

**DIFFERENTIAL PERCEPTIONS OF NEGLECT FOR NATIVE-AMERICAN
FAMILIES: AN EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN**

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Capella University

July 2014

UMI Number: 3630163

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Abstract

Utilizing the critical race theory (CRT), this dissertation concentrates on issues regarding the current disproportionate placement of Native American children into foster care. Specifically, 2% of all children in foster care are Native American, even though Native American children only make up 1% of the total number of children in the United States. Additionally, the placement often results in a loss of ethnic culture, heritage, spirituality, values, traditions, and language of Native Americans. The result of foster care placement extends into a loss of self-identity, and possible extinction of this minority population. Social work educators work to empower oppressed populations by reforming culturally inappropriate decision-making practices. Social work students receive instruction to become self-aware of biases, values, beliefs, and attitudes of the social paradigm. This increased understanding of cultural diversity could create a more philosophical worldview. This dissertation addresses the role of social work students' self-perception of ability and the relationship to their recognition and identification of perceived child neglect. The online quantitative study utilized picture imaging with a culturally constructed Native American case vignette to examine undergraduate and graduate social work students' decision-making practices. A field-tested survey instrument (a case vignette) described culturally specific Native American practices and was presented to the participants with pictures of two physically divergent children. Participants were in one of three groups: two groups related to the visual exposure to a picture of a 10-year-old girl and one control group. Participants answered a child neglect checklist modified from the Department of Health and Human Services nomenclature. Within the survey was a follow-up self-assessment of cultural competence. The major findings of the study

indicated that ethnicity and level of education were significant predictors of both perceived neglect and cultural competence. The implications of the findings were that social work students enrolled in the graduate courses without a social work education or background should receive additional preparation in cultural competence. A final decision to remove a Native American child from their family should require a consultation with a master's level credentialed social worker.

Dedication

On my PhD journey, I have experienced the challenges and obstacles of life that would have terminated my goal had it not been for the calling of the Great Spirit in my life. First, I dedicate this work to Him because it was through his guidance the topic became apparent. My mother, Emma Bell Jones Locklear, has been a strong support for me throughout my education. Her words of encouragement, prayers, and gentle kisses supported me during the physical and emotional trials of my life. I always knew when Momma prayed for me. The spiritual power of my mother's prayers always amazed me. I can feel the pat on my back from my father, Glassie Locklear Sr., and each day I hear his words of wisdom. Geisinger, my son, from the beginning you never knew how much every smile received from you kept me going. Thank you for understanding and patiently waiting for us to share special times together as you reach teenage years. Finally, through all the sleepless nights and countless days of worry and tribulation, I dedicate this work to Fredrick Allen Locklear, the man who stood by my side even when I didn't realize he was there. Your encouragement to pursue my destiny and reminders to "take it one step at a time" is reflected in this work.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to my sisters and brothers for listening to my woes, and those who wiped my tears, while solemnly praying for my success in this journey. Each of you let me know you were proud and the journey was tough. Glostoria (Dottie), your prayers were always delivered on time and were as warm as the bright sunshine. Teresa, each day you inquired, you provided additional strength to my soul. Roseaddie Marie, the smile you gave to your “baby sister” was always needed. Gail, sharing the table with you for working on our laptops meant more to me than you know. Carolyn, when you checked in with me on my progress, it was always on time. Paulette, from across the miles, I knew you were right there with me. Brenda, thank you for each supportive word you gave. Glassie Jr., your encouraging words of spiritual support were always with me. Vincent, you knew this wasn’t easy; you made me laugh. My deceased aunt, Dr. Mary Elizabeth Brayboy, I must mention as a role model. During her trials of sickness, life events, and unfortunately breast cancer, she completed her doctoral degree and inspired me to seek the truth of the cultures.

I also acknowledge my dearest friend and leader, Dr. Gerry Waite, who listened intently to my many struggles along the way, and gave advice freely while helping me to become more comfortable with epistemology, the research-world, and then pushing me to not take “the blankets” and “get in the boat.” Drs. Sherry Edwards, Bobby Brayboy, Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, Michael Yellowbird, and Alfred Bryant, a huge thank you goes out for supporting the expert field-testing of my instruments. Thank you, Wiletta and Adrian.

Sherry, thank you for providing support to me on this adventurous pursuit. An additional gratitude goes to my university social work colleagues for providing support along the way. Dr. Andrea Daines, your words of kindness and dedicated support as my mentor is highly acknowledged beyond words. I cannot imagine completing this project without you. I gained another friend in you. To my committee members Dr. Autumn Keefer and Dr. Kerry Grohman, thank you for the supportive feedback and considerations along the milestones. I hold high gratitude for each of you in serving as my committee members. You made this a successful and rewarding journey. Your kindness, support, professionalism, and attentiveness will always be remembered. Finally, to American Indian Mothers, Inc., your insight into the issues facing the Native American children and families were instrumental to me on this journey.

Imagine a World

Imagine a world when individuals, regardless of race, immerse in their cultures and ancestral ways. Imagine everyone teaching the ways of living based on their culture, safety, and understanding what it means to be free and live on the land. Now imagine a world where something changes these dynamics and every individual becomes broken, transported to territories unknown. Now exists, a world without acceptance of color, loss of culture, and ancestral ways. Then imagine further still, a world where teaching the ways of living are from a stranger's perspective of freedom and definition of life. The result may be a world that revolves around the definition individuals may decide based on perspectives of strangers. Finally, the result may be a decision affecting the life of innocent children.

“Wa Do ni-ga-du-wu.” “Thank you everyone.”

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Currently, national statistics report Native American children experience placement in foster care more frequently than non-minority children (National Indian Child Welfare Association, 2013; Padilla & Summers, 2011; U.S. Census, 2010). Specifically, 2% of all children in foster care are Native American, even though Native American children only make up 1% of the total number of children in the United States (Carter, 2010; Cooper, 2013; Hall, 2012; Hines, Lemon, Wyatte, & Merdinger, 2004). Comparatively speaking, 44.6% of all children in foster care are White, even though White children make up 55.6% of the total number of children in the United States (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, 2011; National Data Archives, 2010). These statistics provide evidence of Native American children placed in foster care at higher rates than children of other ethnicities. The political acknowledgement of a disproportionate number of Native American children being removed from their homes led to the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) P. L. 95-608 (Bussey & Lucero, 2013).

The plan of this dissertation was to examine the impact of westernization on the Native American population. Specifically, this dissertation concentrated on issues regarding the current placement of Native American children into foster care. Colonization began decades ago when the European settlers decided to populate the land

of the Americas. Historical documentation declares that colonization created to westernize the world resulted in a disruption in the lives of the native people (Braveheart, Chase, Elkins, & Atschul, 2011; Gibson, 1980). Separated from their families, Native American children took their place in boarding schools (Chase, 2011). The sending of Native American children to boarding schools was an attempt to educate the children to a westernized world (Adams, 1995, Child, 1998; Cooper, 2013; Hultgren & Fairbanks, 1994). Some argue that the attempt was not to eradicate the population of Native Americans but only to assimilate them into a more acceptable (westernized) way of life (Garrett & Pichette, 2000; Gibson, 1980; Nicotera, Walls, & Lucero, 2010).

The result was the dismantling of Native American cultures because of the systematic separation of children from their families by government decree carried out by social workers through government-sponsored agencies (Ahktar, 2013; Kleinschmit & Craig-Oldsen 2012). The European settlers saw Native Americans as savages, whose practices and beliefs were different from that of the Europeans (Ahktar, 2013 & Cooper, 2013). The dominant European culture held the belief that Native Americans were unlearned and needed help and guidance with activities for everyday living (Nabokov, 1978; Jacobs & Saus, 2012; Steiger, 1974;). The boarding school experiences of a westernized world took precedence over teaching Native American children their cultural way of living (Cross, 2008; Jacobs & Saus, 2012). Rather, there was a need for native people to survive in a world unknown to them. The establishment of boarding schools was an attempt to disenfranchise the native people from their culture (Churchill, 2004; Cooper, 2013; Cross, 2008). Tribal cultural values and beliefs began to subside and resulted in an increase of confusion among the Native Americans (Henry, McDonald,

Oetting, Walker, Walker, & Beauvais, 2011). One example of disenfranchisement through federal prohibition was the Dawes Act of 1887, which disallowed cultural practices of Native Americans (Braveheart, Chase, Elkins, & Altschul, 2011; Churchill, 2004; Henry et al., 2011). Another example of disenfranchisement was the prohibition of cultural practices enforced through the boarding school experiences. For instance, the boarding school caregivers, beginning in 1860, intended to make Native American children conform to European practices, through mandating policies, procedures, rules and regulations concerning speech, dress, and acceptable hair styles. The system of governance was designed to be helpful for assimilation by, eradicating the children's memories of the cultural practices of their elders (Adams, 1995; Ahktar, 2013; Braveheart et al., 2011; Gibson, 1980). In the 1860s, there was a motto in existence referenced, by the United States Government, that the only good Indian is a dead Indian (Churchill, 2004; Klenischmit, 2012; Meider, 1993). Therefore, for survival purposes, only oral histories of the tribal cultural practices remained, each diverse in their own way.

There are 562 federally recognized tribes, each culturally unique (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2002; Cooper, 2013). Of those tribes, the United States Census indicates 4.1 million are American Indian/Alaska Natives of which 64% live in urban areas, 34% live in reservation and federal trust funds, and 2% reside in Alaska (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2002; Jacobs & Saus, 2012; Spillane & Smith, 2007). From a historical perspective, the American Indians endured traumatic hardships that continue to linger in their lives (Jacobs & Saus, 2012; Szlemko, Wood, & Thurman, 2006). These examples of separation included the loss of their children and the loss of their culture (Ahktar, 2013; Cooper, 2013 Jacobs & Saus, 2012).

More recent examples of attempts to assimilate the Native American are outside of the boarding school separations. Today's social work practice, sponsored by the dominant political, educational, and social aspects of American society, involves the placement policy of Native American children into foster care homes. Historically, the removal of Native American children from their native homes was a common practice (Akhtar, 2013; Cooper, 2013; Jacobs & Saus, 2012). The prevalence of removal has ranged from 5-18 % more Native American children than other populations of White and non-White children and continues to be reflected in data reporting (Blyer, 1977; Simmel, 2011). The government implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act was an attempt to create a policy to protect and preserve Native American families (Bussey & Lucero, 2013).

Background of the Study

The implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978 was to address the displacement of Native American children from their homes. The law's intent was to preserve Native American families, while keeping their cultures alive (ICWA, 1974). Before the implementation of ICWA, the disproportionate numbers of out of home placements for Native American children removed from their homes into non-Indian homes ranged from 25% - 35% (Austin, 2009; Fletcher, 2009; Frichner, 2010; Lawler, LaPlante, Giger, & Norris, 2012). Since the implementation of ICWA, the removal of Native American children from their homes has declined. While the data reflect a reduction from 25% to 12% of out of home placement for Native American children since the ICWA implementation, there remains a disparity in percentages of out of home placement. The data of foster care placement currently reflects 3% of Native

American children versus less than 1% for White children (Austin, 2009; Gross, 2003; Fletcher, 2009; Lawler et al., 2012).

Although the percentages reported before implementation has decreased since implementation, disparity remains present. The disproportionate rate of out of home placements of Native American children reflects the efforts of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The ICWA and the ASFA have the same goal (lower numbers of American Native children entering the foster care system) the two groups have different ideological paths (Barth, Webster, & Lee, 2002; Quash-Mah, Stockard, Johnson-Shelton, & Crowley, 2010). The ideological concept of ICWA was to preserve Native American families by fewer placements, while the philosophical goal of ASFA was towards cultural blindness through finding safe permanency for children regardless of race or ethnic identity (American Bar Association, 2013; U. S. Government Accountability Office, 2005).

The ICWA proclaims that expert witnesses must be able to testify on parents' behalf, and that experts must be familiar with Native American cultural practices and child rearing (Barth et al., 2002; Cooper, 2013). On the other hand, the ASFA holds that once a permanency plan has been created and a child has been placed out of the home the termination of parental rights becomes the goal and must occur within 15–22 months with approval by a court (DHHS, 2013; McMahon, 2006). Contrariwise, there is no specific timeframe for permanent placement and termination of parental rights under ICWA (Cooper, 2013; McMahon, 2006). The decision-making practices of a specific social worker is predicated on the idea of the best outcome for families and children; however, the definition of what is the in the best interest of the child is determined by the

philosophical underpinnings of the two contradicting goals of the ICWA and the ASFA. Acceptance, training and legal justification from either ICWA or the ASFA are critical to the well-being of innocent children (Ahktar, 2013; Goldsmith, Oppenheim, & Wanlass 2004; Nicotera et al., 2010). Past decision-making efforts of child welfare social work education was based on the principle of inadequacy reduction of Native American families rather than a focus of strength-based practices approach (Bussey & Lucero, 2013).

Social work educators have instructed students in completing self-awareness assignments in efforts to increase understanding cultural diversity and individual heritages (Bender, Negi, & Fowler, 2010). Self-awareness assignments have concluded that conscious awareness and mindfulness is critical to the social work profession (Bender et al., 2010; Miller, Cahn, & Orellano, 2012). Although poverty and violence have been indicated as child maltreatment, the racial disproportionality for Native American child removal from their homes is not fully understood (Cross, 2008; Dakil, Cox, Lin & Flores, 2011; Miller et al, 2012). Cultural competence is an issue that continually fluctuates and social work educators have determined that remaining attentive to self and others is critical to the profession (Harrison & Turner, 2011). In summary, cultural competence of child welfare workers continues as an important function of the social work education curriculum (Ortega & Faller, 2011). Indeed, the Council on Social Work Education (2010) mandates the strengthening of cultural competence in the preparation of social work students.

Statement of the Problem

The placement of Native American children in foster care outside of their own ethnic culture results in the loss of connection to their heritage, spirituality, values, traditions, and language (Ahktar, 2013; Carter, 2010; Cooper, 2013). Outside placement contributes to a loss of self-identity and eventually leads to extinction of a minority population (Bussey & Lucero, 2013; Hall, 2012). The disparity in rates of child placement for Native American children indicates the need for an in-depth examination of the decision to remove a child by social workers (Ahktar, 2013; Cooper, 2013). It is particularly important to explore these decisions since other researchers have found that the United States is teaching social work students from within a European cultural view of child abuse and neglect and child welfare policies institutionalize this view (Bolea, 2012; Hall, 2012; Pinderhughes, 1997).

Because child welfare trainings are based on a European cultural view of child abuse and neglect (Hall 2012, Willis, DeLeon, Haldane, & Heldring, 2014) an examination of decision-making process for placement of Native American children in foster care deserves to incorporate the view of cultural specific competence among social work training (Collins, Kim & Amodeo, 2010; Jackson & Hodge, 2010; Jackson & Samuels, 2011). The overarching purpose of this dissertation was to question and review the disparity of number of placements for Native American children when compared to White children as it relates to level of education of the social work student and their self-perception. Recognition of differences in training suggests following competencies and practice behaviors of the core curriculum for schools of social work.

Cultural competence entails teaching social work students' professional assessment skills in identifying the needs of individuals and families (Bender et al., 2010; Willis et al., 2014). Completing this assessment, without causing harm, is a hallmark in the school of social work (Lane, Altman, Goldberg, Schafner, Kagotho, Palley, Paul, 2012). Students who graduate with a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) or Master of Social Work (MSW) degree will often seek employment in some aspect of child welfare (Farber & Munson, 2010; Strolin, McCarthy & Caringi, 2007). If a social worker is culturally competent, that individual understands their own values and beliefs but recognizes and respects alternate attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors (Bender et al., 2010). Likewise, if a social worker is not culturally competent, this difference in value systems can lead to unfairly poor assessments of the Native American population (Hodge & Limb, 2011). This difference in training can lead to the unusually high rate of child removal from their family and placement into the foster care system (Carter, 2010). Social workers' level of self-awareness is the key to becoming culturally competent (Martin & Pyles, 2013; Mistry, Jacobs, & Jacobs, 2009; Wilson & Kelly, 2010).

Being culturally competent entails the perceptions of social work students and social work professionals. Perceptions show significance in decision-making practices when it comes to assessing child neglect (Raman & Hodes, 2012). The establishment of Daryl Bem's self-perception theory is important in recognizing that individual self-perception may influence outcome decisions and behaviors specific to removal of a child from their home. The self-perception also includes interpretation and assignment of meaning to include the environment and the history of individual experiences (Nalls, Mullis, & Mullis, 2009).

Outcome measures improve when attention to self-perception is considered (Skowronski, Sedikides, Heider, Wood & Scherer, 2010). Individuals perceive what they think (Meyers, 2007). Self-perception attaches to the internal thoughts, ideas, beliefs and the external attitude and behaviors (Cheng & Hsu, 2012; Secchi & Bardone, 2013). Making the connection for choices and the need to establish consistency in thinking and behavior, results in improved decision-making practices (Holden, 2013; Meyers, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative experimental research study was to explore the relationship between the construct of level of cultural competence of social work students and the ability to identify the level of perceived neglect. This study investigated four research questions through a survey instrument and a modified checklist of “perceived” child neglect developed from the child neglect checklist of Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The survey instrument was field tested by four professional experts in social work, counseling, and anthropology.

Rationale

Examining the factors that may affect the rate of foster care placement for Native American children is scientifically significant to the extension of the critical race theory and social work students (Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew, & Freeman, 2010; Daniel, 2007;) in light of the disproportionality of out of home placements for Native American children (Lawler et al., 2012). The child welfare workforce consists of workers with undergraduate and graduate degrees across all areas of social services, including social work, sociology, family studies, human development, and psychology (Barth, Lloyd, Christ, Chapman & Dickinson, 2008; Strolin, McCarthy & Caringi, 2007).

Child welfare workers from disciplines outside of social work may not receive educational foundations concentrating on self-awareness and cultural sensitivity in decision-making practices (Bagdasaryan, 2012; Hall, Lidot, Orrantia, & Choca, 2012). Upon graduation from social work programs, students will apply for positions in some aspect of child welfare (Farber & Munson, 2010; Strolin, McCarthy & Caringi, 2007). Therefore, the knowledge that social work students may enter the child welfare arena leads to an examination of the social work students' values, belief systems, and culture-specific criteria when considering out-of-home placement, in addition to examining social workers' personal attitudes (Hall, 2012; Harrison & Turner, 2011; Pivorienė & Ūselytė, 2013). Regardless of the area of their degree, individuals hired by the child welfare agencies are expected to function and perform all duties of a professional certified social worker (Cameron, Frensch, Quosal, DeGeer, & Freymond, 2012; Reed-Ashcraft, Westbrook, & Williams, 2012).

