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NO, HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

by

Miranda Mulcrone

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for graduation with Honors in the Social Work

Jeanne Saunders
Thesis Mentor

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All requirements for graduation with Honors in the
Social Work have been completed.

Jeanne Saunders
Social Work Honors Advisor

No, How are YOU Feeling?

A Look at Emotional Intelligence at the School of Social Work at the University of Iowa

00815557

Miranda Mulcrone

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University of Iowa

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore emotional intelligence at the School of Social Work at the University of Iowa. Emotional intelligence can be described as understanding, regulating, and recognizing emotions. Social workers have emotionally tolling, stressful jobs where emotional intelligence would be utilized. There is not much research about emotional intelligence in the social work field, so this study looks at emotional intelligence scores of those enrolled at the School of Social Work at the University of Iowa. It was hypothesized that (1) participants would have higher emotional intelligence than the general population; (2) MSW students would score higher on emotional intelligence than BASW students; and (3) the majority of students would request more content in the curriculum on emotional intelligence. A brief survey that included the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test emotional intelligence scale was distributed to all students in Fall of 2016. The first hypothesis was supported while the second hypothesis was not. The third hypothesis, was partially supported as a half of the students were interested in more training on emotional intelligence in social work practice. Going forward, it is recommended that emotional intelligence in the social work field be researched in greater depth with larger samples, a pre-test/post-test design, and more geographic locations. Finally, implications for practice are to give social work students more space for emotions and emotional intelligence through curriculum and trainings.

Emotional Intelligence in Social Workers and Field Practice

Introduction

Emotions are important feelings in our lives that begin the day we are born. Emotions are defined as a change made by body and mind to adjust to environmental changes (Ikebuchi & Rasmussen, 2007). They can be messy and troublesome, but are a vital part to life in order to make sure we get what we need. If people did not get upset when they were hungry, they may not feel inclined to feed themselves; if people did not feel happy when around loved ones, they may not feel safe around them; and if people did not get scared, they may do dangerous things.

Emotions also work at a deeper level. For example, emotions are used in the learning process (Morrison, 2007). Skinner described learning as a response to a stimulus (Mcleod, 2007). Positive and negative reinforcement rely on how the response to a stimulus makes you feel. Reinforcement is adding or taking away a stimulus hoping that the behavior repeats while punishment is adding or taking away a stimulus hoping that the behavior does not repeat. Similarly, emotions influence making decisions. Against common thought, it is near impossible to make a decision without emotion (Morrison, 2007). We use what we have learned to decide how to react to a situation. For example, if someone did not like watching a horror movie, one will remember how it felt while watching the movie last time to make a decision about whether or not to watch another horror film. When faced with a quick decision, like how to react when someone is not listening, emotions decide how we respond (Bruno, 2011). Finally, emotions aid in the development of relationships with others (Ikebuchi & Rasmussen, 2007). For example, based on Bowlby's attachment theory, which emphasizes developing attachment with a mother

figure, people will go near others and try to maintain relationships with people or places that they feel some emotional attachment to.

Based on earlier learning, some people know how to read emotional cues, understand, comprehend, manage, utilize, and express emotions better than others; this is known as emotional intelligence (Schutte, 2014). Emotional intelligence can be seen as a part of personality, the ability to cope, and/ or similar to general intelligence (Ingram, 2013). Different than general intelligence, emotional intelligence is a relatively new concept that has been gaining interest since the early 1990s (Ingram, 2013).

One thing learned as emotional intelligence has been gaining popularity is that emotional intelligence has a neurobiological background. For example, when someone needs to react immediately, function MRI studies show that three parts of the brain are activated to make the decisions before cognition takes place (Bruno, 2011). These three parts are the insula which processes emotions, the anterior cingulate cortex which uses prior experiences to react, and the superior temporal sulcus which uses sensory stimuli to react. Having the insula activated means that emotions can help make a decision before rational decision making takes place. Similarly, emotional intelligence influences how people process emotions; therefore, emotional intelligence can influence how people make fast decisions.

Types of Emotional Intelligence

Kosnin and Huey (n.d) identify two main kinds of emotional intelligence: ability and trait. Ability emotional intelligence, also termed cognitive-emotional ability is about reason and feeling; it is about perceiving, interpreting, and regulating emotions. Ability emotional intelligence is tested through performance rather than self-report. The questions on these tests have right and wrong answers to solving emotional problems and conducting tasks.

