Examining the Self-Efficacy among Social Workers at Special Education Schools: A Comparative Study between Males and Females

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Abstract

The concept of self-efficacy has received great attention over the course of more than 35 years. It has been studied extensively since Albert Pandora introduced the term in 1986. He referred to self-efficacy as one of the basic components in the human personality as well as a major builder in the performance of the human behavior.

This study aims to determining the degree of self-efficacy of social workers at the schools of special education. and determining the degree of efficacy and perseverance, self-confidence, initiation, and knowledge access of social workers at these schools. The study is applied on 35 social workers at 16 different schools of special education in Qalyubia Governorate. The results show that based-statistical differences do exist between the degrees average of male and female social workers at special education schools for the disabled on the scale of self-efficacy regarding efficacy, perseverance, self-confidence, and initiation. The total results are in favor of the male social workers. On the other hand, there are no based-statistical differences between the degrees average of male and female social workers for the knowledge access.

KEYWORDS: Self-Efficacy, Social Worker, Special Education Schools

Introduction

The education of children with disabilities and those of hard conditions is a main challenge for the achievement of the aims of Education for All, which were approved in the World Forum for All, Dakar/Senegal, April 2000 in which education was confirmed to be one of the basic needs for humans. Providing the right of education is one of the main aims of the UNESCO mission where the right of education has to be attached with the education of good quality for all (UNESCO, 2014, p. 2).

Special education schools aim at raising, learning, and qualifying children with special educational needs from all categories. They also aim at training them to acquire appropriate skills according to their different capabilities and abilities through studied plans and special programs in order to help them reach the best level and prepare them for public life and integration in society (El-Sayed, 2016, p.158).

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Special needs students receive education according to the special education programs, which are based on the philosophy that the disabled were deprived from enjoying their life. Accordingly, their humanity has to be achieved through learning and training them to become useful members for themselves, their families, and their societies as well. (National Center for Educational Research and Development, 2008, p. 13).

The social worker is responsible for professional practice within its different social work settings, of which the field of special education is the most important. He/ She is also considered the tool through which the aims of practice are achieved by the commitment to its philosophy, principles, and scientific methods. Consequently, he/she contributes with other professionals to achieve the desired development in society. Moreover, the personality of the social worker plays an important role in the performance of his professional work because the social work is still characterized by the technical (skill) nature, which depends on his performance on the personality of the social worker himself/herself. (Hussein, 2004, p. 2689)

Farchi (2014) indicated that self-efficacy has been widely discussed in social work literature and has recently been used to assess the outcomes of social work education, in specific areas of professional practice, for social work (Farchi., Cohen & Mosek, 2014). Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as those beliefs that refer to "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of actions required for attaining designated types of performances." (Bandura, 1986, p. 391)

Self-efficacy refers to the basic belief in one's ability to deal with functional challenges successfully for performing desired behaviors and controlling events that affect one's life. Therefore, the essence of self-efficacy is the basic belief of people in their ability to make desirable influences through their own actions. (Bandura, 1997, 2001; Benight & Bandura, 2004)

Simmons et al. (2017) explained the importance of self-efficacy in teaching and practicing social work. Students need to believe in their ability to perform social work tasks. When social work students lack self-efficacy, they will realize that specific social work tasks are more difficult than they actually are. This may lead to anxiety which, in turn, can contribute to reducing motivation and avoiding the required tasks. On the other hand, highly qualified students may deal with

challenging tasks with a high level of composure. (Simmons, Fisher, Barnard, & Allen, 2017).

It can be said that social workers, who have a strong sense of self-efficacy, may be more likely to set higher goals and maintain commitment to achieve them. Alternatively, it can be inferred that social workers who lack self-efficacy may be less willing and able to provide a variety of professional interventions with clients. (Springer & Schimmel, 2015)

Literature Review

Zanbar (2020) indicated that there are some factors which help in enhancing self-efficacy. These factors are internal factors such as self-esteem, proficiency, and hope. Three external factors help to enhance self-efficacy. They are called individual interactions with the environment. They are social and psychological support that the individual receives from individuals around him, in addition to social competence and participation in community life. (Zanbar & Nouman, 2020)

Bandura (1997) stated four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasions, and physiological and affective states(Ooi, Wan Jaafar, & Baba, 2019; van Rooij, Fokkens-Bruinsma, & Goedhart, 2019).