Social work competence builds on knowledge of culturally diverse groups (Nicotera et al., 2010). However, social workers typically experience training within Eurocentric views of child maltreatment (Hall, 2012). Other research has found that child welfare workers also make determinations of placement decisions within the context of their own personal and professional attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors (Hall, 2012; Miller, Cahn & Orellana, 2012). This Eurocentric training, along with mandated rules, may cause child welfare social workers to evaluate child neglect within a more rigid, linear checklist oriented context rather than a circular, environmental, culturally oriented context (Bagdasaryan, 2012; Hall et al., 2012).

The supported rationale for this research was the limited number of studies examining cultural competence and child welfare in the decision-making process of placing Native American children in foster care. An illustration of this spoke to a research study conducted by the General Accounting Office that only five out of 50 states could identify ICWA eligible children (Jacobs & Saus, 2012). Federal and state governments are initially responsible for foster care placement due to the established laws set forth to address issues of child maltreatment (Cooper, 2013). Cultural competence embraces a multicultural understanding beyond race and ethnicity and includes social workers' self-awareness, recognition of attitudes, values and beliefs, and behaviors (Ortega & Faller, 2011). Having a difference in value systems can lead to poor assessments of the Native American population (Hodge & Limb, 2011). Differences in value systems become fundamental in realizing the importance of cultural competency from a multicultural perspective.

It is sufficient to state at this point that child welfare workers and social workers follow the decision-making guidelines of child maltreatment as set forth and mandated by federal and state governance (Cooper, 2013). The established laws and trainings are set forth by the governmental agencies and are developed by the overarching westernized approaches to child maltreatment (Ahktar, 2013). Government funding to support child welfare agencies takes considerable cost that is funded by taxpayers, yet an inconsistent proportion of minority children removed from their homes remains present (Ahktar, 2013; Cooper, 2013; Jacobs & Saus, 2012; Lucero & Bussey, 2012).

One issue prevalent in the child welfare system is the inconsistency of defining child neglect (Hamilton & Bundy-Fazioli, 2013). Researchers agree that appropriate

efforts to combat child maltreatment issues are to (a) involve the families in decision making, (b) embrace self-awareness, and (c) increase knowledge in differing values and beliefs, (d) and become increasingly alert to perceptions (Ahktar, 2013; Cooper, 2013; Jacobs & Saus, 2012; Lucero & Bussey, 2012). Effort combats include providing social work students with the foundational knowledge necessary to work with minority populations and families experiencing child maltreatment issues (Kirmayer, 2012; Hamilton & Bundy-Fazioli, 2013; Ungar, 2011). The fundamental knowledge of social work skills entails collaborative efforts in becoming increasingly aware of self and others (Lidot et al., 2012).

The increased awareness of self and others addresses the major issue of potential child neglect, and therefore becomes an active effort in defining neglect. The defining of neglect has been and continues to be challenging because there are no clear definitions of the term for the majority population, let alone culturally sensitive definitions for minority populations (Ahktar, 2013; Cooper, 2013; Jacobs & Saus, 2012). Unclear definitions make the challenge to improving cultural competence even more difficult, particularly since consideration of cultural competency is critical to the decision-making process (Bagdasaryan, 2012; Williams & Ellison, 1996).

Defining neglect into a more circular view is pertinent to child welfare workers, social workers, families, and governments. Ultimately the innocence of children is affected due to the inconsistency of definitions found in policy and procedures of child welfare agencies (Cooper, 2013). An important factor in providing a clearer definition for child neglect comes through the need for examining the social work students' perceptions of child neglect and social work students self-measure of cultural competence

(Appleton, 2012; Evans-Campbell, 2008;). Although investigation of perception and cultural competence in social work practices alone does not fully address disproportionality (Mitchell, Walters, Thomas, Denniston, McIntosh, & Brodowski, 2012) it is a step toward bridging the gaps toward agreement regarding clarity in constituting a clear definition of neglect across the cultural spectrums (Cross, Day, Gogliatti, & Pung, 2013).

The challenge of clearly defining neglect across cultures requires open-minded approaches with the input from stakeholders such as (a) families, (b) professionals across varied disciplines, and (c) federal government, state, and local entities responsible for the care and safety of children (Lawrence et al., 2012). Deciding on a clear definition of neglect will also require the teamwork approach incorporating cultural competence in the discussion. Cultural competence in decision-making results from establishing a positive identifying relationship between the child welfare workers, social work professions, and minority populations such as Native American families (Collins et al., 2010; Lawrence et al., 2012).

Self-awareness is part of becoming culturally competent. On the other hand, the lack of self-awareness creates problems for vulnerable populations (Bender et al., 2010). For example, a lack of self-awareness can result in poor decision-making when determining foster care placement of Native American children. A social worker's awareness of self and differences in cultures comes through (a) learning from individuals, (b) improving attitudes, (c) values and beliefs, (d) and behaviors, all of which are dynamic in the decision-making process of child welfare system (Harrison & Turner, 2011; Hughes, 2011; Kirmayer, 2012; Popple & Vecchiola, 2007; Ungar, 2011).

Knowledge about the social worker's decision-making process is limited in measuring levels of cultural competence (Goldberg & Coufal, 2009; Stoke & Schmidt, 2011). Low socioeconomic status and child neglect has been associated with foster care placement of Native American children despite the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (Crofoot & Harris, 2012). Native American families are two times more likely to be investigated and substantiated for child neglect and these children are 2.5-3 times more likely to be removed from their homes due to neglect than the majority population (Hill, 2008; National Data Archive, 2010). Social workers seek to place children in a safe environment as soon as possible according to the provisions of the Eurocentric state and federal guidelines.

The focus of this research study was the potential physical child neglect of Native American children. The reasoning for this intentional focus was due to information found in the statistical reporting of physical abuse versus physical neglect. When reviewing the above stated statistics of child abuse and neglect, reports indicate that physical abuse is less prominent among Native Americans than for Whites (Dakil, Cox, Lin, & Flores, 2011). Contrariwise, while physical abuse is more prevalent among Whites, physical neglect is more often reported for Native Americans (Carter, 2010; Dakil, et al, 2011). However, until now, examination of the factors behind removing Native American children from their homes due to neglect in relation to decision-making and cultural competence of social workers is unexplored. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) collaborates with Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to establish professional competencies of social workers based on the core standards of the National Association of Social Workers (CSWE, 2010).

Elliot and Urquiza (2009) express that cultural competence can begin by understanding differences between sociological factors and differences of attitudes, values and beliefs, behaviors or traditions inherent in one's culture. Sociological factors and cultural competence in practices with children and families takes on the approach of emerging linear and circular views (Hughes, 2011; Rodenborg & Boisen, 2013; Ungar, 2011). Social work students receive instruction to embrace self-awareness, open-mindedness, and understanding (Ortega & Faller, 2011; Pivorienė & Ūselytė, 2013). The power differential that currently resides within the child welfare arena (Lawrence, Zuckerman, Smith, & Liu, 2012) can be explored further.

Social workers hold a vital link to making the connections necessary in understanding and bringing family members into the decision-making process in child welfare (Simmons, Diaz, Jackson & Takahashi, 2008). When at risk families are affected by policies and procedures, one of the best approaches is to actively involve them in discussions (Morris & Connolly, 2012). Family dynamics and compositions are consistently changing and in knowing this, there is a need to address those subtleties (Lawrence et al., 2012; Morris & Connolly, 2012) An empirical study was done by Saltiel (2013) wherein he addresses the complexities of the family order and the apparent issue that change is constant. Saltiel's study found that agencies often do not provide all necessary information required to make informed decisions that will affect the lives of families (2013). Saltiel (2013) points out that set indicators are fallible and sometimes difficult to interpret. However, when families are brought together as active participants, decision-making becomes more feasible and less uncertain (Saliel, 2013). A study conducted by Lenzer and Gran (2011) further points out that recognizing the rights of

families in the decision-making process actually improves the directives of agency policies and procedures and therefore reduce possible ‘sabotage’ (p. 161). An additional study reported that when social workers and social agencies include families in the decision-making process, constructive resolutions are more effective (Gallagher, Smith, Hardy, Wilkinson, 2012). The Council on Social Work Education and the National Association of Social Workers address the concepts of human rights and social justice for individuals (Bolea, 2012; CSWE, 2010). Social work students who embrace the concept of cultural competence and learn the skills for effective assessments value the practice with diverse groups (Bender et al., 2010) and increase success (Nissen, 2014). Advocating for minority and oppressed populations is also part of the social work standards and addresses assessment effectiveness (Willis et al., 2014).

Research Questions

The research questions help identify the level of cultural competence in the decision-making process when Native American children are considered for foster care placement due to neglect. The critical race theory, tested through hypotheses, examined specific research questions formulated to test the assumptions that race is (a) socially constructed (b) permeates all social life, and that (c) race-based ideology is threaded throughout society (Ortiz & Jani, 2010).

The hypotheses and research questions examined the application of the critical race theory’s construct of oppression and the view that ethnocentric worldviews advance the majority while keeping the minority populations under reproach referred to as micro-aggression (Brincat, 2013). The critical race theory was used to investigate the perspectives of social work students regarding self-perception of neglect and self-

measures of cultural competence. The tenets of the critical race theory share the need to form a multidimensional approach to viewing race, racism, and the dominant society (Weiner, 2012).

R1: Do social work students significantly vary in their demographic characteristics, level in social work program, level of cultural competence, and rating of level of child neglect between the three experimental groups?

H₁: Due to random assignment to group, it is not expected that there will be significant differences in the social work students' demographics, level in social work program, level of cultural competence, across the three experimental groups.

R2: Across all experimental groups, are social work students' demographic characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age, level in social work program, type of neighborhood where they were raised) significant predictors of level of perceived neglect or level of cultural competence?

H₂: Demographic factors (ethnicity, gender, age, level in social work program, type of neighborhood where they were raised) of social work students will be significant predictors of level of perceived neglect or level of cultural competence.

R3: After controlling for demographics, do social work students' levels of cultural competence relate to the level of perceived neglect and does this relationship differ by experimental group?

H₃: Level of cultural competence will be a stronger predictor of level of perceived neglect for all experimental groups.

R4: Do social work students significantly vary in the level of perceived neglect by the three experimental groups (Group 3 who see the Native American child, Group 2 who see the White child, and Group 1 who only read the case vignette)?

H₄: Social work students' level of perceived neglect will be higher for Group 3 who see the Native American child, compared to both Groups 2 and 1 who either see the White child or only read the case vignette.

Significance of the Study

Cultural competence training for social workers is available to help in deciding when to remove a child from their family (Collins et al., 2010; Ortega & Faller, 2011). Trainings include Indian child welfare practice (Bending, 1997), family-focused practice (Alpert & Britner, 2005) and investigation and interviewing (Freeman & Morris, 1999). For example, the Child Welfare Training Institute provides ongoing cultural competence training for social workers and requires child protective social workers to complete a minimum of 270 hours of pre-service training and pass the competency-based exam with a 70% grade within 16 weeks of hire (DHHS, 2013). There are also cultural sensitivity and cultural competence trainings on working with minority groups (Bender et al., 2010; Ortega & Faller, 2011). However, social workers may still be making decisions of which, they are not fully cognizant based on a family's cultural characteristics or ethnic appearance (Ortega & Faller, 2011). Empirical work specifically related to cultural competence of social workers with Native American culture is difficult to locate (Bolea, 2012; Hodge & Limb, 2010; Leak, Potter, Lucero, Gardner & Deserly, 2012).

This study was designed to investigate social work students' attitude, knowledge, and skills as well as work with minority populations. The decision-making practices of a

social constructed case vignette served as the Native American family characteristics and ethnic appearance. The survey instructed social work students to interpret a culturally constructed case vignette based on Native American practices with one group viewing a Native American girl. The survey concluded with a self-measure of cultural competence.

Researchers have examined the concept of cultural competence in social work education and practice, but there is a gap in the literature examining the cross-cultural work specific with Native Americans (Nicotera et al., 2010; Tsang & Bogo, 1997). For example, limited studies have examined factors such as age, race, and family characteristics forecasting the placement of Native American children in foster care (Carter, 2010; Hill, 2008). In a study by Cross (2008), findings of child maltreatment suggested that out of 100 White children and 100 Native Americans reported for child maltreatment, one White child will be placed outside the home versus 25 of Native American children. Native American child disproportionality rates have increased over the past ten years from 1.5% to 2.1% (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, 2012).

Although the disparity rates are higher for Native American children than White children, studies have not been conducted specific to examining perceived neglect and cultural competence when making decisions of perceived neglect among Native Americans. Studies have found that poverty, substance abuse and lack of communication have been associated with reasons for child removal from their homes (Cross, 2008; Fluke, Harden, Jenkins, & Ruehrdanz, 2011, p. 11). No study has examined the level of cultural competence of social work students that may forecast the disproportionate placement of Native American children into the foster care system (Carter, 2010; Cooper,

2013; Hill, 2006). Additionally, no research has used an experimental design to test social work students' subconscious attitudes when assessing possible neglect. The disparity of Native American children in foster care is suggestive that additional attention is necessary to examine social workers' perceptions and their cultural competence in decision-making practices when determining child neglect.

Definition of Terms

Adoption and Safe Families Act: Pub L 105-89 enacted to place children for adoption once a child has been in foster care at least 15 months of the most recent 22 months unless it is not in the best interest of the child or if the child is with a relative (DHHS, 2013).

Child Neglect: Term that continues debate among professionals and influenced by mores and values. Basically the term is defined as a condition involving lack of caretaker bonding, inadequate supervision, abandonment, and failure to provide physical, mental and emotional needs (DHHS, 2013).

Cultural Competence: Process of respectful and effectual communication and interaction with diverse people regardless of background, beliefs, values, religions, culture, or race in a manner that affirms worth, value and dignity to all (Morris & Connolly, 2012).

Indian Child Welfare Act: Pub L 95-608 enacted by congress in 1978 to alleviate the separation of Indian children from their families (ICWA, 1974; Cooper, 2013)

Picture Imaging: The use of a picture image is a type of methodology used in research in examining perception and reality (Roberts, 2011).

Assumptions and Limitations

The assumptions of this study from the perspective of critical race theory (CRT) include the following: (a) race is a social construction, (b) race permeates all social life, and (c) the threading of race-based ideology exists throughout society (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Further, the Eurocentric views of Western society may impose beliefs, values, and attitudes that do not support the culture of minority populations (Yosso, 2005). The CRT provides a theoretical avenue to process dominant discourse and subordinate groups (Constance-Huggins, 2011).

The current literature has suggested the child welfare system works from a traditional (linear) model in making decisions of child maltreatment (Nissen, 2014). The instruction for social work students relies on the application of the CRT view of an ecological perspective within a linear social structure (Daniel & Quiros, 2010; Simiel, 2011). CRT addresses the construct of race as it applies to minority populations by helping to diminish by identifying barriers to oppression (Daniel & Quiros, 2010). Race never disappears. However, the official counting in documents such as census reports fail to recognize Native American races by categorizing them as “other” (Department of Health & Human Services, 2013; U.S. Census, 2010). Racial populations are categorical representations, social constructs, and hold characteristic meanings for the social spectrum (Hain-Jamal, 2013; Weiner, 2012). The child welfare workforce uses these social meanings and concepts to address cross-cultural representation (Cappiccie, Chadha, Lin, & Snyder, 2012). The current study applied CRT to investigate social work students’ application of attitude, skills, and knowledge as reflected through perceptions of neglect and perception of professional self.

This topic of the current study looked at the historical assumption that social work students may apply a Eurocentric (hierarchical) decision-making model to foster care home placement of children (Harrison & Turner, 2011; Johnson, Antle & Barbee, 2009; Kirmayer, 2012). However, social work educators embrace the ecological (circular) view of placement, which increase decision-making practices for social work students. The Council on Social Work Education mandates social workers to be culturally competent (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Ward, 2012). Therefore, this study investigated the Eurocentric assumption with the application of the critical race theory. The research questions were related to the exploration of relationships between social work students' perception of neglect and cultural competence. The ecological perspectives taught in current social work programs are mandated by Counsel Social Work Education. This current research predicted that social work students who perceive themselves as possessing higher cultural competence levels will make conscious decisions of child neglect based on cultural awareness of minorities. The application of CRT suggested that upon giving thought to decision-making practices, social work students will mark fewer items on the perceived neglect checklist in the group that sees the picture of the Native American girl.

Further, the assumption was that social work students understand cultural sensitivity (Abram & Moio, 2009; Jackson & Samuels, 2011; Ward, 2012). The ecological approach embraces the concept of cultural awareness and sensitivity, which is an important aspect of consideration when making decisions that, will affect the lives of others (Jackson & Samuels, 2011; Martin & Pyles, 2013). This randomized experimental research design addressed the concept of culture, color, and race.

One limitation of this proposed study was the number of social work students who completed the anonymous online assessment of the case vignette and level of cultural competence. However, the use of snowball convenience sampling made it possible to meet the minimum sample size requirements as determined by the power analysis. A second limitation was the imbalance of variables (a) gender, (b) age, (c) ethnicity, (d) level in social work program, and (e) type of neighborhood, which was addressed through random assignment. A third limitation was the gender of the two children (both females) depicted in the case vignette. It was plausible that the respondents may have reflected different attitudes yielding measurements for a male child versus a female child.

Self-perception theory posits that an individualistic view of what a person believes to be true, takes precedence whether or not others support their view (Bem, 1972; Meyers, 2007; Secchi & Bardone, 2013; Skowronski et al., 2010). Therefore, a final limitation of this proposed study was the self-rating basis of self-perception of the cultural competence measure. When participants completed the cultural competence self-measurement tool, there was a possibility that their reasoning of competence level resulted from their beliefs of behavior in their decision-making (Skowronski et al., 2010).

Nature of the Study

When examining the social work students' perception of level of child neglect and the level of perceived cultural competence, the critical race theory (CRT) provided opportunity for developing a framework for a quantitative experimental design. Methodological assumptions of the experimental design for this study examined whether or not there was an association between level of cultural competence and the level of perception of social work students in their ratings of the case vignette with and without

the pictures of the children. The nature of the study applied the critical race theory in examining differential perceptions of neglect for Native-American families. The research explored the relationship between cultural competence and perception of social work students. The research examined if there was a difference between the groups that saw a picture image or the control group that did not see a picture image.

