14% were males. CSU had 5 more females in this study than did MSCD, which had more males in this research than did CSU. There were 23 males identified who participated in the study; two students failed to indicate their gender on the questionnaire. Approximately 60% of all the students were seniors. MSCD was split almost evenly between juniors and seniors, while about 2/3 of the CSU students were seniors

### *Ethnicity*

Participants' ethnic backgrounds compared revealed that there were more White students than any other ethnicity group in this study. There were also more ethnic females than ethnic males. Since there were so few students represented within the ethnic groups, they were all combined to form a Students of Color group for later analyses (See Table 4). The ethnic compositions of the participants in this study are as follows; Black ($n$ = 9), White ($n$ =125), Hispanic/Latino ($n$ = 16), Asian ($n$ = 7), and Other ($n$ = 9).

*Table 4*

*Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

| Variable | Total Sample | | MSCD | | CSU | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | *%* | *N* | *%* | *N* | *%* |
| Gender | | | | | | |
| Female | 141 | 86% | 68 | 83% | 73 | 89% |
| Male | 23 | 14% | 14 | 17% | 9 | 11% |
| Total | 164 | 100% | 82 | 100% | 82 | 100% |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| White | 125 | 75% | 61 | 74% | 64 | 77% |
| Black | 9 | 5% | 6 | 7% | 3 | 4% |
| Hispanic /Latino | 16 | 11% | 9 | 11% | 7 | 8% |
| Asian | 7 | 4% | 2 | 2% | 5 | 6% |
| Other | 9 | 5% | 5 | 6% | 4 | 5% |
| Total | 166 | 100% | 83 | 100% | 83 | 100% |
| Grade Level | | | | | | |
| Senior | 98 | 59% | 41 | 49% | 57 | 69% |
| Junior | 68 | 41% | 42 | 51% | 26 | 31% |
| Total | 166 | 100% | 83 | 100% | 83 | 100% |
| Marital Status | | | | | | |
| Single/Never Married | 81 | 49% | 30 | 36% | 51 | 61% |
| In a committed relationship | 41 | 25% | 19 | 23% | 22 | 27% |
| Married | 28 | 17% | 20 | 24% | 8 | 10% |
| Divorced | 12 | 7% | 11 | 13% | 1 | 1% |
| Married But Separated | 4 | 2% | 3 | 4% | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 166 | 100% | 83 | 100% | 83 | 100% |
| Age | | | | | | |
| 18 to 21 | 51 | 31% | 9 | 11% | 42 | 51% |
| 22 to 25 | 53 | 32% | 26 | 31% | 27 | 32% |
| 26 to 56 | 62 | 37% | 48 | 58% | 14 | 17% |
| Total | 166 | 100% | 83 | 100% | 83 | 100% |

Two participants failed to indicate their gender.

***Grade Level***

The data illustrates that CSU had more senior participants in this study than did MSCD (57 compared to 41). MSCD had more junior participants than did CSU (42 verses 26).

*Marital Status*

Approximately 49% of the participants reported they were currently Single/Never Married, 25% were In a Committed Relationship, and 17% were Married. CSU had 61% or nearly twice as many Single/Never Married students than MSCD which had 36% of Single/Never Married students (51 verses 30). MSCD had more than twice as many Married students than CSU (20 compared to 8). The vast majority of Divorced students or 13% were at MSCD, while CSU only had 1% (11 compared to 1). MSCD had more Married But Separated students than did CSU (3 verses 1). To simplify for later analyses, marital status was recoded into three groups: 1. Single/Never Married, 2. Married and In a Committed Relationship were combined, 3. Married But Separated and Divorced were combined.

*Age*

The age of the participants in this study ranged from 19 to 56 years old. Table 4 illustrates how students were divided into three different age groups for later analyses, these three groups were: (a) 18 to 21, (b) 22 to 25, and (c) 26 to 56. The data indicated that CSU had 51% of the participants in the age range of 18 to 21; whereas MSCD only had 11% (42 verses 9). MSCD had 58% of the students in the age range of 26 to 56; while CSU only had 17% (48 compared to 14).

Table 5 shows the results for both institutions on respondents overall previous experiences for: Prior Exposure to a Social Worker, Was Social Work Your First Major, Mean Age First Became Aware of the Social Work Profession, and Mean Age Decided to Major in Social Work. Table 5 reveals that when students at

MSCD and CSU were compared on whether or not they had Prior Exposure to a Social Worker, overall findings were very similar. The two key findings: first the numbers of participants at CSU who reported selecting Social Work as Their First Major was twice as many as at MSCD (28 verses 14). Second, students at CSU reported that they were six years younger when they Decided to Major in Social Work than students at MSCD (20.1 compared to 26.8).

*Table 5*

*Experience and Age Characteristics of Respondents*

| Variable | Total Sample | | MSCD | | CSU | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | *%* | *N* | *%* | *N* | *%* |
| Prior Exposure to a Social Worker | | | | | | |
| Yes* | 85 | 52% | 42 | 51% | 43 | 52% |
| No* | 80 | 48% | 40 | 49% | 40 | 48% |
| Total | 165 | 100% | 82 | 100% | 83 | 100% |
| Was Social Work Your First Major | | | | | | |
| Yes | 42 | 25% | 14 | 17% | 28 | 34% |
| No | 124 | 75% | 69 | 83% | 55 | 66% |
| Total | 166 | 100% | 83 | 100% | 83 | 100% |
| Mean Age First Became Aware of the Social Work Profession | | | | | | |
| Mean Age** | 18.3 | | 19.8 | | 17.1 | |
| Mean Age Decided to Major In Social Work | | | | | | |
| Mean Age *** | 23.3 | | 26.8 | | 20.1 | |

* = One participant failed to indicate whether or not he/she had prior exposure to a social worker

** = Two participants failed to indicate the age when they first became aware of the social work profession

*** = Two participants failed to indicate the age when they first decided to major in social work

***Prior Exposure***

Table 5 shows that there was only a slight difference between those participants in this study who had and did not have prior exposure to a social worker before declaring social work as their major (85 verses 80).

***Was Social Work Your First Major***

Table 5 reveals also shows that overall only 25% ($n$ = 42) of the participants in this study selected social work as their first major. CSU had more students who selected social work as their first major than did MSCD (28 verses 14).

***Mean Age When First Became Aware of Social Work***

The age range that respondents reported when they first became aware of social work as a profession was between 6 to 44 years old; the overall mean age when participants reported they First Became Aware of Social Work was 18.3. The data indicated that students at CSU had a slightly lower mean age when they First Became Aware of Social Work than did MSCD (17.1 verses 19.8).

***Previous Majors***

Every participant who did not select social work as their first major was asked, on the questionnaire, to list up to three academic majors they had declared before officially selecting social work as their current major. There were 124 participants in this category. The top five academic majors that 108 females selected before social work were as follows: Psychology ($n$ = 32), Education ($n$ = 16), Nursing ($n$ = 11), Human Development ($n$ = 9), and Criminal Justice ($n$ = 8). The top five academic majors that 16 males selected before social work were as follows:

Business ($n$ = 5), Education ($n$ = 5), Psychology ($n$ = 4), Human Development ($n$ = 3), Chemistry ($n$ = 2), Engineering ($n$ = 2), and Sociology ($n$ = 2).

Table 6 reveals the results on the demographic characteristics by gender of respondents, females and males both reported that approximately three-fourths (75%) were of the White ethnic category; approximately one-fourth (25%) of the participants identified as being Students of Color. Females were fairly evenly represented in all three age categories, while males were predominately older.

As illustrated in Table 6, a higher percentage of males had prior exposure to a social worker than did females (73% verses 49%).

### *The Results of Testing the Research Questions*

As described in Chapter Three, Methods, a number of motivating factors were identified as having a possible contributing impact on Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students' selection of and experiences within the social work major. This section of the study examined these motivating factors and experiences and compared male and female participants from two undergraduate social work programs in Colorado, Metropolitan State College of Denver and Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

*Table 6*

*Demographic Characteristics of Respondents With Gender Compositions*

| Variable | Total Sample | | FEMALE | | MALE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | *%* | *N* | *%* | *N* | *%* |
| Grade Level * | | | | | | |
| Senior | 97 | 59% | 85 | 60% | 12 | 52% |
| Junior | 67 | 41% | 56 | 40% | 11 | 48% |
| Total | 164 | 100% | 141 | 100% | 23 | 100% |
| Ethnicity ** | | | | | | |
| White | 123 | 75% | 105 | 75% | 18 | 78% |
| Black | 9 | 5% | 9 | 6% | 0 | 0% |
| Hispanic /Latino | 16 | 11% | 15 | 11% | 1 | 4% |
| Asian | 7 | 4% | 5 | 3% | 2 | 9% |
| Other | 9 | 5% | 7 | 5% | 2 | 9% |
| Total | 164 | 100% | 141 | 100% | 23 | 100% |
| Ethnicity Recoded *** | | | | | | |
| White | 123 | 75% | 105 | 75% | 18 | 78% |
| Students of Color | 41 | 25% | 36 | 25% | 5 | 22% |
| Total | 164 | 100% | 141 | 100% | 23 | 100% |
| Age **** | | | | | | |
| 18 to 21 | 50 | 30% | 47 | 33% | 3 | 13% |
| 22 to 25 | 53 | 32% | 49 | 35% | 4 | 17% |
| 26 to 56 | 61 | 38% | 45 | 32% | 16 | 70% |
| Total | 164 | 100% | 141 | 100% | 23 | 100% |
| Prior Exposure to a Social Worker ***** | | | | | | |
| Yes | 85 | 52% | 69 | 49% | 16 | 73% |
| No | 78 | 48% | 72 | 51% | 6 | 27% |
| Total | 163 | 100% | 141 | 100% | 22 | 100% |
| Social Work as First Major ****** | | | | | | |
| Yes | 41 | 25% | 35 | 25% | 6 | 26% |
| No | 123 | 75% | 106 | 75% | 17 | 74% |
| Total | 164 | 100% | 141 | 100% | 23 | 100% |

* = Two participants failed to indicate their grade level.
** = Two participants failed to indicate their ethnicity.
*** = Two participants failed to indicate their ethnicity (recoded).
***** = Two participants failed to indicate their age.
****** = Three participants failed to indicate whether they had prior exposure to a social worker.
******* = Two participants failed to indicate whether social work was their first major.

## *Research Questions*

The analyses of the five research questions used within this study will now be discussed.

### *Research Question 1a*

*What motivating factors do BSW students report as having impacted their selection of social work as a major?*

As mentioned in Chapter Three, Methods, most of Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) questionnaire was replicated in this study as motivation items 1 to 12. Hanson and McCullagh developed two factors. Factor 1 (items 1 through 7) was labeled *Service to Others* and was defined by the items related to: contributing to individuals, contributing to society, effecting social change, working with people, social work as interesting and exciting, belief in one's own success in social work, and becoming a better person. Factor 2 (items 7 through 12) was labeled *Job Self Interest* and was defined by: the importance of status and prestige, good salaries, working conditions, job opportunities, job security, and becoming a better person.

A principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to assess the underlying structure for motivation items 1 through 12 of the questionnaire. Two factors were requested, based on the fact that the items were designed to index two concepts.

After rotation, the first factor accounted for 30.06% of the variance, and the second factor accounted for 22.51% of the variance. Table 7 displays the factor loadings for the rotated factors, with loadings less than .30 omitted to improve clarity. The first factor indexed Good Working Conditions (.802), Job Security in

Social Work (.782), Good Job Opportunities (.730), Good Salaries in Social Work (.720), Status and Prestige of Social Work (.708), Social Work is Interesting and Challenging (.516), and Becoming a Better Person (.471). This would imply that in factor 1, Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) students who rated Good Working Conditions highly, also felt that the other items in this factor were important. Note that factor 1 included Social Work is Interesting and Challenging, which Hanson and McCullagh found fit better into the other factor. Actually, items 6 (Social Work is Interesting and Challenging) and 7 (Becoming a Better Person) load on both factors 1 and 2, and not very highly on either. Hanson and McCullagh also found modest double loadings for item 7 (Becoming a Better Person).

The second factor indexed students who felt Social Work is Interesting and Challenging (.394), Becoming a Better Person (.463), Contributing to Individuals (.819), Working with People (.721), Contributing to Society (.721), Effecting Social Change (.580), and Believing in My Own Success (.476). This would imply that students who believed Social Work is Interesting and Challenging also connected with Becoming a Better Person, Contributing to Individuals, Working with People, Contributing to Society, Effecting Social Change, and Believing in My Own Success.

Although this is a slightly different grouping of items than that found by Hanson and McCullagh, the analyses seemed similar enough to use their factors in this study. Therefore, two summated scales were computed: items 1-7, labeled *Service to Others Scale*, and items 7-12, labeled *Job Self Interest Scale* (See Table 7).

*Table 7*

*Principal Component Analysis of Hanson & McCullagh's Model for Selecting A Major*

| | Factor Loadings | |
|---|---|---|
| Items | 1 | 2 |
| Good Working Conditions | .802 | |
| Job Security in Social Work | .782 | |
| Good Job Opportunities | .730 | |
| Good Salaries in Social Work | .720 | |
| Status & Prestige of Social Work | .708 | |
| Social Work is Interesting & Challenging | .516 | .394 |
| Becoming a Better Person | .471 | .463 |
| Contributing to Individuals | | .819 |
| Working with People | | .721 |
| Contributing to Society | | .721 |
| Effecting Social Change | | .580 |
| Believing in My Own Success | | .476 |
| Eigenvalues | 3.61 | 2.70 |
| % of variance | 30.06 | 22.51 |

***Research Question 1b***

*Do males and females differ on such motivating factors?*

Five independent samples *t* tests were conducted to answer this research question in order to see if any meaningful differences would emerge when comparing motivation items and scales. Table 8 reveals as a motivator for selecting a major, most students rated eleven out of twelve of Hanson and McCullagh's motivation items as being important to them (6-10 verses 0-4). Data indicated that the last motivation item, Good Salaries in Social Work, as a motivator for selecting a major was unimportant to the majority of them. For the additional three questions posed by this researcher, Table 8 reveals that most students rated Experienced Favorable Contact and Experienced Psychosocial

Crisis as being important as a motivator for selecting the major (more high ratings of 6-10 compared to low ratings of 0-4). Finally, more students rated Social Work is Academically Less Challenging as a motivator for selecting a major as unimportant to them (more lower ratings of 0-4 verses higher ratings of 6-10) (See Table 8).

