DISSERTATION

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA ON PRACTICE

Submitted by

Adrianne Jane Keeney

School of Social Work

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2017

Doctoral Committee:

Advisor: Victoria Buchan

Louise Quijano
Shannon Hughes
Nick Marx

ABSTRACT

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA ON PRACTICE

Electronic media has provided new challenges and opportunities for school social workers. The use of electronic communication to interact with others is a normative and daily part of life for children, adolescents, and adults. Currently there are few, if any guidelines regarding electronic media behavior and standards for school social work practice. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions, beliefs, and experiences from the perspective of school social workers on how electronic communication has affected their practice.

A phased research design with quantitative and qualitative components was utilized for this exploratory research. Data from (N=379) school social workers practicing in the United States were collected. A combination of descriptive, correlation, exploratory factor analysis, and analysis of variance were used to analyze differences and associations among school social worker responses based on current age of the practitioner, community of practice, and student population served.

Age associations were found with the incorporation of electronic elements in service delivery as well as digital knowledge being perceived as a factor impacting the ability to effectively problem solve. School social workers' incorporation of electronic media into service delivery was found to vary depending on the student population served. Age, community of practice or population served were not found to be a contributing factor to ethical dilemmas encountered or the perceived need for electronic media policies to further inform practice. Guidelines related to mandated reporting in regards to electronic communication and social

media boundary guidelines were the top two policies that respondents identified needing the most to further inform their practice.

Results suggest that school social workers perceive their practice is affected due to electronic media and these perceptions may differ based upon age, community of practice and population served. It is hoped that the results of this research would be used to guide: (1) recommendations for professional practice policies and social work education; (2) future research that will further inform school social work practice and support school social workers providing services in a digital era.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the support and guidance of those who have accompanied me on this journey. Thank you to my wonderfully supportive committee members: Dr. Buchan, Dr. Quijano, Dr. Hughes and Dr. Marx for being interested and sticking with me through this process. Dr. Tom Crofoot- thank you for sharing your insight and expertise with me. Thank you to Dr. Ed Byrnes, for being a mentor, confidant, and lighting a passion of research and social justice within me. I am very grateful to Laura Tiitinen for your friendship and encouragement that has spanned years and international borders. Shannon Harrison- your encouragement, humor, and the daily check-ins for accountability and sanity helped me focus and continue moving forward. Thank you to Julie Paye and Annie Wallace for your feedback and thoughtful reflections that started before I was even accepted into the program. I am deeply appreciative of dear friends that provided unwavering support and at times an escape: Melanie Cohen, Danika Whittaker, Darcey Eilers and Kayla Adler. Thank you to Laura Golphenee for investing in me and teaching me how to be fearless, yet purposeful in everything I do. Douglas Keeney- thank you for the years of comic relief, cookies, and love. I am beyond grateful for my parents; Anita and Denny Keeney, for their unconditional love, dedication, and confidence.

Justin Robinson without your support, encouragement, motivation, care, and thoughtfulness this would not have been possible. I am deeply appreciative of you and our life together. This is our achievement. To you and our children, Reese and Piper, thank you for always reminding me that the Ph.D. was the goal, but you all were my dream. Lastly, thank you God for the health, ability, and drive to pursue something at times I often thought was unobtainable.

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my wonderful parents,

Denny and Anita Keeney

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEFINITIONS

Recognizing several definitions can exist for any one given term, a thorough analysis of the literature was conducted. To clarify understanding, the terms are divided into key terms, various types of social media terms, and terms used to describe the characteristics of today's virtual social environment. Further discussion of these concepts is found in chapter two.

Key Terms

Electronic communication/media. Communication that takes place without having to be "face to face"- text messaging, email, social media, and instant messaging, are all examples of electronic communication. And/or "the use of web-based and mobile technologies to allow for the exchange of user-created content between peers" (Mohr, Burns, Schueller, Clarke, & Klinkman, 2013, p.335). Examples include: applications, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), video-sharing sites (e.g., YouTube), photo sharing sites (e.g., Instagram), and blogging and microblogging platforms (e.g., Twitter) (boyd, 2014).