The basis for examining possible differences through use of the experimental design was to apply the critical race theory concepts to the social work students and their knowledge of working with minority populations and sensitivity to a culturally constructed case. The design included random assignment of three groups of social work students. The control group viewed the case vignette without a picture image. The three groups used for this study method compared social work students' decision-making based on their perception of one single case vignette. Two groups saw the vignette with a picture image of either a Native American girl or a White girl. The three-group design strengthened this study by allowing the research to compare differences in levels of perceptions of neglect based solely on a picture (compared to the control group with no picture image). The use of three groups using a posttest-only randomized experimental design was ideal for decreasing experimental bias using the manipulation of the pictures as the intervention. Posttest only randomized designs address many threats to internal validity (Trochim, 2006). Additionally, randomized assignment is an experimental technique used for balancing and assuring better generalization to a larger population when interpreting results (Greenstein & Davis, 2013). It is important for research to use the most unbiased approach in quantitative examination of data. When randomly assigning groups, there is more likelihood that each group holds characteristic similarities

(Creswell, 2009; Greenstein & Davis, 2013). In order to address threats to validity, it was important to make sure of the adequate operation of the variables. In essence, there was a need to ensure the measures applied correctly fit the variables. The randomized three-group design helped to ensure that the measures were more generalizable to the entire population without bias (Rubin & Babbie, 1993).

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 2 contains the literature review, which explored the research questions designed specifically for this study. The literature review examined research pertaining to the following constructs: cultural competence of social work students; disproportionate out of home placements for Native Americans; child neglect; and self-perception. The literature revealed gaps in the current literature in critical race theory, child neglect, and cultural competence.

Chapter 3 describes the methodological framework of the study and explains the experimental design, population sample, instrumentation, data collection, and the plan for statistical analysis. Further discussion includes the Internal Review Board (IRB) process, and social work departmental approval. Chapter 4 will present the results of the data collected. Tables and figures included the findings. Also included is the review of data collection methods. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the results and offers recommendations for further study for social work programs, child welfare departments, and family service providers. Recommendations include researching culture competence for social work students before graduation. Further research is suggested for social work students and cultural competence in the field of family preservation.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review captured the body of research examining decision-making processes of social work students. This study examined social worker student assessments of neglect within the context of cultural competence, which was limited in research to this point. Capturing the cultural context of competency in decision-making with Native American traditions, beliefs, and values would require social workers' knowledge of those populations (Ahktar, 2013; Williams & Ellison, 1996; Wilson & Kelly, 2010). The current maltreatment assessment tools used in child welfare are often challenging and leaves room for personal values and beliefs of the individual assigned to assess the reported case (Johnson, O'Connor, Berry, Ramelmeier & Pecora, 2012).

Research compiled from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) indicates disproportionate representations among minority children in child protection services (Bohn, 2003; Carter, 2010; Cooper, 2013). Native Americans are less likely to be reported for physical abuse than Whites (Dakil, Cox, Lin, & Flores, 2011). On the other hand, the research also indicates that the death rates of Native American children due to physical abuse were higher than for Whites (Bohn, 2003). Further, physical abuse is more prevalent among Whites than Native Americans, while physical neglect was more prevalent among Native Americans (Carter, 2010). Based on this

research, there is conflicting evidence about abuse within the Native American population. For example, even though physical abuse is reported more often for White children, Native American children are removed from their homes at higher rates than White children (Carter, 2010; Stokes & Schmidt, 2011). The disparity of Native American children in foster care was suggestive that additional attention was necessary to examine social work students' perceptions and their cultural competence in decision-making practices when determining child neglect.

Critical Race Theory

Understanding the unequal rates for identification of child neglect among minority populations requires a shift from traditional and empirical views of research. Scientific knowledge emerges from curiosity, exploration, and challenges the social order. The theories of Marxism began during the period of empiricism, which was when scientist believed all knowledge required statistical referencing (Higley & Pakulski, 2012; Spencer, 2012). A formulation of the critical race theory was a consequence of a shift in the in the theoretical application of the epistemology and the belief of how knowledge is acquired. The historical shift of paradigms occurred when theorists set out to challenge hierarchical structures in their ways of thinking (Higley & Pakulsi, 2012). The paradigm shifts were a reflection of the relationships between race and social interaction (Higley & Pakulsi, 2012; Walker, 2012). The neo-Marxists perspectives concerned the dichotomy between too much focus on traditional ways of knowing versus open-minded reasoning (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Angers, 2013). As theorists began to critically examine the social interplay between the majority and minority populations critical theory and critical race theory emerged.

Historical Shift in Paradigms

German neo-Marxists recognized that in order for real understanding of social order to occur, beliefs about society required examination from a critical perspective (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Angers, 2013; Yosso, 2005). Positivism was a neutral position in the school of epistemological thought (Angers, 2013). Every exploration of idea was equally valid. In the positivist view, there was neutrality of knowledge (ideas), which was value free, and without justification by culture or individuality (Brincat, 2013). The Positivist view of science was objective and left no room for culture preference or individuality. All ideas were acceptable for challenge (Brincat, 2013).

Michel Foucault described discourse in post-modern structuration, sharing that that discourse takes into account an individual's ability to remain an objective observer of the work and refrain from bias (Howarth, 2010). For Foucault discourse can increase personal views and opinions, which manifest in assessment results (Boschetti, 2012; McLaughlin, 2013). The premise of Foucault's work on discourse asserts that reason relates to the human perspectives, values, and justification (Boschetti, 2012; Howarth, 2010). Consequently, to expand knowledge through reason, it is necessary to adapt a role without biased feeling or emotion. A lack of bias strengthens the representations of truth, power, and knowledge (Bell, 2012; McLaughlin, 2013).

The emergence of structural linguistics such as Levi-Strauss, who was a structural anthropologist, expressed that social structure requires a definitive explanation to deal with the social system from diverse views (Berting, 2012; Sprenger, 2013). According to structure linguistics, all systems (educational, political, and social) undergo changes at which time behaviors, perceptions, predictions, and analysis become affected (Berting,

2012; Levi-Strauss, 1958; Rusu, 2013). Observations and accumulation of information becomes the justification of events. Acceptance of “facts” becomes a reality testing of events. However, since structural changes occur on different levels of knowledge, there is room for contradictions in views and perspectives of knowledge (Cappiccie et al., 2012; Dawson & Kelly, 2010; Levi-Strauss, 1958; Sprenger, 2013).

Social Structure and Role of Bias

Finding the right and true information in context can be complicated in attempting to fully understand the observance, which may lead to perception or interpretation (Douglas, McCarthy & Serino, 2014; Skowronski et al., 2010; Wolfreys, 1998). Interpretations may result in limited and inaccurate information, and thereby increase misguided assessments based on the lack of understanding of the social structure (Bell, 2012; Bennington, 1993). Misunderstanding the social structure creates bias interpretations. In looking at this point, there was a need for unbiased approaches and non-discriminatory actions in making decisions that affect human lives (Nissen, 2014). At this point, critical theorists emerged in the process in recognizing and approaching potential biases.

Critical Theorists vs. Critical Race Theory

Critical theorists aimed at understanding society from a naturalistic viewpoint, which led to the development of theory of critical race (Brincat, 2013). In its intent, critical race theory challenges the social system to “analyze, deconstruct, and transform” (Abrams & Moio, 2009, p. 250). Although the ideological concepts of critical theory did not hold a strong place in the positivistic concepts, its intention was to develop a more intense level of understanding of the social world than was traditionally established in the

Marxist period (Daniel & Quiros, 2010; Mittwede, 2012; Trevino, Harris & Wallace, 2008). As critical theory strengthened, additional opportunity expanded into specific areas such as race, oppression, and the interaction with dominant discourse shared during the structuralism period (Boschetti, 2012 & Sprenger, 2013).

Critical Race Theory vs. Rational Technocratic Thinking

Critical race theory framed consideration of opposing ideas as a challenge. In order to dominate or get to a specific goal, one can find any means possible (Mittwede, 2012). If finding and securing a means to reach the goal and goal accomplishment is the result, then there is a consideration of rational technocratic thinking (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Alvesson & Kärreman, 2004; Bell, 2012; Song & Ma, 2012). An example of the technocratic thinking is expressed in the view of Auschwitz as being a rational place, but not a reasonable one (Dosso, 2012). Likewise, the “eradicating of the Indian to protect the elite” (Abril, 2007, p. 3) was not a sensible logic. This technocratic thinking incorporates the view of critical race theory in its approach to addressing the experiences of minority oppressions such as indicated with the Jewish and Native American populations.

Critical Race Theory and History of Native Americans

Combining the technocratic thinking and critical race theory, as a conceptual view, results in banishing the Native American children to government run boarding schools (Ahktar, 2013; McIntosh, 2013). The removal of children from the reservations and their families was not rational; however, it served a practical purpose of cultural re-identification (Cooper, 2013; Wolfe, 2006). From a historical standpoint, the tenets of critical race theory, challenges the political and social institutions with intent and

importance to reason without bias (Thyer, 2009; Trevino et al., 2008; Wang, 2012). The perspective of the critical race theory contends that there is an intertwining of knowledge and power and therefore working through institutional knowledge increases understanding of social systems (Burton et al., 2010; Constance-Huggins, 2011; Dawson & Cameron-Kelly, 2010; Mittwede, 2012).

Critical Race Theory and Cultural Competence

The critical race theory's purpose in speaking to discourse and dominance therefore finds applicable place in examining cultural competence and perception of social work students. Examining decision-making practices of social work students', theoretically increases their understanding of current biases and their view of the social systems (Berting, 2012; Martin & Pyles, 2013). Views of cultural competence and self-perceptions are important components in the field of social work (Morris & Connolly, 2012; Johnson, 2013). Therefore, the application of the critical race theory plausibly examines these constructs.

Cultural awareness, part of competence and perception, involves the examination of social constructs (Daniel & Quiros, 2010; Ungar, 2011). Culture immerses the internalizations of subordinates falling prey to subjectivity and authority, which is confronted through the critical race theory (Daniel & Quiros, 2010). Additionally, there is difficulty in defining equality even though the fight for equality has existed since the 1800s (Cappiccie, 2012; Cooper, 2013 Schaefer, 2011). Reformists confer ways to demystify the imbalance among populations. Yet, the fight for equality continues for minorities. A barrier to equality, such as disproportionate rates of Native American

children in foster care placements, is an attention grabbing issue that cuts across racial lines (Crofoot & Harris, 2012; Cross, 2008; Fox, 2003).

Critical Race Theory: Barriers to Equality

Barriers can block individuals from achieving balance and aspiring to reach their fullest potential. In recognizing this, the critical race theory attempts to dissolve barriers such as inequity through public dialog and intellectual exposure (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Constance-Huggins, 2011; Pivorienė & Ūselytė, 2013; Yosso, 2005). The tenets of the critical race theory incorporates the Eurocentric views through a deeper view by understanding the social order through critical thinking about the disparate rates of child neglect of minority populations such as experienced by the Native American families.

Cross-cultural Conflicts: Native American Over representation

A major barricade to the development of diversity in child welfare agencies, where children and families receive culturally competent intervention, is related to the issue of distribution of power (Leak et al., 2012; Nybell & Gray, 2004). In addition, the roots of the child welfare system enhance this power base and serve as an obstruction to the development of a system of care that is culturally competent and built on diversity (Cohen, Gimein, Bulin, & Kollar, 2010; Cooper, 2013; Pierce & Pierce, 1996; Weaver & Congress, 2009). The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) declare that Native American children are most likely to be in foster care than any other race (Carter, 2010; Crofoot, & Harris, 2012). The critical race theory contends that cross cultural conflicts continue without discourse regarding overrepresentation of minority groups.

The cultural conflicts started under dominant litigable ruling such as the Elizabethan Poor Laws (Jacobs & Saus, 2012; McIntosh, 2013).

Elizabethan Poor Laws

The Elizabethan Poor Laws of the 1600s, designed for the care of White children, and not intended for children of color, created the child welfare systems in England. Implemented as a religious Christian duty, the Elizabethan Poor Laws of the Church of England aimed at caring for the poor (McIntosh, 2013; Rice, 2013). The Elizabethan period was a time in social history documenting the beginning helping practices of those in need. This historical period provided future direction toward improving assistance for the oppressed (Kurzman, 1970; McIntosh, 2013; Rice, 2013). Groundbreaking movements to save families and children's lives began with efforts from agencies such as the New York Society of Pauperism (1818), American Social Science Association (1865), and the Conference of Charities (1879), with journals dating back to 1886 (Dunn, 2012).

These movements for addressing the needs of the poor and oppressed populations produced many volumes for social work practice across the nineteenth century (Healey, 2012). Throughout the 1800s, Charity Organizations Societies (COS) boomed in efforts to calm the unwavering storms of the people who were experiencing economic difficulties, the desolation of war, and the separation of children from their families during these times. The Charity Organizations Societies focused on the needs of the White population, leaving the needs of the other races unaddressed. Eventually, the COS established the Colored Federated Charities in Memphis, Tennessee, the first formal organization that addressed minority population needs (Dunn, 2012). However, the

structure base was not on equitable care for all poor races, but rather on the dominant European race at the time. Wolfe (2006) and Jacobs and Saus (2012) maintain the change efforts of the dominant society was to gain territory from the Native Americans, not on caring for the needs of the population. The Manifest Destiny and American Expansionism was a time of upheaval brought on by the efforts of gaining lands and dominance of Native American for assimilation purposes (Jacobs & Saus, 2012; Wesley-Esquimaux, 2010). According to Cooper (2013) and Wolfe (2006), after the attempts at coercion and the demands to adapt to westernized world, Native Americans did not receive the same equal treatment as the dominant group.

The initial creation of the Elizabethan Poor Law was not in response to the needs of minority children (McIntosh, 2013; Rice, 2013). The major foundations of social work began in the 1800s with the days of pauperism, at which time, families experienced poverty and crime, and children experienced abandonment, abuse, and neglect. The change efforts of organizations of that time persisted in the focus on dominant White groups. Native Americans were removed from their lands to distant lands, their children were removed from the families and placed in government run boarding schools, while the groups insisted the policy and procedures were for the benefit of the assimilation of the minority Native American population (Ahktar, 2013; Faherty, 2006; Jacobs & Saus, 2012; McIntosh, 2013).

Current Practices

The demands of everyday child welfare practices create time restraints, leaving little time for cultural competence procedures (Harrison & Turner, 2011). However, the ICWA holds fault as well. A noted point is the lack of specificity to cultural competence

in the ICWA policy (Brown & Reiger, 2001; Cooper, 2013; Cross, Day, & Proctor, 2009; Limb & Brown, 2008; Matheson, 1996). The expectation is that schools of social work teach cultural competence and advocacy of oppressed populations (Nicotera et al., 2010; Topuzova, 2009). Critical thought in bridging service gaps is suggested in the dialogue of social issues (Martin & Pyles, 2013), such as cultural competency measures and out of home placement disproportionate rates of Native American children. Child welfare systems of care are, at best, fragmented, and at worse harmful to many children and families involved in their services for minority children (Cooper, 2013; Pierce & Pierce, 1996). This identification is largely due to child welfare's challenge to conceptualize diversity and cultural competency into its agencies policies and power base (Appleton, 2012; Constance-Huggins, 2011). Increased knowledge in cultural competence, in conjunction with the Indian Child Welfare Act, may be a declaration to the overrepresentation of Native Americans and other minority children in foster care placements (Kleinschmit et al., 2012; Weaver & Congress, 2009). This attempt considers the statistical representation that White children make up 60% of the population yet the non-White child population in foster care is comprised of 60% (Lawrence et al., 2012).

Measurement Issues

The child welfare neglect measurements were examined and the results indicated that agreement among child welfare workers was less than 70% when making decisions of child neglect (Johnson et al., 2012). Researchers use the critical race theory paradigm to examine the issue of cross-cultural conflicts of minority groups experiencing issues of oppression and inequality (Ambrams & Moi, 2009; Constance-Huggins, 2011). The principles of the critical race theory elucidate the issue of disparate numbers of minority

representation (Dawson & Cameron-Kelly, 2010; Mittwede, 2012) such for Native American children and the rate of out of home placements. Application of the critical race theory provides an intellectual, scientific understanding of disparity of foster placement issues (Leak et al., 2012) and the function of cultural conflict and dominance (Pivorienė & Ūselytė, 2013).

Previous research (Douglas et al., 2014) suggests the possibility of a relationship between social work students' self-measure of competence and the social welfare decision-making processes are applicable to the tenets of the critical race theory. The critical race theory proposes that we challenge all we know and re-examine our social conditions (Cappiccie et al., 2012). The culturally constructed case vignette of Native American parenting practices was an avenue in examining the social conditions of perceived child neglect. The use of picture imaging further increased the potential for examining potential bias when reviewing the case vignette with a picture of a 10-year-old Native American girl. In addition, critical race theory focused on the social context of the individual instead of the individuals' learning process (Cappiccie, 2012; McNamara, 2009; Scott, 1978). The examination required a review of social environment (Dakil, Cox, Lin, Flores, 2011) described in the case vignette to deciding on child maltreatment reporting.

The Critical Race Theory: Power and Oppression

The critical race theory examines the themes of race, class, and gender in connection to power and oppression (Daniel & Quiros, 2010; Wang, 2012). The theory's perspective explores the social sciences and histories for the creation of understanding the current social condition of minority populations through social justice, differences, and

change (Abril, 2007; Daniel & Quiros, 2010; Mittwede, 2012). Domination occurs through socially sanctioned power; challenging the power base is the means of creating knowledge (Cappiccie et al., 2012). Therefore, through critical awareness of oppression, domination, and discrimination of the social minority, transformation of our social condition and empowerment is plausible (Lorthridge, McCroskey, Pecora, Chambers, Fatemi, 2012; Scott, 1978) and heightens the attention through research (Burton et al., 2010).

Through a lens of critical race theory, knowledge is socially constructed and is relative to what we experience. Therefore, our knowledge of the world is a result of the human experience. The critical race theory contends that due to issues of oppression, silencing of some voices, and marginalization, the knowledge base is skewed toward dominate social order (Cappiccie et al., 2012; Daniel & Quiros, 2010). In further view of the theoretical model overcoming oppression, elicits unbiased knowledge to bring about social change by “the bringing about of an alteration- using research as a tool” (Kidd, 2005, p. 187). The reality of a person is dependent on their experienced social condition and therefore there are multiple realities (Douglas et al., 2014). The reality of a person grounds in the social condition based on gender, class, race, ethnic group, and other factors marginalized by the power base of these groups (Cappiccie et al., 2012). The combining of these various social realities broaden the collective social reality. People can transform their communities through working together, dialogue, and expanding their knowledge, raising their consciousness of the social condition of all people (Kidd, 2005; Morris & Connolly, 2012). Critical and collective dialogue then equates to realism.