On the other hand, trait emotional intelligence is about one's perception of your own ability to recognize, understand, and use emotions (Kosnin & Huey, n.d). Trait emotional intelligence gives more of an overall picture of one's emotional intelligence such as well-being, empathy, sociability, self-control, emotional stability, and ability to motivate and adapt in situations. Trait emotional intelligence is frequently tested through self-report measures. Additionally, it has more variability in its definitions with a common theme of lack of cognition abilities (Brannick et al., 2009).

Emotional Intelligence in the Social Work Field

Relating to the social work field, emotional intelligence is described as the ability to handle and use stress appropriately to motivate one's self, to read non-verbal messages of colleagues and clients, and to recognize and react to emotionally challenging situations (Morrison, 2007). Emotional intelligence may even be able to spread from person to person like behaviors (Schutte, 2014). This means that emotional intelligence could be learned from teacher to student, from colleague to colleague, or even social worker to client.

Similarly, emotional intelligence can influence a social worker during assessment and intervention at both the micro and macro level. For example, commonly used models for macro level intervention are the "prepare model" and the "imagine model" (Morrison, 2007). The prepare model includes identifying the Problem to address, Reviewing the ability to intervene, Establishing goals, identifying People who it will affect, Assessing the costs and benefits to implementing macro level change, Reviewing any personal risks, and Evaluating how successful it can be (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2011). Similarly, the imagine model includes starting with an Idea, Mustering support, identifying Assets, Specifying goals and how to achieve them, Implementing a plan, Neutralizing oppositions (dealing with roadblocks to change), and

Evaluating the macro level change (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2011). A social worker's low emotional intelligence while working to implement a macro level change would slow down and hurt the process. For example, if someone has trouble with a major component of emotional intelligence, empathy, one may not see enough need to help resolve the problem. In the same way, reviewing personal risks can be problematic if someone had trouble recognizing one's feelings. Likewise, from the imagine model, a social worker with low emotional intelligence could experience more difficulty while neutralizing opposition when needing to see issues from someone else's perspective. The ability to handle personal stress to not interfere with work is another component of emotional intelligence on a macro level scale.

In a like manner, a social worker with high emotional intelligence working on a micro level could experience less trouble than someone with low emotional intelligence. For example, it is important for social workers to recognize and regulate their own emotions while with clients. A social worker who is able to hear a client's story while regulating their emotions can continue to keep the attention on the client without the client needing to comfort the social worker about the reaction to the client's story. While expressing personal emotions can be beneficial for clients, it is important to only do so to strengthen the therapeutic relationship, and not just because the social worker felt specific emotions. A social worker with high emotional intelligence would be better able to regulate their own emotions and work more effectively with clients.

Emotional intelligence is an important aspect of social work education because as Ingram et al. (2013) expressed, services provided by social workers, emotional intelligence, and the core values of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) are all connected. For example, empathy is a critical requirement for being an effective social worker (Barlow & Hall,

2007). Empathy is used to understand where a client is coming from and helps to validate them. Empathy is something that people look for in social workers, and it is a key component in emotional intelligence. Empathy helps build relationships on trust and confidentiality that is a core value in the NASW Code of Ethics (NASW, 2016).

When 24 students, mostly female with a mean age of 27.5, from a United States southeastern university were tested on emotional intelligence and empathetic perspective taking, the results showed a positive correlation between the two (Schutte et al., 2010). The authors argue that these results suggest someone is more likely to be empathetic when they have a higher emotional intelligence. Given this small sample size, replication of this study is warranted. However, since empathy is a core skill in the social work profession, identifying ways to increase emotional intelligence is worth examining.

Teaching Emotional Intelligence

Luckily, unlike general intelligence, emotional intelligence is believed to be something that can change, grow, and be taught (Nogaye, 2010). Learning about emotions; taking time to reflect on emotion; and stimulating emotions through ways such as poetry, film, and music are all ways that emotional intelligence is learned and practiced (Clarke, Lovelock, & McNay, 2016). Classrooms should be emotionally positive for students meaning that students feel safe expressing emotions while learning (Ikebuchi & Rasmussen, 2007). Classrooms can be a place for emotional intelligence intervention where there can be programs, curriculum and workshops on emotional intelligence. Testing this, 37 participants, with a mean age of 21, were tested in a controlled experiment on emotional intelligence before and after an intervention based on emotional perception, cognition, understanding, and reflection. There was an increase in emotion regulation, recognition of other's emotions, emotion identification, and emotional understanding