School social worker. Individuals "hired by school districts to enhance the district's ability to meets its academic mission, especially where home, school, and community collaboration is the key to achieving that mission" (School Social Work Association of America (2005), as cited in Massat, Constable, McDonald, & Flynn, 2009, p. 3).

School social work job dimensions. Five job dimensions have been used to describe the tasks and responsibilities typically associated with school social work practice: (1) Relationships with and services to children and families; (2) relationships with and services to teachers and school staff; (3) services to other school personnel; (4) community services; and (5)

administrative and professional tasks (Massat et al., 2009, p. 25; Allen-Meares, 1977, 1994; Costin, 1968).

Cyberbullying. "Use of the Internet or other digital communication devices to intentionally harm others" (Slovak & Singer, 2011, p. 8).

Types of Social Media

Social networking sites. "Web based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211).

Blog. An easy to publish website that allows for the "blogger" (i.e., authors of blogs) to post information and essays, typically in sequential order (Grajales et al., 2014).

Microblog. Similar to a blog, but allows networks of users to send only word-limited updates. An example of a microblog is Twitter, which allows no more than 140 characters per message (Grajales et al., 2014).

Professional networking sites. Networking websites similar to more general social networking sites like Facebook, with an emphasis that the connections are based solely on interactions and relationships related to users' professional careers (Grajales et al., 2014).

Video sharing sites. Websites that allow users to share, upload, download, view, and comment on videos (Grajales et al., 2014). For example, YouTube is a video-sharing site where individuals are able to view user-generated videos and corporate media such as music videos.

Photo sharing sites. Websites that allow users to upload and share photographs and download, view, and comment on the photographs uploaded and shared by users within one's network (Grajales et al., 2014).

Terms Associated with Today's Digital Culture

Digital natives vs. digital immigrants. Digital natives are those individuals who have grown up in the era of digital technology, whereas digital immigrants are considered individuals who have not grown up in the era of digital technology (Hoffman, 2013; Prensky, 2001). Digital natives are considered today's students (i.e., youth)-- kindergarten through college--that represent the first generations to grow up with digital technology (Prensky, 2001). Digital immigrants are considered everyone else who was not born into a digital world, but at some point adopted many or most aspects of new technology (Prensky, 2001).

Digital communication vs. face-to-face communication. Several characteristics have been used to differentiate digital communication from face-to-face communication. Digital communication is delineated in a number of ways: (1) users are disembodied, meaning their physical selves are not always represented when in communication with others; (2) there is potential to be anonymous; (3) text-based communication is often used; (4) users are prone to self-disclosure and disinhibition; (5) emoticons are often used to express emotion (e.g. :P to express joking or being silly, :(to express sadness or unhappiness); and (6) the devices for engaging in digital communication are often used while multitasking (Subrahmanyam & Smahel 2011, as cited by Hoffman, 2013)

Networked publics. boyd (2014) describes networked publics to be simultaneously "(1) the space constructed through networked technologies and (2) the imagined community that emerges as a result of the intersection of people, technology, and practice" (p. 8).

Media interactivity. "The degree to which a communication technology can create a mediated environment in which participants can communicate (one-to-one, one-to-many, and

many-to-many) both synchronously and asynchronously and participate in reciprocal message exchanges" (Kiousis, 2002, p. 379).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

Electronic media was arguably non-existent just ten years ago, yet society has given this form of communication a significant place in current culture. Text messaging, video and photo sharing, video games, instant messaging, and social networking sites, which are referred to as "Web 2.0 tools" (i.e. electronic media) allow for communication and collaboration on virtual mediums (Halabuza, 2014; Seligman, 2011; Van Dijck, 2012; Pereia, Rocha & Poplin, 2012; Grajales, Sheps, Ho, Novak-Lauscher, & Eyenbach, 2014). These electronic communication tools can be further described as "websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking" (Karpman & Drikso, 2016, p. 398). Sites and applications allow users to combine "text, images, audio, and video" (p. 398). In contrast to traditional forms of media (e.g. television, music) that typically provide interaction between the user and the screen, electronic media(s) allow the user to engage and co-construct social processes and relationships with other users through digital communication. For today's youth, these virtual environments are normative and a daily part of life. However, for many of today's professionals such as educators and school social workers, these digital realms are innately foreign.