Table 9 shows that males were significantly different from females on the motivation item, Experienced Psychosocial Crisis, $t = -2.43$, $df = 162$, and $p = .016$. Inspection of the two group means indicated the average *Experienced Psychosocial Crisis* as a motivator for selecting a major (6.61) for males was significantly higher than the mean (4.66) for females. The difference between the means was 1.95 on the 11-point rating and $d$ was approximately 0.50 ($1.95 \div 3.5$), a medium or typical effect size. The data indicate that males were more likely to report experiencing a psychosocial crisis as a motivator for selecting a major than were females. For the *Service to Others Scale*, females were significantly different with a mean score of (54.67) from males who had a mean score of (51.63), $t = 2.20$, $df = 159$, $p = .029$. The difference between the means was (3.04) and again $d$ was approximately 0.50. The data show that for the *Service to Others Scale*, females were more likely to rate this factor as being more important to them as a motivator for selecting a major than were males (See Table 9).

*Table 8*

*Descriptive Statistics for Undergraduate Motivators of BSW Students*

| Variable | Unimportant | | Important | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | % 0-4 | *N* | % 6-10 | *M* | *SD* |
| Working with People | 2 | 1.2% | 164 | 98.8% | 9.23 | 1.39 |
| Contributing to Individuals | 2 | 1.2% | 164 | 98.8% | 9.13 | 1.35 |
| Contribute to Society | 1 | 0.6% | 165 | 99.4% | 9.07 | 1.20 |
| Effecting Social Change | 4 | 2.4% | 162 | 97.6% | 8.72 | 1.56 |
| Social Work is Interesting & Challenging * | 6 | 3.6% | 160 | 95.2% | 8.55 | 1.73 |
| Believing in My Own Success | 5 | 3.0% | 161 | 97.0% | 8.43 | 1.71 |
| Becoming a Better Person ** | 10 | 6.0% | 155 | 93.4% | 8.10 | 1.97 |
| Good Job Opportunities | 13 | 10.8% | 153 | 89.2% | 7.23 | 2.35 |
| Job Security in Social Work ** | 24 | 14.4% | 141 | 85.0% | 7.04 | 2.51 |
| Good Working Conditions | 37 | 22.2% | 129 | 77.8% | 6.18 | 2.57 |
| Status and Prestige in Social Work** | 70 | 42.2% | 95 | 57.2% | 4.76 | 3.02 |
| Good Salaries in Social Work ** | 93 | 56.4% | 72 | 43.0% | 3.92 | 3.01 |
| *The Three Additional Questions Raised By This Researcher* | | | | | | |
| Experienced Favorable Contact** | 64 | 38.7% | 101 | 60.7% | 5.27 | 3.50 |
| Experienced Psychosocial Crisis | 67 | 40.3% | 99 | 59.7% | 4.96 | 3.60 |
| Social Work is Academically Less Challenging | 127 | 76.4% | 39 | 23.6% | 2.22 | 2.76 |

* Missing 2 responses (1.2%).
** Missing 1 responses (0.6)
Note: Scale based on 0 = Very unimportant and 10 = Very important. The Service to Other Scale and Job Self Interest Scale are based on Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) study.

*Table: 9*

*Independent Samples t Tests Comparing Female and Male BSW Students on Motivation Items*

| Variable | | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service to Others Scale | | | | 2.20 | 159 | .029* |
| | Female | 54.67 | 6.02 | | | |
| | Male | 51.63 | 6.76 | | | |
| Job Self Interest Scale | | | | 1.01 | 159 | .314 |
| | Female | 34.45 | 9.57 | | | |
| | Male | 32.28 | 9.41 | | | |
| Experienced Favorable Contact | | | | 1.47 | 161 | .143 |
| | Female | 5.46 | 3.50 | | | |
| | Male | 4.30 | 3.36 | | | |
| Experienced Psychosocial Crisis | | | | -2.43 | 162 | .016* |
| | Female | 4.66 | 3.72 | | | |
| | Male | 6.61 | 2.29 | | | |
| SW is Academically Less Challenging | | | | -1.01 | 162 | .315 |
| | Female | 2.16 | 2.68 | | | |
| | Male | 2.78 | 3.25 | | | |

* $p \leq .05$.
Note: Scores based on scale, 0 = Very unimportant to 10= Very Important. The Service to Others Scale and Job Self Interest Scale are based on Hanson and McCullough's (1995) study.

***Research Question 2a***

*What are the experiences reported by BSW students while in the social work major?*

The data reveal that students rated experience items, Treated Like an Individual, Valued as a Student, Courses are Academically Challenging, SW Courses Have Prepared Me for the field (SW = Social Work), and SW Professors Offer Good Feedback as something they experienced often within the major (more often ratings of 4-6 verses less often ratings of 0-3).

*Table 10*

*Descriptive Statistics for Undergraduate Experiences of BSW Students*

| Variable | LITTLE | | OFTEN | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | % 0-3 | *N* | % 4-6 | *M* | *SD* |
| Treated Like an Individual | 8 | 4.8% | 158 | 95.2% | 5.25 | .92 |
| Valued As a Student | 15 | 9.0% | 151 | 91.1% | 4.97 | 1.14 |
| Courses are Academically Challenging | 22 | 13.2% | 144 | 86.8% | 4.66 | 1.15 |
| Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing [a] | 122 | 73.9% | 43 | 25.5% | 2.48 | 1.60 |
| Encouraged to Agree or Disagree | 84 | 50.7% | 82 | 49.3% | 3.13 | 1.59 |
| SW Courses Have Prepared | 19 | 11.4% | 147 | 88.6% | 4.74 | 1.13 |
| SW Professors Offer Good Feedback [a] | 18 | 10.9% | 147 | 88.5% | 4.81 | 1.02 |
| Made Aware of My Gender | 125 | 75.3% | 41 | 24.7% | 2.32 | 1.73 |

[a] = Missing 1 response (0.6%).
Note: Scores based on scale, 1 = Experienced Very Little and 6 = Experienced Very Often.

Table 10 also shows that for experience item, Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing (my opinions freely in my social work courses) was ranked by participants as something they experienced little within the major (122 verses 43). Experience item, Made Aware of My Gender was also ranked by students as something they experienced little within the major (125 compared to 41). About half reported they were Encouraged to Agree or Disagree with social work principles that they do not personally believe in. Table 11 shows in descending order mean scores of the 8 experience items. Table 11 also illustrates that students overall rated: Treated Like A Individual, Valued As a Student, and Social Work Professors Offer Good Feedback as the top three experience items as something they had experienced often within the major. Respondents also rated the last two experience items; Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing, and Made Aware of My Gender as something they had experienced relatively little within the major.

*Table: 11*

*Descriptive Statistics for BSW Students on Experience Items*

| Item | *N* | *M* |
|---|---|---|
| Treated Like A Individual | 166 | 5.25 |
| Valued As a Student | 166 | 4.97 |
| Social Work Professors Offer Good Feedback | 165 | 4.81 |
| Social Work Courses Have Prepared | 166 | 4.74 |
| Courses Are Academically Challenging | 166 | 4.66 |
| Encouraged to Agree or Disagree | 166 | 3.31 |
| Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing | 165 | 2.48 |
| Made Aware of My Gender | 166 | 2.32 |

Note: Scores based on scale, 1 = Experienced Very Little to 6 = Experienced Very Often.

***Research Question 2b***

*Do males and females students differ on such experiences?*

With gender as the independent variable, 8 independent samples *t* tests for experience items were conducted to see if any meaningful differences would emerge when comparing males and females on experience items. Table 12 shows that there was a significant difference on only one experience item, Made Aware of My Gender with a mean of 2.04 for females and 4.52 for males, $t = 7.16$, $df = 162$, and $p < .001$. The data indicates that experience item Made Aware of My Gender was something that males experienced more often within the major than did females. The *d* effect size was approximately 1.55, a very large difference. Thus, males feel more aware of their gender in social work classes than do females.

*Table: 12*

*Independent Samples t-Tests Comparing Female and Male for BSW Students on Experiences Items (n =141 females and n = 23 males)*

| Item | | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Treated Like A Individual | | | | | .46 | 162 | .647 |
| | Female | 141 | 5.27 | .88 | | | |
| | Male | 23 | 5.17 | 1.15 | | | |
| Valued As a Student | | | | | -1.44 | 162 | .152 |
| | Female | 141 | 4.94 | 1.18 | | | |
| | Male | 23 | 5.30 | .76 | | | |
| Courses Are Academically Challenging | | | | | 1.71 | 162 | .089 |
| | Female | 141 | 4.73 | 1.03 | | | |
| | Male | 23 | 4.30 | 1.49 | | | |
| Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing | | | | | 1.06 | 161 | .290 |
| | Female | 141 | 2.44 | 1.57 | | | |
| | Male | 23 | 2.83 | 1.80 | | | |
| Encouraged to Agree or Disagree | | | | | - .48 | 162 | .631 |
| | Female | 141 | 3.35 | 1.64 | | | |
| | Male | 23 | 3.17 | 1.37 | | | |
| SW Courses Have Prepared | | | | | .05 | 162 | .961 |
| | Female | 141 | 4.75 | 1.13 | | | |
| | Male | 23 | 4.74 | 1.18 | | | |
| SW Prof Offer Good Feedback | | | | | - .24 | 161 | .810 |
| | Female | 140 | 4.81 | 1.00 | | | |
| | Male | 23 | 4.87 | 1.14 | | | |
| Made Aware of My Gender | | | | | 7.16 | 162 | .001*** |
| | Female | 141 | 2.04 | 1.52 | | | |
| | Male | 23 | 4.52 | 1.70 | | | |

*** $p \leq .001$.
Note: Scores based on scale, 1 = Experienced Very Little and 6 = Experienced Very Often.

***Research Question 3a***

*Are there any differences in student responses to motivations and experiences based upon age?*

First, to see if any meaningful differences would emerge when comparing motivation and experience items, the independent variable current age was recoded into three different age groups:18 to 21, 22 to 25, and 26 to 56.

- 18 to 21 (Youngest group of participants).
- 22 to 25 (Middle group of participants).
- 26 to 56 (Oldest group of participants).

Second, 5 one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) for motivation and 8 ANOVAs for experiences were conducted to answer this question. ANOVAs were between subjects, meaning that there were different participants in the three levels of the recoded independent variable current age. Table 13 reveals that there were statistically significant differences for motivation items Experienced Psychosocial Crisis, $F$ (2, 163) = 5.21, $p$ = .006, and Social Work is Academically Less Challenging, $F$ (2, 163) = 5.25, $p$ = .006. Post Hoc analyses show as a motivator for selecting the major, the oldest recoded age group (26 to 56) had a significantly higher mean score than both of the younger two recoded age groups for the motivation item Experienced Psychosocial Crisis. The oldest age group of students (26 to 56) rated Social Work is Academically Less Challenging more important to them as a motivator for selecting the major than the youngest age groups.

Table 14 shows that there were no statistically significant differences on experience items among any of the three recoded age groups.

*Table: 13*

*Comparison of Means for Recoded Age Groups (18 to 21, 22 to 25 and 26 to 56) on Motivation Items*

| Items | | *N* | *M* | *F* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service to Others Scale | | | | .213 | .808 |
| | 18-21 | 50 | 53.77 | | |
| | 22-25 | 51 | 54.36 | | |
| | 26-56 | 62 | 54.52 | | |
| | Total | 163 | 54.24 | | |
| Job Self Interest Scale | | | | .151 | .860 |
| | 18-21 | 48 | 33.43 | | |
| | 22-25 | 53 | 34.45 | | |
| | 26-56 | 62 | 33.21 | | |
| | Total | 163 | 34.06 | | |
| Experienced Favorable Contact | | | | 1.801 | .168 |
| | 18-21 | 51 | 4.54 | | |
| | 22-25 | 53 | 5.34 | | |
| | 26-56 | 62 | 5.79 | | |
| | Total | 165 | 5.27 | | |
| Experienced Psychosocial Crisis | | | | 5.207 | .006** |
| | 18-21 | 51 | 4.23 | | |
| | 22-25 | 53 | 4.32 | | |
| | 26-56 | 62 | 6.10 | | |
| | Total | 166 | 4.96 | | |
| SW is Academically Less Challenging | | | | 5.247 | .006** |
| | 18-21 | 51 | 1.41 | | |
| | 22-25 | 53 | 2.04 | | |
| | 26-56 | 62 | 3.03 | | |
| | Total | 166 | 2.22 | | |

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$.
Note: Scale based on 0 = Very unimportant to 10 = Very Important. The Service to Others Scale and Job Self Interest Scale are based on Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) study.

*Table: 14*

*Comparison of Means for Recoded Age Groups (18 to 21, 22 to 25 and 26 to 56) on Experience Items*

| Items | | *N* | *M* | *F* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Treated Like A Individual | | | | .042 | .959 |
| | 18-21 | 51 | 5.23 | | |
| | 22-25 | 53 | 5.28 | | |
| | 3.00 | 62 | 5.24 | | |
| | Total | 166 | 5.25 | | |
| Valued As a Student | | | | .258 | .773 |
| | 18-21 | 51 | 4.88 | | |
| | 22-25 | 53 | 5.00 | | |
| | 3.00 | 62 | 5.03 | | |
| | Total | 166 | 4.98 | | |
| Courses Are Academically Challenging | | | | .991 | .374 |
| | 18-21 | 51 | 4.53 | | |
| | 22-25 | 53 | 4.83 | | |
| | 26-56 | 62 | 4.63 | | |
| | Total | 166 | 4.66 | | |
| Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing | | | | .124 | .884 |
| | 18-21 | 51 | 4.61 | | |
| | 22-25 | 52 | 4.48 | | |
| | 26-56 | 62 | 4.47 | | |
| | Total | 165 | 4.52 | | |
| Encouraged to Agree or Disagree | | | | .547 | .580 |
| | 18-21 | 51 | 3.59 | | |
| | 22-25 | 53 | 3.59 | | |
| | 26-56 | 62 | 3.86 | | |
| | Total | 166 | 3.69 | | |
| SW Courses Have Prepared | | | | .510 | .602 |
| | 18-21 | 51 | 4.61 | | |
| | 22-25 | 53 | 4.81 | | |
| | 26-56 | 62 | 4.79 | | |
| | Total | 166 | 4.74 | | |
| SW Prof Offer Good Feedback | | | | .238 | .788 |
| | 18-21 | 51 | 4.82 | | |
| | 22-25 | 53 | 4.87 | | |
| | 26-56 | 61 | 4.74 | | |
| | Total | 165 | 4.81 | | |
| Made Aware of My Gender | | | | 1.952 | .145 |
| | 18-21 | 51 | 4.94 | | |
| | 22-25 | 53 | 4.81 | | |
| | 26-56 | 62 | 4.34 | | |
| | Total | 166 | 4.68 | | |

Note: Scores based on scale, 1 = Experienced Very Little and 6 = Experienced Very Often.

***Research Question 3b***

*Are there any differences in student responses to motivations and experiences based upon marital status?*

To analyze this question marital status was recoded into three different groups: (a) Single/Never Married, (b) Married and In a Committed Relationship, and (c) Married But Separated and Divorced.

