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Mindfulness And Its Impact On Leader-Employee Relations In Higher Education Social Work Departments

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MINDFULNESS AND ITS IMPACT ON LEADER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENTS

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to everyone who was told they could not do something—you most certainly can! And to Isabel, you are such a gift and a joy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many for whom I am grateful and I would like to acknowledge their support of me during this process.

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For my family, thank you all! Mom and Dad, thank you for believing in me and encouraging me at every turn. Your guidance and support have been instrumental, you have taught me the value of hard work, lessons learned and to be a thoughtful, kind, and inquisitive person, and I would not have the strength to have done this journey without that. To Henning, thank you for your love, support, and commitment to us and our family and for always believing in me (and putting up with me). Isabel, in your words "I've saved the best for last." I am constantly amazed by your frankness, humor, and intelligence. I cannot wait to see where you go. I love you.

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ABSTRACT

This sequential, fixed, mixed-methods study explores how mindfulness practice by leaders in higher education social work programs influences the leader-employee relationship among a sample of higher education social work department leaders and their faculty. This study was developed out of the intersection of personal, professional, and academic interests in both mindfulness and leadership. Additionally, this study fills a gap in the existing literature on how leaders' individual mindfulness practice influences the relationship between them and their employees (Reb et al., 2019; Rooney et al., 2021; Urrila, 2021).

The results of this study were that the sample of social work higher education leaders reported an average Mindfulness and Attention Awareness Scale score of 4.16 (out of 6) which indicates a higher than mid-range trait mindfulness but lower than the normative average of 4.2 (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Faculty averaged 5.

The results of this study were that the sample of social work higher education leaders reported an average Mindfulness and Attention Awareness Scale score of 4.16 (out of 6) which indicates a higher than mid-range trait mindfulness but lower than the normative average of 4.2 (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Faculty averaged 5.24 (out of 7)on the Multidimensionality of Leader Member Exchange scale (Liden & Maslyn, 1998), which indicates that social work faculty have a higher than mid-range relationships with their leaders. In a comparative analysis, it does indicate that there is a positive correlation between a leader's overall trait mindfulness and how employees rate that relationship. Additionally, the qualitative elements showed that leaders who practiced mindfulness felt that they developed more self awareness which allowed them to better be able to build relationships with employees, and that employees found that communication,

workplace culture, support, positionality, and the type of leader are crucial elements in developing their relationships with their employees. One groupset showed that a leader's routine practice could positively impact the leader-faculty relationship.

This study's findings do indicate that leader mindfulness does positively impact the leader-member relationship, and that routine practice could enhance the relationship even further. These outcomes can be used to support higher education institutions adding mindfulness elements into their leader trainings and development, and encourage leaders to cultivate mindfulness on their own.

Keywords: leader-member exchange; leader-faculty relationship; mindfulness; mindfulness attention awareness scale; trait mindfulness; relationship

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

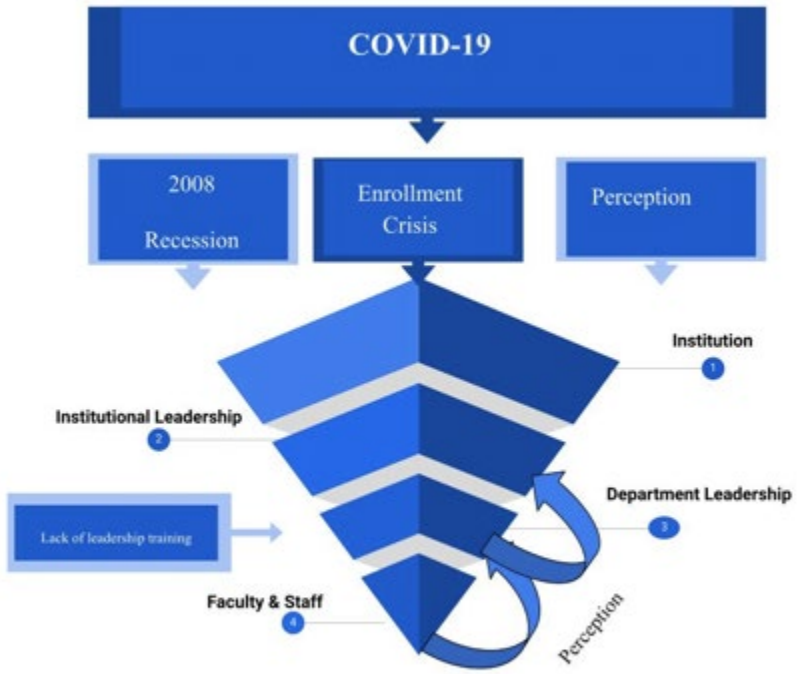
Mindfulness has been both a practice and a concept for the past two thousand years (Johnasent & Gopalakrishna, 2006). Recently, mindfulness has become a buzzword (Krause, 2019 & Sacchet, 2017), and as such, its true meaning and influence have become obscured by popularity and ineffective applications. If the curtain of hype is parted and attention refocused on the empirical mindfulness research of the past fifty years (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000), it is easier to accept the important beneficial implications of engaging in a true mindfulness routine. Researchers have noted that the benefits of mindfulness range from physiological and psychological to intra- and interpersonal relationships (Barnes et al., 2007; Hözel et al., 2010; Modinos et al., 2010 Morone et al., 2011; Wachs & Cordova, 2007). In the past twenty years, mindfulness research has expanded to encompass various elements of the workplace, most commonly from the employee perspective (Beckman et al., 2012; Dane, 2011; Dane & Brummel, 2014; Grover et al., 2017; Hugh-Jones et al., 2018; Hülsheger et al., 2013; Hyland et al., 2015; Kachen, 2017; Krusche et al., 2020; Lyddy & Good, 2016; Malinowski & Lim, 2015; Pinto-Gouveia, 2016; Qiu & Rooney, 2019). However, more recent research has begun to explore the implications mindfulness has on leadership (Baron et al., 2018; Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Goldman Schuyler, 2010; Hyland et al., 2015; Nübold et al., 2020; Reb et al. 2014; Reb et al., 2019; Rooney et al., 2019; Schuh et al., 2019; Vreeling et al., 2019; Zalis et al., 2019).

This understanding of the intersection of leadership and mindfulness is uniquely important at this moment in time, as many individuals have faced increased stress related to the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19 pandemic) that has influenced nearly every aspect of

daily human life (Haleem et al., 2020). One crucial area is that of individuals' work lives; those privileged enough to be able to work from home have transitioned to remote work with increased screen time and delicate yet demanding navigation between familial and work needs, not to mention the ennui (at best) and depression (at worst) from forced social isolation (Galanti et al., 2021; Kniffin et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2020). Moreover, those Americans who could not escape the world at large and mitigate the risk of infection by working from home were increasingly worried about contracting the deadly virus (Parker et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021). Even the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have published guidelines to help employees with the increasing stress of work during the COVID-19 pandemic (CDC, 2020-a); they even call for employers to look for increased signs of stress and fatigue in employees (CDC, 2020-b). In their review of the COVID-19 pandemic workforce shifts, Kniffin et al. (2021) recommended that leaders and organizations invest in building leadership skills that help mitigate some workplace stress by enhancing their communication feedback and overall communication leadership style and abilities.

Figure 1

HEI Structure and Compounding Stressors



Note: This figure represents the HEI hierarchy and the current and historical stressors on those various levels.

There has not been an industry that has escaped the catastrophic changes brought on by COVID-19. Still, higher education might be uniquely affected as the industry was already dealing with several significant stressors (see Figure 1), most prominent of which is the enrollment crisis. Prior to the pandemic, enrollments nationwide had a 1.7 percent decline, and this is predicted to only grow in the coming years (Dennis, 2020; Grawe, 2021; Rhyneer, 2019; Zinshteyn, 2016). The enrollment issue is particularly problematic for small and medium-sized schools, which are primarily supported by tuition dollars (N. Trufant, presentation, February 13, 2019). The financial issues related to enrollment are compounded by the fact that higher education institutions (HEIs) never fully recovered from the 2008 recession that left departments

and budgets decimated. The pandemic has added additional financial burdens (Carlson & Gardner, 2020). Additionally, the aging American demographic has slowed the enrollment pipeline to HEIs. Finally, HEIs have also begun to face a growing perception problem, as far-right politicians claim higher education was the enemy of free-thinking patriots (Carlson & Gardner, 2020; Dennis, 2020).

HEI leadership becomes crucial at the intersection of these factors (Kok & McDonald, 2017; Lumby, 2019; McNamara, 2021). HEIs have a hierarchical leadership and reporting structure that often is designated into two categories, institutional leadership (Boards of Directors, Presidents, Provosts, Deans, etc.) and departmental leadership (Heads of Departments, Chair Persons, Program Directors, etc.). The Heads of Departments (HoDs) role is essential in connecting faculty to institutional leadership while simultaneously insulating them from the institutional pressures. However, heads of departments are often promoted up through the ranks, and leadership training is rarely provided (Baker et al., 2018; Butler, 2020; Kok & McDonald, 2017). This lack of training has been detrimental to department, faculty, and student production and success (Kok & McDonald, 2017). In addition, HEI middle management is a complex and challenging role due mainly to the relational needs of managing expectations up, down, and across the hierarchy (Branson et al., 2016). Another HEI leadership consideration is the slowing pipeline from faculty to department leadership and further upward into institutional leadership (Baker et al., 2018; Butler, 2020). The pipeline issues stem from two primary sources: HEI has an aging workforce, and many baby boomers are leaving their leadership positions (Baker et al., 2018). Many faculty have a negative view of departmental and institutional leadership (Baker et al., 2018; Butler, 2020).

The faculty experience bears particular consideration as they are the student-facing arm of HEIs, more so than either the department heads or institutional leadership. For example, in a phenomenological study by Pifer et al. (2019)[1] the faculty reported no positive interactions with department leadership. This is highly concerning as other studies have linked good leadership and working relationships with leaders to improved employee outcomes (Epitropaki & Marin, 2016; Matta & Van Dyne, 2016; Reb et al., 2019; Sonnentag & Pundt, 2016).

This study focuses solely on social work departments within HEIs because mindfulness has a special role within the social work profession. Mindfulness relates to self-awareness, self-care, and direct treatment, which are all various yet essential components of the social work profession. Self-care is a broader category than just mindfulness; however, mindfulness is considered a self-care tool (Miller et al., 2018; Myers et al., 2020). Self-care is the notion that individuals engage in a thoughtful and purposeful set of skills that help bring attentional awareness and mitigate work and life stressors (Dorociak et al., 2017). Self-care is important in the social work field because it helps mitigate the first-hand and vicarious trauma from meeting and working with clients in crisis or who have experienced trauma (Martin et al., 2020). It also helps to mitigate workplace burnout, compassion fatigue, stress, and work-life balance issues while helping to maintain overall well-being, especially in regard to mental and physical health (Martin et al., 2020; Miller et al., 2018; Myers et al., 2020). It is so important to the profession that in 2021, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) added self-care as an essential element to the ethical principle of *Integrity*, adding that "Social workers should take measures to

[1] This study was conducted via an online survey (to gauge willingness/interest) and interviews with 55 faculty members from 11 of the 13 Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA).

care for themselves professionally and personally" (Murry, 2021, p. 2). While social work educators may face different stressors than their clinical or frontline colleagues, they still face mounting pressures, especially in the era of COVID-19 (Myers et al., 2020). Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, social worker educators are responsible for nurturing future generations of social workers who will need to internalize and embody the concept of self-care to be effective and competent social workers (Miller et al., 2018; Myers et al., 2020).

It is also essential to explore the juxtaposition of mindfulness as it is used as a clinical concept both within modalities and to further the self-awareness of the clinician. Self-awareness is the understanding and sense of oneself; it is not finite or fixed, but rather a continuous fluid understanding (Feize & Faver, 2019). It is an essential part of social work because it allows clinicians greater control of themselves, their emotions, reactions, and use of self in sessions (Feize & Fever, 2019). Mindfulness has been shown to help foster self-awareness (Park et al., 2020; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012). Therefore, social work students must begin to embody mindfulness practices. Without understanding how to engage in mindful practice, they cannot effectively help clients or patients to do so. In regard to clinical modalities, mindfulness has become increasingly central to current evidence-based practices (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; Dialectical Behavioral Therapy; Modular Approach to Therapy with Children with Anxiety, Depression, Trauma, and Conduct Problems; Parent-Child Interaction Therapy), and as mindfulness is an embodied practice (Khoury et al., 2017) practitioners need to have their own experiences engaging mindfulness techniques to help guide clients through them. Additionally, despite their specific licensure or modality, all clinicians need to build an adequate therapeutic alliance to help clients achieve their goals (Bordin, 1979;

Rogers, 1957; 1992). Research has indicated that a mindfulness practice on the part of the clinician does aid in a positive therapeutic alliance (Greason & Welfare, 2013; Johnson 2018; Johnson et al., 2019; Johnson & Walsh, 2021; Leonard et al., 2018; Schomaker & Ricard, 2015).

With all of this in mind, this study grows the understanding of how a social work academic department head's mindfulness practice affects the leader-employee relationship. While mindfulness is not inherently a leadership "tool," regular practitioners of mindfulness practices have seen individual benefits ranging from physiological to psychological and with relationships (Barnes et al., 2007; Hözel et al., 2010; Modinos et al., 2010; Morone et al., 2011; Wachs & Cordova, 2007). These individual benefits can positively impact not only the individual but those around them and, in turn, the larger context or culture that they are in. In terms of organizational culture, Warrick (2017) and Schein and Schein (2017) both note that some of the key elements of a positive culture are communication, open-mindedness, creativity, growth mindset, team building, authentic relationships, and being humble—all of which can be linked to increased mindfulness (Baron et al., 2018; Good et al. 2016; Nübold et al., 2020; Urrila, 2021). As such, mindfulness can be considered a modulating variable to several desirable leadership skills such as decision making (Karelaia & Reb 2015), an increased presence of mind, awareness of others' experiences (Reb et al., 2015), and sense of self (Atkins & Styles, 2015). This helps to link it to more desirable leadership styles such as Servant, Authentic, and Transformational leadership (Rooney et al., 2019). Additionally, Boyatzis (2015) posits "that leaders are highly infectious, or contagious, to others regarding their relative degree of mindfulness or mindlessness" (p. 245), which implies that a leader is in a key position to influence the workplace experience of others and perhaps mitigate some of the increased stress

noted previously. This is perhaps best done between a leader and the employee. Several authors have noted a particular gap in the mindfulness-leadership research about the employee-leader relationship (Reb et al., 2019; Rooney et al., 2019; 2021; Urilla, 2021).

Definitions of Terms

Dispositional Mindfulness. Mindfulness is an inherently human trait, essentially that all humans have some capacity for mindful attention (Tomlinson et al., 2017). In this study, antecedent behavior (engaging in mindfulness practice) to trait mindfulness is examined to understand if it impacts the leader-follower relationship.

Follower. A follower, also known as an employee, is lower on the ladder of the work environment and has less control, jurisdiction, and leverage than those above them in the hierarchy (Kellerman, 2007).

Head of Department (HoD). This is a position in higher education and is the head of an academic department. The position holds academic duties (akin to faculty) as well as managerial, supervisory, and financial duties (Branson et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2020).

Higher Education Institution (HEI). Institutions of higher learning (post-high school in the United States) such as universities, colleges, and professional schools give learners advanced tools and skills in various professional fields (Britannica, 2016).

Leader. A leader is a person who holds a formal role within an organization and has some degree of decision-making power (Juntrasook, 2014).

Leader-Follower Relationship. There exists between a leader and the follower a dynamic through which there is an established exchange of information (leader) and compliance (follower) that aids both parties in obtaining mutual goals (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Leadership. While leadership has many definitions, in this study it is categorized as a formal role within an organization, through which the individual occupying that role has some degree of decision-making power and is considered the "head" of the department (Juntrasook, 2014).

Middle Management. A middle leadership role between higher leadership positions and lower, front-line positions. In higher education, a middle manager would be considered a Department Head, Head of Department, Department Chair, etc., and often these individuals still maintain some role as faculty. This role is both managerial and supervisory (Branson et al., 2016).

Mindfulness. There are many definitions for mindfulness; for the purposes of this study, I will use Kabat-Zinn's (2006) definition: "The awareness that emerges through paying attention to purposes, in the present moment, and non judgmentally to the unfolding experience moment by moment" (p. 145).

Mindfulness-Based Interventions. A therapeutic intervention that uses mindfulness techniques is typically meditation to reduce either physiological or psychological symptoms. (Cullen, 2011; Kabat-Zinn, 2006)

Relationship. A relationship is a state of being related or interrelated (Merriam-Webster's, n.d.).

Self-Awareness. It is the understanding and awareness that one has of themselves it is not fixed or finite but continuous and flowing (Feize, 2020; Feize & Faver, 2019).

Self-Care. Self-care refers to the skills or strategies used to create healthy, balanced well-being across all areas of one's life (Dorociak et al., 2017).

Social Work. Social work is a licensed helping profession that looks to aid all individuals in having their needs met. It is unique among the helping professions because it situates the client(s) contextually within their environment rather than just aiming to *treat* or *fix* the identified patient. There are thousands of different types of social work jobs, but they typically fall within either the macro (community) or micro (clinical) level (NASW, n.d.).

State Mindfulness. State mindfulness is a temporary condition that typically happens when an individual engages in mindfulness (meditation, yoga, tai chi, etc.) (Tomlinson et al., 2017).

Therapeutic Alliance. This is the confluence of three factors that arise out of the therapeutic relationship: agreement on goals, collaboration in setting tasks, and the relationship or bond between the clinician and client (Bordin, 1979). This alliance is an essential element in a client's ability to reach their clinical goals (Rogers, 1957; 1992).

Trait Mindfulness. This is another term used to describe *disposition mindfulness;* mindfulness is an inherently human trait, essentially that all humans have some capacity for mindful attention (Tomlinson et al., 2017).

Workplace. The workplace is a setting in which individuals perform their work. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Statement of the Problem

Across industries, it is not known how a leader's individual mindfulness practice influences the leader-follower relationship, as identified by Reb et al. (2019), Rooney et al. (2021), and Urrila (2021). Rooney et al.'s (2021) theoretical linking of mindfulness and key principles of Authentic, Servant, and Transformative leadership pose the possibility that

mindfulness is an enhanced trait and could lead to measurable effects on others. To look more specifically at leader and employee relationships, early work by Reb et al. (2014) showed a correlation between leader trait mindfulness and employee well-being and performance. This latter point was later contradicted by Zalis et al. (2019). A subsequent study by Reb et al. (2019) gave evidence that the more mindful a leader is, the greater the reduction in employee stress. In turn, Schuh et al.'s (2019) study noted that a leader's mindfulness impacted employee relationships.

While the lack of understanding laid out by Reb et al. (2019), Rooney et al. (2021), and highlighted by Urrila (2021) holds across industries, it could have specific importance for HEIs, as there is a crisis of leadership. With little to no leadership development, department heads are insufficiently prepared to support their departments and employees through these challenging times (Cano & Whitfield, 2019; Chanmugam, 2021). This is even more concerning when considering the professional and clinical importance of mindfulness within the social work field and its teaching within social work HEI departments. When the department leaders do not utilize techniques to create meaningful and reciprocal relationships with faculty nor exemplify the profession's ethical or clinical standards, the department cannot hope to produce social work students who embody mindfulness, self-awareness, and self-care.

Statement of the Purpose of the Study

This sequential, fixed, mixed-methods study explores how mindfulness practice by leaders in higher education social work programs influences the leader-employee relationship among a sample of higher education social work department leaders and their faculty. This study was developed out of the intersection of personal, professional, and academic interests in both

mindfulness and leadership. Additionally, this study fills a gap in the existing literature on how leaders' individual mindfulness practice influences the relationship between them and their employees (Reb et al., 2019; Rooney et al., 2021; Urrila, 2021).

Research Questions

The following questions address the knowledge gap as represented by Reb et al. (2019), Rooney et al. (2021), and Urrila (2021) and explore the problems detected in the study.

Quantitative

RQ 1: Using the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS) to assess trait mindfulness, how do social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions rate their level of trait mindfulness (H1)?

RQ 2: Using the MAAS to examine trait mindfulness and Multidimensionality of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX-MDM) to examine social work faculty rating of their relationship with their department head, to what extent do higher scores of the department heads' trait mindfulness result in higher relationship satisfaction with social work faculty (H2)?

Qualitative

RQ3: How does a sample of social work faculty at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their experience and their relationship with their department head?

RQ4: How does a sample of social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their mindfulness routines and the experience and understanding of the impact that their mindfulness routines have on their relationships with social work faculty?

Hypotheses

The researcher believes that the following hypotheses will be supported via the outlined study:

H1: the more a leader practices mindfulness techniques, the higher trait mindfulness they will have (RQ1).

H2: the more trait mindfulness a leader has, the higher the relationship satisfaction by faculty (RQ2).

Null Hypotheses

H1: there is no relationship between how much a leader practices mindfulness techniques and their overall trait mindfulness (RQ1).

H2: there is no relationship between a leader's level of trait mindfulness and higher faculty relationship satisfaction.

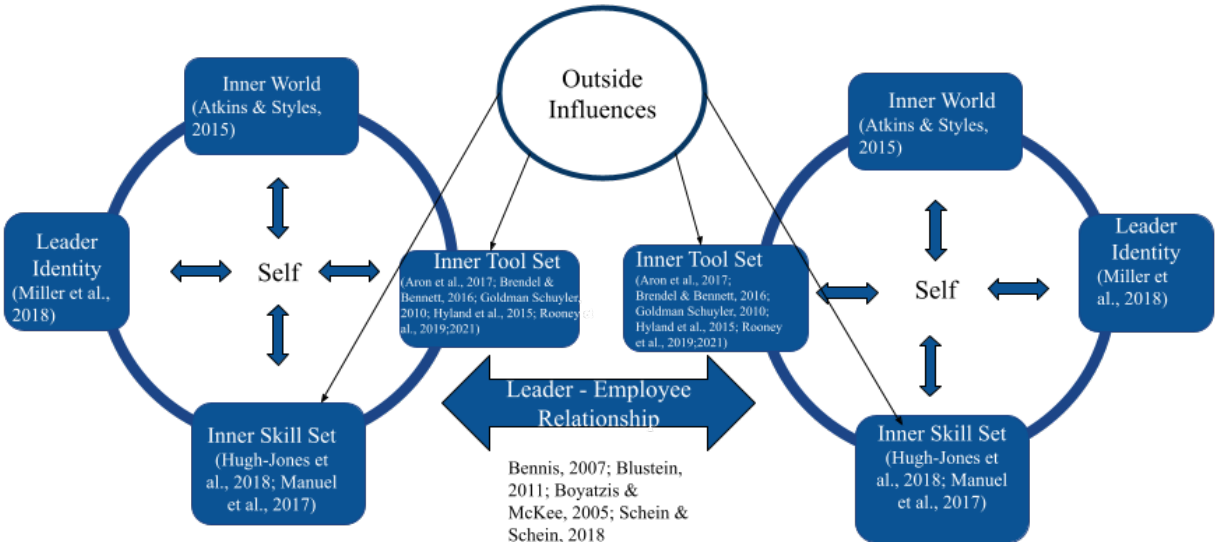
Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework, as described by Ravitch and Riggan (2016), is an element through which mattering and means are set and used throughout a study. In this study, the conceptual framework is that of relationships as defined by Schein and Schein (2018) as the shared anticipations between people based on previous experiences. Schein and Schein (2018) argue that relationships between people exist when both parties can reasonably anticipate the other's behavior and that there is some degree of balance and mutuality of expectations. While this is addressed in greater detail in Chapter Two, it can briefly be expressed as a functional symbiosis between the multiple elements at various levels, fundamental of which are the relationships between leaders, employees, and students. Schein and Schein (2021) posit that relationships are the heart of successful and healthy organizations; trust and growth cannot

flourish without them. However, the notion of relationship does not end with the human element; the theoretical, stylistic, and methodical elements of the study are similarly interrelated.

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework



Of primary importance is the theoretical framework, which in this study is Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, which is concerned with the dyadic relationship between a leader and follower and the impact it can have on those two individuals and the larger organizational culture (Bauer & Erdogan, 2016; Northouse, 2019). LMX offers the ability to tie together the individual relationship between a leader and follower and the recurring theme of relationships present in the content of the individual articles, their relation to one another, and the critical elements of this study. Furthermore, there have been links between LMX and transformational leadership (Nahrgang & Seo, 2016), and mindfulness has been linked to the embodiment of transformational leadership qualities (Rooney et al., 2021).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope

In the design and structuring of the study, several assumptions have been made, primarily that the individuals filling out the surveys and participating in interviews will do so in an honest fashion with the intent of collaboration and scientific inquiry. This assumption is made out of my personal belief that individuals do the best they can at any given moment and that confidentiality in the surveys will cause no reason for retaliation. Furthermore, the participants will be leaders and faculty at HEIs and are used to research inquiries; thus, the researcher assumes they will be more likely to participate. Finally, it is also assumed that the participants in this study have the cognitive and affective abilities most commonly associated with adulthood and, therefore, can make their own decisions in their best interest.

As with any study, there are some foreseeable limitations. Limitations are elements discovered after a study is completed that may impact its ability to be generalized or transferred to other populations; in essence, features that weaken the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). One obvious limitation is that the formatting of the study relied on self-reporting as the only means of data; this has been seen as a limitation (Arnold & Feldman, 1981; Bergomi et al., 2012; Devaux & Sassi, 2016) due to self-report bias. This was mitigated by having employees complete a survey from their perspective on the quality of their relationship with the leader. This study also relied on Fowler's (2014) suggestion that some of the self-report bias will be further mitigated because the data are self-administered and that the demographic and qualitative pieces will be crafted in a nonjudgmental way and be as free of bias as possible. However, this researcher needs to consider researcher bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell

& Creswell, 2018), in both drafting the survey and analyzing the data. Issues regarding researcher bias will be addressed via journaling and synthesized in an audit trail.

Rationale

Previous research has established links between leader mindfulness and improved conditions with and for employees (Nübold et al., 2020; Reb et al., 2014; Reb et al., 2019; Schuh et al., 2019; Vreeling et al., 2019). However, there remains a gap in the literature related to the intersection of mindfulness and leader-follower relationships (Reb et al., 2019; Rooney et al., 2021; Urrila, 2021). Currently, there is no empirical evidence linking specific mindfulness practices with trait mindfulness and then with a rating from an employee perspective of the leader-follower relationship. Nevertheless, empirical findings could aid in answering Kniffin et al.'s (2021) call to create better workplace dynamics that mitigate the level of stress placed on the workforce (Galanti et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2020).

