

**PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AMONG SOCIAL WORK
STUDENTS: COMPARATIVE STUDY
INDONESIA AND TAIWAN**

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Background

The social work profession aims to enhance the wellbeing of individuals, groups, and communities impacted by social disadvantages through intervention practices, research, policy-making, and teachings based on principles of human rights and social justice. Of critical importance is that professionally-prepared social workers are able to “engage people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing” (IFSW, 2014).

Social work education is designed to produce high quality graduates and competent practitioners (IFSW, 2013; Gray, 2005). In many developed countries, social work has become an established profession with advanced programs preparing students at the undergraduate and graduate levels; whereas in many developing nations, the profession and its educational institutions are still in an early stage of development. Regardless of the stage of development, the profession is challenged as to how to accomplish this goal.

The International Council on Social Work Education and the International Federation of Social Work have stipulated the need for competency-based education as a critical foundation for supporting and evaluating educational outcomes. As in other related health and human service disciplines, social work education has been moving from what is taught (curriculum) to how students transfer knowledge into skills and practices (competencies) that guide their work into the future. According to Council of Social Work Education:

“Competency-based education rests upon a shared view of the nature of competence in professional practice. Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being” (CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, 2015, p. 6).

The core professional competence explained above consist of ten competency domains:

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgment.
4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
5. Advance human rights and socio-economic justice.
6. Engage in research informed practice, and practice-informed research.
7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being, and to deliver effective social work service.
9. Respond to contexts that shape practice.
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and educate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

The demand for outcome-based accountability is increasing across all service and education sectors. In line with this demand, social work research examining the implementation of professional competences has also been growing. Competence implementation research is designed to inform educational institutions about the effectiveness of their efforts to prepare competent graduates (Holden et al., 2017). Nevertheless, to date, most available studies about social work competence are limited in terms of region such as United States (Koeske et al., 1993), Israel (Cohen & Laufer, 2008), and mainland China (Guo, Guan, Yang, Xu, Zou, She, Jiang, Wang, Pan, Deng, Pan, & Fu., 2014); or mainly focused on specific aspects such competence in field practice (Parker, 2005), cultural sensitivity (Teasley, Baffour, & Tyson, 2005; Block, Rossi, Alschuler, & Wilson, 2016) or sexual minorities (McCarly-Caplan, 2017). Furthermore, existing studies have not assessed the factors influencing professional competence of social work students and the relationship between student competence and the educational and organizational environment where student learning takes place. Based on a search of the literature currently published, we were unable to find any cross-national studies examining the relationship between a country's social economic development, social work education development, classroom practices of instructors, and student perception of competence. Are these factors influential in shaping professional competence of students within a country? And if so, how are they influential?

To begin to explore this question, a comparative study between countries is needed. This study will examine how global standards that focus on educational outcomes are implemented and evaluated when there are variations with regard to the capacity of social work education institutions between nations, and seek to provide recommendations for actions to respond to these diverse challenges in a manner that supports the development of competent professional graduates. This study proposes a comparative study between Indonesia and Taiwan with regards to factors associated with the perceptions of social work college students about professional competence.

Taiwan and Indonesia share some similarities and differences in their social economic characteristics as well as the development of social work education and practices. Between the two nations, Taiwan leads in both social economic development and quality of social work educators. Taiwan has GDP per capita of above \$ 24,000 in 2017 (World Data Atlas, 2018) and is among the rank of countries with high human development levels (Focus Taiwan, 2014). Indonesia's GDP per capita in 2017 was around \$4,000 and the country is still categorized as a middle-level human development state by UNDP standards (World Bank, 2018; UNDP, 2015). Such contrasts may distinguish the existence of types and extents of social welfare problems faced by and resources available to social workers. In addition, differences in social-economic development could have an impact on the quality of human personnel that in turn affects social work education. Most social work lecturers in Taiwan have doctoral degrees and a fifth of lecturers are professors (Chang & Mo, 2007). On the other hand, the number of social work professors in Indonesia is relatively smaller and the vast majority of lecturers do not have terminal degrees.

When it comes to similarities, perhaps of most significance is how the social work profession in Indonesia and Taiwan is struggling to earn greater public recognition even though the profession's role has been specifically and formally acknowledged in various laws and regulations. Furthermore, despite the efforts to indigenize social work to become more in line with local contexts, the curricula, theoretical foundations, and textbooks used for tertiary education in both countries are greatly shaped by education models, thoughts, and scholars from the West, especially the United States. Finally, the

two countries have been continuously working to improve social work professionalization and standards through the promotion of competence-based education and certification of social work students and graduates; a reflection of their commitment to meet global standards set by CSWE and public demands (Chou, Haj-Yahia, Wang & Fu, 2006; Chang & Mo, 2007; Feng, 2008; O'Leary, Young, McAuliffe, & Wismayanti, 2010; Fahrudin & Yusuf, 2016).

