The School Social Worker as Leader: Are Master's Students Prepared to take Leadership Roles in their Future Schools?

by

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Abstract

Master of Social Work (MSW) programs are in a position to prepare school social workers to become leaders in their respective schools, allowing the social workers to provide both reactive and proactive solutions to situations in their environment. The purpose of this cross-sectional, exploratory study was to assess the attitudes of social work educators towards the inclusion of leadership skills within school social work curricula, to prepare those students for leadership roles. Social work administrators and educators were surveyed using an online survey distributed to all department chairs of MSW programs which received accreditation through the Council on Social Work Education (n = 75) and the resulting data was analyzed for significant relationships through Chi-square and Fisher exact tests as well as logistic regressions. While the research hypotheses analyzed were found to be non-significant, the resulting data serves as a foundation to more exploration of this topic and of leadership within host settings in general, as well as leadership in micro practice.

Keywords: School social work, leadership in social work, social work in host settings, Master of Social Work (MSW) leadership curriculum.

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Chapter One: Dissertation Overview

As school social workers become more and more essential in dealing with the increasing stressors in schools across the United States, it is important to consider their preparedness to meet this new demand. This study explores leadership preparation in school social work, as evidenced through the perceptions of educators in Master of Social Work (MSW) programs. This was examined through an online survey exploring social work educators' perceptions of leadership in school social work curricula. Through this survey, presented in tandem with a review of literature on leadership and school social work preparation, the study endeavored to investigate the expectations and extent to which MSW programs reinforce school social work leadership roles.

This cross-sectional, exploratory study included a survey distributed to the department chairs of all accredited School of Social Work, as identified on the Council of Social Work Education's website. Department chairs were requested to distribute the Qualtrics survey link to all faculty members deemed appropriate for this study. Criteria for inclusion for a University were the possession of an accredited MSW program, regardless of whether school social work curricula was offered.

The aim of this study holistic consociates with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW)'s ethical principles; in a leadership role within the school, the school social work has the opportunity to infuse the policies and actions of the administration with the values significant to social work, including social justice and dignity and worth of the person. The MSW program, then, is responsible for preparation to fulfill these responsibilities and uphold these values. The study also more specifically addresses competence, both as a value and as article 1.04 of the Ethical Standards. As social workers are prohibited from operating outside of

the jurisdiction of their specific training and license through the NASW Code of Ethics (National Association of Social Workers, 2017), the study explores the jurisdiction of school social workers, and whether educators perceive leadership within the school setting as falling within the scope of the practicing school social worker.

Chapter Two: The Study Problem

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) enumerates nine core competencies as a framework for its Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) for master's level social work programs in the United States. Among other criteria, these competencies must be demonstrated in the curricula of the master's programs to receive accreditation (CSWE Commission on Accreditation, 2016). However, the CSWE, in their accreditation guidelines, does not stipulate a requirement for leadership preparedness. The CSWE does provide specific leadership guidelines for macro-level curricula (Council on Social Work Education, 2015), but it is not mandated as part of general coursework criteria. This lack of emphasis may contribute to the "visitor" mentality that shadows social workers outside of social service settings, which will be discussed in more detail as part of the theoretical framework in Chapter Four. Outside of macro practice, the social worker may not be equipped to take on leadership roles in their respective industries, nor expected to do so.

School-wide issues such as bullying and violence have been shown in multiple studies to be impacted by the school climate, and school administrators are positioned to shape this climate through both creation of policy and through positive, guided interactions with students that foster a safe environment. Because of the person-in-environment perspective unique to social work, the school social worker is invaluable in contributing at this level of leadership, allowing the worker to collaborate in the formation of school wide policies and interventions that focus on the individual in constant interaction with the surrounding environment (Karls, et al., 1997). School social workers who assume a role of leadership may aid in the development of more effective interventions and policy, supporting a reduction in life-altering episodes of violence.

Social workers, as advocates for oppressed populations, are instructed to emphasize and advocate for diversity, equality and inclusion in their interactions with clients in all fields. The skilled social worker is expected to utilize this lens in all assessments, goal setting and intervention planning within their populations. Using this lens as part of a collaborative leadership team in education will serve to naturally address social justice issues within the school environment through inclusion for all students, the introduction of interventions that actively consider and address oppression, and staff training.

It becomes imperative, then, for school social workers to be prepared to take on leadership roles within the school environment, possibly even challenging the definition of leadership within the school through reframing it as a collaborative process within an ecological framework. However, many curricula from universities offering MSW degrees cover a limited amount of leadership theory and strategies, if any, preferring instead to focus on task-specific skills and information. Such a focus may prevent the social worker from taking a more assertive, productive role in leadership as a member of the school administration team; the social worker may be regulated to a support role in which the worker is constantly responding but does little prevention.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), in their Code of Ethics (2017), unites and connects those who identify themselves as social workers across work sectors through shared ethical values and a sense of probity. Within the Code of Ethics are the principles of Service, Dignity and Worth of the Person, and Integrity. School social workers are no exception to these expectations; however, school social workers are in a unique position to follow these ethics in a work setting, where the clients may outnumber the worker by 50 or more and will also

maintain numerous equally important interpersonal relationships with other adults within the same environment.

While the original code of ethics was approved in the 1960s, the NASW addressed the specific track of the school social worker more recently. The NASW Standards for School Social Work, revised in 2012, advises the worker to take a significant leadership role: "School social workers shall provide leadership in developing a positive school climate and work collaboratively with school administration, school personnel, family members, and community professionals as appropriate to increase accessibility and effectiveness of services" (National Association of Social Work, 2012, p. 13). This standard instructs workers not only to function as leaders in their school, but to envision themselves as leaders. This study, in conjunction with the NASW's invitation for leadership in schools, looks at whether educators agree with the importance of this proposed standard. The data collected can be begin a dialogue on fulfilling this standard.

The NASW released a statement in March 2018 regarding the need to address school violence. They noted, in part:

> The underlying premise of school social work services is based in strengthening students' academic progress by removing barriers to learning including meeting their basic physical and emotional needs... Any form of school violence, including the mass shootings at schools around the country such as the recent incidents Florida and Maryland, prohibit students' sense of safety and their learning….Today more than ever, there is a growing need for school social workers to help prevent school violence and to support students in moments of crisis… They are extensively trained to manage and deal with crisis and are equipped to assist school administrators and teachers. School social

> workers are experienced in delivering difficult and sensitive information and can assist in developing messages that are age-appropriate and culturally sensitive. In addition, they can lead the development of strategic plans that prepare other school personnel to respond adequately during the times of chaos and crisis. (National Association of Social Workers, 2018)

While the statement by the NASW is thorough and reactive to the events at the time, there is also a need to look at the same characteristics of school social workers with an emphasis on overall prevention. For example, the previously mentioned, correct observation that "[t]hey are extensively trained to manage and deal with crisis" is accurate but overlooks the ability of social workers to prevent crises. Similarly, the thought that social workers can "lead the development of strategic plans that prepare other school personnel to respond adequately during times of chaos and crisis" can also be applied to the development of strategic plans that will assist administration in overall prevention. This study seeks to reinforce the recommendations of the NASW, in exploration of whether Schools of Social Work are preparing their students to lead rather than just react.

The next chapter explores the current literature related to the above challenge of preparedness. The vagueness of expectations, inaccessibility to administrative tasks and/or possible education or training for this position may prevent the worker from using the opportunity of the school social work position to its full potential. The concepts of leadership in school social work, social work and education will also be examined, to understand the current dynamics of leadership and how the social work fits in to this dynamic.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

This study explores the perception of master's levels social work educators towards leadership preparation for future school social workers. The preparation of school social workers, through the introduction of collaborative leadership models that reflect the values of social work, will build the capacity to introduce multi-tier interventions and policy that affect the prevailing climate and, ultimately, have a school-wide impact on issues.

This literature review will begin by operationalizing leadership as ascribed to the fields of education, social work and to school social work, concentrating on different models of leadership within these fields. The review will then transition to an exploration of how social workers are prepared for a role in educational settings, with an emphasis on MSW program curriculum as the general minimum degree requirement for school social work in a majority of states. The review will conclude with an examination of expectations of the school social worker in administration.

A literature search was conducted for each of the search terms related to the study problem on Google Scholar and in the PsycINFO, Eric, Encyclopedia of Social Work and Social Work Abstract databases. The results were then mapped for relevance and themes through inclusion and exclusion criteria. Please see Appendix A for a visual map of these analyses.

Operationalizing Leadership

Attempting to conceptualize leadership into one definitive meaning is a complex task, considering the variation leadership exhibits from field to field, depending on the specific demands of that field. A starting point in understanding leadership is that its implementation may be through an individual as a leader or shared amongst a group. Within these two paradigms are multiple models that vary based on the tasks to be accomplished and the individual members within the organization. Leadership definitions almost universally assume

the formal or informal influence of one member of an organization over others with the goal of solving a problem (Davis & Luthans, 1979; Graen, et al., 2010). Because of this variation in leadership, this review will move to a focus on leadership in the three areas relevant to the within investigation: education, social work and school social work.

