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din IAŞI

Doctoral school of Philosophy &
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Attachment Styles in Adulthood and Self-Efficacy of the Socio-Educational Worker in the Youth Advancement Units in Israel

Summary

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ABSTRACT

Research Topic: The chief research objectives are to elucidate the relationship between attachment style and perceived self-efficacy within the research population of YAS socio-educational workers and to explicate the role of perceived self-efficacy within socio-educational work.

The importance of the study is that research into the factors that create and strengthen self-efficacy have been few and these originating factors are still unclear.

Research methods and design: A Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods research study was designed to triangulate and combine three sources and types of data-quantitative measurement, qualitative interviewing, and the researcher's own experience of, familiarity with, and insights into socio-educational work.

Main findings:

> In the present state of uncertainty about the uniformity and measurement of attachment style, it has limitations as a predictor of PSE and job effectiveness. There are strong indications that the correlation/ association between attachment style and PSE is neither linear nor unidirectional and that there are intervening variables.

> SEWs categorized as of preoccupied and dismissive attachment style, have a mean PSE score only a slightly lower than SEWs categorized as of secure attachment style. This probably means: (a) SEWs of all three attachment styles are capable of building good client relationships; (b) This study's categorization of attachment style is probably-to some extent at least-misleading.

> Attachment style remains, nonetheless, a major predictor of PSE but explains only 50% of the variance in it. Four other factors 'explaining' PSE, in addition to attachment style, have emerged from the present study.

Importance of the study: The contribution of the study to (a) current knowledge and theory about PSE and ATS is its testing of the prevalent assumption that attachment style is an important predictor of PSE; to (b) research methodology-its testing of the Mixed Methods data-triangulation approach; to (c) the Youth Advancement Service-an understanding as to how individual SEW effectiveness and collective unit success rates can be improved and the YAS's problems of burn-out and worker retention lessened.

Key words: attachment in adulthood; self-efficacy; socio-educational work; at-risk youth clients.

INTRODUCTION

My Personal Background to This Research

I have been involved for many years with the socio-educational work of Israel's Youth Advancement Service (YAS) with at-risk youth. Having started as a regular socio-educational worker (SEW), I roe to become responsible for SEWs' individual professional development, then a YAS Unit manager, lecturer on Oranim College's training course for work with at-risk youth. For the last sixteen years I have also worked as a supervisor of SEWs.

The questions that have beset me for years -What makes a good SEW for at-risk youth? What must the YAS and its managers organize and provide exactly so that SEWs have the support and skill repertoire for optimal professional development? What training paths to offer new entrants to the SEW job who come from such a wide range of training backgrounds within the educational and therapy spectrums? These are the questions that need good answers if drop-out youths, marginalised and at risk, are to be given a real opportunity to re-integrate as a second chance.

It was my understanding that the very core and basis of an SEW's work-and therefore the necessary core of the research I wanted to do-was the one-on-one relationship an SEW created with each individual client, what sort of relationship that had to be and what fed and shaped it. This last question led me to the two theorists responsible to a huge degree for the concepts and knowledge guiding socio-educational work -John Bowlby (1969/1982; 1973, 1988) psychiatrist and the father of attachment theory, and social psychologist, Albert Bandura (1977;1986; 1994/2010, 2000, 2006,2012), the composer of self-efficacy theory, and thence to all those who followed in their footsteps to develop and consolidate these two theories. It was these two thinkers and their disciples who shaped the mechanism and design of the present study.

My Other Academic Activity during My Doctoral Studies

My studies at the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi comprehended a wide variety of academic work, including attending supplementary courses, composing papers and articles, conferencing, and fascinating meetings with lecturers and fellow students. The three papers I wrote were:

Research and Innovation in the Socio-Educational Field: The Commitment to Social Involvement and Responsibility for Gender Equality (Submitted to Prof. Dr. Doina Balahur)

This piece of work explored innovation in research and how this has affected the field of socio-educational work in particular, with special emphasis on the six key elements of RRI, public engagement, gender equality, science education, open access, ethics and governance. It emphasized the topic of gendered innovations and the biases that harm the field of sex and gender and the consequent importance of identifying gender bias and how it operates in the fields of science and technology, and also in public services where its effect can be especially baleful given that women form the majority of public service workers. The paper discussed those effects with particular focus on youth advancement in Israel, whose workforce is also predominantly female. It discussed the role of women in innovation, cooperation and responsibility for finding ways to promote excellence and efficiency within the service.

Socio-Educational Workers and Socio-Educational Work in Youth Advancement in the Mirror of Post-Normal Science and RRI (Submitted to: Prof. Dr. Doina Balahur)

This work presented a new look at socio-educational work through the development of research under post-modern, post-normal science (PNS) and the transition between modes 1, 2 and 3 of the Quintuple Helix Model. This paradigm stresses how investment in knowledge production encourages innovation, awareness, accountability, and the democratization of knowledge, as well as taking into account society's needs, aspirations and values. The paper also reaches for a new understanding of involving multiple stakeholders in the production of new knowledge and coping with the issues of complexity itself and the complexity of the research subjects. It uses the prism of gender to sharpen the focus on the promotion of women in the search for responsible research and Innovation.

The Methodology of Elaborating Scientific Works (Submitted to: Prof. Dr. Nicu Gavriluta)

This paper set out the background to my doctoral research, its objectives, research population, my own personal background as a supervisor of that research population for over 15 years, and the first steps on a journey of theoretical exploration, which then widened and deepened as the research period advanced. The paper then sets out the principles of research and scientific writing-the rules of conduct, research ethics, research design and methodology, and the chapters which together compose a doctoral

thesis. The writing of this paper taught the researcher the fundamentals of scientific research.

Published Articles

Am I a Good Caregiver for At-Risk Youth? Socio-Educational Workers' Perception of Self-Efficacy through the Lens of Attachment Theory

This article discusses the key issue of whether a SEW is a professional caregiver. To do this it goes into the questions at the core of this issue - What are the very nature and the intrinsic characteristics of socio-educational work with at-risk youth; Is one aspect of the work to serve as a secure base and safe haven for the client? And in this work: What is the association between the SEW's attachment style and their perceived self-efficacy?

This article was published in: Studia Universitatis Babe -Bolyai Psychologia Pedagogia Series

How Socio-Educational Workers with At-Risk Youth Attain Attachment Capacity and Self-Efficacy: Two Recent Findings

Background: Although attachment theory and efficacy theory are well-developed the determinants of perceived self-efficacy have been much less researched.

Aims & research questions: This study measures and explains the association between the attachment style and perceived self-efficacy of Israeli socio-educational workers working with at-risk educational system drop-outs.

Methodology: This 2016-19 study of a large national sample deployed a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods design. This first paper offers two findings from a semi-structured qualitative interview.

Findings: (1) An important proportion of workers come to the job pre-equipped and pre-committed for it by their upbringing and life since early childhood. (2) Almost all will significantly grow their PSE on the job.

Discussion: PSE develops throughout the lifespan. Noddings' 'pedagogy of care' helps explain many workers' heartfelt sense of mission.

Conclusions: PSE will not grow successfully on the job unless the working environment is made a 'safe haven' and 'secure base' for the workers.

The article was published in: Studia Universitatis Babe -Bolyai Psychologia Pedagogia Series.

Conferences

I participated in the International Conference of the Doctoral School of Philosophy and Social- Political Sciences, 1st edition, entitled Doctoral Research and the Public Sphere: An Interaction. The conference was held at the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi on July 13th 2018. I presented the paper: Am I a good caregiver for youth at risk? socio-education workers perception of self-efficacy through the lens of attachment theory?