in the experimental group (Nelis et al., 2009). This research study supports that emotional intelligence can be learned through interventions. Research has found that implementing emotional intelligence lessons in grade school years have increased classroom's emotional support, instructional support, and organization (Hagelskamp et al., 2013). The previous studies suggest that incorporating emotional intelligence into social work classes, general education classes, and classes throughout grade school and high school can be beneficial for increasing the main aspects of emotional intelligence like empathy, emotion recognition, and reflection.

This research study reported in this document examined emotional intelligence among social work students at a Midwest university. After a brief review of the relevant literature, the results of this study and their implications for future research and practice will be discussed.

Literature Review

Given the reported relationship between emotional intelligence and empathy, it would be common thought that social workers would have high emotional intelligence because of their access to feelings and the space to have feelings. Consequently, when assumed, there is no training used for emotional intelligence. Similar to the general population, there is more likely a continuum of emotional intelligence among social workers. However, without high emotional intelligence, there is a potential problem for social workers because social work is an emotionally trying job (Ikebushi & Rasmussen, 2007). A number of studies have examined emotional intelligence in general college student populations, the stress of social workers, the consequences of emotional stress in helping professions, and emotional intelligence in social work.

Pertaining to emotional stress that social work students may feel, several studies have looked at the causes and consequences of such stress. Social work students participating in field

placement go through similar emotional situations that licensed social workers do. Social workers work with a variety of clients with a variety of problems such as homelessness, suicide ideation, and many more. Even further, these students are sometimes exposed to the experiences that their clients go through. For example, social work students working for the department of human services work with child abuse; social workers that are a part of sexual assault advocacy hear about rape repeatedly; and social workers who work in hospice watch the loss of independence that their clients go through. While experiencing these, social workers have to deal with the institutional discrimination put on their clients like racism, classism, homophobia, agism, etc. Being exposed to these stressors can evoke emotional responses and stress in social workers (Barlow & Hall, 2007). Students may feel hopeless when they cannot help their clients as much as they want to, angry when things are not going the way that they want, scared when a client becomes angry with them, and sad when listening to a client's story. For all these reasons, emotional intelligence is important for a social worker to be able to keep performing the job they are doing.

Gelman and Lloyd (2008) found that 72% of the 204 social work MSW New York University students self-reported their anxiety for entering field placement to be moderately to high on a ten point scale. When asked about their concerns relating to fieldwork, 70% said that they were worried that they lacked necessary skills for field, 64% were worried they would make a mistake, and 47% were worried about feeling overwhelmed. Social Workers are constantly put under emotional stress which can make them feel overwhelmed or burnt out, not be able to complete work to the best of their ability, or distance themselves from their clients. Being burnt out can be explained as feeling exhausted emotionally, physically, psychologically, or mentally.

McQueen (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of emotional intelligence articles pertaining to nursing and found that the traditional way to best care for a patient without becoming too emotionally attached was for nurses and other health care professionals to put up an emotional barrier to not allow personal prejudices to affect caring for the patient. However, participants reported that this had led to less passion and dedication to helping the patients. Like nurses, social workers can put up emotional barriers to not become too close to their clients. Feeling empathetically exhausted or showing no empathy at all strains the relationship between social workers and their clients. Therefore, having emotional intelligence can help improve a social worker's relationships and the outlook of the client.

When Barlow and Hall (2007) asked students and teachers in a Canadian social work field placement program about students' stressors, instructors thought that personal problems would be a big issue for fieldwork while students believed that the vulnerability they felt in the field was more troublesome. Students explained that they felt vulnerable from the client's situations, difficulty with agencies, fear of being put in a dangerous setting, uncertainty if they should continue as social workers, lack of support from instructors, and feelings of incompetency. Students additionally expressed that "emotional rules", or how to react emotionally, were never discussed during the program. This made them feel uneasy and unprepared.

Along with being unprepared emotionally, students are also often unprepared when it comes to safety. Reese and Wertkin (2001) conducted a national survey for social work field instructors and found that only 12% of the 250 schools that they studied had a written student safety policy. Similarly, social work students are commonly victims of verbal abuse and are often fearful of being attacked by clients or clients' loved ones (Barlow & Hall, 2007). These

various examples of stressors that field placement students can face illustrate how aspects of emotional intelligence, like the ability to handle stress, can be useful.