Five one-way analyses of variances (ANOVAs) for motivation and 8 ANOVAs for experiences were conducted to see if any meaningful differences would emerge when comparing marital groups on motivation and experience items. Table 15 reveals that there was a statistically significant difference among the three levels of recoded marital groups for the motivation item Experienced Psychosocial Crisis, $F(2, 163) = 5.67$, $p = .004$. Table 16 shows that there were no statistically significant differences on experience items among the three marital status groups. These groups of students reported they had similar experiences within the major.

The results of the Post Hoc Tukey HSD test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference found among the three levels of student's recoded marital status for motivation item Experienced Psychosocial Crisis. The mean scores of the Single/Never Married group (4.02), and the Married group (5.78) were significantly different from each other. The Post Hoc Tukey HSD test also showed that the small ($n$ =16) Married But Separated and Divorced group (6.12) was not significantly different from either of the other groups on the

motivation item Experienced Psychosocial Crisis as a motivator for selecting a major.

*Table: 15*

*Comparison of Means for Single /Never Married (n= 81) Married and In A Committed Relationship (n=69), Married But Separated and Divorced and (n =16) BSW Students on Motivation Items*

| Items | *N* | *M* | *F* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service to Others Scale | | | .208 | .812 |
| Single / Never Married | 80 | 54.28 | | |
| Married / In A Committed | 67 | 53.99 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 55.10 | | |
| Total | 163 | 54.24 | | |
| Job Self Interest Scale | | | .019 | .981 |
| Single / Never Married | 80 | 33.95 | | |
| Married /In A Committed | 67 | 34.24 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 33.95 | | |
| Total | 163 | 34.06 | | |
| Experienced Favorable Contact | | | 1.073 | .345 |
| Single / Never Married | 81 | 4.86 | | |
| Married / In A Committed | 68 | 5.69 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 5.50 | | |
| Total | 165 | 5.27 | | |
| Experienced Psychosocial Crisis | | | 5.671 | .004** |
| Single / Never Married | 81 | 4.02 | | |
| Married /In A Committed | 69 | 5.78 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 6.12 | | |
| Total | 166 | 4.96 | | |
| SW is Academically Less Challenging | | | 1.150 | .319 |
| Single / Never Married | 81 | 1.90 | | |
| Married /In A Committed | 69 | 2.45 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 2.81 | | |
| Total | 166 | 2.22 | | |

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$.

Note: Scale based on 0 = Very unimportant to 10 = Very Important. The Service to Others Scale and Job Self Interest Scale are based on Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) study.

*Table: 16*

*Comparison of Means for Single /Never Married (n= 81) Married and In A Committed Relationship (n=69), Married But Separated and Divorced and (n =16) BSW Students on Experience Items*

| Items | *N* | *M* | *F* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Treated Like A Individual | | | .670 | .513 |
| Single / Never Married | 81 | 5.28 | | |
| Married / In A Committed | 69 | 5.27 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 5.00 | | |
| Total | 166 | 5.25 | | |
| Valued As a Student | | | .080 | .923 |
| Single / Never Married | 81 | 5.01 | | |
| Married / In A Committed | 69 | 4.94 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 4.94 | | |
| Total | 166 | 4.98 | | |
| Courses Are Academically Challenging | | | .430 | .651 |
| Single / Never Married | 81 | 4.58 | | |
| Married / In A Committed | 69 | 4.74 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 4.75 | | |
| Total | 166 | 4.66 | | |
| Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing | | | .929 | .397 |
| Single / Never Married | 80 | 2.31 | | |
| Married / In A Committed | 69 | 2.67 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 2.63 | | |
| Total | 165 | 2.45 | | |
| Encouraged to Agree or Disagree | | | .165 | .848 |
| Single / Never Married | 81 | 3.38 | | |
| Married /In A Committed | 69 | 3.23 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 3.31 | | |
| Total | 166 | 3.31 | | |
| SW Courses Have Prepared | | | .337 | .714 |
| Single / Never Married | 81 | 4.67 | | |
| Married / In A Committed | 69 | 4.81 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 4.81 | | |
| Total | 166 | 4.74 | | |
| SW Prof Offer Good Feedback | | | .146 | .864 |
| Single / Never Married | 81 | 4.78 | | |
| Married / In A Committed | 69 | 4.81 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 15 | 4.93 | | |
| Total | 165 | 4.81 | | |
| Made Aware of My Gender | | | .794 | .454 |
| Single / Never Married | 81 | 2.49 | | |
| Married / In A Committed | 69 | 2.35 | | |
| Married But Separated/Divorced | 16 | 2.81 | | |
| Total | 166 | 2.37 | | |

Note: Scores based on scale, 1 = Experienced Very Little and 6 = Experienced Very Often.

***Research Question 3c***

*Are there any differences in student responses to motivations and experiences based upon grade level?*

To address this question, 13 independent samples *t* tests were conducted to see if any meaningful differences would emerge when comparing junior and seniors on motivation and experience items. Table 17 shows a statistically significant difference between juniors and seniors on the motivation *Service to Others Scale,* $t = 2.34$, $df = 161$, $p = .021$, and for the motivation item *Experienced Favorable Contact,* $t = 2.60$, $df = 163$, $p = .041$. The differences between group mean scores revealed that the average differences for motivation: *Service to Others Scale* was (2.26) on an 11-point scale. Seniors rated the motivation *Service to Others Scale* and the Experienced Favorable Contact item as more important motivators for selecting the major than did juniors. For experience items, Table 18 shows a statistically significant difference between juniors and seniors on Valued as a Student, $t = 3.64$, $df = 164$, $p < .001$, and Social Work Professors Offer Good Feedback, $t = 2.03$, $df = 163$, $p = .044$. The differences between group mean scores for juniors and seniors revealed an average difference for experience item, Valued as a Student of .632 and for Social Work Professors Offer Good Feedback of .327 on a 6-point scale. Juniors rated the experience item, Valued as a Student as something they experienced more often within the major more than did seniors. On the other hand, the data showed that seniors rated Social Work Professors Offer Good Feedback within the major higher than did juniors.

*Table: 17*

*Independent Samples t-Tests Comparing Female and Male for BSW Students on Motivation Items (n= 98 seniors and n =68 juniors)*

| Items | | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service to Others Scale | | | | | 2.34 | 161 | .021* |
| | Senior | 95 | 55.18 | 5.36 | | | |
| | Junior | 68 | 52.92 | 6.97 | | | |
| Job Self Interest Scale | | | | | .50 | 161 | .136 |
| | Senior | 96 | 35.00 | 10.40 | | | |
| | Junior | 67 | 32.71 | 8.31 | | | |
| Experienced Favorable Contact | | | | | 2.06 | 163 | .041* |
| | Senior | 97 | 5.73 | 3.62 | | | |
| | Junior | 68 | 4.60 | 3.23 | | | |
| Experienced Psychosocial Crisis | | | | | 1.32 | 164 | .188 |
| | Senior | 98 | 5.27 | 3.73 | | | |
| | Junior | 68 | 4.51 | 3.39 | | | |
| SW is Academically Less Challenging | | | | | .385 | 164 | .701 |
| | Senior | 98 | 2.29 | 2.74 | | | |
| | Junior | 68 | 2.12 | 2.80 | | | |

* $p \leq .05$.

Note: Scale based on 0 = Very unimportant to 10 = Very Important. The Service to Others Scale and Job Self Interest Scale are based on Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) study.

*Table: 18*

*Independent Samples t-Tests Comparing Female and Male for BSW Students on Experience Items (n= 98 seniors and n =68 juniors)*

| Item | | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Treated Like A Individual | | | | | 1.59 | 164 | .144 |
| | Senior | 98 | 5.35 | .91 | | | |
| | Junior | 68 | 5.12 | .92 | | | |
| Valued As a Student | | | | | 3.64 | 164 | .001** |
| | Senior | 98 | 5.23 | .88 | | | |
| | Junior | 68 | 5.60 | 1.35 | | | |
| Courses Are Academically Challenging | | | | | 1.28 | 164 | .201 |
| | Senior | 98 | 4.75 | .99 | | | |
| | Junior | 68 | 4.53 | 1.26 | | | |
| Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing | | | | | | | |
| | Senior | | | | .051 | 163 | .959 |
| | Junior | 98 | 4.52 | 1.62 | | | |
| | | 67 | 4.51 | 1.58 | | | |
| Encouraged to Agree or Disagree | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | -.030 | 164 | .976 |
| | Senior | 98 | 3.68 | 1.59 | | | |
| | Junior | 68 | 3.69 | 1.61 | | | |
| SW Courses Have Prepared | | | | | 1.45 | 164 | .149 |
| | Senior | 98 | 4.85 | 1.17 | | | |
| | Junior | 68 | 4.59 | 1.08 | | | |
| SW Prof Offer Good Feedback | | | | | 2.03 | 163 | .044* |
| | Senior | 98 | 4.94 | 1.043 | | | |
| | Junior | 68 | 4.61 | .968 | | | |
| Made Aware of My Gender | | | | | .986 | 164 | .326 |
| | Senior | 98 | 4.74 | 1.719 | | | |
| | Junior | 68 | 4.47 | 1.824 | | | |

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$.
Note: Scores based on scale, 1 = Experienced Very Little and 6 = Experienced Very Often.

***Research Question 3d***

*Are there any differences in student responses to motivations and experiences based upon ethnicity?*

To answer this question, ethnicity was recoded into two different groups: (a) Black, Hispanic, Latino, and Asian, as Students of Color, and (b) White non-Hispanic. These two groups were compared to see if any meaningful differences would emerge when comparing ethnic groups on motivation and experience items.

Five independent samples *t* tests for motivation and 8 experience independent samples *t* tests were conducted. Data in Table 19 show that there were no significant differences for any of the motivation items. However Table 20 reveals that there was a significant difference for experience item Encouraged to Agree or Disagree, $t = 2.30$, $df = 164$, $p = .022$. The differences in the group mean score was .652 on a 6-point scale. The means would imply White non-Hispanic participants rated that they experienced Encouragement to Agree or Disagree with social work principles that they did not personally believe in more than did Students of Color. On average, neither group reported extreme experiences with the statement. The Students of Color averaged 3.20, and White students averaged 3.89 on a 6 point scale, ranging from 1 = experienced very little to 6 = experienced very often.

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*Table: 19*

*Independent Samples t-Tests Comparing Students of Color and White BSW Students on Motivation Items (n= 41 Students of Color and n =125 White Students)*

| Items | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service to Others Scale | | | | -.01 | 161 | .993 |
| Students of Color | 41 | 54.23 | 6.84 | | | |
| White | 122 | 54.24 | 5.95 | | | |
| Job Self Interest Scale | | | | .29 | 161 | .772 |
| Students of Color | 40 | 34.44 | 9.67 | | | |
| White | 123 | 33.93 | 9.66 | | | |
| Experienced Favorable Contact | | | | 1.19 | 163 | .236 |
| Students of Color | 41 | 5.83 | 3.46 | | | |
| White | 124 | 5.08 | 3.50 | | | |
| Experienced Psychosocial Crisis | | | | -.36 | 164 | .718 |
| Students of Color | 41 | 4.78 | 3.72 | | | |
| White | 125 | 5.02 | 3.57 | | | |
| SW is Academically Less Challenging | | | | .53 | 164 | .598 |
| Students of Color | 41 | 2.41 | 3.07 | | | |
| White | 125 | 2.15 | 2.66 | | | |

Note: Scale based on 0 = Very unimportant to 10 = Very Important. The Service to Others Scale and Job Self Interest Scale are based on Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) study.

*Table: 20*

*Independent Samples t-Tests Comparing Students of Color and White BSW Students on Experience Items (n= 41 Students of Color and n =125 White Students)*

| Items | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Treated Like A Individual | | | | -1.25 | 164 | .213 |
| Students of Color | 41 | 5.10 | 1.07 | | | |
| White | 125 | 5.30 | .86 | | | |
| Valued As a Student | | | | .31 | 164 | .754 |
| Students of Color | 41 | 5.02 | .99 | | | |
| White | 125 | 4.96 | 1.19 | | | |
| Courses Are Academically Challenging | | | | 1.27 | 164 | .207 |
| Students of Color | 41 | 4.85 | 1.06 | | | |
| White | 125 | 4.60 | 1.13 | | | |
| Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing | | | | -.61 | 163 | .542 |
| Students of Color | 40 | 4.65 | 1.79 | | | |
| White | 125 | 4.47 | 1.54 | | | |
| Encouraged to Agree or Disagree | | | | 2.30 | 164 | .022* |
| Students of Color | 41 | 3.20 | 1.62 | | | |
| White | 125 | 3.89 | 1.56 | | | |
| SW Courses Have Prepared | | | | -.54 | 164 | .593 |
| Students of Color | 41 | 4.66 | 1.30 | | | |
| White | 125 | 4.77 | 1.08 | | | |
| SW Prof Offer Good Feedback | | | | -.18 | 163 | .854 |
| Students of Color | 41 | 4.78 | 1.04 | | | |
| White | 125 | 4.81 | 1.02 | | | |
| Made Aware of My Gender | | | | .48 | 164 | .630 |
| Students of Color | 41 | 4.56 | 1.76 | | | |
| White | 125 | 4.71 | 1.73 | | | |

* $p \leq .05$.
Note: Scores based on scale, 1 = Experienced Very Little and 6 = Experienced Very Often.

***Research Question 4a***

*Does prior experience with a change in academic major impact reported motivation or experiences within the major?*

Five independent samples *t* tests for motivation and 8 experience independent samples *t tests* were conducted to see if any meaningful differences would emerge when comparing motivation and experience items for participants in this study on whether or not Was Social Work Your First Major (the first major declared after being accepted into a college or university). Results in Tables 21 and 22 showed that there were no significant differences on motivation or experience items between groups for Was Social Work Your First Major.