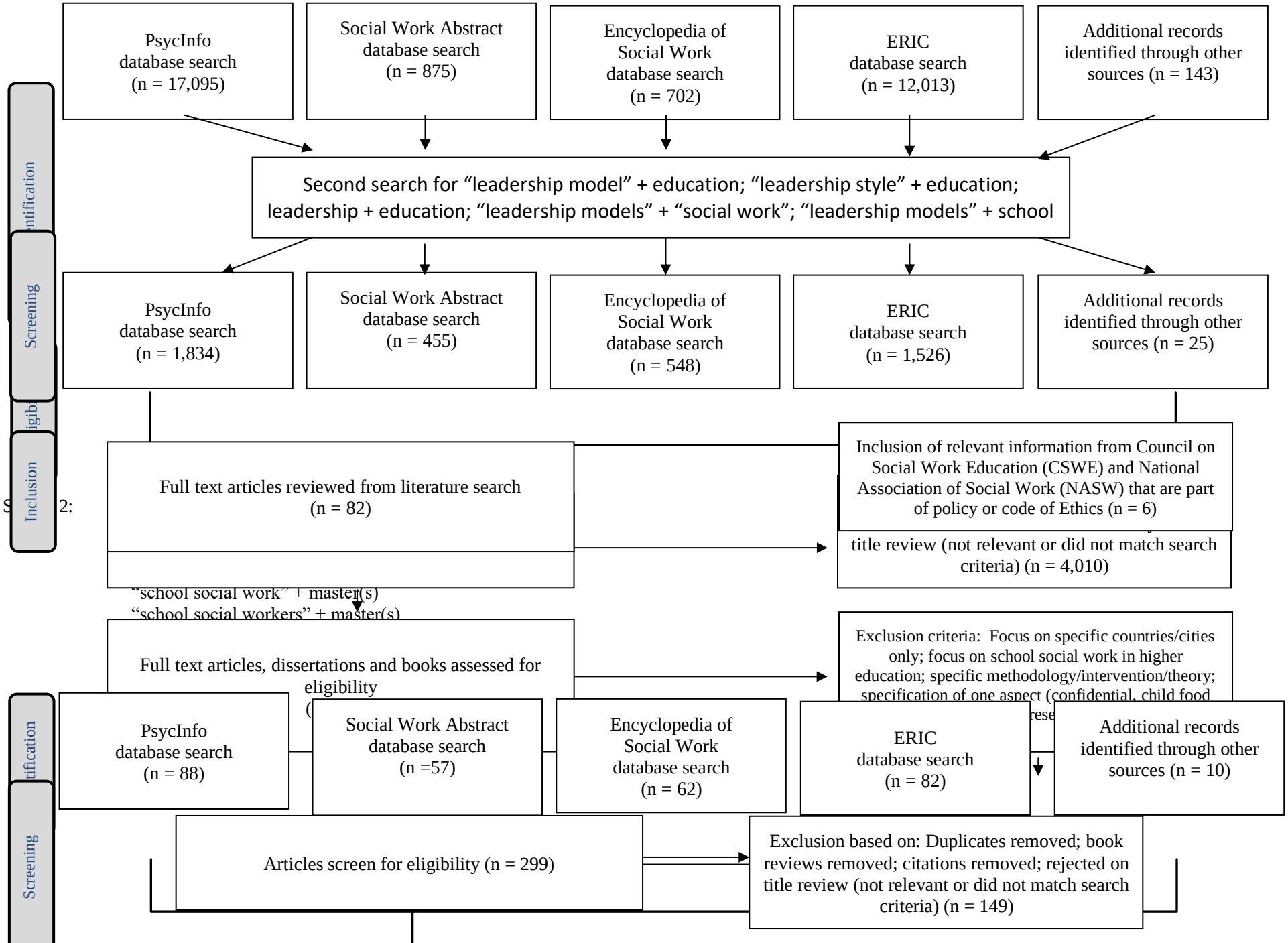
Literature Search Method

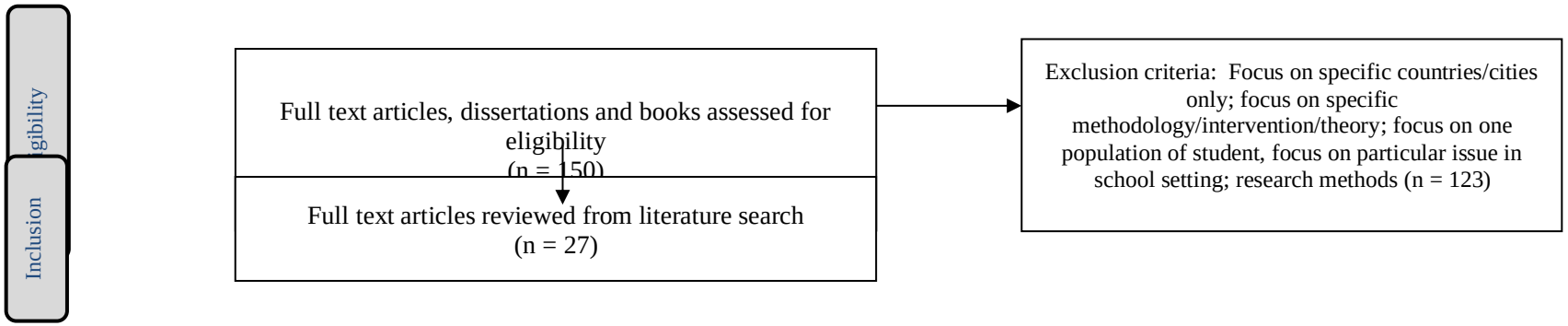
Comprehensive searches of scholarly literature were conducted based on key terms related to leadership within the aforementioned fields, including *leadership and school social work, leadership and social work* and *leadership and education*. Additional searches were conducted for literature related to the roles and perception of school social workers within MSW programs using the key words *school social work and roles*, and *school social work and perception*. Literature for this search included both peer-reviewed journals and published dissertations. Databases included in this search include Google Scholar, PsycINFO, the Encyclopedia of Social Work, Social Work Abstracts and ERIC. Additional articles were found using both forward and backward snowball methods (Wohlin, 2014).

For literature related to leadership in the abovementioned fields, inclusion criteria for the articles consisted of articles that focused on leadership as it pertains to any type of school setting (public or private, of any age group, any community structure). Articles were required to focus on school structure within the physical school environment, versus exclusively district or state leadership structures. Exclusion criteria consisted of pedagogical foci, such as leadership in curriculum creation. Literature that focused exclusively on research methods as well as book reviews were also excluded. All research was reviewed for the quality of content and relevance to each topic.

Comprehensive searches were also completed related to school social worker education and current roles in practice. Keywords for this search included *school social work* and *role*, *school social work* and *masters program*, and *school social work* and *preparation*. Inclusion criteria consists of overall preparedness and articles related to possible aspects of leadership, for example discipline, rule setting and policy. Criteria also included specific mentions of the educational process including course availability, expectations and/or content. Exclusion criteria included articles specific to education to support a particular population of students (foster children, individuals with disabilities, etc.), as the within study focuses on overall preparedness and leadership preparedness. Exclusion criteria also incorporated literature related to specific interventions and specific issues, such as preparation of school social workers to use group work, for the same reason. Please see below for visual flow charts for these searches.

Table 3.1: Visual flow chart: "leadership models" & "leadership styles"




gibility
Inclusion
Full text articles, dissertations and books assessed for eligibility
(n = 150)
Full text articles reviewed from literature search
(n = 27)
Exclusion criteria: Focus on specific countries/cities only; focus on specific methodology/intervention/theory; focus on one population of student, focus on particular issue in school setting; research methods (n = 123)

Results

Leadership in Education

The conventional structure in school settings is based on a traditional managerial style with a single leader, the principal. Some variations exist, but are less common, and most variations continue to center around a figurehead that exists specifically to lead the school. The role of principal evolved from the natural intention to place one teacher as responsible for the school in general, with the role of connecting to the community; the role evolved after the implementation of formalized curricula and the creation of the grade level system (Kafka, 2009; Rousmaniere, 2013). The term 'principal' was originally connected to reputation only and had no "administrative legal scaffold" (Rousmaniere, 2013, p.10). Responsibilities eventually evolved into the supervision of teachers, discipline of students and other functional duties (p. 23).

The establishment of a principal as a leader did not deter competing theoretical foundations for school leadership. As early as the 1870s, John Dewey developed schools that stressed the importance of democracy in its functioning, and Janucz Korczak created a school that allowed youth the opportunity to self-govern through a Children's Parliament and Children's Court (Engel, 2008). However, the concept of a more democratic school did not necessarily equate to distribution of leadership among staff, but rather a school that stressed open expression of opinions.

Today, administrative expectations give principals ultimate judgment in making decisions within the school. Teachers have come to expect this role, to the extent that a study conducted by Blase (1993) on teachers' perceptions of principals showed that the teachers who identified their principals as effective leaders simultaneously indicated that those principals "fail to include

teachers in decision making or limit their involvement significantly." (p. 158). The perceptions of teachers towards their principals are connected to underlying perceptions of the school in general, such as the school's mission, culture and values, rather than the gender, age or experience of the principal (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1995; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997).

Educational leadership styles also included more participatory models, with varying conceptualizations of participation. Banjarnahor, et al. (2018) found a positive effect on job satisfaction for principals; however, it is of note that most studies of participatory models focus on effects in teachers and rarely on the perceptions of support staff (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1995; King, et al., 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997; Spindler & George, 1984). Participatory leadership in schools share the commonality of staff participation to some capacity, but the method and degree to which staff are allowed to participate can vary. Spindler and George (1984), for example, discussed multiple benefits to staff participation meetings at the middle school level, including an increased degree of ownership and "psychological commitment" (p.293) in decisions, a "morale booster" (p. 293), the development of leadership skills, and the fostering of connections between teachers and "support services" (p. 294) mentioning specifically guidance counselors. However, in their discussion of the usefulness of these meetings, there was no mention of concrete, final decisions being made by participants, the delegation of responsibilities and action amongst staff other than the principal or the invitation for ideas that would also spur tangible action. The authors noted:

> Brainstorming techniques are emphasized to allow the faculty to dream a little about things they would like to see happen. It is important to balance the more immediate situational concerns with the pipe dreams that are necessary to pave the way for change, innovation, and long-range planning. (p. 294).

In this way the use and purpose of participatory leadership appeared to be more psychological and less functional for the organization. On a different part of the spectrum, teachers and staff in some schools are tasked to undertake actively evaluating their own work through observation (King, et al., 1996), a task traditionally reserved for administration. Others viewed the concept of participation as forming an evaluative network, such as in Lewis and Borunda (2006) who detail participatory leadership specifically in the field of school counseling as collaboration between counselors in different schools and districts. It is unclear, however, whether participatory leadership decisions made as a group can be implemented district-wide.

The distributed leadership model, similar to the participatory model, includes multiple agents acting in an organization towards decision-making; however, the distribution in this particular model emphasizes leadership shifting to individuals with the appropriate and relevant skill to the task required. Gronn (2002) described a situation in which "spontaneous collaboration" (p. 430) may occur, in which "sets of two or three individuals with differing skills and abilities, perhaps from across different organizational levels, pool their expertise and regularise their conduct to solve a problem, after which they may disband" (p. 430). Harris (2004) noted the potential in this model to seek out and access "expertise" throughout the organization rather focusing on a formalized leadership role (p. 13).

The synergistic leadership model, proposed as a model reflective of feminist values with a consideration of differences in leadership styles by gender, is illustrated through a pyramidal shape that considers culture, external forces beyond the control of the leader, the leader's behavior with an emphasis on gender, and the organizational structure itself (Brown & Irby, 2003; Irby, et al, 2009; Leonard & Jones, 2009). Aside from the inclusiveness of the model, the inclusion of both external forces and the value system of the organization itself highlights the

importance of acknowledging the interactions between these four elements through the concept of the ecological system and the person-in-environment central to social work.

The synergistic leadership model shows potential for use in school leadership, but still proposes a model that centers on one traditional manager, in this case either a principal or district superintendent (Brown & Irby, 2003). However, the pyramidal structure that acknowledges the behavioral style of the leader, among other factors, can and should be applied to members of a participatory model of leadership.

Leadership in Social Work

As previously mentioned, the accrediting body for social work programs in the United States does not specify guidelines or criteria for inclusion of leadership in master's level education programs. The leadership initiatives and institutes conducted by the CSWE focus on leadership at the academic level in the traditional roles of directors and deans ("CSWE Leadership Institute", 2009). Additionally, leadership skills within the social work curricula are traditionally framed from a macro perspective connected to social policy practice, rather than as a feature universal to all future workers in the field, including practitioners. This limitation may be influenced by and may likewise influence the perceived purpose of social workers, which is further explored in Chapter Four.

Interest in a definition of leadership to elucidate social work roles in an organizational climate appeared not long after the formation of the CSWE. Klein (1959) emphasized the importance of outlining leadership as a way of addressing and possibly eliminating many of the issues plaguing social workers in host environments, chiefly role ambiguity. Klein noted that as each professional is in a position to set the expectations for their role within the organization, leadership within social work should be included. Klein did not propose the details of this

concept, but many efforts have been made to operationalize leadership throughout social work literature (Brilliant, 1986; Elpers & Weithuis, 2008; Holosko, 2009; Lawler, 2005; Rank & Hutchison, 2000).

Elpers and Westhius (2008) took a broad view of leadership as including "behavior, personal traits, roles, relationships, interaction patterns, follower perceptions, and influence on organizational culture and goals" (p.27). Holosko (2009), through a content analysis of literature on social work leadership, identified five key attributes of leadership as: the possession and implementation of a vision; influencing others to act; teamwork and collaboration; capacity for problem-solving; and actively creating positive change (p. 454). Hopson and Lawson (2011) specifically examined social work in the context of schools and operationalized leadership with an evidence-seeking approach, ascribing the worker with the ability to make data-informed decisions and the task of collecting and analyzing data.

Throughout the literature, one of the centralized themes in operationalizing leadership within social work has been the juxtaposition of traditional managerial concepts with social work values and motives (Brilliant, 1986; Lawler, 2005; Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005). Lawler (2005) argued that leadership may not be operationalized but more assumed to be the person "in charge"; Wielkiewicz and Stelzner (2005) also discussed leadership models based on an "industrial paradigm" (p. 326) which is common in most fields.