Recent education literature has suggested that public education policies and practices are in need of reform due to the technological advances that have swept the country (DoBell, 2013). In reference to these technological advances, Prensky (2001) argued, "Students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach" (p. 1). The youth of today have grown up in the era of digital technology and are

considered “digital natives” or “digital youth”, while those serving today’s youth are considered “digital immigrants” because they have not grown up in this digital era (Prensky, 2001; Hoffman, 2013). The majority of adolescents are consumers of social media: 76% of teenagers use at least one social media site; with 70% maintaining a social media account (Moreno, Chassiakos, & Cross, 2016, p. 2). Maintaining a social media account refers to regularly posting and uploading content to be disseminated amongst one’s social networks. As a result of the large-scale consumption of electronic media, adults and professionals such as school social workers now have to account for new dynamics in both service delivery and professionalism in a digital era.

School social work literature is extensive, with particular focus on task analysis and practice functions. Numerous studies have been conducted at national, state, and local levels to investigate the “evolving role and current tasks of the school social worker” (Staudt, 1991, p. 496). However, discussion concerning how school social worker job dimensions are impacted due to the increased use of the Internet, technology-driven devices, electronic communication, and interactive media is absent. Fairly recently, Allen-Meares, Montgomery, and Kim (2013) conducted a national systematic review of school social work interventions. Although the scope of the article was to identify and evaluate the school-based interventions school social workers employ, interventions considered in the study did not include the student’s use of online platforms. For example, aggression was examined in several studies; however, cyberbullying was not included in the operational definition (Allen-Meares et al., 2013). School social work literature has largely ignored how electronic media can affect school social work practice.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to focus on school social workers' perceptions, beliefs and experiences on if and how electronic media has affected their practice. School social work is unique to the social work profession, as school social workers provide human and mental health services "within an environment where the primary goals include the teaching of reading, critical-thinking skills, and functioning within a global marketplace" (Minnich, 2014, p. 16). In reference to technology advances and electronic media, DoBell (2013) argues the "[education] profession as a whole has not fully realized the impact" (p. 75). The field of education is witnessing technological impacts on students, especially in relation to learning, therefore it seems fitting school social work practice would also be impacted due to these same technological advances.

To date, most social science literature regarding social media has been focused on young adult and adult populations (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014), cyberbullying (Slovak & Singer, 2011; Best et al., 2014), the ethical standards and guidelines associated with professionals being social media consumers in personal and professional spheres (Halabuza, 2014; Strom-Gottfried, Thomas, & Anderson, 2014; Kimball & Kim, 2013; Tunick, Mednick, & Conroy, 2011), and the integration of social media into higher level education classrooms (Karpman & Drisko, 2016; Hitchcock & Battista, 2013; Lynch, Vernon, & Smith, 2001).

Rationale for the Study

The social work profession prides itself on the belief that "professional ethics are at the core of social work" (NASW, 2008, p.1). The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) developed a Code of Ethics intended to guide social worker conduct by outlining values, principles, and standards of the profession that are relevant to all social workers and social work

students. The Code provides a necessary framework for the profession; however, guidelines regarding social media behavior and standards are absent (Karpman & Drisko, 2016; Halabuza, 2014; Kolmes, 2012). Additionally, few schools serving grades k-12 have technology policies that address social media as well (Ahn, Bivona, & DiScala, 2011 as cited in Karpman & Drisko, 2016).

Familiar ethical and practice applications "take on new forms and complexities in light of [these] technological advances" (Strom-Gottfried et al., 2014, p. 54). This study's focus on school social workers recognizes the importance of adapting interventions for school social workers as society advances as well as being able to serve vulnerable populations (i.e. youth) to the best of the profession's ability. Without professional practice guidelines from school districts or from professional bodies, "the everyday professional conduct of social workers" (socialworkers.org) is not guided. There is an urgency to understand if and how school social workers perceive electronic media affecting their practice and to have professional practice guidelines that address emerging technologies, especially for a profession that emphasizes the importance of service, continuing education, and competence among professionals.

