

Self-Concept of the Bachelor of Science in Social Work Students of the University of Northern Philippines

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Abstract

This study endeavored to determine the level of self-concept of the social work students of the University of Northern Philippines. It utilized the descriptive method of research with a questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument.

The research involved 73 social work students from first year to fourth year, during the second semester of school year 2007-2008.

The respondents who mostly studied at public high schools reside in the rural areas. They come from low income families comprising of 3-4 children. Their parents have a low level of educational attainment.

The self-concept of the students was found out to be at a "high" level. Year level and mothers' education were noted to significantly contribute to the self-concept of the students.

Majority of the social work students who completed their secondary education at public high schools belong to low income families comprising of 3-4 children where both parents had low level of educational attainment. Furthermore, social work students who are mostly from the rural areas belong to closely knit families.

Social work students have high regards of themselves. They have strong faith in the Almighty, are more or less contented with themselves and show concern for the welfare of others. However, as normal beings just like anyone else they sometimes fall short of expected conduct.

The social work students' self-concept is highly influenced by their year level and their mother's education. Indeed moving on to a higher level of learning is vital and instrumental to self-development. Mothers on the other hand, remain to be the most influential figure in the person's life.

The following recommendations are forwarded: 1) In order to further enhance the social work students' self-concept, the college of social work in cooperation with the university guidance center and the social work students' organization should plan for appropriate student development activities; 2) Faculty advisers in cooperation with subject teachers should continuously monitor the development of the students. This way, appropriate measure can be undertaken to ward off the existence of more serious student problems; and 3) A study on the relationship between self concept and emotional quotient be made as an offshoot of this investigation.

Introduction

Background of the Study

Self concept represents the person's beliefs about himself. It is how one describes oneself which includes one's values, goals, traits, interest and motivations. Gradually, it comes into being with the person's experiences with significant people. Thus, wholesome interaction with people is vital to the development of healthy and stable self concept. However, as an individual advances in age, he encounters varied situations which may validate or invalidate his conceived notions of himself.

Time and again, the family is always looked up to as the most influential in the development of children's self concept. The emotional atmosphere of the home provides children with feelings of security or insecurity, acceptance or of hostility and defiance of authority.

Also playing an important role in self concept development is the school. The school's major task is to ensure that the curriculum is conducive to the well rounded development of students. It should provide for various opportunities for students to develop their unique talents and potentialities.

Nowadays, with the effects of the fast changing world brought about by media exposure and other uncompromising events young people often times become confused. They fail to achieve a truly congruent picture of themselves resulting to their inability or even failure to meet the demands and challenges of daily life.

Whenever the developed self-concept of an individual does not parallel with his actual experiences involving himself and others he is said to be psychologically in trouble. Such a person faces the danger of not knowing who and what he is. Consequently, not only his social relationship is affected but more so of his capacity to function at an adequate level.

In the University of Northern Philippines particularly in the College of Social Work where students are prepared to become social work practitioners, the personal and professional use of self has become the core of social work education. As always stressed in most of the professional subjects, on top of all the knowledge, attitudes and skills that must be acquired by a social worker is a deep and through knowledge, understanding and acceptance of the self giving way to a better use of the self in a professional manner.

As stressed by De Guzman (1992), the underlying purpose of social work effort is to release all human power in individuals for personal fulfillment and social good, in order to create a kind of society which will make self-realization possible for all men.

In simple terms the purpose of social work is the enhancement of a person's social functioning, that is, the improvement of his interaction between himself and his environment. The realization of this very noble purpose, however, withholding all other factors, is largely dependent upon the kind and quality of the social worker as a person and as a professional.