Definitions of social work leadership that deviate from the aforementioned concepts are likely to stress the use of interprofessional or participatory strategies, perhaps with the goal of addressing or alleviating the contrast. Klein (1959) describes the presumed natural tendency for social workers to gravitate to a participatory or collaborative style:

> Another facet of this topic is seen in the reaction of social workers to autocratic climates. Social workers believe in democratic values and self-determination. They recoil from direct command and authoritarianism and consequently may unconsciously fight the organizational climate and reject it. Their attitudes are probably observable by others and may result in diminished acceptance and communication." (p. 93)

For the purposes of the within study, leadership is operationalized through a combination of definitions proposed by Holosko (2009) and Hopson and Lawson (2011). This definition provides a starting point for identifying existing leadership skills that may be used in the school system. It should be noted that some of these skills, such as data collection, may be taught in the overall master's curricula; however due to the nuanced way that these skills may be utilized within a school system and with an understanding of the host mentality that may exist within the system, it is worth examining whether participants of the study identify these skills as germane to future work as a school social work leader.

Leadership in School Social Work

Preparing to be a School Social Worker. The roles and tasks traditionally attributed to modern school social workers were previously performed by visiting teachers as far back as 1906. Sugrue (2017) described a need identified in the 1920s to professionally outline and delineate roles for these visiting teachers who were responsible for acting as a liaison between the home and school environments. Their roles also included advocating for consideration of students' specific needs within the school. Sugrue noted, "The discussions of boundaries reflect the concern that if visiting teachers could not distinguish themselves from other school staff, they risked being given tasks, such as maintaining attendance records or following up on health

concerns, that distracted from their larger professional goals (p.26)." Today it could be argued that the need for distinguishing continues.

While students involved in Master of Social Work (MSW) programs may be offered school social work information as part of their curricula, there is little research compiled as to how that information is received by those students and its perceived practical usefulness. Moreover, there is a dearth of literature focused on the roles of the school social worker as perceived by schools of social work, which creates the curricula for these preparatory courses. The research on school social work education that has been presented suggests a need for systemic change in course curriculum to set consistent standards throughout the field (Altshuler & Webb, 2009; Sabatino, et al., 2011; Mumm & Bye, 2011).

Altshuler & Webb (2009) examined the individual state requirements for helping school professionals in the United States. After an examination of requirements throughout the United States for school social workers, school counselors and school psychologists, the authors concluded that of the three professions, school social work had the least standardized education and certification requirements throughout the country. Requirements varied from a baccalaureate in any field to a specific MSW, and from Praxis testing to specialized license to no license requirement. Research by Mumm and Bye (2011) two years later showed some leadership consistency in school social work students' curricula content such as social policy coursework (noted by the authors to be a requirement of all accredited Master of Social Work programs analyzed) but also revealed more overall variety than consistency in school social work content (p.22). The lack of homogenous requirements, compared to the near uniform requirements for school psychologists, is indicative of an absence of demarcated roles for school social workers throughout the education system.

Sabatino, et al. (2011) similarly reviewed school social work standards through the lens of a national certification proposed and developed by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) to assess competency, developed after a national survey isolated key foci. The certification of the NASW, known as the Certified School Social Work Specialist, or C-SSWS, is awarded to graduates from CSWE-accredited MSW programs holding the required licensure in their district to practice school social work, if said graduate has completed 2,160 post-graduate, supervised hours in a school setting. There is currently no national requirement to have this certification, but some states do acknowledge it and leave requirements to a district-by-district basis.

Berzin and O'Connor (2010) qualitatively coded the syllabi of 51 accredited MSW programs with concentrations on school social work. While curriculum content on individualized diagnoses such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, task specific subjects such as special education, and individualized interventions such as attendance issues and substance abuse issues and were found commonly across syllabi, information regarding schoolwide interventions appeared in just 17 percent of syllabi. Leadership specific skills, as part of professional development, were found in 2 syllabi, or 3 percent of syllabi. Most students Berzin and O'Connor observed that "97 percent of schools had content related to individual work to support individuals and spent 25 percent of course weeks dedicated to that quadrant, only 48 percent have content related to intervening with systems to change systems, with only 6 percent of course weeks dedicated to that pursuit" (p. 243). This finding reflects back to the focus of social workers in general on individual support rather than systemic change. While Berzin and O'Connor were instrumental in beginning an investigation of school social work educational

content, it is important to note that the amount of content (and whether that content was required or suggested readings and information for the student) is unclear.

A qualitative study by Phillippo, et al. (2017) explored the practice decisions of 60 school social workers, the majority (82 percent) of which were based in Illinois. Amount foci discussed included their training and preparation to become school social workers. Among recurrent themes were a desire to have more specified training for school-based practice; respondents felt an emphasis on generalist practice knowledge with a lack of training on "behavioral intervention plans, school culture, education law, special education diagnoses and interventions, and SSW [school social work]-specific role education" (p. 277). While the results cannot be generalized, the responses support the concept of missing, non-practice specific elements in preparation for a career in school social work. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the role ambiguity that may be present as the social worker graduates may lead to role opacity for not only the worker but other school professionals in the field.

Out in the Field: The Perceptions of School Social Workers. The role of social workers in school administration tasks varies between schools, locations, and grade levels. Consequently, throughout the applicable literature the specification of responsibilities has been fluid; however, attempts have been made to identify commonalities between school social workers in any setting. Openshaw (2008) noted that there are tasks common to all school social workers including consultation with other staff members, assessment in different facets of student functioning, direct interventions with youth and caregivers, and assistance with the development of programs (p.2). Despite these expected duties, as far back as the 1960s the roles of school social workers were not clearly defined and at times were not easily distinguished from the roles of other helping school professionals such as school counselors or school psychologists

(Hartseil, 1987; Agresta, 2004). It is this lack of definition that may have contributed to blurred expectations of social work and lack of prioritizing collaboration at the administration level.

Costin (1969) attempted to elucidate school social work roles through a survey conducted with a randomized sample of social workers from 40 states and Washington, DC. 238 surveys were analyzed for importance of common school tasks to the social worker, as well as whether that task should be reserved for the social worker alone. Costin found that for the social workers surveyed, casework and case management were the most important of their tasks, while "leadership and policy making" were considered their least important task (p. 277). Almost a decade later, Costin's 1969 study was replicated by Meares (1977); while the tasks identified as most important changed to a focus on advocacy which could be reflective of the change in society priorities including civil rights changes, the least important task remained leadership and policy making. While there is no clear speculation presented by either author as to why leadership tasks were ranked last on the surveys, one possible suggestion is that school social workers might be more likely to prioritize tasks thought of as not only important to their work but also tasks they felt only they could complete, justifying its importance. They may have looked at leadership-related responsibilities as being in the jurisdiction of school administrators without looking at the unique perspective they could bring to the role. Similarly, they may not have felt that leadership and policy making tasks were accessible to them as social workers.

School social workers in Kelly et al. (2010) responded to an online survey assessing, in part, specific tasks and current and ideal time spent on each task (n=1,639). Tasks were divided into three tiers of interventions, including first-tier school-wide interventions, second-tier targeted interventions specified to a limited number of students, and third-tier individual interventions that included assessments (p. 133), basing this division on a response-to-

intervention model. Findings from the study suggested that while most of the social workers surveyed (60 percent) spent all or most of their time on third-tier task and less on first-tier, schoolwide prevention interventions, there was a desire to ideally spend the majority of their time on preventative, first-tier interventions. The study demonstrated an eagerness to depart from the compartmentalized clinical perspective that can be the hallmark of social work, instead incorporating plans to affect the overall need for high-risk, individual interventions. The results of Kelly et al. (2010) also suggests that preparation for school social work must include an understanding of tasks that can affect the climate of the school, such as the use of school-wide interventions that establish expectations and values of students, teachers and administrators. Avant & Swerdlik (2016), in their study investigating collaborative efforts between school social workers and school psychologists to implement multi-tiered interventions, found similar results in that both school social workers and psychologists engaged more in second and third tier interventions than in first. Thompson and Cox (2017) discuss the multi-tiered framework as a necessity to address risk factors for students, reiterating a concentration on first-tier interventions that address the whole system (p. 137).

Attitudes held by school social workers regarding their own roles speaks to an understanding of a clear clinical perspective. Agresta (2004) revisited and reexamined a previous study proposed by Hartseil (1987), surveying 183 school social workers, 137 school psychologists and 166 school counselors from national organizations of their respective professions. Agresta found that while the school social workers surveyed spent an average 17.45 percent of their time in individual counseling, they desired to increase this time while reducing the approximately 11.26 percent spent in collaboration and consultation with teachers and administration. While this may speak to a desire to be removed from the administrative process,

the study does not examine the factors that may contribute to this attitude. The lack of role definition may have led to ineffective experiences interacting with administration, and subsequently a desire to reduce time believed to be unproductive.

There is also a need to consider the attitudes of other staff members towards school social workers and their perceived roles to understand their leadership opportunities (Bye, et al., 2009; Tower, 2000; Webber, 2018). Tower's study (2000), though small and specific in sample size and location, illustrates the need to understand attitudes towards school social workers. Of 276 surveyed teachers in Nevada, 7.9 percent were unfamiliar with the tasks of the school social worker, while the percentage increased to 25.2 percent of administrators. In an unexpected divergence, when educators and administrators were asked to rate the value of tasks traditionally attributed to social workers to student success on a scale from 1 to 4 without specifically identifying these tasks as social work tasks, most of these tasks were rated at a 3 or above. This lack of understanding can lead to lost opportunities for school social workers to capitalize on their full education and training given.

Bye et al. (2009) explored the perceptions of other school staff regarding school social workers, concentrating on the effect of social workers on school climate and examined the similarities between expected outcomes of social workers by school administration and the social workers themselves. While the study was small and centralized to Minnesota, the results of the study of 140 social workers, 22 principals and 2 superintendents over four districts indicated that school social workers have a significantly higher expectation to contribute to a positive school climate than school administration (although $p<.10$). While the authors advise that this result should be taken with some reservation due to the small sample size of administrative staff, the outcome does raise the question of whether social workers have been traditionally expected to

contribute or affect school climate, as well as the difference in perception of role between administration and social workers.

A qualitative study by Webber (2018) found similar opinions among interviewees in a school district in the Southeastern United States. School social workers, counselors and district leaders familiar with the school social work role discussed, among other topics, the role of the school social worker including perception of the role by others. Respondents identified an ambiguity in their roles despite district level definitions of their job responsibilities (p. 86) as well as a distinction between their current position and what was termed "real social work" (p. 87). It is important to note, however, that this qualitative study spanned only one district and therefore a commonality of the social workers' opinions may be expected; however, it also bolsters the need to address possible ambiguity in the role, especially in situations where individuals not practicing social work set definitions and responsibilities.

There is an acknowledgment of movement on a macro-level that may result in change in the school social work role (Lee, 1983; Franklin, 2006). Decisions regarding education transitioned throughout the 1970s and 1980s from centralized state government level to the local level, and with this change is an increased demand for a shift in priorities by school social workers, who may have to weigh in and advocate for policy changes. Meares (1977), in her factor analysis, expressed disappointment at the continued disinterest in policy and leadership tasks in her replicated study, remarking, "It is unfortunate that the importance of such tasks related so low" (p. 198).

School social workers' perceptions of leadership roles were further examined by Elswick et al. (2018) through a qualitative study that suggested that school social workers believed themselves to be leaders in very specific areas, including mental health and conflict resolution.