The focus on HEIs initially came out of the ease of finding participants as the researcher works in a university setting; however, unique factors within the education landscape could benefit from this study. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education faced an enrollment crisis that was only growing in intensity (Dennis, 2020). Additionally, the industry never fully recovered from the 2008 recession, coupled with the financial crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic (Neel, 2020), which has presented significant and very concerning issues for higher education. This study's results could provide information that may impact how leadership at HEIs is conceptualized and actualized. As Kok and McDonald (2017) noted, improving departmental leadership within HEIs will help individual institutions meet their unique challenges more effectively. It has also been identified that to be more effective, HEI leaders

need to be more self-aware to best navigate between their personal needs and the needs of others (Lumby, 2019). This may help leaders achieve an overall ability to create an influential collaborative community within their departments (McNamara, 2021).

This study focused on social work departments within HEIs because the profession is inextricably linked with mindfulness via the profession's focus on self-care, self-awareness, and general clinical practice. Social workers have an ethical obligation to engage in self-care, of which mindfulness can be a component (Murry, 2021; Myers et al., 2020). Additionally, social workers have been tasked with maintaining competence in their specific areas of practice. As mindfulness is an embodied practice (Khoury et al., 2017) and fundamental to many evidence-based treatments, social workers, in general, should have their own experiences in the area of mindfulness. Furthermore, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), in its proposed updated 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), has noted that social workers, among other things, need to demonstrate reflexivity, self-awareness, and self-regulation (CSWE, 2021, p. 3)—all three confirmed results of mindfulness (McCusker, 2021; Park et al., 2020; Vago & Silbersweig, 2012).

Summary

In conclusion, this study aimed to fill the gap in the literature as discussed by Reb et al. (2019), Rooney et al. (2021), and Urrila (2021), using a mixed-methods approach to examine the effect of a leader's individual mindfulness practice on the leader-follower relationship within a social work higher education department. Additionally, this study can provide helpful information regarding leadership in a broad sense and help HEIs become more attuned to their faculty, staff, and students, making the institutions more viable in today's shifting marketplace.

Given the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuing financial crisis, coupled with the fact that HEIs never fully recovered from the previous recession, the dwindling population, and political backlash from propagandists have left the industry in dire need of self-evaluation (Carlson & Gardner, 2020; Dennis, 2020; Grawe, 2021; LeClair, 2021; Rhyneer, 2019; Zinshteyn, 2016). Furthermore, social work specifically needs support with ensuring that social work department heads and faculty have skills, tools, and overall ability to provide students with an educational experience that promotes self-awareness and self-care (Khoury et al., 2017).

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review was undertaken to understand previously published empirical research and theoretical understandings of mindfulness's impact on the workplace in general and leadership, social work, and higher education specifically. This review has revealed a gap in the existing literature: how a leader's individual mindfulness practice influences the relationship between that leader and their employees (Reb et al., 2019; Rooney et al., 2019; 2021; Urilla, 2021). The study outlined in this dissertation will explore this gap with a specific focus on social work academic department heads and faculty.

This topic has long been of interest to this writer from both an employee and a leadership standpoint. With a career focused on social work, much of this author's work has been in nonprofit social service agencies and higher education. Across settings, this writer has anecdotally observed that leaders who engage in routine personal mindfulness practices tend to be more effective in their leadership styles and create better, more secure relationships with their employees.

This literature review has been instrumental in understanding the breadth and depth of the topical research and narrowing this author's line of inquiry. The literature presented in this chapter, while not exhaustive, is substantial and selected to give the reader a dynamic understanding of the ongoing conversations about mindfulness in the workplace, leadership, social work, and higher education. While the research on mindfulness is vast, and that which addresses the topics of mindfulness at work and leadership is growing more robust, there is a gap in the existing literature of how leaders' individual mindfulness practices affect the relationship

between said leaders and their employee(s), and to what extent (Good et al., 2016; Reb et al., 2019). This author intends that the study presented in this dissertation will enhance both the topical understanding and the ongoing dialogue about how mindfulness can be a useful work-related leadership tool.

The Organization

This chapter reviews the literature on mindfulness practices related to the workplace, employees, leadership, social work as a profession in higher education, and in social work education. It includes an overview of the conceptual framework, theoretical framework, a background for the measures chosen in this study, the social work profession, social work education, and a summary of the history and progression of mindfulness research to better orient the reader to the topic. The review's body will discuss empirical research on workplace Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs), the effects on employees, leader mindfulness, its use as a leadership development tool, academic leadership mindfulness, faculty mindfulness, and social work education leadership and faculty mindfulness, as well as mindfulness's connection with therapeutic alliance. Additionally, a section addresses the limitations and overall criticism of research related to mindfulness. While each article's limitations are discussed singularly in the content areas, this author felt that given the criticism of the overall topic and its ethical implications, it deserved careful review on the whole. This review seeks to provide the reader with a base knowledge of mindfulness and a larger and deeper contextual understanding of its role in the workplace and leadership. Each section begins with an overview and is broken into subsections that are predominantly presented chronologically; however, due to uniqueness, some articles are placed elsewhere in the subsections.

This literature review has been an ongoing process starting in the late spring of 2019; initially, research was located via a review of the University of New England (UNE) library catalog utilizing keyword searches. Upon establishing a body of reliable and topical articles, a subsequent review of their references was conducted.

Conceptual Framework

Ravitch and Riggan (2016) state that "a conceptual framework is an argument about why the topic one wishes to study matters and why the means proposed to study it are appropriate and rigorous" (p. 5). The undertaking of the review of the literature, subsequent writing and revisions, and study of theories has given way to the development, or rather the discovery of the overall conceptual framework utilized herein. The conceptual framework is that of the most fundamental nature: relationships (see Figure 2). The relationship that one has with others (leader and employee) (Bennis, 2007; Blustein, 2011; Boyatzis, 2015; Boyatzis & McKee, 2005), that which an individual has with their own self (inner world and thoughts) (Atkins & Styles, 2015), that of an individual's relationship with mindfulness as a tool available to regulate or improve themselves (Aron et al., 2017; Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Goldman Schuyler, 2010; Hyland et al., 2015; Rooney et al., 2019; 2021), and the relationship one has with their leadership skill set (Northouse, 2019).

In his writing on relational work theory, Blustein (2011) offers his conceptual framework outlining how human relationships are essential to every aspect of an individual's working life. Blustein notes that human relationships shape individuals' decisions about and in their careers. Humans' foundational relationships provide an internal construct for how they see their abilities, strengths, and weaknesses as they start, maintain, and end their careers (Blustein, 2011). Blustein

also asserts that the influence is reciprocal and that our working life can influence our relationships even with those outside the work setting (Blustein, 2011). Atkins and Styles (2015) make a similar point that our identities (how we see ourselves) shape our relationships. Combining these two works (Atkins & Styles, 2105; Blustein, 2011) gives way to a symbiotic understanding between relationships both within ourselves and with others.

Atkins and Styles (2015) also discuss a theoretical model of self-related to work and individual identities within an organizational environment. This model describes how the relationship among the three senses of self-merge to form our identity: self-as-perspective (transcendent self), self-as-story (the conceptualized self), and self as a process (the experiential self) (Atkins & Styles, 2015). Another symbiotic relationship emerges if Boyatzis' (2015) work is considered, wherein a leader within an organization can shape the overall organization through the process he terms "emotional contagion" (p. 251). In this process, one individual in a relationship can influence the other through internal access to mindfulness, hopefulness, understanding, and playfulness (Boyatzis, 2015).

Boyatzis's (2015) use of mindfulness as one of four key tools to positively influence others through emotional contagion links well with the understanding of mindfulness as a tool. Mindfulness as a tool is an essential notion to the majority of the research done on how mindfulness affects various aspects of our lives. In this chapter, mindfulness as a leadership development tool will be discussed in depth, focusing on works from Aron et al. (2017), Brendel and Bennett (2016), Goldman Schuyler (2010), Hyland et al. (2015), and Rooney et al. (2019; 2021).

In his 2019 edition of *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Northouse discusses Mumford et al.'s (2000, as cited in Northouse, 2019) understanding of a skills-based leadership model in which the relationship between a leader's skills, knowledge, and performance is considered. Northouse (2019) characterizes this as a capability model—a model that focuses on what a leader can develop as a skill rather than the notion that someone is intrinsically a good leader. It is important to note that Northouse characterized the capability model as being markedly different from those theories falling within the behavioral approach, of which Leader Member Exchange (LMX) theory is considered. This is important because LMX is the theoretical framework used in this dissertation. This author asserts that while LMX is a behavioral approach—a classification hallmarked by the doings and actions of leaders—it is not fundamentally separate from a skills approach *if* the leader is doing the work of engaging in skill-building.

While it is abundantly clear to this author that relationships are at the heart of the research topic itself, it is also apparent that they are the hallmark of the symbiotic nature of the individual elements of the overall study. As such, using relationships as the conceptual framework integrates this author's relationship, interest, and experiences with and in mindfulness and leadership, the dialogue of current research and the subsequent gap in the particular area of relationships, the theoretical model of leader-member exchange theory (LMX—hallmarked by its focus on relationships) (Bass & Bass, 2008; Northouse, 2019), and both the methodology and data analysis.

Theoretical Framework

There has been much debate and confusion about the role of both a conceptual framework and a theoretical framework (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). While many choose to

conflate the two terms, this author agrees with Ravitch and Riggan (2016) that they are two distinct yet interconnected elements of the dissertation. In addition, several theories have been considered, but Leader Member Exchange (LMX) theory (Bass & Bass, 2008; Northouse, 2019) has proven it to be highly efficacious to this writer's study.

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory first emerged in the 1970s out of vertical dyad linkage (VDL) theory; this preceding theory was concerned with the vertical links leaders formed with each member (Day & Miscenko, 2016; Northouse, 2019). In the 1980s, LMX overtook VDL as the predominant theory used, and as such more empirical data was published, specifically data from Garen et al. (1982; as cited in Day & Miscenko, 2016). The distinct difference between VDL and LMX begins to emerge in this data. VDL does not consider relationships holistically but rather in a hierarchical view only, whereas LMX takes into consideration that the "job is a function of relational variables (especially the relationship with a leader or supervisor), job variables, and their reactions" (Day & Miscenko, 2016, p. 17). In the 1990s, the literature on LMX began to focus on how the theory could be used in terms of organizational understanding and is linked with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), perceived organizational support, and a predictor of employee satisfaction (Day & Miscenko, 2016). Over the past twenty years, the theory has taken on more nuanced and intricate focuses on creating trust, social networking, empowerment, and organizational justice (Day & Miscenko, 2016). There have also been bolstered efforts to explore antecedent behaviors to higher LMX (Day & Miscenko, 2016), which nicely complements the study outlined in this dissertation.

Leader-member exchange's dominant principle is the singular uniqueness of the dyadic relationship between a leader and a follower (Bass & Bass, 2008; Nahrgang & Seo, 2016;

Northouse, 2019). Additionally, LMX offers the ability to tie together the individual relationship between a leader and follower and the recurring theme of relationships present in the content of the individual articles, their relation to one another, and the critical elements of this study. Furthermore, there have been links between LMX and transformational leadership (Nahrgang & Seo, 2016), and mindfulness has been linked to the embodiment of transformational leadership qualities (Rooney et al., 2021). Lastly, LMX has several corresponding measures, the Leader-Member Exchange 7 Questionnaire (LMX-7; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) and the Multidimensionality of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX-MDM; Liden & Maslyn, 1998) both previously validated. While both of these measures have been seriously considered, the researcher ultimately chose the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) because it captured the enhanced multidimensionality of the relationship between a leader and employee and was more rigorously orchestrated than the LMX-7 (Linden et al., 2016).

Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale

As with the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998), the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS) was chosen in part because of conceptual and theoretical underpinnings that Brown and Ryan (2003) used in developing it. When Brown and Ryan developed the MAAS, there was a very limited amount of research into exploring mindfulness as an inherently human characteristic. They noted that their overall understanding of mindfulness is an inherently fluid human capacity and stated that it is an "attribute that varies both between and within persons and examines the significance of both kinds of variation" (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p. 824). Their development of the MAAS was based on the understanding that each person has the ability for mindfulness. However, that ability varies based on an individual's tendency and

inclination toward attentional awareness, which can wax and wane within a person based on their context (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

Brown and Ryan's (2003) MAAS differs from other mindfulness measures (Hülsheger & Alberts, 2021). It focuses on capturing the overall existence or lack of a person's attention and awareness rather than the individual elements associated with mindfulness. This distinction has drawn some criticism that the individual items MAAS measures (Brown & Ryan, 2003) are not based on the definitions from Buddhist scholars (Grossman, 2011), and that it is not multidimensional and is focused only on awareness and not other components such as nonjudgment, nonreactivity, observing, or describing (Hülsheger & Alberts, 2021). With others Brown and Ryan (Brown et al., 2011) defend their process and fundamental underpinnings for the MAAS by returning to and simply repositioning the argument that mindfulness is not just left to scholars but is a human capacity available to everyone. Grossman (2011) further discusses that by allowing the MAAS to be a self-report measure, Brown and Ryan allow individuals to redefine mindfulness, which erodes the Buddhist meaning and understanding. Brown et al. (2011) posit that Buddhists did not develop it as a construct but rather were the first to understand it as a human capacity. Essentially, the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) can be used with adult individuals without a previous history of mindfulness training and allows researchers to understand further an individual's and humanity's capacity for mindfulness (Bergomi et al., 2012; Brown & Ryan, 2003).

Furthermore, in the premier article about MAAS, Brown and Ryan (2003) noted in their discussions of future research that their measure could aid in furthering the understanding of the influence mindfulness has on interpersonal relationships. Brown and Ryan argue that

mindfulness may create an existential space where individuals can better understand their behavior both uniquely and concerning others, thus creating more awareness of their role in others' lives. This concept lends itself nicely to the study explored in this proposal.

The Profession of Social Work

There is a popular narrative that social work stemmed from a primarily Christian charity perspective. In reality, it flows from a confluence of religious and ethical perspectives ranging from Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Native American, and African American spirituality (Tannenbaum & Reisch, 2001). Similarly, it is a popular belief that the poor houses of the 19th century marked the start of social welfare and social work; however, even before the American Revolution, North America had proper mechanisms for working with the impoverished, orphaned children, and the mentally ill (Tannenbaum & Reisch, 2001). However, in the late 1800s, both the United States (U.S.) and Europe were faced with what some term the "*social question,* the paradox of increasing poverty in an increasingly productive and prosperous economy" (Stuart, 2019, para 1). In the U.S., the formal systems could or would not sufficiently handle this growing problem, and helping or benevolent societies began to lend an ever-increasing hand (Tannenbaum & Reisch, 2001). As such, a nascent form of the social work occupation answered this question. This volunteer-based response was largely a female workforce and responded by developing a community-based approach to meeting the needs of individuals within the affected communities (Stuart, 2019). Throughout the 19th century, social work became more specialized in case management, and in 1898 Columbia University in New York City offered the first School of Social Work (Coggins, 2016; Stuart, 2019; Tannenbaum & Reisch, 2001).

In 1915 the burgeoning occupation faced what could have been a startling setback when Dr. Abraham Flexner, a then leading expert on professional education, stated that social work could not be a profession because it "lacked specificity, technical skills, or specialized knowledge" (Tannenbaum & Reisch, 2001, para. 14; similar statements in Stuart, 2019). However, rather than slowing the pace of development, social work education expanded exponentially over the next decade (Stuart, 2019). This growth was further aided by the federal government funding social work agencies, which previously had relied on inconsistent donations. This more reliable funding source spurred the expansion of the social work profession and its associations (Stuart, 2019; Tannenbaum & Reisch, 2001). As a result, by the late 1920s, social work had expanded beyond working with those in poverty to include hospital, school, and child social work.

The great depression of the 1930s overwhelmed the inefficient and ineffectual state and local agencies and pushed forward federalized departments largely made up of social workers, namely social security (Stuart, 2019; Tannenbaum & Reisch, 2001). This brought social work into a new light professionally and brought a new perspective that poverty is not the result of personal shortcomings but rather economic instability. This move onto the national stage also ushered in the need for graduate-level social work education (Stuart, 2019). In the 1930s, two social work education organizations emerged, the National Association of Schools of Social Administration (NASSA) and the American Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW). As the Master of Social Work (MSW) became the terminal degree of the field, the AASSW became singularly associated with MSW programs, and the NASSA with the Bachelor of Social

Work (BSW) programs (Stuart, 2019). This decade also coincided with the start of social work using more psychoanalytic or clinical therapeutic tools to work with clients.

In the 1970s, this educational divide became more pronounced when professional organizations realized there would not be enough MSW graduates to fill the growing need. In turn, it granted those with a BSW degree as professional social workers (Popple, 2018). However, it is important to note that CSWE did not and does not allow BSW programs to train their students for clinical social work, rather granting them a generalist practitioner—a designation geared toward case management (Popple, 2018).

Today, social work is mostly considered a licensed helping profession that works toward all individuals having their needs met. It is unique among the helping professions because it situates the client(s) contextually within their environment rather than just aiming to treat or fix the identified patient. However, some would argue that requiring a formal education and licensure further the elitist divide. Those engaging in the demanding work of helping should also be considered a social worker (Popple, 2018). There are thousands of different types of social work jobs, but they typically fall within either the macro (community) or micro (clinical) level. This writer and many of the individuals she works with have been trained in a more micro-focused environment; however, all social workers need to hold both the individual and the larger society when working on either level. As noted in chapter one, social work is guided by the NASW *Code of Ethics* (NASW, 2021); this code outlines the ethical principles and standards that social workers must adhere to and relate to interactions with clients, colleagues, organizations, and students. Social work education also maintains a strict set of EPAS as outlined

by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) that the Code similarly informs *of Ethics* (NASW, 2021).

Social Work in Higher Education

As noted above, there are two primary degree distinctions in social work programs, BSW and MSW[2]. In the U.S., both of these degrees are accredited by CSWE, which is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Authority to grant accreditation. Both BSW and MSW programs are based on a competency-based educational framework that focuses on "competence[,] . . . [being] the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being" (2015, p. 6). The 2015 CSWE EPAS contains nine competencies (See Table 1).

[2] Note that there are degrees of Doctorate of Social Work (DSW, a clinical doctorate) and a Doctor of Philosophy of Social Work (Ph.D., a more research-based degree). At the time of this writing, neither of these degrees is considered a terminal degree and is not accredited by CSWE.

Table 1

CSWE 2015 EPAS

Competency One	*Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior*	Competency Six	*Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities*
Competency Two	*Engage in Diversity and Difference in Practice*	Competency Seven	*Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities*
Competency Three	*Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice*	Competency Eight	*Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities*
Competency Four	*Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice*	Competency Nine	*Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.*
Competency Five	*Engage in Policy Practice*		

Both BSW and MSW programs must demonstrate a generalist practice which CSWE defines as

> grounded in the liberal arts and person-in-environment framework . . . [and that] promote[s] human social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices (2015, p. 11).

BSW programs must demonstrate that each student has met all nine competencies at a generalist level. A BSW may lead to a macro level of licensure in some states but generally does not allow a social worker to practice clinical skills in a therapeutic sense.

MSW programs are also tasked with providing specialized practice education to students. Specialized practice scaffolds off the generalist experience into a more focused practice where students will learn to work with specific populations, interventions, or types of social work. For MSW programs, each of the nine competencies must be met for each student at generalist and specialization levels. Graduates of MSW programs can sit for licensure in all fifty states and, upon successful completion of state exams and supervision, are allowed to practice as licensed therapists.

Faculty in Higher Education

There are a number of types and terms for various levels of faculty. At the University of New England, each college can determine its faculty designation. However, most institutions have tenured track positions, teaching professors, clinical faculty, and adjunct faculty. While these roles might have more nuanced meaning at the institutional level, they generally combine teaching, research, scholarship, and service. The American Association of University Professors (n.d.) divides these areas into three categories: student-centered, professional-centered, and community-centered. Student-centered tasks involve teaching, course development, grading, mentoring, sponsoring clubs, among many others. Professional-centered activities involve sitting on committees, serving faculty assemblies, and promoting the program or institution. Community-centered initiatives could include serving on a board and providing a community partner's presentation or service (AAUP, n.d).

Social work faculty engage in the same activities as their peers from different professions. However, they have the additional responsibility of carrying out the NASW Code of

Ethics (2021). This is frequently done by infusing a social justice-oriented lens into the other aspects of their job.

Department Heads in Higher Education

The current understanding of an academic Department Head or Chair comes from the diversification of higher education in the latter half of the twentieth century (Wald & Golding, 2020). At the time, there was a push to move away from the elite collegial experience and toward a more open and robust post-secondary educational system, which meant that institutions needed to change their reporting structure (Wald & Golding, 2020). What has emerged is a role that is leader, supervisor, academic, scholar, and faculty member (Paape et al., 2021; Wald & Golding, 2020). The role helps connect faculty and institutional leadership while providing insulation from institutional pressure. Additionally, people in the department head role are noted as "frontline administrator," meaning they deal with the in-the-moment application of policy and procedures related to faculty, staff, and students. However, heads of departments are often promoted up through the ranks, and leadership training is rarely provided (Baker et al., 2018; Butler, 2020; Kok & McDonald, 2017; Paape et al., 2021; Wald & Golding, 2020). This lack of training has been detrimental to department, faculty, and student production and success (Kok & McDonald, 2017).

In a search of the available literature, no information provides evidence that there are any differences between social work department heads and their colleagues from other departments.

History of Mindfulness and Research

The word mindfulness has many definitions (see Table 2), and while arguably a universally human state that knows no geographic or religious boundaries, the term's origin and history carry meaning (Gunartana, 2015). Mindfulness comes from the Pali word *sati,* meaning activity (Gunartana, 2015; Weick & Putnam, 2006), and is a practice that is central to Buddhism (Kabat-Zinn, 2006). The basic tenets of Buddhism stem from Siddhartha Gautama's teachings, a fifth-century (BCE) man of privilege who gave up his position to search for enlightenment (Johansen & Gopalakrishna, 2006; Wright, 2020). Buddhism originated in northeast India and spread throughout the Asian continent (Wright, 2020) and is currently a faith practiced by millions worldwide. It is distinct from other religions as it does not have an identified god but rather views its Buddha as a "respected . . . [and] enlightened teacher" (Johansen & Gopalakrishna, 2006, p. 338).

The understanding of mindfulness is distinctly nuanced in its difference between the Eastern and Western ideologies. However D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966) worked to bring a deeper understanding of Buddhist and Zen practices to Eastern audiences (Gershon, 2020; Suzuki, 2015) Eastern practices are more grounded in understanding mindfulness as a state of being and have clearer ties to Buddhism (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006). While not entirely divergent from the Buddhist underpinnings, the Western understanding of the term is hallmarked by Langer's perceptions (see Table 2), a point noted by both Weick and Putnam (2006) and Weick and Sutcliffe (2006). Additionally, the Western operationalization of mindfulness as a therapeutic technique or general skill detracts from the purer state of being and leads to anticipated gains. This creates a paradoxical situation, as addressed by Kabat-Zinn (2006); the attachment to one's

mindfulness practice's outcome contradicts the general practice's foremost intent, being present in the current moment. As such, it should be noted that some of the subsequent studies differentiate between dispositional mindfulness ([DM] also known as trait mindfulness [TM]) and state mindfulness (SM). DM is defined by Tomilson et al. (2017) as "an inherent human capacity or trait" (para. 2), while SM is considered the state in which someone is actively engaging in mindfulness practice (Kiken, 2015).

Table 2

Definitions of Mindfulness

Author	Definition
Langer, 1989	"As a state of alertness and lively awareness, which is specifically manifested in typical ways. . . . Characterized by cognitive differentiation." (p. 138).
Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000	"The process of drawing novel distinctions" (p. 1).
Kabat-Zinn, 2006	"The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding experience moment by moment" (p.145).
Brown & Ryan, 2003, as cited in Brown et al., 2007	"A receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experience" (p. 212).
Gunaratana, 2015	"Mindfulness is presymbolic. It is not shackled to logic. . . . It is a subtle process that you are using at this very moment. . . . Mindfulness is mirror-thought . . . is impartial watchfulness . . . is nonconceptual awareness . . . is present-moment awareness . . . nonegotistic alertness . . . awareness of change . . . is participatory observation . . . is extremely difficult to define in words (pp. 131–136).
Krause, 2019	"A way to be in the world, using Three A's: Aware, Advancing, Authentic" (p. 10).

Considering mindfulness as a human capacity, it has thus existed the whole of human history; however, the developed practice and concept has existed for several millennia (Johansen & Gopalakrishna, 2006), and research into the topic began only in the mid-1970s (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000). This early research focused primarily on the properties of mindfulness

(Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000); however, in the ensuing decades researchers have explored the effects of mindfulness on mental, physical, and emotional health, as well as delivery options for both therapeutic and nontherapeutic interventions (Kabat-Zinn, 2006). The past two decades have seen a marked increase in both interest and research regarding mindfulness. For example, researchers have documented the neurological benefits of mindfulness practices from modulating brain functions in the cortical regions that govern our conscious response to emotions (Modinos et al., 2010) to overall development in gray matter, indicating mindfulness supports learning, memory, processing, regulation, and perspective-taking (Hölzel et al., 2010), and to improved health benefits and overall stress-reduction (Morone et al., 2011). In addition, mindfulness's benefits in stress reduction have given way to robust research on how mindfulness impacts work experiences and leadership abilities.

This author hopes that this section has laid the groundwork for understanding mindfulness so that the reader can focus on the singular content of each study and the path that the research discussion is taking. Therefore, this review will first explore employee mindfulness research, an area of study hallmarked by its review of the various effects of mindfulness practices on employees who participate in them. Secondly, the review will examine the literature related to leader mindfulness, similar to employee mindfulness; leader mindfulness research focuses on the effects of mindfulness practices on the leaders who engage in them. Lastly, the review will cover the emerging literature discussing how leader mindfulness affects the employee-leader relationship.

Employee Mindfulness

Most adults spend a large amount of time at work; for some, it is where they spend the majority of their waking hours. Thus, it is no surprise that researchers have delved into how the basic tenets and practices of mindfulness affect our work experiences, the workplace, and productivity. Research in this area has focused on workplace MBIs, the experience of being mindful while at work, and the effect of mindfulness on productivity, job performance, and stress. As noted by Kachan et al. (2017), workplace MBIs come in many forms (general wellness programs, time and space for meditation or yoga, encouragement of reflection); however, in this section, the majority of the MBIs discussed are of formal intervention practices that focus on meditative and mindful strategies conducted in a series of "classes" over a period of time, typically at the place of employment. While the articles reviewed are not exhaustive of all works on the topic, they represent a cross-section of the literature available, and they should provide the reader with a good understanding of the various nuances of the topic.

MBIs formalize the Eastern practice of mindfulness into an actionable activity and have primarily been used in clinical settings as interventions to address mental health (Kabat-Zinn, 2006). However, in the past decade, researchers have begun to explore how MBIs can be used in the workplace and to what benefit (Dane & Brummel, 2014; Hülsheger et al., 2013; Hyland et al., 2015; Krusche et al., 2020; Lyddy & Good, 2016; Qiu & Rooney, 2019). All of the primary research presented in this section (Beckman et al., 2012; Dane & Brummel, 2014; Duarte & Pinto-Gouveia, 2016; Hugh-Jones et al., 2018; Hülsheger et al., 2013; Krusche et al., 2020; Lyddy & Good, 2016) outline a clear and positive advantage to workplace mindfulness. Additionally, several studies did not attempt to initiate a work-based MBI but rather cultivated a

group of those already practicing mindfulness and then looked at the effect on the workplace (Grover et al., 2017; Hülsheger et al., 2018; Malinowski & Lim, 2015).