It is with this perspective that the researcher has been motivated to know the level of self-concept of the social work students. Results of this study can provide the College of Social Work with the baseline data to further improve or enhance its curricular and extracurricular programs and activities to help students prepare themselves for their chosen profession. It can also be used by faculty adviser and subject teachers to be more understanding and sensitive so that they can better help students especially those special personal concerns. Results can also be a good resource material for the guidance counselor in the formulation of programs and activities geared towards the development of healthy self-concept among students. Lastly, results can also serve as cues for students in better understanding themselves so as to enable them become increasingly more self-reliant.

Objectives of the Study

This study attempted to determine the level of self-concept of the Bachelor of Science in Social Work students of the University of Northern Philippines during the second semester of school year 2007-2008.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the Social Work students in terms of the following socio demographic factors;

- a. curriculum year;
 - b. type of high school attended;
 - c. number of children in the family;
 - d. family status;
 - e. honors received;
 - f. membership in organization;
 - g. place of residence;
 - h. parents' educational attainment;
 - i. family income; and
 - j. exposure to mass media?
2. What is the level of self-concept of the respondents in terms of the following components, taken singly and as a whole?
- a. spirituality;
 - b. self-acceptance; and
 - c. social relations?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their level of self-concept?

Review of Related Literature

This section presents a review of some theories, concepts and related studies which can be used as valuable guide in the formulation of the direction of this present investigation.

A healthy self-concept is man's greatest source of strength. His success and failure in any undertaking, be it a productive endeavor or along social relations, depends on the extent of how well he views himself.

According to Rogers (1993) self concept plays an important role in personality development because it influences one's behavior, feelings and thoughts, A positive self concept enables one to act, feel and think optimistically and constructively. A negative self-concept on the other hand, results in one to think pessimistically and destructively.

William James, a noted American psychologist explained that the self is constructed around three basic components, they are the "material me" which includes one's body, the clothes that one wears, the member of one's immediate family; the "social me" which refers to the recognition that one receives from his fellow human beings and finally the "spiritual me" the central nucleus of one's inner or subjective being, the entire collection of the person's status of consciousness.

On the other hand E. Higgins (1993) had set forth a recent view of the self. He considers the relationship between three selves namely: the actual self, the ideal self and the ought self. Incongruence between the actual self and the ideal self will make a person feel depressed. Incongruence between the actual self and the ought self will make a person feel anxious.

Naomi Brill in her book *Working with People* had explained that self-acceptance and liking involves a continuous process of awareness, assessment and flexibility. Those who aspire therefore to use the self in a disciplined and knowledgeable way in relationships with other people must have a personal objectivity based on: (1) awareness of self and personal needs, (2) ability to deal with their own patterns of personality, and (3) resultant freedom from placing limitations on their individual ability to perceive with clarity and relate with honesty.

In the study of Ricon (1983) on the Factors Related with the self-concept of high school students in Palawan, she found out that the educational attainment of parents is a significant factor in the development of the students' self-concept.

More recent studies show that family conditions are important factors in the development of children's self-concept affecting their ways of coping or adjusting to the demands of daily living.

In Baroch's study as cited by Gaerlan et al (2008), a strong relationship is found between children's personality adjustment and marital relationships of their parents. Children who grew in homes marked by family discord are inferior in personal adjustment as compared to children from homes characterized by confidence, affection and companionability.

Finally, with the above discussions, the researcher finds some theoretical guide in so far as the direction of the study is concerned. The present study then is anchored on the proposition that the self concept of the social work students is significantly related with their socio demographic profile.

Methodology

This study made use of the descriptive survey design. According to Best, descriptive research describes and interprets data. It is concerned with conditions that exist, opinions that are held and trends that are developing. As applied in this study, the data were generated through the use of a questionnaire, analyzed and interpreted them in order to answer the questions raised earlier stated.

A total enumeration of all the BSSW students who were enrolled for the second semester of school year 2007-2008 were taken as respondents.

In this study, the researcher made use of a Self-Concept Rating Scale. Said instrument was formulated by the researcher with the help of three social work educators.

Divided into two parts, the questionnaire includes: Part I, the profile of the respondents and Part II, the level of the respondents self-concept.