Personal Comment

The experience of studying at the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi under Prof. Dr. Balahur and the encounter with the university's lecturers and other staffers at the university conference and committees, and indeed the attractiveness of the university campus itself, has been throughout a fascinating and eye-opening experience for me.

Focus of this Research

The chief research objectives of the present study are to elucidate the relationship, quantitative and qualitative, between attachment style and perceived self-efficacy within the research population of YAS socio-educational workers and to explicate the role and importance of perceived self-efficacy in socio-educational work.

The Rationale for this Research Study: The Knowledge Gaps the Research is Designed to Fill

One of the key ways by which worker effectiveness is currently explained and predicted is by the concept and variable of self-efficacy, defined as a worker's beliefs about their ability to coordinate the skills and abilities required to achieve their desired work goals in their given work environment and circumstances. The significance of perceived self-efficacy (PSE) to successful job performance has been validated in countless studies. Nevertheless, some of the underlying determinants, the processes that create and strengthen self-efficacy, are still unclear and unverified (Mauer et al., 2017). Research studies into these originating factors have not been common (Mauer et al., 2017). My hunch from my own long work experience as a

socio-educational worker and then supervisor of SEWs was that a secure attachment style predicted a higher PSE in socio-educational work. It was also my belief that a secure attachment style provided a better mental-emotional context for socio-educational work. A secure attachment style is thought to help build a steady self-esteem, sustain mental health in the face of adversity, and provide a comfortable framework within which to build supportive and mutual one-on-one relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016, 2017). Attachment theory argues that workers with an insecure attachment style would tend to caution, envision difficulty and failure and fall prey to other insecure behaviours (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Elliot & Reis, 2003).

The present study examines the proposal that a SEW's attachment style-how an individual manages their personal relationships with others- is one of the determinants of their PSE. And the context of the study is socio-educational work with youths at risk. This context was appropriate because the very heart and basis of socio-educational work is creating close supportive one-on-one relationships with clients (Hertz, 2019)-something which requires in SEWs a high level of self-belief in their relationship-building capacity and skills. Workers with high PSE take obstacles as challenges and show initiative (Bandura, 2001). They can envision scenarios for overcoming difficulties and possess the long-term patience and experience of past successes to carry the scenarios through to fruition (Bandurs,1997). They also know how to recruit the support and advice of bosses and colleagues.

Another reason to investigate the determinants of PSE was that both efficacy theory and numerous previous research studies had established a high and positive correlation between PSE and actual job performance, so that to measure the one was to a high degree to measure the other (Weinfeld, N. S., Sroufe, A., Egeland, B., & Carlson, E. 2008; O'Brien et al.,2000; Kass & Freidman,2005; Mallinckrodt, 1992, 2000).

The principle theorist of self-efficacy argued strongly that the work setting was a major ongoing shaper of worker self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; 2012). From which it follows that the quality of support and cooperation among managers (Mayseless, & Popper, 2019), supervisors (Marmarosh et al., 2013) and SEWs, and the degree of support managers, supervisors and colleagues provided SEWs, and especially new entrants (Bennett, S., Mohr, J., Deal, K. H., & Hwang, J., 2013) would have be a

central object of study to the present research. One of the key determining factors in generating a sense of efficacy may be the way the SEW experiences their 'professional home', and whether this 'home' succeeds in providing SEWs a 'secure base' and 'safe haven' for their work with at-risk clients.

Key Concepts and Variables

1. *Perceive Self-Efficacy/ PSE in the workplace:* PSE is an individual's assessment of his/her capacity to organize and execute the actions required to fulfil a given task or achieve a desired result or change their surroundings in a desired direction.

2. *Attachment style/ ATS:* An attachment style is in essence the patterns of expectation, need, sensitivity and social behaviour which are the outcome of an individual's attachment history.

3. *The YAS unit:* Each unit is staffed by a manager (responsible for allocating tasks, maintaining discipline, day-to-day decision and policy-making, and the professional care of SEWs); a supervisor (a senior professional who meets twice-monthly with all SEWs to review their work issues, give guidance and encouragement, shape their professional identity); and a number of SEWs and teachers.

4. *The socio-educational worker:* SEWs work one-on-one with at-risk youths to try and set them on a path to re-integration into education and employment.

5. *The SEW-client relationship:* The very heart and basis of youth advancement is the one-on-one SEW-client relationship. The essential objectives of this relationship are (a) to instil in/ restore to the youth enough confidence in themselves and adults to make them willing and able to set foot on the path of re-integration, and (b) to guide the SEW in devising a care plan tailored to the client's individual needs.

Description of the State of Affairs in Israel's Youth Advancement Service (YAS) on the Eve of This Research

The YAS is a safety net deployed by the Ministry of Education within local authorities in order to provide care for the YAS target population-marginalized youths between the ages of 12 and 19, who have dropped out of the education system and are not registered with any formal educational framework; YAS's guiding strategy is to

reintegrate these youths into the formal educational and/or employment systems (Lahav,2011).

The YAS operates currently in 168 local authorities across the country and across all religio-ethnic groups, Arab, Jewish, ultra-orthodox Jewish, Bedouin, Christian, etc. Its services are provided by about 750 SEWs who will be working at any one time with some 17274 young clients. Most current SEWs come from a range of backgrounds in the behavioural sciences (social work, psychology, criminology, education, sociology). Each of the YAS's 168 units is run by a manager and all SEWs meet fortnightly with a professional supervisor.

The at-risk youth who are the SEWs' clients do not present themselves voluntarily for a relationship with SEWs. They often don't understand the need for such an intervention; are typically in conflict with the adults they know, and don't know how to make positive relationships with adults. Some strongly reject SEW overtures. They are experienced in failure and have lost faith in their ability to do well in the educational system as they have experienced it. Many come from marginalised, low-income communities and circumstances of severe deprivation (Hertz, 2019) petty criminality, and drug use (Lahav, 2014).

SEWs have to function as significant others for these youths, often fulfilling quasi-parental roles (Cohen & Cohen, 2001). They will try to 'sign them up' to processes of re-integration and self-development by which they try to combat the youngsters' self-perceptions of inability and incompetence. SEWs set out to repair that lack of self-esteem, identify potential, show belief, provide experiences of success and accomplishment, but most of all, provide their clients 'reparative' human encounters filled with warmth, acceptance and attentiveness. The challenge to SEWs is complex and daunting (Hertz, 2019). No youth is like another. The YAS faces serious problems of SEW burn-out and worker retention.

Research Objectives and Research Questions

The chief objective was to examine the size and nature of correlation and association between attachment style and perceived self-efficacy among socio-educational workers in Israel's Youth Advancement Service. The four research questions were:

1. What is the association between attachment style and perceived self-efficacy among socio-educational workers in Israel's Youth Advancement service?
2. What are the associations between background variables (age, gender, work experience, education, nationality) and the workers' perceived self-efficacy?
3. To what extent do their attachment styles explain socio-educational workers' perceived self-efficacy?
4. What other factors affect the quality of socio- educational workers' work?

Research Design and the Boundaries of This Study

Research design: The study's research design first measures PSE and categorizes attachment style (ATS) (*ECR self-report questionnaire on Attachment Style in Adulthood*) and perceived self-efficacy (*Self-report questionnaire on SEWs' Job Efficacy*) (plus *Questionnaire on respondents' background variables* --gender, work experience, ethnicity, education, work scope). Then a number of statistical tools are applied to the data to see if and what numerical association/s exist/s between the two variables. SEWs are interviewed (by *semi-structured qualitative interview*) in order to explain the interrelationship between the two variables by means of the SEWs' experience and understanding of their work and what effectiveness in it demands of them.