*Table: 22*

*Independent Samples t-Tests Comparing Was Social Work Your First Major of BSW Students on Experience Items (n= 124 no and n =42 yes)*

| Items | | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Treated Like a Individual | | | | | 1.29 | 164 | .199 |
| | No | 124 | 5.31 | .88 | | | |
| | Yes | 42 | 5.09 | 1.01 | | | |
| Valued As a Student | | | | | .78 | 164 | .436 |
| | No | 124 | 5.02 | 1.17 | | | |
| | Yes | 42 | 4.86 | 1.05 | | | |
| Courses Are Academically Challenging | | | | | .77 | 164 | .441 |
| | No | 124 | 4.70 | 1.13 | | | |
| | Yes | 42 | 4.55 | 1.06 | | | |
| Feeling Uncomfortable. Expressing | | | | | .29 | 163 | .769 |
| | No | 123 | 2.46 | 1.61 | | | |
| | Yes | 42 | 2.55 | 1.58 | | | |
| Encouraged to Agree or Disagree | | | | | -.35 | 164 | .725 |
| | No | 124 | 3.34 | 1.61 | | | |
| | Yes | 42 | 3.24 | 1.57 | | | |
| SW Courses Have Prepared | | | | | -.29 | 164 | .768 |
| | No | 124 | 4.73 | 1.14 | | | |
| | Yes | 42 | 4.79 | 1.14 | | | |
| SW Prof Offer Good Feedback | | | | | -.761 | 161 | .448 |
| | No | 123 | 54.03 | 6.39 | | | |
| | Yes | 40 | 54.89 | 5.42 | | | |
| Job Self Interest Scale | | | | | .50 | 163 | .620 |
| | No | 123 | 4.83 | 1.02 | | | |
| | Yes | 42 | 4.74 | 1.04 | | | |
| Made Aware of My Gender | | | | | 1.03 | 161 | .305 |
| | No | 123 | 34.50 | 9.75 | | | |
| | Yes | 40 | 32.70 | 9.25 | | | |
| Experienced Favorable Contact | | | | | .76 | 164 | .445 |
| | No | 124 | 2.31 | 1.74 | | | |
| | Yes | 42 | 2.55 | 1.84 | .923 | 163 | .357 |
| Experienced Psychosocial Crisis | | | | | 1.130 | 164 | .260 |
| | No | 124 | 4.77 | 3.60 | | | |
| | Yes | 42 | 5.50 | 3.59 | | | |
| SW is Academically Less Challenging | | | | | 1.435 | 164 | .153 |
| | No | 124 | 2.39 | 2.88 | | | |
| | Yes | 42 | 1.69 | 2.32 | | | |

Note: Scale based on 1 = Experienced Very Little to 6= Experienced Very Often.

*Table: 21*

*Independent Samples t-Tests Comparing Was Social Work Your First Major of BSW Students on Motivation Items (n= 124 no and n =42 yes)*

| Items | | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service to Others Scale | | | | | -.761 | 161 | .448 |
| | No | 123 | 54.03 | 6.39 | | | |
| | Yes | 40 | 54.89 | 5.42 | | | |
| Job Self Interest Scale | | | | | 1.03 | 161 | .305 |
| | No | 123 | 34.50 | 9.75 | | | |
| | Yes | 40 | 32.70 | 9.25 | | | |
| Experienced Favorable Contact | | | | | .923 | 163 | .357 |
| | No | 124 | 5.41 | 3.44 | | | |
| | Yes | 41 | 4.83 | 3.69 | | | |
| SW is Academically Less Challenging | | | | | 1.435 | 164 | .153 |
| | No | 124 | 2.39 | 2.88 | | | |
| | Yes | 42 | 1.69 | 2.32 | | | |

Note: Scores based on scale, 0 = Very unimportant to 10= Very Important. The Service to Others Scale and Job Self Interest Scale are based in Hanson and McCullough (1995).

***Research Question 4b***

*Does prior exposure to the profession of social work impact reported motivation or experiences within the major?*

To see if any meaningful differences would emerge when comparing motivation and experience items on whether or not students had Prior Exposure to a Social Worker (before declaring social work as their major). Five independent samples *t* tests for motivation and 8 experience independent samples *t* tests were conducted. Data in Table 23 reveal that a statistically significant difference was found between students who had Prior Exposure to a social worker and those who had not had such exposure on motivation item Experienced Favorable Contact, $t = -4.249$, $df = 162$, $p < .001$, and Experienced Psychosocial Crisis, $t = -2.491$, $df = 163$, $p = .014$. The differences between group mean scores was 2.21 for Experienced Favorable Contact, it was 1.38 and, for Experience Psychosocial Crisis. Those students with prior exposure rated motivation item Experienced Favorable Contact as a more important motivator for selecting the major; they also rated Experience Psychosocial Crisis as higher. Table 24 reveals that there was a significant difference on experience item Courses are Academically Challenging, $t = 2.153$, $df = 163$, $p = .033$. The difference in the group mean score was .368 on a 6-point scale. Students rated experience item Courses are

Academically Challenging higher if they did not have Prior Exposure to the

*Table: 23*

*Independent Samples t-Tests Comparing Prior Exposure to a Social Worker for BSW Students on Motivation Items (n = 80 were no and n = 85 were yes)*

| Items | | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service to Others Scale | | | | | -1.35 | 160 | .180 |
| | No | 79 | 53.66 | 6.89 | | | |
| | Yes | 83 | 54.95 | 5.21 | | | |
| Job Self Interest Scale | | | | | -.22 | 160 | .828 |
| | No | 78 | 33.98 | 9.87 | | | |
| | Yes | 84 | 34.31 | 9.38 | | | |
| Experienced Favorable Contact | | | | | -4.25 | 162 | .001*** |
| | No | 80 | 4.16 | 3.40 | | | |
| | Yes | 84 | 6.37 | 3.25 | | | |
| Experienced Psychosocial Crisis | | | | | -2.49 | 163 | .014* |
| | No | 80 | 4.22 | 3.58 | | | |
| | Yes | 85 | 5.60 | 3.51 | | | |
| SW is Academically Less Challenging | | | | | -1.87 | 163 | .063 |
| | No | 80 | 1.81 | 2.56 | | | |
| | Yes | 85 | 2.61 | 2.91 | | | |

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.
Note: Scores based on scale, 0 = Very unimportant to 10= Very Important. The Service to Others Scale and Job Self Interest Scale are based in Hanson and McCullough (1995).

profession.

*Table: 24*

*Independent Samples t-Tests Comparing Prior Exposure to a Social Worker for BSW Students on Experience Items (n = 80 were no and n = 85 were yes)*

| Items | | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Treated Like A Individual | | | | | -1.091 | 163 | .277 |
| | No | 80 | 5.19 | .96 | | | |
| | Yes | 85 | 5.34 | .85 | | | |
| Valued As a Student | | | | | -1.106 | 163 | .270 |
| | No | 80 | 4.89 | 1.21 | | | |
| | Yes | 85 | 5.08 | 1.05 | | | |
| Courses Are Academically Challenging | | | | | 2.153 | 163 | .033* |
| | No | 80 | 4.86 | .90 | | | |
| | Yes | 85 | 4.49 | 1.26 | | | |
| Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing | | | | | .043 | 162 | .966 |
| | No | 80 | 2.47 | 1.54 | | | |
| | Yes | 84 | 2.46 | 1.65 | | | |
| Encouraged to Agree or Disagree | | | | | -1.340 | 163 | .182 |
| | No | 80 | 3.15 | 1.58 | | | |
| | Yes | 85 | 3.48 | 1.61 | | | |
| SW Courses Have Prepared | | | | | -.224 | 163 | .823 |
| | No | 80 | 4.72 | 1.04 | | | |
| | Yes | 85 | 4.76 | 1.22 | | | |
| SW Prof Offer Good Feedback | | | | | 1.272 | 162 | .205 |
| | No | 80 | 4.93 | .98 | | | |
| | Yes | 84 | 4.73 | 1.02 | | | |
| Made Aware of My Gender | | | | | -.732 | 163 | .465 |
| | No | 80 | 2.23 | 1.79 | | | |
| | Yes | 85 | 2.42 | 1.70 | | | |

*$p \leq .05$.

Note: Scores based on scale, 1 = Experienced Very Little and 6 = Experienced Very Often.

***Research Question 5***

*What do male undergraduate BSW students report related to the experiences of being in a female dominated major?*

A total of 23 males participated in the research study. Two students failed to indicate their gender on the questionnaire. Thirteen of the males were successfully contacted to complete the brief follow-up telephone interview, and to further explore their individual decisions for selecting social work as their academic major. The follow-up telephone interview schedule contained 15 questions and took between 30 to 50 minutes to complete. Table 25 shows the grade level of the 13 males who participated in the follow up interviews: seniors ($n$ = 8), and juniors ($n$ = 5). There were 8 males from Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD): seniors ($n$ = 4) and juniors ($n$ = 4). There were 5 males from Colorado State University (CSU): seniors ($n$ = 4) and juniors ($n$ = 1). The age range of the 13 males ranged between 21 and 52 years old.

*Table 25*

*Demographic Profile of Male Students Who Participated in Follow-Up Interview ($n$ = 8 were seniors and $n$ = 5 were juniors)*

| Variable | | Total Sample | | MSCD | | CSU | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *N* | *%* | *N* | *%* | *N* | *%* |
| Gender Level | | | | | | | |
| | Senior | 8 | 62% | 4 | 50% | 4 | 80% |
| | Junior | 5 | 38% | 4 | 50% | 1 | 20% |
| | Total | 13 | 100% | 8 | 100% | 5 | 100% |
| Was Social Work Your First Major? | | | | | | | |
| | Yes | 2 | 18% | 1 | 50% | 1 | 25% |
| | No | 9 | 82% | 6 | 50% | 3 | 75% |
| | Total | 11 | 100% | 7 | 100% | 4 | 100% |
| Did You Have Prior Exposure to a Social Worker? | | | | | | | |
| | Yes | 7 | 64% | 5 | 71% | 2 | 50% |
| | No | 4 | 36% | 2 | 29% | 2 | 50% |
| | Total | 11 | 100% | 7 | 100% | 4 | 100% |

A summary of the responses from the 13 male participants to the follow up telephone interviews will be discussed in this section. Tables 26 and 27 provide a brief summary of male interview responses to social work major experiences arranged by theme.

Table 26 illustrates the responses of male students' experiences and motivations within the social work major.

- ***How Did You Hear About Social Work?***

Six of the males reported that they either knew a friend, were a colleague of a social worker, or personally knew someone majoring in social work. Two males mentioned they had a family member who was a current social worker. Two males revealed they were going to a social worker in a professional capacity or had contact with a social work agency. Two other males talked about how they were advised about social work through a college advisor or had discovered social work from attending a college major fair. One indicated he switched majors in search of wanting to find something unique, but different. Eight stated that their experiences, mentioned above were the first time they heard about the social work profession. Four stated they had heard about the social work profession before in some capacity.

*Table 26*

*Male Interview Responses to Social Work Major Experiences By Theme.*

| Interview question | *N** |
|---|---|
| How did you hear about social work? | |
| Through a friend, colleague, family member is a social worker had seen a Social Worker professionally | 10 |
| Through advising | 2 |
| First impression positive or negative? | |
| Positive | 10 |
| Mixed (positive/negative) | 3 |
| What aspects drew you to social work? | |
| Desire to help others | 11 |
| Broadness of degree, personal issues | 2 |
| What do you like most/least? | |
| Most – Opportunity to help | 13 |
| Least – curriculum | 3 |
| Paperwork | 3 |
| Misconceptions about social work | 2 |
| How does it feel to be a male in social work classrooms? | |
| Had to be politically correct, unable to speak their mind | 6 |
| Felt welcome, liked, and supported | 5 |
| Felt totally neutral | 2 |

Note: *N** represents number out of 13 interviews.
Responses may total more than 13 if multiple responses were possible.

- ***Were Your First Impressions About Social Work Positive or Negative?***

Ten of the males discussed having overall generally positive first impressions about social work. Of these ten, several males revealed having a positive impression about social work from taking an introductory social work course, having a favorable prior contact with a social work professional, or having positive encounters with social work professors. Three talked about having both positive and negative impressions about social work.

- ***What Aspects Drew You to Social Work?***

Eleven indicated it was the desire/opportunity to help others, to work with people and communities, to make a difference, or the humanness of the social work profession. One male mentioned that it was the broadness of the degree, the ability to find and secure future employment that drew him into social work. Another male stated it was a chance to work on his own personal issues. All 13 stated that they shared the same values and philosophical beliefs as the field of social work and its professional Code of Ethics. This was an unexpected beneficial bonus that drew them into the social work profession.

- ***What Do You Like the Most and the Least About the Social Work Profession?***

All 13 reported that what they liked most about the social work profession was the opportunity to help individuals, groups, or communities. What they liked the least about the social work profession varied. Three indicated they disliked the academic work/curriculum. These three males did not perceive the social work program as being an academically challenging major compared to the majors they

had left. Another three males disliked the paperwork. One male talked about how he disliked working on his own issues because many of the social work concepts being discussed in class had triggered his unresolved and emotional triggers. Two disliked all of the misconceptions, the incorrect perceptions about the social work profession and what social workers actually do.

- ***How Does It Feel To Be A Male In Social Work Classrooms?***

The responses seemed to vary on this question. Two of the males talked about how politically correct they had to be when engaged in classroom discussions and how uncomfortable they would have felt discussing what was really on their minds concerning the sensitive topics being discussed. Four discussed at length about feeling awkward in class participation, wanting to speak their minds, but refraining due to the dynamics of the classroom, or from not wanting to disturb the status quo of polite discussions. Five males readily talked about how welcome, liked, and supported they felt in their social work programs. Two other males felt totally neutral and had not observed any differences in how they were treated in social work classrooms.

- ***What does it feel like to be a male in predominately female classrooms?***

Seven mentioned they had no problems or they felt very comfortable. Seven males felt annoyed because they were repeatedly being called upon to give either a male perspective, a gay male perspective, or being encouraged to talk about how they felt on social welfare issues, and how they would have felt uncomfortable telling the truth. Four stated they felt uncomfortable speaking up and discussing

what was truly on their minds, or felt uncomfortable about their general physical appearance. Two males mentioned they had become more self-conscious about their physical appearance and the clothing they wore, because they had repeatedly observed how several female students had commented and gossiped about the clothing of other female students in the class. Four other males described their disdain towards how much female social work students gossiped and talked about one another in predominately female classrooms.

Table 27 extents the responses of male students' experiences and motivations within the social work major.

- ***Would You Consider Yourself To Be A Minority In Social Work Due To Your Gender? (Positive/Negative?)***

Eleven males indicated they did feel like a minority majoring in social work due to their gender. One of the eleven males said that even though he was a minority in the social work program, he still retained his white male privileges. This same male stated that being a minority in the program wasn't a negative thing, but to the contrary, it was a huge bonus because he was constantly being asked to share his male beliefs and opinions on various social welfare issues. Another male stated he only considered himself to be a minority every now and then depending on the topic being discussed. One interesting revelation was that one male did not consider himself to be a minority as might be expected.

*Table 27*

*Male interview Responses to Social Work Major Experiences By Theme*

| Interview question | *N** |
|---|---|
| Would you consider yourself to be a minority in social work due to your gender? | |
| Yes | 11 |
| *(Though 1 male stated that he retained his white male privilege)* | |
| No | 1 |
| What was your level of participation as a male in female classrooms? | |
| Felt their level of communication was largely dependent on the subject matter being discussed | 8 |
| Their shyness, introverted personality, or their fear of public speaking as contributing factors | 5 |
| Would having more males in the classroom impact your level of contribution? | |
| Yes | 6 |
| No | 7 |
| *What are your perceptions regarding recruiting more males into the profession?* | |
| Should recruit more men | 10 |
| Should not recruit more men | 3 |
| *Perceptions issues about recruitment* | |
| Will try do something to help recruit more men into the profession | 12 |
| Will not do anything to recruit more men | 1 |

Note: *N** represents number out of 13 interviews
Responses may total more than 13 if multiple responses were possible.