The responses also noted some social work leadership roles connected to bullying, including establishing "anti-bullying programming" (p. 6). Among the themes identified from the responses include the task of "improv[ing] anti-bullying programs and teach[ing] students how to ask for help" (p. 6). It could be intimated, however, that a desire to improve programs may be different than implementing those programs; the response may continue to speak to the regulatory role of social workers as crisis responders in and after an event has occurred as opposed to originating preventative policies and programs. Additionally, some respondents felt they could have an influence on school wide policy connected to school safety including participation at the district level to initiate change within the community (p. 7). Elswick et al. (2018) stated, "[s]ocial workers rightly understand the connection between the psychological impact of these factors and safety for all students and school personnel" (p. 7). This observation supports the possibility that social workers can extend this role of policy advocacy at the school wide level and may be leaders in the school in performing this task. Teasley and Richard (2017) also discuss leadership as "the most important role a social worker can play" (p. 49), noting the expertise of social workers in systems inside and outside of the school that impact students to become leaders in multidisciplinary settings.

Summary

The above literature review describes many facets of leadership, both seen and unseen in school social work practice. While there is research on the concept of leadership within social work, there are no universal definitions or criteria for leadership within social work education, nor precedent for a leadership model within school social work practice.

Within the literature, there is an understanding that leadership is an essential part of an educational structure, as demonstrated in its inclusion in the earliest school models. However,

the literature also reveals that while the management structure is consistent in the use of a principal, there is variation in the implementation of leadership styles. The literature also indicates that social work as a profession recognizes the benefit of leadership in its skill set and the lack of emphasis of leadership in practice. Within the intersection of these understandings lies school social work, which struggles with defining its role within the school setting in general, and for which there is a dearth of literature examining leadership. The literature does indicate a lack of utilization of leadership skills in school social work, which may be related to the way school social workers are prepared for their career.

The literature also shows a lack of examination of leadership in master's program curriculum content, outside of an administrative focus. Due to this limitation, it is difficult to assess the attitudes, beliefs and values of program directors and instructors towards the leadership content provided to social work students. This limitation also makes it problematic to assess these same attitudes, beliefs and values towards curriculum intended for future school social workers.

It is intended that the findings of this study will add to present literature by highlighting how and to what extent students are prepared for leadership in school social work curriculum, and examining the attitudes of instructors and program directors towards providing leadership curriculum to be used by social workers in the school environment.

Chapter Four: Theoretical Framework

This chapter will review the theories that underlay the presenting problem and research questions for this study. Review of the framework will start by discussion of the ecological system at the heart of social work practice and its connection to the school environment and school climate. The review will then discuss the significant social work values that demand application in leadership, despite the prevailing idea of the social work as purely support.

Finally, the theoretical view of social workers as "hosts" in their environment will also be scrutinized, with a consideration of the origins of this viewpoint and its possible resulting exclusion from leadership positions. This exclusion may impact how social workers are trained before graduation to perpetuate the host stigma.

An Ecological Approach in Schools

Ecological Theory

Within the field of social work, use of the ecological approach usually emerges in the acknowledgement of the interaction between the client, group or community with which the worker interacts, and the environment in which the client, group or community exists (Pardeck, 1988; Siporin, 1980; Ungar, 2002). The worker's consideration of the multiple interlocking spheres in which the identified client functions on a regular basis allows them to build a comprehensive picture of all factors impacting the client and ideally a more effective intervention.

Within the school environment, social work tasks exist within all systems, and literature reveals a consideration and interest in theorizing from an ecological perspective (Avant & Swerdlik, 2016; Hopson & Lawson, 2011; Kelly et al., 2010; Richard & Villarreal Sosa, 2014; Rudasill et al., 2017). "School social workers should address all the systems affecting a student

and work to provide appropriate interventions to alleviate difficulties the student has in the school setting. The four areas of practice— micro, macro, evaluation, and supervision—are embedded within this ecological context" (Richard & Villarreal Sosa, 2014, p. 216).

The ecological perspective has been previously applied to school counseling with the intent of considering students' surrounding environment in treatment (McMahon, et al., 2014). Counselors may attempt to implement interventions for students that span multiple ecosystem levels. School social workers educated in this framework can also implement not only individual interventions for students but also school-wide interventions that take into consideration how the entire student body and staff interact within the school environment. The social worker may also address issues of inclusion and cultural sensitivity as part of these interventions. As one of the professionals specifically educated to not only be aware of multiple systems but to understand the interconnectedness of those systems, social workers can lead school professionals in implementing policy and interventions that take this perspective into consideration.

Consideration of the School Climate using Ecological Theory

Decades of research have been conducted on school climate as the immediate environment, though climate has been operationalized throughout these studies in various ways. Van Houtte (2005) noted that Pace and Stern (1958) may have been the first researchers to examine school climate factors, albeit at the college level. Pace and Stern used the concept of the environmental press to examine factors which could conceivably be impacting student functioning. This research could be considered a precursor to the isolation of themed dimensions in later studies and establishes an understanding of larger, ecological system impact on effectiveness.

Thapa et al. (2013), in their meta-analysis of 203 studies and reviews related to school climate, noted that among factors considered to facilitate positive school climate were accessibility to helping staff and assessment by school staff for threats prior to violent episodes (Cornell, et al., (2009) as cited in Thapa, et al., 2013, p. 361; Gregory et al., (2010) as cited in Thapa, et al., 2013). The authors also explored the importance of the staff-student relationship, grounded in an ecological perspective with an understanding of climate through both micro and macro lenses. Among the recommendations of Thapa et al. was the development of "relational trust" (p.372) between staff and students; that is, developing a positive, trusting relationship between school staff and students.

Wang et al. (2013) investigated the function of school climate in bullying prevention and suggest two possible theories for a relationship. Social disorganization theory, which suggests that the inability to effectively monitor socially acceptable behavior may lead to maladjustment, reinforces the hypothesis that a negative school climate with a lack of monitoring may result in higher rates of bullying. Additionally, social control theory, which suggests that when a person does not connect to the outer community there is an increase in negative behaviors, may also be a basis for the need to maintain a positive school climate (p.297). Both theories point to a whole environment, systemic approach to prevention programs that allow monitoring in a way that precludes an authoritarian police state within the school. The school social worker educated in an ecological approach can implement this type of intervention and becomes vital to the leadership team.

Social Work Values as a Requirement for Leadership

Rank and Hutchison (2000) described the idea of social work leadership through participatory leadership within the specific milieu in which the social worker is joining, and Elpers and Westhuis (2008) discussed the concept of "shifting leadership by management to leadership by empowerment" (p. 27). The values of autonomy and empowerment which are native to the profession can be utilized. Rank and Hutchison (2000) also delineated some of the factors specific to social work that contribute to effective leadership, which included a commitment to the NASW Code of Ethics, a systemic perspective and altruism (p. 492).

The School Social Worker in a Host Environment

In many situations, the school social worker is present part time during the day, or divides time between multiple buildings and schools within a district. Because of the role ambiguity previously discussed in the review of current literature, a social worker who is not an educator and not part of the school administration could be considered a "visitor" in a host environment. Lee (1983) hinted at this relationship in an article discussing the political climate that naturally exists within any school environment, advising school social workers to be aware of the functioning power differential. This concept has been explored as early as the fifties; Klein (1959) discusses the concept of social workers in schools and hospitals needing to clarify their roles in the host environment as well as show a sincere interest in the field and the roles of their colleagues: "[t]he school social worker who is not interested in education, classroom controls, and course content will find working in the school setting lonely" (p. 93).

Dane and Simon (1991) researched social workers in host settings such as schools, among other settings, defining host settings as "arenas in which social workers practice that are dominated by people who are not social workers" (p. 208). Among common issues of the social

worker in a host environment is "role ambiguity and role strain" (p. 210) which can occur in settings in which the role of social worker is undefined, and expectations are exceptional. Dane and Simon described the tendency to utilize outcome driven, short-term interventions in these types of settings, rather than benefiting from the social workers' more holistic view of the system (p. 211). Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Jr. (2009) also discussed host settings as locations that are hierarchal in nature, in which the workers' decisions and judgment may be based on values that differ from that of the host (p.135). In these situations, the values and goals of the host take precedence. Webber (2018) in her qualitative study, also reflected on the ambiguity identified by respondents, which she opined may derive from responsibilities being set by administrators in the school environment rather than as a collaborative effort with the social work. Webber added that respondents discussed added responsibilities such as "daily lunch and bus duty" (p. 86) and "babysitting" (p. 86) which some felt took away from "real social work" (p. 87).

The theory behind this phenomenon varies. Bordieuian theory has been suggested as an underlying reason as to why social workers are viewed from this perspective and school administration fail to operate in a truly collaborative manner (Dane & Simon, 2009; Bolton, 2013). Bordieuian theory suggests the concept of personal or social capital that can be accumulated, similar to economic capital; Bordieu further opines that this capital is directly connected to a power structure within society, or in this scenario an organization, and that misrecognition leads to an appearance of collaboration without actual foundation (Bolton, 2013). Social workers may struggle to earn professional capital within a host setting without the shared experiences of the host (Dane & Simon, 2009).

Related to the host theory is the idea that social workers have been depicted as helpers or support staff throughout their own history and education. Claiborne (2004), in her research of

social workers in leadership positions at non-government organizations (NGOs), noted that only 12 of the 229 administrative positions within the 16 NGOs she surveyed were held by social workers; additionally, 6 of these NGOs specifically noted that social workers were not appropriate for these positions (p. 213). Brilliant (1986) notes that leadership can be thought of as "the process of influencing the activities of an individual or group towards goal achievement" (p.325). While this definition is a suitable standard definition and incorporates the skill of goal setting fundamental to social work (Rapp, Saleebey & Sullivan, 2006), the concept of influencing behavior may appear to be at odds with the ethical standard set forth by the NASW to promote self-determination wherever possible. It is conceivable that this contradiction may contribute to social workers being consigned to supportive roles rather than ones of decision making.

Chapter Five: The Research Questions & Related Hypotheses

This chapter clarifies the questions and hypotheses proposed in this study. Research questions were investigated through cross-sectional survey to examine the perspectives of administrative staff and instructors of CSWE-accredited Master of Social Work programs (hereafter referred to as "Participants") towards the inclusion and importance of leadership content in school social work curriculum.

Research Questions

RQ_1: How do participants rate the importance of inclusion of leadership skills in their school social work (SSW) curriculum?

> H_{1a}: As participant rating of the inclusion of leadership skills in general social work education increases, the rating of the inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curriculum will decrease.
>
> H_{1b}: As participant rating of the inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curriculum increases, the rating of the importance of individual components related to leadership will increase.
>
> H_{1c}: As participant rating of the importance of acquiring leadership skills after student graduation increases, the rating of the importance of inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curriculum decreases.

RQ_2: What moderating variables affect the attitudes of instructors and program directors in CSWE-accredited MSW programs towards leadership content in host settings?

> H_2: Participants who have practiced social work in schools or in another host setting will have a higher rating of the belief that social workers cannot be leaders in the school environment than those who have not.

Chapter Six: Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the structure and methodology of the within study. The study conducted was a cross-sectional, exploratory study that investigated the attitudes of MSW faculty members towards the inclusion and importance of leadership curriculum in school social work. The sampling method and system for data collection used will be detailed. Ethical considerations will be discussed including potential risks to the participants and how these risks were addressed. Data analysis techniques based on the hypothesis will also be discussed, and a table of hypotheses in which variables are label and operationalized (with their accompanying method of analysis) will be presented.

Leadership as it is understood in relation to both education and social work must be used as an underpinning to establish leadership in school social work. In both settings, there is precedent for a distributed leadership model that addresses the need of each member of the organization and allows the social worker to utilize their expertise. The person-in-environment approach that is foundational to social work practice can be applied to the social worker within the school environment. While each school setting and environment has its own set of challenges and requirements, leadership as it applies to social work and the concept of distributed leadership is adequately universal to be a starting point understanding work within the school environment.