One of the main avenues of research between mindfulness and its effects on the workplace is that of task performance. In a comprehensive literature review on the topic, Dane (2011) explored the various possibilities of both positive and negative effects with the available tangentially related studies at the time, developing four propositions:

> 1) Wide external attentional breadth fosters task performance in a dynamic task environment and inhibits performance in a static task environment . . .
>
> 2) Wide internal attentional breadth fosters task performance when one has a high level of task expertise, and it inhibits task performance when one is a task novice . . .
>
> 3) The relationship between mindfulness and task performance is positive when one operates in a dynamic task environment and has a high level of task expertise . . .
>
> 4) The relationship between mindfulness and task performance is negative when one operates in a static task environment and is a task novice (pp. 1007–1010).

Dane (2011) called for these propositions to serve as the basis of continued and more focused research in the field. The following year, Beckman et al. (2012) published a qualitative study looking at 46 primary care physicians in the Rochester, New York, area who had engaged in a mindfulness continuing education program that was done over eight weeks. Exit interviews (interviews done at the end of the program) were done as part of the overall process. The physicians' responses indicated that mindfulness skills allowed them to be better able to connect with their patients and respond better to their needs. Beckman et al.'s study is unlike the others addressed in this section. The focal intervention was a continuing education course, thus not

provided in the workplace, but instead participated in maintaining licenses. Both the study's narrowness of subjects and its format could indicate issues for generalizability.

Following was Dane and Brummel's (2014) study of 102 survey participants who "supported a positive relationship between workplace mindfulness and job performance" (p. 105). Additionally, their work establishes some links between mindfulness, increased job dedication, and reduced organizational turnover. Subsequently, a 2015 study by Malinowski and Lim using 299 subjects (146 nonmeditators and 153 meditators) concluded that there is a "positive relationship between dispositional mindfulness (DM) and . . . work engagement and well-being" (p. 1258). Essentially, the more mindful an employee is, the greater their engagement in work tasks and overall well-being. The consideration of well-being is important as it relates to work-life balance as the study highlights increased work engagement; it should be noted that overall high work engagement can lead to poor work-life balance (Halbesleben et al., 2009, as cited in Malinowski and Lim, 2015). Malinowski and Lim's study leads to an opportunity for future research by opening the possibility to the idea that the greater the DM an individual accesses, the less likely they are to overly engage in work. In looking at the studies by both Dane and Brummels and Malinowski and Lim, it is important to note that neither of these studies focused as narrowly on situational or expertise level as Dane (2011) called for, which could lead to issues with applicability.

Studies by Duarte and Pinto-Gouveia (2016), Grover et al. (2017), Hugh-Jones et al. (2018), Hülsheger et al. (2013 & 2018), Krusche et al. (2020), Lyddy and Good (2016), and Walsh and Arnold (2020) all provide evidence that mindfulness can impact the experience of workload, stress, and emotional exhaustion. Grover et al. (2017) explore mindfulness in terms of

the job demands and resources model (JD-R), with the underlying premise that mindfulness is a personal resource. Their study surveyed 415 Australian nurses in six areas: emotional demands, job control, mindfulness, perceived autonomy support, psychological stress, and control variables. The study underlined the complex relationship between mindfulness and stress, as the authors outline that it diminishes an individual's perception of job demands, ebbs the weight of those demands on psychological stress, and directly affects psychological stress itself. Grover et al. help establish the benefit of mindfulness on work-related stress; however, there is an important limitation to be addressed: the study sample was limited in scope to Australian nurses, which creates issues with the finding's generalizability across occupations and nationalities.

That same year, Duarte and Pinto-Gouveia (2016) published a significantly smaller yet more focused study relating to the benefits of mindfulness to nurses. In their comparison study, the authors had data from 29 active participants, and 19 in the wait-list comparison group focused on seven areas: burnout, compassion fatigue, psychological symptoms, mindfulness, self-compassion, experiential avoidances, rumination, and satisfaction with life. Results from this study indicated that nurses engaged in the intervention showed substantial "decreases in compassion fatigue, burnout, stress, experiential avoidance, and increases in satisfaction with life, mindfulness[,] and self-compassion" (Duarte & Pinto-Gouveia, 2016, p. 98). While these findings mirror that of Grover et al. (2017), it is important to note that this study's sample size is relatively small. Thus, again, there is a narrowness in the overall sample pool that creates issues with the transferability of findings.

Both the Hülsheger et al. (2013) and Krusche et al. (2020) studies specifically address how workplace MBIs can influence employee well-being. Krusche et al. performed a control

experiment with 65 hospital employees (35 active and 30 controls) that showed that engaging in a workplace MBI increased the active participants' "psychological needs at work and mindfulness scores . . . and [that] perceived stress scores decreased compared with participants who did not attend the course" (2020; p. 370). While this study's results confirm the findings of others (Greeson, 2009; Kiken et al., 2015) both cited in Krusche et al., 2020), there is a lack of applicability due to the narrowness of the participant occupation. Hülsheger et al., however, sampled a variety of organizations in their two-study analysis of the topic. Study one had 219 participants and consisted of a five-day journal or diary study; study two was an experimental self-training MBI (the term utilized in the study was mindfulness intervention group or MIG) with 64 participants (22 active participants and 42 controls). Both of the Hülsheger et al. studies showed that "for employees working in emotionally demanding jobs, mindfulness promotes job satisfaction and helps to prevent burnout in terms of emotional exhaustion" (2013, p. 320).

A notable addition to this growing body of work is Hugh-Jones et al. (2018). The authors engaged in a semistructured interview 21 participants, all employees of a higher education institution in the United Kingdom, six to sixteen months after the end of their workplace MBI. This is the only study reviewed that has offered even a semilongitudinal view of the benefits of mindfulness after the course has ended; additionally, it offers insight into how the MBI helped, not just the overall effects. It appears that the initial fit of the program and connection that an individual makes to it could be the cornerstone of the other stages of "developing attention and awareness" (Hugh-Jones et al., 2018, p. 481), and through which individuals can have generative experiences that will later allow for greater capacity for understanding of their stress levels and recovery tools. The benefits so readily discussed in the other articles are achieved through these

stages and overall greater self-understanding. It is important to note that in this study, the notion of mindfulness as a personal resource surfaces, indicating that Grover et al.'s (2017) use of the JD-R model was warranted.

The previous studies establish clear links to the benefits of being mindful at work; Lyddy and Good (2016) explore what the experience is for those engaging in mindfulness practices at work. Lyddy and Good's study is a qualitative study of 39 working professionals with diverse professional backgrounds, exploring the theory of Being and Doing (Kabat-Zinn, 2006; Williams, 2008; both cited in Lyddy and Good, 2016). Their findings indicated that engaging in and maintaining mindfulness practices at work has value, but it is also challenging given the context and underlying premise of a workplace—*doing*.

The Hülsheger et al. (2018) study is notably different from those previously presented in this section. Instead of exploring mindfulness's impact on stress, it looks at how both workload and recovery (work detachment and sleep quality) impact an individual's ability to be mindful. Additionally, the authors explore situational mindfulness (SM) rather than the more commonly explored effects of DM. This study's underlying theory is the conservation of resources theory (COR), which proposes that individuals utilize and seek out resources to mitigate and reduce stress and stressors. Hülsheger et al. engaged 168 participants in a broad array of professions in a journal study. Their findings bolster the underlying principle of COR. That data garnered from the journals showed that individuals who engaged in it could recover successfully from work and were better able to engage in mindfulness practices, which affected their ability to engage in future recovery processes. The authors connect these findings with implications for the

workplace, such as promoting workplace MBIs, overall mindful work environments, and not overburdening employees with workload expectations.

In 2020, Walsh and Arnold published their empirical research on both the positive and negative sides of employee mindfulness. In a time-lagged survey of 246 employees, the authors found that the more mindful an employee was, the more it intensified either the positive or negative aspects of their relationship with their supervisor (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). This is of particular interest because, unlike the previously reviewed studies, Walsh and Arnold have highlighted that there is sometimes a downside to mindfulness. Essentially, more mindful employees were more aware of their supervisor's inability to provide a transformational work relationship or environment. The authors, therefore, concluded that, at times, the ability to be disengaged or unattuned to the world around us might have psychological benefits (Walsh & Arnold, 2020). As with others, this study has limitations, primarily because it is based solely on self-report measures and that participants were paid to take the surveys. However, unlike many of the other studies, Walsh and Arnold used Amazon's Mechanical Turk to gather participants, which resulted in a broader range of industries represented; it is unknown how many different countries could be represented within the study.

In summary, the articles presented in this review demonstrate the significant evidence of the positive impact that mindfulness practices can have on an individual's workplace experiences, performance, stress, work-life balance, and overall well-being. This evidence has given way to other avenues of research regarding mindfulness and the workplace, most specifically mindfulness and leadership.

Mindfulness and Leadership

As with employees, leaders also have job tasks, performance demands, stress, and work-life balance issues. However, leaders need to be considered explicitly, as they have a broader impact on employees and the overall output and success of an organization (Boyatzis, 2015). This has been an emerging research area with a primary focus on mindfulness as a development tool for leadership (Aron et al., 2017; Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Goldman Schuyler, 2010; Hyland et al., 2015, discussed previously; Rooney et al., 2019; 2021) and its impact on the employee-leader relationship (Nübold et al., 2020; Reb et al., 2014; Reb et al., 2019; Schuh et al., 2019; Vreeling et al., 2019; Zalis et al., 2019).

In organizational settings, mindfulness has been used as a leadership development tool to help effect more positive leadership styles; this section will explore several articles that discuss this phenomenon (Baron et al., 2018; Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Goldman Schuyler, 2010; Hyland et al., 2015, discussed previously; Rooney et al., 2019; 2021).

Goldman Schulyer (2010) specifically explored how embodied learning experiences (being cognizant of one's physical body), and mind training (learning to notice thoughts) can contribute to overall capacity for awareness and presence with overall positive impacts on leadership integrity. Through case studies and literature reviews exploring mind training and the Feldenkrais Method (bringing awareness through mindful movement), the author proposes that engaging in these methods allows a person to "develop parts of the mind that pay attention, that simultaneously feel and notice differences . . ." (Goldman Schulyer, 2010, p. 33). Through these experiences, one is more likely to engage with integrity as these mindfulness practices encourage the shedding of negative inner states of being and foster more formative and productive states of

the inner being. In summary, Goldman Schulyer calls for leadership training to go beyond the familiar empirical and theoretical elements of leadership and consider the importance of attentional practices of the mind and body, inferring that by changing the relationship with the self, they could change their relationships with others. While this article proposes some innovative lines of inquiry and uses some previously published tangential empirical evidence, it lacks substantial data to support a broader application of theory beyond the case studies used.

Similarly, Brendel and Bennett (2016) argue that leadership trainings at the time were limited to cognitive and conceptual aspects and did not take into account how mindful and somatic practices can increase awareness and lead to being more "open, grounded, and engaged in a way that builds resilience and resourcefulness, and improves relationships in complex environments" (p. 409). The authors highlighted a three-phase model through which individuals develop a more embodied leadership style; these phases emerged from their review of previous literature and included 1) expanding awareness to receive mind-body insights; 2) critical reflection and dialogue around insights to transform behaviors; 3) transforming practice into attunement and accepting ways of being. Brendel and Bennett argue that these findings should be used in the human resources development (HRD) field to lead a more genuine and honest engagement, drawing a leader closer to the transformational leadership style. Additionally, they note that it could lead to a deeper relationship between teammates and a stronger organization. Much like the previous article, this one is based on a literature review. While it utilized previously published research to establish its claims, it lacks its own primary data to support them.

Moving slightly away from a focus on leadership training, Baron et al. (2018) posit that leaders should evolve their own behavioral flexibility to more nimbly and effectively manage various organizational stakeholders' needs and demands. The authors examine the role that mindfulness plays in a leader's ability to be behaviorally flexible. The quantitative study had 162 participants who self-reported on both the Leadership Versatility Index (LVI) and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), both previously validated measures (Baron et al., 2018). Baron et al.'s findings indicate a relationship between mindfulness and leadership flexibility, mainly as there was a positive association between overall leadership flexibility and mindfulness. The authors assert that leadership flexibility is connected with non-judging, which, in turn, allows for greater acceptance and understanding of their own experiences. In essence, leaders demonstrate greater flexibility as they better understand the relationship they have with their own experiences, allowing them to understand and be open to others' experiences. However, Baron et al. relied on self-report measures, which, as noted previously, can be skewed. Additionally, part of the sample population was taken from the author's existing organizational contacts, posing some generalizability issues.

Conversely, Hyland et al. (2015) take a step away from the cerebral practices and discuss functionally how mindfulness training can enhance leadership skills by increasing self-awareness (this implies that the previous article's suppositions are transferable to this argument). The authors argue that a lack of self-awareness is the primary disruption to "high potential development" (Hyland et al., 2015, p. 590) and disrupts the overall effectiveness of an organization. While this is a brief point in an otherwise lengthy article, this author is likely to agree with Hyland et al. based on personal professional experience. However, personal assertions

aside, this article likely meets with the same criticism as the others, lacking primary empirical evidence.

The works presented in this section culminate in Rooney et al.'s (2019) article, which explores the theoretical intersection of mindfulness and habitus in embodied wisdom. The authors use the "Social Practice Wisdom (SPW) [as a] conceptual framework [that] explicitly acknowledges embodiment, temporality, mindfulness, and habitus" (Rooney et al., 2019, p. 186). SPW utilizes five elements to produce distinction and rectitude: "1) Qualities of mind and consciousness; . . . 2) Agile, transcendent, and reflexive reasoning; . . . 3) Ethical purpose and virtuosity; . . . 4) Embodiment and Praxis; . . . 5) Outcomes that improve conditions of life" (Rooney et al., 2019, p. 187). Through these elements, Rooney et al. developed a theoretical model of mindful leadership in which mindfulness aids in the embodiment of key principles from Authentic, Servant, and Transformational leadership theories. Rooney et al. make a number of recommendations for future research; this is especially important given the theoretical nature of the suppositions. Most of these recommendations are centered around gathering empirical evidence to support SPW, one of which is particularly important to the study being outlined in this dissertation. Rooney et al. request that future researchers explore if there are measurable and purposeful individual effects of SPW; and if the outcomes of SPW produce "positive social, cultural, economic, and ecological change" (2019, p. 191).

Leader and Employee Relationships

There are specific theorized considerations for how leaders can utilize mindfulness. The most germane of these is the impact on the leader and employee relationship. For example, Reb et al. (2014) published the findings of their two-study research into how supervisors' DM

impacted employee well-being. The authors engaged in two, two-part studies; the first had 95 employee and respective supervisor participants in the first round and 74 in the second; study two had 73 in the first round and 61 in the second. Participants were from various occupations and industries who submitted self-report scales on mindfulness (supervisors), well-being (employees), work-life balance (employee), and employee performance (supervisor). The studies show a direct positive correlation between a leader's DM and employee well-being, specifically regarding psychological and job satisfaction.

Additionally, more mindful leaders tended to be more positive about employees' work performance. While Reb et al. (2014) establish an effect between a leader's mindfulness and employee well-being and performance, it does not specifically address which mechanisms could account for this effect. The authors also note that the type of leadership looked at in this study was that of direct supervisors. Thus, there is some concern about transferability to other leadership levels.

Five years later, Reb et al. (2019) underwent another two-party study, looking more specifically at how employee performance is influenced by leader mindfulness. The first study had complete data from 76 triads, and the second had complete data from 227 dyads. The participants were primarily all from Singapore. The authors use organizational justice (akin to procedural justice discussed below in Schuh et al., 2019) and leader-member relations with a specific focus on LMX. This study is of particular importance to this author's outlined study because it not only utilizes the same theoretical framework but because it offers empirical evidence that through reducing "employee stress levels and increase interpersonal justice perceptions" (Reb et al., 2019, p. 756), better interpersonal relationships can occur. While this

study engaged a relatively large number of respondents, generalizability due to nationality is still an issue. Additionally, the authors noted that there could be limitations regarding the fact that leaders provided the data both for their own mindfulness and their employees' performance. Furthermore, Reb et al. (2019) called for future research to address leaders' distinct practices and how followers understand these actions.

Building off Reb et al.'s (2014) work, Schuh et al. (2019) utilized the theory of procedural justice[3] to examine the impact that leader mindfulness had on employee job performance and emotional exhaustion. The authors undertook a three-study approach. Study one was a survey with 275 employee participants from across the United States of America and a wide range of progressions. Study two was a multisource field study with a time lag design that had 182 employee participants and 54 leader participants from China. And study three was a laboratory experiment that had 62 senior executive participants. The studies found that a leader's mindfulness was positively correlated to employee job performance and that that correlation exists via procedural justice as a leader is more able to access procedural justice elements the more mindful they are. Schuh et al. gives future researchers an understanding of the mechanisms through which leader mindfulness impacts an employee. However, as Good et al. (2016) note in their review of the literature pulled from previous empirical research on intimate partner relationships, impact on communication, and sustained attention suggests that there are links beyond the established individual benefits for both a leader and employee (Reb et al., 2014) to that of the relationship between the two parties.

[3] Procedural justice is defined "as the fairness of decision-making procedures" (Melkonian, et al., 2011).

In 2020 Nübold et al. continue to build off Reb et al.'s (2014) work in their two multi-sourced field studies. Both studies were designed to explore the relationship (if any) between trait mindfulness and authentic leadership. Nübold et al. note four key elements to authentic leadership: awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective. The first study was a cross-sectional of the dyadic "relationship between a leader's trait mindfulness and a follower's rating of authentic leadership" (Nübold et al., 2020, p. 473) using the MAAS for gauging the leader's trait mindfulness and the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) for measuring the follower's rating of their leader's authentic leadership qualities. In this first study, there were 209 dyads from across several industries and countries (Nübold et al., 2020). The findings of this first study did allow for the creation of a cross-sectional connection between trait mindfulness and authentic leadership; it did not identify any causal inferences (Nübold et al., 2020, p. 474). The author's second study was experimental, with "a pre/post-test, waitlist control group design to study the effect of a 30-day app-based mindfulness intervention on the leader and follower-rated authentic leadership" (Nübold et al., 2020, p. 475). There were two points of data collection (pre-intervention and post-intervention) for the second study; at time one (pre), there were 173 leaders (experimental: 93; control: 80) and 125 followers. At time two (post), there were 104 leaders and 87 followers. Again, these dyads came from a broad range of countries and industries. Study two found that leaders with higher trait mindfulness (using the MAAS) also have higher employee ratings of authentic leadership (using the ALI). This second study also provided a causal link between mindfulness practice and authenticity in leadership, leading the authors to claim that "leader mindfulness [is] an important antecedent of authentic leadership behavior in organizations" (Nübold et al., 2020,

p. 482). There were no issues with generalizability in either of the two studies conducted by Nübold et al. as both had participants from wide-ranging industries and geographic locations.

In 2019, Vreeling et al. continued in this vein by undertaking a post-mindfulness intervention qualitative study exploring leaders' perceptions of the intervention's effects on their leadership capabilities. While 52 Netherlander medical specialists took part in the ten weekly sessions (five hours per session), only 17 participants were interviewed for the qualitative study. The interviews happened at a minimum of 12 months post-intervention and demonstrated that two key dimensions evolved: self vs. other and attitude vs. behavior. From these two dimensions, four classifications were derived: Self-Attitude, Self-Behavior, Other-Attitude, and Other-Behavior. In terms of the "self" classifications, Vreeling et al. established an overall increased sense of internal awareness, self-regulation, and an enhanced ability to "let-go" of challenging or difficult behaviors. In terms of the "other" classification, Vreeling et al. noted that the leaders had an enhanced awareness of others, their (the leader's) own impact via positive or negative communication, less judgment of others, reconsidering previously conceived judgments, being open to difficult situations, saw an enhanced value in others, listening with purpose, asking questions, giving more clarity in directions, interrupting others less, and giving more responsibility and trust to others. While this study was small and relatively homogenous, it does bear some proof that at least leaders' perceptions of their role shifted more positively post-intervention.

However, a study by Zalis et al. (2019) contradicted Reb et al.'s (2014) findings. In a study of 40 managers and 487 of their employees, the authors gave managers the FFMQ in order to assess their trait mindfulness and the NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) to determine

personality traits, then tracked the employee performance for six months using key performance indicator (KPI) that the company already gathered (Zalis et al., 2019). The multilevel regression analysis showed no distinguishable association between the manager's mindfulness and the employees' performance (Zalis et al., 2019). This study focused on participants with limited (or no) meditation experience; Zalis et al. note this as a potential limitation, but perhaps it helps to widen the discussion about what types of mindfulness practice are most efficacious to overall trait mindfulness. Although there are additional limitations, such as the fact that out of the five subscales on FFMQ, one is not recommended for use with participants with no prior meditation experience, this could have skewed the data because most of their participants did not have prior meditation experience. Furthermore, and like many of the other studies discussed within this chapter, there is concern over generalizability because all participants were from the Czechia and worked for one company.

Kroon et al. (2017) explored how the employee-leader relationship is affected by employee mindfulness. The study had 382 participants in the Netherlands, working across both the service and manufacturing industries; the participants all engaged in self-report surveys. The study showed that employees engaging in their mindfulness practices on their own time could mitigate not having a transformational leader by bolstering their motivation and performance. Through this mitigation, the authors imply that anyone engaging in mindfulness practices can increase their own transformational leadership skills. While further research is needed, this implication could mean that leaders engaging in mindfulness may be more likely to exhibit transformational leadership skills, a theory favored by both Koon et al. and this author.

Urrila (2021) published a literature review of 30 empirical articles analyzing leader mindfulness interventions and habits from a leadership development standpoint. Through her review, Urrila synthesized many findings and concluded that leader mindfulness practices develop "across areas of personal wellbeing, work productivity, relationships, and inner growth, including self-care behavior, creativity, self-awareness, social/contextual awareness, ethical awareness, and adapting to change" (p. 15). Concerning the study outlined in these chapters, the findings on relationships bear essential consideration. En masse, the studies Urrila reviewed demonstrated that engaging in mindfulness practices positively impacts the leader-follower relationship. This happens via the enhanced awareness of self and others and subsequently culminates in the leader's enhanced ability to attune to their employees' needs and context. Furthermore, Urrila offered a comprehensive list of recommendations for future research that encompasses many areas of mindfulness and leadership research. Of particular note here is her call for more empirical research on the effect of mindfulness on relationships from the leadership standpoint, and likewise a call for more mixed-methods research, especially when researching mindfulness's "influence on leadership such as interpersonal workplace relationships" (Urrila, 2021, p. 13).

While these studies in this section have provided empirical evidence between employee performance, satisfaction, and overall well-being, and leadership mindfulness, it is evident that there is room for growth. As Good et al. (2016) noted, there is little understanding of the effect leader mindfulness has on the relationship between the two parties. In turning our focus toward Barnes et al. (2007) and Wachs and Cordova's (2007) exploration of mindfulness's effects on

romantic or intimate relationships, they showed improvement in overall emotional skills and communication and a greater capacity for constructive response.

Mindfulness in Social Work

Social work is grounded in the person-in-the-environment theory (Kondrat, 2013), which centers the profession's work at the micro, macro, and mezzo levels to focus on the person(s) in front of them with a contextual lens to that individual's environment. This theory requires a social worker to be able to maintain self-awareness (Feize, 2020; Feize & Fever, 2019) while simultaneously and nonjudgmentally holding the experience of clients. This is not an easy practice and requires the ability to existentially hold your experience and understand it contextually, as one of many (Unrau & McCormick, 2016). However, as laid out in the studies below, mindfulness can play a direct role in a clinician's ability to practice self-awareness self-care, establish resilience, mitigate burnout, and provide authentic and nuanced clinical treatment (Kinman et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2020; Trammel et al., 2021; Unrau & McCormick, 2016).

Unrau and McCormick (2016) presented the environment-within-person perspective, a perspective based on first-hand experience and literature review on traditional and emerging social work frameworks. The authors offer this perspective, not in contradiction of social work's foundational principle of person-in-environment (Kondrat, 2013) but rather in conjunction with it. Often our bodies manifest reactions to stimuli that our minds are unaware of, and Unrau and McCormick underline the importance of better understanding our body's reaction. While not empirical, Unrau and McCormick's work draws together a number of works over the past thirty years that highlight the importance of understanding the role of the physical body in social work practice, both for the client and the clinician. The authors pull greatly from Hölzel et al.'s (2011,

discussed in this chapter) work and understanding of mindfulness as a whole and how the brain and body are connected within the context of mindfulness.

Unrau and McCormick (2016) discuss that the environment-within-person is not a mode of therapy but a necessary shift of conceptualizing social workers and their clients within the context of their clinical work. The authors outline three principles of the environment-within-person perspective: asynchronous communication, worker self-attunement; and present-moment-centered (Unrau & McCormick, 2016). Asynchronous communication concerns how the social worker helps the client understand the incongruencies between their verbal or behavioral cues (i.e., body language) and the current environment (Unrau & McCormick, 2016). Work self-attunement is the understanding that to be present for clients, social workers must have the ability to be fully present within themselves and suspend their own beliefs and experiences so as to remain present with the client (Unrau & McCormick, 2016). Unrau and McCormick define present-moment centered as the ability to hold past information, future goals, and the client's current needs.

In 2017, Crowder and Sears published a small study on the ability of a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) intervention to understand mindfulness's effects on a social worker's resilience. The authors had a small research group containing 14 registered social workers as participants and a second waitlist group. There was a combination of age, gender, and degree (BSW or MSW); however, the group identified themselves only as Caucasian or Canadian, so there is some concern about generalizability across ethnic and racial groups. The participants were engaged in eight, two and a half hour weekly sessions and went to one all-day session (Crowder & Sears, 2017). In addition, the participants engaged in two interviews pre-

and post-intervention. In these interviews, the participants answered questions on the Perceived Stress Scale, Self-Compassion Scale, Experiences Questionnaire, Maslach Burnout Inventory, and Professional Quality of Life (these were additionally administered at weeks 13 and 26 post-intervention), and were asked qualitative experiential-based questions. The data from these measures indicated no real difference between the participant group and the waitlist group; however, the authors discussed that this is likely due to the small sample size and that a larger study might be a better indicator.