Objectives

- 1) Gain an understanding of the perceived professional competencies among undergraduate social work students in Indonesia and Taiwan
- 2) Examine the influence of individual, organizational, and social/economic development on teaching capacity and student perception of competence

Research questions

1. Do social work college students in Indonesia and Taiwan differ in their perception of their professional competence?
2. What factors influence perception of professional competence among social work college students in the two countries?

Theoretical Framework

Competency-based education is commonly regarded as the learning experience that integrates various skills, abilities, and knowledge to build intended competence. As in social work education, according to CSWE, competence-based education is:

“[...] an outcome performance approach to curriculum design. Competencies are measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. The goal of the outcome approach is to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The ten core competencies are listed below ... followed by a description of characteristic knowledge, values, skills, and the resulting practice behaviors” (p3).

The ecological approach will be utilized to analyze different levels of factors associated with students' perceptions of professional competence. This approach views professional competence as being shaped by various internal and external factors that interact with one another. Those factors are rooted in the micro, mezzo and macro levels of environment the students deal with.

At the micro level, individual factors such as motivation, self-efficacy or experience may have an impact on how an individual regards his or her competence. A calling or passion and meaningful sense felt by individuals toward his or her work is regarded as an individual characteristic that can affect someone's sense of competence as it motivates them to pursue their professional goals (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011). A study among students in mainland China confirmed that students with higher levels of calling towards the social work profession reported higher levels of professional competence (Guo et al., 2014). Other variables such as academic achievement is also viewed as affecting the student's competence. A study among MSW students from five universities in mainland China found that the higher the grade students obtained, the

more they were perceived to have higher levels of professional competence. (Wang, Guo, Findley, Lu & Huang, 2015).

In addition to individual factors, perceptions of professional competence are shaped by environmental factors. Among environmental factors, the nature of mezzo environments such as educational institutions and work supervision are regarded as very important predictors. The nature of educational institutions may predict the competence and the extent of career-oriented learning it offers to the students. A study by Guo et al. (2014) found that perceptions of higher competence were commonly reported by students from social work programs with greater career-oriented characteristics. A career-oriented environment is characterized by various attributes, including an educational environment that delivers substance and tools of practice in line with students' careers, emphasizes the importance of transferring skills of use in various practical contexts, and applies various teaching methods that encourage students to reflect and become fully involved. In addition, a study among social workers in Israel found that those who were satisfied with their supervision reported perceptions of higher professional competence (Cohen & Laufer, 2008).

At the macro level, a country's level of social economy can be viewed as a determinant of students' competence. Developed countries are assumed to allocate more resources and support for social work education to run effective and appropriate educational processes to produce competent graduates than less developed states. Another explanation could relate to the fact that social work is more established in developed regions, especially Western countries, than in developing regions; thus, making the standardization of social work education in Western regions more advanced than less developed region (Noble, 2004). To date, only one study that takes into account country development has been conducted. This study compared the perceptions of professional competence between social work students in mainland China and the United States and found that Chinese students reported lower levels of professional competencies than American students (Wang et al., 2015). More evidence needs to be built to examine the influence of macro social-economic environment—as this study intends to achieve.

Methodology

Design

The study is primarily quantitative in nature.

Samples and sampling

The universities included in this study are those that are nationally accredited in each country. They will be systematically sampled so that they are representative in accommodating diversity in terms of program size, program characteristics, or region/location of social work education in the two countries. The samples were undergraduate social work students who are studying at their final year or close to graduation and are in or have completed a field placement. The students were non-randomly sampled. The research obtained data from at least 700 students proportionately distributed between the two countries.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data from students were collected through a survey. Students were approached in classes and asked to participate in the study. The coordination with and permission from the programs and lecturers were completed and obtained, respectively, prior to recruitment and data collection. Those who agreed to participate were expected to complete a paper-based survey as identified below. A description of the study along

with an informed consent form were distributed to each participant. The survey could be completed within 35 to 45 minutes.