The data gathered used the following statistical tools; frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean and (χ^2) chi square test.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

On Year Level. As reflected in the table a great number (21 or 29.2%) of the respondents are in their third year while the least (14 or 19.4%) are in their fourth year. The data tend to show that there are more social work students who are in their third year.

Table 1. Profile of the BSSW Students.

Socio-Demographic Profile	F	%
Year Level		
I	20	27.8
II	17	23.6
III	21	29.2
IV	14	19.4
Total	72	100
Type of High School Attended		
Private	20	27.8
Public	52	72.2
Total	72	100
No. of Children in the Family		
1-2	9	12.5
3-4	30	41.7
5-6	22	30.5
7-8	8	11.1
9-10	3	4.2
Total	72	100

Table I continued

Socio-Demographic Profile	F		%	
Family Status				
Parents living together	61		84.7	
Separated	8		11.1	
Widowed	3		4.2	
Total	72		100	
Membership in Organization				
School based	42		58.3	
Community based	10		13.8	
Church based	20		27.9	
Total	72		100	
Place of Residence				
Rural	59		81.9	
Poblacion	13		18.1	
Total	72		100	
Parents' Educational Attainment	Father		Mother	
	No.	%	No.	%
No formal schooling			1	1.4
Elementary level	6	8.3	7	9.7
Elementary graduate	9	12.5	11	15.3
High school level	32	44.4	22	33.3
High school graduate	6	8.3	5	6.9
College level	17	23.6	17	23.6
College graduate	2	2.8	7	9.7
Total	72	100	72	100
Family Income	F		%	
P3,000 and below	12		16.7	
P3,001 - P6,000	19		26.4	
P6,001 - 9,000	20		27.8	
P9,001 -- 12,000	14		19.4	
P12,001 and above	7		9.7	
Total	72		100	
Exposure to Mass Media				
Television	50		44.64	
Radio	37		33.03	
Newspaper	25		22.32	
Total	112		100	
Honors Received				
Academic	21		29.17	
Co-curricular	14		19.44	
Religious	8		11.11	
Socio-civic	3		4.17	
Not applicable	26		36.11	
Total	72		100	

On Type of High School Attended. The table clearly shows that majority (52 or 72.2%) of the respondents had their secondary educational completed at public high schools while the least (20 or 27.8%) came from private high schools. The data suggest that most social work students come from public high schools where there are no fees to be paid.

On Number of Children in the Family. It appears on the table that most (30 or 41.7%) of the respondents come from families with 3-4 children while the least (3 or 4.2%) come from families with 9-10 children. The data tend to show that there are more social work students coming from families with more or less ideal size.

On Family Status. The table shows that majority (61 or 84.7%) of the respondents belong to intact families where parents live together. This observation could be attributed to the fact that Filipino families are closely knitted.

Membership in Organization. As glimpsed from the table, majority (42 or 58.3%) of the respondents are members of school based organization while the least (10 or 13.8%) are members of organizations in the community. The data tend to show that the respondents are social beings and as such they seek membership in organizations that would satisfy their belongingness and affiliation needs.

On Place of Residence. It is shown on the table that majority (59 or 81.9%) of the respondents are from the barrio while the least (13 or 18.05%) reside in the poblacion. The data tend to show that there are more social work students who come from the rural areas.

On Parents' Educational Attainment. It is reflected on the table that most (32 or 44.4%) of the respondents' fathers did not complete their secondary education while the least (2 or 2.8%) are college graduates. The data tend to imply that most of the respondents' fathers have low level of education.

The table also reflects that most (24 or 33.3%) of the respondents' mothers are high school undergraduates while the least (1 or 1.4%) did not even have a formal schooling. It is interesting to note however that there are 7 or 9.7% who are college graduates. The data tend to show that the respondents' mothers just like their fathers have a low level of educational attainment.