Research Questions

An exploratory research design consisting of qualitative and quantitative components was employed to understand school social worker's perceptions on if and how electronic communication/media has affected school social work practice. A two-phase research design was utilized. The first phase collected information from a regional group of school social workers about if and how they perceived their practice was affected due to electronic communication. The second phase utilized an online questionnaire administered through a web-based platform to gather information from a national school social work sample.

1. From the perspective of school social workers, what is the impact of electronic communication/social media on school social work practice?

    a. What do school social workers report as their primary job tasks?

    b. Do school social workers perceive a change in their job duties or roles associated with school social work because of electronic communication/social media? If so, what changes are school social workers reporting?

    c. Do school social workers perceive changes in their service delivery, including their ability to build rapport with students due to social media/electronic communication? If so, how?

    d. How, if at all, is electronic communication/social media formally addressed with the use of policies, guidelines or interventions within the school social worker's school and/or school district?

2. How are school social workers experiencing electronic communication/social media within their practice?

    a. Are school social workers experiencing ethical dilemmas in practice as a result of social media/electronic communication? If so, what kinds of ethical dilemmas are school social workers reporting?

    b. Are school social workers using electronic communication/social media within their practice? If so, how?

    c. How do school social workers perceive student's use of social media/electronic communication?

3. From the perspective of school social workers, how effective do they feel problem solving student issues related to electronic communication/social media?

    a. What do school social workers report as the primary student issues related to electronic media?

    b. Do school social workers report the need for practice guidelines; additional trainings or education related to electronic communication/social media? If so, what are school social workers reporting the need for to further inform their practice?

4. What kinds of electronic communication/social media do school social workers report being familiar with?

5. Are there differences in the school social worker responses based upon demographic variables such as current age of school social worker, community of practice, and population served?

Key Variables

The primary attribute variables of population served (e.g. elementary, middle, high school), current age of the school social worker, and community of practice (e.g. city, suburb) were the main focus of the study. Further explanation of why these variables were selected is provided below.

Population Served

From a developmental perspective and the uses and gratifications approach perspective, the population served (e.g. elementary, middle, high school) will impact the different uses and needs for engaging in electronic communication/social media (Greenfield, 2008). Research has shown adolescents and young adult populations consume media more frequently and in more capacities (e.g. TV, computers, mobile devices, etc.) opposed to elementary aged children (Greenfield, 2008; Tehranian, 2013). As such, depending on the specific population served, school social workers may have different perceptions on how their practice is affected by electronic media. For analysis purposes, population served was divided into five levels of nominal measurement. Categories of population served included (1) elementary; (2) middle school; (3) high school; (4) district; and (5) other.

Age

The current age of school social worker was another primary attribute variable used for analysis. Within the demographic section of the survey, participants were asked to report their current age. This provided a continuous (interval) level of measurement. By using the current age of the school social worker, associations among how electronic media is incorporated within school social work practice and beliefs associated with changes in service delivery were assessed.

Community of Practice

The third attribute variable used for data analysis was community of practice. This was a nominal, leveled measurement that was self-reported by respondents in the demographic section of the survey instrument. Participants were asked to define their community of practice to be city, suburbs, town, or rural.

Researcher's Perspective

Assumptions

Several assumptions were made in conducting this study. Based upon Grajales et al., (2014) critique that "a large number of stakeholders are unaware of social media's relevance" (p.1) it was assumed that the level of awareness and familiarity with electronic media tools among research participants would vary considerably. It was also assumed respondents had a basic understanding of electronic communication (i.e. the types available such as text, email, and social media) and basic computer literacy skills in order to access and complete an online survey questionnaire. It was also assumed participants in the study would describe a variety of experiences related to electronic media and have personal biases on the challenges and opportunities associated with electronic communication within their practice. Additionally, it was assumed participants had a basic understanding of student's electronic media consumption and pre-established beliefs around the pros and cons of students' use of electronic media. It was also assumed state affiliate members of the SSWAA were willing to participate in the study in order to help address the gap in literature and resources associated with the affects electronic media has on their school social work practice. The researcher also assumed respondents would base their responses on utilizing the definitions, terms, and examples presented in both phases of the study. Lastly, it was assumed participants would respond to the questions in an open and honest manner.