Sampling and Data Collection Methods

Sampling

The target population for this study included Program Directors and/or Administrative Staff in all 301 CSWE-accredited MSW programs in the United States. This included all schools with and without specialized school social work curriculum. The sampling frame included all

301 CSWE-accredited Schools of Social Work identified in the Director of Accredited Programs found on the CSWE website as of May 1, 2020 (https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Directory-of-Accredited-Programs.aspx). For the purpose of this study, Program Directors were defined as an individual identified as a "MSW Program Director," "Program Director" or "MSW Program Head" by a college or university with a CSWE-accredited School of Social Work. Email addresses were confirmed through the college or university's website. If the Program Director's contact information was unavailable on both the college or university's website and the CSWE's website, solicitation for participation was made to the Dean of the School of Social Work. If both were unavailable, solicitation was made to the listed "contact person" on the CSWE's website. One email requesting participation was sent to the identified contact person per school.

Individuals were allowed to self-select to participate by responding to prompts to complete the survey. MacCallum et al. (1996) discussed the importance of using power analysis to determine the ideal sample size to adequately test a null hypothesis, noting "we may fail to reject the false null hypothesis if we happen to draw a sample wherein the model fits well or if our sample size is not sufficiently large to provide a precise estimate of goodness of fit" (p. 131). An a priori power analysis was completed using Stata to determine appropriate sample size using an R-Squared test of all coefficients in a multiple linear regression, $\alpha = .05$, and a medium effect size (d=.15) with 5 covariates. Results showed that a total sample of 13 participants were required to achieve a power of .80. A total of 75 individuals responded to the survey.

Data Collection - Survey

The student researcher distributed a self-administered online survey by email through direct solicitation to identified MSW program directors and administrators of the CSWE-

accredited Schools of Social Work. Email addresses were retrieved from individual schools' websites. Responses were managed through Qualtrics, a survey platform website.

Nonresponse bias occurs with responses to self-administered surveys (Rubin & Babbie, 2017). Specifically, this bias is present in consideration of the beliefs and attitudes of those participants that respond compared to those that do not (Sax et al., 2003). Additional measures were used to address the nonresponse bias that would inherently be present in using this method. Sax et al. (2003) investigated the use of paper and online surveys in research, and found that survey questionnaires elicit the fewest responses, even with the added incentive of a comparison between a previous survey and their current survey; however, they noted as a limitation that the incentive itself may have led to the low response as the participants may have felt tracked during what was supposed to be a confidential process. Groves and Peytcheva (2008) found similar results in their meta-analysis of 59 methodological studies, also noting that low response rate frequently occurs in studies in which follow-up was built into the survey. The cross-sectional design inherently reduces nonresponsive bias by eliminating follow up. Additionally, to address the possibility of sampling error that may be present in the use of Web-based surveys, assumptions based on an incorrect understanding of the population, a 5 percent margin of error will be estimated based on the sample size (Rubin & Babbie, 2017).

Emails sent to each CSWE-accredited school included an introductory letter (see Appendix A) addressed to the administrative staff of the School of Social Work. The letter contained a link to an online survey and a request to forward this link to any instructors within the MSW program deemed relevant. The first page of the survey contained informed consent information, including the purpose of the study and the ability to option out of participation. No

identifiable information was collected. All information collected from this survey was kept confidential and only accessible by authorized individuals.

Data Analysis

Results from the sample was first analyzed descriptively. The data is described by location, school type (private or public), and professor's gender, ethnicity and experience in school social work, as well as requirements for school social worker positions by state. Multivariate analysis was used to examine the relationship of multiple independent variables in connection to leadership skills. Inferential analysis was performed using the statistical analysis software STATA. Tests include chi-square tests and Fisher's Exact Tests of significance, and multiple linear regressions to examine moderating variables within these relationships.

A list of hypotheses and variables is detailed in Table 1, below:

Hypothesis	Variable Name	Definition	Lvl of Measurement	Variable Use	Analysis Method
H_{1a}: As participant rating of the importance of inclusion of leadership skills in general social work education increases, the rating of the inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curriculum will decrease.	SSWleadershipIMP	Rating in response to Likert-type question "It is important to include leadership skills in school social work curriculum" 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Dependent	Chi-square and Fisher's Exact Test, Logistic Regression
	leadershipIMP	Rating in Likert scale-type, response to question "It is important include skills to become a leader in social work practice curriculum." 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Independent	
H_{1b}: As the rating of the importance of inclusion of leadership skills in school social	SSWleadershipIMP	Rating in response to Likert-type question "It is important to include leadership skills in school social work curriculum" 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Dependent	Chi-square & Fisher's exact test; logistic regression

work curriculum increases, the rating of importance of individual components related to leadership will increase.	visionIMP	Rating in Likert-type, response to question "It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to possess and implement a vision" 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Independent	
	actionIMP	Rating in Likert-type, response to question "It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to influence others to act" 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Independent	
	collabIMP	Rating in Likert-type, response to question "It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to encourage collaboration" 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Independent	
	probsolveIMP	Rating in Likert-type, response to question "It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to develop a capacity to problem solve" 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Independent	
	positivityIMP	Rating in Likert-type, response to question "It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to create positive change" 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Independent	
	dataIMP	Rating in Likert-type, response to question "It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to collect data in their school to inform outcome-driving practice" 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Independent	
H_{1c}: As participant rating of the importance of acquiring leadership skills after	SSWleadershipIMP	Rating in response to Likert-type question "It is important to include leadership skills in school social work curriculum" 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Dependent	Chi-square and Fisher's Exact Test; logistic regression

student graduation increases, the rating of the importance of inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curriculum decreases.	graduateIMP	Rating in Likert-type, response to question "The majority of leadership skills are learned from practice in the field, after graduation." 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Independent	
	CeuIMP	Rating in Likert-type, response to question "The majority of leadership skills are learned through continuing education (CEU/CE) courses." 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Independent	
$H_{2:}$ Participants who have practiced school social work or in another host setting will have a higher rating of the belief that social workers cannot be leaders in the school environment than those who do not.	SSWleadershipIMP	Rating in response to Likert-type question "It is important to include leadership skills in school social work curriculum" 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.	Categorical	Dependent	Chi-Square and Fisher's Exact Test; Logistic Regression
	hostWork	Identification by participant of previous work in a host environment. No (0); Yes (1)	Categorical	Independent	

The use of Likert scales introduced the issues of whether to consider the resulting data as continuous or categorical. Numerous theories exist for both considerations. Traditionally, it is difficult to assume that Likert scale can be subject to normal measures of parametrics due to a lack of normal distribution for numerical responses (Bishop & Herron, 2015; Norman, 2010; Roberson et al., 1995; Sullivan & Artino Jr., 2013). However, several authors propose that despite being ordinal and therefore customarily categorical, parametric measures can (and for some authors should) be used. Lubke and Muthén (2004) proposed the consideration of Likert-scale data as continuous specifically in situations in which the data stems from a single homogenous population, which is the case for the within population. Norman (2010)

recommended the consideration of Likert-scale data as continuous as significant to the concept of robustness, defined by Norman as "the extent to which the test will give the right answer even when assumptions are violated. And if it doesn't increase the chance very much (or not at all), then we can press on" (p. 627). Carifio and Perla (2008) note that considering the scale as strictly ordinal deprives the researcher use of "powerful" statistical analysis tools.

However, the view of Likert scales as ordinal levels of measurements is also strongly acknowledged and cited. Jamieson (2004) discussed the lack of the ability to use measures of central tendency in evaluating ordinal variables, which results in an inability to use parametric tests. For the purposes of this paper, the dependent variables will be transformed to a dichotomous categorical variable, then analyzed continuously.

Ethical Considerations

Participants were presented with an "Informed consent" within their initial solicitation email for review before accessing the survey. An additional copy of the informed consent was provided to upon access to the survey and was required to be agreed to before beginning the survey. A sample of the informed consent is included in the Appendices section (Appendix B). Included in this consent form was information concerning confidentiality and the retention of data, and the voluntary nature of the survey.

The use of web-based questionnaires and surveys have inherent ethical complications. Among chief concerns in using this method of data collection are confidentiality and data security. Umbach (2004) correctly notes that despite the best effort of the researcher, it is impossible to guarantee complete anonymity and confidentiality of data transmitted over the internet (p. 28). To address this ethical concern, information regarding this concern was

transmitted to each participant during the informed consent stage of the survey. No identifying data was retained nor collected, including participants' names, IP addresses, contact information, specific higher education institutions attended or current place of employment. Instead, general descriptive information was collected.

Chapter Seven: Results

This chapter will present and discuss the results of the data analysis. The first section of the chapter will describe the characteristics of the sample. The second section will focus on the results of hypothesis testing.

Descriptive Information

Table 7.1 includes descriptive information of the sample (n=75). The most frequently observed faculty position was Department Chair (*n* = 25, 33%). The most frequently observed category of highest degree obtained was PhD, accounting for more than three-fourths of the participants in the sample (*n* = 59, 79%). Most participants had received an MSW from an accredited social work program (*n* = 68, 91%) and identified as full-time staff members (*n* = 67, 89%). The majority of the sample possessed at least state licenses at the master's level (*n* = 37, 49%); however, an almost equal number of faculty members did (*n* = 32, 43%) and did not (*n* = 30, 40%) possess a clinical-level license.

The most frequently reported type of university was a public university (*n* = 46, 61%), while the most frequently identified university setting was urban (*n* = 26, 35%). It should be noted that the university settings identified were also fairly similar, including 29% suburban and 27% rural (*n* = 22 and *n* = 20, respectively).

The average number of years the participants taught in a CSWE-accredited master program was 17.74 years (SD = 8.09). The participants also carried a course load of approximately 2.81 courses for the 2019-2020 school through Summer 2020 (SD = 1.92). See Table 7.2.

Table 7.1:

Frequencies and Percentages of Variables

Variable	*n*	*%*
Current position at College/University		
Assistant Professor	1	1.33
Associate Professor	2	2.67
Professor	2	2.67
Department Chair	25	33.33
Program Director	24	32.00
Associate Dean	3	4.00
Dean	9	12.00
Other	2	2.67
Missing	7	9.33
Total	75	100.00
Highest Degree Obtained		
MSW	5	6.67
PhD	59	78.67
DSW	3	4.00
Other	1	1.33
Missing	7	9.33
Total	75	100.00
MSW from an accredited school of social work?		
Yes	68	90.67
No	0	0.00
Missing	7	9.33
Total	75	100.00
Employment status:		
Full-time	67	89.33
Part-time	1	1.33
Missing	7	9.33
Total	75	100.00

Variable	*n*	*%*
Possession of State License: Master's-Level:		
Yes	37	49.33
No	13	17.33
I am currently working towards my license	1	1.33
I have a higher-level license to practice social work in my state	12	16.00
Other	5	6.67
Missing	7	9.33
Total	75	100.00
Possession of State License: Clinical-Level:		
Yes	32	42.67
No	30	40.00
I am currently working towards my license	2	2.67
Other	4	5.33
Missing	7	9.33
Total	75	100.00
Location of University		
Alabama	3	4.00
Arkansas	1	1.33
California	3	4.00
Connecticut	2	2.67
Florida	1	1.33
Georgia	2	2.67
Hawaii	1	1.33
Idaho	1	1.33
Illinois	4	5.33
Indiana	1	1.33
Kentucky	2	2.67
Louisiana	1	1.33
Maine	1	1.33
Maryland	1	1.33
Massachusetts	2	2.67
Michigan	3	4.00
Minnesota	2	2.67
Missouri	1	1.33
New Jersey	2	2.67
New York	3	4.00

Variable	*n*	*%*
North Carolina	2	2.67
Ohio	6	8.00
Oregon	1	1.33
Pennsylvania	4	5.33
Puerto Rico	2	2.67
Tennessee	2	2.67
Texas	5	6.67
Utah	1	1.33
Vermont	1	1.33
Washington	1	1.33
West Virginia	2	2.67
Wisconsin	1	1.33
Wyoming	2	2.67
Prefer not to say	1	1.33
Missing	7	9.33
Total	75	100.00
Participant's University/College Type		
Public University or College	46	61.33
Private University or College	22	29.33
Missing	7	9.33
Total	75	100.00
Participant's University/College setting		
Urban	26	34.67
Suburban	22	29.33
Rural	20	26.67
Missing	7	9.33
Total	75	100.00
School Social Work Elective Offered		
No	32	42.67
Yes	36	48.00
Missing	7	9.33
Total	75	100.00

School Social Work Concentration Offered		
No	48	64.00
Yes	20	26.67
Missing	7	9.33
Total	75	100.00

Table 7.2:

Selected Statistics Table for Continuous Variables

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*n*	Min	Max	Median	Mode
Number of years in CSWE program	17.74	8.09	68	1.00	39.00	17.00	20.00
Average number of classes taught - 2019-2020	2.81	1.92	68	0.00	8.00	3.00	2.00

Research Questions and Hypothesis Testing

This section will outline the results of the hypothesis testing. The dependent variable was operationalized through a five-items Likert statement: *It is important to include skills to become a leader in social work practice curriculum*. Responses included *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Agree* and *Strongly Agree*, bivalent around a neutral middle. Evaluation of the responses revealed the presence of acquiescence bias and social desirability bias, which will be further discussed in the limitation section of the Discussion chapter. Due to the presences of these biases, the responses to the dependent variable were redistributed due to the skewed responses; positive responses (Strongly agree, Agree) were combined to one response (with a value of "1") and all other responses include the neutral response were combined (with a value of "0"). This resulted in a bivariate variable more representative of the lack of variation in responses. Frequencies for the dependent variable as written can be found in Table 7.3; frequencies for the modified categorical variable can be found below in Table 7.4. The modified variable will be used to in the hypothesis analyses below.