On Monthly Family Income. As glimpsed from the table most (20 or 27.8%) of the respondents have a family income of P6,001-9,000 while the least (7 or 9.7%) have 12,001 and above. The data tend to show that most of the respondents come from low income families.

On Exposure to Mass Media. It can be seen from the table that majority (50 or 44.64%) of the respondents have access to television while the least (25 or 22.32%) claimed to be exposed to newspapers.

The data suggest that most of the social work students are watching the television. This could be attributed to the entertainment value of TV viewing can provide. As such TV viewing seems to be the most convenient or easiest way of getting information compared to newspaper reading.

On Honors Received. The table clearly shows that most (26 or 36.11%) of the respondents did not receive any honor while the least (3 or 4.17%) had been recipients of socio-civic awards or honors. It is interesting to note however, that there were 21 or 29.17% who had been given academic honors.

Table 2. Item Mean Responses of Spirituality Dimension of Self-Concept of the Social Work Students.

Items	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. God has a purpose in creating me.	4.6	Very High
2. God loves me despite my imperfections	4.5	Very High
3. I am confident that God will always protect me.	4.8	Very High
4. God is my number one counselor	4.3	Very High
5. I am careful not to hurt others because God tells us to love one another	4.0	High
6. I love God that I wish to preserve everything He created.	4.0	High
7. I usually blame God for my tribulations such as loss of loved ones and family problems.	3.9	High
8. I pray only in times of crisis.	3.8	High
9. God makes Himself felt through our possession and enjoyment of material things	3.1	Moderate
10. If God truly loves me, He will not allow me to fail.	4.0	High
Overall	4.0	High

As illustrated on Table 2, the respondents had a "High" level of spirituality dimension of their self-concept. This is backed up by a mean score of 4.0. On a specific item analysis, the item "I am confident that God will always protect me" got the highest mean score of 4.8 (Very High) while the item "If God truly loves me He will not allow me to fail" got the lowest mean score of 3.0 (Moderate). The data tend to suggest that while the respondents seem to have faith in God there could probably be times that their faith is challenged by experiences of failures and frustrations.

Table 3. Item Mean Responses of Self-Acceptance Dimension of Self-Concept of the Social Work Students

Items	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. I am contented with my physical appearance.	4.1	High
2. Whenever I make wrong decisions I can always forgive myself.	3.9	High
3. I have confidence in my abilities.	3.8	High
4. I can accept criticisms and treat them as inputs for my own personal growth.	3.7	High
5. No matter who they are I am still proud of my family	3.8	High
6. Whenever I experience failure I blame myself and feel so frustrated.		
7. I know I have limitations but I make it a point to achieve my goal in due time.	3.6	High
8. At times I feel stubborn and do something wrong but I can quickly rectify my mistakes.	3.3	Moderate
9. When provoked I lose my composure and get confused.	2.8	Moderate
10. There are a lot of things in myself that I can not accept.	2.6	Moderate
Overall	3.53	High

As shown on Table 3, the respondents had a "high" level of self-acceptance dimension of their self-concept. This is backed up by a mean score of 3.53. However, a closer examination of the table reveals that the item "I am contented with my physical appearance" got the highest mean score of 4.1 (high) while the item "There are a lot of things in myself which I cannot accept" got the lowest mean score of 2.6 (moderate).

The data tend to imply that while the respondents have a high level of self-acceptance especially in terms of their physical appearance there could still be some other details of themselves which they can not accept. This could be possibly explained by the fact that humans as complicated beings rarely attain complete satisfaction in all aspects of life.