Researchers, unanimously, indicated that mastery experience has the most powerful influence on a person's sense of efficacy (Ulenski, Gill, & Kelley, 2019). Springer (2016) referred to four sources of general self-efficacy to better understand the development of social worker self-efficacy, engagement in role plays (performance), modeling (vicarious learning), and gaining opportunities to receive positive feedback (verbal persuasion). Self-efficacy may be enhanced or derived through performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasions, and emotional arousals (Bandura, 1977).

The attitude of the individuals towards their known efficacy helps them to continue accomplishing their tasks until they become important parts of their lives. It resembles a co-factor in encouraging them to persevere and achieve progress and excellence in their achievement and tasks (Nayef, 2012, p. 12). This may correspond to the study of Bonett (1994) as it displayed a positive relationship between general self-efficacy on one hand and the professional efficacy in addition to the professional compatibility on the other one. Therefore, the self-efficacy of social workers is generally very

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important, especially for those who work in special education schools or with the disabled people. This is what the current research focuses on.

There are many researches in the literature of social work that addressed the issue of self-efficacy and its role in improving professional practice with clients in social work. These researches include the study of Carter et al. (2018) study that was concerned with assessing self-efficacy and preparing social work students for practice for following simulated instruction. The results of that study indicated that students have achieved high levels in all indicators of self-efficacy (Carter et al., 2018).

Another study was Simmons et al. (2017) that attempted exploring self-efficacy among entry-level and advanced BSW students. The results of that study indicated that only advanced students obtain significantly higher degrees of self-efficacy beliefs than beginner students do. The results also indicated that increased mastery experiences in the social work method might help students to develop confidence in their ability to practice as professional social workers (Simmons et al., 2017).

Simons et al. (2016) indicated that there are a set of factors which likely increases the self-efficacy of practice for social workers. Among these factors are the lengths of long experience in practice, the size of younger cases, additional training, the exposure to older clients with complex needs, the monitoring of the effective clinical practices of the colleagues, the support from colleagues or supervisors, group or individual supervision, and methods for managing stress at work. (Simons, An. & Bonifas, 2016)

The study of MacAteer et al. (2016), which dealt with the awareness of social workers working in the field of mental health of self-efficacy, showed the presence of strong negative correlations between the organizational climate and role stressors. There was also a negative correlation of moderate significance between self-efficacy and role ambiguity. (MacAteer., Manktelow, & Fitzsimons, 2016)

The study of Hong et al. (2016) attempted to assess the self-efficacy measure of Korean American caregivers. The results of that study showed that the CSE-K is a reliable and valid measurement to assess caregiver self-efficacy for Korean American caregivers (Hong, Kim, & Casado, 2016). The study of Williford (2015) demonstrated the importance of self-efficacy among social workers as one of the

important indicators in the success or failure of efforts to prevent and interfere with bullying among students (Williford, 2015).

The study of Collins (2013) demonstrated the importance of self-efficacy as an alternative psychological approach for social workers and social work students with stressful shocks in the UK. The study indicated that concepts of feeling coherence, self- efficacy, and a sense of control are important psychological concepts in helping social workers and social work students to become more flexible in their approach. Self-efficacy is about beliefs and confidence in one's ability to do tasks. (Collins, 2013)

Danis, Dong & Anderson (2007) also indicated that there is a relationship between the self-efficacy of the practice with the victims of any crime and the orientation that the social worker earned by continuing education and training. The results of that study also showed the role self-efficacy plays for practitioners in dealing with victims' problems and the skills needed to work with them (Danis, Dong, &, Anderson, 2007). Parker (2006) indicated that participation in practical training helps to enhance the self-efficacy of social work students, especially with regard to carrying out many tasks such as role-playing, teamwork, and communication.

Golia & Pedrazza (2014) stated that the received self-efficacy is interested in people's beliefs that they are able to succeed in certain conditions and can play a pivotal role in meeting targets, tasks, and challenges. That research introduced the structure of a self-efficacy scale prepared for social workers. (Golia & Pedrazza, 2014, p. 58).