Role of Imagination, Desire, and Ability

Culture is a result of our view of reality that is programmed into the mind and social order (Carr-Ruffino 2003; Secchi & Bardone, 2013 Song & Ma, 2012). Therefore, in order to change these realities we need three tools which are imagination (creativity and innovation), desire (mission/purpose, goals), and ability to change. In social service child welfare agencies, these qualities may go without promotion or teaching of realistic views in meaningful ways at the management level (Bagdasaryan, 2012). Empowerment is frequently devalued and instead the teaching of dependency allows for continuation of the current power structure. Policy in agencies has only spoken to reactive measures and aimed at reducing children of color in foster care (Hall, 2012). Some attention has been discussed as to the development of policy that increases in-home services, increases partnering with families, creating kinship placement friendly policy, ensuring secondary barrier assistance (such as housing and employment services), and creating policy that empowers the family in decision making (Gallagher et al., 2012; Raman & Hodes, 2012).

A focused increase on the development of more diversity in the social services cultures involves families the inclusion of policy making (Willis et al., 2014). In taking the time to teach respect for innate abilities and altering the power base, agencies have the potential of increasing the institutional culture to higher levels of acceptance of those considered different (Collins, Kim & Amodeo, 2010). With increased internal acceptance, outward acceptance of clients may be possible.

Inclusion and Empowerment through Social Work Practice

The crest of the cultural competence concept is about inclusion and empowerment but it can take time to master the skill of understanding and acceptance (Bender et al., 2010; Douglas et al., 2014). The up side is, those skills become shared with others, thus creating empowerment, one of the core themes of social work practice. Empowerment is an inseparable element of inclusion of diverse human groups (Bolea, 2012; Leak et al., 2012; Prasad, 2001; Wilson, & Kelly, 2010) and diminishes the cultural violations experienced by Native American families (Bolea, 2012; Voss, Hat, Bates, Lunderman, & Lunderman, 2005). In order for child welfare agencies and schools of social work to strengthen cultural assessments, communications should explore the level of cultural competence, not just by building tolerance (Johnson et al., 2012; Nybell & Gray, 2004; Willis et al., 2014). This work allowed for exploration of cultural competence.

The social order, in reference to empowerment, was examined by application of picture images for the purpose of differences in perception with or without a visual image. Kapferer (2012) describes this technique as useful in measuring perception versus realistic responses. The lack of knowledge that surrounds biases and conflict decreases acceptance of diversity and exploration. Williams (1997) stated,

“What seems to happen in a lot of organizations is integration of the staff and a commitment to developing the right staffing complement, but then no one talks about it. The doors are opened, different players brought to the table, and there is no discussion about what it means to have different perspectives and different orientations; everything goes underground” (p. 17).

Therefore, when communication is opened between organizations and individuals, empowerment and acceptance is possible (Bolea, 2012; Willis et al., 2014).

Cultural Diversity and Balance

Building cultural diversity and balance refers to the process of inclusion and empowerment (Martin & Pyles, 2013). The critical race theory challenges individual beliefs and a movement past tolerating the differences of others. Vitality rests with social work programs and child welfare agencies in identifying the conditions of indifference (Hancock, Waites, & Kledaras, 2012). Indifferences lead to minority powerlessness, and non-acceptance. Therefore, active effort to remove such conditions, involving both formal and informal processes, seems probable (Prasad 2001; Rodenborg & Boisen, 2013; Williams & Ellison, 1996). The values of the social services profession require individuals to approach the social condition of those served with a certain level of critical assessment of all elements involved in their ecological system (Cote & Nightingale, 2012). An understanding of the ecological system then takes into account that culture, race, values, attitudes, and belief are integral elements of the social condition.

Social Work as a Profession

Social work encompasses all sociological elements (Otter, 2013). Social work serves the hearts and minds of individuals from diverse backgrounds (Hancock et al., 2012; Martin & Pyles, 2013; Wilson & Kelly, 2010). Individuals seek degrees in social work as a calling in attempts to extend the helping hand to oppressed and vulnerable populations (Hancock et al., 2012; Johnson et al, 2012; Martin & Pyles, 2013). Social workers reach out to the populations who seek help and refuge in times of suffering, confusion, pain, and loss (Hancock et al., 2012). The fluidity of the social system creates

a climate of changing events that can result in anyone becoming vulnerable at some point in time (Johnson, 2013). However, throughout history, children are and have been the most vulnerable population because their voices often go unheard (Cross, 2008; Hancock et al., 2012). Increasing cultural competence and including knowledge of the Indian Child Welfare Act can improve advocacy for minority groups (Lawrence et al, 2012).

National Association of Social Work

Currently, the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW, 1999) preamble defines the main purpose of social work practice as, "enhancing human wellbeing and help meet the basic needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty." When social systems become chaotic, oppressive, and challenging, interventions need to occur (Nissen, 2014). Social justice includes balancing the scales for those who need transformation from confusion to order. It is because of this NASW focus on social justice that students feel attracted to the field of social work (Jackson & Samuels, 2011).

Schools of social work teach students to apply an ecological systems paradigm to child welfare problems (Daniel & Quiros, 2010). Conversely, child welfare systems use a hierarchal European approach to child welfare problems (Simiel, 2011). Combining the hierarchal (linear) and ecological (circular) models raises awareness of policy issues, intervention practices, and individual cultures (Morris & Connolly, 2012; Willis et al., 2014). The social work field is one profession that incorporates critical thinking in providing discourse to societal concerns (Martin & Pyles; 2013; Mizrahi & Dodd, 2013).

Critical Thinking Skills

Teaching social work students critical thinking skills related to social problems and personal anxieties is complex (Martin & Pyles, 2013; Weaver & Congress, 2009; Wilson & Kelly, 2010). However, it is more complex when students are involved in thinking about issues as they relate to minority groups such as the Native American population (Bolea, 2012; Cross et al., 2012). Although the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) assert the need for inclusion of indigenous knowledge, there is a challenge in determining the best ways to incorporate this knowledge within the social work curriculum (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010; Daniel & Quiros, 2010; Raman & Hodes, 2012; Weaver & Congress, 2009).

Role of the Council on Social Work Education

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), established in 1952, provides the foundational criteria for social work education (CSWE, 2010). The CSWE establishes set procedures for social work educational departments to ensure that students meet required competence levels. Unfortunately, a standardized way of measuring general competence continues to be challenging for implementation by the CSWE (Bender et al., 2010; Jackson & Hodge, 2010; Pivorienė & Ūselytė, 2013; Weaver & Congress, 2009).

Social Work Students

Curricula currently taught to social work students include a totality of social work theories and frameworks (Daniel & Quiros, 2010). Critical thinking processing is the essential element in understanding the need for change, conducting assessments, and intervention practices (Harrison & Turner, 201). Social work students aim toward

becoming change agents in the social environment (Chamiec-Case, 2013). The ecological system perspective is a complex vision for understanding social problems as a change agent. This more complex vision requires more attentiveness to the definition of strengthening the family (Kilmer & Cook, 2012).

The complexity of families celebrates human diversity within a social context (Gallagher et al. 2012; Willis et al., 2014). The current family structure is different from the concept of the traditional European perspective. This difference suggests that social work education needs to teach students to support diverse families, withhold judgments of minority families, provide support, and extend help for maintaining adequately functioning family systems (Harrison & Turner, 2011; Hughes, 2011).

The definition of family is in constant flux within our political system (Edwards, McCarthy, & Gillies, 2012; Kilmer & Cook, 2012; Stokes & Schmidt, 2011). The domain of acceptance of family diversity rests with political acceptance, regardless of what is perceived best for the unique individual family. Social workers and social work students give dignity to individuals by acknowledging their unique needs within their environment (Chamiec-Case, 2013; Jackson & Samuels, 2011). Social work decisions should be according to the family identification of need, not the professional perception of family need (Bagdasaryan, 2012).

Family and Environment Stressors

Families that have a culture outside of the westernized European concept may struggle in a world that is not accepting of their diverse beliefs (Edwards et al., 2012). However, if sharing of the cultural norms and morals of a family occurs among others with similar ideology and is embraced to extend the family system, this process

strengthens the family sense of belongingness (Gallagher et al., 2012; Stokes & Schmidt, 2011). Addressing the family cultural struggles is important.

Family roles are arrived from their past interactions in their environment; emotional, social, economic, and psychological issues affect individuals sometimes without realizing the strength of those effects (Chamiec-Case, 2013; Waldegave, 2009). Social work teaches that thorough views of all environmental factors and the identification of every available resource are important (O'Connor & Leonard, 2013). Sometimes gathering this information requires sensitivity to diverse cultures. Being able to help families identify stressors is also important (Bussey & Lucero, 2012). Having circular thinking, in the ecological context, provides a foundation for a social worker to assist families in reconnecting, repairing, and unifying their family system (Chamiec-Case, 2013).

Minimizing Bias of Decisions

Critical thinking from a concept of wholeness helps the social worker eliminate bias of decisions. Biases may lead him/her to blame families and circumstances for failures (Ortega & Faller, 2011; Wiener, 2012). Bias tendencies involve self-interest, which is at the crest of the self-serving bias. Studies reveal that personal intentions reflect a need to see things from one's own perspective, while believing others' perceptions of the same issues are clouded (Legault & Inzlicht, 2013; Prolin, Lin, & Ross, 2002; Yampolsky & Amiot, 2013). However, optimal social work practice entails the professional internally reviewing and acknowledging possible differences that he/she could make to improve the situation and client outcome (Anyon, 2011; Duval & Silvia, 2002). Social work instruction challenges students to incorporate the skill of critical

thinking. Critical thinking increases the opportunity to access resources, develop skills, and share ideas with others. This progressive stance applies acceptance and willingness to make modifications to dominate worldviews, thereby decreasing barriers for families (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Burton et al., 2010; Cooper, 2013; Willis et al., 2014).

Critical Race Theory and Equality

Equality across ethnic groups has been a controversial issue. Principles from the critical race theory attempt to dissolve barriers such as ethnically based inequity thereby proposing a fair and balanced system (Cappiccie et al., 2012; Yosso, 2005;). The ideal perspective of social workers includes bridging gaps, promotion of equality, and a broader understanding of diverse families (Edwards et al., 2012; Stokes & Schmidt, 2011). From this perspective, social work students are taught to advocate for clients and develop skills for becoming change agents for stronger, healthier, social systems (Chamiec-Case, 2013; Wiener, 2012).

Social Workers as Change Agents

As change agents, social work students require appropriate attitude, skills, and knowledge for addressing the high rates of Native American children experiencing placement in foster care (Cooper, 2013; Pivorienė & Ūselytė, 2013). The social work profession has held discussions on how best to include historical losses of culture and trauma of minorities in the social work curriculum (Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Kleinschmit, 2012). Course content might engage student open discussions on the historical exchanges between the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA).

The history behind these disproportionate rates may go unaddressed in the typical social work curriculum regarding the exchanges between the BIA and CWLA negotiations and their consequences, which led to higher placements of Native American children into White middle class homes (Crofoot & Harris, 2012; Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Kleinschmit, 2012). The discussion of curriculum thereby imposes critical thinking in policy and procedural standards. The social work profession discussions are in response to EPAS and CSWE standards, which state clearly that social work students are required to prove success in the ten core competencies (CSWE, 2010) two of which specifically state (a) engagement of diversity and difference in practice and (b) apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments (CSWE, 2010).

Level of Cultural Competence: Importance for Social Work

Individuals strive to survive in a world full of emotional unrest, stress, and disparities, while working to maintain strength to overcome diverse challenges (Hughes, 2011). Cultural competence takes into account the fluidity of the social system and embraces cultural differences in periods of distress (Kirmayer, 2012; Leigh, 1998; Paris, 2012). Political systems influence individuals and families through various regulatory bodies of civil laws and policies created by elected citizenry (Rice, 2013). Rules and regulations within systems that regulate individuals and families often do not include cultural awareness or sensitivity and therefore may inappropriately separate families (Dumbrill & Green, 2008).

Muriel Pumphrey, social work educator, first identified the need for examining and teaching students conflicting values in social work issues (Congress, 2000). Cultural competence is one of the main ways of knowing the diversity present in the social

system. Historically, cultural competence is a pedagogical view of understanding the social world (Larrison & Korr, 2013; Paris, 2012). Bearing equal importance, the Council on Social Work Education (2010) describes and records in transcripts, the field experience of social work students as the signature pedagogy in the social work educational arena. A point of reference to the social work program model, developed by CSWE, is the ten core competencies and 41 practice behaviors, all of which require students successfully master in both undergraduate and graduate programs. The expectation is that both undergraduate and graduate social work students acquire satisfactory attainment in meeting the core competencies and practice behaviors (CSWE, 2010). Cultural competence is an attempt at addressing bias within social work practice by embracing differences (Paris, 2012). This acceptance of cultural differences comes from an ecological approach to competence within the social structure (Unger, 2011).

To have a functional society with understanding of the social structure bears the potential for the dominant group to relinquish control of the minority group (Abril, 2007; Hamilton & Fazioli, 2013; Willis et al., 2014). Likewise, there is also the potential for Native American children to gain equality with White children regarding foster care placement. The point of advocacy for oppressed populations is to disrupt the Eurocentric view of correctness (Bolea, 2012; Dumbrill & Green, 2008). Cultural competence takes a broader ecological perspective from the standpoint of knowing and embracing the theme of unity, survival, and existence from an individualistic approach (Bender et al., 2010; Geron, 2002; Jackson & Hodge, 2010; Kirmayer, 2012; Paris, 2012).

Embracing the individualistic approach is challenging and not expected to disregard social structure and appropriateness according to child safety measures

(Hamilton & Fazioli, 2013). This mindset moves us toward inclusion and acceptance instead of exclusion and extinction of minority cultures. Instead of viewing child rearing solely on Eurocentric beliefs, social work must be sensitive and include cultural competence in the safety measures that reflect their essential values. Cultural competence is a theme, taught in social work education, which takes into account differences of others and students' recognition of self through examining their attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010).

Testing Unconscious Bias

There is an expectation for social work students to understand cultural differences and become culturally competent as established by the CSWE. However, teaching cultural competence through self-awareness has been challenging due to multiple definitions of the term (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010; Bender et al., 2010; Geron, 2002; Harrison & Turner, 2011). Adding to this challenge is the humanistic tendency to apply judgment onto others based on outward appearance, oftentimes not having a conscious awareness of these judgments (Weaver & Congress 2012; Weaver, 2009; Weber & Johnson, 2009; Crofoot & Harris, 2012). A solid understanding of cultural differences and a high self-awareness is critical in providing individuals and families with equal service treatment without bias tendencies (Harrison & Turner, 2011; Mama, 2002; Weaver & Congress 2012). Recognizing the presence of unconscious bias, this study examined level of perceived neglect and level of cultural competence of social work students.

Picture Manipulation Research Method

Picture manipulation is an examination of unconscious attitudes incapable of a more direct measurement (Emme & Kirova, 2005; Gotto, Lea, Wills & Milton, 2011). This study examined social work students' unconscious attitudes, with the use of a checklist of perceived child neglect with and without picture imaging. A measure of perceived cultural competence tested any relations between perceptions in their decision-making.

Picture manipulation generates a creative ground for processing complex issues, communicating ideas, and regulating the human attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors and is beneficial for examining differences in perceptions (Brainerd, Reyna, Holliday & Nakamura, 2012; Curtis, 2011;). The social research field has used images to assist clients experiencing issues such as body dysmorphia, but little research exists in the social sciences using imaging for researching everyday conflicts of the social structure (Huss, 2012). Therefore, in adding to the social science research, this study utilized the picture manipulation process through an experimental design with social work students' to examine perceptions of child neglect.

Examples of Research Method

Individuals view the world through experiences, imagination, perception of worldviews, and actual accounts based on cognitive conceptions and cross-cultural knowledge (Roberts, 2011). The research strategy of picture manipulation presented with a case study vignette illustrating a possible case of child neglect allows the examination of unconscious attitudes that social work students may not realize they have. The use of picture manipulation, as a research method, has occurred across a variety of research

areas (Bower & Karlin, 1974; Craig et al., 2002; Fazio et al., 1995; Karpinski & Steinman, 2006; Leitchy & Madhaven, 2012) but little in the social sciences (Marshall, Craun & Theriot, 2009).

Examining unconscious attitudes through picture imaging increases the ability of measuring perception in a more direct way (Emme & Kirova, 2005; Kapferer, 2010). For instance, social work students completed an assessment using an image visual to measure their perception of child neglect and self-measure of cultural competence. Testing the relationship between perceptions in decision-making of assessments level of cultural competence, it can also provide knowledge to the CSWE in its attempt for finding ways to further address the competence levels of social work students (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010; Geron, 2002; Ward, 2012) and self-awareness in practice (Bender, Negi, & Fowler, 2010). Huss (2012) completed a study using picture imaging with social work students. The aim of the research was to use picture images as a voice for the silenced voices of the oppressed population. This study proposed the need to use images in social research for exploring bias after reading the case vignette.

Self-Perception

Bourdieu's construct of habitus, field, and praxis works together for increasing understanding from a philosophical perspective. Habitus is the "cognitive structures through which people deal with the social world" (Ritzer 2008, p. 404). Individuals have choices in how they view and perceive what happens in and around their social world (Boschetti, 2012). Part of developing the human personality has to deal with the way one chooses to address issues in the social environment. We make a conscious effort to respond to stimuli even though we may not be completely aware of the automatic

responses. This response does not imply that humans are mechanical beings (Boschetti, 2012; Douglas et al., 2013).

Field is the social structure or environment in which relationships occur (Berting, 2012). According to this conceptual definition, there is a constant interplay of forces at work in each individual's life. The present forces have an effect on the human mind and functioning roles. Field is the most important in determining the hierarchy of power (Boschetti, 2012). Through the field (social structure), the individuals seek to find value, meaning and sense (Berting, 2012; Boschetti, 2012; Douglas et al., 2013). The perception individuals hold has a tremendous weight in the subject or order and leveling the scale (Skowronski et al., 2010). Perception becomes the information suggestive of the internalized meaning presented.

Praxis is the interchange between the *habitus* and *field*. Within the *praxis*, *habitus*, and *field* unite to the point of realization. Bringing the forces of the field and the cognitive mind together creates the ability for learning, processing, and growing (Boschetti, 2012). If viewed on a nonprofessional's point, it stands reasoning that praxis is about practicing how to think and receive the most out of each situation, opportunity, and social achievement. The strength of the structure is the ability to bring the cognitive mind and the social environment together. The weakness of Bourdieu's sociological structure is that it does not clearly inform how one can join each component. Therefore, the separation creates emptiness and invalidity (West, Flemming & Finnegan, 2013).

Habermas studied the life-world and the system as being parts of the society (Boschetti, 2013; West et al., 2013). Communication is about delivering meaning. Communication can be complex. It is vital to the life of individuals and organizations. A

linear working relationship among all parties is dependent on the delivery of the communication process (Jackson & Samuels, 2011; Pivorienė & Ūselytė, 2013). The avoidance of hidden motives and formulation of transparent agendas is also important in the communicative action (Edwards et al., 2012; West et al., 2013).