In regards to the negative aspects associated with being a minority majoring in social work, the responses varied; three described feeling as if males were the central focus or the key actors in many of society's ills and problems. These men reported seeing and feeling a lot of male bashing, negative stereotyping of men, or had to repeatedly listen to classroom discussions where the perpetrators of any type of violence were men. They all agreed this accusatory undertone contributed to their feelings of isolation due to their maleness within classroom settings. Four didn't feel comfortable speaking their mind. Two discussed feeling like token males. Three males saw no negatives associated with being a male (or the only male) in predominately female classrooms.

Three males stated the positive aspects associated with being a minority majoring in social work were learning something new from a feminist perspective, and being repeatedly called upon to express themselves and their varying different points of view. Five elaborated on how proud they felt being asked to give the male perspective on issues, so they could help eliminate negative male stereotypes. Three males reported feeling very special and honored to be perceived in a caring and sensitive way, or from being thought of as a positive role model for other men. One male talked about his positive experiences of being able to joke, laugh, and socialize around female students, which was something he had not felt comfortable doing before. One male indicated there were no positive aspects associated with being a minority majoring in social work.

- ***What Was Your Level of Participation As A Male In Female Classrooms?***

Eight talked about how much they participated or had contributed in classroom discussions. All 8 of these males felt their level of communication was largely dependent on the subject matter being discussed. Additionally, these eight stated they tended to participate a lot more in small groups than in larger classroom settings. Another five males reflected on their shyness, introverted personality, or their fear of public speaking as contributing factors, which limited how much they participated in either small or large group classroom discussions.

Gender affected or limited their level of participation. Two males described how their gender did not affect how much they participated in classroom discussions. One male reported how the subject matter often affected how much he participated. Nine males readily mentioned that their gender did not affect how much they participated in classroom discussions, but they still felt uncomfortable if they were discussing sensitive or socially correct topics. One male talked about experiencing mixed feelings and couldn't decide if his gender affected his participation or not.

- ***Would Having More Males In The Classroom Impact Your Level Of Contribution?***

Two males described how having more males in the classroom would increase their comfort level and their level of participation in discussions. Seven said having more males in the classroom would not affect their level of participation in discussions either way, largely because they already felt very comfortable

speaking up in class. Another two males felt if more men were present in the classroom it would have helped to equalize the imbalance of female and male students. Two openly gay males discussed how having heterosexual males in the classroom would have affected their level of participation because they would have felt more self-conscious around straight males.

- ***How Do Female Students React To You?***

Nine males stated that female social work students reacted to them either very positively, supportively, acceptingly, invitingly, or treated them nicely. Two indicated having both positive and negative reactions. Two males reported they had no clue how female social work students were reacting to them in class.

- ***Were You Treated Differently Due To Gender?***

Seven males said that female social work students did not treat them differently in class due to their gender. Five described how some female social work students did treat them differently to some degree, whether it was being left out of informal conversations, out of class activities, or being viewed as different due to their maleness. One male talked about how he was not treated differently because of his gender, but he did feel treated differently due to his gay sexual orientation.

- ***Do You Treat Female Social Work Students Differently?***

Ten males indicated they had not treated female social work students differently because of their gender. Two males reported female students did not react to them any differently than they did in any other class. Three males stated they had treated female social work students differently in class, because they

were raised to respect women and to treat them with more cordiality, geniality, and with warmth.

- ***How Did Female Faculty Treat You In Class?***

Eleven males described how female social work teachers treated them very positively, supportively, acceptingly, encouragingly, or were very complimentary. Two reported that female social work teachers did not treat them negatively or positively. One online student at MSCD reported observing no differences at all. One male at CSU thought female social work professors had a higher professional status than did male social work professors.

- ***How Did Male Faculty Treat You In Class?***

Eleven males reported male social work teachers treated them the same as female teachers did. One male felt like male social work teachers did react to him differently than his female teachers, because he felt like male teachers expected more from him and didn't treat him as if he were special for being one of a hand full of males in the classroom.

- ***Has Anyone Questioned Your Selection of Social Work? (Negative/Positive?)***

Twelve males openly discussed how numerous people have questioned their decision to major in social work, particularly the low pay associated with the profession. However, one male stated no one had ever questioned his decision to major in social work.

Nine males said inquiries about their decision to major in social work did have negative impacts on them. It caused them to question the low pay and the low

status of the profession. One male, for example, stated that some inquires about his academic major were like a double-sided compliment and critical when someone would say, "Oh, you are a social work major? You will be a great social worker, but too bad you won't make any *real* money." This student stated he felt like his choice of academic majors and his future career was being devalued.

- ***Has Anyone Questioned Your Sexual Orientation Since You Have Been A Social Work Major? (Negative/Positive?)***

Eleven males indicated they haven't received any inquiries about their sexual orientation. Three of the eleven reported it was because they were openly gay. Two males discussed their encounters/experiences about inquiries into their sexual orientation after declaring social work as their major. A negative aspect, one irritated male talked about, was always having his sexual orientation called into question when he was not gay. The male talked about how people often thought he was gay because he was a male social work student. While an openly gay male readily discussed how receiving inquiries about his sexual orientation was a positive thing because it gave him the opportunity to educate other people about life as a gay male. This gay male also indicated people have been very supportive and welcoming towards him and his sexual orientation.

- ***What Are Your Perceptions Regarding Recruiting More Males Into the Profession?***

Ten males strongly felt the social work profession should recruit more men. Three males reported that the social work profession should do nothing to recruit

more men, because they believed that not all men were special enough to handle the emotional demands of the social work profession.

- ***How Should Males Be Recruited?***

Seven males were unsure how they would attract and recruit more males, but believed it was a good idea. Two males believed more males should be recruited in secondary and post-secondary schools by school social workers or school guidance/career advisors. Three males thought more males should be recruited through better marketing efforts by social work departments and professionals, through job awareness fairs and functions, and by seeking out males interested in other human services majors, such as psychology, sociology, theology, and human development. Other responses were that more males should be recruited at colleges and churches.

Twelve males talked about how having more males in the social work program would have been a positive experience for them. Seven males mentioned that it would increase the male perspective on social welfare issues, would have a positive overall effect, would provide good role models for other men considering social work, would to help to eliminate stereotypes about the profession, and would help to increase overall salaries.

All thirteen males believed the perceived low pay of social workers was probably the number one reason why most males would not consider social work as their academic major. Though, several of these males pointed out that when male students did select a helping profession, they tended to major in other fields like psychology, human development, sociology, and counseling which have very

similar salaries to social work. The males in this study felt this was because the other academic majors were better at marketing to students and the public, in general, about what they actually do. The majority of the males in the study felt like social work was often viewed as "those people who come and take children away from their families." Other misconceptions about social work, given by these male students, were that social work was often viewed as an all-female dominated academic major, social work was not a competitive academic major, and that most social workers were only employed in city and county departments of human or social services.

- ***If You Were Going To Help With Recruitment, What Things Might You Consider?***

Twelve males stated that after they graduate with a degree in social work, they will try to do something to help recruit more men into the profession, such as talking with like-minded males, or with males who inquire about a degree in human services, thus being able to tout the virtues of the social work profession. One male stated he would not do anything to recruit more men.

### *Summary*

This study provided evidence that several motivating factors and experiences are important influences on BSW students' experiences within the social work major.

### *Descriptive Demographics*

A total of 166 subjects from two undergraduate social work programs in Colorado participated in the research study; they were from Metropolitan State

College of Denver (MSCD) and Colorado State University (CSU). Eighty-three of the participants were from MSCD, and 83 were from CSU. Roughly 86% of the participants were females and 14% were males. CSU had 5 more females in this study than did MSCD, which had more males in this research than did CSU.

The ethnic compositions of the participants in this study are as follows; White ($n$ =125), Hispanic/Latino ($n$ = 16), Black ($n$ = 9), Other ($n$ = 9), and Asian ($n$ = 7).

The martial status of participants revealed that 49% reported they were currently Single/Never Married, 25% were In a Committed Relationship, 17% were Married, 7% were Divorced, and 2% were Married But Separated.

The age of the participants in this study ranged from 19 to 56 years old. Students were divided into three different age groups for later analyses, these three groups were: (a) 18 to 21, (b) 22 to 25, and (c) 26 to 56.

***Significant Group Differences***

Tables 28 and 29 indicate which group differences were statistically significant for each of the research questions. Table 28 shows that that there were 3 out of 13 significant gender differences, 2 out of 13 significant age differences, and only 1 out of 13 significant marital status differences. Note that Exposure to a Psychosocial Crisis was significant for gender, age, and marital status, with males, older students, and married students rating these variables as more important motivations for selecting social work as a major than females, younger students, and unmarried or divorced students. The data in Table 28 illustrates that

female participants were more likely to rate the *Service to Others Scale* as more important to them as a motivator for selecting a major than did male participants.

Table 28 also reflects that male subjects were significantly more likely to rate Made Aware of My Gender higher than were females. The oldest age student group (26 to 56) rated the variable Social Work is Academically Less Challenging higher as a motivator than the two younger groups.

The data in Table 29 illustrate that seniors were more motivated than juniors to select *Service to Others* and as a result of Experiencing Favorable Contact with a social worker. Junior participants were more likely than senior participants to have experienced the variable Valued as a Student, but less likely to say Social Work Professors Offer Good Feedback.

*Table 28*

*Significant Differences for Research Questions 1b, 2b, 3a, 3b*

| | Gender | Age | Marital Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| Motivations to Major in Social Work | | | |
| Service to Others Scale | Female | ----- | ----- |
| Job Self Interest Scale | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Experienced Favorable Contact | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Experienced Psychosocial Crisis | Male | Oldest | Married In A Committed Relationship |
| SW is Academically Less Challenging | ----- | Oldest | ----- |
| Experiences During Major | | | |
| Treated Like A Individual | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Valued As a Student | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Courses Are Academically Challenging | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Encouraged to Agree or Disagree | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| SW Courses Have Prepared | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| SW Prof Offer Good Feedback | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Made Aware of My Gender | Male | ----- | ----- |

Note: When group differences were statistically significant, the group with the higher mean is listed in the table. Dashes mean groups were not significant.

Table 29 also illustrates that White non-Hispanic students felt more Encouraged to Agree or Disagree with social work principles that they do not personally believe in than Students of Color. Students who had had Prior Exposure to a Social Worker were more motivated to select a social work major by having Experienced Favorable Contact with a social worker and by having

Experienced a Psychosocial Crisis than were students who had not had prior exposure to a social worker. Conversely students who had not had prior contact with a social worker were less likely to have experienced courses as Academically Challenging.

*Table 29*

*Significant Differences for Research Questions 3c, 3d, 4a, 4b*

| | Grade Level | Ethnicity | 1st Major | Prior Exposure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motivations to Major in Social Work | | | | |
| Service to Others Scale | Senior | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Job Self Interest Scale | | | | |
| Experienced Favorable Contact | Senior | ----- | ----- | Yes |
| Experienced Psychosocial Crisis | ----- | ----- | ----- | Yes |
| SW is Academically Less Challenging | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Experiences During Major | | | | |
| Treated Like A Individual | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Valued As a Student | Junior | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Courses Are Academically Challenging | ----- | ----- | ----- | No |
| Feeling Uncomfortable Expressing | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Encouraged to Agree or Disagree | ----- | White | ----- | ----- |
| SW Courses Have Prepared | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| SW Prof Offer Good Feedback | Senior | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Made Aware of My Gender | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |

Note: When group differences were statistically significant, the group with the higher mean is listed in the table. Dashes mean groups were not significant.

### *Follow Up Male Interviews*

The results of the follow up interviews with thirteen male students revealed that the majority of the male participants had had contact with a social worker prior to declaring social work as their major; they had a positive impression of the social work major once accepted and in general were motivated to help others. While the males reported feeling like a minority in the classroom, they also indicated that they were able to participate in classroom discussions though approximately half of them reported that they were somewhat constrained in always freely expressing their thoughts.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# DISCUSSION

## *Introduction*

This chapter summarizes and discusses the findings for this research study on motivation and experience factors, as they influence an undergraduate student's selection of social work and his or her experiences within the academic major. The primary attribute independent variable utilized in this study was gender (2 levels). There are six other independent variables implied by research questions 3 and 4. These variables and categories are: (a) age in years (recoded into three levels), (b) marital status (recoded into three levels), (c) grade level (2 levels), (d) ethnicity (recoded into two levels), (e) social work as first major declared (2 levels), and (f) prior exposure to a social worker (2 levels).

This research study sought to investigate how these various motivation and experience factors impacted female and male students in junior and senior level Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programs. The research took place within two undergraduate programs in Colorado: Metropolitan State College of Denver, and Colorado State University in Fort Collins. Additionally, this research study sought to explore any experiences that male BSW students reported in relation to being in a predominately female dominated academic major.

### *Summary of the Literature*

A systematic review of the literature uncovered several key concepts and factors that could impact motivation and experience factors, influencing an undergraduate student's selection of social work as their academic major. More specifically, the literature review addressed how gender role stereotypes can be found within professions (or an academic major) where one gender has less than a 30% representation (Cross & Bagilhole, 2002). Certain academic majors, like social work, have often been perceived to have a gender imbalance where one gender is overrepresented, perhaps due to the various motivation and experience factors that impact students' choices of selecting a major (Butler, 1990; Chee, Pino, & Smith, 2005; Fortune & Hanks, 1988). The majority of nationally enrolled Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students are female at 87%, and 13% are male (Lennon, 2004). Therefore, with only 13% of males enrolled in social work programs across the country, an apparent gender imbalance related to motivation and experience factors appears to be influencing male students' selection of social work as their academic major. It is necessary to look critically at motivation and experience differences and the implications of why so few male undergraduate students select social work as their academic major.

To explain this gender disparity, several themes emerged from the literature; these were student motivations, choice of major, advising theory, declaring social work as an academic major, life experiences in the social work program, gender differences in life experiences of male and female social work students, traditional

verses nontraditional roles, and experiences in or with the social work profession (Butler, 1990; Chee, Pino, & Smith, 2005; Fortune & Hanks, 1988).

After examining the themes, the literature review then focused on the importance of undergraduate students selecting the most appropriate academic major, since it would determine the path and course of direction that would guide them through their educational pursuits (Porter & Umbach, 2006). Once admitted into a college or university, approximately 75% of undergraduate students will change their major at least once in the first two years based either upon their motivations to select or experiences within an academic major (Kramer, Higley & Olsen, 1994). In social work, for example, several studies found students selected the major because they had a strong desire to help others, wanted to work with people, and/or had a need to better understand themselves; making these reasons the most frequent influential elements reported by undergraduate social work students (Rubin & Johnson, 1984; Rubin, Johnson, & De Weaver, 1986; Butler, 1990; Getzel, 1983).