The following standardized measures will be used for the survey:

1. Professional Competence was measured using *Self-Efficacy Regarding Social Work Competencies* (Holden et al., 2017). The Scale consists of 41 items that measure an individual's degree of confidence to practice 41 behaviors representing 10 social work competencies set by the Council of Social Work Education. Respondents indicated their degree of confidence by choosing one of the 11 responses from 0 (cannot do) to 100 (highly certain can do). Higher scores indicate higher professional competence. The reliability test showed that the instrument has a very good reliability, with a .98 score in both Indonesia and Taiwan.
2. Professional commitment was an independent variable, which was measured using the *Calling toward Profession* scale constructed by Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas (2011). Participants were asked to rate 12 items on a 5-point scale where 1=extremely disagree and 5=extremely agree. An example of an item is "I am passionate about being a social worker". Cronbach alpha test values for Indonesia and Taiwan were .93 and .96, respectively, indicating high reliability.
3. The learning environment is an independent variable which was examined using a scale developed in China by Guo et al. (2014) that measures three aspects: career-oriented teaching methods, program orientation, and career guidance. The scale consists of 12 items rated on a five-point scale where 1=extremely disagree and 5=extremely agree. Examples of the items are "multiple teaching methods are integrated to strengthen the learning effects" and "frequent professional education activities are arranged for students to grasp relevant skills". Cronbach alphas for Indonesia and Taiwan were very high: .88 and .94 respectively.
4. Demographic information on students' age, gender, GPA, country of origin, work experience and field placement experience were collected as well.

All instruments for students were translated to Bahasa Indonesia and Mandarin and then distributed to students in Indonesia and Taiwan. Translation from English to Bahasa Indonesia or Mandarin were done by bilingual experts to ensure accuracy. A pretest was conducted with a small number of students from both countries to make sure that the instruments were readable and understandable. The researcher worked with Chinese-English co-researchers from a university in Taiwan throughout the study period.

All quantitative data were stored, processed, and analyzed using SPSS. Multiple regressions were performed to analyze the findings from the survey. Beta scores (standardized coefficient) were used to indicate the direction and size of effect of the predictor variable on outcome variables (Field, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Protection of Human Subjects

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained a research ethics approval through a Research Office at a public university in Taipei that was used for all research locations in Taiwan. A research ethic approval through the researcher's university in Indonesia was also obtained to justify research in all Indonesian sites.

Informed Consent

When students were informed about the study in their class, the informed consent forms were distributed. The script for describing the study and providing information about informed consent was attached. There were opportunities to ask questions about the study. Any student who wanted to participate could then attend a separate scheduled time to complete the survey online. The first page of the survey contained the informed consent so that prior to starting the survey, students would be asked to check a box stating their consent to participate.

Protection of Confidentiality

To protect confidentiality, this research did not ask students to include any individual identifying information. Data from questionnaires were transported into an SPSS database in a password protected computer. Hard copies of questionnaires were stored in a locked cabinet and would be destroyed after one (1) year.

Potential risks

The risk for taking part in this study was very minimal. The students might find discomfort in spending time involved in the research. However participation in the study was voluntary so that potential participants could choose to participate, refuse or withdraw from the study without any penalties. The questions asked were not sensitive in nature and thus were considered to not cause any harm to the participants. No instructors or lecturers were present when students filled in the questionnaires, thereby reducing potential pressure that may affect students' responses.

Benefits for the Participants

The participants did not obtain direct benefits from the study. However, indirectly, students may have benefitted from participating in this study, which had the potential to make them more aware of the following: their self-assessment regarding their confidence in professional competence as a future social worker, their learning environment, and motivation to pursue the social work field. In the long run, this study could provide important information for international efforts designed to improve social work education. Student perceptions of their practice competence are essential for guiding curriculum and program modifications to ensure adequate preparation and transfer of core competencies into the work place.

Compensation

The researcher provided gift cards to randomly selected respondents among Taiwanese students. An amount of NT\$15,000 was allocated to buy 50 gift cards for selected participants. The research assistant asked the lecturer/instructor to manage the selection of the gift cards.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of respondents are summarized in the table 1 below. The total of 370 Indonesian students from nine universities participated in the study. The nine universities were located in three major Indonesian regions: four universities from Western Indonesia (Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung School of Social

Welfare, Islamic State University Jakarta and Universitas Pasundan), three universities in Central Indonesia (Islamic State University Yogyakarta, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, and Universitas Jember), and another two universities located in Eastern Indonesia (Universitas Kristen Maluku Indonesia and Universitas Cendrawasih, Papua). Of those nine universities, six are public and three are private universities. Students from public universities made up the biggest portion of the respondents (92.4%).

The Indonesian students in this study were within the range of 19 to 26 years old with the average age of 21.20 years (SD=.93). Almost 70% of students were female. In terms of field practice, students reported 2-4 field practice experiences with the average of 2 field practicum. No Indonesian students in this study reported having work experience prior or during their study. The range of GPA was 2 (The lowest) and 4 (the highest), with an average of 3.61 on the 4.0 scale (SD=2.4).