Table 7.3

Frequency Table for Dependent Variable - SSWleadershipIMP

Variable	*n*	%
It is important to include leadership skills to become a leader in school social work curriculum		
Strongly agree	30	40.00
Agree	22	29.33
Neither agree nor disagree	6	8.00
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly disagree	1	1.33
Missing	16	21.33

Table 7.4

Frequency Table for Dependent Variable – SSWleadershipIMP (modified)

Variable	*n*	%
It is important to include leadership skills to become a leader in school social work curriculum		
0 Agree (Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)	7	9.33
1 (Strongly agree, Agree)	52	69.33
Missing	16	21.33

RQ_1: How do participants in CSWE-accredited MSW programs rate the importance of inclusion of leadership skills in their school social work (SSW) curriculum?

H_{1a}: As participant rating of the inclusion of leadership skills in general social work education increases, the rating of the inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curriculum will decrease.

As previously discussed, the dependent variable will first be analyzed as a dichotomous categorical variable. The independent variable is a Likert-scale variable; frequencies for the responses are listed below in Table 7.5:

Table 7.5

Frequency Table for Independent Variable - LeadershipIMP

Variable	*N*	%
It is important to include leadership skills to become a leader in social work curriculum		
Strongly agree	34	45.33
Agree	21	28.00
Neither agree nor disagree	3	4.00
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly disagree	0	0.00
Missing	17	22.67

Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests were conducted to examine the within hypothesis. Due to the skewed nature of the variables, the Fisher's exact test was also used in assessing the relationship in addition to the chi-square test. There was no significance was found in either the results of the chi-square test ($\chi^2(2, n = 57) = 2.62, p = 0.27$) and the Fisher's exact test ($p = 0.35$), indicating significant relationships between the rating of the importance of leadership skills in school social work curriculum and the rating of the importance of leadership skills overall.

A logistic regression was then conducted to examine the dependent variable as a significant predictor of the independent variable with the additional of control variables. The moderating variables of the position of the participant (professor, department chair, program director, associate dean, dean and other), whether the participant had worked in a host setting, number of years in position and location were added to the model with no significance, $\chi2(4) = 1.02, p = 0.91$. As the model was insignificant and there were no significant interactions, goodness-of-fit tests were not conducted.

Because of the size of the sample, bootstrapping was added to simulate samples of similar size. Results for the r = 1000 bootstrap replicates were also not significant, $\chi 2(4) = 0$, p = 1.00.

H_{1b}: As participant rating of the importance of inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curriculum increases, the rating of the importance of individual components related to leadership will increase.

A number of tests were run to analyze the within components in this hypothesis. First, all Likert-scale variables, in this case all of the variables to be analyzed within this hypothesis, were assumed to be categorical. Frequency information for the modified dependent variable can be found in Table 7.3, above; frequency information for each of the independent variables related to leadership in social work is listed in Table 7.6 below:

Table 7.6

Frequency Table for Independent Variables – Concepts Related to Leadership

Variable	*n*	*%*
SSW curriculum should include the skills to possess and implement a vision **(**visionIMP)		
Strongly agree	27	36.00
Agree	29	38.67
Neither agree nor disagree	3	4.00
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly disagree	1	1.33
Missing	15	20.00
SSW curriculum should include the skills necessary to influence others to act (actionIMP)		
Strongly agree	29	38.67
Agree	22	29.33
Neither agree nor disagree	7	9.33
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly disagree	2	2.67
Missing	15	20.00
SSW curriculum should include the skills to encourage collaboration (collabIMP)		

Variable	*n*	*%*
Strongly agree	39	52.00
Agree	18	24.00
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1.33
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly disagree	2	2.67
Missing	15	20.00
SSW curriculum should include the skills to develop a capacity to problem-solve (probsolveIMP)		
Strongly agree	43	57.33
Agree	13	17.33
Neither agree nor disagree	2	2.67
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly disagree	2	2.67
Missing	15	20.00
SSW curriculum should include the skills to create positive change (positivityIMP)		
Strongly agree	37	49.33
Agree	19	25.33
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1.33
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly disagree	2	2.67
Missing	16	21.33
SSW curriculum should include the skills to collect data in their schools to inform outcome-driven practice (dataIMP)		
Strongly agree	32	42.67
Agree	22	29.33
Neither agree nor disagree	2	2.67
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly disagree	2	2.67
Missing	17	22.67

Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests was conducted to compare each of the concept variables independently to the dependent variable. Table 7.7 displays the results of those analyses:

Table 7.7

Results of Chi-square and Fisher's Exact tests: Concepts Related to Leadership

Variable	*df*	*n*	χ^2	Chi-square p-value	Fisher's exact p-value
visionIMP	3	59	9.30	0.03	0.09
actionIMP	3	59	3.66	0.30	0.25
collabIMP	3	59	11.13	0.01	0.03
probsolveIMP	3	59	3.42	0.33	0.30
positivityIMP	3	58	7.63	0.05	0.22
dataIMP	3	57	3.15	0.37	0.37

Due to the data having no normal distribution, the Fisher's Exact p-value will be used to determine significance. Significant relationships are shown to have exist between one of the independent variables and the dependent variable, specifically collabIMP (SSW curriculum should include the skills to encourage collaboration). A logistic regression was conducted using the modified dependent variable to assess predicator variables for the dependent variables; the results of the regression can be found in Table 7.8 below:

Table 7.8

Results for Logistic Regression with Independent Variables – Concepts Related to Leadership

Variable	Odds ratio	*SE*	Z	95% CI	*p*
visionIMP	3.42	3.41	1.23	[-0.72, 3.18]	0.22
actionIMP	0.63	0.71	-0.41	[-2.66, 1.74]	0.68
collabIMP	5.63	8.58	1.13	[-1.26, 4.72]	0.26
probsolveIMP	2.15	3.20	0.52	[-2.15, 3.68]	0.61
positivityIMP	0.20	0.33	-0.99	[-4.75, 1.56]	0.32
dataIMP	0.45	0.45	-0.80	[-2.71, 1.13]	0.42

There were no significant predicators of the dependent variable, and the model was insignificant, $\chi2(6) = 7.82$, $p = 0.25$. The bootstrap replicates ($r = 1000$) also yielded no significant results, $\chi2(6) = 0.05$, $p = 1.00$.

H_{1c}: As participant rating of the importance of acquiring leadership skills after graduation increases, the rating of the importance of inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curriculum decreases.

Chi-square and Fisher's Exact tests were first conducted to examine the relationship without predictor variables. Table 7.4 above describes the frequency for the dependent variable; Table 7.9 below describes the independent variable examined here:

Table 7.9

Frequency Table for Independent Variable – GraduateIMP

Variable	*n*	*%*
The majority of leadership skills are learned from practice in the field, after graduation		
Strongly agree	0	0.00
Agree	11	16.18
Neither agree nor disagree	16	23.53
Disagree	24	35.29
Strongly Disagree	7	10.29
Missing	10	14.71

A test for skewness and kurtosis was conducted for the independent variable; it should be noted that no skewness was found for the independent variable ($p = 0.60$). Both chi-square and Fisher's exact tests were conducted to assess for a significant relationship between the two variables; no significance was noted in either the chi-square test, $\chi^2(4, n = 58) = 7.88, p = 0.10$, or the Fisher's exact test, $p = 0.11$.

The independent variable, CeuIMP, which similarly examines attitudes towards leadership skills after graduation in the form of the acquisition of skills through continuing education units (CEUs), was also assessed. Categorical frequency for the independent variable is outlined in Table 7.10 below:

Table 7.10

Frequency Table for Independent Variable – CeuIMP

Variable	*N*	*%*
The majority of leadership skills are learned through continuing education (CEU/CE)		
Strongly agree	0	0.00
Agree	11	14.67
Neither agree nor disagree	18	24.00
Disagree	25	33.33
Strongly Disagree	3	4.00
Missing	18	24.00

Chi-square and Fisher's tests were again conducted to assess for a significant relationship between the dependent variable and each of the independent variables. For the variable GraduateIMP, there is no significant relationship with the dependent variable, $\chi^2(3, n = 57) = 1.38$, $p = 0.71$. For the variable CEUImp, there is no significant relationship with the dependent variable, $\chi^2(3, n = 56) = 2.49$, $p = 0.48$. A logistic regression revealed no significant predicators among both independent variables, when including position, location and view of self as leader as controls, $\chi^2(7, n = 56) = 3.59$, $p = 0.83$.

H_2: Participants who have practiced social work in schools or in another host setting will have a higher rating of the belief that social workers cannot be leaders in the school environment than those who have not.

The dependent variable in this hypothesis is a Likert-level question; frequency information for the variable can be found in Table 7.11 below:

Table 7.11

Frequency Table for Dependent Variable: NoLeaderSE

Variable	*n*	*%*
Social Workers cannot be leaders in the school environment		
Strongly agree	1	1.33
Agree	1	1.33
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1.33
Disagree	15	20.00
Strongly Disagree	41	54.67
Missing	16	21.33

Due to the skew of responses to this survey question, again due to bias, the values of this dependent variable have been recoded as to make this variable dichotomous. Frequencies for the modified variable can be found in Table 7.12 below:

Table 7.12

Frequency Table for Modified Dependent Variable: NoLeaderSE

Variable	*n*	*%*
Social Workers cannot be leaders in the school environment		
0 – (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree or disagree)	3	4.00
1 – (Disagree, Strongly disagree)	56	78.67
Missing	16	21.33

Frequency information for the independent variable, can be found in Table 7.13:

Table 7.13

Frequency Table for Independent Variable: HostWork

Variable	*n*	*%*
I have worked as a social worker in a school or another host environment		
Yes	43	57.33
No	25	33.33
Missing	7	9.33

Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests were conducted to assess for relationships between the variables. The chi-square was insignificant, $\chi^2(1, n = 59) = 0.007, p = 0.93$, as was the Fisher's exact test, $p = 1.00$.

The following chapter will discuss the results in further detail, highlighting significant findings and areas for future study.

Chapter Eight: Discussion

This chapter will provide an interpretation of the results of the analyses of Chapter Seven. Implications and contributions will also be discussed, as will opportunities for future research in these and related areas.