After exploring motivation and experience factors, the literature review examined three major social work studies; The Center for Health Workforce Studies (CHWS) School of Public Health / the NASW Center for Workforce Studies National Association of Social Workers (NASW) (2006), Rompf and Royse (1994), and Hanson and McCullagh (1995).

CHWS and NASW conducted a collaborative study of 10,000 social workers employed in numerous settings in the United States. Their joint report revealed that social workers helped people function better in numerous ways, such as in

their environments, improving their relationships with others, and helping them to solve personal and family problems through individual, social, and psychological counseling. Rompf and Royse (1994) conducted one of the major studies that examined students' selection of social work. Rompf and Royse explored the influence of selected life experiences in students' declaration of social work as their academic major. These life experience factors were prior employment, volunteering, and the influence of significant professionals.

At the time of Rompf and Royse's study, the literature on the reasons why students chose to major in social work was virtually nonexistent. An earlier study conducted by Pins (1963) explored factors that led to undergraduate students choosing social work as a career. Pins's study supported the general belief that altruism, social idealism, and a commitment to social change were major factors for students in opting to select social work as their career choice.

Hanson and McCullagh (1995) conducted another important study that examined students' selection of social work as their major. Hanson and McCullagh studied 746 different undergraduate students over a 10-year period; it was the first longitudinal study on social work student choice. The two main objectives of Hanson and McCullagh's study were to identify the path students took on their road towards declaring social work as their major, and to gauge the importance of various motivational factors in undergraduates' choice of social work over a decade.

Gillingham (2006) reported that because there are relatively fewer men than women in social work, it is considered a nontraditional occupation for men and is

perceived by the public as a feminine profession. Christie (1998) believed that this characterization of social work has led to the speculation that male social workers experience a sense of discord between their personal and professional identity.

### *Summary of the Methodology*

Participants in this study were enrolled in junior and senior level courses at two undergraduate social work programs in Colorado. All potential BSW students were asked to voluntarily complete and return a self-administered, 32-item questionnaire. Interested male students were given a cover letter inviting them to participate in an additional telephone follow-up interview where they could explore their individual decision for selecting social work.

The questionnaire was organized into three sections. Items 1 through 12 of Part One are replications of Hanson and McCullagh's (1995). Part One of the instrument requests student responses to 15 questions about motivation for selecting a social work major, using an 11-point scale: 10 = Very Important to 0 = Very Unimportant. Part Two contained undergraduate social work experiences and requested student responses to eight questions using a 6-point scale: 6 = Experienced Very Often to 1 = Experienced Very Little. Part Three was demographics and requested student responses to 9 demographic questions. The follow-up telephone interview for male participants' contained 15 questions and took 30 to 50 minutes to complete.

Hanson and McCullagh's examination of students' motivations for selecting social work as a career led them to inquire about possible dimensionality within

the 12 questions related to career choice. To test this position, Hanson and McCullagh used a principal-components factor analysis with varimax rotation with the 12 questions. The rotated structure produced two factors with eigenvalues above 1. Factor 1 incorporated the first seven questions on the instrument. They labeled this as *Service to Others* factor. Factor 2 incorporated questions 7-12. This factor was labeled *Job Self-Interest* factor.

## *Major Findings and Recommendations*

### *Demographics*

Since there were relatively few minority students represented in this study, they were all combined to form a Students of Color group. The ethnic background of the majority of the students was White (Caucasian). Roughly 60% of all the students identified themselves as seniors. Approximately 50% of the students reported that their current martial status as Single/Never Married, 25% were In a Committed Relationship, and 17% were Married. In order to produce more meaningful analyses, the respondents were divided into three separate age groups: (a) 18 to 21, (b) 22 to 25, and (c) 26 to 56.

Only one fourth of the participants in this study selected social work as their first major. The mean age when students first identified becoming aware of social work was 18.3. The mean age when students decided to major in social work was 23.3. Students at MSCD had a higher mean age when they decided to major in social work than did CSU (26.8 verses 20.1). Male students were identified as having higher Prior Exposure to a Social Worker than did female students.

***Significance Gender Differences***

The findings of the study revealed that there were three motivation differences based on gender, two motivation differences based on age, and one motivation difference based on marital status. There were several statistically significant differences found in this study that were grouped around the three additional motivation items that were raised by this researcher, which were: Experienced Favorable Contact, Experienced Psychosocial Crisis, and Social Work is Academically Less Challenging. However Table 8 illustrated that these additional questions had lower mean scores and were not rated as high as motivators for selecting the major as most of the other motivation items. Even though these questions had lower ratings they should still be explored in future research to see whether or not they have an impact on certain types of students' selection of the major.

Statistical analyses revealed that there were several motivating and experience factors that were identified as being important when comparing groups of students on the selection of and experiences within the social work major of 166 undergraduate social work students within two programs in Colorado. The data revealed that there were: three motivation differences found based on gender (*Service to Other Scale*, Experienced Psychosocial Crisis, and Made Aware of My Gender), two motivation differences based on age (Experienced Psychosocial Crisis and Social Work is Academically Less Challenging), and one motivation difference based on marital status (Experienced Psychosocial Crisis). There were four experience differences found based on grade level (*Service to Other Scale*,

Experienced Favorable Contact, Valued As a Student, and Social Work Professors Offer Good Feedback), three experience differences based on Prior Exposure to a Social Worker (Experienced Favorable Contact, Experienced Psychosocial Crisis, and Courses Are Academically Challenging), and one experience difference based on ethnicity (Encouraged to Agree or Disagree).

***Highest Ranked Motivation Items* Found in This Study**

In general, as motivators for selecting the major, participants in this study rated the *Service to Others Scale* items higher than what Hanson and McCullagh (1995) reported in their study (See Table 30).

Future research should attempt to replicate this research to determine whether or not they could produce similar findings. Particularly, attention should be given to the findings of Factor 2, *Job Self Interest,* since all of the means in this study were higher than what Hanson and McCullagh discovered (See Table 30).

Future research could be beneficial for undergraduate social work programs and faculty in their pursuits to better serve potential and current social work students by understanding the motivations and experiences students have for selecting the major.

*Table 30*

*Comparison of Mean Scores for Motivation Items Found in This Research Study and Hanson and McCullagh (1995) Study*

| Item | Hanson & McCullagh's Mean Score | Mean Scores Found in This Research | Reason For Choosing Social Work |
|---|---|---|---|
| Factor 1: *Service to Others* (Items 1 through 7) | | | |
| 1 | 9.35 | 9.23 | Working With People |
| 2 | 9.08 | 9.13* | Contribute to Individuals |
| 3 | 8.95 | 9.07* | Contribute to Society |
| 4 | 8.61 | 8.43 | Believing in My Own Success |
| 5 | 8.53 | 8.71* | Effecting Social Change |
| 6 | 8.26 | 8.55* | SW Interest & Challenge |
| 7 | 7.31 | 8.10* | Becoming a Better Person |
| Factor 2: *Job Self Interest* (Items 7 through 12) | | | |
| 7 | 7.31 | 8.10 * | Becoming a Better Person |
| 8 | 5.96 | 7.23 * | Good Job Opportunities |
| 9 | 5.35 | 7.04 * | Job Security in Social Work |
| 10 | 4.18 | 6.18 * | Good Working Conditions |
| 11 | 3.56 | 4.76 * | Status & Prestige |
| 12 | 3.18 | 3.92 * | Good Salaries in Social Work |

* Higher mean scores found in this research

***Motivation Differences Based on Gender, Age and Marital Status***

- *Females in this study rated Service to Others Scale significantly higher than for males*

Hanson and McCullagh's (1995) analyses found major differences between males and females on two key motivational factors. Male students in Hanson and McCullagh's study scored higher on the *Service to Others* factor than did female students, which is the opposite of the current findings. Hanson and McCullagh's study also revealed that for the *Job Self Interest* factor, male students scored

significantly higher than did female students; in the current study there were no differences on this factor.

Future research should examine why current Colorado females rated higher on the *Service to Others Scale* than males as a motivator for selecting social work. In the effort to attract more males into social work programs, this knowledge about why females rated *Service to Others Scale* higher could be very beneficial to undergraduate social work programs, and in marketing the social work profession to potential male students.

- *Males rated Experienced Psychosocial Crisis higher than did females.*

Rompf and Royse's (1994) findings revealed that 37% of the social work students, at both levels (undergraduate and graduate), identified emotional problems within their families, whereas only 25% of the comparison group did. In their study alcoholism or drug addictions within families was found to be statistically significant. Experiencing child abuse or neglect within their families of origin was also found to be statistically significant. More than twice as many social work students as nonsocial work students reported experiencing this while growing up.

Rompf and Royse's (1994) study, also sought to examine which types of psychosocial crises for undergraduate and graduate level social work students, were motivators for selecting the major; these included emotional problems, addiction, and abuse. Rompf and Royse's data revealed that 39% of the social work students, at both levels, identified emotional problems within their families as motivators for selecting the major.

Future research should examine why more males rated Experienced Psychosocial Crisis as a motivator for selecting the major than did females.

- *Males rated Made Aware of My Gender as a motivator for selecting the major higher than did females.*

Given the fact that so few males are in social work programs it would not be unexpected that males rated experiencing higher levels of Made Aware of My Gender than did females by being in predominately female classrooms.

If the social work profession wants to achieve greater gender equality then future research should explore if there are more effective ways to close the enrollment gap between males and females for selecting the major.

- *The oldest recoded age group (26 to 56) had a significantly higher mean than the youngest recoded age group (18 to 21) for Experienced Psychosocial Crisis as a motivator for selecting the major.*

Findings in this study suggested that the oldest age groups rated experienced higher levels of psychosocial crises. It might be advisable for future researchers to replicate the Rompf and Royse (1994) study to determine if similar findings can be reproduced. If there are, then intervention strategies could be employed to help reduce the reported level of psychosocial crises among these students.

- *The oldest group (25 to 26) had a statistically significant higher mean score than did the youngest age group (18 to 21) for motivation item Social Work is Academically Less Challenging.*

The oldest age group rated Social Work is Academically Less Challenging higher as a motivator for selecting the major than did the younger age groups.

- *The Married /In a Committed Relationship group rated the motivation item Experienced Psychosocial Crisis higher than the Single/Never Married group as a motivator for selecting the major.*

Future research should examine what types of psychosocial crises do Married /In a Committed Relationship social work students experience as a motivator for selecting the major that Single/Never Married students did not report experiencing.

***Differences Based on Grade Level, Prior Exposure to a Social Work and Ethnicity***

- *There was a statistically significant difference found between juniors and seniors on the motivation item Service to Others and for the motivation item Experienced Favorable Contact.*

Seniors rated motivation items *Service to Others Scale,* and Experienced Favorable Contact as important motivators for selecting the major than did juniors.

Future researchers should examine what types of Favorable Contacts senior social work students experienced as a motivator for selecting the major that junior students did not report experiencing after being admitted into the major?

- *There was a statistically significant difference found between juniors and seniors for experience items Valued as a Student and Social Work Professors Offer Good Feedback.*

Seniors rated experiencing Social Work Professors Offer Good Feedback higher than did juniors. Future research should examine which types feedback

social work professors offered that seniors considered that junior students did not report experiencing. Future research should examine why junior social work students felt more Valued as a Student than did seniors. Future research should qualify and identify what was meant by being valued as a student? In what context did students feel valued as a student? Was this due to the maturation progress from junior to senior status?

- *Students who indicated that they had Prior Exposure to a Social Worker rated motivation item Experienced Favorable Contact high and they rated Experienced Psychosocial Crisis, and Courses Are Not Academically Challenging as more important as motivators for selecting the major than did those students with no prior exposure.*

Future research should examine what types of Favorable Contacts did students who had prior exposure to a social worker experience as being a motivator for selecting the major? What was the duration and the origins of these favorable contacts? If these motivators could be replicated and examined by undergraduate social work programs they would be very beneficial in effectively reaching potential students with prior exposure to a social worker.

Future research should examine in students who have had prior exposure to a social worker what aspects made them they feel that courses were not Academically Challenging. If these attributes could be known then it could be very beneficial to social work programs in their community outreach efforts in striving to have as many favorable contacts with prospective students.

- *White students rated higher the experience item Encouraged to Agree or Disagree with social work principles that they do not personally believe in higher than did Students of Color.*

Because the item was not worded well future research should examine whether or not this is really an important ethnic difference. It would be interesting to explore what students meant by their answers to this question.

***Follow Up Male Interviews***

The results of the follow up interviews with thirteen male students revealed that the majority of the male participants had a positive impression of the social work major once accepted and in general were motivated to help others. Though approximately half of them reported that they were somewhat constrained in always freely expressing their thoughts.

After conducting this research, future researchers should examine the dynamic levels of male interactions within predominately female classrooms. The level of responses that were given reached far beyond the scope of this research, but would have been very beneficial towards understanding the experiences of these males within predominately female classrooms. The way the follow up interviews were structured in this study did not adequately allow for the richness of the open ended responses that were given.

Another area of future research should be to examine what role, if any male social work students should play in recruiting more males into the social work program while in or after they graduate. Across the board this was the one question that most male students in the follow up interview had the hardest time

giving a response. It appeared as if this was the first time that they had actually considered this question, or thought about their role in this equation. It would be interesting to explore male responses to this particular question.

### *Limitations*

During the course of conducting this research, several limitations were discovered by this researcher that should be acknowledged, as future research studies might benefit from avoiding similar issues as they consider and formulate their approaches. These limitations should serve as a point of reference for future researchers in the consideration of their design, construction of questions, and with the methodological approaches to be used.

The results of this study are not generalized to all female and male social work students across the country. The findings are specific to the two undergraduate social work programs that were used in this study. Though it might be true that social work students across the country may face a number of these same motivation and experience factors in their selection of social work as their academic major, however future findings might produce different results depending on the demographic backgrounds of the undergraduate BSW students.

The study was limited by the relatively low number of male participants, which was slightly less than what was first expected. Though having more than 15% male participants would have been beneficial, it was still very consistent with the total number of males (13%) enrolled in undergraduate social work programs nationally. Therefore the qualitative results gathered from male

participants would only be generalized and representative to a larger Colorado theoretical male population.

In addition, consideration should be given to the fact that only two out of three undergraduate social work programs in Colorado were participants in this study. Generalizing the findings of this study towards other public undergraduate social work programs outside of Colorado might yield different results.