A study done by Schutte et al (2014) found that when assessing mostly females from a university population with an average age of 33 in Australia, there were positive correlations between emotional intelligence and concurrent positive affect with life. Additionally, the study found that people who had higher emotional intelligence tended to have close people who they spent a lot of time with who also had high emotional intelligence. The authors suggest that this supports that emotional intelligence can be “contagious” and beneficial. Similarly, in a cross sectional study with over 200 Australian university students using stories and various scales measuring depression and emotional intelligence, emotional intelligence or emotional perception was found to moderate the relationship between stress and depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation (Ciarrochi et al., 2002).

In like manner, a study of undergraduate students at a U.S Midwestern university found that emotional intelligence allowed participants to use stress as a challenge more than a threat with less physiological, psychological, and mood threats (Schneider et al., 2013). Teaching students how to use stress effectively in classroom courses could prepare students to use stress constructively instead of interpreting it as a threat in the social work field.

Emotional Intelligence in Social Work

Social work professionals help people on a personal, community, and societal levels. Even though different from school to school, social work programs require some core social work educational classes and field work. For example, the school used for this study, the University of Iowa, requires 400 hours of field placement for the Bachelor of Social Work (BASW) program and 910 hours in the Master Social Work (MSW) program (University of

Iowa, 2015). The core curriculum presents an opportunity to prepare students emotionally for field placement and careers. During field placement, students have a seminar to talk about field placements; this is another opportunity for the school to guide students through stress, emotions, and emotional intelligence.

The Social Work Code of Ethics is the “moral ground” that social workers turn to for guidance on social work practice and especially when facing ethical dilemmas. There are multiple standards that emotional intelligence directly relates to in the Code of Ethics. For example, Code 4.05 Impairment, talks about the importance of the ability to work through one’s own problems and being able to focus on what the client needs (NASW, 2016). The Code of Ethics also stresses the value “Competence” which means that a person performs well in their job and has the proper mindset, education, and training to be in the position that they are in (NASW, 2016). This is also relevant to emotional intelligence because in order to give 100% to the client, a social worker needs to be able to read a client’s emotions while handling their own.

Overall, little research has been conducted about emotional intelligence (Nogaye, 2010). Even less has been done about emotional intelligence in the social work field. However, the few studies that have been done indicate that emotional intelligence is an important part of being a social worker and should be taught. For example, after being trained on emotional intelligence and taking a post test and a delayed posttest, social workers working in the health care field reported that the training had a positive impact on decisiveness, interest in growth and development, personal assessment, and personal value/self-worth even at the delayed posttest (Nogaye, 2010). The author also argued that emotional intelligence should be a part of the National Association of Social Workers ethical standards, that emotional intelligence training should be a part of Graduate school curriculum, and that both students and social work

professionals should take emotional intelligence testing to measure competency and areas needing improvement (Nogaye, 2010).

Gaps in the Literature

A number of gaps in this area of inquiry are evident. One gap in research that was found is the lack of emotional intelligence research in the United States; most of the research is from Australia or the United Kingdom. While these countries are similar to the United States, differences may be present. Another gap is the small number of participants in many of these studies. In addition, little research was found about emotional intelligence and social work students specifically or in fields other than health care (Nogaye, 2010). Finally, even though it would be thought or has been assumed that social work students would have higher emotional intelligence scores, there has been little empirical evidence of this claim.

Measuring Emotional Intelligence

Even though there is little research on emotional intelligence, there are still popular measures to test it. For example, ability emotional intelligence is most commonly tested in adults through the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence test (MSCEIT), and is known for its reliability and validity (Kosnin & Huey, n.d). It contains 141 questions, uses a Likert scale from one to five for responses, and focuses on four branches of emotional intelligence: perceiving emotions, facilitating thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions (Fiori et al., 2014).

The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) is a 153-item questionnaire targeting adults using a 7-point scale that ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). This tool has four domains which are well-being, self-control, emotionality, and socialability (Nelis, 2009). Nelis (2009) describes this test as having “excellent psychometric properties.”