Self-perception, developed by theorist Daryl J. Bem in 1967, was the establishment of recognizing that individuals may have more control over their thoughts and behaviors than was expected in previous works. The depth of the cognitive intentions formulates awareness and self-identity (Bem, 1972). Perceptions appear to show significance among Native Americans in such that cognitive thought processes include environment and the history of their assimilation (Nalls et al., 2009). From a historical perspective, the Native Americans endured traumatic hardships that continue to linger in their lives (Szlemko et al., 2006). Placing the self in the social context of the issue offers the opportunity for exploring child neglect and cultural competence from an individual approach. Outcome measures improve if attention to self-perception is considered. Meyers (2007) asserted that individuals perceive what they think is correct whether or not others believe it to be the same. Perception is apparent as being true from an individualistic level. Self-perception theory works by attaching to the internal and external forces. Making the connection to establish consistency in thinking and behavior works to lessen eradicable behavior (Meyers, 2007). Individuals behave based on their perception, which can be positive or negative.

Staudt (2011) indicated practitioner biases exist in human service work; thus, social work students and professionals must have knowledge of how culture and ethnicity impact access to services and how lack of knowledge about clients' culture and ethnicity

can do more harm than good. Biases are often unconscious and many social workers do not deliberately treat clients in a harmful manner (Staudt, 2011). What can result is the influence of stereotypes and generalizations about specific cultural groups. These stereotypes and generalizations then transpire during the professional-client relationship. With this in mind, the challenge is to engage social work students, social work professionals, and child welfare workers in cultural competence training that offers techniques to become more aware of biases and the automatic transmission of stereotypes and generalizations. Future research should focus on the evaluation of current cultural competence training for social service workers, which may help determine the effectiveness of the training. In addition, future research needs to address the barriers of becoming a cultural competent human service worker.

Moreover, Ortega and Faller (2011) suggested moving beyond the cultural competence framework and into a cultural humility framework. The researchers imply social work professionals must have knowledge regarding the impact of clients' ethnicity and culture related to child maltreatment and possess self-awareness regarding how their own ethnicity and culture can affect the professional-client relationship. Cultural humility also implies professionals are open to viewing their clients as having multiple perspectives, and the way clients experience their social world affects their thoughts and viewpoints. Research on child maltreatment assessments should then examine the impact of self-awareness or the lack thereof regarding cultural competency. The aim is bridging the gap between different cultures and systems for the protection of children from maltreatment and keeping cultures alive.

Bridging the Research Gaps

There are numerous research studies on cultural competence and self-awareness (Johnson et al., 2012). These studies suggest a need for more culturally competent social workers who have self-awareness, which would eliminate biased decision-making (Crofoot & Harris, 2012; Weaver & Congress 2012; Weaver, 2009; Weber & Johnson, 2009). Additionally research conducted on the overrepresentation of Native American children in foster care reveals that additional research is necessary to examine disparity issues (Carter, 2010; Jackson, Samuels, 2011; Lawler et al., 2012). Another construct of examination is self-perception, which has also undergone rigorous research (Kellerman & Laird, 1982; Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007; Pronin, Lin, & Ross, 2002; Teasley, Baffour, & Tyson, 2005; Skowronski et al., 2010). Each study suggests that participants report themselves with higher rates of competence and actions while suppressing unconscious behaviors. Research on self-perception has also shown that when participants focused attention on behavior, the rating of actual behaviors was more consistent.

Social research has failed to associate the constructs of the level of cultural competence with the level of perceived neglect in the areas of Native American child disparity rates. Additionally, research suggests utilizing picture imaging in social work research (Huss, 2012). In an effort to fill the research gaps, this quantitative study examined cultural competence and perceived neglect in social work students (Nicotera et al.; 2010; Tsang & Bogo, 1997). This research study addressed the cross-cultural work with Native Americans.

There were limited studies examining factors such as age, race, and family characteristics forecasting the placement of Native American children in foster care

(Carter, 2010; Hill, 2008). Further, no study had examined the level of cultural competence of social work students that may forecast the disproportionate placement of Native American children into the foster care system (Carter, 2010; Hill, 2008). Finally, no research had used an experimental randomized design to test social work students' subconscious attitudes when assessing level of perceived neglect.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 provided a detailed literature review that focused on the examination of issues that are pertinent for further review. The issues of perceived neglect, cultural competence, and self-perception among social work students are critical in the exploration of decision-making practices in social work profession. The disproportionate placement of Native American children into foster care provides beneficial information for the profession in examining social work students' subconscious attitudes. Chapter 3 will provide a descriptive review of the methodology used for this study.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Cultural competence and decision-making practices are integral functions of the social work profession (Crofoot & Harris, 2012). Additionally, examining the level of cultural competence with the level of perceived neglect among social work students leads the way for continued growth in delivering successful outcomes for the social work profession. Recognizing the research gap for Native American children by exploring the disproportionate placement of Native American children into the foster care system adds to the social sciences through the examination of subconscious attitudes among social work students.

This chapter describes the methodological approach used to examine the variables of cultural competence and perceived neglect among social work students. Specifically, the research methodology is designed to examine self-perception of social work students in their decision-making practices. Critical race theory (CRT) focuses on the inequality of decision-making by addressing the technocratic thinking of the dominant population. This study examines whether or not social work students apply traditional worldviews to their judgments about child neglect when reviewing a case study based on the Eurocentric decision-making model. Since the CSWE expects social workers to be culturally competent, this study investigates the cultural awareness and perception of social work students through experimental random assignment. The study examined the

variables of social work students who perceive themselves as possessing high cultural competence levels and their decisions of perceived child neglect. Finally, this study determined whether social work students' decision-making was based on cultural awareness of minorities based on their markings of items on the perceived neglect checklist in the group that sees the picture of the Native American girl.

Research Design

This dissertation utilized a quantitative research design in the examination of perceived neglect and cultural competence. This study incorporated an experimental design using three group-randomized assignments. Social work schools teach students to take a multidimensional approach when making decisions about clients, communities, and the social environment (Martin & Pyles, 2013; Wilson & Kelly, 2010). The rationale was to allow an unbiased examination of any underlying or unconscious biases social work students may have toward Native American families. Data collection was initiated through an online survey, the experimental design captured differences based only on picture imaging, while holding all other variables constant (same case vignette). The study also allowed participants to remain anonymous.

Experimental designs are known as the hallmark of the research field (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2009). The experimental design that uses random assignment to groups eliminates many problems with internal validity. The experimental design required that the researcher randomly assign participants to one of two groups, two experimental, and one control group (Greenstein & Davis, 2013). Experimental design also incorporates use of independent and dependent variables (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2009).

The experimental design for this study allowed the examination of any association between level of cultural competence and the level of perceived neglect of social work students in their ratings of the case vignette with and without the pictures of the children. Using the experimental design in examining differential perceptions of neglect for Native-American families allowed the examination of any the relationship between the group assignment, level of cultural competence, and level of perception of social work students. The research examined if there were differences between the two groups that saw two different pictures or the one control group that did not see a picture along with a case vignette of potential child neglect.

Sample

The target population for this experimental design was social work students. The justification for choosing this target group was on the expected attitudes, skills, and knowledge that the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) deem necessary in working with vulnerable populations. Developing and conceptualizing effective approaches helps clients formulate their understanding of the uniqueness of human behavior and the social environment (Staudt, 2011). The sampling technique used for this study was convenience sampling, a factor that falls under the non-probability level (Cosby, 2009). Remler and van Ryzin (2011) assert that convenience sampling extends as coverage bias and may not represent the entire target population.

The sample used for this study was social work students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate social work programs. As an employee in a social work department, site permission was needed. It was also essential to ensure student anonymity in order to

avoid instructor/student role conflict. The social work department chair of the home site gave written permission to announce the study to social work students. Two additional university social work programs in the southern United States also provided approval to announce the study. To increase generalizability, this study utilized purposive snowball sampling to include students who were currently enrolled in other schools of social work at universities across the nation.

Strict anonymity ensured nonidentity of the research participants (Greenstein & Davis 2013). During the study, the researcher avoided individual contact with the study participants. The anonymous online data collection process ensured safety while reducing the risk of any harm to students (Dudley, 2005). In fulfilling the anonymity process, the researcher did not collect any identifiable data on study participants.

Public announcements, such as flyers, Facebook announcements, and university campus e-mails, informed students of the study for recruitment purposes. The public announcements informed students to share the study information with other interested social work students. The participants could also make copies of the public announcements. Study announcement flyers were placed on the bulletin boards of university social work departments. Public announcements of the study occurred indirectly through student e-mail accounts. The study announcements contained the researcher's contact information, participant criteria, purpose of the study and the SurveyMonkey web links. Social media served as a gateway to students across the nation. The purposive sampling of social work students' criteria are found in Table 1. The study excluded students under 18 years of age who were unable to participate without parental consent.

E-mail invitations, sent to social work students through campus list-serves, included the survey Uniform Resource Locator (URL) web links, which automatically connected them to the survey. Study participants were provided an incentive to win one of five \$25.00 gift cards through a random drawing in SurveyMonkey upon completion.

Table 1. *Criteria for Student Selection*

Gender	Ethnicity	Level in Social Work Program	Age	Type of Neighborhood
Male	White	BSW Freshman	University enrollment status	Rural
Female	African American /Black	BSW Sophomore		Urban
	Native American /American Indian	BSW Junior	Suburban	
	Hispanic/Latino	BSW Senior		
	Asian/ Pacific Islander	MSW 1 st Year no BSW education or background		
	Other	MSW Second Year, no BSW education or background MSW Third Year or more, no BSW education or background MSW First Year with BSW education or background MSW Second Year with BSW education or background MSW Third Year or more with BSW education or background		

Power Analysis

The sampling procedure chosen for this research methodology was for maximizing the number of participants and the response rate. The methodological procedure chosen was an experimental design with randomized grouping. Power analysis was applied as a way to determine the minimum sample size needed to find real relationships that are not due to chance. The larger number of participants and response rates increases generalizability. In determining the minimum sample size for this study, the following power analysis method considered that $S = 50(m) + 8 = N$.

The power analysis for this procedure served as a way of anticipating the study would yield significance. Sample size was computed as $50(m) + 8$ participants for every independent variable (IV). The targeted sample size was $50 + 8(6) = 98$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006). Therefore, the expected sample for this study was between 98 and 150 social work students.

IRB Approval and Site Permission

Approval from two Institutional Review Boards (IRB's) was needed for this study. After receiving confirmation from both of the student's educational and employment institutional IRB's, social work departments provided the researcher with permission to inform students of the survey in SurveyMonkey. Both IRB's approved the research study plan. After obtaining approval, social work programs provided permission to the researcher to make announcements of the study and its accompanying survey. Upon receipt of site permissions, social work department officials announced the study by way of e-mail to all social work students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate social work programs. Permission granted to begin this study allowed the researcher to connect

with social work schools across the nation. Permission for the study also allowed announcements to occur through social media without revealing the study's exact title.

Providing the study's exact title to the participants was avoided at the onset of the study. Non-disclosure of the study's title and full purpose was to prevent potential bias of participants when answering the study's survey questions. Providing explanations and expectations in the consent form assured the participants had a clear understanding of the study, in order to reduce the potential risks involved (Remler & van Ryzin, 2011).

Manipulating the study's exact title in the consent form was based on ethical standards, which served as an avoidance of any potential bias of the participants. Before completing the survey, students received brief information that the study's purpose was to examine social work practice and its relevance to the field of social work. In addition, students were unaware of the specifics of the study until its completion. The purpose for not divulging the full intent of the study's information at the onset was to prevent the presence of potential bias.

After the study was completed, participants were able to read a full disclosure of the study and the study results. The participants were informed of a timeline for completing the study. Participants were informed that the study results would be made available through a website developed by the researcher, linked to SurveyMonkey. The full disclosure and purpose of the study was also posted in the researcher's website.

Instrumentation/Measures

The survey consisted of the following five sections: (a) introduction, (b) demographic information, (c) perceived child neglect, (d) Attitude, Skill, and Knowledge (ASK) instrument, and (e) three randomly assigned groups. The three randomly groups were defined as Group 1 (control group that only read the case vignette without a picture image); Group 2 (experimental group that read the case vignette with a picture image of a 10-year-old White girl), and Group 3 (experimental group that read the case vignette with a picture image of a 10-year-old Native American girl). The case vignette went through field-testing by four professionals in the fields of social work, counseling, and anthropology (see Appendix A). The perceived child neglect checklist was developed by permitted use of the child neglect checklist from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The checklist accompanied the case vignette for field-testing and was approved by each of the four field professionals (see Appendix B). The ASK instrument (Appendix C) was used with permission of the author.

The researcher's case vignette was intended to describe an ambiguous environment that could be construed as neglectful. This vignette included culturally specific interactions that reflected common Native American parenting practices not considered as neglectful within that culture. Additionally, the modified perceived level of neglect checklist reflected scaled answers rather than a yes/no check. The perceived level of child neglect reflected 10 items of neglect. The scale total ranged from 10–50. The higher the number the more perceived neglect. The Likert scale ranged from 1 = *Definitely No Neglect*; 2 = *No Neglect*; 3 = *Neutral, I need more information*; 4 = *Possible Neglect*; 5 = *Definitely Neglect*. Field-testing of the case vignette and the

perceived child neglect checklist occurred with expert panelists' approval using both instruments in unison.

The Attitude, Skills, and Knowledge Cultural Competence (ASK) instrument used a 14-item Likert Scale. Each item consisted of 1= *totally unprepared*; 2= *somewhat unprepared*; 3= *prepared but need practice*; 4= *ready to practice* and 5= *competent*. The range for the scale equaled 14 to 70. The ASK scale was originally used to measure comparisons of social work student competence to competence of social work practitioners. The higher the number, the more ready the social work student felt prepared to work with a specific family or client. The reliability of the ASK tool was a Cronbach alpha of both groups was 0.97 when comparing social work students to social work practitioners. The ranging score for social work students was 0.90-0.95. The range score for social work practitioners was 0.91-0.95. Author permission of the ASK Scale allowed utilization of this tool with the targeted group.

Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments

Positivism marked the way of reliance on the scientific measurements to apply meaning to phenomena (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) further describes empirical research as investigating phenomena through application of theory testing with the incorporation of hypotheses and attention to reliability and validity. Empirical research was born out of the positivist approach to knowledge acquisition (Creswell, 2009). Researchers use intuition in their studies with individuals and are aware that reliance on empirical studies is important as well (Fumerton, 2007).

Although intuition is powerful, it can be unreliable when making decisions that affect the lives of others but can serve as a healthy balance in when matched with

knowledge acquisition (Welsh & Lyon, 2001). Empirically-based evidence is in determining accurate approaches with target populations (Fumerton, 2007). The statistical significance of research findings is indicative of a $p < .05$, which means there is a 95% confidence level that the results are not due to random chance. Boyce and Fuligni (2007) postulate that scientific research continues to express need for cultural awareness for racial and ethnic minorities. In looking at cultural competence, the (ASK) tool is specific to the assessment of social work students' perception cultural competence in the field.

The (ASK) instrument was developed by Drs. Monit Cheung and Patrick Leung of the University of Houston from their original work on multicultural practice and evaluation (Cheung & Leung, 2008). The instrument was designed to examine multicultural practice and evaluation among social work practitioners and social work students. The ASK instrument utilizes a five point Likert scale assessing readiness in terms of Attitude, Knowledge, and Skill when working with a specific family or client. Indication of the reliability and validity of the ASK was through demonstration with social work professionals and students (Cheung & Leung, 2008). Cronbach's alpha was used to assess reliability of the ASK instrument between both groups. Reliability indicated 0.97 when comparing social work practitioners and students. The ranging score for social work practitioners was 0.91-0.95 and the range score for social work students was 0.90-0.95.

The Checklist for Perceived Child Neglect and the Case Vignette were not tested using standard psychometric evaluations. The Perceived Child Neglect Checklist originated from the standard evaluation of neglect form based on the Department of

Health and Human Services. The participants were asked to read and evaluate this case vignette using the standard neglect checklist to determine the potential level of perceived child neglect.

The Case Vignette was developed to describe an ambiguous environment that could be construed as neglectful. This scenario was developed to include culturally specific interactions that reflect common Native American parenting practices that are not considered neglectful within that culture. Additionally, the perceived level of neglect checklist was modified to reflect a scaled answer rather than a yes/no check.

Both instruments went through rigorous field-testing by four doctoral level expert professionals. The perceived child neglect and the case vignette were delivered separately to the experts requesting that rigorous assessment be conducted for field-testing as reliable and valid for the experimental study. Each expert reported with documentation that instrument findings were suitable and valid for this research.

Data Collection

Approval for conducting research was necessary before beginning data collection. Therefore, the researcher obtained approval from two Institutional Review Boards (IRB's). The first IRB approval came from the researcher's work site. The second approval arrived from the student's educational institution after collaboration occurred between both entities. Upon receipt of the approval notices, circulation of the survey occurred through public announcements with a SurveyMonkey link to the targeted population. The goal was to reach a targeted sample of 98-150 participants.

Procedures

The procedures used in the research study carefully considered the best approach for reaching the targeted research audience without participants feeling pressured to take part in the study. Therefore, the use of SurveyMonkey was the selected choice for collecting data anonymously from the participants. The procedures used indicated clarity in the consent process.

The procedures required participants to read the consent form before participating in the research study. This consent form was purposefully vague about the exact intent of the experimental design in order to avoid bias from the participants in their responses. Participants agreed at the bottom of the consent form that they met specific criteria of the study. A basic demographic survey included (a) gender, (b) age, (c) ethnicity, (d) level of social work education, and (e) type of neighborhood where the participant grew up.

The research study participants consisted of three groups who were randomly assigned to one of three groups, which then linked them to three different surveys. Group 1 served as the experimental control group that only read the case vignette with no picture of a child displayed. Group 2 read the same case vignette that displayed at the top, a picture of a White child. Group 3 read a case vignette displayed with a picture of a Native American child.

All three groups completed a 5-point Likert scale rating of the 10 items of perceived level of child neglect. The 10 items of child neglect were acquired from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). In addition, all three groups completed the Attitude, Skills, and Knowledge (ASK) Cultural Competency scale. The author of the scale permitted use for this particular study. A full disclosure of the study

was not required at the onset of the study. A web address was made available for all participants to access survey results after the collection and analysis of all data. Finally, a full disclosure of the study's exact title and intent was provided after the collection and analysis of all data.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this quantitative study occurred in several stages. First, data cleaning and coding was necessary. The participants who took part in this study met the criteria of a student currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate social work program. The criteria of age consisted of only those students who met enrollment status as a university student. To check for internal inconsistencies, frequency tables were generated on the total number of participants and the participants who fully completed the survey in its entirety. In order to provide a broader view of the entire population of participants, additional analyses were run in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to compare the demographics of both non-completers and completers.