Kinman et al. (2020) conducted a similar mixed-methods study with social workers. Their study sprang out of the ever-present issue of social work burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma. At the pre-testing stage, the authors had 26 participants who then engaged in an eight-week mindfulness training; however, only 18 participants completed the post-test and four the qualitative interviews. It is important to note that the authors do not say how many times per week nor the duration of the sessions in their article. The pre- and post-tests consisted of emotional self-efficacy, reflective ability, psychological flexibility, self-compassion, compassion fatigue, and stress. Kinmen et al. noted that the quantitative post-tests showed an increase in emotional "self-efficacy, psychological flexibility, and [that] compassion satisfaction increased after the intervention and compassion fatigue and perceived stress reduced" (p. 769). The quantitative interviews echoed these findings, and the participants interviewed had found the intervention helpful (Kinmen et al., 2020). However, the authors noted no change in the area of reflective abilities and theorized that since the participants had a high baseline score (3.96/5), their reflective abilities were already well established (Kinment et al., 2020, p. 770). While this study was slightly larger than Crowder and Sears's (2017), its limitations are similar, suffering

from a small, self-selected sample, and the same issues with generalizability are found, given that the sample was 85% white, British, and identified as female (Kinman et al., 2020).

Perry et al. (2020) conducted a systematic literature review in an attempt to understand the best interventions in building emotional intelligence (EI) in child welfare workers[4]. Perry et al. outline that EI is the capability to handle one's own emotional state as well as maintain an awareness of others' emotional state, a term whose meaning is not wholly dissimilar from mindfulness. Furthermore, Perry et al. note that EI is an essential skill for child welfare workers given the stressful and often hostile situations they work in. Perry et al.'s initial search garnered 1367 articles, but through elimination based on the author's criteria, only 18 studies remained. None of the 18 studied a population of child welfare workers, but all looked at either social work students (n=12) or social work professionals (n=6) (Perry et al., 2020, p. 7). Perry et al. (2020) noted that the most studied outcome was that of mindfulness (n=12, p. 8), with the vast majority of those finding statistically significant participant improvement post-intervention (the only one not to was Crowder & Sears, 2017). While the authors were unable to fulfill their initial research question, they found evidence that mindfulness-based interventions help social workers deal with stressful work environments (Perry et al., 2020). As the authors note, it is clear that there is a significant gap in the literature when it comes to child welfare workers (Perry et al., 2020).

Trammel et al. (2021) undertook another mindfulness intervention-based study that explored how Religiously Oriented Mindfulness (ROM) delivered via MP3 would impact social worker's burnout, Heart Rate Variability (HRV), and overall mindfulness. As the authors note, it

[4] Please note that not all child-welfare workers are licensed (or registered) social workers but often act in a similar capacity in terms of case management.

is important to discuss that the majority of the studies conducted (especially with social workers) follow a secular model of intervention; however, they outline evidence that shows that in other groups, ROM has been an equal, if not more effective model (Trammel et al., 2021). Trammel et al. recorded "eight 20–30 minute long MP3 files" (p. 27) that were renditions of the Centering Prayer, *Lecto divina* of the Lord's Prayer, and other guided religiously-based meditations. The participants of this study (n=22) engaged in a four- to six-week intervention, which due to the nature of electronic modality they could administer at their disposal (Trammel et al., 2021, pp. 24–26). Participants took a pre- and post-test, including the MAAS and the Copenhagen Scale, and engaged in HRV measurement at first and either sixth (end of study) or eighth (post-study) week (Trammel et al., 2021). Trammel et al. noted that the outcomes indicated there could be improved mindfulness from the ROM model and that the HRV results also indicated better emotional regulation and an increase in general coping among participants. However, while the results of participants' personal burnout indicated an improvement, the effect was low and, therefore, can not entirely indicate improvement (Trammel et al., 2021). As with many of the studies, the low participation rate creates issues with generalizability; additionally, the majority of the participants were female (n=15), which is somewhat reflective of the field, but still remains an issue in an empirical study (Trammel et al., 2021, p. 28.).

Mindfulness and Therapeutic Alliance

Therapeutic alliance, also known as working alliance and therapeutic rapport, is not a concept unique to social work but a foundational principle of all clinical work. In 1957 (republished in 1992), Rogers first addressed therapeutic alliance in his work, outlining the conditions under which clients can actualize change. Adding to the understanding of therapeutic

alliance, Bordin (1979) determines the confluence of three elements: agreement on goals, collaboration in setting tasks, and the relationship or bond between a therapist and a client are essential for a healthy working rapport between a client and clinician. These elements are not wholly dissimilar to what Unrau and McCormick (2016) discuss in their article about the environment-within-person perspective or Perry et al.'s (2020) discussion of EI. It was believed by both Rogers and Bordin that a positive therapeutic alliance results in better client outcomes. This assumption has recently been confirmed by several empirical studies that show therapeutic alliance does impact client success and results in more positive client outcomes (Bisseling et al., 2019; Gilson & Abela, 2021; Guest & Carlson, 2019; Ovenstad al., 2020; Sotero and Relvas, 2021).

Research regarding the elements of the therapeutic alliance (empathy, attention, self-efficacy, or one's belief in their ability to provide therapy to clients) and mindfulness did not begin until the early 2000s. Laying the foundation in 2009, Greason and Cashwell published the results of a quantitative study that indicated that counselors-in-training who are mindful in their own life have a greater likelihood of being empathetic and of controlling their attention within sessions and that mindfulness did predict empathy. Greason and Welfare (2013) published another empirical study, this time involving both counselors and clients. The authors found that counselors who had a weekly meditation practice scored higher in overall mindfulness and observed subsections (Greason and Welfare, 2013). In addition, client surveys showed that counselors who meditated weekly had higher scores for level of regard, empathy, unconditionality, congruence, task, bond, and overall working alliance.

In 2015, Schomaker and Ricard published a small mindfulness-based initiative (MBI) for counselors in training. This study examined the effect the MBI had on the counselor-client attunement of five counselors while comparing it with a control group of (n=four) (Schomaker & Ricard, 2015). The five participants in the experiment group engaged in a six-week mindfulness course; this group's results for counselor-client attunement were 1.58 times higher than the control group's results, substantiating Greason and Welfare's (2013) findings that meditation does increase counselor attunement (Schomaker & Ricard, 2015). However, while this study provides additional empirical evidence of mindfulness's benefits to the therapeutic alliance, the limitation of self-report continues to be an issue. Additionally, this study has an extraordinarily small sample size, creating problems with generalizability. Furthermore, Schomaker and Ricard noted that a different formatting of the study, with an additional follow-up phase, might have demonstrated the treatment's efficacy post-intervention.

In 2018, Johnson published a study exploring working alliance and state mindfulness with counselors-in-training. Johnson recruited 200 students in Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited programs at state universities and had at least one adult client that they treated in a dyadic model. Participants completed previously validated measures for state and dispositional mindfulness, working alliance, and empathetic concern. Johnson's findings indicate that state mindfulness during therapeutic sessions was more highly associated with working alliance than dispositional mindfulness. Thus, Johnson surmises that student counselors should be encouraged to engage in within-session state mindfulness rather than cultivating a practice outside of the session to promote disposition mindfulness and that in subsequent studies on mindfulness, researchers

should pay specific attention to state and disposition mindfulness. As with many others, this study was conducted using self-report measures, presenting issues regarding social desirability bias.

Leonard et al. (2018) published a study with a participant population of professional, licensed clinicians rather than trainees. Leonard et al. examined the possible benefits therapist mindfulness has on the therapeutic relationship by exploring mediating results of self-reported empathy on those two variables. The study had 96 participants who were identified using psychology listservs; these participants completed surveys regarding mindfulness, empathy, and working alliance (Leonard et al., 2018). In their findings, Leonard et al. noted that clinicians' reported empathy moderated the link between mindfulness and working alliance. Additionally, the authors said that therapists who rated themselves higher in mindfulness were better at maintaining their affective state when clients were experiencing negative emotions, something participants noted as helping build therapeutic rapport (Leonard et al., 2018). However, again, a possible limitation is the nature of the self-report measures; additionally, Leonard et al. used snowball sampling to gain participants, which could create issues with generalizability.

Expanding on Johnson's 2018 work, Johnson et al. (2019) examined how working alliance compared among counselors-in-training engaged in different types and frequencies of mindfulness activities. Johnson et al., similar to earlier research, sought a population of students who were at CACREP accredited programs with at least one individual, adult, client. The 182 participants were asked to complete previously validated measures to assess working alliance and mindfulness and a questionnaire about the type and frequency of their mindfulness practice. Johnson et al.'s findings confirmed that of previous researchers by indicating that the counselor's

use of mindfulness practice was associated with better working alliance. This study, however, goes further by determining that engaging in a mindfulness practice at least four times per week is best for enhancing working alliance with clients. Self-reporting was a limitation in this study, not including client measures on the working alliance.

Most recently, Johnson and Walsh (2021) published a study exploring the connection between particular mindfulness-based practices and relational factors within the therapeutic relationship. While similar to Johnson et al. (2019), this work differs in that it explores a population of counselor-in-training and professional therapists and looks specifically at the difference between mind and body based mindfulness practices and their effect on the therapeutic alliance. Johnson and Walsh noted that the purpose of their study was to determine what types of mindfulness practices, and for how long, had what effect on the therapeutic relationship elements of task, goal, and bond according to the Working Alliance Inventory—Short Revised Form (WAI-SR-T). The 206 participants were also asked to complete the MAAS and an expert-derived questionnaire about their mindfulness practices (Johnson & Walsh, 2021). The authors reported that the survey results did not confirm their suppositions; however, they determined that body scanning and relational mindfulness[5] were most firmly connected with cognitive facets of the therapeutic relationship (Johnson & Walsh, 2021). At the same time, loving kindness[6] was linked more highly with the affective elements of a therapeutic relationship (Johnson and Walsh, 2021). Johnson and Walsh noted that their findings could help clinicians find the practice that most benefits their specific area of needed improvement.

[5] The practice of nonverbally fluctuating awareness and acceptance between both oneself and a partner, while simultaneously expressing gratitude and compassion for the other (Johnson & Walsh, 2021).
[6] This is the practice of "foster[ing] benevolence and goodwill toward others" (Johnson & Walsh, 2021, p. 99).

Mindfulness in Higher Education

Higher education bears particular consideration due to the high volatility and shifting landscape of that particular industry (Dennis, 2020; Grawe, 2021; LeClair, 2021; Rhyneer, 2019; Zinshteyn, 2016). Faculty face what are seemingly counterintuitive demands; such as catering to the consumer (i.e., students, parents, and community partners) doing more with less due to budgetary constraints, service, research, preparing online or hybrid models of instruction while maintaining a "return-to-normal" attitude, all while ensuring a rigorous academic experience (Cohn, 2021; Ganon, 2021; Lashuel, 2020; McMurtie, 2020). These demands create stress both within individual faculty departments and the institution as a whole. Some of the research reviewed below demonstrates the effectiveness of faculty utilizing a mindfulness practice to help mitigate some of this stress (Brendel & Cornett-Murtada, 2019; Jha, 2021; Pizzuto, 2019).

It is also important to consider the role that higher education department heads play within an HEI. Department heads are typically promoted from within the department and do not usually receive leadership development (Baker et al., 2018; Butler, 2020; Carlson & Gardner, 2020; Dennis, 2020; Kok & McDonald, 2017. As such, they are wholly unprepared for navigating the demanding tasks that face them individually, nor are they prepared to support faculty with their increasing demands (Pifer et al., 2019). The two studies that were identified specifically about HEI department leadership supported the use of mindfulness or contemplative practices to better manage the demands of the position and build better relationships with employees (Beer et al., 2015; Meyer et al., 2016).

Mindfulness Among Faculty

Earlier in this chapter, mindfulness-based interventions (MBI) were discussed within the larger context of the general workplace; in 2019, Juberg et al. published an empirically based case study on an MBI with university students, faculty, and staff participants. Seventeen total participants engaged in the eight-session intervention. The intervention was adapted from mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT; Segal et al., as cited in Juberg et al., 2019), a specific MBI that is used in clinical treatments. In Juberg et al., self-compassion was determined through participants engaging in a battery of psychological self-assessments to gauge their symptomatology and acuity (depression, anxiety, and stress were reported on the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21; experiential avoidance was reported on the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II; the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire determined their state of mindfulness; the Self-Compassion Scale determined self-compassion, and engaged living by the Engaged Living Scale) at both a pre- and post-initiative interval. A comparison of the pre- and post-initiative assessment scores showed an improvement in participants as evidenced by lower rates of anxiety, depression, stress, and experiential avoidance. In this study, Juberg et al. did not indicate how many of the 17 participants fell into the student, staff, or faculty categories. Had this designation been provided, it would have been particularly interesting to understand how this study impacted faculty and staff differently from students (if at all). Juberg et al. noted some barriers to treatment, specifically the university schedule. While university schedules are often challenging, offering a treatment modality within a work environment can reduce other barriers (work-life schedule balance, transportation, cost, etc.). However, there could be those who wish not to participate due to the perceived exposure of their mental health status or the possibility of

being treated by their colleagues or even students (as Juberg et al. noted that student practitioners could do future iterations of this MBI.

Also, in 2019, Pizzuto published a qualitative analysis of faculty's experience of using contemplative (i.e., mindfulness) practices in their classrooms. Pizzuto had 19 participants, all of whom had at least one year of contemplative practice within the classroom and were working at a four-year HEI. There were 11 participants from publicly funded HEIs and eight from private HEIs; there were faculty that represented both online and face-to-face teaching. Many of the faculty had begun to engage in classroom-based contemplative pedagogy in response to their own enhanced well-being after engaging in personal contemplative or mindfulness practices and a perceived need to reduce student stress, anxiety, depression, and overall academic fatigue (Pizzuto, 2019). Participants noted an increase in students' ability to focus, accept their challenges from a nonjudging standpoint, and in their overall well-being. Unsurprisingly, Pizzuto recommends the continued use and research of contemplative pedagogy within HEIs. Additional recommendations were made to HEI leadership to promote more contemplative practices among faculty as it can be used to mitigate and anticipate faculty burnout (Pizzuto, 2019).

In 2019, Brendel and Cornett-Murtada published their two-year-long, mixed-methods, action research study about mindfulness and its impact on transformational teaching, research, and service. The study had 33 faculty members, all of whom attended a four-day workshop on mindfulness and teaching; participants were then periodically consulted by Brendel and Cornett-Murtada. The duo concluded that participants showed an essential change in three areas of perspective and behaviors, primarily holding a beginner's mind while still maintaining the proficiency and know-how that is indicative of being a professor (Brendel & Cornett-Murtada,

2019). Additionally, Brendel and Cornett-Murtada found that faculty had greater regard for their individual area of expertise and in joining with students around that subject. Finally, the faculty noted a growing appreciation for a sense of community across their university. The most notable limitation in this study is that it was conducted within one university, which could impact the broader generalizability across other universities and colleges.

A 2021 study by Jha is one of the few empirical studies purely focused on faculty's mindfulness. Jha's study explored the relationship between faculty mindfulness, job satisfaction, burnout, voice behavior, and affective commitment[7]. The study had 1092 participants who were all full-time faculty members at management schools in India. Jha's findings indicate a positive correlation between an individual's trait mindfulness and job satisfaction, voice behavior, and affect commitment, and a negative correlation between mindfulness and burnout. Jha concludes that mindfulness does help faculty feel more connected and satisfied with their jobs and overall less stressed. One limitation in this study is that Jha did not indicate if "job" satisfaction is designated as satisfaction with a faculty member's institutions or specific departments, or rather than in their own job performance. Additionally, Jha makes inferences in the recommendations that are likely not supported by the data gathered in this study. Furthermore, there is the generalizability given that all participants were from India and worked only for management schools.

[7] Voice behavior is defined by Dyne et al. (2003) as "openly raising issues and giving suggestions for improvement" (as cited in Jha, 2021, p. 3). Additionally, affective commitment is "defined as the emotional attachment to an organization" (Mercurio, 2015, p. 405).

Higher Education Leadership

In a rare, purely qualitative study, Beer et al. (2015) looked at how both faculty and administrators understood the integration of their contemplative (i.e., mindfulness) practices with their work and personal lives. Beer et al. interviewed seventeen participants from a mid-sized Western university, including ten men and seven women; eleven of them are noted as either mid- or senior-level administrators; as such, this study has been placed in the leadership category. Through a rigorous coding and member-checking process, the authors noted the emergence of three main categories: Awareness as Mindful Practice, Integrating Contemplative Practices, and Interconnectedness (Beer et al., 2015). In the discussion, Beer et al. noted that peer support staves off isolation and promotes interconnection, which is essential to maintaining robust teaching and mentoring methods. Additionally, interviewees from the study highlighted that their contemplative practices were paramount to the successes they had achieved within the field of higher education and to find a balance between their personal and work lives (Beer et al., 2015). Finally, Beer et al. concluded that "the development and regular use of mindful, contemplative practices are helpful, and perhaps imperative for professionals to meet the demands of roles in higher education with success" (2015, p.180).

In a 2016 study by Mayer et al., the authors conducted a quantitative cross-sectional survey among women who belonged to the Higher Education Resource Services network in South Africa (HERS-SA, an organization that promotes and develops women HEI leaders; HERS, n.d.) that explored the connection between personality trait, mindfulness, and sense of

coherence[8]. The 125 participants were given three previously validated measures: the Life Orientation Questionnaire (for a sense of coherence), the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory, and a modified version of the Big Five Personality Trait Questionnaire. Through a series of regressive analyses, the authors determined a meaningful connection among the three variables of personality trait, mindfulness, and sense of coherence. The data also implied that participants who understand life to be ordered and routine "have higher levels of emotional stability" (Meyer et al., 2016, p. 7) and also have an enhanced ability to handle life's conditions. Conversely, they also determined that participants who have greater emotional instability cannot sufficiently deal with life's conditions.

Additionally, and most importantly to the study outlined in this dissertation, Meyer et al.'s (2016) study provided further evidence that mindfulness can positively affect well-being, health, and relationships. The limitations of Meyer et al.'s study are that there was a fairly small sample that is limited to one geographic area, so there are concerns about generalizability. Additionally, Meyer et al. noted that they could not account for causal relationships due to the survey's cross-sectional nature.

Mindfulness and Self-care in Social Work Higher Education Departments

Self-care was recently added to the NASW Code of Ethics (Murry, 2021) as an essential element of the ethical principle of integrity. The updated verbiage reads that "Social workers should take measures to care for themselves both professionally and personally" (Murry, 2021, p. 2). While self-care is not synonymous with mindfulness, mindfulness can be a component of

[8] Sense of coherence has three areas: "comprehensibility (one's understanding of the world), manageability (how one copes with challenges)[,] and meaningfulness (how one is motivated through the construction of meaning in life)" (Meyer et al., 2016).

self-care (Miller et al., 2018; Myers et al., 2020); furthermore, in a search for articles on social work faculty and/or leadership with the term mindfulness resulted in articles that focused only on student impact of in-class contemplative or mindfulness pedagogy.

In 2018 Miller et al. published their 2017 exploratory study on self-care practices of social work faculty. This qualitative study had 124 participants from social work faculty from one southeastern state in the U.S., and they were not asked to identify their institution. Participants were asked to complete the Professional Self-Care Scale, which includes 21 items with five subscales (professional support, professional development, life support, cognitive awareness, and daily balance). Miller et al. determined that overall, faculty participants "engage in self-care 'frequently'" (2018, p. 1052); however, those participants who hold professional social work licenses are more likely to engage in self-care. Miller et al. noted that of the subscales, "life support" was rated the highest (M = 5.78; SD = .95) and "daily balance" the lowest (M = 4.53; SD = 1.27). The "life support" findings were determined to indicate that participants can distinguish themselves in terms of a dual personal and professional identity and overall "highlights the importance of the complementary balance of professional and personal dimensions of self-care" (Miller et al., 2018, p. 1052). "Daily balance" is considered the skills that can be used to help mitigate daily demands and keep intentional focus or awareness. Miller et al. note that this dichotomy evidenced in the scale between "life support" and "daily balance" is further evidence of the false narrative that personal self-care carries impacts professional ability to modulate workday demands and that perhaps a more holistic view of the concept of self-care needs to be understood to help mitigate professional pressure and fatigue. As with many of the studies discussed in this chapter, generalizability remains an issue with Miller et al.

Myers et al. (2020) published a timely qualitative analysis from 81 BSW and MSW directors[9] about their own self-care practices, those they use in the classroom, what their organization does to support their self-care, and what barriers to self-care they experience. There were five main categories that participants reported engaging in for self-care: Psychological, 74.1% (reading, nature, relaxing, music, TV/Movies, self-awareness, other); Physical, 66.7% (exercise, sleep, nutrition, health); Social, 51% (family or friends); Spiritual, 25.9% (meditation/mindfulness and prayer/church/scripture); and Professionalism, 22.2% (boundaries and collegial support; Myers et al., 2020, p. 4). Participants identified that workplace culture, colleagues, and supervisors were both a support and a barrier, with one-third noting that their organization did not provide any support at all or provided negative support. Participants who identified that their organization supported self-care noted that organized classes in various exercises (yoga, walking, fitness, etc.) and mindfulness were offered (Myers et al., 2020). Participants also noted that colleagues and supervision were key elements in promoting self-care. Myers et al. note that while social work educators might not experience the same type or even level of stress that their human service colleagues are facing, they are training the next generation of social workers, and given that self-care is now part of the profession's Code of Ethics (NASW, 2021), it is crucial that educators utilize, teach, and demonstrate these skills to students.

[9] Note that the authors (Myers et al., 2020) did not distinguish these individuals as "leadership," rather leaving that categorization to deans and college-level administrators. However, it is placed in the leadership category in this section because the study outlined in this dissertation is considering "leadership" to be the social work department head.

Limitations and Criticisms of Mindfulness Research

In this chapter, many works relating to mindfulness in the workplace have been presented, and throughout the chapter, each article's limitations have been noted. However, in looking at the works discussed as a whole, there are some common and notable limitations. From a data standpoint, many of the primary research studies rely significantly if not solely on self-report data. Furthermore, in the studies addressing the impact of mindfulness (Dane & Brummel, 2014; Grover et al., 2017; Hulsheger et al., 2013; Krusche et al., 2020; Malinowski & Lim, 2015), the concept of causation among and between variables should be explicitly considered. Many of the studies have evidenced the beneficial aspects of mindfulness on task or job performance, well-being, and stress reduction. However, it could be that these elements impact a person's ability to be mindful.

Further still, none of these studies has provided empirical longitudinal data, so it is impossible to understand the long-term effect of mindfulness on the various elements considered in this section. Finally, it is also important to underline that many of the studies, even those exploring MBIs, are exploring DM rather than SM, even though SM is what the MBI is initiating. There is, of course, the underlying hope that SM will lead to DM, but the two are not synonymous.

Van Dam et al. (2018) argue many points of concern with the field of study, mainly about the more clinical applications of the practice(s) in question. However, there is some applicability in the field of work and leadership as well. Primarily, Van Dam et al. noted that there needs to be a clarification of the term mindfulness. As it stands, the field's fluctuation between definitions, while similar, does underscore the subtle difference in understanding, leading to a lack of

applicability of findings and overall confusion. Similarly, the authors called that future research in the field of mindfulness should learn from lessons of the ongoing "replication crisis" in psychological science.

Furthermore, Van Dam et al. (2018) argued that more uniformity is needed in clinical research involving MBIs. These criticisms are valid, especially when considering future quantitative research. However, Van Dam et al. have not addressed that, not unlike other disciplines, a more cohesive and more profound understanding is gained about the subject through the growth of the field. Additionally, the authors have seemingly dismissed the importance of understanding that mindfulness is inherently different for everyone. Thus, while a common and broad definition can be applied, it is likely to be challenging to quantify such a profoundly personal experience.

Summary

This literature review was undertaken to understand the empirical research better as it currently exists, related to mindfulness and the workplace, higher education, and social work education; it was a crucial step to the overall development of the dissertation proposal as a whole. While many of the individual works discussed utilized various theories and frameworks to construct the broad array of research presented, the overall connection theme is apparent. Moreover, it simultaneously adds validation to the choice of LMX as the theoretical framework while also contributing to the overall conceptual framework of relationships. Specifically, the works of Reb et al. (2019), Rooney et al. (2021), and Urilla (2021) have helped formulate the dissertation's central focus: how do social work education department heads' individual mindfulness practices impact the leader/employee relationship? Furthermore, the literature

indicates an overall positive outcome from both workplace and leader mindfulness, which further validates the need for continued research.

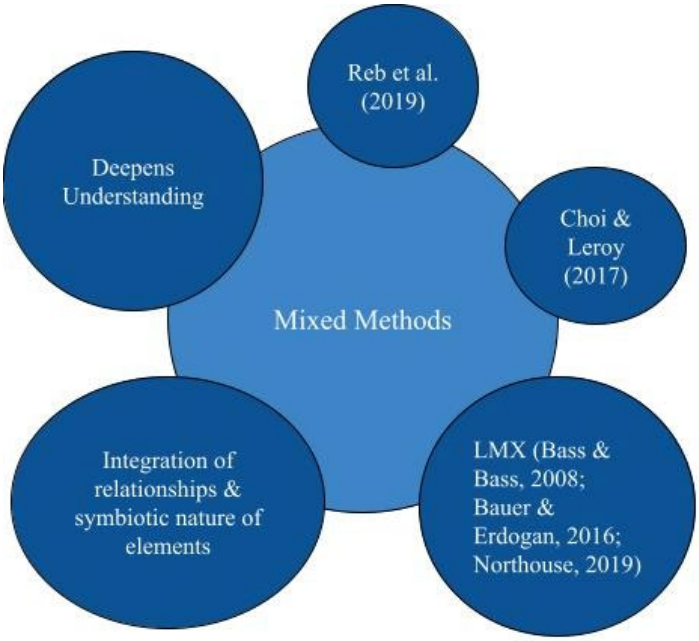
Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

Over the past several decades, mindfulness research has been growing, and there are now multiple studies that have explored mindfulness in nearly every aspect of human life (Hölzel et al., 2010; Kabat-Zinn, 2006; Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000; Modinos et al., 2010; Morone et al., 2011). It is no wonder then that a growing number of studies focused on mindfulness and the workplace. However, one emerging area has been that of leadership, specifically the relationship between leader mindfulness practices and the leader-follower relationship. While there has been some previously published research that discusses the leader's mindfulness on employee well-being and performance (Reb et al., 2014; Reb et al., 2018; Schuh et al., 2019), and despite Reb et al.'s (2018) use of a leader-member exchange questionnaire (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), there remains a gap in the literature. Reb et al. (2019), in their study of mindfulness and leadership, noted specific research about the dyadic relationship between a leader and follower and how mindfulness on either part influences that relationship. Therefore, many elements of this study were directed at exploring the avenues of continued research discussed by Reb et al. (2019). This study explores this gap by using a fixed, explanatory, sequential mixed-methods design, using quantitative data via previously validated measures and semistructured interviews among social work department heads and their faculty. It was anticipated that by using a mixed-methods approach, the empirical data would provide evidence that a leader’s mindfulness practices do positively impact relationships with employees. In addition, integrating qualitative content analysis will give a richer and more complex understanding of the phenomenon.