Results of Analysis

H_{1a}: As participant rating of the inclusion of leadership skills in general social work education increases, the rating of the inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curriculum will decrease.

The proposed hypothesis was intended to confirm or challenge the findings of Agresta (2004), Mears (1977) and Berzin and O'Connor (2010) in understanding the inclusion of leadership skills within the school social work curriculum and social work curriculum in general. The caveat in gathering this information lied with the fact that participants were social work educators as opposed to field practitioners; however, the assumption of importance in including leadership skills would be expected to trickle down to students as eventual practitioners. Due to the skewed nature of the responses, which will be discussed further in the limitation section below, both parametric and non-parametric measures were used for analysis. Both a chi-square and Fisher's exact test revealed no significance; a logistic regression with controls for participant's position and opinion of themselves as a leader also reveal no significant relationship.

The hypothesis predicted an inverse relationship between the variables, which could not be confirmed. However, it is important to note that this may not be the case in speaking to school social workers directly, who may be utilizing the leadership skills on a regular basis. It

would be advantageous to examine responses to this question from school social workers in the field, versus administrative staff.

The skew in responses also makes it difficult to draw conclusions from the responses received, which is why the Fisher's exact test was used. Mears (1977) noted a lack of interest from school social workers in leadership tasks, and it is unclear from the results of that study whether the issue lies with lack of access to leadership skills in general or a disinterest in leadership over direct practice. In either case, there appears to be no relationship between perceived importance of leadership skills in general social work and in school social work.

H_{1b}: As participant rating of the importance of inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curriculum increases, the rating of the importance of individual components related to leadership will increase.

Identifying an agreed upon model of leadership in social work, let alone school social work, is a difficult task and varies across research. The models set forth by Holosko (2009) and Hopson and Lawson (2011) were combined to examine the relationship of the perceived importance of each component to the perceived importance of leadership in school social work overall, with the optimism of connecting skills to a future school social work leadership model that emphasizes, respects and connects to both the needs of the school and the values of social work.

Upon running individual chi-square and Fisher exact tests for each of the variables, there were no significant relationships with the exception of one concept and the dependent variable, specifically the statement, "School social work curriculum should include the skills to encourage collaboration." This finding speaks to a very common view of social workers, especially in host settings, as collaborating as part of a team versus participation as traditional team leaders

(D'Agostino, 2013). If educators perceived school social work leadership skills as important, they were more like to give a higher rating to the necessary skill of collaboration; however, among other skills there was no significant relationship.

As previously discussed in the theoretical framework, social workers are often looked at as support in their host settings, rather than in a traditional managerial role. Because social workers themselves may be uncomfortable with this traditional view of manager-as-leader, there may be more identification with a more collaborative role. The connection to bringing people together to address an issue, or identifying the strengths of others to work together, connects both to the ecological perspective of identifying multiple resources in an environment to work as one, and the strengths perspective that also underpins many social work interventions and interactions. (Weick et al., 1989).

The significant relationship found in the data analysis directly aligns with the findings of Klein (1959), who noted the conflict of values in "autocratic" (p. 93) environments; specifically, the subconscious rejection of a traditional leader (which may lead to a alienation of the worker from the other members of the "group"). Participatory leadership, which has increased in use far beyond 1959 when Klein compiled his research, remains a viable option for the social worker who acknowledges the important of leadership but wants to recognize the importance of individual strengths.

It is worth revisiting the idea of participatory leadership to be introduced by the social worker in host settings.

The first significant relationship found in the Fisher's exact test connects to idea of participatory leadership that may be more in line with social work values and comfort (Klein, 1959; Rank and Hutchison, 2000).

Logistic regressions revealed a significant predictor variable in response to the statement "School social work curriculum should include the skills to possess and implement a vision." This may also involve the concept of doing this on a level individualized to their own work versus planning interventions on a schoolwide level. Akin to participatory leadership, this may be connected to the empowerment model proposed by Elpers and Westhuis (2008).

It is interesting that the other statements (curriculum should include the skills necessary to influence others to act, develop a capacity to problem-solve, create positive change, and collect data in their schools to inform outcome-driven practice) are statements that speak to leadership on a more traditional, managerial level (Brilliant, 1986; Lawler, 2005; Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005). A logistic regression model that included all of the variables as predictors was insignificant.

H_{1c}: As participant rating of the importance of acquiring leadership skills after graduation increases, the participant rating of the importance of inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curriculum decreases.

Foundations for this hypothesis lie in the discrepancy discovered by Mumm and Bye (2011) and Phillippo, et al. (2017) in the elucidation of social work roles. One possible explanation may be the desire to allow sources in the field to delineate leadership expectations, versus providing specifics within the Master's program. Two possible sources of leadership information are field practice after graduation, in which the host could provide skills specific to its own environment, and continuing education credits that allow an advancement of skills. In both cases, the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable were insignificant, as was a logistic regression with both independent variables as possible predictors.

H_2: Participants who have practiced social work in schools or in another host setting will have a higher rating of the belief that social workers cannot be leaders in the school environment than those who have not.

The concept of the social worker in a host environment, as mentioned within the theoretical framework, describes a scenario where the social worker may not be viewed as a member of administrative staff or possibly as being a legitimate member of the field, but more of a visitor within their setting. The role ambiguity and value differences may prevent the social worker from fully being collaborative in administrative tasks and duties (Dane & Simon, 2009; Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Jr, 2009; Bolton, 2009). The two following hypotheses, H_{2a} and H_{2b}, both examine the belief that the social worker may be feel constrained from leading in the school setting.

The first hypotheses examined the idea that a participant who had experienced a school setting or any host setting might be less inclined to believe that a social worker has the ability to function as a leader. Basing this hypothesis on Lee's observation (1983) of the social worker as "visitor," the analysis revealed that the null hypothesis had to be accepted and there was no relationship between the two variables. A limitation in accepting this outcome lies in the fact that previous observations centered around practicing social workers as opposed to optimistic educators; therefore, while responses reveal an idyllic belief in school social work leadership, conducting this survey with school social workers as participants may yield different responses to this question.

Limitations

The cross-sectional method of collection has inherent limitations. Cross-sectional studies are conducted to examine data of a population at one point in time; due to the nature of this

design, it is difficult to describe definitive causal relationships (Levin, 2006; Rubin & Babbie, 2017). To address this limitation, Rubin & Babbie (2017) suggested the use of multivariate analysis to address and rule out any alternative hypotheses that may explain the causal relationship, which were performed in the analyses above.

In conducting the above data analysis, the presence of social desirability response bias cannot be discounted in data collection. Social desirability response bias suggests participants may have provided responses perceived as socially or professionally compelled (Coastrum & Ostrum, 2011; Larson, 2018). Krentzman and Townsend (2008), in their evaluation of scales for use in social work, highlighted the challenges of social desirability response bias, noting that "scales that increase the likelihood of social desirability bias feature items so clear and straight-forward that the "right answer" becomes obvious" (p.25). They further observe that social desirability response bias can be manipulated through the way the items are specifically worded (p. 16). Repeating the within survey with predominantly full or part time professors, as opposed to predominantly school administration, may yield different results.

To control for this bias, responses to the Likert-scale representing the dependent variable were redistributed within the statistical analysis program, condensing five separate categories of responses to two; all negative responses into one variable and all positive responses into a separate variable. The neutral middle was included with negative responses due to the minimal responses received.

Implications and Areas for Further Research

This section will discuss future implications for the results of this study, and anticipated areas for continued research based on the findings of this story. While proposing these

implications, it is important to note that this study is an exploratory study examining the attitudes of professors of social work, and any conclusions are limited to generalities. Future studies may provide in-depth exploration of schools of social work that are specific to region and as previously noted, school social worker roles vary from state to state, district to district and school to school. Ideally, as patterns emerge with regards to location and educational setting, further research can be conducted to solidify differences and identify challenges within those specific parameters.

In recognition of the presence of social desirability response bias present, it would be prudent to modify the survey used for future use by changing the language of the standard Likert scale and answers to responses that allow for more variation. A rating scale from 1-10 may yield more variation in responses and alleviate pressure to respond with a "right answer." An additional method may be to provide categorical responses that are not as absolute ("Must Have", "Nice to Have", "Don't Need") to allow respondents to feel sanctioned in not responding in line with perceived professional expectations.

Social Work Education

The purpose of the study directly and immediately impacts social work education, specifically in connection to school social work education. While the within hypotheses failed to be proven, the study begins a discussion on the importance of the presence of leadership skills within the curricula. Participants consistently rated inclusion of these skills as important, so it would be imperative to confirm that leadership skills are in fact present and to investigate the addition of same if they are not present. Within this study is also the beginning of an investigation of leadership in social work in general, which also is an important area for future research. As previously mentioned, there is no leadership skill requirement set forth by the

CSWE, but administrators appear to view this as important; a future study can investigate the specifics of where this content can be added to the Master's curricula, if at all.

One of the most immediate areas of follow-up research that can be undertaken almost immediately with regards to the within study involves the completion of a complementary qualitative directive content analysis of the current school social work syllabi used in accredited MSW programs. The reasoning for this type of analysis is to compare the positive responses received from educators in the present study with the actual content given to future school social workers. The participant responses from educators who have input into the development of the curricula were extremely optimistic, and it would be informative to balance those responses with the practical information distributed to students.

Social Work Practice

School social work as a practice has been extensively researched, and that research has revealed a strong resistance to many of the administrative, leadership tasks faced in the field. Whether this starts at the education level and is reinforced within the field, or whether it comes from expectations as the new practitioner begins working, the within study begins to challenge the role curricula has in setting the tone for this work. Future research may continue to investigate leadership roles within the school through a large-scale investigation of the attitudes of school social workers towards leadership.

School Work Policy

A review of the literature on school social work revealed the variation on which the role is executed within the school systems. Demands of the school social worker vary by location and can include unrelated tasks. The within study begins an examination of Master's curricula, which directly influences and guides the expectations that graduating social workers have in the

field, but there is an element of precedence already established within each school. An important area for research, then, would involve a continued investigation of the attitudes of current school administration towards the role and function of school social workers, as well as a policy of education for administrators on the capabilities of the social workers in their school environment. Ideally, a baseline of leadership expectations should be nationally established, with nuanced changes depending on the location and population demands.

Summary

This study initiates an investigation into the importance of leadership within the school social work profession, highlighting the impact that the Master's curricula can have on shaping those skills and strengthening the profession. While the initial hypotheses were unproven, there is a clear indication social work educators perceive a role for leadership within the field, and future research will include a practical investigation of how leadership is being implemented. The study also allows a beginning conversation for a discussion of leadership skills in social work as a whole, with the goal of strengthen the profession on both the macro and micro levels.

Chapter Nine: References

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Appendix A: Introductory Letter (sent through email)

Dear Participant:

My name is Christine Vyshedsky and I am a doctoral student at Yeshiva University. For my dissertation, I am examining leadership skills in school social work. As a professor in a CSWE-accredited School of Social Work, you are invited to complete a survey regarding your attitudes towards leadership skills within your school social work curricula/um.

The link for this survey can be found here, and at the bottom of this email:

https://yeshiva.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bEnhIP6TzsmMfJz

This survey is part of a dissertation, the purpose of which is to better understand leadership skills as part of the school social work curricula/um. Please complete this survey only once.

INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY:
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your participation in this study will require the one-time completion of an anonymous survey on your attitudes and beliefs towards leadership in school social work. The survey is expected to take approximately fifteen minutes to complete and all responses are anonymous; you will not be asked to provide any potentially identifying information and your responses cannot be linked back to you. At the end of the survey, you will submit your survey to the student investigator.

RISKS:
There are no known risks to you for participating in this study, as all information provided will remain strictly anonymous. You may choose not to participate in this study prior to or any time during your participation, you can skip any questions that you wish not to answer, and you may end the survey at any time by simply exiting the web link.