Sampling: A composite quantitative questionnaire was sent to all 750 SEWs and 179 completed questionnaires were returned, of which 175 were complete enough to be analysed (a response rate of 27%). Thus, the sample was large but non-random and, although there is no reason to think it very unrepresentative of its population.

The aim of the Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods research design was to triangulate and combine three sources and types of data-quantitative measurement, qualitative interviewing, and the researcher's own experience of, familiarity with, and insights into socio-educational work-in order to achieve as full an understanding as possible of the role of ATS (Attachment Styles) and PSE (within the YAS's socio-educational work and within SEW-client relationship-building in particular.

The research process comprised seven stages:

1. Obtain approvals: for the study and for use of attachment and efficacy questionnaire;

2. Construct and validate efficacy questionnaire and compose semi-structured interview framework;

3. Recruit samples for quantitative questionnaire and qualitative interview;

4. Distribute questionnaires; get back completed questionnaires; conduct qualitative interviews;

5. Analyse quantitative and qualitative data

6. Interpret data.

7. Draw conclusions.

Importance of the Study

The contribution of the study to (a) current knowledge and theory about PSE and ATS is its testing of the prevalent assumption that attachment style is an important predictor of PSE; to (b) research methodology-its testing of the Mixed Methods data-triangulation approach; to (c) the Youth Advancement Service-an understanding as to how individual SEW effectiveness and collective unit success rates can be improved and the YAS's problems of burn-out and worker retention lessened.

The Study's Conceptual Framework

Research Topic

The study's chief research objective is to elucidate the relationship, quantitative and qualitative between attachment style and perceived self-efficacy within the population of YAS socio-educational workers.

The Basic Premises of the Study

1. The one-on-one working relationships between SEWs and their young clients are central to the objectives and effectiveness of YAS units.

2. Given the severe challenges to these relationships daily confronting SEW's, YAS units are facing great difficulties in maintaining SEW morale, in minimising burn-out and retaining staff.

3. Self-efficacy and attachment style are central to a SEW's ability to build and make a success of these relationships.

4. There is still a considerable knowledge gap as to the factors which generate and condition self-efficacy.

5. There is much evidence that attachment style may be one of the abovementioned factors but exactly how the two concepts/variables are inter-related, and what other variables may be involved, is still unclear.

The study's research design first measures PSE and categorizes attachment style (ATS) and then applies a number of statistical tools to see if and what numerical association/s exist/s between the two variables. SEWs are interviewed qualitatively in order to explain the interrelationship between the two variables by means of the SEWs' experience and understanding of their work and what effectiveness in it demands.

The aim of the research design is to triangulate and combine three sources and types of data-quantitative measurement, qualitative interviewing, and the researcher's own experience of, familiarity with, and insights into socio-educational work-in order to achieve as full an understanding as possible of the role of ATS and self-efficacy within the YAS's socio-educational work and within SEW-client relationship-building in particular. This understanding should provide insights as to how individual SEW effectiveness and YAS unit success rates can be improved-see below Section 1.4.5).

The Study's Conceptual Universe

Brief definitions of key concepts and variables

1. Self-efficacy in the workplace:

PSE is an individual's assessment of his/her capacity to organize and execute the actions required to fulfil a given task or achieve a desired result or change their surroundings in a desired direction (Bandura, 1994/1010,2006). Its three components-task efficacy, organizational involvement efficacy, relationship building efficacy-are the equivalents in socio-educational work of the three components of teachers' PSE identified by Friedman & Kass (2000).

Attachment style:

An attachment style is in essence the patterns of expectation, need, sensitivity and social behaviour which are the outcome of an individual's attachment history. Following the typology of ATS first developed by Mary Ainsworth and colleagues, SEWs in the present study were placed in one of four categories: those who were low

on attachment avoidance and high on attachment anxiety were defined as *preoccupied*, those high on avoidance and low on anxiety were defined as *dismissive*, those who were high on both dimensions were defined as *fearful*, and those who were low on both dimensions were defined as *secure* (Bartholomew,1990)

The YAS unit:

Israel's Youth Advancement Service works through units attached to local government authorities, each unit combining socio-therapeutic care and support together with support in gaining educational achievement. The YAS and its SEWs work mostly with youths on the margins of society who have dropped out or been ousted from the education and employment systems and has chosen for itself the strategy of re-integrating these youths into society. Each unit is staffed by a manager (responsible for allocating tasks, maintaining discipline, day-to-day decision and policy-making, and the professional care of SEWs); a supervisor (a senior professional who meets monthly with all SEWs to review their work issues, give guidance and encouragement, shape their professional identity); and a number of SEWs and teachers.

The socio-educational worker (SEW):

SEWs work one-on-one with at-risk youths to try and set them on a path to re-integration into education and employment. At the time of the present study SEWs came from a wide span of professional backgrounds and training and their working conditions in their units were characterized by very fuzzy internal boundaries, a high degree of uncertainty and ambiguity as to what methods of work could and should be deployed and a high reliance on creativity and personal initiative. No sort of 'recipe book' for achieving Unit objectives existed.

1) The SEW-client relationship:

The very heart and basis of youth advancement is the face-to-face SEW -client relationship. The essential objective and task of this relationship is to instil in/ restore to the youth enough confidence in themselves and adults to make them willing and able to set foot on the path of re-integration, and to guide the SEW in devising a care plan tailored to the client's individual needs.

A YAS unit's internal dynamic:

Unit managers and supervisors are supposed to provide their SEWs protection and support and respond to their professional needs. It follows that the quality of interpersonal relationships and cooperation among them is centrally important to SEWs' wellbeing, professional effectiveness and self-efficacy. One of the key determining factors in generating a sense of efficacy may be the way the SEW experiences their 'professional home', and whether this 'home' succeeds in providing SEWs a "secure base" and 'safe haven' for their work with clients.

The Main Theories Guiding This Study

Attachment theory - as developed by Bowlby (1969/1982,1988) Ainsworth (1991), Hazan & Shaver (1987,1990), Mikulincer & Shaver (2016,2017), Bartholomew (1990), Fraley (2019), Scharfe, (2017) and many others. Social Cognition theory-largely the work of Bandura (1996,1997), with significant contributions from Maddux (2002,2006) and others