In Taiwan, 459 students from 11 universities participated in the study. The location of those 11 universities represented a combination of varied types (public-private) and locations (rural-urban and region). These universities included: National Taiwan University, National Pingtung of Sciences and Technology and National Quemoy, Shi Chien University, Asia University, Providence University, Chaoyang University of Technology, Chia Nan University of Pharmacy and Sciences, Chang Jung Christian University, Tzu Chi University. Unlike Indonesia, the majority of Taiwanese students came from private universities (84.3%).

Similar to Indonesia, the majority of Taiwanese students in the study were females (slightly above 75%). As in Indonesia, the majority of Taiwanese students already had two field placement (86.3%) and the other 2.8 percent had more than two field practice experiences. However, around 11% reported had one time field practice. Two systems of GPA calculation were found among students in Taiwan, which were the percentage system (with 100% as the highest) and scale system (with 5 as the highest). Additional analysis was done to obtain adjusted GPA and the study found the average adjusted GPA (81.27, SD= 6.6, range 50% to 94%).

The average age of Taiwanese students was slightly older than Indonesia students with the average of 23.06 years (SD=4.8, age range 21 to 58 years). In contrast with Indonesian respondents, approximately 14% of Taiwanese students reported having a job during their studies.

Table 1. Distribution of Student's Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Indonesia (N=370)		Taiwan (N=459)	
Sex				
Males	113	30.5%	112	24.4%
Females	257	69.5%	346	75.4%
Other	-	-	1	.2%
Type of University of origin				
Public	342	92.4	72	15.7
Private	28	7.6	387	84.3
Number of field practice				
1	-	-	49	10.8
2	306	82.9	391	86.3
>2	64	17.1	13	2.8
Working experience				
Yes	0	0	49	14.3
No	370	0	390	85.7

The average for social work calling among Indonesian students was 59.25 (SD=11.85) and 51.19 (SD=15.24) among Taiwanese students. Considering the range for the calling score (7 to 84,) the average social work calling in the two countries found in this study was within the range of moderate level. For perception about academic environment, the average score for both Indonesian and Taiwanese students was relatively similar, 68.41 (SD=8.27) and 68.32 (SD=10.78), respectively. Given the range for perception about academic environment (19 to 95), it can be said that the scores for both countries were also within the moderate level.

Perceptions about professional competence: Indonesia and Taiwan

The range of scores for perceptions about professional competence was 0 (the lowest) to 4100 (the highest). In this study, Indonesian students reported the average score of 3020 (SD=449.80). The average score for Taiwanese students was relatively lower than Indonesians at 2780.34 (SD=202.10). However, the students' perceptions about professional competence in the two countries were within the moderate range.

With regards to competence efficacy, on average, students from Indonesia reported high degree of confidence in three areas of competences: engaged diversity and difference in practice (competence 4, mean: 77.58); engaged, assessed, intervened and evaluated individuals, family, groups, organization and community (competence 10, mean=74.95); and applied knowledge and HBSE (competence 7, mean=73.73). However, students from Indonesia generally reported low confidence with respect to competence 9: responded to context that shape practice (mean =67.74).

Meanwhile, Taiwanese students reported high degree of efficacy in three areas: engaged diversity and difference in practice (competence 4, mean =71.08), identified as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly (competence 1, mean=70.05), and engaged, assessed, intervened and evaluated individuals, family, groups, organization and community (competence 10, mean=69.7). On the contrary, students reported lowest confidence in being engaged in research informed practice and practice informed research (competence 6, mean= 58.55).

Tables 2 and 3 below summarize the distribution of students' perceptions of professional competence in Taiwan and Indonesia

Table 2. Distribution of Indonesian social work college students' perception on professional efficacy (N=370)

Competence	Level of Confidence										
	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
<i>Competence 1: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly</i>											
Advocate for client access to the services of social work (M=64.84, SD=18.40)	.3	.3	1.4	3.8	5.1	22.2	14.3	23.5	17.0	5.7	6.5
Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development (M=70.30, SD=17.21)	.3	-	.3	2.2	4.1	15.1	10.3	25.7	24.3	10.3	7.6
Attend to professional roles and boundaries (M=77.30, SD=16.81)	.3	-	.5	.5	1.6	8.1	10.3	17.3	27.6	17.8	15.9
Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication (M=75.86, SD=16.33)	.3	-	.3	.5	1.9	9.7	10.0	19.2	29.2	16.8	12.2
Engage in career-long learning (M=73.43, SD=16.62)	.3	.3	-	1.9	1.9	9.5	12.4	24.3	25.7	14.6	9.2
Use supervision and consultation (M=76.03, SD=16.68)	.3	-	.5	.8	2.2	8.4	9.5	20.3	28.1	17.3	12.7
<i>Competence 2: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice</i>											
Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice (M=74.89, SD=16.28)	.3	-	.5	1.4	1.4	9.5	9.2	21.6	31.4	14.9	10.0
Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles (M=74.57, SD= 17.10)	.3	-	-	1.1	4.1	9.5	9.7	21.9	27.8	12.2	13.5
Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts (M=67.38, SD=18.03)	.3	.3	1.4	2.2	4.9	17.3	14.1	25.7	18.6	8.9	6.5
Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions (M=73.19, SD=16.51)	.3	-	.3	1.4	2.7	9.5	12.7	25.9	24.1	13.5	9.7