The data collection consisted of a survey developed through SurveyMonkey wherein the demographics and research instruments were incorporated into the online website. The participants who did not fully complete the survey as well as the participants who completed the survey in its entirety were compared. The data were transferred from SurveyMonkey into a statistical analysis program (SPSS version 21). Although the participants did not have any identifying information, it was the researcher's obligation to protect all data. The data were protected at all times with a password protection per ethical considerations and guidelines. The study utilized a descriptive correlational survey methodological approach in determining the relationships

between variables of interest. The data analysis also included the means and standard deviations of the study's variables to test the four following research questions and hypotheses.

R1: Do social work students significantly vary in their demographic characteristics, level in social work program, level of cultural competence, and rating of level of child neglect between the three experimental groups?

H₁: Due to random assignment to group, it is not expected that there will be significant differences in the social work students' demographics, level in social work program, level of cultural competence, across the three experimental groups.

R2: Across all experimental groups, are social work students' demographic characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age, level in social work program, type of neighborhood where they were raised) significant predictors of level of perceived neglect or level of cultural competence?

H₂: Demographic factors (ethnicity, gender, age, level in social work program, type of neighborhood where they were raised) of social work students will be significant predictors of level of perceived neglect or level of cultural competence.

R3: After controlling for demographics, does social work students' level of cultural competence relate to the level of perceived neglect and does this relationship differ by experimental group?

H₃: Level of cultural competence will be a stronger predictor of level of perceived neglect for all experimental groups.

R4: Do social work students significantly vary in the level of perceived neglect by the three experimental groups (Group 1 who only read the case vignette, Group 2 who see the White child, and Group 3 who see the Native American child)?

H₄: Social work students' level of perceived neglect will be higher for Group 3 who see the Native American child, compared to both Groups 2 and 1 who either see the White child or only read the case vignette.

Limitations

The limitations of this proposed study were the number of social work students who completed the anonymous online assessment of the case vignette and cultural competence, although it was expected that it was feasible to obtain the minimum sample size needed for this study as per the power analysis. There was also the possibility of a potential imbalance of variables like gender, age, ethnicity, level in social work program, and type of neighborhood where social work students grew up.

Theoretically, self-perception is an individualistic view of what a person believes to be true, whether or not others support the same view (Bem, 1972; Meyers, 2007). Therefore, another limitation of this proposed study was that the cultural competence measure is based on self-measure. When participants completed the cultural competence self-measurement tool, there was a possibility that their reasoning of competence level would be based on their beliefs of behavior in their decision-making, whether accurate or not, referred to as self-enhancing behavior (Skowronski, Sedikides, Heider, Wood & Scherer, 2010).

The original sampling plan focused only on specific university settings in the southern United States. However, the sampling plan was modified to include social work

students across the nation. Extending the scope of the sampling plan was expected to increase the sample size. Since this study was quantitative and was being collected in an online environment, the cultural competence measure (ASK) could not be redesigned. Therefore, the issue of a self-evaluation of cultural competence was acknowledged as a limitation to this study. It is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the validity of the cultural competence measure.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations work in guiding research in protecting study participants from harm. Remaining unbiased in presentation and decision-making is the key; personal views and opinions require omission in objective analysis. Hidden motives and agendas have no place in ethical decision-making, positive communication, or research (Willis et al., 2014).

A request went out to two public institutions for IRB approval before the outset of the study. Both institutions provided exempted approval. Site permission was obtained from social work department chairs. Facebook announcements and invites did not require site permission. An endorsement was not needed from the chosen professional social media in order to post the announcements on their websites.

Study participants were informed of the research through e-mails, flyer postings, Facebook announcements, and social media websites. SurveyMonkey was the tool for online data collection. A Waiver of Consent was provided in SurveyMonkey for informing participants of the potential risks of any research study and that this study met standards of minimal risks. Participants were informed that the study was completely anonymous and participation in the survey was voluntary. Before progressing further,

participants electronically acknowledged understanding the purpose of the study and gave their consent to continue with the study.

The information shared with participants provided them with opportunity they deserved to make an informed decision to participate or discontinue with the proposed study. In maintaining integrity, participants took part in the study voluntarily and anonymously. Participants were at leisure to withdraw from the study at any time without reason to feel pressured.

For further ethical considerations, the participants were generally informed about the intent and purpose of the study. The study's exact title was not provided to the participants at the onset of the study. The purpose for not fully disclosing the study's title and intent was to prevent potential bias of participants when answering the study's survey questions. Expectations were explained in the consent form to assure the participants have a clear understanding of the study, to reduce the potential risks involved (Remler & van Ryzin, 2011). The consent form did not reveal the actual title of the study. Since the study's title could potentially provide participants with the study's purpose, the study's title was manipulated. The research study's title, *Differential Perceptions of Neglect for Native-American Families: An Experimental Design*, was changed to *Social Work Practice in the Field: Perceptions of Neglect*, on the required Waiver of Consent form, flyer postings, e-mail announcements, and social media announcements.

The participants were informed the timeline for study could take nine to twelve months. Personal identifying information from the participants was not collected. Therefore, participants could not be linked back to study (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2009). Since the study only used anonymous online data collection, this facilitated student

participant protection. There was some deception with the failure to fully disclose the experimental nature of the study; students' were informed that the study would examine social work practice and its relevance to the field of social work.

Random group assignments occurred through SurveyMonkey for an unbiased method of group assignment, which created a true experimental design (Greenstein & Davis, 2013). Incentives for participating in the study were provided. SurveyMonkey provided a way to separate data collection from incentives to unlink any participant identifying information from the data collected. After the survey closed, SurveyMonkey randomly chose the winners of the gift card incentives without providing the researcher with any participant identifying information. Greenstein and Davis (2013) share the ethical responsibility and consideration on the necessity of sharing research data with the study participants. Sharing the results of the data analysis is essential in the process of member checking in order to ensure the reliability and validity of the quantitative data (Greenstein & Davis, 2013). Therefore, full disclosure about the purpose and nature of the study was provided to participants after all the data were collected and analyzed.

Keeping the information in a secure site location only accessible to the researcher protected the data. The data were secured by keeping three CD ROMS in safe locations behind locked doors in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's private office. The office was secured behind three locks with two of the CD ROMS stored in two individual locked filing cabinets. For additional security purposes, a locked filing cabinet kept locked behind two doors at the researcher's residence and only accessible to the researcher held backup copies of the CD ROMS.

The SurveyMonkey database was maintained for security, privacy, and confidentiality through use of a personal pass code made only available to the researcher. Protection of the participant data, provided by the researcher, limits and prevents misappropriation of the data (Creswell, 2009). The discarding of data followed the required timelines for retention (Creswell, 2009). Data retention for this study was seven years; at which time the researcher was required to destroy and dispose the data.

Chapter Summary

The information provided in chapter four of this work focused on the methodology used for this experimental design. The integral part of the social work profession is to provide advocacy and supportive assistance to populations who are vulnerable, oppressed, and who live in the minority status of society. In addressing disproportionate out of home placement rates of Native American children, this research examined social work students' perception of cultural competence and perceived child neglect.

The methodological assumptions of the experimental design for this study included the examination of whether or not there was an association between level of cultural competence and the level of perception of social work students in their ratings of the case vignette with and without the pictures of the children. Using the experimental design in examining differential perceptions of neglect for Native-American families, the researcher specifically looked at the relationship between the level cultural competence and level perception of neglect among social work students.

Incorporating the use of instruments that have been empirically tested and field tested by experts provided an increased understanding of social work students decision-

making skills when assessing possible child neglect based on perception and cultural competence. Developing an understanding between level of perceived neglect and cultural competence increased the knowledge in the social work faculty, student, professional, and community networks. The limitations of this study left opportunity for additional research.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the experimental three-group design. Included in chapter four is the data procedure, sample size, data analysis, the analysis of all research questions and hypotheses, and the results. A discussion, implications and recommendations of these results is provided in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

The purpose of this experimental study was to examine the attitudes of social work students when assessing possible neglect within the framework of cultural competence. Research compiled from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), indicates disproportionate representations among minority children in child protection services (Bohn, 2003). Native Americans are less likely to be reported for physical abuse than were Whites (Dakil, Cox, Lin, & Flores, 2011). The research also indicates that the death rates of Native American children due to physical abuse were higher than for Whites (Bohn, 2003). Physical abuse is more prevalent among Whites than Native Americans, while physical neglect was more prevalent among Native Americans (Carter, 2010). Based on this research, there is conflicting evidence about abuse within the Native American population. However, even though physical abuse is reported more often for Whites, Native American children are removed from their homes at higher rates than White children (Carter, 2010). No study has examined the level of cultural competency of social workers that may forecast the disproportionate placement of Native American children into the foster care system (Carter, 2010; Hill, 2006). Additionally, no research has used an experimental design to test social workers subconscious attitudes when assessing possible neglect.

Social work students were recruited to participate in the study. After consenting to participate, students were subsequently randomly assigned to one of three treatment

groups. SurveyMonkey was used to collect the data anonymously from the participants, who were linked to one of three different surveys, which were the three different experimental conditions. Data were analyzed with SPSS.

Chapter four is organized by a discussion of the data preparation for analysis, sample demographics, research question/hypothesis testing, and conclusions. The following provides a discussion of the data preparation for analysis.

Data Preparation for Analysis

One hundred and ninety three participants started the online survey. Out of this number, 148 participants completed the assessment in its entirety. In capturing a full picture of the data analysis, a review of the results for the 193 participants was analyzed for this study. However, the focus of the statistical analysis was based on the one 148 total participants who fully completed the survey. This sample size met the requirement of the power analysis, which indicated an optimum sample size of between 98 and 150. Table 2 provides information on the level of education from the total 193 who started the online survey. Table 3 explains the drop-out rate during the random assignment stage.

Table 2. *Level of Education for the Total Sample*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	BSW Freshman	5	2.6	2.7	2.7
	BSW Sophomore	15	7.8	8.0	10.7
	BSW Junior	24	12.4	12.8	23.5
	BSW Senior	38	19.7	20.3	43.9
	MSW First Year, no BSW education or background	23	11.9	12.3	56.1
	MSW Second Year, no BSW education or background	38	19.7	20.3	76.5
	MSW Third Year or more, no BSW education or background	5	2.6	2.7	79.1
	MSW First Year with BSW education or background	17	8.8	9.1	88.2
	MSW Second Year with BSW education or background	10	5.2	5.3	93.6
	MSW Third Year or more with BSW education or background	12	6.2	6.4	100.0
	Total	187	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	3.1		
Total		193	100.0		

Of the 193 participants who started the data collection, 35 participants dropped out at the point of random assignment. An additional 10 participants failed to complete all items of the survey. Consequently, the total number of cases for analyses in this study was 148 (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Group Random Assignment for Total Sample*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00 Control	57	29.5	36.1	36.1
	2.00 White Girl	56	29.0	35.4	71.5
	3.00 Native American Girl	45	23.3	28.5	100.0
	Total	158	81.9	100.0	
Missing	System	35	18.1		
Total		193	100.0		

Comparing Completers and Non-Completers

For everyone who started the survey, 172 were females (89.1%), while 15 (7.8%) were male. Six individuals did not indicate gender. The mean age for the total sample was 30.83. The majority of respondents were White (56.5%). The remainders of ethnicity categories were as follows: Black/African American (25.4%), Multiracial (5.2%), Native American Indian/Alaskan Native (4.7%), Asian/Pacific Islander (3.1%) and Hispanic/Latino (2.1%). The majority of the sample reported growing up in a rural area (46.1%) followed by suburban area (36.3%) and urban area (14.5%). Level of education was bi-modal with both BSW seniors and second year MSW's with no BSW education or background the most commonly reported levels of education.

Completers

The study used only the 148 participants who fully completed the survey. Of the 148 completers of the survey, 93.9% were female (n=139), while 6.1% were male (n=9). The age of those participants who completed the entire survey ranged from ages 18-67. The mean age for the participants was (M= 31.12 and SD =11.30). White respondents were the majority 61.5% (n=91); Black/African American 23.6% (n=35); Multiracial 5.4% (n=8); Native American Indian/Alaskan Native 4.7% (n=7); Asian/Pacific Islander

2.7% (n=4); Hispanic/Latino 2.0% (n=3). The six categories of ethnicity were recoded into two ethnicity categories (White and Non-White) for the entire sample. The majority of the respondents 44.6% (n=66) reported growing up in rural neighborhoods followed by 41.9% (n= 62) living in suburban areas and 13.5% (n=20) growing up in in urban neighborhoods. The most commonly reported level of education for the completers was BSW seniors (17.6%) and MSW students in their second year without a BSW education or background (20.9%) (see Table 4). There were no statistically significant differences between the completers and the non-completers.

Table 4. *Level of Education for Final Study Sample*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
BSW Freshman	3	2.0	2.0	2.0
BSW Sophomore	14	9.5	9.5	11.5
BSW Junior	17	11.5	11.5	23.0
BSW Senior	26	17.6	17.6	40.5
MSW First Year, no BSW education or background	18	12.2	12.2	52.7
MSW Second Year, no BSW education or background	31	20.9	20.9	73.6
Valid MSW Third Year or more, no BSW education or background	5	3.4	3.4	77.0
MSW First Year with BSW education or background	14	9.5	9.5	86.5
MSW Second Year with BSW education or background	10	6.8	6.8	93.2
MSW Third Year or more with BSW education or background	10	6.8	6.8	100.0
Total	148	100.0	100.0	

Sample Demographics

There were 148 students that completed the surveys; 93.9% ($n = 139$) were females and 6.1% ($n = 9$) were males. The majority of participants (61.5%, $n = 91$) were White; 23.6% ($n = 35$) were black or African Americans; and 5.4% ($n = 8$) were multiracial. Ethnicity is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *Sample Ethnicity*

Ethnicity	<i>n</i>	%
Multiracial	8	5.4
American Indian or Alaskan Native	7	4.7
Asian or Pacific Islander	4	2.7
Black or African American	35	23.6
Hispanic or Latino	3	2.0
White	91	61.5
Total	148	100.0

Current level in a social work program ranged from “BSW Freshman” to “MSW third year or more with BSW education or background.” As indicated in Table 6, the largest groups of respondents were second year MSW students without a “BSW education or background,” (20.9%, $n = 31$); “BSW seniors,” (17.6%, $n = 26$) and “BSW juniors,” (11.5%, $n = 17$).

Table 6. *Level in a Social Work Program*

Level in Social Work Program	<i>n</i>	%	Cumulative %
BSW Freshman	3	2.0	2.0
BSW Sophomore	14	9.5	11.5
BSW Junior	17	11.5	23.0
BSW Senior	26	17.6	40.5
MSW First Year, no BSW education or background	18	12.2	52.7
MSW Second Year, no BSW education or background	31	20.9	73.6
MSW Third Year or more, no BSW education or background	5	3.4	77.0
MSW First Year with BSW education or background	14	9.5	86.5
MSW Second Year with BSW education or background	10	6.8	93.2
MSW Third Year or more with BSW education or background	10	6.8	100.0
Total	148	100.0	

The majority of participants (44.6%, $n = 66$) grew up in rural neighborhoods; 13.5% ($n = 20$) grew up in urban neighborhoods; and 41.9% ($n = 62$) grew up in suburban neighborhoods. Regarding assignment to experimental groups, 35.1% ($n = 52$) were assigned to the control group; 35.8% ($n = 53$) were assigned to the “White girl” picture image with the case vignette, and 29.1% ($n = 43$) were assigned to the “Native American Indian girl” picture image with the case vignette. The age of participants ranged from 18-67 ($M = 31.12$, $SD = 11.28$).

Descriptive Statistics and Data Screening

Scores for neglect ranged between 12-49 ($M = 32.44$, $SD = 6.49$). Scores for cultural competence ranged between 17-70 ($M = 50.28$, $SD = 12.37$). The distributions were screened for normality with skewness and kurtosis statistics. A perfectly normal distribution has skewness and kurtosis coefficients of zero. Therefore, skewness and kurtosis values less than the absolute value of one were considered to be normally distributed. As indicated in Table 7, skewness and kurtosis coefficients were less than the absolute value of one.

Table 7. *Skewness and Kurtosis for Level of Neglect and Cultural Competence*

Variable	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Neglect	-.150	.199	.717	.396
Cultural Competence	-.539	.199	-.192	.396

Research Questions and Hypothesis Testing

Four research questions and hypotheses were formulated for investigation. They were as follows:

R1: Do social work students significantly vary in their demographic characteristics, level in social work program, and level of cultural competence, between the three experimental groups?

H₁: Due to random assignment to group, it is not expected that there will be significant differences in the social work students' demographics, level in social work program, level of cultural competence, across the three experimental groups.

R2: Across all experimental groups, are social work students' demographic characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age, level in social work program, type of neighborhood where they were raised) significant predictors of level of perceived neglect or level of cultural competence?

H₂: Demographic factors (ethnicity, gender, age, level in social work program, type of neighborhood where they were raised) of social work students will be significant predictors of level of perceived neglect or level of cultural competence.

R3: After controlling for demographics, do social work students' level of cultural competence relate to the level of perceived neglect?

H₃: Level of cultural competence will be a stronger predictor of level of perceived neglect for all experimental groups.

R4: Do social work students significantly vary in the level of perceived neglect by the three experimental groups (Group 1 who only read the case vignette Group 2 who see the White child, and Group 3 who see the Native American child)?

H₄: Social work students' level of perceived neglect will be higher for Group 3 who see the Native American child, compared to both Groups 2 and 1 who either see the White child or only read the case vignette.

Research Question 1

Do social work students significantly vary in their demographic characteristics, level in social work program, and level of cultural competence, between the three experimental groups? Research question one was investigated with the following: (a) chi-square tests for ethnicity between the three experimental groups and neighborhood between the three experimental groups; (b) one-way ANOVAs for age between the three

experimental groups and cultural competence between the three experimental groups; and (c) the Kruskal-Wallis Test for level in social work program between the three experimental groups. Before conducting the chi-square tests, the ethnicity variable and the neighborhood variable were both recoded into variables with two categories each. The ethnicity variable was recoded into White and Not White because the sample size was too small to be used in a chi-square for the number of categories. In a chi-square test, cell sizes with expected frequencies of less than five can yield spurious results. The neighborhood variable was recoded into rural and non-rural. In addition, gender was not included in any of the analyses because there was not enough variability to include it since there were only nine males out of a sample of 148 participants.