The previous foreign studies focused mainly on the knowledge of self-efficacy, whether among social work students or social workers, and its relationship to their professional competence with different groups emphasizing the importance of self-efficacy and its effect on the professional performance of social workers.

As such, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the self-efficacy of social workers at special education schools in a sample in Egypt.

Objectives of the Study:

The aim of this study is to:

1- Examine the self-efficacy among male and female social workers in special education schools in Egypt.

2- Identify the self-efficacy for the social workers in special education schools with its dimensions (efficacy, perseverance, self-confidence, initiation, and knowledge access)

Study Hypotheses:
1- The social workers' lack of self-efficacy in special education schools with its dimensions (efficacy, perseverance, self-confidence, initiation, and knowledge access)
2- The Existence of statistically-based differences between male and female social workers in special education schools on the scale of self-efficacy and its dimensions (efficacy, perseverance, self-confidence, initiation, and knowledge access)

Method

1-Type of Study: the current study is a part of a cross-sectional study designed to assess the Social Workers' self-efficacy in special education schools in Egypt.

2- Study Methodology: the researchers relied on the comprehensive social survey method regarding cases of social workers who work in special education schools within Qalyubiyya Governorate.

3- Study population: the researchers made a comprehensive count of (35) social workers working in special education schools affiliated with Qalyubiyya Governorate. The research was applied to (16) schools from the special education schools in Qalyubiyya Governorate within the period from January 2018 until March 2018.

4- Study Tools: while designing the scale, the two researchers reviewed previous studies, researches, and theoretical writings which focused on the self-efficacy of social workers. The scale was designed in two parts as follows:

Part One: includes demographic data related to (gender, age, and marital status).

Part Two: includes (45) phrases to measure the self-efficacy of social workers distributed over four dimensions.

The researchers considered designing the scale as follows:

A- Determining the type of data to be obtained.

B- Putting phrases that are closely related to the aim of the study.

C- Using easy statements, clear content, and confirmation during testing the scale.

D- Terms are consistent with the educational and cultural levels of social workers.

Validity and Reliability of the Self-Efficacy Measure for Social Workers

A. Validity: the researchers relied on two types of Validity, namely:

1- The content validity (the apparent): it includes the proportions of the arbitrators' agreement on the paragraphs of the scale. The measure of social workers' self-efficacy was presented to a number of professors of sociology, social work, and psychology. Field practice that provided that arbitration takes place within:

1. The extent to which the paragraph relates to each dimension of the study.

2. In terms of the wording of the paragraph.

3. In terms of content.

Accordingly, the dimensions of the scale have been modified, some of the paragraphs have been modified, and the paragraphs with an agreed-upon ratio less than 85% hيave been deleted. The number of paragraphs of the scale has reached (41) paragraphs considering measuring the self-efficacy of social workers distributed over four dimensions: (persistence, self-confidence, initiation, and knowledge). The agreement percentage has been calculated according to the (Getman) equation.

1- Validity of the Internal (Global) Consistency: the researcher calculated the internal consistency of the questionnaire paragraphs on a collective sample of 20 individual samples.

Table (1) shows the internal consistency among the variables of the self-efficacy scale for the social workers and the total degree.

N	Dimensions of the Scale	Correlation Coefficient with the Total Score	Significance Level
1	Persistence and perseverance	0.718	**
2	Self-confidence	0.848	**
3	Initiation	0.789	**
4	Knowledge Access	0.716	**

** Significance at P value (0.00)   * Significance at P value (0.05)

It is obvious from the previous table that the dimensions of the self-efficacy measure of social workers have a statistical significance at the level (0.01). This gives an indication of the high coherence of internal consistency. It indicates high and sufficient sincerity that can be trusted in the application of the current study.

B - Reliability: the researchers used two methods to ensure the reliability of the scale:

1. Alpha-Cronbach: the researchers applied the scale to a sample specifying the psychometric properties then, it was re-applied to the same sample after an interval time of (15) days (two weeks between the first and second application). The researchers, then, calculated the reliability of the self-efficacy scale for social workers through using Alpha Cronbach's Reliability Factor. The following table shows the scale reliability factor:

Table (2) shows the persistent results using (Alpha Cronbach) to measure the self-efficacy of social workers.