Figure 3

Framework for Methodology and Research Design



The study examines if a social work academic department head's individual mindfulness practice affects the leader-employee relationship. The social work academic department head's individual practice and overall trait (sometimes termed dispositional mindfulness) will be examined by the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003), a previously validated measure. Additionally, some leader participants were randomly selected to participate in semistructured interviews to understand further their individual mindfulness practice and its impact on their leadership style and relationship with their employees. Simultaneously, the social work faculty were given the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998), a previously validated measure to examine how they view their relationship with their leader. After the surveys were received, faculty were also randomly selected to participate in a semistructured interview that helped to triangulate and deepen the data garnered from the measure. Each subpopulation received a different survey because each holds

the key to a different element of the research questions. Only the leaders themselves can answer questions about their attentional awareness via the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Additionally, the faculty subpopulation alone can report on how they view their relationship with their department head via LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). There is a specific focus on School of Social Work department heads, Bachelor or Master of Social Work (BSW & MSW) department heads (and those with similar positions and responsibilities with slightly different titles), and faculty; participants were from private HEIs who have a full-time enrollment between 1,000 and 17,000 in the Northeastern United States.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study is a mixed-methods survey, therefore utilizing a combination of qualitative and quantitative questions. Mixed methods was chosen for several reasons, primarily that Reb et al. (2019) called for increased qualitative work in the field of organizational mindfulness, specifically between leaders and their followers. Choi and Leroy (2017) further underscored this point for more mixed-methods research related to mindfulness and the workplace. Additionally, the symbiotic nature of a mixed-methods study fits well with the study's overall conceptual framework or relationships. The following questions address the knowledge gap as represented by Reb et al. (2019) and explore the problems detected in the study.

Quantitative

RQ 1: Using the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS) to assess trait mindfulness, how do social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions rate their level of trait mindfulness (H1)?

RQ 2: Using the MAAS to examine trait mindfulness and Multidimensionality of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX-MDM) to examine social work faculty rating of their relationship with their department head, to what extent do higher scores of the department heads' trait mindfulness result in higher relationship satisfaction with social work faculty (H2)?

Qualitative

RQ3: How does a sample of social work faculty at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their experience and their relationship with their department head?

RQ4: How does a sample of social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their mindfulness routines and the experience and understanding of the impact that their mindfulness routines have on their relationships with social work faculty?

Hypotheses

The researcher believes that the following hypotheses will be supported via the outlined study:

H1: the more a leader practices mindfulness techniques, the higher trait mindfulness they will have (RQ1).

H2: the more trait mindfulness a leader has, the higher the relationship satisfaction by faculty (RQ2).

Null Hypotheses

H1: there is no relationship between how much a leader practices mindfulness techniques and their overall trait mindfulness (RQ1).

H2: there is no relationship between a leader's level of trait mindfulness and higher faculty relationship satisfaction.

Design

Sequential mixed-methods is a design in which the researcher collects both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time and uses the information from both methods to understand the overall results (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). While there are many definitions of mixed methods design, Creswell and Clark's (2018) definition is a methodology that gathers and examines both qualitative and quantitative data to respond to research questions thoroughly. Additionally, Creswell and Clark (2018) note that mixed methods research utilizes techniques that are distinct from the study's design; this adds to the analytical processes and helps ground the processes in the overall theory and philosophy of the study (p. 5). This definition has been chosen because it represents the evolution of mixed-methods research, as it utilizes methods and philosophical underpinnings (Creswell & Clark, 2018). These two concepts help to underscore the design elements of this individual study.

Mixed-method was chosen for several reasons, primarily that Reb et al. (2019) called for increased qualitative work in the field of organizational mindfulness, specifically between leaders and their followers. Choi and Leroy's (2017) study underscored this point for more mixed-methods research related to mindfulness and the workplace. An additional consideration is the power differential between a leader and follower; it could be unethical for the researcher to put the employee in a situation where there might be retaliation due to remarks reported by them—as such, doing a purely qualitative study would limit the number of leader/employee

group-sets, which could make any statements or comments used identifiable and would potentially put employees at risk of retaliation.

Second, the overall conceptual framework of the study is that of relationships. Not only the leader-follower relationship, but the relationship that people have with themselves, with their mindfulness practice, and with their abilities and skills (i.e., leadership). The importance of relationships does not stop at the study's content. Instead, it extends to the symbiotic elements of the outlined study (the author's relationship, interest, and experiences with and in mindfulness and leadership, the literature review, the theoretical model of leader-member exchange theory (Bass & Bass, 2008; Bauer & Erdogan, 2016; Northouse, 2019), the methodology, and data analysis; therefore leading to the symbiotic design of a mixed-methods approach.

Third, the theoretical framework used is leader-member exchange (Bass & Bass, 2008; Bauer & Erdogan, 2016; Northouse, 2019). This theory is primarily concerned with the unique relationship between two individuals. Additionally, because one of the critical variables in this study is mindfulness, the previously validated Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) by Brown and Ryan (2003) will gauge a leader's overall trait mindfulness. The data garnered from the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) will be used in tandem with data from the qualitative interviews to better understand participants' relationship with, understanding of, and experience of mindfulness practice and leadership. Finally, because mindfulness is a personal and internal experience, the author believes that the complexity of how it influences one's leadership practices cannot be wholly captured in a quantitative format.

Site Information and Demographics

There was a lack of empirical evidence specifically looking at any aspect of mindfulness within social work higher education departments. This study used electronic surveys targeting department heads and their faculty at Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited BSW and MSW programs within private Higher Education Institutions with between 1,000 and 17,000 total student enrollments located as determined by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) in the northeastern part of the United States. This resulted in a list of the 34 schools that met these criteria (see Appendix E). It is important to note that there were three schools that remained either in pre-candidacy or in candidacy stage with their CSWE accreditation and therefore were not included. Additionally, there were two schools that had a full-time enrollment of more than 20,000 and were excluded because of the disparity of resources between those institutions and those with lesser enrollments. While cultivating the email list three schools did not list emails. One school had only faculty listed with no leader clearly identified and was not included in the email to faculty. During the initial survey request, one email from a leader came back stating that they were in another position at a different institution; no leader was identified, so no alternate email was sent.

Population and Sampling Method(s)

This study used purposive sampling, a technique in which researchers predetermine a specific group of participants that can best illustrate a specific subject (Robinson, 2014). This study had two population sets: leaders (social work academic department heads) and their faculty. Both sets of participants were employees of BSW or MSW programs that were within larger private institutions that have full-time enrollments between 1,000 and 17,000 (as listed on

the Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System; IPEDS; NCES, n.d.) and are located in the northeastern part of the U.S. (see Appendix E).

Leader

The leader subpopulation was pulled from department heads at BSW and MSW programs at northeast institutes of higher education who have been in that role for at least two months. The two-month time frame is important because previous LMX research has shown that the process through which a new leader and his or her employee forms and stabilizes their relationship can take several weeks to months; however, by eight weeks, the quality of their relationship at that point is predicted for the relationship six months after (Nahrgang & Seo, 2016). These leader participants were identified via the institution's website.

Faculty

The faculty subpopulation set was also pulled from the individual HEI website from which the leaders were pulled. Surveys were sent to social work faculty (full-time or part-time, but not adjunct) as listed on the BSW and MSW program's website. Survey links were sent to full and part-time faculty listed on the department's website. This population excluded adjunct faculty. While adjunct faculty is a crucial element to many programs, especially those like social work that tend to be based on the scholar-practitioner model, it has been shown that they receive less formal support from institutions and leaders than those employees with regular employment (Bolitzer, 2019; Kezar & Sam, 2013). Many institutions have different designations and language for different faculty roles. In the study presented here, full and part-time faculty have regular and continuous employment from their HEI. In contrast, adjunct faculty were considered anyone with less than a year contract. Ideally, this information would be clearly identifiable on

the HEI's website. Still, there was also a question in the survey's demographic portion that helps to identify and deselect adjunct faculty.

Instrumentation

This study was composed of two concurrently timed, quantitative surveys. One survey was sent to leaders, including informed consent, demographics, and the MAAS (Appendices A, F, & H). The second survey was sent to faculty members and includes informed consent, demographics, and the LMX-MDM (Appendices B, G, & H).

MAAS Scale (Brown & Ryan, 2003)

The MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) (see Appendix A) is a 15 item, six-point Likert scale that measures a person's trait mindfulness in a unidimensional capacity. The MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) will be used to answer research question two and confirm either hypothesis two or null hypothesis two. This scale was selected for three reasons: first, it is a shorter measure than some other prominent ones (namely the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire—FFMQ; Baer et al., 2006) and, therefore, easier for participants to complete. Second, it draws on a unidimensional capacity for mindfulness versus a multidimensional capacity, an important distinction. Like Reb et al. (2019), this study is not concerned with the degree of specific dimensions but rather a person's overall mindfulness disposition. Third, this scale was selected because of Brown and Ryan's (2003) understanding that mindfulness is a human "attribute that varies both between and within persons and [the study] examines the significance of both kinds of variation" (p. 824). This understanding aligns with the researcher's views on mindfulness as an inherently human quality but not fixed. Finally, this scale was initially designed to capture the "empirical links between mindfulness and well-being" (p. 824). It is important to note that there

are two subsequent short forms of this scale but were not chosen due to less available data concerning validity.

Validation of Instrument(s)

The MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) is a widely used measure, and data from the initial study exhibits confirmatory factor analysis, temporal stability, and has internal consistency. The measure has been successfully adapted for multiple languages, but the initial study was conducted in English. A follow-up study by MacKillop and Anderson (2007) endorsed the validity of the MAAS. However, Goh et al. (2017) conducted a Rasch model analysis of the MAAS that determined that some of the 15 items were over-discriminating due to dependence between "Items 7, 8, 10, and 14" (p. 393). Goh et al. (2017) suggest that a 10-item version be adopted, but also noted that the 15 items should "not be used to assess differences in mindfulness that emerge with meditation practice" (p. 397); because the study outlined in this chapter is not concerned with pre- and post-practice intervention, but rather a leader's own cultivation of mindfulness, this is not a concern. Additionally, Choi and Leroy (2015; 2017) note that the mindfulness scale is best used with both clinical and nonclinical participants—an important point given that some of the leaders at the site have both clinical and nonclinical backgrounds.

The MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) is scored by calculating the mean of the 15 items; the higher the score indicates higher levels of trait mindfulness (Brown & Ryan, 2003). This writer has received permission from Dr. Brown to use this measure for the purposes of this study (see Appendix A).

LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998)

The second part of this study will consist of a subsequent survey sent to the participants in part one's full and part-time faculty direct reports. The initial section of the survey will contain inclusion criteria, then a section on demographic information. Next, participants will be asked to complete the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) (see Appendix B), and finally, answer open-ended experiential questions. The LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) will be used to answer research question two and confirm either hypothesis two or null hypothesis two. The open-ended questions will be done based on evidence in the literature and in consultation with this writer's dissertation committee.

LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) is a twelve-item multidimensional measure that uses a seven-point Likert scale that assesses professional respect, loyalty, affect, and contribution in a leader-follower relationship. It was initially designed to capture the quality of specific dyadic relationships between leader and follower. While Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory began in the 1970s (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Joseph et al., 2011; Linden et al., 2016; Northouse, 2019), its focus had shifted, and there was no previously validated measure to capture that unique connection between the leader and employee. Therefore, this measure was chosen primarily due to its ties with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Furthermore, it is one of the most highly regarded measures concerning LMX and is considered to have gone through a more rigorous validation process. According to Sasaki et al. (2020), the LMX-MDM is scored by "summing the scores on the 12 items and dividing it by 12. The score of each dimension is calculated by summing the scores on the three items, composing each one and dividing it by 3"

(p. 1491). This author has received permission from Dr. Liden to use this survey in the context of the study outlined (see Appendix B).

Validation of Instrument(s)

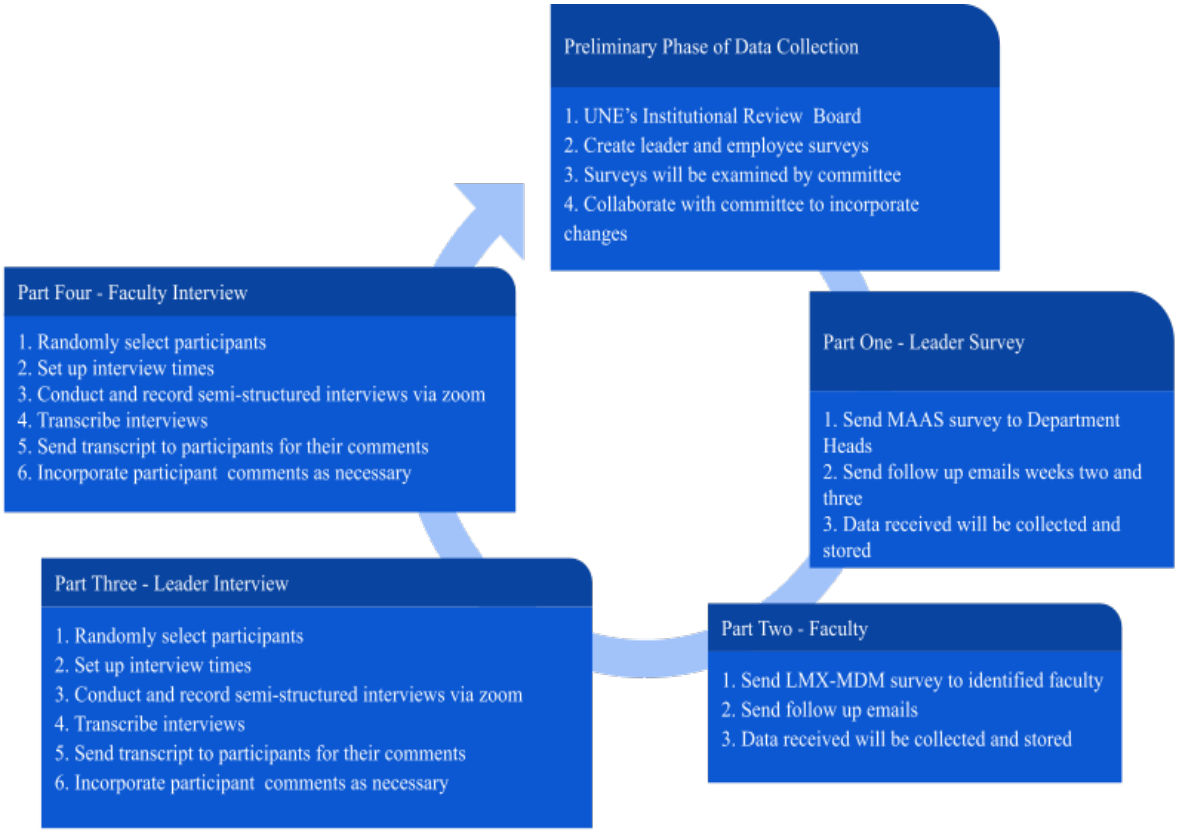
The LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) is a widely used multidimensional instrument designed to capture four elements of leader-member relationships: loyalty, contribution, affect, and professional respect. The LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) was developed out of a need to capture this multidimensional understanding adequately, as previous measures either were unidimensional (LMX-7; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) or did not capture sufficient dimensionality. Their measure was "created through an extremely rigorous scale development process" (Linden et al., 2016, p. 31). Moreover, according to the authors, the confirmatory factor analysis validated the four dimensions. The scales presented correlated with those in the LMX-7 (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), the other predominant LMX measure (Liden & Maslyn, 1998).

Data Collection

As with any study, there were multiple steps in the data collection process (see Figure 4). There were two groups of participants in this study, and there were four data collection times: two for department heads and two for faculty. Exemption from the University of New England's institutional review board (IRB) was obtained; this helped to ensure that all aspects of the implementation followed the guidelines of the study of human subjects.

Figure 4

Data Collection Process



Part One—Leaders—Quantitative

After the leader participant groups were identified, they were sent the MAAS survey with the added demographic questions (See Appendices A & F). It was designed using REDcap, and participants were sent an email with a link to the survey to the email listed on their institution's website. In addition, there was a follow-up reminder email sent out at week three (delayed due to the winter holidays) and then one, two, and four weeks after that initial reminder. After the leader completed the survey, the results were collected and stored in REDcap. When survey data

collection time has ended, all data will be exported into the author's password protected ShareDrive.

Part Two—Faculty—Quantitative

The social work faculty, whose leaders were sent the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003), received the LMX survey with added demographic questions (see Appendices B & G) via their email listed on their institution's website. In addition, there was a follow-up reminder email sent out at week three (delayed due to the winter holidays) and then one, two, and four weeks after that initial reminder. After the faculty completed the survey, the results were collected and stored in REDcap. When the survey data collection time ended, all data was exported into the author's university-provided, password protected ShareDrive.

Part Three—Leaders—Qualitative

After the leader's quantitative data was received, the participants who voluntarily entered their private email addresses were contacted to participate in a follow-up qualitative interview (see Appendix C). This semistructured interview happened via Zoom and was recorded for transcription processes. The recording was stored in this author's private Google Drive account. The researcher used Zoom's transcription service to aid in the transcription process. Participants were given an opportunity to review the transcript of their interview for accuracy. Carlson's (2010) recommendations on how to engage and scaffold expectations for participants was used. While there is currently some debate among qualitative researchers about the efficacy of member checks (Thomas, 2017), this researcher utilized them for the purpose of accuracy, especially in regard to baseline mindfulness practice. Participants were notified in the initial interview about the member check process and were asked if they would prefer to receive the transcription via

email or mailed copy. Participants were asked to check for accuracy and given the opportunity to write a reflective statement about the process (both interview and member check); additionally, participants were made aware that they did not need to make grammatical corrections. Participants were all given pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Part Four—Faculty—Qualitative

After the faculty received quantitative data, the participants who entered their private email addresses were asked to participate in a follow-up qualitative interview (see Appendix D). This semistructured interview happened via Zoom and was recorded for transcription processes. The recording was stored in this author's private Google Drive account. The researcher used Zoom's transcription service to aid in the transcription of the process. Participants were allowed to review their interview transcripts for accuracy. Carlson's (2010) recommendations on engaging and scaffolding expectations for participants was used. Unlike member checks for the leader subgroup, accuracy was not paramount for the faculty subgroup. However, this researcher was particularly drawn to Chase's (2017) argument for mitigating power dynamics. Their goal was to break down the researcher/participant dynamic; this author is to offer both the leader and faculty the same opportunity and not to place one's status over the other. Participants were notified in the initial interview about the member check process and were asked if they would prefer to receive the transcription via email or mailed copy. Again, participants were asked to check for accuracy and were given an opportunity to write a reflective statement about the process (both interview and member check); participants were also notified that they did not need to make grammatical corrections. Participants were all given pseudonyms to protect their identity, to further protect the faculty's identity, gender neutral names were chosen.

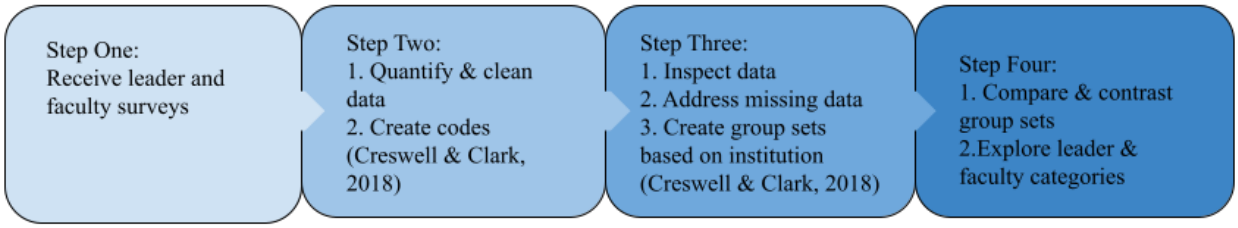
Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

When the collection period ended, the data from the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) were quantified using Excel. The data were grouped and examined by the leader and faculty employee subgroups. Then group sets were made of leaders and faculty from the same institution. There was a comparison between groupsets to see if leaders who had a higher MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) score had employees who reported better relationships via the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). The purpose of this comparison is to understand if there is a difference in the relationship for employees who work for higher- and lower-scoring MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) leaders. This comparison was done using Excel.

Figure 5

Quantitative Data Analysis Process



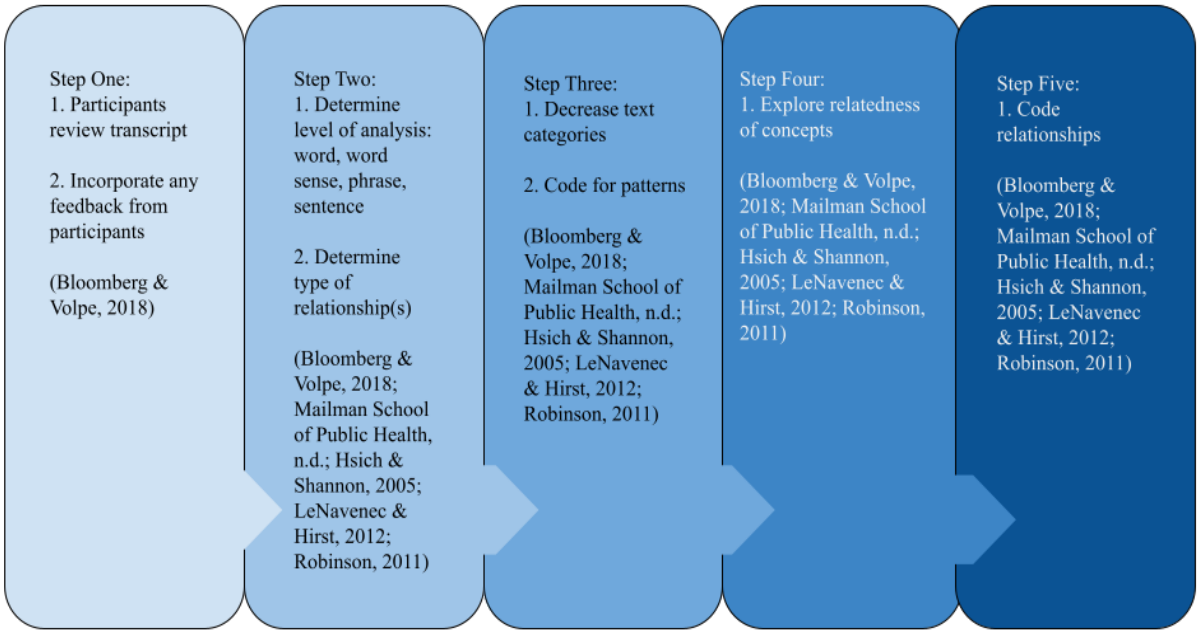
Qualitative Data Analysis

Upon completion, the interviews were analyzed using content analysis with relational analysis. Content analysis is a form of qualitative analysis in which the researcher uses either an inductive or deductive approach to create schematic themes into which the data is categorized

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). For the purpose of this study, an inductive approach was used as it allowed for the growth of information and better attunement to the participant's own experience. While the exact definition and method of relational analysis is varied among authors, researchers agree it is used as a supplemental tool in qualitative analysis and allows researchers to examine data in terms of their relationships via visual mapping (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, n.d.; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Le Navenec & Hirst, 2012; Robinson, 2011). Relational analysis was chosen to supplement the content analysis for two reasons. First, this analysis strengthens the conceptual framework of relationships as it allows for a deeper understanding of how concepts are connected rather than merely quantifying the number of times a particular theme is discussed. Second, the mapping element of relational analysis is something that clinical social workers regularly use in practice. For example, the profession uses genograms to show the relationships between family members and ecograms to explore a client's context within their environment. The researcher used the software Dedoose to aid in the content analysis portion and then reviewed the interview videos and transcripts to better understand how the concepts form relationships.

Figure 6

Qualitative Data Analysis Process



Limitations, Delimitations, and Ethical Issues

Limitations

In the outlined study; there are foreseeable delimitations and limitations. Limitations are qualities discovered after a study's completion that could impact the generalizability or transferability of the study's results; in essence, features that weaken the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). There are several limitations this study. First, the format of the study relies on self-reporting as the only means of data collection. Historically, self-report data has been seen as a limitation (Arnold & Feldman, 1981; Bergomi et al., 2012; Devaux & Sassi, 2016) due to self-report bias. There is an understanding that participants might alter their responses to be more socially desirable (Fowler, 2014; Nardi, 2018). However, the employee

data set addresses how they view their relationship with their superior; in essence, this will verify if the leader's perceptions are accurate. This study will pull from Fowler's (2014) suggestions that because the data will be self-administered and the open-ended and demographic questions will be drafted to be nonjudgmental and free of bias, some of this can be further mitigated.

An additional limitation is that this researcher needed to carefully consider the issues of bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018) as the survey and interview language were designed, and as the crucial step of content analysis was undertaken. Bias is essential to consider as any unexplored issues could contribute to skewed data analysis and interpretation.

Another limitation that became apparent was that this researcher, while an experienced clinician, was new to interviewing colleagues for research purposes and there could be issues that arose in the interview process.

Delimitations

Delimitations are factors that help delineate the study's theoretical and conceptual extents and are conditions intentionally set by the author (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). There is an inevitable delimitation of sampling and time constraints. There was a nonrepresentative sampling of the larger population, which will cause issues with overall generalizability; however, the use of thick description (an in-depth description of participants' experience) and the use of verbatim language from the surveys will overcome this (Beaudry & Miller, 2016, p. 53; Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 71).

Ethical Issues in the Study

There are many ethical components that were considered as a part of this study because the research involved human subjects. As per the *Belmont Report* (Nardi, 2018), this researcher considered three essential ethical components when designing and conducting the research presented herewith: autonomy, justice, and beneficence. The concept of autonomy is addressed by informed consent. Informed consent is the disclosing of the study's aims to participants. This study included the purpose of the study, the primary researcher's identification and that of UNE, the type and level of participation, any potential risks, confidentiality, ability to opt out, and whom the participants can contact with questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Beneficence is a principle that "requires the researcher to do no harm, to maximize the benefits to knowledge and society, and minimize risks and potential injuries to the participants" (Nardi, 2018, p. 42). As such, the primary investigator worked with the dissertation committee and UNE's IRB to ensure that no harm would come to participants by following all procedures and processes as set by the IRB. Additionally, this work will advance learning and understanding of mindfulness, leadership, and work relationships. In considering justice, the third *Belmont Report* principle is concerned with equity in allocation, ensuring all groups have access to participate. Therefore, it was essential to be mindful of the level and sophistication of the language used in the surveys, making it more available to those with lower reading and writing abilities. As such, the primary investigator aimed to apply universal design techniques and explore if audio components could go along with the survey to support those who cannot read (Tobin & Behling, 2018). The survey will also need to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Initially, when this study was looking at a broader participant base it

would have been important to also consider language; however, given that the 24 programs are within the U.S. and instruction is typically given in the English language, alternate languages were not considered.

It is also important to note specific ethical considerations for quantitative research; the author needed to ensure that the statistical analysis is current and takes on a form considered best practice within the quantitative community (Nardi, 2018). As previously stated, this author has only a minimal understanding of statistical analysis; therefore, it was imperative to seek the support of literature, colleagues, and the dissertation committee.