Ethnicity by Experimental Group

There was no significant difference in ethnicity relative to experimental group, $\chi^2(2, N = 148) = 4.07, p = .131$. A cross tabulation of ethnicity by experimental group is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. *Ethnicity by Experimental Group*

		Image Random Assignment				
				Native American		
		Control	White Girl	Girl	Total	
Ethnicity	Non-White	Count	25	20	12	57
		% within Ethnicity	43.9%	35.1%	21.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	16.9%	13.5%	8.1%	38.5%
	White	Count	27	33	31	91
		% within Ethnicity	29.7%	36.3%	34.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	18.2%	22.3%	20.9%	61.5%
Total		Count	52	53	43	148
		% within Ethnicity	35.1%	35.8%	29.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	35.1%	35.8%	29.1%	100.0%

Neighborhood by Experimental Group

There was no significant difference in neighborhood type by experimental group, $X^2(2, N = 148) = 1.43, p = .49$. A cross tabulation of neighborhood by experimental group is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. *Neighborhood Type by Experimental Group*

		Image Random Assignment				
		Control	White Girl	Native American Girl	Total	
Neighborhood	Non-Rural (Urban or Suburban)	Count	28	27	27	82
		% within Neighborhood	34.1%	32.9%	32.9%	100.0%
		% of Total	18.9%	18.2%	18.2%	55.4%
	Rural	Count	24	26	16	66
		% within Neighborhood	36.4%	39.4%	24.2%	100.0%
		% of Total	16.2%	17.6%	10.8%	44.6%
Total	Count	52	53	43	148	
	% within Neighborhood	35.1%	35.8%	29.1%	100.0%	
	% of Total	35.1%	35.8%	29.1%	100.0%	

Age by Experimental Group

There was no significant difference in age relative to experimental group, $F(2, 145) = 0.49, p = .615$. Group means for age by experimental group are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. *Group Means for Age by Experimental Group*

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Control	52	31.56	11.18	1.55	28.44	34.67	18	57
White Girl	53	31.85	12.51	1.72	28.40	35.30	19	67
Native American Girl	43	29.70	9.84	1.50	26.67	32.72	18	55
Total	148	31.12	11.28	.93	29.29	32.95	18	67

Cultural Competence by Experimental Group

There was a significant difference in cultural competence relative to experimental group, $F(2, 145) = 4.22, p = .017$. Group means for cultural competence by experimental group are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. *Group Means for Cultural Competence by Experimental Group*

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Control	52	54.19	11.73	1.63	50.93	57.46	17.00	70.00
White Girl	53	48.42	13.35	1.83	44.74	52.10	17.00	70.00
Native American Girl	43	47.84	10.90	1.66	44.48	51.19	20.00	70.00
Total	148	50.28	12.37	1.02	48.27	52.29	17.00	70.00

Note. Dependent variable = Cultural competence.

Scheffe post hoc comparisons revealed that students in the control group scored significantly higher (mean difference = 6.36) in cultural competence than students in the Native American Girl group, $p = .042$.

Level in Social Work Program by Experimental Group

The outcome of the Kruskal-Wallis indicated no significant differences among the three treatments, $\chi^2 = .109 (2, N = 148), p = .947$. Mean ranks are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Mean Ranks for Level in Social Work Program by Experimental Group

	Image Random Assignment	N	Mean Rank
What is your current level in a social work program?	Control	52	75.47
	White girl	53	72.96
	Native American girl	43	75.22
	Total	148	

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁ stated that due to random assignment to group, it is not expected that there will be significant differences in the social work students' demographics, level in social work program, level of cultural competence, across the three experimental groups. There was no significant difference in ethnicity relative to experimental group, $\chi^2(2, N = 148) = 4.07, p = .131$. There was no significant difference in neighborhood by experimental group, $\chi^2(2, N = 148) = 1.43, p = .49$. There was no significant difference in age relative to experimental group, $F(2, 145) = 0.49, p = .615$. There was a significant difference in cultural competence relative to experimental group, $F(2, 145) = 4.22, p = .017$. There was no significant difference among levels in the social work program relative to the experimental group, $\chi^2 = .109 (2, N = 148), p = .947$. Since one out of five statistical tests were significant (cultural competence by experimental group). The alternative H₀₁ was partially supported.

Research Question 2

Across all experimental groups, are social work students' demographic characteristics (ethnicity, gender, age, level in social work program, type of neighborhood where they were raised) significant predictors of level of perceived neglect or level of cultural competence? Research question two was investigated with two regression models. In the first regression model, perceived neglect was the dependent (outcome) variable. Demographic characteristics were the independent (predictor) variables. However, gender was excluded from the analysis due to lack of variability. The ANOVA for the model was statistically significant, $F(4, 142) = 6.82, p < .001$; Adjusted $R^2 = .14$. This means that at least one demographic variable was a significant predictor of perceived neglect. An examination of the regression coefficients revealed that student ethnicity was a significant, negative predictor of perceived neglect, $\beta = -.192, t = -2.37, p = .019$. Non-white students were more likely to perceive neglect than White students. Current level in social work program was a significant, negative predictor of perceived neglect, $\beta = -.283, t = -3.44, p = .001$. This means that as the level in the social work program increased, there was a corresponding decrease in perceived neglect. None of the other demographic variables were significantly related to perceived neglect. Regression coefficients are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. *Regression Coefficients for Demographics and Perceived Neglect*

Predictor Variable	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adj. <i>R</i> ²	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	β	<i>T</i>
	.402	.161	.138				
Ethnicity				-2.47	1.04	-.192	-2.37*
Age				-.047	.044	-.084	-1.06
Current level in social work program				-.748	.217	-.283	-3.44**
Neighborhood				-.458	.985	-.036	-.465
Total R	.402	.161	.138				

Note. Ethnicity: 1 = White, 0 = non-White; Neighborhood: 1 = Rural, 0 = Non-rural (Urban or Suburban); * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

In the second regression model, cultural competence was the dependent (outcome) variable. The ANOVA for the model was statistically significant, $F(4, 143) = 4.34, p = .002$; Adjusted $R^2 = .083$. Ethnicity was a significant, negative predictor of cultural competence, $\beta = -.219, t = -2.64, p = .009$. Non-white students were more likely to score higher in cultural competence than White students. Current level in a social work program was a significant, positive predictor of cultural competence, $\beta = .291, t = 3.44, p = .001$. As level in the social work program increased, there was a corresponding increase in cultural competence. None of the other demographic variables were significant predictors of cultural competence. Regression coefficients are presented in Table 14.

Table 14. *Regression Coefficients for Demographics and Cultural Competence*

Predictor Variable	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adj. <i>R</i> ²	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>
	.329	.108	.083				
Ethnicity				-5.56	2.10	-.219	-2.64**
Age				-.092	.090	-.083	-1.02
Current level in social work program				1.51	.441	.291	3.44**
Neighborhood				-3.38	1.99	-.136	-1.70
Total R	.329	.108	.083				

Note. Ethnicity: 1 = White, 0 = non-White; Neighborhood: 1 = Rural, 0 = Non-rural (Urban or Suburban); ** $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 2

H₂ stated that demographic factors (ethnicity, gender, age, level in social work program, type of neighborhood where they were raised) of social work students will be significant predictors of level of perceived neglect or level of cultural competence. The ANOVA for the model with perceived neglect as the outcome variable was statistically significant, $F(4, 142) = 6.82, p < .001$; Adjusted $R^2 = .14$. This means that at least one demographic variable was a significant predictor of perceived neglect. An examination of the regression coefficients revealed that student ethnicity was a significant, negative predictor of perceived neglect, $\beta = -.192, t = -2.37, p = .019$. Non-white students were more likely to perceive neglect than White students. Current level in social work program was a significant, negative predictor of perceived neglect, $\beta = -.283, t = -3.44, p = .001$. This means that as the level in the social work program increased, there was a corresponding decrease in perceived neglect. None of the other demographic variables were significantly related to perceived neglect.

In the second regression model, cultural competence was the dependent (outcome) variable. The ANOVA for the model was statistically significant, $F(4, 143) = 4.34, p = .002$; Adjusted $R^2 = .083$. Ethnicity was a significant, negative predictor of cultural competence, $\beta = -.219, t = -2.64, p = .009$. Non-white students were more likely to score higher in cultural competence than White students. Current level in a social work program was a significant, positive predictor of cultural competence, $\beta = .291, t = 3.44, p = .001$. As level in the social work program increased, there was a corresponding increase in cultural competence. None of the other demographic variables were significant predictors of cultural competence. Therefore, the alternative H_2 was partially supported.

Research Question 3

After controlling for demographics, do social work students' level of cultural competence relate to the level of perceived neglect? Research question three was investigated with hierarchical multiple regression. In Step 1 of the model, the demographic variables were entered. In Step 2 of the model, cultural competence was entered. There was no significant F-change from Step 1 to Step 2, $F(1, 141) = .166, p = .684$. Therefore, cultural competence did not significantly add to the model over and beyond the demographics. Regression coefficients are presented in Table 15.

Table 15. *Regression Coefficients for Cultural Competence and Perceived Neglect*

Predictor Variable	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	ΔF	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>
Step 1	.402	.161	.161	6.82***				
Ethnicity					-2.47	1.04	-.192	-2.37*
Age					-.047	.044	-.084	-1.06
Current level in social work program					-.748	.217	-.283	-3.44**
Neighborhood					-.458	.985	-.036	-.465
Step 2	.403	.162	.001	.166				
Ethnicity					-2.57	1.07	-.199	.018*
Age					-.048	.045	-.087	-1.09
Current level in social work program					-.722	.227	-.273	-3.19**
Neighborhood					-.516	.998	-.041	-.517
Cultural Competence					-.017	.041	-.033	-.408
Total R	.403	.162						

Note. Ethnicity: 1 = White, 0 = non-White; Neighborhood: 1 = Rural, 0 = Non-rural (Urban or Suburban); Adjusted *R*² at Step 1 = .138; Adjusted *R*² at Step 2 = .133; **p* < .05, ***p* < .01.

Hypothesis 3

H₃ stated that level of cultural competence will be a stronger predictor of level of perceived neglect for all experimental groups. H₃ was investigated with hierarchical multiple regression. In Step 1 of the model, the demographic variables were entered. In Step 2 of the model, cultural competence was entered. There was no significant *F*-change from Step 1 to Step 2, $F(1, 141) = .166, p = .684$. Therefore, cultural competence

did not significantly add to the model over and beyond the demographics. Consequently, H₃ is not supported.

Research Question 4

Do social work students significantly vary in the level of perceived neglect by the three experimental groups (Group 1 who only read the case vignette, Group 2 who saw the White child, and Group 3 who saw the Native American child)? Research question four was investigated with a one-way ANOVA. There was no significant difference in perceived neglect by the three experimental groups, $F(2, 145) = 1.79, p = .171$. Group means for perceived neglect by experimental group are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. *Group Means for Perceived Neglect by Experimental Group*

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Control	52	33.77	6.04	.84	32.09	35.45	21.00	46.00
White Girl	53	31.96	5.80	.80	30.36	33.56	12.00	44.00
Native American Girl	43	31.42	7.61	1.16	29.08	33.76	13.00	49.00
Total	148	32.44	6.49	.53	31.39	33.49	12.00	49.00

Note. Dependent variable = Perceived neglect.

Hypothesis 4

H₄: Social work students' level of perceived neglect will be higher for Group 3 who see the Native American child, compared to both Groups 2 and 1 who either see the White child or only read the case vignette. There was no significant difference in

perceived neglect by the three experimental groups, $F(2, 145) = 1.79, p = .171$.

Therefore, H_4 was not supported.

Summary

A summary of the all hypotheses, statistical tests, significance levels and outcomes are presented in Table 17.

Table 17. *Summary of Hypotheses, Statistical Tests, Significance Levels, and Outcomes*

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Significance	Outcome
H_1 : Due to random assignment to group, it is not expected that there will be significant differences in the social work students' demographics, level in social work program, level of cultural competence, across the three experimental groups.	Chi-Square One-Way ANOVA Kruskall-Wallis	p-values ranged from .017 to .947	Partially Supported
H_2 : Demographic factors (ethnicity, gender, age, level in social work program, type of neighborhood where they were raised) of social work students will be significant predictors of level of perceived neglect or level of cultural competence.	Multiple Regression	P-values ranged from .001 to .643 for perceived neglect and .001-.311 for cultural competence	Partially Supported
H_3 : Level of cultural competence will be a stronger predictor of level of perceived neglect for all experimental groups.	Hierarchical Multiple Regression	$p = .684$	Not Supported
H_4 : Social work students' level of perceived neglect will be higher for Group 3 who saw the Native American child, compared to both Groups 2 and 1 who either saw the White child or only read the case vignette.	One-Way ANOVA	$p = .171$	Not Supported

Conclusion

Four research questions and related hypotheses were formulated for investigation. Both H₁ and H₂ alternative hypotheses were partially supported. There was a significant difference in cultural competence relative to experimental group. Scheffe post hoc comparisons revealed that students in the control group scored rated themselves significantly higher in cultural competence than students who viewed the Native American Girl. There was no significant difference among levels in the social work program relative to the experimental group.

Student ethnicity was a significant predictor of both perceived neglect and cultural competence. Non-white students were more likely to perceive neglect than White students. Non-white students were also more likely to score higher in cultural competence than White/White students.

Current level in social work program was a significant, negative predictor of perceived neglect. This means that as the level in the social work program increased, there was a corresponding decrease in perceived neglect. Current level in a social work program was also a significant, positive predictor of cultural competence. As level in the social work program increased, there was a corresponding increase in cultural competence. After controlling for demographics, social work students' level of cultural competence was not significantly related to the level of perceived neglect. There was no significant difference in perceived neglect by the three experimental groups.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

Documentation of statistical reports indicated that Native American children are placed in foster care homes at a higher rate than White children (Bohn, 2003; Carter, 2010; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2011; Crofoot & Harris, 2012; Cross, 2008). The intent of this research was to examine the relationships between demographic factors of social work students and the level of perceived neglect and the level of cultural competence. Previous research had not examined this relationship of level of cultural competency of social works students and ability to perceive neglect. Recognizing this research gap pointed specifically toward examining unconscious decision-making practices and cultural competence of social work students.

Summary and Discussion of Results

This study was explicitly designed for addressing the disproportionate placement of Native American children into the foster care system. The purpose of this study was to determine if there was an association between the subconscious attitudes of social work students when assessing for child neglect and cultural competence and the following demographics: ethnicity, age, neighborhood where raised, level in social work program, and level of education (Collins, Kim, & Amodeo, 2010). In addition, the study was

designed to explore what extent these variables may or may not predict social work students' perceptions when assessing child neglect.

A review of the literature indicated that Native Americans are less likely to be reported for physical child abuse than Whites (Dakil et al. 2011). It has been previously found that physical abuse was more prevalent among Whites than Native Americans, while physical neglect was more prevalent among Native Americans (Carter, 2010). Based on this research, there is conflicting evidence about abuse within the Native American population. However, even though physical abuse is reported more often for Whites, Native American children are removed from their homes at higher rates than White children (Carter, 2010). Low socioeconomic status and child neglect have been associated with foster care placement of Native American children despite the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (Crofoot & Harris, 2012). Native American children are two times more likely to be investigated and substantiated for neglect and are 2.5 - 3 times more likely to be removed from their homes due to neglect than the majority population (National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2006; Hill, 2008). This statistic indicates Native American children are being removed from their homes at higher rates than White children (Carter, 2010). The extant research led to this examination of the disproportionality rates for Native American children. It was critical to investigate perceived neglect and cultural competence to raise additional awareness of child welfare decision-making practices.

The importance of raising awareness of the social constructs in child welfare such as perceptions of neglect, cultural competence and decision-making practices, led the final purpose of this study. The intention of this study was to contribute to the social

sciences by providing social work educators, administrators, students, and communities with information to increase awareness of perception, culture, knowledge of minority populations and perceived child neglect. In contribution to the social sciences, this work extended the discussion of the variety of perspectives addressed in social work curricula thereby increasing student understanding of social issues relative to perceived child neglect and cultural competence.

In examination of the level of perceived neglect and cultural competence, this study utilized an experimental design incorporating three randomly assigned groups to measure social work students' subconscious attitudes when assessing level of perceived child neglect. Data collection from social work students enrolled in both undergraduate and graduate level programs included a survey developed for this study that measured level of neglect. The survey measuring the level of neglect was asked after the participants read a field-tested case vignette that was designed to describe an ambiguous environment that could be construed as neglectful by the majority population. The vignette included culturally specific interactions that reflected common Native American parenting practices not considered as neglectful within that culture. The perceived child neglect instrument was based on the Child Neglect Checklist, modified from the Department of Health and Human Services. The second instrument was the Attitude, Skills, Knowledge instrument (ASK), which is a self-measure of cultural competence. Participant demographic factors were collected to examine any presence of differences across the three experimental groups. The experimental design allowed the examination of any association between level of perceived neglect and cultural competence of social

work students in their ratings of the case vignette with and without picture images of either a 10-year-old White girl or 10-year-old Native American girl.

The expectations of this study was that across the three experimental groups, there would not be significant differences in the demographics of social work students, their level in a social work program, or their level of cultural competence. It was also expected that social work students' demographic factors would be significant predictors of the level of perceived neglect and the level of cultural competence. It was expected that social work students' level of cultural competence would predict the level of perceived neglect for all three experimental groups. It was expected that the social work students in group 3 (read the case vignette and saw the picture image of a Native American girl), would rate perceived neglect higher than either group 2 (read the case vignette and saw the picture image of a White girl), or the control group (read the case vignette without a picture image).

Associations of Predictors

An analysis of any differences between the experimental groups was conducted. The results revealed no significant difference in the average level of perceived neglect. Additionally, there were no significant differences found between the experimental groups in ethnicity, neighborhood where social work students were raised, age, or level of education in the social work program. However, it was found that the control group scored higher in cultural competence than group 3, who saw the picture image of a 10-year-old Native American girl. This finding shows a possible interaction between only reading the case vignette without any picture image versus reading the case vignette with a picture image.

It was also found that ethnicity was a significant predictor of perceived neglect when all demographics were entered into a regression model as the independent variables and level of perceived neglect was entered as the dependent variable. Based on the beta coefficient in the regression model, it was found that non-White/White students perceived more neglect than White/White students. Of further interest, it was also found that non-White students scored themselves higher in cultural competence than White students.

In addition to the above findings, current level of education in social work program was a significant negative predictor of perception of child neglect. The higher the level of education in a social work program the lower the perception of child neglect. The findings further revealed that the higher the level of education the higher the perception of their own cultural competence. These findings provide insight for social service providers, teachers, child protection agencies, and other stakeholders about potential relationships between social work student's attitude towards assessing child neglect and cultural competence.