N	Dimension	Alpha- Cronbach Coefficient
1	Self-Efficacy Measurement reliability for Social Workers as a Whole	0.921

** Significance at P value (0.00)   * Significance at P value (0.05)

The previous table shows that the self-efficacy measure for social workers is statistically high. It enables us to rely on the finding tools.

2. Midterm Fragmentation: the researchers used the (Spearman-Brown) equation for midterm segmentation where the expressions of each variable were divided into two halves. The first section included the values obtained from the responses of the individual paragraphs and the second section includes the values that express the marital paragraphs. The test results came as follows. Table (3) shows persistent results using the (Spearman-Brown) equation for the midterm segmentation of the self-efficacy scale for social workers.

N	Dimension	Spearman Brown Equation
1	Self-Efficacy Measurement reliability for Social Workers as a Whole	0.942

** Significance at P value (0.00)   * Significance at P value (0.05)

It is clear from the previous table that most of the reliability coefficients of the variables have a high degree of reliability. Thus, its results can be relied upon and the tool has become finalized.

5- The Statistical Tools

The researchers unloaded and analyzed data from the two measures through the Statistical Analysis Program (SPSS- 20). The following statistical tests were use:

Percentages and Repeats

Arithmetic mean: the researchers relied on the following criteria to judge the level of social workers' self-efficacy in special education

schools according to the arithmetic means obtained by the respondents, as follows:

- From (1) to less than (1.67) was sorted as a weak level.

- From (1.67) to less than (2.34) was sorted as an intermediate level.

- From (2.34) to less than (3) was sorted as a high level.

Standard Deviation

-Reliability coefficient (Alpha- Cronbach).

-Brown-Spearman Split-Half.

-The T-Test.

Findings

Table (4): Demographic Data

Variables	Frequency	%
1- Gender		
Male	21	60
Female	14	40
Total	35	100
2- Age		
From 20 - to less than 30 years	4	11.4
30- to less than 40 years	18	51.4
From 40 to less than 50 years	11	31.4
50 years or more	2	5.7
Total	35	100
Mean	38.14	
SD	0.758	
3- Social status		
Unmarried	3	8.6
Married	29	82.9
Divorced	1	2.9
Widower	2	5.7
Total	35	100

The demographic data of the study population showed that the majority of the study population were about males. It reached (60%) when compared to females (40%). Their average age was (38.14) years. The population of students, in the age group, was targeted between (SD 0.758; 30- less than 40 Years) (51.4%), and those whose marital status was 'married' reached (82.9%). The lowest percentage was for divorced as (2.9%).

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Table (5): The Degree of Efficacy and Perseverance for Social Workers

N	The Degree of Efficacy and Perseverance	Mean	SD	%	Ranking
1	I always seek to implement plans that help me work	2.54	0.561	84.76	1
2	I seek to achieve my goals even if I fail more than once.	2.51	0.612	83.81	2
3	Do not leave tasks and jobs before completing them in an integrated manner.	2.46	0.741	81.90	3
4	I work hard to find the right ways to work.	2.37	0.770	79.05	4
5	Be patient when exposed to difficult and complex situations.	2.31	0.796	77.14	5
6	I have the ability and the determination to always help me get things done.	2.31	0.676	77.14	5
7	I like work that includes challenge and competition.	2.23	0.770	74.29	7
8	I can handle the troubles and difficulties whatever how big they are and take time and effort.	2.26	0.780	75.24	6
9	I don't give up achieving my positive goals in work	2.20	0.759	73.33	8
10	I seek to learn new things even if they are difficult.	2.17	0.785	72.38	9
	TOTAL	23.37	2.891	77.90	-

It is clear from the previous table that there is a degree of efficacy and perseverance for social workers working in special education schools for the disabled. It came in the first order "I always seek to implement the plans that help me work" with a rate of (84.76%) and an average of (2.54), while the standard deviation was (0.561). Then, in the second order "I seek to achieve my goals even if I fail more than once" by a rate of (73.81%) and an average of (2.51). The standard deviation, hence, was (0.612), while came last "I seek to learn new things even if they were difficult" by a rate of (72.38%) and an average of (2.17), while the standard deviation was (0.785).