As a social worker, this author would be remiss if the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (2021) was not explicitly addressed. This code is the cornerstone of professional practice for social workers. It guides every aspect of our work life—clinical, educational, and political. A specific section (5.02) addresses how social workers should conduct themselves and their research. Essentially, the items covered in this section of the NASW Code of Ethics (2021) are accounted for with the paragraphs above.

Conflict of Interest

This author did not receive any funding for conducting this study.

Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility relates to understanding the study's participant's understandings are the same as the researcher's depiction of them (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). This study's credibility was established by engaging in a semistructured interview with open-ended qualitative questions to triangulate with the survey data from previously validated measures (LMX-MDM—Liden &

Maslyn, 1998 & MAAS—Brown & Ryan, 2003). This study also used content and relational analysis for qualitative data.

Member Checking Process

This study also incorporated a member-checking process during the qualitative data collection period. The member checking process was based on Carlson's (2010) recommendations for engagement and scaffolding for participants.

Transferability

Transferability is a term used in qualitative research and essentially is used to describe the correlating quantitative term *external validity* (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Essentially, transferability aims to ensure some degree of generalizability across studies (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). In this study, there were narrow limits to the population pool; universities employ a broad range of people from different religious, ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, the social work departments are likely to have more individuals with a higher educational background as a terminal degree prerequisite for several academic positions. To ensure the highest level of transferability possible, it was necessary to utilize demographic information to best describe the contextual nuances of the participants in what is known as a thick description (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Dependability

The dependability of the qualitative elements was ensured by an external audit review (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018) by a doctorly prepared individual(s) who were members of this author's dissertation committee. An external audit is a process through which the auditor can review, summarize, assess, and critique the data gathering and assessment of the study (Cohen &

Crabtree, 2006). This aided in creating validity in the qualitative elements of the study via enhanced rigor.

When the study has been completed and the data gathered and assessed, this section will include a detailed audit trail—an exacting explanation of the methods used in data collection and analysis.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the demonstration of how conclusions were made (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). There is an audit trail for this study to help readers and future researchers fully understand the researcher's thought process and understanding as the qualitative content analysis unfolded. This was done via routine journal entries during the data collections and analysis phases. In addition, there was a significant focus on the role of bias through the researcher's individual lens as well as through institutional and societal lenses. This researcher kept notes via an ongoing google doc through all phases of this study. Furthermore, the use of member checks, as well as committee feedback, will provide additional mechanisms for confirmability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Internal and External Validity

Using two previously validated measures (LMX-MDM—Liden & Maslyn, 1998 & MAAS—Brown & Ryan, 2003) afforded the study considerable internal and external validity. Internally, those who completed the survey might have been predisposed to specific inclinations and therefore skewed the data. Externally, because of the limited sample population, there could be issues with generalizability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998)

Liden and Maslyn (1998) reported that the LMX-MDM measure had coefficient alphas below one for affect (.90), loyalty (.78), contribution (.60), and professional respect (.92). This original study was done with two sets of member participants, student employees (n=302) and organizational employees (n=251; hospitality and manufacturing). After the study was submitted for publication, Liden and Maslyn (1998) added three items to the "contribution" dimension; when this updated measure was tested with 34 student employees, the coefficient alpha was .74 and .77 when conducted with a larger sample (n=227) of manufacturing employees.

MAAS (Brown &Ryan, 2003)

Brown and Ryan (2003) reported that the MAAS measure had a coefficient alpha of .82. Their first study had 313 undergraduate participants; the second study reported data from 239 non-college adults from across the United States (Brown and Ryan, 2003). Although additionally Brown and Ryan (2003) examined the temporal stability with 60 students, this test showed that test scores do not change significantly between times.

Conclusion and Summary

The research presented in the previous sections is a mixed-methods, two-part, convergent design aiming to address a knowledge gap presented by Reb et al. (2019), Rooney et al. (2021), and Urrila (2021). It explored the impact of a leader's individual mindfulness practice on the leader-follower relationship. The study utilized the previously validated measures of LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) and the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) via an online survey of university leaders and faculty members.

As with any research study, there are limitations to consider. The study relied on self-report, which has historically come under fire as a less reliable data collection method (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). However, given the duality of the surveys, this is somewhat mitigated. Further mitigation ensures that the faculty data will remain completely anonymous, which could reduce the occurrence of self-report bias (Fowler, 2014)—one of the main issues with self-report data collection (Arnold & Feldman, 1981; Bergomi et al., 2012; Devaux & Sassi, 2016).

As this is a mixed-methods study, there are both qualitative and quantitative considerations regarding data analysis. The coding of the quantitative data was done via content and relational analysis. In addition, the nature of group reviewing adds credibility as all three reviewers will need to agree on the thematic codes associated with individual responses. The qualitative data will be captured via the web-based application REDcap.

While ethical considerations are paramount in every study, there are heightened ethical obligations given the researcher's professional status as a licensed independent clinical social worker (LICSW). While this author does not work directly with any of the participants in this study, there remains a duality of role as the community of higher education social work departments is close knit, and there are likely some of the participants with whom this author has worked or will work in the future. Furthermore, the NASW Code of Ethics (2021) requires collaboration in a border sense of giving back to the profession. It is these dualities that create a connection to the overall conceptual framework of relationships. As it is used to tie not only the rote individual items of the dissertation (introduction, literature review, and methodology) but that between the participant groupings (leader and employees) and between individuals and their

own internal experiences with mindfulness (individual practice), and their leadership skill set. This study also utilizes the LMX theory to help understand the unique dyadic relationship between a leader and an employee.

Chapter Four

RESULTS

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to explore how a leader's mindfulness practice influences the leader-faculty relationship among a sample of higher education social work department leaders and their faculty. This study was developed out of the intersection of personal, professional, and academic interests in both mindfulness and leadership. Additionally, this study aimed to fill the gap in the existing literature on how a leader's individual mindfulness practice influences the relationship between that leader and his or her employees (Reb et al., 2019; Rooney et al., 2021; Urrila, 2021).

The study explored the gap noted by Reb et al. (2019), Rooney et al. (2021), and Urrila (2021) by using a fixed, explanatory, sequential mixed-methods design. The study used quantitative data via previously validated measures and semistructured interviews among social work department heads and faculty. The methodological design came out of the growing amount of mindfulness research reviewed for this dissertation. The literature provided an understanding of the symbiotic relationship that mindfulness has with different aspects of work-life, specifically that of relationships. Wanting to enhance the study's underlying conceptual framework of relationships, and out of natural curiosity, the author designed this mixed-methods study to answer the following questions:

Quantitative

RQ 1: Using the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS) to assess trait mindfulness, how do social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions rate their level of trait mindfulness?

RQ 2: Using the MAAS to examine trait mindfulness and Multidimensionality of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX-MDM) to examine social work faculty rating of their relationship with their department head, to what extent do higher scores of the department heads' trait mindfulness result in higher relationship satisfaction with social work faculty?

Qualitative

RQ3: How do a sample of social work faculty at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their experience and their relationship with their department head?

RQ4: How do a sample of social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their mindfulness routines and the experience and understanding of the impact that their mindfulness routines have on their relationships with social work faculty?

Analysis Method

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used singularly and collaboratively to complete this fixed, explanatory, sequential mixed-methods study. Sequential mixed-methods is a design in which the researcher collects both qualitative and quantitative at the same time and uses the information from both methods to understand the overall results (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Explanatory research is done to answer a "why" question for this study: Why do some leaders have better leader-employee relationships (Nardi, 2018)? A fixed study is one in which the design and methods are stable throughout, versus a more flexible design that allows for change as the research unfolds (Collins et al., 2004).

To create a truly integrated mixed-methods study, an analysis process that ultimately blends qualitative and quantitative analysis methods at all levels was used. However, for the

simplification of organization, the following section is organized in a similar order to chapter three and the order in which the actual analysis occurred.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis phase began by exporting both the leader's and faculty's principal data from REDcap into the primary investigator's university-provided and password-protected Sharedrive. Microsoft Excel was used to sort and analyze the data. The primary data included the Record ID assigned by REDcap, time stamps, all demographic answers, and the answers from the MAAS (for leaders) and the LMX-MDM (for faculty). The emails that participants had submitted for follow-up interviews were copied into their own Excel Sheet for clarity; at this point, it was discovered that an individual had completed the survey twice. Their second set of data was removed from all demographics analyses and the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998).

The primary demographic data was also copied into an Excel sheet. The categories of race, gender identity, title, age, time in the role, and time under the current leader were calculated by mode. Mode is a type of average that can be used with mutually exclusive categories by noting how many times a category has occurred (Salkind & Frey, 2020).

Following the primary data extraction, both the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) surveys were scored individually. The scores were then tabulated collectively for a broader understanding of the data. However, the answers to the demographic questions showed two leader-faculty pairs. This presented the opportunity to pair leader and faculty scores to better understand the direct relationship between a leader's individual mindfulness practice and the leader-faculty relationship.

The MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) primary data was copied into an Excel sheet tab, which was used for the MAAS computation. The participants' answers for their institution were also copied to make institutional groups by looking at the leader's MAAS scores and faculty's LMX-MDM scores. Next, the MAAS individual responses were scored according to Brown and Ryan's (2003) directions, calculating the mean of the 15 items; the higher the score indicates higher levels of trait mindfulness. Salkind and Frey (2020) noted that the mean score is a type of average calculated by summing all of the values in a category and then dividing that sum by the total number of values in that category (see Formula 1).

Formula 1.

$$\underline{X} = \frac{\Sigma X}{n}$$

Similarly, the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) primary data was copied into an Excel Sheet that was only for the LMX-MDM scores and the participant's identified institutions. The LMX-MDM was scored according to the author's instructions by calculating the means (see Formula 1) of the 12 item scale, as Sasaki et al. (2020) discussed. The LMX-MDM was also scored on a dimensional basis of Affect, Loyalty, Contribution, and Professional Respect (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). These dimensions were Affect (items 3,6,10), Loyalty (items 2, 5, 9), Contribution (items 4, 7, 11), and Professional Respect (items 1, 8, 12). (see Table 3; Sasaki et al., 2020).

Table 3

LMX-MDM Four Dimensions and Statements

Affect	Loyalty	Contribution	Professional Respect
Item 3: My manager is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend.	Item 2: My manager would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake.	Item 4: I do not mind working my hardest for my manager.	Item 1: I respect my manager's knowledge of and competence on the job.
Item 6: I like my manager very much as a person.	Item 5: My manager would come to my defense if I were "attacked" by others.	Item 7: I do work for my manager that goes beyond what is expected of me in my job.	Item 8: I admire my manager's professional skills.
Item 10: My manager is a lot of fun to work with.	Item 9: My manager defends (would defend) my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question.	Item 11: My manager is a lot of fun to work with.	Item 12: I am impressed with my manager's knowledge of his/her job.

Note: These items are rated on a seven-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 4 = neither disagree nor agree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree).

Two institutional leader and faculty pairings allowed institutional groupsets to be set up. The appropriate scores from both the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) were pulled from the raw data sheet into their own Excel sheet. Then the correlation coefficient was calculated using the Pearson product-moment correlation (see Formula 2; Mukaka, 2012; Salkind & Frey, 2020).

Formula 2.

$$r_{XY} = \frac{n\Sigma XY - \Sigma X \Sigma Y}{\sqrt{[n\Sigma X^2 - (\Sigma X)^2][n\Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2]}}$$

Calculating the correlation coefficient allowed the principal investigator to understand a positive relationship between a leader's mindfulness and the faculty's rating of the leader-faculty relationship.

Qualitative Analysis

The second phase of data analysis was qualitative, done using inductive content analysis, a form of qualitative analysis used to generate schematic themes to better contextualize the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). The inductive (versus deductive) method allowed thematic codes to arise from the data itself, essentially allowing the participants to be "heard" in their own voices (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

After survey data collection was completed, four leaders and ten faculty participants included email addresses for follow-up semistructured interviews (see appendices A & D). Ten faculty participants expressed interest in follow-up interviews; five were randomly selected and were emailed to gauge interest. After two attempts, one faculty member responded. Following IRB protocol, additional invitations were sent to the remaining faculty members. In total, three rounds of request for interview emails were sent out. All four leader participants replied, and three participated in interviews. Two faculty members responded, and both set up and completed interviews. The interviews were held and recorded via Zoom; the recordings were stored in the principal investigator's private Google Drive account. The Zoom transcription service was used. This author reviewed the transcript with the video recording, made corrections for accuracy, and removed participant and institutional names but did not correct grammar. Participants were emailed (in the interview, they were asked if they would like to be emailed or mailed a copy of the transcript, all chose email) a copy of the interview transcript to review for accuracy and

reflection using Carlson's (2010) recommendations on engaging and scaffolding expectations for participants. Of the five interview participants, only one made changes; these changes were based on the potential that some comments could identify this individual to colleagues or employer.

After the member checks were completed, this author uploaded the transcripts into Dedoose, a web-based coding tool to aid in the coding process. The form of content analysis used for this study was more of an inductive rather than deductive approach. The inductive content analysis allowed the principal investigator to have schematic themes emerge from the data itself; however, given the semistructured nature of the interviews, the majority of the themes tend to be based on the direct questions asked of the participants. This type of analysis lends itself well to Creamer's (2018) understanding of blending, a process that allows themes to emerge from either the quantitative or qualitative data and be applied to both. Additionally, relational analysis was used as a supplemental visual method to better understand the relationships that emerge from the data.

Presentation of Results and Findings

Demographics

The survey was sent to 320 faculty and 51 leader participants. The response completion rate for the faculty survey was 8.43%, with 37 individuals opening it and 28 completing it, but one was a duplicate submission; therefore, 27 surveys were assessed. The response completion rate for the leader survey was 17.65 %, with 12 individuals opening the survey and nine completing it.

Faculty

The majority of the 27 participants self-identified as White or Caucasian (n = 20; 74.07%). One individual identified as Black, one as Asian, and one as Latino (each being 3.7%), and five respondents did not identify. The majority of individuals identified as female, women, or cis-gendered female (n=19; 70.04%); eight individuals identified as male or "m" (29.63%). The age range for participants was 28–74, and the mode age was 43. Of the total respondents, 19 reported that they are full-time faculty (70.04%), seven reporting that they are tenured faculty (25.92%), and one reporting they are part-time faculty members (3.7%). The mode time for working under the department head was three to five years. This information is represented in tables 4, 5, and 6.

Table 4

Faculty Gender & Race

Characteristic	
Gender	***N***
Female, Women, Cis-gendered Female	19
Male, 'M'	8
Race	***N***
Asian	1
Black	1
Latino	1
White, Caucasian	20
No answer	4

Table 5

Faculty Age

Characteristic	
Age	***N***
≤29	1
30-39	6
40-49	10
50-59	3
60-69	5
70-74	3
No Answer	0

Table 6

Faculty Time Under Leader

Characteristic	
Time Under Leader	***N***
2-6 months	3
7-11 months	2
1-2 years	6
3-5 years	10
5-7 Years	5
7-10 years	2
No Answer	0

Leader

All eight of the leaders that responded to the survey self-identified as female, seven identified as white or Caucasian (88%), and one response was left blank (22%). The leaders ranged from 36 to 59, with the average age being 48.12 and the mode age being 48. All leaders identified their role as either the Chair of their department or Program Director. The mode time for being in their role was three to five years. This information is represented in tables 7, 8, and 9.

Table 7

Leader Gender & Race

Characteristic	
Gender	***N***
Female	8
Race	***N***
White/Caucasian	7
No Answer	1

Table 8

Leader Age

Characteristic	
Age	***N***
30-39	1
40-49	4
50-59	3
No Answer	0

Table 9

Leader Time in Position

Characteristic	
Time in position	***N***
7-11 months	2
1-2 years	2
3-5 years	4
No Answer	0

LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998)

The LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) is a twelve-item multidimensional measure that uses a seven-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 4 = neither disagree nor agree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree), that assesses professional respect, loyalty, affect, and contribution in a leader-follower relationship. The averaged scores from the 28 LMX-MDM responses from faculty ranged from 2.41 to 7, with a standard deviation of 1.22 between the averaged scores. The average standard deviation between

individual scores was .924. The median of the scores was 5.66, with 13 scores less than that and 12 higher than that. There were three sets of LMX-MDM scores far below the average of 5.24. Calculating the dimensions resulted in faculty rating the Professional Respect dimension the highest with a mean score of 5.43, then Contribution with 5.41, Loyalty with 5.26, and Affect with the lowest mean score of 4.85 (see Table 6).

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics from the LMX-MDM Faculty Survey

LMX-MDM	Number of Items	Score Range	Mean	SD
Overall	12	1-7	5.24	1.22
Affect	3	1-7	4.85	1.59
Loyalty	3	1-7	5.26	1.29
Contribution	3	1-7	5.41	1.19
Professional Respect	3	1-7	5.43	1.37

MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003)

The MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) is a 15 item, six-point Likert scale that measures a person's trait mindfulness in a unidimensional capacity. The average scores for the eight leader respondents of the MAAS were 4.16 out of a possible six based on the Likert scale (1 = almost always; 2 = very frequently; 3 = somewhat frequently; 4 = somewhat infrequently; 5 = very infrequently; 6 = almost never). The leader group's overall mindfulness is slightly higher than mid-range trait mindfulness but lower than the normative average of 4.2 (Brown & Ryan, 2003). This indicates that 75 % of the respondents were fairly close to the average score of 4.16,

indicating that they have a higher than mid-range trait mindfulness, with mid-range being a score of three). This information is represented in table 11.

Table 11

MAAS Descriptive Statistics for Leader Survey

MAAS	Number of Items	Score Range	Normative Mean	Leader Mean	*SD*
Overall	15	1-6	4.2	4.16	0.87

Institutional Groupset Comparison

Data was collected from two institutional leader-faculty pairings (see table 12). For Institution One, there were two leader participants and three faculty participants. The average of Institution One's two leader's scores was slightly lower on the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) than the group average (4.1 compared with 4.16). However, the averaged faculty LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) scores from Institution One were better than the group average (6.19 compared with 5.24). Institution Two's leaders rated themself with a 4.33 in overall trait mindfulness, slightly above the group average of 4.16. Likewise, the institution's two faculty rated their relationship as 6.58, significantly higher than the group average of 5.24

Table 12

Comparison of Institutional Responses

MAAS	**Participants**	**Number of Items**	**Score Range**	**Mean**	***SD***
Institution 1	2	15	1-6	4.1	0.96
Institution 2	1	15	1-6	4.33	-
LMX-MDM	**Participants**	**Number of Items**	**Score Range**	**Mean**	***SD***
Institution 1	3	12	1-7	6.19	0.64
Institution 2	1	12	1-7	6.58	-

A Pearson correlation coefficient was run in Excel comparing Institution One and Institution Two (see table 13). There was a positive correlation between leader MAAS scores and faculty's relationship ratings via the LMX-MDM. This positive correlation held for the LXM-MDM dimensions of Affect, Loyalty, and Professional Respect. The contribution dimension was likely zero because Institution One's average for that dimension and Institution Two's solitary score were six.

Table 13

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Data

Institution	**MAAS**	**LMX-MDM**	**Affect**	**Loyalty**	**Contribution**	**Professional Respect**
One	4.1*	6.19*	6.33*	6.33*	6**	6.11*
Two	4.3	6.58	7	7	6**	6.33
Pearson Result	-	1	1	1	0	1

* *Indicates an average score.*

Qualitative Analysis

After the participants' interviews were transcribed, member checks completed, and coding finished, the *in vivo* codes were categorized into themes for clarity of understanding and analysis related to this study's research questions. The participants' interviews provided great insight into their lived experiences of their current work life. The participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their identity, and any reference to their institution has been de-identified. The faculty pseudonyms are Sam and Charlie. In these quotes, any references to their leader have been de-identified. The leader pseudonyms are Eileen, Rose, and Crissy.

Faculty

Eleven faculty self-identified as willing to participate in the interview, but only two completed the interview process. Of the participants, one was male and one female, both white or Caucasian, both from different institutions. One had worked under their leader for two to six months, and the other for three to five years. Both of the participants were friendly and engaged during the interview and in turn, asked questions of this author about the study, its impetus, and progression.

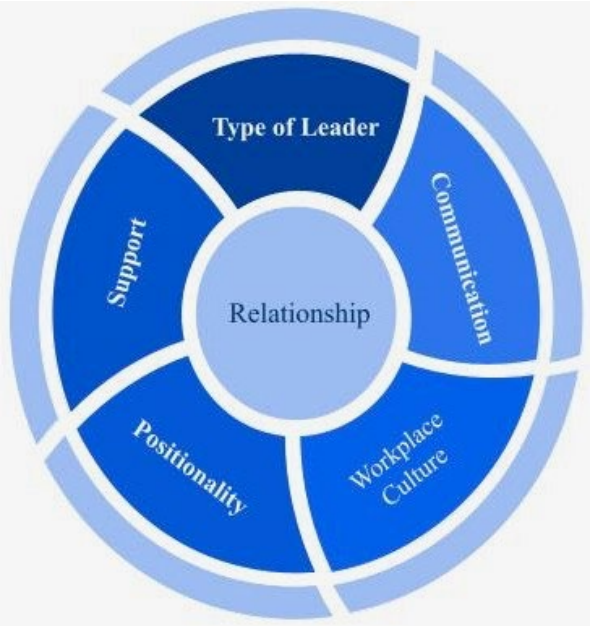
Faculty Interview Themes

In the faculty interviews, five themes were identified: (a) type of leader, (b) communication, (c) workplace culture, (d) positionality, and (e) support. All of the themes influence the nature of the relationship that each of the participants has with their leader. Originally this author considered **r**elationships as one of the major themes; however, upon further reflection, it was evident that the five themes, in their totality, compose that of the leader-faculty relationship. Thus relationship was not a theme but instead a concept composed of the

five themes (see Figure 7). Because of the small sample size for the faculty interviews and the dichotomous nature of their overall interviews, many of the codes borne out in this section are taken from the themes of the questions.

Figure 7.

Faculty Theme Relatedness



Theme 1: Type of Leader. Two juxtaposed elements that helped inform the theme of Type of Leader that is best summarized as (a) creating space and straightforwardness and (b) strong leadership and poor management. There was a clear dichotomous description of the two types of leaders as mentioned previously. Sam repeatedly noted their leader was "Straightforward with what the expectations [are]" and "I appreciate that [they] kind of gives that space" for Sam to be independent. Conversely, Charlie described a leader who has a visionary leadership style but lacks sufficient managerial skills, stating that

> the leadership issue is where [leader] seems to be doing better so [leader] has a clear vision for where [leader] wants to take the school. . . . And as a means of raising the profile of the school, and that's been fairly successful. And at the same time [the leader's] also started new . . . initiatives at the school and introduce new ones, so I think [leader's] leadership is actually really reasonably strong from that and it's just as management is the . . . the bigger issue.

And that "[Leader's] leadership style is in some ways positive and in other ways chaotic." These descriptions of leaders show up in the remaining two themes of relationship and workplace culture.

Theme 2: Communication. Communication emerged as a theme as both Sam and Charlie expressed how crucial it was to forming their relationship with their leader. Sam often felt that their leader's communication was supportive, stating "I can go to [leader] pretty much at any time with concerns or questions I have about my syllabi or about student behavior patterns or concerns" and "my supervisor fosters that and like encourages us to check in with each other and checks in on us." Whereas Charlie initially identified that

> [leader] not a great communicator and so . . . it . . . causes a lot of frustration and there's a lot of miscommunication and therefore a lot of tensions that come up in the department as a result. And [leader's] not a great listener so it's hard to really engage in a meaningful conversation if that makes any sense.

Charlie was demonstrating a rather disconnected and ineffectual manager, however, noting that

> If you're communicating with [leader], one on one. Well, it depends on who you are, so I can speak from my experience and I'm a [redacted identifying features]. Speaking with

> [leader], one on one. I've never had any problems with [leader]. In fact it's always been pleasant conversation, for the most part. I've heard from other colleagues that it's awful and that . . . I think it depends on your positionality I think. I think that has a lot to do" [with it].

Theme 3: Workplace Culture. Two common yet divergent elements informed the theme of workplace culture (a) isolation and (b) politics. Sam described workplace culture in a broader sense stating

> I forget that there's other departments out there, and so. When I was hired . . . the social work department was in a whole separate building which there was two of us so like that's weird. And then everyone kind of got sent home because of COVID and then everyone got brought back and they were bringing all the faculty into the same building, but they were like sticking us in offices, where they could. And every department is in these pods of offices my boss, and I are as far away from each other as humanly possible in this one building and I am smack dab in the middle [another] department.

Sam noted that they and their leader felt alone in their efforts to advocate for students at times, but despite the broader workplace culture Sam's leader helped foster connection.

Charlie's description of workplace culture is markedly different from Sam's and focuses primarily on the social work department. Charlie identified a culture that was fairly political and focused on money and notoriety, stating that

> Even interpersonally where . . . I've kind of gotten shoved into the innovation side and that puts me at odds with the bureaucrats. And so now there's a lot of tension and people are used to be friendly with I'm not friendly with anymore, because they see me as the

> enemy and aligned with the [leader] and at the same time, the [leader] . . . brings in all these people who have wildly inappropriate interpersonal behaviors but bringing a lot of money, and so they treat people, however they want. Just really abusively and then the [leader] totally back them up because they bring in money, and so you know I don't like that.

Theme 4: Positionality. Positionality emerged with the sub-theme of togetherness. Charlie identified race and gender (please note that specifics have not been included to protect identities) stating

> Well, it depends on who you are, so I can speak from my experience and I'm a [redacted identifying features]. Speaking with [leader], one on one. I've never had any problems with [leader]. . . . In fact it's always a pleasant conversation, for the most part. I've heard from other colleagues that it's awful and that . . . I think it depends on your positionality I think. I think that has a lot to do [with it].

Additionally, Charlie discussed how they felt about specific work issues and that had contributed to making some elements of the working relationship with their leader easier, but more challenging with colleagues, as is evidenced by the quotes in theme of Workplace Culture.

Sam's positionality played a role mainly in that both they and their leader have similar family situations noting "[they] and I are two of the only faculty members with young unvaccinated children at home," which has helped create a state of understanding between the two. Both participants discussed how having a sense of togetherness around certain identifiers or issues with their leader had helped their relationship with their leader.

Theme 5: Support. Both Sam and Charlie noted support as a key element in their relationship. Sam repeatedly brought up examples of how their leader supported them in learning about the position, with administration, and with colleagues. Stating "[leader] has been a great ally to have to connect with around some of that larger policy discomfort" about COVID, and additionally "acknowledging that we were burnt out, and you know, taking the space to get ready for this semester." Sam also felt that their leader created a space where they are available for them, stating "I can very easily go to [leader] and say what do I do, and so . . . [leader] helps me kind of create the plan."

For Charlie, support, positionality, and workplace culture are closely linked. A specific issue about bureaucracy is mentioned in the previous sections. While that allowed them a more pleasant interaction with the leader, it also created a workplace culture that created divisions between folks they had previously considered friends. However, Charlie also noted that "so long as your efforts are aligned with trying to publish in as high impact journals as possible . . . or is somehow linked to bringing in a lot of funding, then [they're] very supportive of that."