The study's supported hypotheses provided meaning to the professional world and helped to bridge the social research gap. The gap was addressed by associating the constructs of the level of cultural competence with the level of perceived neglect in the areas of Native American child disparity rates. This dissertation utilized picture imaging with social work students. The examination of cultural competence and perceived neglect in social work students' results provided beneficial information for the professional world.

The results of the research questions and hypotheses provided meaning that indicated the higher level of social work education received the potential for perceiving

child neglect. In addition, the statistical results indicated that the control group revealed a higher level of cultural competence than either experimental group 2 or 3. The finding that White students were less likely to indicate perceived neglect than non-White students was central to the theoretical standpoint of the critical race theory.

Theoretical Application to Findings

The critical race theory (CRT) attempts to break down the obstacles that create inequality and imbalance (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Constance-Huggins, 2011; Yosso, 2005). The view of critical race theory takes into account the perspectives of all societal members involved in decision-making practices when working to bridge the gaps of those in need. This happens through applying understanding in every element under consideration in the social context (Daniel, 2007; West et al., 2013). The critical race theory also addresses issues such as perception and cultural competence when identifying measures to combat disproportionality of minority groups (Martin & Pyles, 2013). An example of the critical race theory was the discourse of out of home placement disproportionate rates of Native American children.

When accompanied with critical thinking, self-awareness, and knowledge, there is an opportunity for becoming successful change agents (Mama, 2002; Daniel & Quiros, 2010; Ortega & Faller, 2011). The expectation was for social work students to apply self-reflection skills; to enhance awareness of self-perception; to avoid bias tendencies; and to increase the value base for minority populations (Weaver, 1999; Geron, 2002; Jackson & Samuels, 2011; Pivorienė & Ūselytė, 2013). The critical race theory applies the review of biases. Thus, CRT provides a framework for the continued examination of overrepresentation of out of home placements for children. Evidence-based practice

requires a closer view from the social worker (Crofoot & Harris, 2012; Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Weaver, 1999).

The researcher's application of the critical race theory took into consideration the social work students' demographic characteristics. It was noted gender of social work students could result in making decisions based on the social concepts of formed by the dominant societal group. However, for this work, gender was not applicable due to only having nine males out of a sample of 148. The age of social work students could also result in decisions based on their cumulative life experiences, however since age was found as a non-significant factor, the critical race theory was not fully examinable in this study. In going a step further regarding the applicability of the critical race theory, the type of neighborhood that a social work student was raised could have been an influencing factor in their decisions and perceptions of the community where they grew up. Consequently, the findings did not support neighborhood type, leaving room for future study from the theoretical standings of critical race.

The tenets of the critical race theory were further examined by applying the experimental grouping tests to investigate the potential bias toward a child based solely on a picture image (Native American versus White versus no picture). The theoretical application for this examination indicated a lack of potential bias. The findings suggested that the control group was found to report higher cultural competence than the group viewing the Native American girl. This finding is indicative that the control group did not have a visual image to base possible preconceived notions of Native American ethnicity. In going further into this explanation, within the tenets of the critical race theory, this finding indicated a possible shift from the dominant societal views of child

neglect wherein possible biases exists. This paradigm shift is considered positive in that the White group was less likely to rate potential neglect. The framework of critical race theory seems indicative to sensitivity of unbiased decisions of White social work students. Rather, the participants in the non-White group were more probable to perceive neglect in the case vignette. The probability of non-White students perceiving neglect leaves room for further examination in the differences in perception of child neglect.

The critical race theory was addressed according to its relevance of cultural awareness and the necessity to look at social constructs (Ungar, 2011) such as child neglect and cultural competence. Culture immerses the internalizations of subordinates who could fall prey to social constructs of subjectivity and authority (Daniel & Quiros, 2010). The level of perceived neglect served as a measure of the evaluation and interpretation of social work students.

The dissertation revealed that non-White students reported higher perceived neglect in the case vignette than White students. The case vignette was intentionally written to reflect culturally specific interactions that reflect common Native American parenting practices that are not considered neglectful within that culture. Therefore, it is important to note that child neglect was not present in the case vignette. Critical race theory contends the necessity of maintaining facts that are representative of the particular structure under assessment, such as the perception of child neglect. The research on perception was essentially supported in this work. Since perception was suggestive of presented internalized meanings, establishing consistent ways to balance individuals' thinking and behavior could lessen the likelihood of eradicable behavior (Meyers, 2007; Willis et al., 2014).

In this study, child neglect was described in a purposefully ambiguous way, although perceived by some students to be present. Perceived neglect was not statistically significant across the experimental groups, which indicates that the manipulation of pictures across the experimental groups did not result in differences in perceived neglect. In terms of the critical race theory it appeared that social work students are applying value-free (Daniel & Quiros, 2010) thinking necessary for adequate decision-making. Therefore, the indication is that schools of social work are providing students with skills required to mitigate biased decisions. Furthermore, the circular (ecological) framework taught in social work programs support the application of critical race theory. This conclusion was suggestive due to assessment of the case vignette by social work students. There was an incorporation of view of the family system in the absence of preconceived bias (Burton et al., 2010).

The theoretical finding of the critical race theory, in application of this dissertation, was that schools of social work appear to be addressing cultural awareness in an effort to increase unbiased decision-making practices. The final analysis reported statistical significance in level of education and perceived neglect and the construct of cultural competence. The higher level of social work education a student had, resulted in lower perceptions of neglect and higher cultural competence across the experimental groups.

When using the theoretical framework of critical race theory, critical assessment included understanding through self-awareness, cultural competence, race, values, attitudes, and beliefs, all of which are integral elements of the social condition (Prasad 2001; Rodenborg & Boisen, 2013 Williams & Ellison, 1996). Social work educators

address the issues of disparity and unbalance by teaching that cultural competence includes understanding differences through attitude, knowledge, and skill taught in social work education (Ben-Ari & Strier, 2010). From the theoretical viewpoint of critical race theory, the study results appear indicative that social work educators are addressing social work student perceptions through self-awareness. This statement was supported by the results that higher levels of social work educational revealed a decrease in perceived neglect. As previously, noted reality-testing weighs not on thought alone but on actuality (Levi Strauss, 1958). Class forums about the historical contexts from the Native American perspective is a way of increasing awareness of the loss of culture experienced by Native Americans (Ahktar, 2013; Cooper, 2013; Mama, 2002; Weaver, 1999).

The reality of the disproportionate rates of child removal from their family for Native American children remains to be a need for further study. Native American children who are removed from their home are at risk of losing the connections to their families and their culture. In alignment with the critical race theory, ecological thinking by social work students, social workers, and practitioners could eliminate the presence of any self-serving bias which could lead professionals to blame families for failures (Ortega & Faller, 2011; West et al., 2013). A review of the current child welfare policies, the Indian Child Welfare Act, and ASFA brought consideration to the critical race theory, child welfare practices, and social work. The review spoken of in this work leads professionals to consider increasing joint efforts to address protection of cultural values for all groups for protection and preservation.

The Indian Child Welfare Act was implemented to protect and preserve Native American families, while keeping their cultures alive (ICWA, 1974). The critical race

theory contends that oppressed and minority populations receive circular thinking in decision-making from all stakeholders to demystify the imbalance and break barriers for safe, equal treatment of all populations (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Constance-Huggins, 2011; Yosso, 2005) This dissertation found support for the applicability of the critical race theory when examining social work students in their measures of decision-making for perceived child neglect and cultural competence.

Implications for Practice

The disparate rates of child placement for Native American children remain in existence. The findings of this study provided implications for practice among social work professionals in the school of social work, social work students, social work agencies, and communities. The implications produce suggestions to increase the knowledge base in regards to social work students' perception of cases such as potential child neglect and students' self-reporting of perception of cultural competence. This implication bears importance in the fact that upon graduation, social work students could apply for employment positions in child welfare. Therefore, continuing to provide culture competence and self-awareness in the social work curriculum will add the potential for better outcomes for all minority populations in the reduction of disproportionality rates, not just Native American families. Additionally, there will be less likelihood of children losing cultural connectivity. This dissertation research further implies that social work students enrolled in the graduate courses without a social work education or background receive additional preparation in cultural competence. Future social work scholars can add work from Eurocentric (linear) and to ecological (circular) views of practice by embracing cultural competence and remaining self-aware of

potential biases. This dissertation also provided implication for child welfare agencies and policies.

Child welfare agencies and community operations should further examine the definition of neglect by incorporating families' views. There is also implication for consideration of all cultural dynamics when measuring child neglect. Agreement between child welfare workers should require consultation from a social work professional possessing a social work degree from an accredited school of social work. Disallowing child welfare workers without a degree in social work the ability to make decisions to remove a child from a home could reduce disproportionate rates for all populations. Implication for practice can include addressing the current child welfare policies with minorities by providing continued education of cultural practices regarding perceptions of child neglect thereby addressing the issue of disparity in the child welfare system.

Child welfare policies are crucial in the decision-making practices of child welfare workers and social work professions. The influence of professionals can increase the focus on team approaches by involving families of all ethnic backgrounds to the decision-making process. Work toward improving current measures of child maltreatment, taking into account cultural awareness, is essential to equalizing the current disproportionate rates of all minorities. Social welfare policy needs continued review when thinking about best practices for best outcome measures. For example, leadership in decision-making practices from a critical theoretical approach could include local government agencies, communities, universities, and families' struggles, to the decision-making table.

Limitations

There were several limitations of this study. One limitation included the imbalance of the demographic variable of gender. Secondly, a limitation of this study was the self-rating basis of self-perception of the cultural competence measure. Self-rating of cultural competence increased the likelihood of higher scores. Individualistic views can increase based on what is believed to be true, whether or not others support the same view (Bem, 1972; Meyers, 2007). This study was quantitative and utilized an online environment. Therefore, the cultural competency measure (ASK) could not be redesigned. It is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the validity of the cultural competence measure. Thirdly, the study included a response from 148 social work students across the United States, which creates a limitation when considering generalizability to the entire social work student population. The ability to generalize the findings to the entire population was limited. This limitation was due in part to the online collection of data. The online survey did not include responses from all social work students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate level programs across the United States, thereby decreasing generalizability.

Recommendations for Further Research

Several recommendations for future research resulted from this study. It is recommended that this research be replicated to expand sample size, thereby increasing generalizability. Future research recommendations would secondly suggest the use of a male child in a culturally constructed case vignette using a child younger than 10 years old. Thirdly, recruiting social workers with BSW and MSW degrees who are employed in child welfare services would expand the discussion on perceived neglect and cultural

competence. A fourth recommendation would be a replication of this study to continue the use of picture imaging with a case vignette illustrating a possible case of child neglect based on cultural parenting practices not considered neglectful in that culture. The replication would allow the continued examination of unconscious attitudes that social work students may not realize they have. A fifth recommendation would be to continue this research on both quantitative and qualitative methods to address the disproportionate rate of Native American children in out of home placements enlisting information of the ICWA policy. A qualitative method would explore the lived experiences of Native American families and cultures in regards to their child rearing practices. The exploration of the lived experiences could associate perceived neglect and cultural competence among social work students and social work practitioners. A sixth recommendation would be to conduct this study separately with BSW students and MSW students. A secondary data analysis could then be conducted comparing the two groups. Finally, since the number of social work students completing the survey for this dissertation was not generalizable to the entire population, the type of neighborhood where students grew up could be readdressed. Although the type of neighborhood was not a statistically significant finding, further research could include separately examining rural communities, urban communities, and suburban communities of social work students to readdress significance. The readdress of type of neighborhood could further lead to secondary data analysis when examining perceived neglect and cultural competence.

Conclusion

This quantitative experimental three-group design supports the critical race theory (CRT). The perspective of critical race theory contends that there is an intertwining of knowledge and power (Martin & Pyles, 2013). The ideological school of thought behind CRT was the development of higher intensity of thought than established prior to investigation (Daniel & Quiros, 2010). This dissertation associated the constructs of the level of perceived neglect and level of cultural competence with the in the areas of Native American child disparity rates. The examination of the social work students revealed the finding that schools of social work educators are enlisting the concepts of linear and circular paradigms in decision-making practices.

This dissertation identified gaps in the current literature examining critical race theory and cultural competence by bridging the elements equal balance through the examination of level of perceived neglect, and cultural competence among social work students. The results of this study indicated statistical significance in cultural competence across the three experimental groups. The control group scored higher cultural competence than the group who viewed the Native American girl. Level of education was also a significant predictor of perceived neglect and cultural competence. The higher education level that a social work student reported having, resulted in a reduction of perceived neglect, which was a positive finding. Further, the higher level of education reported by students indicated increased cultural competence scores. Merging the critical race theory with a culturally constructed case vignette, perceived child neglect checklist and cultural competence scale contributed to the principles of equality, self-awareness, and came through learning from individualistic views, applying thought to

attitudes, values and beliefs, and behaviors, which are dynamic in the decision-making process of child welfare system (Popple & Vecchiola, 2007).

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APPENDIX A. CASE VIGNETTE

A neighbor, Ms. G. called the Department of Social Services about a 10 year-old girl, Jane, who lives next to her. The neighborhood consists of several old homes. Jane and her mother, Sue, moved to the neighborhood a few months ago. Ms. G. reported that she observed Jane using an axe in the backyard to slaughter a chicken. Ms. G. stated that there was no adult at home with Jane at the time. When Ms. G. walked over to speak with Jane about why she was using an axe and slaughtering a chicken, Jane refused to speak to her. In the process, Ms. G. noticed that Jane had scratches on her left arm that appeared to be about a day old. There was no bandage on these scratches. In the past, Ms. G. had also seen Jane's mother refusing to speak to her. On a separate occasion, she heard Sue tell Jane, "The spirit forces will punish you for being a bad child." and then saw Sue throw water in Jane's face. She also witnessed another incident that occurred at night in Jane's backyard. On this night, Ms. G. saw a fire and witnessed Sue chanting around the fire. Jane was seen standing by the fire, bowing her head, and silently weeping. After Jane's mother finished chanting, she picked up a rock and placed it in Jane's hand saying, "Learn from this rock."

Note: Researcher Designed. Locklear, A. K. L. (2013). A Native-American family culturally constructed case vignette: Potential child neglect.

APPENDIX B. CHECKLIST FOR CHILD NEGLECT

Child Neglect Item	<i>Definitely No Neglect</i>	<i>No Neglect</i>	<i>Neutral- I need more Information</i>	<i>Possible Neglect</i>	<i>Definitely Neglect</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. Improper supervision					
2. Improper care					
3. Improper discipline with no injuries noted					
4. Improper discipline resulting in injuries					
5. Injurious environment- unsafe environment absent of domestic violence and substance abuse					
6. Injurious environment that includes domestic violence					
7. Injurious Environment that includes substance abuse					
8. Abandonment - child has been abandoned by parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker, other than the Safe Surrender law					
9. Improper medical/remedial care					
10. Adoption Law Violation - Placed for adoption without legal permission					

**Note:* Department of Health and Human Services (2011). *Child maltreatment*. Retrieved from: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2011>.

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APPENDIX C. ATTITUDE, SKILL, KNOWLEDGE

	<i>Totally Unprepared</i>	<i>Somewhat Prepared</i>	<i>Prepared but Need to Practice</i>	<i>Ready to Practice</i>	<i>Competent</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. I am open to hear my clients' perceptions.					
2. I value input from clients to clarify their perceptions of the problem.					
3. I understand that a positive attitude toward the use of authority is so important that it may influence the clients' willingness to participating in the assessment process.					
4. I enjoy learning from my clients about their culture.					
5. I use my previous experiences in working with clients from a specific culture as a guide in selecting services for new clients from that same culture.					
6. I openly ask questions and share information concerning cultural differences with clients to help identify possible problems and barriers that my clients and I might encounter.					

APPENDIX C. ATTITUDE, SKILL, KNOWLEDGE (Continued)

	<i>Totally Unprepared</i>	<i>Somewhat Prepared</i>	<i>Prepared but Need to Practice</i>	<i>Ready to Practice</i>	<i>Competent</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
7. I ask clients to reflect back to me what they hear me saying about their problems.					
8. When I encounter what appears to be resistance, I also explore other possible meanings of this behavior in my client's culture.					
9. I assess family strengths within the context of cultural norms when appropriate.					
10. I acknowledge culturally specific practices that I am not familiar with.					
11. I address my clients' inappropriate behaviors that may inhibit successful goal attainment without judging particular cultural values or beliefs.					
12. I know several ways of greetings that may work well with the family/client.					
13. I understand that information specific to the family's culture may be useful in developing goals and objectives with my clients.					

APPENDIX C. ATTITUDE, SKILL, KNOWLEDGE *(Continued)*

	<i>Totally Unprepared</i>	<i>Somewhat Prepared</i>	<i>Prepared but Need to Practice</i>	<i>Ready to Practice</i>	<i>Competent</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
14. I realize the importance of including culturally relevant information in the outcome evaluation.					

Note: Cheung, M., & Leung, P. (2008). *Multicultural practice and evaluation: A case approach to evidence-based practice*. Denver, CO: Love Publishing Co. *Used with permission.*

APPENDIX D. STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL WORK AND SIGNATURE

Academic Honesty Policy

Capella University's Academic Honesty Policy ([3.01.01](#)) holds learners accountable for the integrity of work they submit, which includes but is not limited to discussion postings, assignments, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation or capstone project.

Established in the Policy are the expectations for original work, rationale for the policy, definition of terms that pertain to academic honesty and original work, and disciplinary consequences of academic dishonesty. Also stated in the Policy is the expectation that learners will follow APA rules for citing another person's ideas or works.

The following standards for original work and definition of *plagiarism* are discussed in the Policy:

Learners are expected to be the sole authors of their work and to acknowledge the authorship of others' work through proper citation and reference. Use of another person's ideas, including another learner's, without proper reference or citation constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty and is prohibited conduct. (p. 1)

Plagiarism is one example of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own. Plagiarism also includes copying verbatim or rephrasing ideas without properly acknowledging the source by author, date, and publication medium. (p. 2)

Capella University's Research Misconduct Policy ([3.03.06](#)) holds learners accountable for research integrity. What constitutes research misconduct is discussed in the Policy:

Research misconduct includes but is not limited to falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, misappropriation, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the academic community for proposing, conducting, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. (p. 1)

Learners failing to abide by these policies are subject to consequences, including but not limited to dismissal or revocation of the degree.

Statement of Original Work and Signature

I have read, understood, and abided by Capella University's Academic Honesty Policy (3.01.01) and Research Misconduct Policy (3.03.06), including the Policy Statements, Rationale, and Definitions.

I attest that this dissertation or capstone project is my own work. Where I have used the ideas or words of others, I have paraphrased, summarized, or used direct quotes following the guidelines set forth in the *APA Publication Manual*.

Learner name: Alice Kay Locklear

Date: 5/21/ 2014

Mentor name: Andrea Daines, PhD

School of Public Service Leadership