Personal Statement

Having prior experience as a school social worker, I witnessed a variety of situations among the students I served that were essentially created by the use of electronic media among students, peers, and/or families. Without social media, the situations I encountered would not have existed. I observed teachers' and other school personnel's use of social media affect their service to students. For example, I witnessed a special education teacher take a picture of her students and post the picture on her Facebook page. I have a personal belief that electronic media is affecting school social work practice and that there is a vital need for electronic media practice guidelines. Facebook became incredibly popular while I was completing my undergraduate degree, as such, I am part of the generation that has readily accepted and even contributed to the development of this new form of communication, but did not essentially "grow up" with it. This has granted me a unique position; I can easily relate to both digital natives and digital immigrant perspectives. Additionally, I believe the benefits afforded by social media outweigh the negative aspects that are often discussed and focused on in popular media. Furthermore, I trust the focus should not be on labeling forms of electronic media as "good" or "bad", but rather on understanding how and why individuals use them. I believe if helping professionals and professional bodies can begin to recognize the impact electronic communication has, service delivery across systems will become more efficient and applicable for the digital culture of today.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine school social worker perceptions on how electronic communication/social has affected school social work practice. The literature review informed areas for needed research and implications for future research. This chapter provides context on traditional and electronic communication technologies, the virtual social landscape for today's youth, interpersonal relationships as well as professionalism in a digital era and how the school social work profession can address service delivery implications associated with today's digital culture.

This chapter can be collapsed into three sections. The main section centers on the digital culture of today. A summary of traditional and social media(s) and how social environments, interpersonal relationships, and professionalism are all impacted in the digital era is presented. A brief background of media interactivity, mediated public image, networked publics, and privacy concerns related to electronic communication is also discussed. Opportunities and challenges associated with electronic media and social dynamics is examined. Youth relationships and professionalism, with specific focus on helping professionals, and how those are manifested in a digital era is summarized with focus on interpersonal development, service delivery implications, and professional guidelines.

The second section addresses the school social work profession. A brief history of school social work task analysis literature is summarized. Additionally, this section incorporates education literature concerning teachers' conceptions of implementing Web 2.0 tools in learning strategies. Due to limited literature involving electronic media within school social work

practice, referencing the available social media literature in the field of education seemed most appropriate due to school social workers involvement with educational systems. Teacher's self-efficacy implementing Web 2.0 tools within the classroom setting and career practitioners' conceptions of social media are summarized. Lastly, a discussion on the theories used to guide the study is provided. The integration and synthesis of systems theory, developmental theory and the uses and gratifications approach is discussed.

Traditional and Social Media

Traditional Mass Media

Mass media has been defined as "organizations that produce news or entertainment content and distribute that content to a large number of geographically separated people though a technologically based medium" (Demers, 2005, p. 182). Traditional forms of mass media include newspapers, movies, radio, books, magazines, records, and television. Historically, an item that is produced for consumption by large a number of individuals constitutes as mass media. The Internet has historically been excluded from this definition because mass media has often been associated with corporate identity. However, the onset of new technologies has allowed not-for profit and personal agendas to be communicated in mass quantities as well, thus challenging this notion. Typically mass media has been seen as a type of social institution that produces messages and pursues goals.

Traditional media research. For more than 50 years, media research has attempted to address and define the significant health impacts children and adolescents are faced with in lieu of media engagement (Strasburger, Jordan, & Donnerstein, 2010). Evidence suggests that media use can be attributed to the following health concerns, but not limited to: obesity, substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, aggression, and eating disorders. Academic difficulties, language delays, and other developmental concerns have also been associated with media use. In 2013,

television consumption continued to be the most popular media platform for youth between the ages of 8-18 years; with an average watch time of four hours and 29 minutes a day (Tehranian, 2013). This finding was reiterated in a 2016 policy statement from the Academy of Pediatrics, however, TV viewing has "changed over the past decade, with content available via streaming or social media sites, such as YouTube and Netflix" (Moreno et al., 2016). A further discussion on the health impacts associated with youth television use is necessary in order to provide insight into why attempts have been made to regulate media consumption for children and adolescents.