Another area that needs attention was the manner in which the follow-up interviews were conducted. As designed, the follow-up interviews did not allow for in-depth analyses of the responses that male participants so richly provided. In retrospect, this researcher should have allowed participants much more time, and the freedom to expand upon their answers and to deviate beyond the formulated list of follow up questions. This researcher should have also used raters to help code the data. Finally, video taping the interviews instead of conducting telephone interviews would have yielded additional useful information and it could have added a new dimension that was missed by not being able to see the male participants.

### *Recommendations for Social Work Programs*

The findings in this study were collected from two public undergraduate social work programs in Colorado. The study revealed several significant findings, thus the synthesis of these results are stated here as recommendations for undergraduate social work programs, governing organizations, and for social work faculty.

First, undergraduate social work programs have to increase their efforts at marketing their academic majors off and on campus to prospective students. There appears to be a level of confusion about what social workers actually do in practice and where social workers can be employed.

Second, undergraduate social work programs should explore why male social work students rated experiencing psychosocial crises higher than female students did as a motivator for selecting the major.

Third, social work departments need to find more effective ways to have earlier positive interactions with prospective students in middle schools, high schools, and career fairs. Participants in this study reported that having favorable prior exposure to a social worker helped them with their decision to major in social work. Likewise, this understanding would help to identify those factors that serve as supports and motivations for selecting the social work profession, and to help bring more students into social work undergraduate programs.

Fourth, social work departments need to find more effective ways to increase their visibility on campuses to attract prospective students. Many students in this study did not select social work as their first major. In fact many students discovered social work after only majoring other human service disciplines. Therefore, increasing the visibility of social work programs on campus could be very beneficial.

Fifth, social work departments need to develop new ways to obtain the male perspective without singling out males in the classroom. Male students in this study often felt isolated due to their gender within predominately female

classrooms, so social work professors should be aware of this and find other ways than always calling on males to present a male perspective.

Six, social work departments need to recognize that males may feel compelled to give politically correct answers to social welfare issues, so social work professors need to continue to foster safe learning environments that respect all participants.

Seventh from the interview responses, this researcher also believes that a formulation of male support groups would be a very beneficial component to social work male students. It would enable them to forge common bonds, and it would serve as a support system for male social work students to process their experiences.

### *Conclusions*

The purposes of this research were two-fold. First, this research sought to identify the most important motivation factors for selecting the major. Second, this research sought to investigate the experiences of undergraduate male BSW students as related to being in a female dominated major. The literature review identified several significant motivation and experience factors as having an impact on student's selection of an academic major. Follow-up interviews with male BSW students revealed their collaborative experiences as males within a predominately female dominated academic major. Participants in this study completed a 32-item questionnaire instrument that was divided into three parts (See Appendix A). There were several significant differences that emerged in this study. The findings of the study revealed that there were three differences based

on gender, two motivation differences based on age, and one motivation difference based on marital status. There were four differences found based on grade level, three differences based on Prior Exposure to a Social Worker, and one experience difference based on ethnicity. These significant differences were fully discussed in the study.

In conclusion, both female and male participants in this study have shed light on key motivation and experience factors impacting female and male undergraduate students' selection of social work as their academic major. Male participants, who were involved in the follow-up interviews and offered their personal reflections, have helped to shed insight on male experiences within social work and how the profession can attract more males the into social work programs.

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# APPENDIX A

## *Questionnaire*

The purpose of the questionnaire is to explore why undergraduate social work students have selected social work as their academic major

***Part 1 (Motivation For Selecting Social Work As A Major)***

Please read each of the following statements and rate each by circling the appropriate number on the scale provided. For each of the motivational items please indicate how important this was in your decision to major in social work. With 0 representing "Very unimportant" and 10 representing "Very important."

| | | Very Unimportant | | | | | | | | | | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Working with people | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 2 | Contribute to individuals | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 3 | Contribute to society | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 4 | Believe in my own success in social work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 5 | Effecting social change | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 6 | Social work is an interesting and challenging career | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 7 | Becoming a better person | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 8 | Good job opportunities in social work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 9 | Job security in social work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 10 | Good working conditions in social work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | Status and prestige of social work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 12 | Good salaries in social work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 13 | Experienced favorable contacts with a social worker | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 14 | Experienced a psychosocial crisis | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 15 | Believed that social work was academically less challenging | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

***Part 2 (Undergraduate Social Work Experiences)***

Please read each of the following statements and rate each by circling the appropriate number on the scale provided. To what extent **have you personally experienced** the following issues **during** your BSW program? With 1 representing "Experienced Very Little" and 6 representing "Experienced Very Often"

| | | Experienced Very Little | | | | | Experienced Very Often |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | I regularly feel treated like "an individual student" rather than just "a number" by my social work professor(s) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 17 | I feel valued as a student in the social work department | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 18 | My social work courses are academically challenging | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 19 | I feel uncomfortable expressing my opinions freely in my social work courses | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 20 | I am encouraged to "agree with or disagree with" social work principles I do not personally believe in | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 21 | I believe that most of my social work courses have prepared me well for the type of work that I want to do in this field | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 22 | My social work professor(s) offer very good feedback on assignments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 23 | I am often made aware in my social work courses that I am different due to my gender | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

*Part 3 (Demographics Profile)*

24 Your current age in years is _____

25 At what age did you first become aware of the social work profession _____

26 How old were you when you decided to major in social work _____

27 Did you have exposure to a social worker **prior** to declaring social work for a major?
(a) ___ Yes (b) ___ No

28 Gender
(a) ___ Female (b) ___ Male

29 Martial status: (Please place an "X" by one)

(a) ___ Single / Never Married (b) ___ Married
(c) ___ Married But Separated (d) ___ In a committed relationship
(e) ___ Divorced (f) ___ Other (Please explain) _____

30 Grade level
(a) ___ Senior (b) ___ Junior

31 Ethnicity

(a) ___ Black (b) ___ White (c) ___ Hispanic/Latino (d) ___ Asian
(e) ___ Other (Please explain)_____

32 Was social work the FIRST major that you declared?

(a) ___ Yes
(b) ___ No (If you selected **NO** above, please list up to three academic majors you declared **BEFORE** you selected social work as your **CURRENT** major).

(1st)_____ (2nd )_____ (3rd)_____

**Thank you for taking time to complete the questionnaire**

# APPENDIX B

***Class Script***

Hi Class,

I am LaTra Tracy Rogers. I am a PhD candidate at Colorado State University and I am conducting my dissertation on exploring a number of motivating factors about why undergrauate students select social work as their acdemic major.

The questionnaire that I would like for each of you to fill out and complete contains 32 items, three different sets of questions, and should take about 15-minutes of your time to complete. Once you have completed filling out your questionnaire, would you please insert it face down into the envelope labeled, "completed questionnaires."

Male students who are interested in participating in a brief telephone follow up interview to further explore your individual decision for selecting social work as your academic major are asked to fill out a follow up form, and a consent form which both need to be returned back to me after you have completed filling out your questionnaire.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in the questionnaire or the follow up telephone interview. Your answers on the questionnaire will be completely anonymous, your name is not requested and there is no tracking number on them. Your participation is entirely voluntary. As you are filling out the questionnaire if there are any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering you can skip them.

Are there any questions I can answer before I pass out the questionnaires?

APPENDIX C

***Consent To Contact***

(Follow Up Telephone Interview for Male Students)

Colorado State University

School of Social Work
1586 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-1586
(970) 491-6612
FAX: (970) 491-7280
www.cahs.colostate.edu/sw

Fall 2007

If you are a MALE STUDENT who would be interested in participating in a brief 30-minute telephone follow up interview (with LaTra Tracy Rogers), please fill out the following information and place it in the separate envelope labeled, "Follow Up Interview."

**TITLE OF STUDY:** Selection of Social Work As An Academic Major Among Male and Female Undergraduate Baccalaureate Students

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Vicky Buchan, Ph.D (970) 491-5211
Buchan@CAHS.Colostate.edu

**CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** LaTra Tracy Rogers, MSW, ABD
(303) 556-5698 rogerstr@msed.edu

**WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?** You are invited to participate in this study because you are a male junior or senior who is currently majoring in social work.

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?** The primary purpose of this study is to investigate any potential differences between why male and female undergraduate social work students select social work as their academic major.

**ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?** Although you are not expected to benefit directly by your participation in this study, it is hoped that the results will provide insight into why male students select social work as their academic major

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

- Your decision to participate in the follow up telephone interview is entirely voluntary.
- You may decline or decide to withdraw from the follow up telephone interview at any time, and are free to do so without any effect to your status in this class or in this program. Your grade will not be adversely affected if you decline to participate or later stop participating.
- This study entails no foreseen risks. However, some of the questions concern sensitive information, therefore if you feel like any particular question is too personal or distressing please feel free to refrain from answering that question.
- It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

**DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?** Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?** Your information will remain confidential and will only be shared with the dissertation advisors.

**WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?** Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Dr. Vicky Buchan at (970) 491-5211 or the co-investigator LaTra Tracy Rogers at (303) 556-5698. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator at (970) 491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

Thank you.


Dr. Vicky Buchan, Ph.D
School of Social Work
Colorado State University
970-491-5211
Buchan@CAHS.Colostate.edu

LaTra Tracy Rogers. MSW, ABD
School of Education
Colorado State University
303-556-5698
rogerstr@mscd.edu


**ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

_____ _____
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study Date

_____
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_____ _____
Name of person providing information to participant Date

_____
Signature of Research Staff

## Consent To Contact Form

*(Follow Up Telephone Interview for Male Students)*

**Your PRINTED Name**

_____

**Today's Date** ____/ ____/ 2007

**Phone Number Where I Can Call You?**

**First** ( ) _____

**Second** ( ) _____

**Your E-mail Address** _____

**Best Day(s) For Me To Call You? (Please mark with an "X")**

___ Monday ___ Tuesday ___ Wednesday ___ Thursday ___ Friday
___ Saturday ___ Sunday

**Best Time(s) of Day For Me To Call You? (Please write in a time span. For example, Mornings from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM)**

Morning _____ Afternoon _____ Evening _____

**Your School**

_____ Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD)

_____ Colorado State University-Fort Collins (CSU)

**Your current age in years is** _____

**Grade Level** _____ Senior _____ Junior

**Did you have exposure to a social worker "prior" to declaring social work for a major?**
(a) ___ Yes (b) ___ No

**Was social work the FIRST major that you declared?**
(a) ___ Yes (b) ___ No

APPENDIX D

***Telephone Script & Interview Schedule***

(Male Responders) Follow Up Questions

*Telephone Script*

Hello this is LaTra Rogers may I speak with **(male participant's full name)** please?

Hi **(male participant's first name)** you filled out a consent to contact form for me where you indicated that you would be willing to participate in a telephone follow up interview, and that this would be one of the good times for me to call you. **(Male participant's first name)** is this still a good time for you to talk with me?

**(Male participant's first name)** as stated in the materials that I passed out in class, this study is exploring a number of motivating factors that have been identified as potentially having an impact on undergraduate student's selection of and experiences within an academic major. This study seeks to explore these motivating factors and experiences with junior and senior level male and female students.

**(Male participant's first name)** as a male social work student, I am very interested in getting your thoughts and opinions about 15 questions. All of your thougths and opinions that you share with me will remain confidential. I will not reveal any of your personal information, but your thoughts and opinions will be compiled into common themes and experiences that male social work students have in common.

**(Male participant's first name)** your particpation in this telephone follow up interview is entirely voluntary. If you feel uncomfortable in responding to any particular question let me know and we can skip it.

Okay, **(male participant's first name)** are you ready to share your perceptions and experiences while in the social work major with me?

*Interview Schedule Questions*

1. How did you hear about social work?
    a. What were your first impressions about social work?
    b. Were any of your first impressions positive? (If yes, what were they?)
    c. Were any of your first impressions negative? (If yes, what were they?)
    d. Was this the first time you heard about social work? (If not, would you tell me about the first time?)

2. What aspect(s) about social work drew you to it?
    a. How important are those aspect(s) to you?

b. Is it important that a major have those same aspect(s)?

3. What do you like the most about social work?

4. What do you like the least about social work?

5. What does it feel like to be a male majoring in social work?

6. Would you consider yourself to be a minority in social work due to your gender?
    a. Are there any negative aspect(s) associated with being a male minority in social work? (If yes, can you give me examples?)
    b. Are there any positive aspect(s) associated with being a male minority in social work? (If yes, can you give me examples?)

7. What does it feel like to be a male in predominately female classrooms?

8. How much do you **participate** in your social work classroom discussions?
    a. Does your gender affect how much you contribute? (If yes, can you give me examples? If not, can you tell me why?)
    b. Does your gender prevent you from contributing more? (If so, how?)
    c. Does your gender prevent you from contributing less? (If so, how?)
    d. Would more males in class affect your level of contribution? (If so, how?)

9. **In class**, how have female social work students reacted to you?
    a. Have they treated you differently because of your gender? (If so, how?)
    b. Have you treated them differently because of your gender? (If so, how?)

10. **Out of class**, how have female social work students reacted to you?
    a. Have they treated you differently because of your gender? (If so, how?)
    b. Have you treated them differently because of your gender? (If so, how?)

**(Male participant's first name) I want to remind you that your answers are optional.** If you should feel uncomfortable about sharing your perceptions and experiences after hearing the question you may ask me to skip that question and continue onto the next one.

11. **In class**, how have female social work teachers reacted to you?

a. Have they treated you differently because of your gender? (If so, how?)
b. Have you treated them differently because of your gender? (If so, how?)

12. **In class**, how have male social work teachers reacted to you?
    a. Have they treated you differently because of your gender? (If so, how?)
    b. Have you treated them differently because of your gender? (If so, how?)

13. Has anyone questioned your selection of social work as a major? (If yes, what things have been said?)
    a. Have those comments had negatives impacts on you?
    b. Have those comments had positive impacts on you?

14. After you declared social work as your major, has anyone questioned your sexual orientation? (If yes, what things were said?)
    a. Have those comments had negatives impacts on you?
    b. Have those comments had positive impacts on you?

15. Lets chat about recruiting more males in social work. What are your perceptions and experiences about recruiting more males?

**(Prompt questions depending on response)**

a. How should more males be recruited?
b. Where should males be recruited?
c. What impact(s), if any, would more males have on the social work profession?
d. What prevents males from selecting social work as their academic major?
e. Would more males into your social work courses have affected your experiences? (If yes, how? If not, why not?)
f. After you graduate with a degree in social work, will you do anything to help recruit men into the profession? (If yes, what things will you do?)

**(Male participant's first name)** that was the last question, thank you so much for sharing your perceptions and experiences in the social work major with me. Do you have any further questions or comments that you wish to ask or share with me?