The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) for adults is the test that is used in this study. It has four subscales which are emotion perception, utilizing emotions, managing self-relevant emotions, and managing other's emotions (Statistics Solutions, 2016). This scale has 33 items with responses on a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), and has strong validity (Schutte et al, 2010). The mean score of this test for the general population is about 124 with a standard deviation of 13 (Using Psychology, 2014). Schutte et al. (2010) supported this average with five studies using this tool with mostly college students. The mean scores in these studies ranged from 126 to 142.

Given what we know and do not know from the literature, the purpose of this study was to explore the emotional intelligence of BASW and MSW students at the University of Iowa School of Social Work. I hypothesize 1. social worker participants will have higher emotional intelligence than the general population; 2. that MSW students will score higher than the Bachelor's students; and 3. the majority of students will request more content in the curriculum on emotional intelligence. The next section describes the methods used to test these hypotheses.

Methods

Design

The design of this research study was a cross-sectional, quantitative design using survey methods to collect data.

Sample Participants

This study used a convenience sample of all BASW students and MSW students at the University of Iowa School of Social Work. All enrolled students in the Fall of 2016 were invited to participate in the study. Approximately 125 BASW students and 250 MSW students are

enrolled each semester. Approximately 90% of the students are females. Students attend classes in Iowa City, Des Moines, Sioux City and the Quad Cities.

Measurement

Emotional intelligence was measured by using The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT). This scale uses a 33 item, five responses Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). This scales asks questions such as, “When my mood changes, I see new possibilities,” and “I know when to speak to others about my personal problems.” The complete survey is provided in Appendix A. Items 5, 28, and 33 were reverse scored for the analysis. Using the scoring protocols, a participant’s emotional intelligence score was computed by adding their response for each item. Higher numbers indicate greater emotional intelligence.

In addition, the survey asked about a participant’s age, gender, program year at the University of Iowa, and whether they would like more training on emotional intelligence as part of the curriculum. Participants were asked to indicate their actual *age* by filling in the box provided, and to select their gender from *male*, *female*, and *other*. Next, they were to provide their program, either *BASW* or *MSW*. Finally, when asked if they would like additional training on emotional intelligence, they chose from *yes*, *no*, and *I do not care*.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected using the Qualtrics electronic survey tool provided by the University of Iowa. A link to the Qualtrics survey was included in an email message sent to all students on the school’s list serve by the program administrator. After the survey was approved by the institutional review board (IRB), the students received an email in early September that briefly described the study, invited them to participate, and that they could participate by following the

link to the survey at the bottom of the email (see Appendix B). At the end of the survey, they submitted their responses anonymously, and that ended the participation for the students. Given a low response rate, the same email was sent out again two weeks later. There was a more representative number of responses from both the BASW and MSW level after the second notice.

Human Subjects Procedures

Approval for the conduct of this research was received from the University of Iowa IRB on June 23rd, 2016. This study only included minimal risks for participants. Recognizing that any study may have some risks, the primary risk for participants was possible stress about data not being confidential. However, to address this risk, participants were told it was an anonymous survey, it did not ask personal identifying questions, and participants could complete the survey at any time or location. Another potential risk was participants realizing they may not have as much emotional intelligence as they thought. To address this risk, it is recognized that all students are enrolled in the social work program at the University of Iowa; therefore, they could talk to their instructors or advisors if they were worried about their own emotional intelligence.

This survey had continuous consent which means that participants did not have to start the survey, they could not answer any questions they did not want to, and they did not have to submit the survey. There was no penalty for not completing the survey or choosing not to participate.

The possible benefits from this study are an increase in emotional intelligence awareness, a desire for more research, and possibly more training in emotional intelligence in the School of Social Work at the University of Iowa.

Results

This study analyzed the emotional intelligence scores of participants compared to a typical average for the general public. Using Qualtrics, a total of 107 responses were received when the survey was sent to approximately 375 students giving a response rate of 29%. Of these, 90 participants (84% of respondents) completed the emotional intelligence survey items. Eighty-six reported their program level: 19 (22%) reported being a BASW student and 66 (77%) identified being an MSW student. Approximately, 125 BASW students received a survey and 19 returned one making the response rate for BASW students 15%. Sixty-six MSW students returned a survey making their response rate 27%.

Overall, participants ranged in age from 19 to 51 with an average age of 28. Six participants (5.6 %) identified as male, 82 (76.6%) identified as female, and 2 (1.9%) wished not to disclose. Fifty-seven percent reported knowing what emotional intelligence was. The average emotional intelligence score was 126.7 among all participants with scores ranging from 83 to 151. The mean for BASW students was 123.1 and for MSW students, 127.7.