Self-efficacy theory-largely the work of Bandura (1977,1997,2006) Maddux, (2002, 2016), Stajkovic& Luthans (1998), Mauer et al (2017), Consiglio, Borgogni, Di Tecco, & Schaufeli, (2016), Caprara (2011), and with significant contributions from Friedman &Kass (2000), Zaccaro (1995) and others. Socio-educational work theory-as developed by Lahav (2014), Yakhnich, Grupper & Romi (2018) Himi, (2009) Smith (2007) and others.
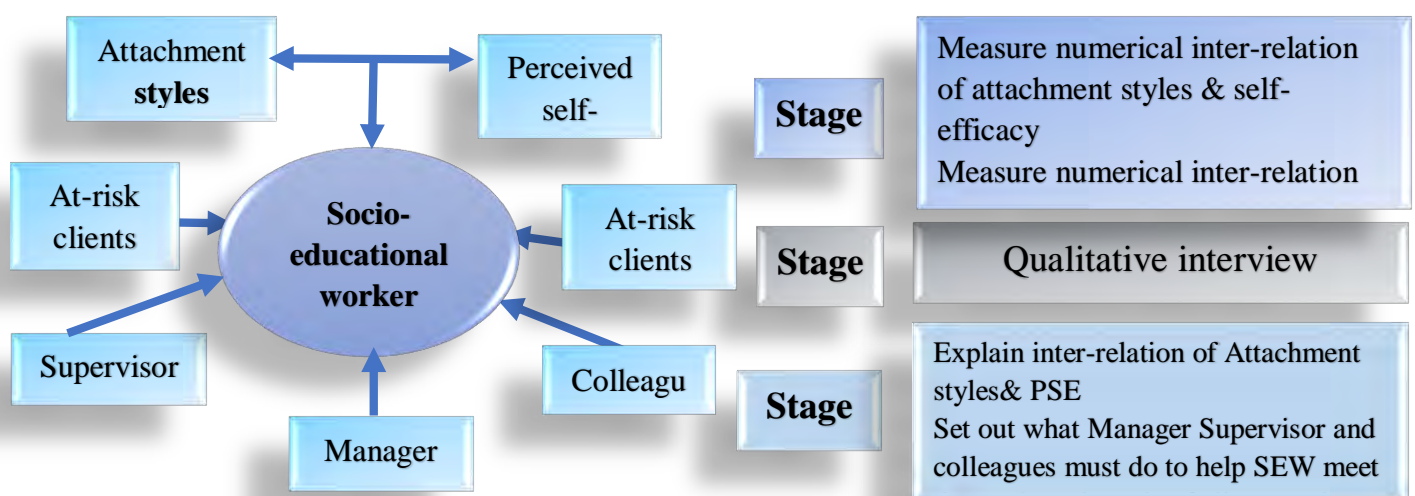
How These Concepts Interrelate

Fig. 1.3 How the present study's concepts interrelate

Commentary to Fig. 1.3

The guiding premise of the present study is that SEWs come to their SEW work with a learnt attachment style or styles, and a level of PSE grounded largely in their previous experience of life and work. Once in the YAS unit, they are faced with the demands and needs of successive clients and the expectations of the Unit with respect to what the SEW might achieve with these clients. The ATS and PSE which the SEWs have brought with them will lead them to work with clients in a certain way or ways. The manager, supervisor and other more experienced SEWs in the unit will face new SEWs with a mixture of demands and support. The ultimate aim of the present study is to explain-by way of answering its four research questions-how an individual SEW's ATS and PSE interact with the expectations and support inputs of their manager, supervisor and fellow SEWs and how this interaction can be improved so as to (a) achieve greater social integration success with clients, and (b) maintain and reinforce the job satisfaction of SEWs so as to retain them in their socio-educational work.

Interim Conclusions from the Literature Review

SEWs' beliefs and expectations-their PSE-regarding their ability to create supportive client relations are crucial to socio-educational work and we may assume that the attachment style of SEWs will affect their success in relationship-building. The two variables interrelate in some way and clarifying this interaction should generate useful insights for improving SEWs' work.

Personal self-efficacy shapes and predicts an individual's ability to perform his professional role. The challenges SEWs must cope with every day and the fact that there is no recipe book for effective performance predicts that only confident and creative workers will measure up. This makes PSE in socio-educational work a valuable issue for investigation.

The severe difficulties of the SEWs' working conditions mean that the quality of interpersonal relationships and cooperation among managers, supervisors and SEWs, and the degree of support managers, supervisors and colleagues can provide are all centrally important to SEWs' wellbeing and their effectiveness and self-efficacy.

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I would expect that one of the key determining factors in generating a sense of personal efficacy and effective performance is the way the SEW experiences their 'professional home'. SEWs need from manager, supervisor and colleagues that safe haven and secure base that they themselves must try to provide their clients. The present study must consider to what extent the Unit provides its SEWs this space where they can expand and flourish.

SEWs with low PSE will need markedly more support and 'safe haven'-making than SEWs with a secure attachment style and high PSE.

This in turn introduces the issue of whether PSE can be learnt and/or taught on the job and, if it can, then by what means?

Numerous research studies have shown that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between PSE and practical performance levels at work. This is very important for the present study since what it measures is not its subjects' practical performance but their self-reported PSE.

Bandura argues that to develop a sense of individual and collective PSE among staff the employer must address social and organizational factors in the workplace. This again raises the issue of how far YAS managers and supervisors see it as part of their responsibility to provide a safe haven and secure base for their SEWs.

Attachment styles can both change and multiply over the lifespan, as the individual passes through different experiences and relationships with different attachment figures and learns/adopts attachment styles from them.

The aim of the present study is to explain how an individual SEW's ATS and PSE interact with the expectations and support inputs of their manager, supervisor and fellow SEWs and how this interaction can be improved so as to (a) achieve greater social integration success with clients, and (b) maintain and reinforce the job satisfaction of SEWs so as to retain them in their socio-educational work.

METHODOLOGY

Research Population

The research population is the approximately 750 SEWs working for Israel's Youth Advancement Service. The YAS operates across Israel in all six regions (North,

Haifa, Centre, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and South) and religio-ethnicities (Arabs, Druse, Bedouin, Jews, ultra-orthodox Jews, Christians). In order to be able to work with all these ethnicities and within their own cultural-religious heritage the YAS has recruited SEWs from among all of them (Shemesh & Shemesh, 2010). SEWs come from a wide variety of employment and training backgrounds.

Sampling

The composite quantitative questionnaire was sent to all SEWs and 179 completed questionnaires were returned, of which 175 were complete enough to be analysed (i.e. a response rate of approximately 25% of the total research population). Power analysis, conducted with G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) revealed that for a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), with 4 groups and 4 response variables, a medium effect size of f = 0.25, = .05, and a high level of power of 0.95, a minimum sample size of 144 participants was required. Likewise, for a regression analysis with 7 predictors, a medium effect size of f = 0.40, = .05, and a high level of power of 0.95, a minimum sample size of 144 participants was required.

The Choice of Research Paradigm: Mixed Methods Research

The research design chosen to allow the researcher to combine both qualitative-constructivist and quantitative-positivist perspectives is a convergent parallel mixed methods design (MMR) (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Kuhn (1962) defined a research paradigm as "the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed". Following Egon Guba (Guba, 1990, p 17) Denzin and Lincoln (2018) defined a paradigm as *a basic set of beliefs that guide action... and deal with first principles or ultimates. These beliefs can never be established in terms of their ultimate truthfulness".*

A research paradigm comprehends four areas of inquiry-ethics, epistemology, ontology and methodology. Ethics asks: How can I be a moral person in this world? Epistemology asks: How can I know this world? And through these lenses we contemplate the world and the relationships between researcher and knowledge. Every epistemology embodies a moral-ethical stance vis-a-vis the world and the researcher's self. Ontology poses fundamental questions as to the nature of reality, of

men and women and of the world. Methodology focuses on the best means for gaining knowledge of the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The question - What data will best answer my research questions and what strategy/ies will be most effective for gathering these data (Denzin& Lincoln, 2018, p-58) taught me that I needed to (a) get as close as possible to the unique structure of a SEW's working world as they understand it and (b) objectively explore and measure the associations between my two major research variables (Shkedi, 2015). Understanding this, I understood that the most comprehensive and insightful answers to my research questions would be furnished by a Mixed Methods research strategy.