<i>Competence 3: Apply critical thinking and to inform and communicate professional judgment</i>											
Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom (M=70.89, SD=15.79)	.3	.3	-	1.1	3.0	.3	16.0	29.5	21.6	10.5	6.8
Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation (M=72.78, SD=15.50)	.3	-	.3	.8	2.4	8.6	15.4	24.9	27.3	13.0	7.0
Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues (M=76.11, SD=15.16)	.3	-	-	.3	2.2	6.8	9.7	24.6	28.6	17.3	10.3
<i>Competence 4: Engage diversity and difference in practice</i>											
Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power (M=76.27, SD=16.38)	.5	.3	-	.8	1.9	5.7	10.5	23.0	28.4	16.2	12.7
Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups (M=74.68, SD=16.08)	.5	-	.3	.8	1.9	8.9	9.2	24.1	29.2	16.8	8.4
Recognize and communicate understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences (M=77.78, SD=15.99)	.5	.3	-	.3	2.4	5.1	7.0	20.3	32.7	17.8	13.5
See yourself as a learner and engage those with whom you work as informants (M=80.24, SD=14.15)	.3	-	-	-	.8	4.6	5.9	19.7	31.1	21.9	15.7
<i>Competence 5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice</i>											
Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination (M=75.32, SD=15.0)	.3	-	-	.8	1.4	7.0	11.1	25.7	30.0	13.8	10.0
Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice (M=71.03, SD=17.09)	.3	-	.3	2.2	3.8	9.5	18.1	24.3	22.4	9.5	9.7
Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice (M=69.95, SD=17.36)	.3	-	.8	1.4	5.9	10.8	15.7	25.1	21.6	10.8	7.6
<i>Competence 6: Engage in research informed practice and practice informed research</i>											
Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry (M=74.89, SD=16.0)	.3	-	-	.8	3.2	10.5	5.4	25.4	27.0	18.6	8.6
Use research evidence to inform practice (M=70.57, SD=17.32)	.5	-	.5	1.6	4.1	10.8	15.9	25.4	21.4	12.2	7.6

<i>Competence 7: Apply knowledge and HBSE</i>												
Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation (M=73.68, SD=16.20)	.3	-	.3	.5	3.5	7.6	14.9	23.8	25.7	13.5	10.0	
Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment (M=73.49, SD= 15.82)	.3	-	.3	.8	2.4	10.0	11.0	25.7	27.0	14.6	7.8	
<i>Competence 8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work service</i>												
Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being (M=69.32, SD=16.94)	.3	-	.5	1.4	4.6	13.5	18.1	24.1	19.7	11.1	6.8	
Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action (M=73.08, SD=17.33)	.3	-	.5	1.9	1.6	10.5	15.7	21.1	23.5	13.5	11.4	
<i>Competence 9: Respond to context that shape practice</i>												
Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services (M=68.81, SD=17.68)	.3	.8	.5	3.0	4.6	11.6	17.3	27.3	17.0	12.2	6.2	
Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services (M=67.19, SD=18.26)	.3	.8	.5	3.0	4.6	15.9	17.3	23.5	18.9	8.1	7.0	
<i>Competence 10: Engage, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and community</i>												
Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups (M=74.35, SD= 15.83)	.3	-	.3	1.1	2.4	6.2	14.9	22.2	28.9	14.6	9.2	
Use empathy and other interpersonal skills (M=78.14, SD=14.80)	.3	-	-	.5	1.1	5.7	8.6	19.5	32.2	20.0	12.2	
Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes (M=76.05, SD=15.58)	.3	-	-	.8	1.4	7.8	10.8	21.4	30.0	16.5	11.1	
Collect, organize, and interpret client data (M=75.41, SD=15.35)	.3	-	.5	.3	1.1	8.4	10.8	22.2	32.7	13.5	10.3	
Assess client strengths and limitations (M=77.49, SD=15.21)	.3	-	.3	.8	.8	6.2	7.6	23.0	30.8	17.8	12.4	
Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives (M=77.65, SD= 15.36)	.3	-	-	1.1	1.1	6.5	8.4	19.2	31.9	19.5	12.2	
Select appropriate intervention strategies (M=75.03, SD=15.87)	.3	-	-	1.9	1.9	6.5	10.0	25.9	29.5	13.2	10.8	

Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals (M=71.57, SD=16.02)	.3	-	-	1.9	3.8	7.8	15.9	29.2	21.4	12.4	7.3
Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities (M=71.57, SD=16.44)	.3	.3	.5	1.6	3.2	7.8	14.9	28.4	24.3	11.6	7.0
Help clients resolve problems (M=76.97, SD=16.43)	.3	-	-	1.6	2.4	6.2	8.1	21.4	27.0	20.0	13.0
Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients (M=73.86, SD=16.64)	.3	-	.3	.3	1.9	2.2	11.9	25.7	25.9	14.9	9.5
Facilitate transitions and endings (M=72.19, SD=16.49)	.3	-	.3	-	2.4	2.4	13.2	28.4	24.9	10.5	8.9
Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions (M=71.14, SD=16.67)	.3	.3	-	2.7	4.3	7.8	11.9	31.4	23.5	10.8	7.0

Table 3. Distribution of Taiwanese social work college students' perception on professional efficacy (N=459)

Competence	Level of competence										
	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
<i>Competence 1: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly</i>											
Advocate for client access to the services of social work (M=64.70, SD=16.90)	.2	.7	.3	2.6	3.5	21.2	17.9	24.7	19.4	5.2	3.3
Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development (M=75.20, SD= 15.70)	.2	.2	-	.9	.9	9.2	11.8	22.3	27.5	17.7	9.4
Attend to professional roles and boundaries (M=72.40, SD=14.70)	-	.2	-	.9	1.5	11.6	14.0	24.9	28.0	14.2	4.6
Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication (M=70.30, SD=15.40)	-	-	.2	1.3	4.4	12.0	14.6	26.4	25.5	11.1	4.4
Engage in career-long learning (M=60.90, SD=19.40)	.4	.9	1.5	2.2	5.0	13.1	13.8	20.5	22.9	12.2	7.4
Use supervision and consultation (M=76.03, SD=19.40)	.2	1.3	1.3	1.1	3.7	11.4	12.9	23.4	22.7	13.8	8.3
<i>Competence 2: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice</i>											
Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice (M=68.50, SD=15.80)	.2	-	.7	2.0	4.2	12.7	16.8	24.7	27.4	8.8	2.6
Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics	.2	-	1.1	2.0	4.1	13.5	13.5	24.2	27.5	7.9	5.9

and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles (M=69.30, SD= 17.00)											
Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts (M=65.40, SD=16.40)	-	.4	1.3	2.0	7.2	13.8	21.0	24.7	21.0	6.3	2.4
Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions (M=67.40, SD=16.00)	-	.2	.7	1.7	4.6	16.2	17.7	23.6	25.5	6.1	3.7
<i>Competence 3: Apply critical thinking and to inform and communicate professional judgment</i>											
Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom (M=65.80, SD=16.60)	-	.4	1.5	1.7	5.7	15.7	19.9	24.0	21.0	7.2	2.8
Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation (M=65.50, SD=16.00)	-	.2	1.5	2.0	6.1	14.2	20.8	26.3	20.6	5.7	2.6
Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues (M=69.10, SD=16.20)	-	.9	.2	1.8	3.9	12.3	16.6	24.5	25.8	10.7	3.3
<i>Competence 4: Engage diversity and difference in practice</i>											
Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power (M=72.20, SD=15.30)	-	-	.4	.7	3.5	10.5	13.5	25.5	26.2	13.3	6.3
Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups (M=70.28, SD=15.50)	-	-	.2	1.5	3.1	10.1	10.5	25.2	29.8	13.2	6.3
Recognize and communicate understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences (M=69.30, SD=15.40)	-	-	.4	2.2	2.4	13.5	17.2	26.2	25.1	8.7	4.1
See yourself as a learner and engage those with whom you work as informants (M=70.20, SD=14.80)	-	-	.2	1.3	3.5	11.1	15.3	29.7	26.0	8.3	4.6
<i>Competence 5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice</i>											
Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination (M=70.90, SD=15.00)	.4	.2	1.7	4.1	6.8	12.9	18.1	21.4	18.1	9.8	6.5
Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice (M=63.90, SD=18.40)	.7	.7	1.7	4.1	6.8	12.9	18.1	21.4	18.1	9.8	6.5
Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice (M=63.90, SD=18.40)	.7	.7	1.7	4.4	6.5	14.6	18.5	24.4	19.0	6.8	2.8