The first hypothesis was that social workers would have a higher emotional intelligence than the general public. The average score of the general public has been reported as 124 with 111 and 137 being low or high in emotional intelligence (Malouff, 2016; Schutte et al. 2010). To test this hypothesis, a one-sample t-test was conducted. The average in this sample was 126.7. The results of the t-test indicated statistical significance between the two groups ($t(88) = 2.17$, $p = .03$). This suggests that the social work students participating in this study had, on average, statistically significantly higher emotional intelligence than the general public.

The second hypothesis, that MSW students would score higher on emotional intelligence than BASW students, was tested with an independent samples t-test on SPSS. The results of the t-test indicated there was no significance between the two groups. The MSW students, on average had a scale score of 127.7 and the BASW students had a 123.1. However, there was no significance between the two groups ($t(83) = -1.459, p = .148$). The hypothesis was not supported.

The third hypothesis was that participants would request more emotional intelligence training. Forty seven percent said *yes* and 53% said *no* or *I don't care*. This hypothesis was not supported. A one way ANOVA was used to see if there was a relationship between emotional intelligence scores and whether participants wanted more emotional intelligence training. For example, I was curious whether those with low emotional intelligence wanted more training. The results indicated there was not a statistical difference in emotional intelligence scores between those wanting more training on emotional intelligence ($F(2,86) = .613, p = .54$).

Discussion

The results will be explained in order of the hypotheses given at the beginning of this paper. The first hypothesis, social work students in this study will score higher on the SSEIT than the general population, was accepted because the t-test showed a significant difference between the general population's emotional intelligence average scores and the scores of the social workers measured during this research. This means that this sample's emotional intelligence scores average was higher than the general population's emotional intelligence average. This is interesting because it supports the idea that social workers already have higher emotional intelligences.

There are several things that may account for this finding. One could be that participants gave themselves higher answers than they actually have because they were worried that,

somehow, their professors would find out. They could also give themselves higher scores than normal because it is a self-report measure compared to an experiment measure recorded by someone else.

Looking at the sample collected in this study, there was a relatively low response rate for both the BASW and MSW participants. Because participation was voluntary, students with low emotional intelligence may not have answered the survey; therefore, the average may not have been statistically different if all students in the program participated. Similarly, this research was conducted at one university in the U.S Midwest; there may not have been a statistical difference between the general public and a different location sample.

The second hypothesis that MSW students would have higher emotional intelligence scores than BASW students was not supported. The t-test showed that the difference was not statistically significant; therefore, the scores between the two groups were too similar to be significant. This is interesting because it would be thought that emotional intelligence grows through field placement and courses in the master level. Because this survey was sent out in September, incoming students at both the BASW and MSW level could have no prior social work education compared to those with a BASW in social work or participants who had been enrolled in the School of Social Work for at least a year. Therefore, the results may have shown a statistical difference if the survey was sent out in April or May. At the time, these results may illustrate the need to enhance emotional intelligence in social work courses if students are not becoming more emotionally intelligent through classes and field placement on their own.

The third hypothesis that the majority social work students would request more training on emotional intelligence was partially supported. As discussed in the results section, about 50% of students wanted more training in emotional intelligence. This shows that even though the

students surveyed have higher emotional intelligences than the general population, about half still want more training. This could be because students are aware of the stress that social workers are put under like low pay, long work hours, and emotional fatigue. This reiterates that curriculum and trainings could be beneficial for social work students. Half of the students responding they did not care or that they did not want more training could be because they assumed that curriculum about emotional intelligence would be included in their courses. Other possible reasons include: they were concerned that answering yes would mean that they would be contacted about trainings or curriculum; they did not think they needed more emotional intelligence training; or they thought that other things in the School of Social Work curriculum were more important to go over. A possible response to this split would be giving more space for emotions in classrooms and giving social work students optional trainings and discussions outside of class.

Limitations of Study Design

There are several potential limitations to this study. For example, participants could choose whether to participate or not (29% response rate); therefore, people who have low emotional intelligence might not have wanted to take the survey. Similarly, students had to check their emails to receive the invitation to complete the survey. Therefore, the data only included people who checked their email regularly. Also, people may have skipped the email if they are not interested in research.