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Table (6): The Degree of Self-Confidence for Social Workers Working in Schools for Disabled Special Education

N	Self-Confidence Degree	Mean	SD	%	Ranking
1	I feel confident in dealing with them.	2.77	0.598	92.38	1
2	I accept criticism directed at me without sensitivity or anger.	2.71	0.519	90.48	2
3	I'm good at dealing with sudden events and situations.	2.66	0.591	88.57	3
4	I don't lose control of my behavior when I get angry.	2.63	0.646	87.62	4
5	I can successfully cope with stressful life events.	2.60	0.604	86.67	5
6	I am a calm and balanced person.	2.51	0.658	83.81	8
7	Most of my thoughts and beliefs are rational and logical.	2.63	0.646	87.62	4
8	I can control myself for a long time.	2.60	0.604	86.67	5
9	I always speak in a clear and strong manner without fluctuations or clinging.	2.71	0.572	90.48	2
10	I always look at the one whom I'm taking to with confidence and balance without shame.	2.57	0.558	85.71	6
11	My words always show positive optimistic signs away from stress and anxiety.	2.49	0.658	82.86	9
12	I keep my smile most of the time even in the most difficult conditions.	2.54	0.611	84.76	7
TOTAL		31.43	4.017	87.30	-

It was clear from the previous table that social workers working in the disabled special education schools have a high degree of self-confidence as it came in the first order (I feel confident in dealing with them) with a percentage of (92.38%) and an average of (2.77) while the standard deviation was (0.598). In the second order (I accept the criticism directed to me without sensitivity or anger, I always speak in a clear and strong way without fluctuation or

clinging (90.48%) and average (2.71) while, the standard deviation was (0.519; 0.572). The last arrangement was (my words always show positive optimistic signs apart from stress and anxiety (84.76%) and average (2.54), while the standard deviation was (0.611). These findings may be consistent with the study of Rose-Grau et al. (2001) whose results indicated that an individual's beliefs about his/her self-efficacy play an important role in reducing stress and fatigue.

Table (7): Degree of Initiation for Social Workers Working in Special Education Schools for the Disabled

N	Initiation Degree	Mean	SD	%	Ranking
1	I am persuading others to my view.	1.86	0.845	61.90	1
2	I interfere to solve the differences between my workmates.	1.46	0.657	48.57	7
3	I always seek to learn new things.	1.80	0.759	60.00	2
4	I take the initiative to help my colleagues in difficult situations.	1.74	0.852	58.10	4
5	I take the initiative to know and chat with new colleagues.	1.66	0.802	55.24	5
6	I always like to share my colleagues with their activities.	1.51	0.702	50.48	6
7	I always initiate group activities to work as one collaborating team.	1.66	0.802	55.24	5
8	I take the initiative to apologize and reconcile if I make a mistake against someone.	1.37	0.598	45.71	8
9	I always initiate proposals and plans for work development.	1.74	0.886	58.10	4
10	I always take the responsibility of leading the team and take responsibility.	1.77	0.877	59.05	3
	TOTAL	16.57	4.978	55.24	-

The previous table reveals the degree of initiation of social workers working in schools for special education for the disabled. It came in the first order (I am persuading others to my view) with a percentage (61.90%) and an average (1.86) while the standard deviation was (0.854). In the second order, came (I always seek to learn new things with a percentage (60%) and an average (1.80) while, the standard deviation was (0.759). It came in the last order (I take the initiative to apologize and reconcile if I make a mistake against someone) with (45.71%) and an average (1.37) while, the deviation was Benchmark (0.589).

Table (8): The Degree of Cognitive Knowledge of Social Workers Working in Schools of Special Education for the Disabled

N	Cognitive Knowledge Degree	Mean	SD	%	Ranking
1	I have enough information on my work field.	1.83	0.747	60.95	1
2	I always like to have a look on new and updated studies of social sciences.	1.63	0.731	54.29	4
3	I always want to know the latest models and practical theories.	1.63	0.690	54.29	4
4	I always make a monthly schedule to read a new book.	1.66	0.725	55.24	3
5	I'm always interested in reading the latest cognitive and therapeutic methods of interfering with individuals.	1.69	0.718	56.19	2
6	I always rely on internationally trusted scientific references and sources.	1.60	0.604	53.33	5
7	I tend to rely on cognitive opinions and ideas that can be applied.	1.60	0.651	53.33	5
8	I'm always interested in analyzing individuals' problems and explaining them using modern scientific knowledge.	1.46	0.561	48.57	7
9	I'm interested in modern knowledge in teaching and learning in my work field.	1.57	0.739	52.38	6
	TOTAL	14.66	4.419	54.29	-