<i>Competence 6: Engage in research informed practice and practice informed research</i>											
Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry (M=57.20, SD=19.20)	.9	1.1	3.7	6.1	13.3	17.2	22.1	19.0	10.7	3.7	2.2
Use research evidence to inform practice (M=60.10 SD=17.32)	.4	1.3	1.7	4.8	10.9	17.7	20.3	24.2	11.4	5.0	2.2
<i>Competence 7: Apply knowledge and HBSE</i>											
Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation (M=61.90, SD=16.30)	.4	.4	.7	3.5	7.8	721.1	20.0	25.5	14.0	4.1	1.5
Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment (M=66.80, SD= 15.40)	-	.2	.7	3.3	4.8	11.5	19.6	26.1	26.6	5.7	1.3
<i>Competence 8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work service</i>											
Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being (M=60.20, SD=16.94)	-.7	.7	2.0	4.8	10.7	20.7	17.2	23.3	12.9	4.4	2.8
Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action (M=64.40, SD=18.30)	.4	.2	2.6	3.1	6.5	16.1	18.3	24.0	17.4	7.8	3.5
<i>Competence 9: Respond to context that shape practice</i>											
Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant service (M=66.50, SD=17.00)	.2	.4	1.5	2.0	4.1	14.8	20.7	24.8	20.0	7.0	4.4
Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services (M=65.20, SD=17.40)	.4	.7	.9	2.2	6.6	13.8	26.2	20.1	17.7	7.4	4.1
<i>Competence 10: Engage, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and community</i>											
Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups (M=69.80, SD= 17.30)	-	.7	.7	2.6	3.5	11.8	15.3	22.8	26.9	9.2	6.6
Use empathy and other interpersonal skills (M=77.90, SD=15.40)	.2	.2	.7	.2	1.3	4.6	11.5	18.3	30.5	19.6	13.1
Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes (M=70.70, SD=16.00)	-	.2	.9	1.5	2.4	10.3	18.6	23.1	27.1	10.0	5.9

Collect, organize, and interpret client data (M=73.30, SD=15.40)	-	.2	1.1	.4	1.3	8.1	14.8	25.1	27.7	14.6	6.6
Assess client strengths and limitations	-	-	.7	.7	2.4	7.2	14.0	22.9	31.7	16.2	4.4
Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives (M=70.50, SD= 15.70)	-	.4	.9	.9	3.5	9.8	16.4	25.8	26.6	12.0	3.7
Select appropriate intervention strategies (M=70.65, SD=15.60)	.2	.2	1.3	.9	3.5	12.2	20.5	26.5	23.3	8.7	2.6
Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals (M=68.40, SD=15.30)	-	.4	.5	.9	3.5	9.4	20.2	30.3	22.4	9.2	2.2
Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities (M=67.60, SD=15.90)	-	.4	.7	2.0	4.4	13.5	19.2	24.7	24.0	8.3	2.8
Help clients resolve problems (M=72.40, SD=15.30)	-	.4	.4	.7	2.2	9.8	13.9	24.8	29.3	13.3	5.2
Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients (M=68.70, SD=16.10)	.2	.2	.7	1.8	3.9	12.7	16.8	26.0	24.9	8.8	3.9
Facilitate transitions and endings (M=66.80, SD=16.70)	-	.7	1.1	2.4	4.6	10.9	17.6	28.3	21.6	9.2	3.5
Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions (M=59.40, SD=20.40)	1.7	1.5	3.5	5.9	7.4	16.6	21.1	19.0	15.5	6.3	1.5

Factors Associated with Competence Efficacy

Pre-regression analysis was conducted to assure the assumptions of linearity were met. Multivariate analysis was conducted to investigate factors associated with perceptions about students' competence of professional social work. In Indonesia model, four independent variables: gender (Female=1), GPA, calling toward social work, and perceived career-oriented academic environment were included in the model. The model was significant ($F=26.21$, $p<.001$). All four independent variables explained 28.3% of variability in the dependent variable.

The analysis found 3 of 4 independent variables as significant predictors for Indonesian samples: GPA, calling toward social work, and perceived career-oriented academic environment. The higher the GPA, the more likely Indonesian students reported higher professional competence when other predictors were held the same (standardized beta=.115, $p<.025$). Similarly the stronger calling to social work, the higher the professional competence reported when other predictors were held constant (standardized beta= .303, $p<.001$). Finally, the more positive students' perception of their academic environment were in supporting their career, the more likely that they claimed a higher professional competence controlling for other predictors (standardized beta= .273, $p<.001$). It appeared that level of calling to social work was the strongest predictor. Gender was not found as a significant predictor; there were no significant difference between male and females Indonesian social work college students regarding professional efficacy.