The Type of Mixed-Method Research Design Chosen

The particular mixed- method design chosen for the present study is the Convergent Parallel design, that is different but complementary data sets are collected in order to answer the research question, the quantitative and qualitative data have equal priority, and the two sets of data are collected and analysed independently (for a detailed review of mixed-method designs see Creswell & Clark, 2017, pp. 69-72). This design has three stages (see fig. 2.1 below). Stage 1 is the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. At Stage 2 both data sets are separately analysed and validated and then triangulated and cross-checked., The third and final stage is the stage of data interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).
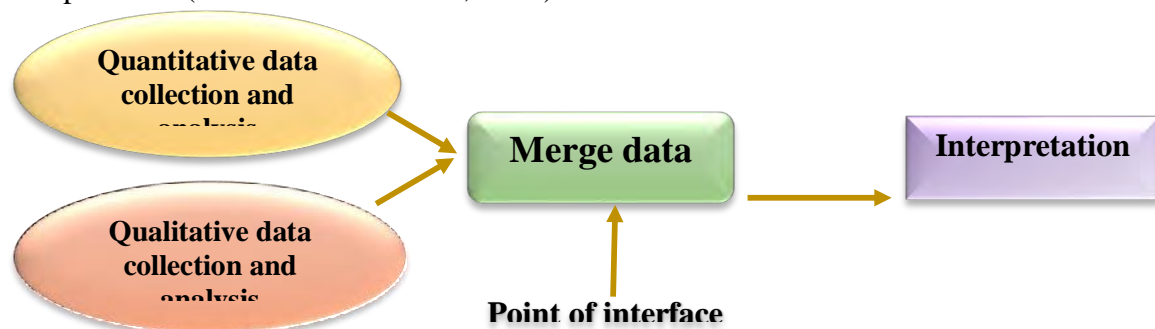

Fig. 2.1: The Convergent Parallel Mixed-Method Design
(Teddlie &Tashakkori, 2009, p.300)

Quantitative Instruments

Three questionnaires were combined into a single composite questionnaire for the quantitative section of the present study. The three were-

1. **ECR Questionnaire on Attachment Style in Adulthood** (Brennan et al, 1998).

   (See Appendix 1).

   I used the Hebrew version of this instrument developed by Brennan et al. (1988). Three bilingual psychologists had translated the English questionnaire into Hebrew for Mikulincer and Florian's 2000 study. The questionnaire comprises 36 self-reported items, half of them referring to the dimension of anxiety and half to the dimension of avoidance. Respondents are asked to rank the degree to which each statement describes their feelings within close relationships on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "Not at all" (1) to "Very much" (7). The even-numbered items examine attachment anxiety and the odd-numbered items examine avoidance. The total anxiety and avoidance scores are determined by the mean across all item scores. Higher scores indicate higher levels of anxiety and avoidance, while a low score across both dimensions shows a secure attachment style.

2. **Questionnaire on SEWs' Job Efficacy** (See Appendix 2).

   This instrument focuses on the three components of PSE identified by Friedman and Kass (2000): (a) task efficacy (performing the tasks the job requires, with items such as: "I can help youths change negative behaviour patterns" or "I find it difficult to offer clear results as to the advancement of the youths in my care"), (b) relational efficacy (the content and nature of the SEW's working relationship with the youths in their charge), with items such as "I succeed in coping with negative behaviour and rejection on the part of the youths" or "I succeed in encouraging my clients to share their experiences with me", and (c) organizational efficacy (an SEW's ability to influence important decisions made by Youth Advancement Unit managers). Examples of items are "I feel that I have the ability to influence the decisions made in the Unit" or "I have difficulty in demanding things from my manager."

   This questionnaire was based on previous studies into teachers' perceived self-efficacy (Friedman & Kass, 2000; Gibson & Dembo, 1984) and its terminology and other features were adjusted by the researcher to the field of socio-educational work. Items which were not suitable for SEWs were replaced by suitable items

validated by some experts in socio-educational work from academia and senior field practitioners (see next paragraph). The adjusted questionnaire comprised a total of 41 items.

To validate the questionnaire, the adjusted version was sent to ten experts in socio-educational work, three experts from academia who taught socio-educational promotion, two experts from Youth Advancement Service headquarters, three experienced supervisors of SEWs (expert in SEW instruction and guidance), and two field managers of socio-educational workers. Analysis of the experts' responses led to the re-formulation of the items and to a revised questionnaire of 36 items, each answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very much). Some items were phrased to represent high self-efficacy and others to represent low self-efficacy.

The new questionnaire was sent to six experts, three from the field and three from academia, for re-validation. It was this final version that was then distributed to thirty Haifa-region SEWs in order to check item reliability (see Section 2.6.1.1 below).

3. **Questionnaire on respondents' background variables** (gender, work experience, ethnicity, education) (See Appendix 3),

The Qualitative Instrument

The one qualitative instrument is an in-depth semi-structured interview, which was completed by ten YAS socio-educational workers.

A semi-structured qualitative research interview is defined as "an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 6). The advantage of a "semi-structure" is that it affords a much wider and flexible space for the interviewee's thoughts and perceptions to form and emerge. Because the interviewer does not hide behind a barrier of strictly closed questions he/she has a much greater chance of being a partner in this process of knowledge formation.

The interview focusses on the SEWs' daily experience of their work, the meanings the SEWs themselves give to this work, the personal resources they draw on, their personal relationships at home and at work (both with colleagues and clients).

The Research Process

The research process comprised seven stages:
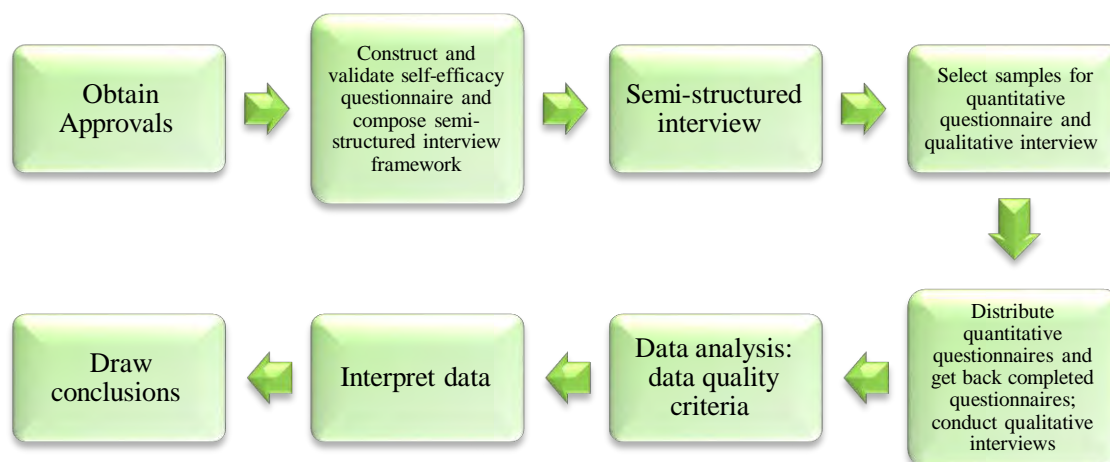
THE FINDINGS FROM THE TWO MEASURING INSTRUMENTS, THE QUANTITATIVE AND THE QUALITATIVE

Data Analysis

The data provided by the quantitative instrument were analysed using the SPSS 25 package. Background characteristics were described with frequencies and percentages for categorical variables, and with means and standard deviations for continuous variables. Internal consistency (Cronbach) was calculated for the research instruments, and total scores were computed from item means.

Concurrent validity (comparing a new test with an existing test of the same nature to see if they produce similar results) was examined using Pearson correlations with the total score of the general self-efficacy questionnaire

Main Findings from the Quantitative Instrument

The quantitative instrument was used to answer the first three research questions and its main findings will be set out question by question.

Research Question 1: *What is the association between attachment style and perceived self-efficacy among socio-educational workers in Israel's Youth Advancement service?*

This question was first examined with Pearson correlations to measure the correlations between total self-efficacy and its three component dimensions and their attachment styles.

The statistic results reveals very significant and highly negative correlations between self-efficacy and anxiety and avoidance in attachment. That is, higher anxiety and avoidance in attachment were both strongly associated with lower self-efficacy.