Leaders

Four leaders self-identified to be interview participants, and three completed the interview process. All three identified as female and white or Caucasian. Eileen had been in her role for seven to 11 months, Rose for one to two years, and Crissy for three to five years. The leader participants were friendly and engaged during the interview and asked this author questions about the study, its impetus, and how it was going. Unlike the faculty participants, the leader interviews were more comparable while still having unique experiences.

Leader Interview Themes

In the leader interviews, five major themes emerged. Due to the nature of the second qualitative research question, both (a) type and (b) duration of mindfulness practice were directly asked of the participants and thus were evident themes. *In vivo* themes that emerged related to the leader's experience and understanding of the impact that their mindfulness routines have on their relationships with their faculty are (c) approach to leadership, (d) self-awareness, and (e) individual regard. In contrast, three distinct categories emerged; it became clear through the relational analysis that they are highly dependent on one another as well as mindfulness and the general construct of the relationship (see Figure 8).

Theme 1: Type. All three participants had different types of mindfulness practices. Crissy had the most structured and routine type of practice, noting that she used time at the "gym" and during her "commute" to reflect purposely. Eileen discussed trying to "cultivate this self-awareness, so my mindfulness comes to that self-awareness piece. . . . So it's cultivated a good practice of like that kind of ongoing self-assessment" and that she "find[s] other ways that I'm I bring this into my life, even though it's not a direct practice . . . I get my mindful magazine that comes and reminds me that I should be mindful," and that she does "journal." Rose described that she "tend[s] to read books that . . . [are] either memoirs or you know the happiness project or books on people chasing happiness and you know eat love pray, let's go meditate in India" as well as "spending time with my family" and using her " lightbox . . . sometimes I try to just sit [with] my coffee and have the light . . . but I don't have a routine" as her means of developing mindfulness.

Theme 2: Duration. Eileen stated that her goal is to spend 15 hours a week engaged in mindful pursuits. Rose tries to use the box light for 30 minutes each morning but noted that sometimes this is a time spent multitasking, indicating that it isn't always a mindful pursuit.

Figure 8

Leader Theme Relatedness

Please note that these are only the In Vivo themes.

Theme 3: Approach to Leadership. All three participants described their leadership styles differently. Eileen said she was a servant leader focused on meeting her team where they were. Crissy noted that she is a "collaborative leader" who prefers to engage in "community building." Rose described herself as a very casual and flexible leader who is more content to support her faculty's vision by "trying to facilitate empowerment . . . help people do their best" and that she believes in "autonomy and self-determination" noting that "I don't like to tell people what to do. I'm . . . not seeking to control anyone or direct anyone. . . . I just want a well-functioning team with good morale."

All three participants agreed that mindfulness did influence their leadership style and skills. The participants discussed their desire to make faculty members feel heard and that their input is valued. Crissy did note

> I try to deconstruct the power dynamic a little bit, not that I'm . . . more powerful really in any [meaningful] way. But there is that dynamic that exists . . . I'm somebody's boss . . . they're accountable to me, which [are] . . . both true, but also that's not really . . . a fruitful way of creating a relationship in my experience, so I try to make it clear that you know I do want people's input. And I want to incorporate feedback and ideas into what we're doing and I also try to be clear that . . . at the end of the day, I am responsible for the program, so there are some times, where I'm hearing what you're saying and that's just . . . not something that we're going to be able to do. So, I try to balance that. . . . I check in with people's lives, you know "how's it going." . . . "how are you holding up, "'what can we do to help you?" . . . if I know someone's having a big life event, you know getting married or having a baby or they've had a loss or something I send them a little note, so I just try to keep a personal touch. . . . You know I try to be as accessible as people need me to be.

Crissy also discussed that the importance of having very clear expectations for faculty has helped contribute to more successful relationships. Whereas Rose felt that it has helped her to cultivate a purposeful workplace culture stating

> I think the work we do is important, but I don't think it's the most important thing we do in our lives, and so, for me. In my personal and professional career my family has always come first, at every juncture. I work hard, and all of that, but if there's a competing

> demand and I can only be in one place at that moment family wins out and I'm . . . not bashful or apologetic about that . . . and I apply the same exact thing to all team members.

Additionally, Rose hoped that mindfulness has helped her be "as supportive to the person that might be annoying as the person that is my dear friend." Eileen expressed that mindfulness "influences how I approach the world and engage with people" and allows her to "be able to be . . . the sounding board and the voice . . . "okay I'll let you have that time to process." And that when there is a difficult situation or circumstance it allows her "to stay focused in the moment."

Theme 4: Self-Awareness. Much of what all three participants identified in the previous theme is related to a cultivated sense of self-awareness that has been born out of their mindfulness practices. Both Crissy and Eileen described a self-assessment process that led them to greater self-awareness, which contributed to their approach as a leader and their relationships with faculty. Eileen stated

> I think . . . part of that self-assessment happens . . . I don't know if it's a balancing is the appropriate term, but right there's a piece of looking at a situation. "Okay I'm getting frustrated about the situation. Why am I frustrated?" And then, reflecting I'm frustrated because of X, Y, or Z whatever it might be I'm like okay, then, am I going to do anything to change X, Y, or Z . . . or can I change anything about X, Y, or Z? And if I can't change anything or not going to do anything to change it, for whatever reason, then I'm like okay, then I need to let it go so, then I tell myself that and then work to not be triggered by whatever that is. Right so it's a lot of mental process . . . I mean it's like the script that I've created in my head. . . . Okay, I need to take a deep breath and need to recognize

> that. . . . You know, whatever my next steps are you know either letting it go or finding a different approach.

Crissy discussed the difference between her current higher education leadership position and that of one in the human service industry, stating

> [In my previous job] I just couldn't maintain that and so that shift kind of incurred in like you know, going from administration to teaching. Really caused me to like shift my own thinking, so I would say that that's kind of where I became more aware of mindfulness being important because prior to coming here I would be like "whatever who has time for mindfulness like I'm busy," and now I know from my own reflection and experience . . . that's exactly why we need to practice mindfulness.

Crissy and Eileen also discussed that self-awareness brought about an understanding of what they need to manage the natural and complex situations that arise from a team dynamic.

Rose also brought up self-awareness at the very start of our discussion. It was more in terms of thinking that engaging in this interview would be helpful to increase her self-awareness. Later in the interview, she said that

> I think I'm calmer, and about the big picture. Because of my awareness of its role in our lives, . . . which I think comes from mindfulness. . . . You know the things that people can get upset about sometimes I think I can see the bigger picture and just know it'll pass or it's not a big deal

And that her awareness "then gives me the skill to be calming and a voice of reason in that conversation. You know, or just not to get . . . in a huff myself."

Theme 5: Individual Engagement. This theme arose as it was clear that all participants intentionally navigated faculty relationships based on the individual faculty member. Both Eileen and Rose specifically brought up the importance of understanding each faculty member's strengths and areas of growth. Rose stated

> I think, depending on who you're working with people need different things. . . . I've got a couple of faculty members that can . . . have a strong sense of anxiety [if] there's going to be change or something like that and so you know . . . if I'm speaking or working with them, I might insert . . . some calming or . . . points of fact or something that that would stop someone on high alert. And if I were working with someone . . . who's more scattered I might try to help them be more focused. It just depends on what my assessment of what that person needs from me.

And Eileen acknowledged that her management "varies, based on the individual," stating that for her team

> What makes us work well, is that we all care about our students and we all care about getting them the best education and working together to make that happen. . . . I think it goes back to knowing who they [faculty] are, and why they're problematic. Right, so I have . . . the absent minded professor . . . so I have to make sure I target my questions. . . . I can check in to see like very specific, it can't be the broad how's it going, it has to be like hey have you done this, you know tell me about that, like very specific. Right and then I have . . . [a] more emotional person that I need to be checking and treating that a little bit differently . . . then I have some like the rabble rouser . . . so I need to be aware of what's going on that end. You know, fortunately [they're] also upfront and tells me

> everything it is so I have to. Also, you know not to personalize things like you know their stuff going on, like I'll own my mistakes, but it also not personalize stuff, it's theirs. And I tell my students that to like always that self-assessment if somebody like blowing up on you like, how much is this is mine, how much do I need to own and how much is it them and I just need you know not own it and help manage it.

In essence, both do their best to target both duties and how information is received and given to meet the needs of their faculty. Crissy did not talk about individuals in the same sense as the other two but brought up that her mindfulness practice increased her ability to listen actively, noting

> I'm going to be able to really focus on what this person needs. I used to think that my role is really to . . . provide an answer. And so I think I spent a lot of time listening to respond and I think more recently I've been listening to just try to listen, just try to receive whatever is being given to me. And that has changed my leadership style a lot, I might say, like okay tell me more about that or ask more . . . probing questions and really try to hear the answer. As opposed to being in my own life [and] what am I going to say when I'm hearing you ask this question . . . what is my response going to be like, how are we going to fix this . . . having this internal dialogue it feels like that's quieter now.

These skills are inherently targeted toward an individual and help them have a successful working experience.

Summary

Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered during this study and were presented in this chapter. This study used a fixed, explanatory, sequential mixed-methods design. Personal experiences provided a more granular view of the quantitative data collected through the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) and the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003). The quantitative data provided a burgeoning answer to the first two research questions presented in this study. The qualitative data gathered via semistructured interviews helped answer the second two research questions. The data presented within this chapter indicates that the hypotheses put forth by this author were mostly borne out and that the greater a leader's trait mindfulness, the better their employees experience their relationship. The coming chapter will summarize the methodology, analysis, and findings and allow for the drawing of conclusions based on the gathered data.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the study *Mindfulness and Its Impact on Leader-Employee Relations in Higher Education Social Work Departments.* This sequential, fixed, mixed-methods study explores how mindfulness practice by leaders in higher education social work programs influences the leader-employee relationship among a sample of higher education social work department leaders and their faculty. The study was developed out of the intersection of personal, professional, and academic interests in both mindfulness and leadership. Additionally, this study began to fill the gap in the existing literature on how a leader's individual mindfulness practice influences the relationship between them and their employees (Reb et al., 2019; Rooney et al., 2021; Urrila, 2021). This author posed the following research questions:

Quantitative

RQ1. Using the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS) to assess trait mindfulness, how do social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions rate their level of trait mindfulness?

RQ2. Using the MAAS to examine trait mindfulness and Multidimensionality of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX-MDM) to examine social work faculty rating of their relationship with their department head, to what extent do higher scores of the department heads' trait mindfulness result in higher relationship satisfaction with social work faculty?

Qualitative

RQ3. How does a sample of social work faculty at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their experience and their relationship with their department head?

RQ4. How does a sample of social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their mindfulness routines and the experience and understanding of the impact that their mindfulness routines have on their relationships with social work faculty?

The conceptual framework used in this study was that of a most fundamental nature, relationships (Aron et al., 2017; Atkins & Styles, 2015; Bennis, 2007; Blustein, 2011; Boyatzis, 2015; Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Goldman Schuyler, 2010; Hyland et al., 2015; Northouse, 2019; Rooney et al., 2019; 2021). Via the research questions, this study explores the relationship that one has with others (leader and employee), that which an individual has with hisor her self (inner world and thoughts), that an individual's relationship with mindfulness as a tool available to regulate or improve him- or herself, and the relationship one has with a leadership skill set.

This study used quantitative self-report data and qualitative narrative interviews as a means of investigation. The study's participants all engaged in quantitative surveys that combined demographic data and previously validated measures. The leader participants received a survey that included the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003), and the faculty participants received a survey that included the LMX-MDM (Liden & Ryan, 1998). This data did indicate that the more mindful the leader, the higher the faculty rates their relationship. Survey respondents were self-selected to be contacted for a follow-up interview, and these interviews were held and recorded

using Zoom. The interviews were also transcribed using Zoom, and then this author corrected them for content and accuracy based on the video recording. Participants were all asked to engage in a member-checking process for accuracy and general impressions. The themes for faculty that emerged were the type of leadership, workplace culture, support, and positionality, all feeding into their relationship with their leader. The themes that emerged from leaders were approach to leadership, self-awareness, and individual engagement. These were influenced by their mindfulness practice and fed into how they cultivated their relationships with their employees. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of this study, discusses the implications, and makes recommendations for both action and research.

Interpretations and Importance of Findings

For organizational purposes, the interpretation and importance of these findings will be further explored by addressing the four research questions. For the leader survey, there were nine participants and 27 for the faculty survey that completed all the questions. Four of the leaders self-identified as interested in doing interviews, and three completed them. Ten faculty members identified as willing to participate in the interview, but only two completed the interview process.

Interpretation and Importance of Findings for Question 1: Department Head Mindfulness

The first research question asked:

1. Using the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS) to assess trait mindfulness, how do social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions rate their level of trait mindfulness?

The average scores for the eight respondents of the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) were 4.16 out of a possible six based on the Likert scale (1 = almost always; 2 = very frequently; 3 = somewhat

frequently; 4 = somewhat infrequently; 5 = very infrequently; 6 = almost never). The leader group's overall mindfulness is slightly higher than mid-range trait mindfulness but lower than the normative average of 4.2 (Brown & Ryan, 2003). This is an interesting finding given the social work profession's ethical call for self-care (Murry, 2021; NASW, 2021), the need for self-awareness (Feize, 2020; Feize & Fever, 2019), and the demand for clinical therapeutic alliance (Bordin, 1979; Rogers, 1957). Whereas the literature does not address the profession's overall mindfulness, it has been noted that mindfulness can help increase self-awareness, as was explored by Hyland et al. (2015) and Urrila (2021) in Chapter Two. Furthermore, both the Miller et al. (2018) and Myers et al. (2020) studies indicate that self-care practice leads to mindfulness, a point echoed by Urrila (2021) in their literature review. Both of these would seem to indicate that social workers would have an increased level of mindfulness, but perhaps the profession's need for self-care, self-awareness, and therapeutic rapport has given way to social work leaders being more aware of their own inattention than other leaders might be.

Interpretation and Importance of Findings for Question 2: Impact of Leader Mindfulness on Leader-Employee Relationship

The second research question asked:

2. Using the MAAS to examine trait mindfulness and Multidimensionality of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX-MDM) to examine social work faculty rating of their relationship with their department head, to what extent do higher scores of the department heads' trait mindfulness result in higher relationship satisfaction with social work faculty?

When looking at the mean score for both the LMX-MDM (n = 5.24; Liden & Maslyn, 1998) and the MAAS (n = 4.16; Brown & Ryan, 2003, both are slightly above mid-range, indicating that leaders are self-reporting slightly lower levels of trait mindfulness than the normative average (4.16 vs. 4.2); however, their faculty have a slightly more favorable view of their relationships with their leaders. Despite the 0.04 difference between the participant leaders and the normative average, the leaders in this study did rate themselves higher than the midpoint (n = 3). These scores could indicate that a higher level of trait mindfulness impacts that leader-faculty relationship. This finding is further corroborated by the statistical comparison between the institutional group sets. The result of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was a positive one, which indicates that there is a solid correlation between higher trait mindfulness (via scores on the MAAS) and higher faculty relationship ratings on the LMX-MDM.

Adding the qualitative findings gives a deeper understanding of how intentional practice consistently could foster higher trait mindfulness and thus relationship scores. The combined quantitative and qualitative findings add a further exploration of Boyztzis's (2015) understanding of mindfulness as a tool that positively influences others. Sam and the leader, Crissy, were the leader-employee duo whose data is represented as Institution 2 in Table 12 (chapter 4). Crissy was the only leader interviewed with a routine mindfulness practice and averaged a 4.33 on the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003), compared to the 4.16 that was the average score on the MAAS. Sam's averaged LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) score was 6.58, far above the averaged LMX scores of 5.24 and well outside the average SD of 0.44. In essence, these findings could indicate that a routine mindfulness practice positively impacts the leader-employee relationship.

Additionally, these findings could help support Nübold et al.'s (2020) findings that leaders who rated higher on the MAAS had better employee ratings of authentic leadership. The findings also help begin to answer some of Rooney et al.'s (2019) calls to further understand the measurable and purposeful individual effects of Social Practice Wisdom. However, more data would be needed to make a definitive declaration.

There were three lower faculty scores on the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). These indicate that those individuals do not have a positive relationship with or favorable understanding of their relationship with their department head. It would have been ideal to have a leader survey data and qualitative data from both the leader and faculty to extrapolate better if the findings from the Pearson analysis held for leaders with lower-scoring faculty surveys. The same would have been true for the one leader who rated herself at a 2.53 on the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

Interpretation and Importance of Findings for Question 3: Relationships Matter

The third research question asked:

3. How does a sample of social work faculty at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their experience and their relationship with their department head?

As noted in the previous chapter, the experiences of the two faculty were fairly dichotomous. Sam has a generally positive and "straightforward" relationship with the leader, whereas Charlie said, "I've never had any problems with [them]. . . . In fact it's always a pleasant conversation, for the most part. I've heard from other colleagues that it's awful and that . . . I think it depends on your positionality." Charlie also described an overall divisive and political working

environment made so by the fact that the leader is “not a great communicator and so . . . it . . . causes a lot of frustration and there's a lot of miscommunication and therefore a lot of tensions that come up in the department, as a result.”

The juxtaposition of Sam and Charlie’s experiences does create an interesting paradox through which one leader’s areas of growth are actualized by the other leader, through which support appears as a common thread. Charlie felt supported by the leader in efforts to dismantle bureaucracy, stating that the leader “saw the same way as I did essentially.” However, that support also came with “a lot of tension and people . . . [I] used to be friendly with, I'm not friendly with anymore.” Even though Charlie felt supported by the leader with one particular issue, it was clear that the leader was “not a great communicator . . . [or] listener” and that created some relationship tension. Whereas Sam’s experience was generally based on positive support, as evidenced by the statement, “I can very easily go to [leader] and say what do I do, and so . . . [leader] helps me kind of create the plan” and that [leader] is “straightforward with what the expectations [are]” and despite some of the larger workplace culture issues within the institution there was a level of connection. It is interesting to note that while this author’s general impression of contradiction between these two faculty members, it is interesting that neither faculty participant could answer how their leader’s mindfulness practice (or lack of) influenced that leader’s skills.

These findings help underscore this study’s conceptual framework of relationships, namely the leader-employee relationship (Bennis, 2007; Blustein, 2011; Boyatzis, 2015; Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). Blustein (2011) argued that human relationships are vital to all aspects of a person’s work life, and in the two interviews, both Sam and Charlie describe how

the two divergent leadership styles impact their experience of work. Sam expressed overall positive regard and experience in the relationship with leader Crissy. This relationship helped Sam cope with the isolation brought on by COVID-19 and the institution's policies and procedures, as well as the hurdles of teaching in a constantly changing environment. Alternatively, Charlie's experience of the relationship with the leader was more complex, being "personally pleasant," but overall "chaotic" and based on "positionality" and resulted in fractured collegial relationships.

Due to the dichotomous nature of Sam and Charlie's leader relationship experiences and the lack of data for Charlie's leader, it is harder to understand the role mindfulness plays. However, Charlie's experience of poor and chaotic communication indicates a leader who is potentially not self-aware, behaviorally-flexible, open to other's experiences, or otherwise exemplifying the leadership qualities outlined by Baron et al. (2018), Brendel and Bennett (2016), Goldman Schuyler (2010), and Hyland et al. (2015) discussed in Chapter Two. Sam's experience with Crissy seems to exemplify self-awareness, behavioral-flexibility, openness to others' experiences (Baron et al., 2018; Brendel & Vennett, 2016; Goldman Schuyler, 2010; Hyland et al., 2015) and that the higher a leader's DM, the higher the employee well-being and lower stress levels (Reb et al., 2014; Reb et al., 2019).

Interpretation and Importance of Findings for Question 4: Influence of Mindfulness

The fourth research question asked:

4. How does a sample of social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their mindfulness routines and the experience and

understanding of the impact that their mindfulness routines have on their relationships with social work faculty?

All three leader participants described different mindfulness practices. Only one, Crissy, had a routine practice. While Rose does have a morning practice of using her lightbox, she noted that "I don't have a routine." However, all three identified efforts to be mindful and that it led them to be more attuned to their reactions and to develop an ability to keep those "in check" when working with faculty. Rose stated that it gives her the sense that "this will pass, this isn't a big deal in the scheme of things, then gives me the skill to be calming and a voice of reason in that conversation." Even though Eileen struggled to find the right word for her experience, her term "balancing" seemed accurate to her description of keeping multiple contextual elements in mind when working with others. Crissy was very attuned to the fact that her mindfulness practice allowed her to see areas that she needs "to acknowledge that it's also hard for me" and that she's realized she has "some avoidant tendencies . . . so I've really been conscious to . . . address that."

Regarding how they lead their faculty, all discussed an ability to meet faculty where they are and tailor their approach and work demands to each individual based on that person's strengths and areas of growth. For the most part, the three leaders noted a positive but professional regard for their faculty. Rose, however, did note that she had personal relationships with faculty outside of the work environment, but "I hope, I believe I put energy into being as supportive to the person that might be annoying as the person that is my dear friend." All three were able to identify and recognize that through mindfulness came a level of self-awareness that has helped them develop their leadership style or skills to create that tailored approach with the

understanding that, as Rose said, “people need different things.” This approach generally centered around being “calmer” or “more sensitive and figuring out what the need” is.

These comments all suggest support for Baron et al.’s (2018) understanding that engaging in a mindfulness routine helps leaders be more behaviorally flexible as they better understand their own internal and external experiences and help them to be open to the experience of others. Additionally, the interviews add substance to Hyland’s (2015) assumption that mindfulness can enhance self-awareness and Urilla’s (2021) understanding that mindfulness does impact the leader-follower relationship. Similarly, the findings underscore Vreeling et al.’s (2019) findings that leaders who engaged in mindfulness practices had an increased sense of internal knowledge, self-regulation, the ability to not hold on to demanding or troublesome behaviors and generally were less judgmental and more curious about others’ experiences.

The interviews also help to emphasize Brendle and Bennett’s (2016) argument that mindfulness practices can help leaders to be more “open, grounded, and engaged in a way that builds resilience and resourcefulness, and improves relationships in complex environments” (p. 409). All three leaders communicated going through aspects of Brendle & Bennett’s three-phase model 1) expanding awareness to receive mind-body insights; 2) critical reflection and dialogue around insights to change behaviors; 3) transforming practice into attunement and accepting ways of being.

These findings, as with RQ3, underscore the study’s conceptual framework by further understanding the relationships an individual leader has with hie or her self (Atkins & Styles, 2015), as attested by the participants claims of better self-understanding and knowing how to manage their own reactions. Similarly, the findings also support the notion that leaders’

relationship with mindfulness is a tool available to regulate or improve themselves (Aron et al., 2017; Brendel & Bennett, 2016; Goldman Schuyler, 2010; Hyland et al., 2015; Rooney et al., 2019; 2021). Additionally, engaging in mindfulness allows them to recognize their relationship with their leadership skill set (Northouse, 2019) and better navigate the areas where there is existing strength and weakness.

Implications

The data collected from this study aimed to fill the gap in the literature that was identified by Reb et al. (2019), Rooney et al. (2021), and Urrila (2021) to explore how leaders' individual mindfulness practice influences the relationship between them and their employees. While much of the literature presented in chapter two might lead to an inference that there would be a positive correlation between a leader's mindfulness practice and their employee relationships, there had been no empirical evidence. The quantitative data does show a positive correlation between a leader's overall trait mindfulness and the employee's rating of their relationship. However, that data on its own does not explore a leader's specific mindfulness practice. This was explored in greater detail during the qualitative phase of the research.

In the leaders' interviews, participants described their mindfulness practice and habits. While only one leader had a routine practice, all felt that they had benefited from their cultivation of mindful moments and reflection. Their employee relationships had benefited as well. It was ideal to have a leader-faculty duo of Crissy and Sam represented in the quantitative data (Institution Two as outlined in Table 12) and qualitative data. This small subset of participants shows that routine mindfulness practice could positively impact the leader-employee

relationship. While this finding should be explored in greater depth, it could help to inform higher education leaders on how to enhance their relationships with their employees.

Recommendations for Practice

At the time of this study, the world entered its third straight year of the COVID-19 pandemic that influenced every facet of human life (Haleem et al., 2020); with constant changes and "new normals" the need for more mindful leadership has never been greater. These changes also left the world of higher education reeling as it tries to grapple with a dwindling pipeline of students (Boeckenstedt, 2022; Dennis, 2020; Grawe, 2021; Rhyneer, 2019; Zinshteyn, 2016), lower budgets, and overall financial hardship (Butrymowicz & D'Amato, 2020; Hess, 2021; Weissman, 2022), leaving behind a ravaged workforce in desperate need of solid, consistent, and supportive leadership (Basko, 2022; Gannon, 2022; Zahneis, 2022-a; Zahneis, 2022-b). Basko (2022) calls for changes in how higher education approaches professional development, insourcing rather than outsourcing, individualization rather than cookie-cutter, and the need for a better connection with management. With all of this and the data collected and subsequent findings of this study, it is recommended that higher education institutions develop institution trainings to help leaders develop their mindfulness practices. It is also recommended that leaders find ways independently of their institution to develop their mindfulness practice.

Recommendations for Further Research

As outlined in the limitations section below, the small sample size makes it hard to generalize the findings of this study. It is recommended that future studies broaden their participant pool to garner a greater depth and breadth of response. One way to do this would be to look at all leaders and employees within higher education institutions across the U.S. or

broaden it to other industries. Conversely, mindfulness's links to social work via self-care, self-awareness, and clinical modalities might suggest a similar study in a wider geographic area. Another avenue not explored in this study was comparing and or contrasting BSW and MSW programs.

Initially, this author planned to use Cramer's (2018) cross-case comparison but did not have more than one qualitative group set—so no comparison could be made. Cross-case comparison occurs when the researcher "consolidates qualitative and quantitative data by constructing holistic internally coherent profiles that are used to test or expand upon qualitatively or quantitatively derived themes for the purposes of comparison" (Cramer, 2018, p. 104). This type of comparison would allow the primary investigator to compare specifically institutional group sets to get a better understanding of how a leader's specific mindfulness routines impact their faculty's experience of relationships. In this study, for this type of comparison to be possible multiple institutions would have had to have both a leader and at least one faculty that (a) completed both surveys and (b) engaged in the interview processes. In future studies, researchers may be able to incorporate questions about mindfulness routines and their duration, frequency, and type into a survey, and that would possibly generate more data for those specific questions.

In this study, leader participants were not asked to define or operationalize mindfulness. It would be ideal for future researchers to ask leader participants to describe their understanding of mindfulness in the interview. This would allow the researcher to explore the varied understandings of mindfulness. Conversely, researchers could provide participants with a definition of mindfulness to narrow the scope of participants' answers. Additionally, asking

leader participants how the COVID pandemic influenced their mindfulness practices, and their leadership practices could provide additional contextual information. Similarly, asking faculty participants about how the COVID pandemic influenced their experience of the relationship with their leader and workplace culture would add further contextual insights.