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It is clear from the previous table that social workers working in schools of special education for the disabled have a degree of cognitive knowledge. It came in the first order (I have enough information about my work field) with a percentage of (60.95%) and an average of (1.83) while, the standard deviation was (0.747). In the second order came (I was always interested in reading the latest cognitive and therapeutic methods of interfering with individuals) with a percentage of (56.19%) and an average of (1.69) while, the standard deviation was (0.718). In the last order came (I'm always interested in analyzing individuals' problems and explaining them using modern scientific knowledge) with a percentage of (48.57%) and an average of (1.46) while, the standard deviation was (.651).

Table (9): A Degree for Social Workers Working in Schools of Special Education for the Disabled on the Total Scale as a Whole

N	Dimensions of the Scale as a Whole	Mean	SD	%	Ranking
1	Efficacy and Perseverance	23.37	2.891	77.90	2
2	Self-Confidence	31.43	4.017	87.30	1
3	Initiation	16.57	4.978	55.24	3
4	Knowledge Access	14.66	4.419	54.29	4
	TOTAL	86.03	8.042	68.68	-

It is clear from the previous table the order of the dimensions of the scale of self-efficacy for social workers working in schools of special education for the disabled. It came in the first order (self-confidence) at (87.30%) and an average of (31.43) while, the standard deviation was (4.017). In the second one came (efficacy and persistence) (by 77.90%) and an average of (23.37) while, the standard deviation was (2.891). In the third order came (initiation) by (55.24%) and an average of (16.57) with a standard deviation of (4,978). While 'knowledge' came in the last order (54.29%) and an average of (14.66) while, the standard deviation was (4.419).

Table (10) shows the differences between the averages of scores (male and female) regarding social workers working in schools of special education for the disabled on the scale of self-efficacy.

Significance level	T value	Freedom Degree	Standard Deviation	Average	Social Workers	The main variable
Function at (0.01) level	3.096	33	2.135	24.57	Males	Efficacy and perseverance
			3.180	21.57	Females	
Function at (0.05) level	2.203	33	3.203	32.48	Males	Self-confidence
			4.413	29.64	Females	
Function at (0.05) level	2.365	33	3.727	17.90	Males	The initiation
			4.027	14.71	Females	
Non-function	1.199	33	4.421	15.38	Males	Knowledge Access
			4.345	13.57	Females	
Function at (0.01) level	4.162	33	5.953	90.33	Males	Total scale
			9.485	79.50	Females	

Table (T) value at the level of significance (0.01) = (2.750), and at level of significance (0.05) = (2.042)

Discussion

Self-efficacy plays a prominent role in influencing the professional performance of a social worker. This efficacy is shaped in the form of ideas and beliefs about the self-regarding its efficacy. Benz and his colleagues stated that these ideas come between the knowledge and skills of the social worker and his/her actual performance in professional situations with children in special education schools.

The self- efficacy is not just common feelings but, it is an evaluation of the individual for himself/herself for what he/she can do, the extent of his/her perseverance, the amount of the effort he/she exerts, the extent of his/her flexibility in dealing with difficult and complex situations, as well as the amount of his/her resistance to failure. (Benz et al., 1992, p.171)

This study tries to fill the research gap in the studies of social workers self-efficacy in the Egyptian environment, specifically with the disabled children. This study aims at identifying the differences between male and female social workers in special education schools in Egypt upon the scale of self-efficacy. Study results indicate that there are statistically significant differences between the averages of the degrees (male and female) social workers working in special

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education schools for the disabled on the scale of self-efficacy with regard to the dimension of self-efficacy in favor of male social workers.

These differences may be due to the participation of male social workers in more training courses and continuous learning that help them enhance their self-efficacy. Parker (2006) stated that the participation in the practical training help the students of social work enhance their self-efficacy. This is consistent with the study of Khalil (2009) that confirmed the existence of statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the population individuals on the perceived self-efficacy scale attributed to gender in favor of males. Ahn et al. (2012) also referred that students of higher levels were more confident of their abilities in practicing social work than those students who were registering in social work preliminary courses (Ahn, Boykin, Hebert, & Kulkin, 2012).