The next step was to examine differences in self-efficacy by attachment style using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) (see Table 4). Post hoc Scheffe analyses revealed that for all dimensions, as well as the total score, the self-efficacy of SEWs with a fearful attachment style was lower than the self-efficacy of workers in all other sub-groups. No statistically significant differences in self-efficacy were found between workers with the three other attachment styles: secure, preoccupied, and dismissive.

In sum, with respect to the first research question, despite the high negative correlations found between self-efficacy and anxiety and avoidance in attachment style, only the SEWs (Socio-Educational Workers) classified as having a fearful attachment style reported significantly lower self-efficacy than all other workers. The differences in self-efficacy between SEWs with other attachment styles were not statistically significant.

Research question 2: *What are the associations between background variables (age, gender, work experience, education, nationality) and the workers' perceived self-efficacy?*

This question was examined with a series of t-tests for differences in self-efficacy by gender, education, and ethnicity; by Pearson correlations for the relationships between self-efficacy and age and work experience; and by analysis of variance (ANOVA) for differences in self-efficacy by scope of employment. It was examined with a series of t-tests for gender, education, and ethnicity; Pearson correlations for age and work experience; and analyses of variance (ANOVAs) for scope of employment.

In sum with respect to research 2, all background variables (i.e., gender, age, work experience, education, scope of employment, and ethnicity) were found unrelated to SEWs self-efficacy

Research Question 3: To what extent do their attachment styles explain socio-educational workers' perceived self-efficacy?

To answer this question four multiple hierarchical regression models were calculated, with the three dimensions of self-efficacy and the total self-efficacy score as dependent variables. The demographic background variables were entered as independent predictors at the first step, while anxiety and avoidance in attachment were entered at the second step.

Results shows that all the Step 2 regression models are significant, with 36% to 51% of the variance in self-efficacy being explained by them. The Step 1 models are non-significant. Attachment styles were added in the second step and were found to make a significant contribution to explaining the variance in both total self-efficacy and its components. In other words, lower anxiety and lower avoidance in attachment were both significant explanative factors of higher self-efficacy. That is, whereas attachment style was found to make a very significant contribution to SEW self-efficacy the workers' background characteristics made no explanatory contribution.

Two very interesting riders to that finding, however, were that once anxiety and avoidance were entered into regression model, the background variable of age turned significant with respect to the efficacy dimension of 'tasks'. That is, older workers (and thus those with higher seniority) perceived themselves as having greater task self-efficacy than younger workers. Secondly, ethnicity turned significant with respect to the dimensions of 'task' and 'involvement', as well the total score. The relationship is weak, yet it points to a trend whereby Arab workers tended to report higher self-efficacy than Jewish workers.

Main Findings from the Qualitative Instrument

Part 2 presents the data and findings from a content analysis of the qualitative semi-structured interviews of ten SEWs. This qualitative interview was designed to answer research question 4: *What other factors* [i.e. other than attachment style] *affect/help explain the quality of socio- educational workers' work?*

Main themes:	1.Having/ being a significant other as a source of self-efficacy	2.Family and professional home as safe haven or stormy sea	3.Personal development and growth at work in the Unit	4.Vocation and self-realization
Sub-categories 1.	**Having a role model/significant other or not:** G. "Listen, I never had anyone like that (a significant other or role model) and it's still so hard I could cry. We grew up on the kibbutz in the children's house, sleeping alone at nights without our parents, hours of such loneliness and misery…My mother worried terribly over my health …but if I try to recall someone who looked into my eyes, who hugged me and asked how I was, what I needed, what was going on in my life, no, I had no one like that."	**The family home-its effect on current perceived self-efficacy:** F. "I had very complex relations with my late father. On the one hand, lots of love and closeness, on the other hand, a lot of verbal and physical violence, whereas my mother I always felt as an emotional cripple. And I felt very alone in all this and I think that the first instinct in such a situation is to go into the caring professions. …What I didn't get there I realise here…The lack of intimacy there was so painful that perhaps I'm resurrecting it here."	**Then and now:** E. "At first I would get really heated, almost to boiling point…For the first 5 years I felt things as personal insults .….Nowadays if that happens then I realise that I'm going wrong…. Most of the times I understand it's a childish reaction…That's why I maintain that it is so important to get close support in the beginning from experienced colleagues…You need at least 5 years to begin to appreciate what the youngsters are doing, what's happening to them."	**A sense of mission, destiny:** H. "…it was as though something inside me said to me this is what you want to do…It was not that I stopped and asked myself, is that what you want to do for the rest of your life?"

2.	**Being a significant other-memories of childhood roles:** C. "I'm the firstborn of 10 brothers and sisters, from my earliest years my parents drummed into me that I have to set an example…be the elder brother who looks after his little brothers and sisters… Everything in the house I had to be involved in and intervene in…They set me tasks and duties for looking after the little ones."	**The professional family as source of confidence and self-efficacy-or not:** I. "…but when you suddenly see how another SEW has succeeded with a kid, then you say to yourself-Maybe I can do that too. We have a saying here in the unit that when the team is good then you can survive anything."	**Inner resources:** H." I'm still full of desires for these kids and, to tell you the truth, I sometimes ask myself how after all these years here I can be still so full of desire. But it now comes from a different source, one a bit more mature, less hysterical, more understanding, more adult when facing the parents."	**Doing work of real value:** G. "I have a lot to give and that gives me a lot and fills me with meaning …I open up and learn things all the time. I am growing and becoming a better person. What I do here is central to what I am. I live it…I fly on the fact that I make these choices, that I am strong and effective and that I move in a crowd of one and not a crowd of everybody."
3.	**How childhood roles and responsibilities translate into current work:** B. "…all that issue of working for the good of society and of the other [which I absorbed at home] reinforced in me the desire to work with at-risk youth"		**The boundaries of the socio-educational space:** A. "I remember coming to a tiny room in a house I didn't know, there was this boy lying under a blanket, thin and pale, hardly left the house and it was very clear to me that the only thing I had to do, the most important thing, was be with him…We played backgammon, day after day, week after week, [I had] not to be too clever or try to do therapy or whatever…but simply come, be with him, talk a little bit, make a connection, that's the most central thing…" We can only work effectively here by working 'between the lines'…Our work	**Relationship building-the heart of the work:** H. "My first and foremost function is to provide them a space where they can express themselves without someone judging them….The boy or girl has to leave here having gone through a reparative experience…I have to be the one who constructed the space that gave them this reparative experience, the place in which they can rise to self-recognition and self-

			can only be done in those spaces where the kids are".	value, a space that reinforces, that contains, a place which must be founded on trust, in which they can feel loved, that this is not a place where I just come to work in some mechanical fashion, do what I have to do and then go home. The day I feel that I don't have this love in me to give them will be the day I realise that I have to give up this work."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions Relating to the Research Questions

1. Conclusions Relating to the Research Questions Attachment style is an important predictor/explainer of PSE of SEWs. For instance, it indicates that there are substantial numbers of SEWs with a fearful attachment style and that these SEWs may need to be screened out of this form of employment. It explains 50% of the variance in PSE and this fact in itself justifies looking into other shapers and predictors of PSE and effective SEW job performance.

2. The other factors explaining PSE, in addition to attachment style, which have emerged from the present study are:

   o Most SEWs, but especially those with non-secure attachment styles- accrue PSE on the job. The very nature of the job means that no worker can arrive fully prepared for it. They learn how to cope with the challenges, they develop their professionalism and professional identity, or they do not become fully effective, or they drop out.

   o For this individual development to happen YAS unit staff, manager, supervisor and experienced SEW's, need to make the unit-the SEWs' professional home-a safe haven and secure base for all SEWs but especially for the new and inexperienced SEW's. The supervisor has a particularly key role to play in this 'holding 'function.

   o SEWs need a battery of necessary inner resources to do their job.

   o Most SEW's have deeply absorbed at their parents' knee `both the 'parental' role and the need/drive to care for others (see next conclusion).