In Taiwan, all four independent variables included in the model showed significance ($F=33.41$, $p<.001$). All of four predictors included into the model predicted 27.5 percent of the variability in professional competence. Compared to male students, female students were more likely to report higher level of professional competence when all other predictors were held constant (standardized beta=.129, $p<.010$). There were positive associations among GPA, perception about academic environment, and calling to social work with perception about professional competence. The higher the GPA, the more positive students' perception about their academic environment in preparing students to pursue their career in social work, and the stronger the student's calling to social work, the more likely they reported higher levels of confidence in performing social work competence. The standardized betas for each of the three predictors previously stated were: .115, $p<.025$, .273, $p<.001$, and .303, $p<.001$ respectively. Like the Indonesian context, degree of calling to social work was also found as the strongest predictor among the Taiwanese sample.

DISCUSSIONS

This study revealed that both Indonesian and Taiwanese students reported moderate levels of efficacy competence. It is unclear whether students reported their actual competence or had underestimated their competence. This is quite surprising on one side given that the participants were the social work students who were about to graduate from the program. On the other side, it is understandable because students will have a greater efficacy in their competence once they assume the role of social workers after graduation. A study among vocational students in the Netherlands found that students tended to overestimate their competence in the beginning of the study and underestimate it as they were about to graduate (Baartman & Ruijs, 2011).

The study found similarities with regard to core social work competencies students perceived with high degree of efficacy, namely engaged diversity and difference in practice as well as engaged, assessed, intervened and evaluated individuals, family, groups, organization and community respectively. Social work curriculum in Indonesia and Taiwan emphasize the competence in dealing with diversity through teaching and field practice. The two countries experience some important social, demographic and cultural changes that expose and increase the awareness of students about various forms of social diversity and social justice issues in society. The facts of inequality, poverty, and marginalization are part of modern societies like Taiwan and Indonesia. The relatively well level of perceived efficacy in social work process reported by students in the two countries is quite expected considering that most of them have gained experiences through the field practices. Field practice enables them to employ their skills in practicing social work process with the clients under supervision.

Students in Taiwan reported relatively high efficacy to identify and behave as a professional social worker. This shows the success of the educational process on one hand and reflects the role of positive environment in building and strengthening students' professional identity on the other. The legislation in Taiwan has recognized social worker as a profession for more than 20 years and the growing acceptance of the public for the profession has been evident. This enabling environment does not yet exist in Indonesia and thus social work is still struggling to expand and obtain public recognition. The newly approved Indonesian Law on Social Work Practice of 2019 is expected to strengthen the public appreciation toward social work and thus motivate social work students to be more confident in building their professional identity and behave accordingly.

Most of the findings in this study are consistent with the previous studies in other individual countries. Social work calling is confirmed as a significant predictor for students' perception of professional competence in Indonesia and Taiwan. Similar association has been found among social work students in mainland China (Guo et al, 2014). A study among a large number of undergraduate vocational students in Germany also found that work calling positively associated with career planning and career self-efficacy (Hirschi & Herrmann, 2013). Students with social work calling have a strong orientation or mindset about doing social work as their purpose of life, driving students to overcome difficulties and develop relevant professional competence to become future social workers (Dobrow & Tosti Khass, 2011). Social work education needs to pay attention to promoting and strengthening students' calling as part of the intervention to increase their confidence of professional competence.

The study also found that the more the students perceived academic institutions as providing an environment that supports them to pursue a career in social work, the better their efficacy in performing social work core competences. This career-oriented learning environment is characterized by competence-based content, various teaching methods, reflective learning, dialogue between students and teachers, and career guidance. Similar results have been reported in studies among undergraduate social work students in mainland China (Guo et al. 2014), vocational students in the Netherlands (Kuijpers, Meijers, & Gundy, 2011) and among nursing students in Iran (Hakimzadeh, Ghodrati, Karamdost, Ghodrati, & Mirmosavi, 2013).

Finally, the positive association between GPA and students' competence efficacy found in this study confirmed the finding from a previous study among social work students in China. Students with higher grades may possess better knowledge

comprehension, practice skills, and ethics that compose professional competencies than their counterparts with lower grades (Wang, Guo, Findley, Lu & Huang, 2015).

Gender is found as a significant predictor among the Taiwan sample in which female students reported relatively higher level of professional competence than their male counterparts. This finding adds to the new knowledge about the significant association between gender and professional competence among social work students.

CONCLUSIONS

This study is considered among the first that compares factors associated with efficacy competence among undergraduate social work students between the two countries in Asia. The nature of social work education as well as social, culture, economic and political contexts of the two nations seem to influence the findings. The study confirmed the findings revealed from the previous multi-cultural studies as well as added to the new knowledge of the field. The role of the learning environment in shaping students' efficacy highlights the importance of educational institutions improvement in fostering career-oriented environments in order to improve students' competence. Calling to social work, while being brought as intrinsic attribute when the students start their program, can be strengthened through educational processes as it has an important role in increasing student efficacy.

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