Luckily, the instrument has established validity (Schutte et al. 2010). However, the instrument itself was self-reported which means that people could have scored themselves as higher or lower on items compared to an experimental design that is rated by another person.

Finally, the study was only taken at the one school, the University of Iowa. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize to a larger population. Another reason it is difficult to generalize to the larger public is because of the small sample size, $n=107$.

Implications for Further Research

For future research, I would suggest more studies on emotional intelligence in social work. The research has shown little studies that explored emotional intelligence (Nogaye 2010) and even less within the social work field. An intervention study that has an experimental group with a social work emotional intelligence intervention and a control group that does not with a pre and posttest is recommended. Conducting this study at the beginning of a program and at the end could be beneficial to see if the school supports emotional intelligence growth. Similarly, I would recommend a larger sample size that allows for different locations and schools to compare scores. Looking at different geographic locations as well as more programs to examine if studies taken other places receive similar or different results would also be interesting.

Implication for the School of Social Work at the University of Iowa

The School of Social Work at the University of Iowa might consider reviewing their curriculum to enhance or add emotional intelligence content due to the stress and emotional fatigue that is common in field placement and social work practice. This would include more time spent on self-care, discussing stress management, practicing empathy early in the program, participating in feeling recognition in more classes, and making resources to enhance emotional intelligence accessible.

Implications for Practice

Similar to the University of Iowa, I hope that this research study can open the door to schools considering incorporating emotional intelligence in their curriculum. Also, continuing

education trainings could be offered for professionals to enhance or recognize their emotional intelligence. Even for pre-k through high school, time spent on emotions, emotional processing, and emotional intelligence can give students more tools to handle, express, and support emotions.

Reflection on Honors Project

This project to satisfy the second level of my honors curriculum has been interesting, difficult, eye opening and exciting. It was interesting to become an expert in this field. Collecting and analyzing data for my own study made the results become more meaningful. For example, figuring out if the differences between groups were significant, and explaining it on paper after made me feel like more of a researcher.

The project was also difficult. I have never done a research study to this extent before, and have only done a few other things similar. Therefore, putting it all together was challenging at times. For the literature review, connecting everything that I thought was important to the main idea was not easy as I thought either. However, the main thing that I would have done differently is done more things during the Spring and Summer so that I did not have so much to do this past semester.

With this in mind, this experience has, more than anything been exciting and eye-opening. I have never been good at taking criticism; however, meeting every two weeks with my honors advisor has allowed me to learn how to effectively take criticism. Also, that I can handle criticism and sometimes it is very necessary.

Also, the fact that I have actually done a research study about something that interests me during my undergraduate degree is exciting in itself. It is not something that a lot of people get to say and gives me a sense of accomplishment and ownership. I feel that it has strongly prepared

me for research during my master's degree while my fellow peers may not have been able to experience the same opportunity.

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Appendix A

The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)

Instructions: Indicate the extent to which each item applies to you using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neither disagree nor agree

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

1. I know when to speak about my personal problems to others
2. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them
3. I expect that I will do well on most things I try
4. Other people find it easy to confide in me
5. I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people*
6. Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important
7. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities
8. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living
9. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them
10. I expect good things to happen
11. I like to share my emotions with others
12. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last
13. I arrange events others enjoy
14. I seek out activities that make me happy
15. I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others
16. I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others
17. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me
18. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing
19. I know why my emotions change
20. When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas
21. I have control over my emotions
22. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them
23. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on
24. I compliment others when they have done something well
25. I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send
26. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself
27. When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas
28. When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail*
29. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them
30. I help other people feel better when they are down
31. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles
32. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice
33. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do*

Appendix B.

Hello,

My name is Miranda Mulcrone, and I am an undergraduate student in the BASW program at the University of Iowa. I am conducting a research study about emotional intelligence as part of my second level honors requirement. I am reaching out to ask if you would like to participate in this study.

If you agree to participate, I would like you to complete an online survey (link below). Your participation is voluntary, which means you may choose not to participate, are free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer, you may ask questions if they arise, and can stop the survey at any time. There is no right or wrong answer to any of the questions. We are interested in your opinions. The survey should take 10-15 minutes.

If you have any questions, please email me at [email].

Survey url: <https://uiowa.qualtrics.com/>

Thank you for your time,

Miranda Mulcrone