3. It is clear that many SEW's come to this work with a long-standing -if not life-long- commitment to, and understanding of, its objectives and the demands it makes on its workers. Not a few feel it as a sort of destiny. This commitment is largely the outcome of their childhood upbringing. They arrive equipped with a battery of vital inner resources although careful and skilled supervision and advice from colleagues, supervisors and managers does help. Whereas a proportion of SEWs come to the work as a staging-post to better things and leave after 3-5 years, these deeply committed ones, who perhaps shape the dominant character of the YAS, tend to stay for the long term. The very high felt value of the

work to their young at-risk clients keeps them in their job and fighting to succeed despite the most challenging of working conditions.

4. There are strong indications that the correlation/ association between attachment style and PSE is not only linear nor unidirectional and that there are intervening variables *en route* from one to the other. For instance, there seem to be at least four lifespan pathways to learning/acquiring an effective attachment style for socio-educational work and a high PSE:

   o The two qualities can be learnt as a child in the parental home- but by two very different routes:

   > Children can learn from the example and teaching of loving parents, or
   > They can teach themselves the caring role and skills despite the negative example of uncaring or badly-caring parents.

   o The two qualities/skills can be learnt from caring experience after childhood and before entering the YAS;

   o Post-childhood intensive relationships and attachment figures can 'teach' new in

   o A secure attachment style and high PSE can be learnt or at least substantially augmented on the SEW job.

5. We have to pay close attention to the finding that SEWs who score as of preoccupied and dismissive attachment style also, on average, rank only slightly lower on PSE than SEWs categorized as of secure attachment style. Given the known high positive correlation between PSE and actual job performance rating, the preoccupied and dismissive are therefore probably performing at least adequately on the SEW job, even if the secure may, on average, do the job a little better. But-

   It seems likely that on-the-job experience will be more important for the preoccupied and dismissive SEWs than for the secure. They need time and the close support of managers and supervisors to find their feet, compared to SEW's with a secure attachment style

6. That the preoccupied and dismissive SEW's have a PSE rating slightly lower then the secure SEWs must mean one or both of two things:

   o SEWs of all three attachment styles are capable of building good client relationships. (The responses to the qualitative interview indicate, for instance, that at least some SEWs categorized as of 'preoccupied' attachment style -who by definition stand in need of intimacy-find this intimacy within their client relationships.)

- o This study's categorization of attachment style is probably-to some extent at least-misleading. Categorization itself as an attachment strategy is relatively crude as compared to dimensional measurement (Fraley et al, 2015; Scharfe, 2017). SEWs were asked to report their answers with respect to close relationships in general and not their current work relationship in particular. Had the latter been the case I feel sure that many more of them would have scored as having a secure attachment style. Nor can we argue that the respondent SEWs misrepresented themselves in answering the questionnaire as they are in the main experienced and long-serving workers. This seems to leave only the interpretation that the 175 SEWs sampled are somewhat more secure in attachment with their young clients than this study's categorization indicates. That security strategies are widespread among the large majority of SEWs is also what my long experience as a supervisor of SEWs has shown me.

7. My own feeling is that there is considerable truth in both of the above interpretations of the data and that both are very interesting. The first of the two interpretations, for example, would seem to put the usefulness of trying to identify a 'best' attachment style which 'best' promotes PSE in some doubt. It suggests, instead, that exploring/ measuring the correlation between PSE, attachment style and practical success on the job in socio-educational work would be a useful direction for future research.

8. Recent research makes it likely that, in adulthood, the one person may apply different attachment styles within different relationships (Fraley, 2016; Fitch, Pistole & Gunn, 2010; Mayseless & Popper, 2019) -and thus SEWs whose parents have 'taught' them an insecure attachment style may well be able to face their young clients with a secure attachment style and confident PSE

9. The gathering research evidence that reparative post-childhood relationships can teach a new more optimistic attachment strategy provides backing for the YAS's strategy of providing their young clients just such a reparative relationship and experience.

Conceptual Conclusion: Modelling The Two-Way Relations between Attachment Style and Perceived Self-Efficacy in Socio-Educational Work – The AS-SE-SEW Model

The findings emerging from this study indicate the following modelling of the two-way relationship between attachment style and perceived self-efficacy in socio-educational workers.
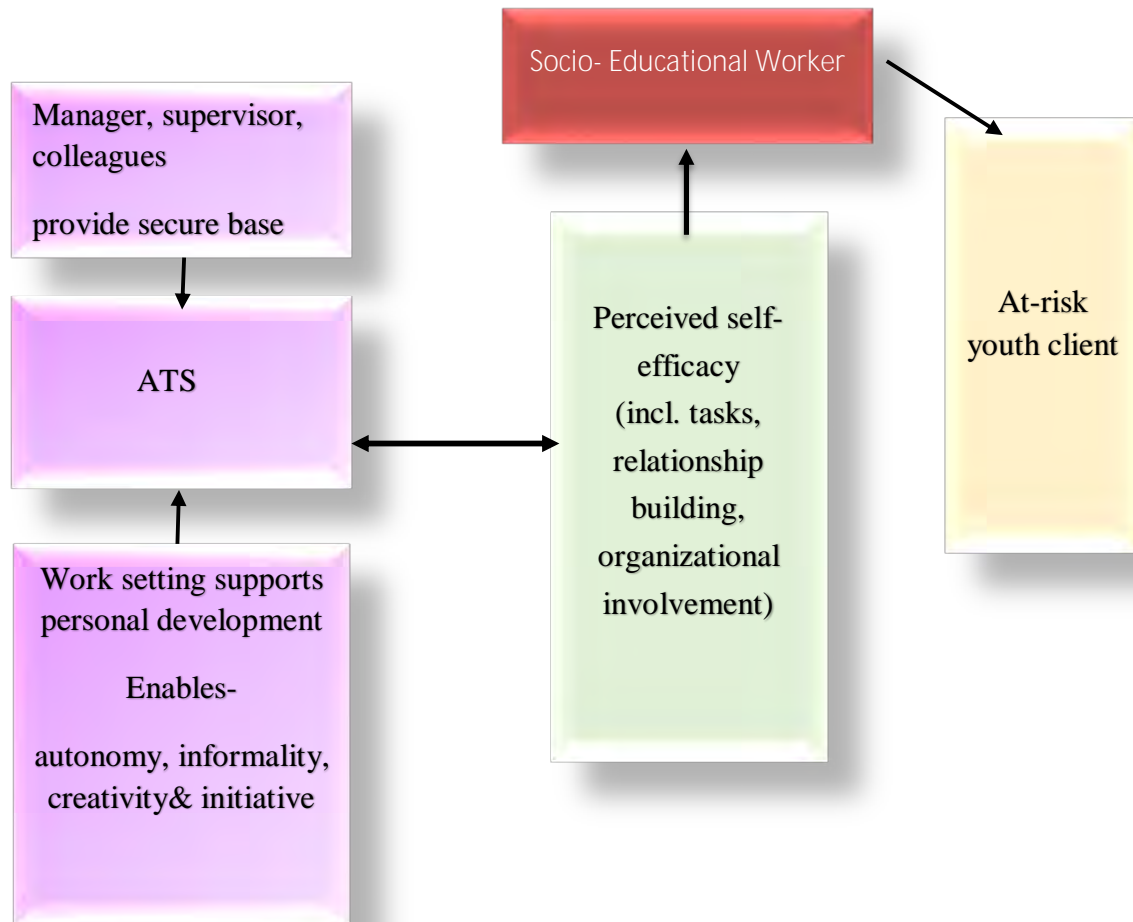
Fig. 3.1: Model of the two-way relations between attachment style and perceived self-efficacy in socio-educational work

The AS-SE-SEW model illustrates that the present study has confirmed that three component dimensions (task performance, relationship-building and organizational involvement) are essential to overall PSE. It also shows that if SEW's manager, supervisor and more experienced colleagues provide a secure base and safe haven, and if the work setting promotes their individual professional development then the SEWs' attachment style operate as a dynamic synergy intergrating bi-directionally with their self-efficacy as SEW's. (The model assumes that

SEWs show a more secure attachment style to their clients than their answers to the present study's Attachment Scale indicated see Point 7.1f above.)