The high levels of male self-efficacy may be due to the high level of ambition among male social workers in special education schools in Egypt or due to the preoccupation of female social workers with the family chores rather than the professional tasks.

Self-efficacy is one of the dimensions of self-management as it influences the beliefs of the social worker in his/her ability to solve problems, which increases his motivations to transform these beliefs into realistic behavior. A social worker who has a strong sense of self-efficacy considers the difficult task as a challenge that must be overcome, not a threat that must be avoided and ignored. This point of view makes the social worker busy in his/her work until he/she succeeds and feels satisfaction with his/her work. This is considered one of the most important reasons that encourages the researchers to investigate the level of self-efficacy of social workers in special education schools in Egypt.

The study results indicate that there are statistically significant differences between the averages of the degrees (male and female) social workers working in special education schools for the disabled on the scale of self-efficacy with regard to the dimension of efficacy and perseverance in favor of male social workers.

The results also show that there are significant differences between the average scores of (male and female) social workers working in special education schools for the disabled on the scale of self-efficacy with regard to the dimension of self-confidence in favor of male social workers.

Moreover, the study results indicate that there are significant differences between the averages of the scores (male and female) social workers working in special education schools for the disabled on the scale of self-efficacy with regard to the dimension of initiation in favor of male social workers.

The findings of the current study show that there are no significant differences between the mean scores of (male and female) social workers working in schools of special education for the disabled on the scale of self-efficacy in relation to the cognitive dimension. This means that they may have the same educational programs in the different educational stages. In Egypt there are 23 institutions for social work education: five schools of social work, 12 high institutes for social work, and 5 middle institutes for social work. The majority of these institutions teach the same social work course syllabus in dealing with the disabled.

On the other hand, the results of Ahn et al. (2012differed from the study results of Semple-Dormer (2013): The State of Self-efficacy among Massachusetts School–based Occupational Therapists. The results of Semple-Dormer's study confirmed that the demographic features and background don't effect on the level of self-efficacy of the study population (Semple-Dormer, 2013).

The results of the study also differed from what was indicated by the study of Al- Raffou (2019) that the self-efficacy of females working in governmental schools in Jordan was higher than that of males (Al-Raffou, 2019).

Study Limitation

There are clear limitations to this study. Although the study uses a purposive population, the social workers working in special education schools affiliated with Qalyubiyya Governorate, it is inappropriate to generalize the results to all social workers. Samples from different geographical regions may provide different results. Secondly, the questionnaire is self-reported and does not capture the actual practices related to professional requirements. Thirdly, self-reporting measures introduces sources of errors and biases, such as participants consistently choosing high or low ratings.

Implications for Social Work Practice

Self-efficacy is an estimation from the social worker to his/her own abilities on doing professional effective practice with clients and a judgement on his/her abilities to affect on the clients' problems. According to the great importance of the self-efficacy concept in

social work, the study recommends the following points. Our findings have useful academic and practical implications, especially for social workers working in special education schools' settings. Thus, we make the following recommendations: (1) Include self-efficacy issues in social work educational curriculums at both the undergraduate, graduate levels and continuous education programs. (2) Creating a series of training courses for social work students in all social work education phases with the purpose of enhancing self-efficacy among social workers in all social work professional setting .(3) Carrying out future studies to identify professional interventions to enhancing the self-efficacy for Practitioners in social work practice settings, and especially in special education schools' settings. (4) Encourage female social workers to enhance their social efficacy by participating in the continuous learning activities and training courses as well as observing the effective clinical practices of male social workers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated the self-efficacy of social workers at special education schools. We found that based-statistical differences do exist between the degrees average of male and female social workers at special education schools for the disabled on the scale of self-efficacy regarding efficacy, perseverance, self-confidence, and initiation. The total results were in favor of the male social workers. On the other hand, there are no based-statistical differences between the degrees average of male and female social workers for the knowledge access. The study invites researchers to conduct studies concerned with self-efficacy with use of a large representative sample in the future.

Acknowledgments

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