This author chose the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and the LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998) for several reasons, outlined in Chapter Three. However, there are other measures of mindfulness and LMX theory to be considered. In 2021, Hülsheger and Alberts published an article outlining a new measure for mindfulness related to work, The Mindfulness@Work Scale. This scale is markedly and specifically different from the MAAS or the FFMQ (Baer et al., 2006), two of the most widely used mindfulness measures. Hülsheger and Alberts (2021) argue that the MAAS may miss facets related to the quality of awareness due to its unidimensionality and that it "operationalizes mindfulness as the converse of inattentiveness or absent-mindedness" (p. 5). The Mindfulness@Work Scale measures instead four areas thought to contribute to overall trait mindfulness: Describing, Nonreactivty, Nonjudging, and Act with Awareness. Hülsheger and Alberts (2021) was published too late for this author to consider, but it could provide a different insight into the mindfulness of leaders.

Limitations

As discussed in previous chapters, this study, like all studies, is limited by its design. All mechanisms for data collection were based on self-report, which can be problematic due to self-report bias when participants feel pressured to have more desirable answers (Arnold & Feldman, 1981; Bergomi et al., 2012; Devaux & Sassi, 2016). Additionally, the study was also limited due to the sample and participant pool sizes. While a deliberate choice on the part of the author and

her committee to narrow the scope for better manageability, this does negatively affect the study's scope and generalizability. Furthermore, personal bias toward others, both on the part of participants and this author, could play a role in how information was given, collected, analyzed, and interpreted (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

It is important to note three other procedural issues that could limit the findings. In the demographic questionnaire in both the leader and faculty surveys, the time ranges for both Time in Role (leader) and Time Under Current Leader (faculty), there was an error in how time was denoted. The categories were as expressed as follows: (1) less than 2 months, (2) 2–6 months, (3) 7–11 months, (4) 1–2 years, (5) 3–5 years, (6) 5–7 years, (7) 7–10 years, and (8) 10+ years). This is how they are denoted in Appendices F and G, and the study's IRB proposal. However, the fifth, sixth, and seventh options should have been written (5) 3–4 years, (6) 5–7 years, and (7) 8–10 years, not allowing any overlap in duration. While this was an oversight on this author's part, it likely does not have any significant bearing on the outcomes of the data because the LMX can be accounted for with as little as two months in a leader-employee paring (Nahrgang & Seo, 2016). Additionally, the timing of the surveys likely impacted the response rate. The initial emails to participants went out just before most universities close for the winter holiday; had this been sent out sooner it may have resulted in a higher response rate.

Additionally, the gender identification of the participants is also a limitation, as the majority of the participants in both the data collection and the interviews identified as female. In the leader survey and interviews, all the participants identified as female. The only area of the study that had equal male and female participants was the faculty interviews. None of the

participants identified as anything beyond a binary gender experience. All of this limits the generalizability of the findings.

Furthermore, the small number of participants is also a limitation. While the participant pool was larger for the quantitative surveys (nine for leaders and 27 for faculty) than the qualitative studies (three for leaders and two for faculty), it was still not a large percentage of the overall requests that were sent (17. 65% for leaders and 8.43% for faculty). These low numbers could represent an issue with generalizability to other higher education social work departments.

Conclusion

This mixed-methods study explored how mindfulness practice by leaders in higher education social work programs influences the leader-employee relationship among a sample of higher education social work department leaders and their faculty. This study was developed out of the intersection of personal, professional, and academic interests in both mindfulness and leadership. Additionally, this study was intended to fill the gap in the existing literature on how a leader's individual mindfulness practice influences the relationship between them and their employees (Reb et al., 2019; Rooney et al., 2021; Urrila, 2021). This study answered the following four research questions:

1. Using the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS) to assess trait mindfulness, how do social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions rate their level of trait mindfulness?
2. Using the MAAS to examine trait mindfulness and Multidimensionality of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX-MDM) to examine social work faculty rating of their relationship with their department head, to what extent do higher scores of the department

heads' trait mindfulness result in higher relationship satisfaction with social work faculty?

3. How does a sample of social work faculty at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their experience and their relationship with their department head?
4. How does a sample of social work department heads at a select sample of higher education institutions describe their mindfulness routines and the experience and understanding of the impact that their mindfulness routines have on their relationships with social work faculty?

The quantitative data bore evidence that there could be a positive correlation between a leader's level of trait mindfulness and how their employees rate and experience the leader-employee relationship. This finding was bolstered by the qualitative discoveries of how leaders felt mindfulness helped them develop self-awareness that led them to be better able to meet employees where they are on an individual basis. The evidence from the faculty interviews is that support is a key element in how they form and understand their relationship with their leaders. It is recommended that higher education institutions focus efforts on helping leaders develop their mindfulness practice and that leaders work to cultivate that practice on their own as well.

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Appendix A

Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) Questions (Brown & Ryan, 2003)

1. I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some time later.
2. I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.
3. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.
4. I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.
5. I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.
6. I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.
7. It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing.
8. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.
9. I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I am doing right now to get there.
10. I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.
11. I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.
12. I drive places on "automatic pilot" and then wonder why I went there.
13. I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.
14. I find myself doing things without paying attention.
15. I snack without being aware that I'm eating.

These items are rated on a six-point Likhert scale, *(1 = almost always; 2 = very frequently; 3 =somewhat frequently; 4 = somewhat infrequently; 5 = very infrequently; 6 = almost never).*

Yes you are welcome to use the MAAS for your study. You can find the scale, along with background normative and other information, on the 'Lab > Tools for Researchers' page of my Lab website, the link for which is below. The 'Publications' page has papers related to the validation of the MAAS. See especially Brown and Ryan (2003).

All the best with your research,

Kirk

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WellbeingLab

Senior Editor, Oxford Handbook of Hypo-egoic Phenomena (2016). Oxford U Press.
Senior Editor, Handbook of Mindfulness (2015). Guilford Press.
Academic Editor, PLOS ONE

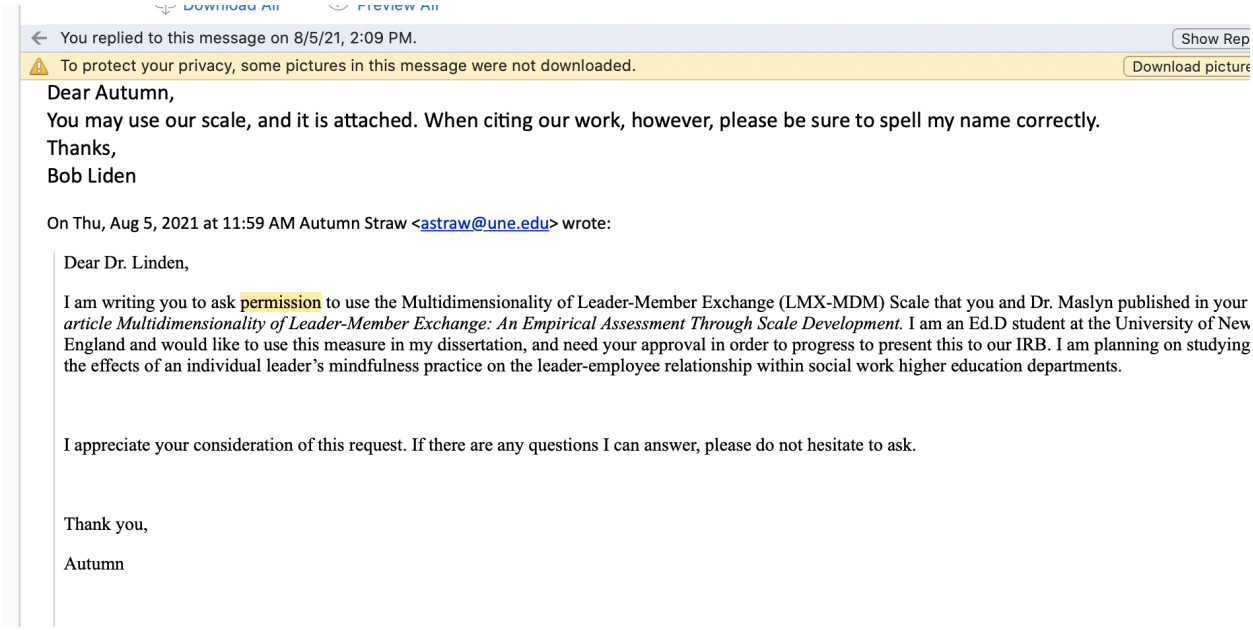
Pronouns: he/him/his

Appendix B

Multidimensionality of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX-MDM) Scale (Liden & Maslyn, 1998)

1. I respect my manager's knowledge of and competence on the job.
2. My manager would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake.
3. My manager is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend.
4. I do not mind working my hardest for my manager.
5. My manager would come to my defense if I were "attacked" by others.
6. I like my manager very much as a person.
7. I do work for my manager that goes beyond what is expected of me in my job.
8. I admire my manager's professional skills.
9. My manager defends (would defend) my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question.
10. My manager is a lot of fun to work with.
11. My manager defends (would defend) my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question
12. I am impressed with my manager's knowledge of his/her job.

These items are rated on a seven-point Likert scale *(1= strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 4 = neither disagree nor agree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree)*.



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You replied to this message on 8/5/21, 2:09 PM. Show Rep

To protect your privacy, some pictures in this message were not downloaded. Download picture

Dear Autumn,
You may use our scale, and it is attached. When citing our work, however, please be sure to spell my name correctly.
Thanks,
Bob Liden

On Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:59 AM Autumn Straw <astraw@une.edu> wrote:

> Dear Dr. Linden,
>
> I am writing you to ask permission to use the Multidimensionality of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX-MDM) Scale that you and Dr. Maslyn published in your *article Multidimensionality of Leader-Member Exchange: An Empirical Assessment Through Scale Development.* I am an Ed.D student at the University of New England and would like to use this measure in my dissertation, and need your approval in order to progress to present this to our IRB. I am planning on studying the effects of an individual leader's mindfulness practice on the leader-employee relationship within social work higher education departments.
>
> I appreciate your consideration of this request. If there are any questions I can answer, please do not hesitate to ask.
>
> Thank you,
>
> Autumn

Appendix C

Leader Interview

1. How would you describe your leadership style?
2. How do you manage your team?
3. How do you manage individuals on your team?
4. How do you experience your relationship with your team?
5. How do you generally experience your relationships with individuals you lead?
6. How do you generally experience your relationships with challenging employees?
7. How would you describe your workplace culture?
8. How long have you been practicing mindfulness?
    1. How much time in a typical week do you spend on mindfulness activities?
    2. How much time in a typical day do you spend on mindfulness activities?
9. Do you think your mindfulness practice has influenced your leadership style and skills? (yes or no)

    If yes…

    a. Describe how your mindfulness practice influences your leadership style.
    b. Describe how your mindfulness practice influences your leadership skills.
    c. Describe how your mindfulness practice generally influences your relationships with your employees.
    d. Describe how your mindfulness practice influences your relationships with challenging employees.

If no…

a. Describe what, if any, effect you think mindfulness has in your life.

b. How do you think mindfulness impacts your relationships with others?

c. How do you think mindfulness impacts how you navigate stressful life events?

10. How do you think mindfulness impacts your world view?

Appendix D

Faculty Interview

1. Describe your department head's leadership style and skills.
    a. Describe your department head's management of
        1. Your team
        2. You
    b. Describe how your department head's leadership style impacts your role as faculty:
        1. your work production;
        2. your engagement with students;
        3. your engagement with colleagues.
2. Describe your interpretation of mindfulness.
    a. Does your leader exhibit mindfulness as you've just described?
    b. If so, how?
    c. Describe how your department head's mindfulness impacts your role as faculty:
        1. your work production;
        2. your engagement with students;
        3. your engagement with colleagues.
3. Describe the intersection of your department head's mindfulness and leadership skills.
4. Describe workplace culture as you understand it.
    a. How do you experience your workplace culture?

b. How do you think your department head's leadership style impacts your workplace culture?

c. How do you think your department head's mindfulness impacts your workplace culture?

5. How do you engage other faculty members on your team?
6. Describe your relationships with challenging team mates.
7. Describe, generally, your relationships with individuals that lead you.

Appendix E:

CSWE Accredited Schools of Social Work in the Northeast

with Between 1,000 and 17,000 Students

	Name	Location	2019 Full-time Enrolment
1	Adelphi University	Garden City, NY	7,991
2	Anna Maria College	Paxton, MA	1,299
3	Boston College	Boston, MA	14,747
4	Castleton University	Castleton, VT	2,399
5	Champlain College	Burlington, VT	4,385
6	The College of Our Lady of the Elms	Chicopee, MA	1,495
7	Daemen College	Amherst, NY	2,401
8	Dominican College of Blauvelt	Orangeburg, NY	1,868
9	Fordham University	Bronx, NY	16,972
10	Gordon College	Wenham, MA	1,857
11	Iona College	Rochelle, NY	3,613
12	Keuka College	Keuka Park, NY	1,777
13	Marist College	Poughkeepsie, NY	6,738
14	Mercy College	Dobbs Ferry, NY	10,557
15	Molloy College	Long Island, NY	5,113
16	Nazareth College of Rochester	Rochester, NY	2,979
17	Niagara University	Buffalo, NY	3,723
18	Nyak College	New York City, NY	1,981

19	Providence College	Providence, RI	4,649
20	Quinnipiac University	Quinnipiac, CT	10,076
21	Regis College	Weston, MA	3,194
22	Sacred Heart University	Fairfield, CT	8,870
23	Saint Josephs	Standish, ME	1,987
24	Salve Regina University	Newport, RI	2,574
25	Siena College	Loudonville, NY	3,269
26	Simmons University	Boston, MA	6,535
27	Skidmore	Saratoga Springs, NY	2,663
28	Smith College	Northampton, MA	2,894
29	Springfield College	Springfield, MA	3,110
30	The College of St. Rose	Albany, NY	4,004
31	Touro College	New York City, NY	11,631
32	University of Saint Joseph	West Hartford, CT	2,025
33	Western New England University	Springfeild, MA	3,801
34	Yeshiva University	New York City, NY	5,357

Appendix F

Leader Survey Demographics

1. Age (select 18–105)
2. Race (open question)
3. Gender identity (open question)
4. Title (open question)
5. Time in current role (less than 2 months; 2–6 months; 7–11 months; 1–2 years; 3–5 years; 5–7 years; 7–10 years; 10+ years)
6. School—Drop down menu (optional)—the following passage will be underneath:

   Please note that the use of the school name is only for the researcher to pair employees and leaders—this information will not be published or reported out.
7. Please add your preferred email if you would like to be considered for an interview. Interview invitations will be selected at random.

Appendix G

Faculty Survey Demographics

1. Age (select 18–105)
2. Race (open ended)
3. Gender identity (open ended)
4. Role within department (select: part-time staff; full-time staff; part-time faculty with; full-time faculty; tenured faculty; adjunct faculty; student worker)
5. Time under your current department head/leader: (less than 2 months; 2–6 months; 7–11 months; 1–2 years; 3–5 years; 5–7 years; 7–10 years; 10+ years)
6. School (drop down menu—optional)

   Please note that the use of the school name is only for the researcher to pair employees and leaders—this information will not be published or reported out.
7. Please add your preferred email if you would like to be considered for an interview. Interview invitations will be selected at random.

Appendix H

Information Sheet

University of New England, Department/Program of EdD

Title of the Study: Mindfulness and Its Impact on Leader-Employee Relations in Higher Education Social Work Departments

Researcher Name(s): Autumn A. Straw, astraw@une.edu;

Study Background

- The general purpose of this research is to better understand the influence (if any) that a social work department head's mindfulness has on their employee-leader relationship. Participants in this study will be asked to complete an online survey. Findings from this study will be used in a written dissertation that will be publicly available and in a presentation of the dissertation that will be for the dissertation committee, faculty, and others associated with the researcher and UNE. There is a possibility that the findings will be used in scholarly writing for journal or other publication.

Possible Risks and Benefits of Taking Part in This Study

- The probability and magnitude of harm/discomfort anticipated as a result of participating in this study are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.
- There is a slight risk of a breach of confidentiality.
- The potential benefits of this study include better understanding how mindfulness practice influences the work environment, which may, in turn, draw more interest among leaders to engage in mindfulness practices.
-

Your Rights as a Study Participant

I understand that:

- My participation in this study will take approximately 10–20 minutes. I agree to complete the study in one sitting.
- I have the right to skip or not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

- I will not be compensated for participating in this study.
- My participation is voluntary, and I may discontinue participation in the study at any time by closing the survey. My refusal to participate will not result in any penalty. (If I choose not to complete the survey data, the data I have submitted may still be used in the analysis of the study.)
- My responses will be kept confidential, to the extent permitted by law. The data will be stored in a secure location [a password-protected computer, and spreadsheet], will be available to [the principal investigator], and research reports will only present findings on a group basis, without any personal or school identifying information.

To keep a copy of this information sheet please print and save for your records.

Your completion of this study implies your consent.

Appendix I

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

Information Sheet

Project Title: Mindfulness and Its Impact on Leader-Employee Relations in Higher Education Social Work Departments

Principal Investigator(s): Autumn A. Straw, astraw@une.edu;

Introduction:

- Please read this form. You may also request that the form is read to you. The purpose of this form is to give you information about this research study.
- You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study, now, during or after the project is complete. You can take as much time as you need to decide whether or not you want to participate. Your participation is voluntary.

Why is this research study being done?

- The general purpose of this research is to better understand the influence (if any) that a social work department head's mindfulness has on their employee-leader relationship. Participants in this study will be asked to complete an online survey. Findings from this study will be used in a written dissertation that will be publicly available and in a presentation of the dissertation that will be for the dissertation committee, faculty, and others associated with the researcher and UNE. There is a possibility that the findings will be used in scholarly writing for journal or other publication.

Who will be in this study?

- Participants will be social work department heads and faculty from 34 CSWE accredited schools, who participated in a preliminary online survey. Interviewees will be randomly selected from the preliminary respondents that provided their personal emails.

What will I be asked to do?

- You will be asked to take part in a semistructured, Zoom interview that will be recorded [BK1]. The interview will be recorded for transcription purposes.

- The interview will take approximately one hour (60 minutes).
- You do not have to answer any or all of the questions.
- You will be given the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview and offer feedback to the primary researcher.
- The recording will be destroyed after you have reviewed and commented on the transcript.

What are the possible risks of taking part in this study [BK2]?

- The probability and magnitude of harm/discomfort anticipated as a result of participating in this study are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.
- There is a slight risk of a breach of confidentiality.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

- The potential benefits of this study include better understanding how mindfulness practice influences the work environment, which may, in turn, draw more interest among leaders to engage in mindfulness practices.

What will it cost me?

- There will be no monetary cost. It will require time to complete the interview.

How will my privacy be protected [BK3]?

- The information used in the dissertation, presentation, and any subsequent writings will be de-identified both in regard to participants' individual identity and the identity of their institution.
- You may leave your camera off during the Zoom interview.
- The interview transcript will not contain any personally identifiable information.
- The primary investigator conducting the interview will be doing so in a private setting to ensure that others will not be listening to the conversation.
- It is recommended that participants are also in a private setting during the interview.

How will my data be kept confidential [BK5]?

- Your recorded interviews will be kept in a password protected, UNE laptop. Only the principal investigator will have access to the recordings.

- Your recording will be transcribed using a web-based digital assistant and that transcript will be stored with the recording on the principal investigator's password protected UNE laptop.
- These recordings will be destroyed after participants have reviewed and commented on the transcript.
- The transcript will be either mailed or emailed to the participant's preferred address for review. The email or physical address will be kept on the principal investigator's UNE password protected Google Drive, and will be destroyed after participants have reviewed and commented on their transcript.

What are my rights as a research participant [BK6]?

- You may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.
- You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time, for any reason [BK7]. If you choose to withdraw your data will be deleted and not be used.

Whom may I contact with questions?

- The researcher conducting this study is: Autumn A. Straw—astraw@une.edu
- For more information regarding this study, please contact: Autumn A. Straw—astraw@une.edu

Appendix J

Email Request for Leaders

Hello,

My name is Autumn Straw, and I would like to invite you to participate in a research study [BK1] entitled: *Mindfulness and Its Impact on Leader-Employee Relations in Higher Education Social Work Departments.*

This study is the foundation of my doctoral dissertation for the Doctorate of Education program at the University of New England. In full disclosure, I am also the Interim Director of UNE's Online MSW program option.

What is the study about?

The purpose of this study is to better understand if mindfulness has an impact on the leader-faculty relationship. It is a mixed-methods study involving a survey to both social work higher education leaders and another to their faculty. In the leadership survey participants will be asked to complete demographic questions and answer the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) Questions (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

This survey is confidential and should take you approximately 10 minutes. You have the right not to answer or skip any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. All data collection will happen remotely and at your convenience.

There is an overall email spreadsheet that is stored in the principal investigator's UNE, password protected Google Drive. The overall email spreadsheet will be destroyed after the survey has ended. Your survey responses will not include your name, and the institution's name (should you choose to select it) will be deidentified and will be coded in any subsequent writing. Survey data will be stored in REDcap, but will also be exported to Excel for data analysis. The data in Excel will be stored on the primary investigator's UNE password protected ShareDrive.

Participants will be given an opportunity to submit their personal email address to be randomly selected for a voluntary follow-up interview. All information will be deidentified and neither the individual's name nor your institution's will be used in the writing of the dissertation or any subsequent materials that are published out of this study.

Please know that your faculty will be receiving an email with a separate survey.

Why have I been approached?

You have been asked to participate because the study requires survey participation from higher education social work leaders who have been in the position for at least two months.

Do I have to participate?

No! It is completely up to you if you participate. There is no obligation or pressure to take the survey or engage in the interview process.

Are there any benefits to participating?

Yes! Aspects of mindfulness are essential elements of some foundational social work principles, such as self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-care. Additionally, mindfulness is a key component in a number of evidence-based modalities used in clinical practice. In order to help new social workers embody these elements and skills it is important to foster a mindful educational space from the top down and, as such, this study will allow social work higher education leaders and their faculty to better understand how to create such an environment. Furthermore, this study could have implications in other higher education departments, and across industries.

What do I do if I want to participate?

If after reading this email you decide to take part, please click the link below. If you decide not to take part, please simply ignore this email.

Your participation and help with this are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Autumn A. Straw, MSW, LCSW

Doctoral Candidate of Ed.D.

University of New England

716 Stevens Ave.

Portland, Maine 04103

207.221.4856

astraw@une.edu

She/her/hers

https://www.mypronouns.org/she-her

[BK1]Research study

Appendix K

Email Request for Faculty

Hello,

My name is Autumn Straw, and I would like to invite you to participate in a research study [BK1] entitled: *Mindfulness and Its Impact on Leader-Employee Relations in Higher Education Social Work Departments*. This study is the foundation of my doctoral dissertation for the Doctorate of Education program at the University of New England. In full disclosure, I am also the Interim Director of UNE's Online MSW program option.

What is the study about?

The purpose of this study is to better understand if mindfulness has an impact on the leader-faculty relationship. It is a mixed-methods study involving a survey to both social work higher education leaders and another to their faculty. In the faculty survey participants will be asked to complete demographic questions and answer the Multidimensionality of Leader Member Exchange (LMX-MDM; Liden & Maslyn, 1998).

This survey is confidential and should take you approximately 10 minutes. You have the right not to answer or skip any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. All data collection will happen remotely and at your convenience.

There is an overall email spreadsheet that is stored in the principal investigator's UNE password protected Google Drive. The overall email spreadsheet will be destroyed after the survey has ended. Your survey responses will not include your name, and the institution's name (should you choose to select it) will be deidentified and will be coded in any subsequent writing. Survey data will be stored in REDcap, but will also be exported to Excel for data analysis. The data in Excel will be stored on the primary investigator's UNE password protected ShareDrive.

Participants will be given an opportunity to submit their personal email address to be randomly selected for a voluntary follow-up interview. All information will be deidentified and neither the individual's name nor your institution's will be used in the writing of the dissertation or any subsequent materials that are published out of this study.

Please know that the leadership at your program will be receiving an email with a separate survey.

Why have I been approached?

You have been asked to participate because the study requires survey participation from higher education social work faculty who have worked under their leader for at least two months.

Do I have to participate?

No! It is completely up to you if you participate. There is no obligation or pressure to take the survey or engage in the interview process.

Are there any benefits to participating?

Yes! Aspects of mindfulness are essential elements of some foundational social work principles, such as self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-care. Additionally, mindfulness is a key component in a number of evidence-based modalities used in clinical practice. In order to help new social workers embody these elements and skills it is important to foster a mindful educational space from the top down; as such, this study will allow social work higher education leaders and their faculty to better understand how to create such an environment. Furthermore, this study could have implications in other higher education departments, and across industries.

What do I do if I want to participate?

If after reading this email you decide to take part, please click the link below. If you decide not to take part, please simply ignore this email.

Your participation and help with this are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Autumn A. Straw, MSW, LCSW

Doctoral Candidate of Ed.D.

University of New England

716 Stevens Ave.

Portland, Maine 04103

207.221.4856

astraw@une.edu

She/her/hers

https://www.mypronouns.org/she-her

Appendix L

Interview Request Email

Dear xxxxx;

My name is Autumn Straw, and recently you participated in a survey that is part of my study entitled: *Mindfulness and Its Impact on Leader-Employee Relations in Higher Education Social Work Departments.* You provided this email address for me to contact you to set up a 1:1 interview.

This study is the foundation of my doctoral dissertation for the Doctorate of Education program at the University of New England. In full disclosure, I am also the Interim Director of UNE's Online MSW program option.

What is the study about?

The purpose of this study is to better understand if mindfulness has an impact on the leader-faculty relationship. It is a mixed-methods study involving both a survey that you have already completed, and one on one interviews of both social work higher education leadership and faculty. All information will be deidentified and neither your name or your institution's will be used in the writing of the dissertation or any subsequent materials that are published out of this study.

Why have I been approached?

You have been asked to participate because the study requires participation from higher education social work leaders who have been in their role for at least two months and for faculty who have worked under their leader for at least two months.

Do I have to participate?

No! It is completely up to you if you participate. There is no obligation or pressure to engage in the interview process.

Are there any benefits to participating?

Yes! Aspects of mindfulness are essential elements of some foundational social work principles, such as self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-care. Additionally, mindfulness is a key component in a number of evidence-based modalities used in clinical practice. In order to help new social workers embody these elements and skills it is important to foster a mindful educational space from the top down and as such, this study will allow social work higher education leaders and their faculty to better understand how to create such an environment. Furthermore, this study could have implications in other higher education departments, and across industries.

What do I do if I want to participate?

If after reading this email you decide to take part, please email me at astraw@une.edu or call 207-221-4856 to set up an interview time. If you decide not to take part, please simply ignore this email.

Please review the information sheet attached to this email.

Your participation and help with this are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Autumn A. Straw, MSW, LCSW

Doctoral Candidate of Ed.D.

University of New England

716 Stevens Ave.

Portland, Maine 04103

207.221.4856

astraw@une.edu

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