The model is holistic and dynamic in that it takes into account the totality of the SEW's life experience from childhood through adulthood, his/her relationships with significant others and the way the SEW has been affected by these relationships. The model is also modular in order to take account of the SEW's current developmental stage. At the start of their job SEWs have more attachment needs and need temporary attachment figures much more than they do later, when they are more experienced-although these attachment needs never entirely disappear.

Contributions to Knowledge

Contribution to Theoretical Knowledge

Understanding the variables of attachment style and PSE and their inter-relationship has been enlarged:

1. The three component scales proposed for total SEW self-efficacy-socio-educational tasks, socio-educational relationship building, and involvement in Unit management-were all confirmed and empirically supported.
2. The study has confirmed evidence and indications from other research that the correlation between the two variables is non-linear and has indicated that it may involve several intervening variables.
3. The present study has uncovered several factors explaining/predicting PSE in addition to attachment style.
4. The original AS-SE-SEW model presented above closes the gap in knowledge regarding the connections between attachment style and self-efficacy by closely examining these connections in the context of socio-educational work with youth at risk.
5. This study has taken place at a time when the knowledge base for attachment style is in a degree of flux. Recent research makes it likely that, in adulthood, the one person may apply different attachment styles within different relationships (Ainsworth, 1989; Trinke and Bartholomew, 1997; Cook ,2000; Fraley, Hudson, Heffernan, and Segal, 2015; Scharfe, 2017; Fraley & Roisman, 2019; Fraley, 2019).

6. This study confirms that there are multiple lifespan pathways to learning/acquiring an effective attachment style and a high PSE for socio-educational work. It confirms that attachment style acquired in childhood is not determinative and can be changed by new close relationships in adolescence or adulthood. It confirms that SEWs of preoccupied and dismissive attachment styles seem to do their job at least competently, if perhaps not quite as well as those with a secure attachment style.

7. This study-through the difficulties the researcher has faced in interpreting her own attachment data- has confirmed the relevance of the debate over the benefits and shortcomings of the categorical and dimensional measurement of attachment style, reinforcing the argument that attachment style currently has considerable limitations as a predictor of PSE and job effectiveness.

Contribution to Practical Knowledge, Including Practical Recommendations to the Youth Advancement Service

The SEW job, with its high degrees of inherent day-to-day uncertainty and ambiguity is so difficult to prepare for that (a) most YAS entrants, particularly at the start, need close support and 'holding'. The study has also shown that most YAS entrants really learn their job on the job. This emphasizes that the YAS unit and its managers and supervisors must provide SEWs a professional 'safe haven' and 'secure base', and therefore have to be trained and instructed accordingly. Supervisors have a particularly core part to play in this ongoing support function. All the above is illustrated in the AS-SE-SEW model.

a. It is recommended that new entrants be attached to an experienced SEW for a period of 'apprenticeship'.

b. The correlation between attachment style and effective job performance (except perhaps for SEWs of fearful attachment style) has been put in some doubt and needs to be more thoroughly explored.

c. SEWs whose parents have 'taught' them an insecure attachment style may well be able to face their young clients with a secure attachment style and confident PSE.

d. SEWs of fearful attachment style perhaps need to be screened out of the Youth Advancement Service on application, or at a later stage.

e. The hardships of SEWs' work are so permanently severe that one can make a case for SEWs being allowed a sabbatical to 'renew their batteries'.

f. SEW work is becoming more formal and formalized. Given this trend, there is great importance to SEWs retaining their right to be singular, informal, creative and initiating.

g. The gathering research evidence that reparative post-childhood relationships can teach a new more optimistic attachment strategy provides more backing also- if it was needed-for the YAS's strategy of providing their young clients just such a reparative relationship and experience.

Contribution to Methodology

The Mixed Methods design and data triangulation strategy deployed for the present study has entirely justified itself and in this way confirms the usefulness of this research approach for exploring research topics of the sort explored here.

Jones et al (2018) argue that the findings of the two main data gathering strategies deployed by attachment and PSE research-self-report questionnaires and interviews-are weakly correlated. the present study find correlation in some cases and in some not, for example whereas the self-report questionnaire found only a weak correlation between length of SEW job experience and level of PSE, the responses to the semi-structured interview indicated the very opposite. Further, the non-linear relationships confirmed and elaborated by the qualitative interviews constitute a key element of the study's importance

Limitations of the Research

Although the researcher was not known personally to her interviewees, they did know that she was a senior supervisor in the Service, which may have introduced/increased the tendency to give answers expected to gratify the interviewer (social desirability).

It may be that the study failed to test for background variables more connected to attachment style and PSE than the ones measured.

The study considered only the correlation between attachment style and PSE. Correlation between attachment style, PSE and practical success on the job is worth exploring and corroborating in the context of socio-educational work.

Recent research makes it likely that, in adulthood, the one person may apply different attachment styles within different relationships (Fraley, 2016; Fitch, Pistole & Gunn, 2010; Mayseless & Popper, 2019) -and thus SEWs whose parents have 'taught' them an insecure attachment style may well be able to face their young clients with a secure attachment style and confident PSE. Then there is the debate over the benefits and shortcomings of categorical and dimensional measurement of attachment style (Fraley et al, 2015; Scharfe, 2017). Given this present state of uncertainty about its uniformity and measurement, this research uses them both.

The two samples drawn for the present study, while representative of the research population to a reasonable degree, could be made more representative by random stratified sampling.

Future Research

Exploring/ measuring the correlation between PSE, attachment style and practical success on the job in socio-educational work would be a useful direction for future research.

It would be advantageous for the Youth Advancement Service to collect data on the drop-out rate SEWs. Is there a correlation between insecure SEWs and drop-out? Does low SE relate to drop-out from YAS? Does the success rate of SEWs relate to high PSE?

Other background variables, in addition to the ones tested for by the present study, need to be brought into the accounting.

It seems likely that on-the-job experience will be more important for the preoccupied and avoidant SEWs than for the secure. The preoccupied and avoidant need time and the close support of managers and supervisors to find their feet, compared to SEW's with a secure attachment style. This likely hypothesis needs testing.

The sample in the present study were asked to score their attachment style in the context of close relations with significant others in general. It seems likely had they been asked about their relations in the work context that many more would have reported secure or largely secure attachment patterns. Further study will allow an examination of this assumption.

The notion that in adulthood, the one person may apply different attachment styles within different relationships (Scharfe, 2017; Fraley & Roisman, 2019) and the debate over the

benefits and shortcomings of categorical and dimensional measurement of attachment style (Scharfe, 2017) requires the need for further research on how to measure ATS and PSE of SEWs and assessing attachment hierarchy within YAS units.

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