BENEFITS:
The responses from this study will be used to explore leadership content within school social work curricula and the attitudes and feeling towards school social workers in leadership roles. This exploration can help to influence school social worker education and training, as well as development of school social work practice within the United States.

PROTECTIONS:
All information and data collected from you through your participation in this study will remain strictly anonymous. No potentially identifying information will be collected from you. The researcher will keep all study materials (e.g. collected data) on the investigator's password-protected computer or on a password-protected computer owned by the researcher's chair. No one other than the principal investigator and her dissertation chair will be able to access the data collected from this study. For analyzing and reporting the findings of this study, all demographic information will be summarized to further protect the human participants in this study.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you have questions at any time about the study or its procedures, you may contact the student investigator for this study:

Christine Vyshedsky, LMSW
(908) 403-3899
christine.vyshedsky@yu.edu

You may also contact the dissertation chair:
Charles Auerbach, PhD
(212) 960 – 0816
auerbach@yu.edu

PARTICIPATION:
Your participation in this is completely voluntary and does not in any way impact your professional standing at your university.

The survey, which can be accessed through the link below, will take approximately 10-12 minutes to complete:

https://yeshiva.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bEnhIP6TzsmMfJz

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Christine Vyshedsky, LMSW

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM:
As a professor in a CSWE-accredited School of Social Work, you are invited to complete a survey regarding your attitudes and beliefs towards leadership within your school social work curricula/um.

This survey is part of a dissertation, the purpose of which is to better understand leadership skills as part of the school social work curricula. Please complete this survey only once.

INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY:
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your participation in this study will require the one-time completion of an anonymous survey on your attitudes and beliefs towards the inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curricula/um. The survey is expected to take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and all responses are anonymous; you will not be asked to provide any potentially identifying information and your responses cannot be linked back to you. At the end of the survey, you will submit your survey to the student investigator.

RISKS:
There are no known risks to you for participating in this study, as all information provided will remain strictly anonymous. You may choose not to participate in this study prior to or any time during your participation, you can skip any questions that you wish not to answer, and you may end the survey at any time by simply exiting the web link.

BENEFITS:
The responses from this study will be used to explore leadership content within school social work curriculum. This exploration can help to influence school social worker education and training in CSWE-accredited social work programs, as well as open an exploration of school social work roles within practice across the United States.

PROTECTIONS:
All information and data collected from you through your participation in this study will remain strictly anonymous. No potentially identifying information will be collected from you. The researcher will keep all study materials (e.g. collected data) on the investigator's password-protected computer or on a password-protected computer owned by the researcher's chair. No one other than the principal investigator and her dissertation chair will be able to access the data collected from this study. For analyzing and reporting the findings of this study, all demographic information will be summarized to further protect the human participants in this study.

CONTACT INFORMATION:
If you have questions at any time about the study or its procedures, you may contact the student investigator for this study:
Christine Vyshedsky, LMSW
Yeshiva University

(908) 403-3899
christine.vyshedsky@yu.edu

You may also contact the dissertation chair:
Charles Auerbach, PhD
Yeshiva University
(212) 960-0816
auerbach@yu.edu

PARTICIPATION:
Your participation in this is completely voluntary and does not in any way impact your professional standing at your college/university. By selecting "yes" below, you are accepting the terms of this informed consent. If you choose to participate in this study, you are asked to submit this form only one time.

If you wish to not participate in this study, please exit this survey now.

Thank you!

Appendix C: Survey Questions

School Social Work Curriculum Survey

Start of Block: Informed Consent

Q1
INFORMED CONSENT FORM- PLEASE READ BELOW:

As a professor in a CSWE-accredited School of Social Work, you are invited to complete a survey regarding your attitudes and beliefs towards leadership within your school social work curricula/um.
This survey is part of a dissertation, the purpose of which is to better understand leadership skills as part of the school social work curricula. Please complete this survey only once.

INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY:
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your participation in this study will require the one-time completion of an anonymous survey on your attitudes and beliefs towards the inclusion of leadership skills in school social work curricula/um. The survey is expected to take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and all responses are anonymous; you will not be asked to provide any potentially identifying information and your responses cannot be linked back to you. At the end of the survey, you will submit your survey to the student investigator.
RISKS:
There are no known risks to you for participating in this study, as all information provided will remain strictly anonymous. You may choose not to participate in this study prior to or any time during your participation, you can skip any questions that you wish not to answer, and you may end the survey at any time by simply exiting the web link.

BENEFITS: The responses from this study will be used to explore leadership content within school social work curriculum. This exploration can help to influence school social worker education and training in CSWE-accredited social work programs, as well as open an exploration of school social work roles within practice across the United States.

PROTECTIONS:
All information and data collected from you through your participation in this study will remain strictly anonymous. No potentially identifying information will be collected from you. The researcher will keep all study materials (e.g. collected data) on the investigator's password-protected computer or on a password-protected computer owned by the researcher's chair. No one other than the principal investigator and her dissertation chair will be able to access the data collected from this study. For analyzing and reporting the findings of this study, all demographic information will be summarized to further protect the human participants in this study
. CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you have questions at any time about the study or its procedures, you may contact the student investigator for this study:

Christine Vyshedsky, LMSW Yeshiva University
(908) 403-3899
christine.vyshedsky@yu.edu

You may also contact the dissertation chair:
Charles Auerbach, PhD
Yeshiva University
(212) 960-0816
auerbach@yu.edu

PARTICIPATION:
Your participation in this is completely voluntary and does not in any way impact your professional standing at your college/university. By selecting "yes" below, you are accepting the terms of this informed consent. If you choose to participate in this study, you are asked to submit this form only one time.
If you wish to not participate in this study, please exit this survey now or indicate this below.

Thank you!

- ○ Yes, I consent.
- ○ No, I do not consent.

End of Block: Informed Consent

Start of Block: Your Background

Q2 **Your Background:** Please answer these questions about your educational background, and role at your college/university. If you are employed by more than one college/university, please answer based on the school at which you spend the most hours.

Q3
My current position:

- ○ Adjunct
- ○ Lecturer
- ○ Assistant Professor
- ○ Associate Professor
- ○ Professor
- ○ Department Chair
- ○ Program Director
- ○ Assistant Dean
- ○ Associate Dean
- ○ Dean
- ○ Other

Q4 My highest completed degree: HS diploma or equivalent, BA or BS, BSW, Master's degree, MSW, PhD, DSW, Other

- ○ High School Diploma or Equivalent
- ○ BA/BS degree
- ○ BSW
- ○ Master's degree
- ○ MSW
- ○ PhD
- ○ DSW
- ○ Other

Q5 I hold a master's degree from an accredited school of social work:

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I am currently in school to earn my MSW

Q6 I have presented or co-presented at conferences.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q7 I have written articles which have been published in peer-reviewed journals.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q8 I consider myself a leader in my area(s) of interest.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q9
Number of years I have taught in a CSWE-accredited MSW program (if less than one year, enter 1):

_____

Q10 Number of classes I taught last academic year (September 2019-May 2020)

_____

Q11 My current employment status with my college/university:

- ○ Full-time
- ○ Part-time
- ○ Other

Q12 I have a master's level license (LMSW, LGSW or LSW) to practice social work in my state.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I am currently working towards my license
- ○ I have a higher-level license to practice social work in my state
- ○ Other

Q13 I have a clinical license (LCSW, LICSW or LMSW-C) to practice social work in my state.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I am currently working towards my license
- ○ Other

Q14 I currently hold a certificate or license to practice school social work in my state.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I am currently working towards my license
- ○ My state does not require a school social work certificate/license
- ○ Other

Q15 I completed a School Social Work specialization/major/certificate program during my MSW education.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I did not complete an MSW-specific education

Q16
I have worked as a social worker in a school or another host environment (a host environment is defined as a location in which majority of employees are not social workers and policy and practice boundaries are defined by individuals who are not social workers; for example, schools, hospitals, court systems).

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q17
I currently contribute or have contributed to the curriculum for my master's social work (MSW) program.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q18
I currently contribute or have contributed to the curriculum for a school social work course, specialization or concentration.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

End of Block: Your Background

Start of Block: Your Current Educational Setting

Q19 **Your Current Educational Setting**: For all questions about your university or college, please answer this question based on the school at which you are employed the most hours as faculty.

Q20 The US state in which your college/university is located:

- ○ Prefer not to say
- ○ Alabama
- ○ Alaska
- ○ Arizona
- ○ Arkansas
- ○ California
- ○ Colorado
- ○ Connecticut
- ○ Delaware
- ○ District of Columbia
- ○ Florida
- ○ Georgia
- ○ Hawaii
- ○ Idaho
- ○ Illinois
- ○ Indiana
- ○ Iowa
- ○ Kansas
- ○ Kentucky
- ○ Louisiana

- ○ Maine
- ○ Maryland
- ○ Massachusetts
- ○ Michigan
- ○ Minnesota
- ○ Mississippi
- ○ Missouri
- ○ Montana
- ○ Nebraska
- ○ Nevada
- ○ New Hampshire
- ○ New Jersey
- ○ New Mexico
- ○ New York
- ○ North Carolina
- ○ North Dakota
- ○ Ohio
- ○ Oklahoma
- ○ Oregon
- ○ Pennsylvania
- ○ Puerto Rico

- ○ Rhode Island
- ○ South Carolina
- ○ South Dakota
- ○ Tennessee
- ○ Texas
- ○ Utah
- ○ Vermont
- ○ Virginia
- ○ Washington
- ○ West Virginia
- ○ Wisconsin
- ○ Wyoming

Q21
Which of the following BEST describes your school type:

- ○ Public University/College
- ○ Private University/College
- ○ Other

Q22
Which of the following BEST describes your college/university setting:

- ○ Rural
- ○ Suburban
- ○ Urban

Q23
Does your college/university offer a school social work elective?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q24
Does your college/university offer a school social work concentration/specialization?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Page Break

End of Block: Your Current Educational Setting

Start of Block: Leadership in School Social Work Curricula/um:

Q25
Leadership in School Social Work Curricula/um:

The following statements focus on the inclusion of leadership skills in school social work

curriculum. Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to possess and implement a vision.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to influence others to act.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to encourage collaboration.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to develop a capacity to problem solve.	○	○	○	○	○

It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to create positive change.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for school social work curriculum to include the skills necessary to collect data in their school to inform outcome-driving practice.	○	○	○	○	○
It is more important for school social workers to learn leadership skills in the field rather than through course curriculum.	○	○	○	○	○
Social workers cannot be leaders in a school environment.	○	○	○	○	○

Leadership skills are acquired in the school after graduation.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important to include skills to become a leader in school social work practice curriculum.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for school social workers to be prepared to take a leadership role in pandemics situations such as COVID-19.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for school social workers to be prepared to take a leadership role in implementing tele-mental health services in times of crisis.	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

End of Block: Leadership in School Social Work Curricula/um:

Start of Block: Leadership in Social Work Curricula/um

Q26
Leadership in Social Work Curricula/um:

The following statements focus on the inclusion of leadership skills in the social work

curriculum in general. Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Leadership skills are more appropriate in macro practice, not micro practice.	○	○	○	○	○
Leadership skills cannot be taught directly.	○	○	○	○	○
The majority of leadership skills are learned from practice in the field, after graduation.	○	○	○	○	○
The majority of leadership skills are learned during field experience/internships.	○	○	○	○	○
The majority of leadership skills are learned through the observation/mentoring of other social workers in the field.	○	○	○	○	○
The majority of leadership skills are learned through continuing education (CEU/CE) courses.	○	○	○	○	○
Leadership skills can be taught in social work curriculum.	○	○	○	○	○
It is important to include the skills to become a leader in social work practice curriculum.	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Leadership in Social Work Curricula/um