**(Male participant's first name)** thank you so much for your participation.

APPENDIX E

***Cover Letter for Colorado State University***

Selection of Social Work As An Academic Major
Among Male and Female Undergraduate Baccalaureate Students
(A 15-Minute Survey)

Colorado State University

School of Social Work
1586 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-1586
(970) 491-6612
FAX: (970) 491-7280
www.cahs.colostate.edu/sw

Fall 2007

Dear Social Work Student:

A number of motivating factors have been identified as potentially having an impact on undergraduate student's selection of and experiences within an academic major. This study seeks to explore these motivating factors and experiences with junior and senior level male and female students.

This questionnaire will take about 15 minutes of your time to complete. Once you have completed filling out your questionnaire, please insert it face down into the envelope labeled, "completed questionnaires." Male students who are interested in participating in a brief telephone follow up interview to further explore their individual decision for selecting social work as your academic major are asked to fill out consent to contact follow up form. There are no known risks associated with your participation in the questionnaire or the follow up telephone interview, it is hoped that the results will provide insight into why male students select social work as their academic major

**TITLE OF STUDY:** Selection of Social Work As An Academic Major Among Male and Female Undergraduate Baccalaureate Students

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Vicky Buchan, Ph.D (970) 491-5211
Buchan@CAHS.Colostate.edu

**CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** LaTra Tracy Rogers, MSW, ABD
(303) 556-5698 rogerstr@mscd.edu

**WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?** You are invited to participate in this study because you are a junior or senior who is currently majoring in social work.

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?** The primary purpose of this study is to investigate any potential differences between why male and female undergraduate social work students select social work as their academic major.

**ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?** Although you are not expected to benefit directly by your participation in this study, it is hoped that the results will provide insight into why students select social work as their academic major

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

- Your decision to participate in the follow up telephone interview is entirely voluntary. Any student may decline or decide to withdraw from the follow up telephone interview at my time, and are free to do so without any effect to their status in this class or in this program. Student's grade will not be adversely affected if he declines to participate or later stops participating.
- This study entails no foreseen risks. However, some of the questions concern sensitive information, therefore if any student feels like any particular question is too personal or distressing please feel free to refrain from answering that question.
- It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

**DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?** Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?** Your information will remain confidential and will only be shared with my dissertation advisors.

**WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?** If you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Dr. Vicky Buchan at (970) 491-5211 or the co-investigator LaTra Tracy Rogers at (303) 556-5698. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator at (970) 491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

**WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?** Aggregated research (combined data results and findings) will be shared with members of my dissertation committee. All questionnaire responses will be completely anonymous because no names are requested and no tracking number associated to the questionnaire. Consent to contact follow up telephone interviews will be completely confidential, since names are requested to arrange telephone interviews. Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary. Student's grades or status in the program will not be adversely affected if he/she declines to participate or later stops participating.

**WHAT ABOUT POSSIBLE PUBLICATIONS?** There is a probability that aggregated research results and findings will be submitted for publication in professional Social Work journals.

Thank you.

Dr. Vicky Buchan, Ph.D
School of Social Work
Colorado State University
970-491-5211
Buchan@CAHS.Colostate.edu

LaTra Tracy Rogers. MSW, ABD
School of Education
Colorado State University
303-556-5698
rogerstr@msed.edu

APPENDIX F

***Cover Letter for Metropolitan State College of Denver***

Selection of Social Work As An Academic Major
Among Male and Female Undergraduate Baccalaureate Students
(A 15-Minute Survey)

Colorado State University

School of Social Work
1586 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-1586
(970) 491-6612
FAX: (970) 491-7280
www.cahs.colostate.edu/sw

Fall 2007

Dear Social Work Student:

A number of motivating factors have been identified as potentially having an impact on undergraduate student's selection of and experiences within an academic major. This study seeks to explore these motivating factors and experiences with junior and senior level male and female students.

This questionnaire will take about 15 minutes of your time to complete. Once you have completed filling out your questionnaire, please insert it face down into the envelope labeled, "completed questionnaires." Male students who are interested in participating in a brief telephone follow up interview to further explore their individual decision for selecting social work as your academic major are asked to fill out consent to contact follow up form. There are no known risks associated with your participation in the questionnaire or the follow up telephone interview, it is hoped that the results will provide insight into why male students select social work as their academic major

**TITLE OF STUDY:** Selection of Social Work As An Academic Major Among Male and Female Undergraduate Baccalaureate Students

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Vicky Buchan, Ph.D (970) 491-5211
Buchan@CAHS.Colostate.edu

**CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** LaTra Tracy Rogers, MSW, ABD
(303) 556-5698 rogerstr@mscd.edu

**WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?** You are invited to participate in this study because you are a junior or senior who is currently majoring in social work.

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?** The primary purpose of this study is to investigate any potential differences between why male and female undergraduate social work students select social work as their academic major.

**ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?** Although you are not expected to benefit directly by your participation in this study, it is hoped that the results will provide insight into why students select social work as their academic major

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

- Your decision to participate in the follow up telephone interview is entirely voluntary. Any student may decline or decide to withdraw from the follow up telephone interview at my

time, and are free to do so without any effect to their status in this class or in this program. Student's grade will not be adversely affected if he declines to participate or later stops participating.

- This study entails no foreseen risks. However, some of the questions concern sensitive information, therefore if any student feels like any particular question is too personal or distressing please feel free to refrain from answering that question.
- It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

**DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?** Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

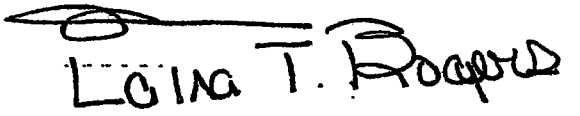
**WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?** Your information will remain confidential and will only be shared with my dissertation advisors.

**WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?** If you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Dr. Vicky Buchan at (970) 491-5211 or the co-investigator LaTra Tracy Rogers at (303) 556-5698. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research may contact Professor Jeff Forrest, Chair of the MSCD Human Subjects Committee, at 303-556-4380. Guidelines for protecting the rights of human subjects that are in operation in this study may be found on the College web site: http://www.mscd.edu (go to: "For Faculty and Staff", under Faculty Resources. All subjects will be given a copy of this cover letter to take with them..

**WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?** Aggregated research (combined data results and findings) will be shared with members of my dissertation committee. All questionnaire responses will be completely anonymous because no names are requested and no tracking number associated to the questionnaire. Consent to contact follow up telephone interviews will be completely confidential, since names are requested to arrange telephone interviews. Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary. Student's grades or status in the program will not be adversely affected if he/she declines to participate or later stops participating.

**WHAT ABOUT POSSIBLE PUBLICATIONS?** There is a probability that aggregated research results and findings will be submitted for publication in professional Social Work journals.

Thank you.




Dr. Vicky Buchan, Ph.D
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# APPENDIX G

***Human Subject Approval Forms and Letter of Agreement***

Colorado State University

Research Integrity & Compliance Review Office
Office of Vice President for Research
Fort Collins, CO 80523-2011
(970) 491-1553
FAX: (970) 491-2293

# Notice of Approval for Human Research

| | |
|---|---|
| **Principal Investigator:** | Vicky Buchan, Social Work, 1586 |
| **Co-Principal Investigator:** | LaTra Tracy Rogers, 989 Downing St. #409 Denver, CO 80218 |
| **Title:** | Selection of Social Work as an Academic Major among Male and Female Undergraduate Baccalaureate Students |
| **Protocol #:** | 07-202H **Funding Source:** N/A |
| **Number approved:** | Maximum of 45 male survey and interview participants and 350 female survey participants |
| **Committee Action:** | **Approval Date:** August 29, 2007 **Expires:** August 14, 2008 |
| **HRC Administrator:** | Janell Barker Janell Barker |

**Consent Process:**
**SURVEYS:** Because of the nature of this survey research, it will not be necessary to obtain a signed consent form. However, all subjects must receive a copy of the approved cover letter printed on department letterhead. The requirement of documentation of a consent form is waived under § ___.117(c)(2).

**INTERVIEWS:** The attached consent form must be signed by the subjects and each subject is given a copy of the form.

*NO changes may be made to these documents without first obtaining the approval of the Committee.*

**Conditions:**
The IRB approvals from the Metropolitan State College of Denver and CSU-Pueblo must be submitted once obtained and prior to recruitment.

**Investigator Responsibilities:**

- It is the PI's responsibility to obtain consent from all subjects.
- It is the responsibility of the PI to immediately inform the Committee of any serious complications, unexpected risks, or injuries resulting from this research.
- It is also the PI's responsibility to notify the Committee of any changes in experimental design, participant population, consent procedures or documents. This can be done with a memo describing the changes and submitting any altered documents.
- Students serving as Co-Principal Investigators must obtain PI approval for any changes prior to submitting the proposed changes to the HRC for review and approval.
- The PI is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the project.
- A status report of this project will be required within a 12-month period from the date of review. Renewal is the PI's responsibility, but as a courtesy, a reminder will be sent approximately two months before the protocol expires. The PI will be asked to report on the numbers of subjects who have participated this year and project-to-date, problems encountered, and provide a verifying copy of the consent form or cover letter used. The necessary continuation form (H-101) is available from the RCO web page www.research.colostate.edu/rcoweb/.
- Upon completion of the project, an H-101 should be submitted as a close-out report.
- If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice. This approval is issued under Colorado State University's OHRP Federal Wide Assurance 00000647.
- **Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.**

Please direct any questions about the Committee's action on this project to me for routing to the Committee. Additional information is available from the RICRO web site at http://ricro.research.colostate.edu.

Attachment Date of Correspondence: 9/7/07

# APPENDIX H

***Human Subjects Committee Forms***

***Metropolitan State College of Denver***

Human Subjects Review Committee
Research Review Form

**PROJECT TITLE:**
Selection of Social Work As An Academic Major Among Male and Female Undergraduate Baccalaureate Students

RESEARCHER(S): LaTra Tracy Rogers
Department Phone: 303-556-5698
Campus Box: 70

| *LaTra Tracy Rogers* | 7-23-2007 | rogerstr@mscd.edu |
|---|---|---|
| **Signature of Researcher** | **Date** | **E-Mail Address** |

I. If you consider your research to be exempt according to the current MSCD Human Subjects Guidelines (Section A.9), please identify the category of exemption (a-d) and briefly explain the rationale for the exemption:

II. If your research does not fall into one of the exempt categories, please answer the following questions on a separate sheet:

1. **What is the general purpose of your research? What will you be studying?**

A number of motivating factors have been identified as potentially having an impact on undergraduate student's selection of and experiences within an academic major. This study seeks to explore these motivating factors and experiences with junior and senior level male and female students at two undergraduate social work programs in Colorado. Potential participants will be enrolled in junior and senior courses at Metropolitan State College of Denver, and Colorado State University-Fort Collins

The five research questions are: 1. (a) What motivating factors do BSW student report having impacted their selection of social work as a major? 1. (b) Do males and females differ on such motivating factors? 2 (a) What are the experiences reported by BSW student while in the social work major? 2. (b) Do males and females students differ on such experiences? 3. Are these differences in student responses to motivations and experiences based upon the demographic variables? (Age, prior exposure to a social worker, marital status, grade level, ethnicity, planned area of work and social work first choice). 4. (a) Does prior experience with a change in academic major or (b) prior exposure to the profession of Social Work impact reported motivation or experiences within the major? 5. What do male undergraduate BSW student report related to the experiences of being in a female dominated major. Based upon the types of questions posed in this study the primary approach to be used will be a quantitative non-experimental, using the comparative approach

**2. Who are the subjects and what will they be asked to do?**

The instrument for collecting research data will be a self-administered questionnaire. Students, if they choose to participate in this study will be asked to complete the questionnaire, which should take about fifteen minutes. The questionnaire in this study contains 32 items and three different sets of questions. Part 1 is motivation for selecting social work as a major. Part 2 is undergraduate social work experiences. Part 3 is demographics. Part 1 requests student responses to 15 questions using an 11-point scale: 10 = Very Important and 0 = Very Unimportant. Part 2 requests student responses to eight questions using a 6-point scale: 1 = Experienced Very Often and 6 = Experienced Very Little. Part 3 requests student responses to nine demographic questions.

Once students have completed filling out their questionnaire they will be instructed to insert it face down into the envelope labeled, "completed questionnaires." Male students will be asked if they are interested in participating in a brief telephone follow up interview to further explore their individual decision for selecting social work as their academic major. An information follow up form will be provided. Follow up interview schedules contain eight questions, and should take about 30-minutes to complete.

**3. Where will you recruit your subjects?**

All junior and senior level social work students (only) who enrolled in social work practice, human behavior and the social environment and field practice courses in the Fall of 2007 will be asked if they would be interested in participating in the study.

**4. How do you plan to protect the subjects' anonymity and assure confidentiality?**

Subjects will not be asked to put their names on the questionnaire. Male subjects will only be contacted individually, if they voluntarily provided information to be a part of a follow up telephone interview process. All subject responses will remain completely confidential. Even when the study results are reported, subject name will not be revealed

**5. How will you protect the subjects from harm, deception, invasiveness, or other adverse impact?**

The questionnaire involves no deception or adverse impacts and invasiveness inquires are limited to a minimum. If subjects are concerned over their welfare by serving in this study, they will be advised to contact Dr. Jeff Forrest at (303) 556.4380 or forrestj@mscd.edu.

6. **How are potential subjects informed that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw without prejudice at any time?**

The cover letter that each potential subject will be given clearly states that; "Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary. If you decline or decide to withdraw from the study at my time, you are free to do so without any effect on your status in this class or in this program. Student's grade will not be adversely affected if he/she declines to participate or later stops participating. The study entails no foreseen risks. However, some of the questions concern sensitive information. If you feel like any particular question is too personal, or if you are too distressed when considering any particular question, please feel free to refrain from answering that question."

On the script that I will read to each class states that: "Your answers on the questionnaire will be completely anonymous, your name is not requested and there is no tracking number on them. Your participation is entirely voluntary. As you are filling out the questionnaire if there are any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering you can skip them."

7. **How long will you keep the records and where? (Records must be kept in a secure place for at least three years)**

I will keep all records in a locked file cabinet at my office at MSCD. After three years all records will be destroyed.

8. **What do you plan to do with the data? With whom will the results be shared?**

The data is being collected for the purposes of completing my dissertation. Data will be shared with my dissertation committee (at CSU) and future publication of raw data finding might be undertaken.

9. **How will you share the results with the subjects? How will you inform them about how the data will be used? How will you debrief the subjects, parents, or guardians, if necessary?**

I will discuss my general findings with subjects, if asked. Debriefing will not be necessary due to the fact that there are no deception or adverse impacts expected from the questionnaire or follow up interview.

10. **How will you ensure informed consent? Criteria include providing full information, ensuring comprehension, and legal**

**competence of participants. A parent or legal guardian must sign along with children under 18 years of age.**

A cover letter will be distributed to all potential subjects, which they must sign and return a copy before they can participate in the study. In addition, a class script will be orally read aloud to each classroom of potential subjects.