Table 4. Item Mean Responses of Social Relation Dimension of Self-Concept of the Social Work Students

Items	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. I always get back at anyone who maligns me	3.03	Moderate
2. I entertain gossips and character assassination	3.07	Moderate
3. I don't care if I hurt others so long as I enjoy what I am doing	3.0	Moderate
4. I would like to be at peace rather than in conflict with my friends.	3.9	High
5. I encourage my friends to realize their dreams and be successful	3.64	High
6. I am happy with the achievement of others	4.0	High
7. Its alright for me to put down people if only I shall go ahead of them	2.60	Low
8. My friends can trust and depend on me.	3.72	High
9. I find it easy adjusting myself to anybody	3.4	Moderate
10. My friends enjoy my company	3.6	High
Overall	3.40	Moderate

Legend:

4.21- 5.0	Very high
3.41- 4.20	High
2.61 - 3.40	Moderate
1.81- 2.60	Low
1.00- 1.8	Very low

As shown in the table, the respondents had a moderate level of social relation dimension of their self-concept. This is supported by an overall mean score of 3.40. On a per item analysis, the table clearly shows that the item "I am happy with the achievement of others" got the highest mean score of 4.0 while the item "Its alright for me to put down people if only I shall go ahead of them" got the lowest mean of 2.60.

The data tend to show that even when the respondents' level of social relation is only moderate, they seem to be socially sensitive in that they find happiness in their friends' achievement and would do the least of putting down others as a means of elevating oneself.

Table 5. Level of Self Concept of the Social Work Students

Dimension of Self Concept	Mean	Descriptive Rating
I. Spirituality	4.0	High
2. Self Acceptance	3.53	High
3. Social Relation	3.40	Moderate
Overall	3.64	High

The table clearly shows that on the over all the respondents level of self-concept is high ($\bar{x}=3.64$). The data tend to imply that the respondents have positive view of themselves. This runs parallel with what is expected that students in social work should have favorable attitude of themselves as they will be making use of a great deal about themselves in helping others, an essential in the social work profession.

Table 6. Relationship Between the Profile of the Social Work Students and their Level of Self-Concept

Profile	Spirituality	Self-Acceptance	Social Relations	Overall
Year level	0.78	5.59	6.13	5.79*
Type of high school attended	3.97	0.002	0.60	0.26
No. of children	3.29	1.52	0.54	0.48
Family status	1.16	0.72	2.80	0.13
Membership in organization	1.30	2.83	1.18	1.11
Place of residence	0.25	0.02	0.60	0.16
Parents' Educational Attainment				
Father	1.92	3.38	6.42	7.23
Mother	0.82	3.40	4.24	7.53*
Family income	3.09	5.78	7.02	1.87
Exposure to mass media	0.44	1.55	4.06	1.90
Honors received	0.58	0.76	0.56	0.47

Significant at 0.05

Table 5 clearly shows that on the overall year level (5.79) and mother's educational attainment (7.53) are significantly related with the respondents' level of self-concept.

The manifested relationship between year level and self-concept of the student could be possibly explained by the effect of increasing levels of awareness, exposure and learning one gets as he progresses from one year level to another.

On the other hand, the noted relationship between mothers' education and self-concept of the respondents tend to validate the established belief that mothers play very significant roles in the personality development of their children.

Conclusions

1. Majority of the social work students who completed their secondary education at public high schools belong to low income families comprising of 3-4 children where both parents had low level of educational attainment. Furthermore, social work students who are mostly from the barrios come from closely knit families.

2. Social work students have high regards of themselves. They have strong faith in the Almighty, are more or less contented with themselves and show concern for the welfare of others. However, as normal beings just like anyone else they sometimes fall short of expected conduct.

3. The social work students' concept of themselves is highly influenced by their year level and their mother's education. Indeed, moving on to a higher level of learning is vital and instrumental to self-development. Mothers on the other hand remain to be the most influential figure in the person's life.

Recommendations

I. In order to further enhance the social work students' self-concept, the College of Social Work in cooperation with the university guidance program and the social work students' organization should plan for appropriate student development activities.

2. Faculty advisers in cooperation with subject teachers should continuously monitor the development of the students. This way, appropriate measures can be undertaken to ward off the existence of more serious student problems.

3. A study on the relationship between self-concept and emotional quotient be made as an offshoot of this investigation.

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