Health impacts. It is estimated that youth view 10,000 acts of violence per year: the desensitization to violence, learned aggression, and fear of being victimized have all been attributed to youth's television use (Villani, 2001). The ideals, behavior, and beliefs depicted by television characters and reality television stars play a pivotal role in youth's development and can have serious implications to what youth constitute as 'normal behavior' (Strasburger et al., 2010). Additionally, children and adolescents are exposed to large amounts of sexual content. With the altered sex education in schools due to the highly controversial abstinence only sex education policy, adolescents turn to the media for guidance, ideas, and education on everything from contraceptives to romantic relationships. Mainstream media has become what Strasburger et al., (2010) refer to as "the super peer": influencing, socially constructing, and making normative behaviors not typically associated with the developmental stage youth are in. Continued focus on television use for media research is warranted. However new media technologies are allowing television material to be viewed without the use of a television (e.g. smartphones, computer, iPad), making current youth and media policies either void or in need of reform.

Social Media

Definition of social media. Grajales et al. (2014) describe social media as a dynamic and interactive computer based communication tool. danah boyd, author of It's Complicated: the Social Lives of Networked Teens, describes social media as "social network sites, video sharing sites, blogging, and microblogging platforms, and related tools that allow participants to create and share their own content (boyd, 2014, p. 6). Halabuza (2014) characterized social media sites as "communication through computer mediated interactions in which participants share personal information, photos, and exchange thoughts and feelings (p. 25). Mohr et al. (2013) define social media as "the use of Web-based and mobile technologies to allow for the exchange of user-created content between peers" (p. 335). One theme is prevalent: social media provides the opportunity for an interactive process allowing users to control, relate, and respond to others in a virtual space. Youth are the most active and eager adopters of social media and are living the majority of their lives through these online means (Yardi, 2012; Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). Marlin-Bennett and Thornton (2012) assert, "social media websites are not simply ways to communicate- the digital equivalent of Christmas letters or conference calls. Instead, websites are *sites* on which interaction happens" (p. 493).

The Role of Social Media

Differing from traditional forms of media where the interaction is typically between the user and a screen, social media allows the user to engage or rather co-construct social processes and interpersonal relationships through electronic communication. Children spend more time engaging in media processes than they spend in school or with their family (Buckingham, 2007). On average, children and adolescents spend more than 7 hours a day with media; 93% of youth aged 12-17 are online; 71% have a cell phone, and 65% create, maintain and engage in social

networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace (Strasburger et al., 2010). In industrial nations, electronic communication has become a daily part of adolescent life. Youth and media engagement is not a new topic to researchers, however new electronic media tools such as text messaging, video and photo sharing, video games, and social networking sites are changing the landscape of social environments for today's youth.

The Social Landscape in a Digital Era

Media Interactivity

Definition of media interactivity. Interactivity is a concept associated with new technologies. Influenced by the specific media in question, interactivity is assumed to facilitate interactions similar to interpersonal interactions (Kiousis, 2002). Numerous researchers in communication and non-communication fields have discussed interactivity. There has been little consensus on one given definition; however, there is agreement that the term is multifaceted and complex. When used to describe how new technologies are influencing the new media environment, interactivity can be described as "either undefined or under-defined" (McMillan, 2006, p. 206).

Historically, interactivity research is identified in one of three ways: human-to-human interaction, human-to-document interaction, and human-to-system interaction (McMillian, 2006; Kiousis, 2002). The confines of traditional and new media are becoming more intertwined and less compartmentalized than ever before. For example, social media allows for an individual to create a document, video, or picture and share it with a large number of people without much effort. Kiousis (2002) defines interactivity as "the degree to which a communication technology can create a mediated environment in which participants can communicate (e.g. one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many) both synchronously and asynchronously and participate in

reciprocal message exchanges" (p. 379). Incorporating a media and psychological variable into a "hybrid" definition similar to Kiousis (2002) appears to be the most appropriate explanation when applying media interactivity to an adolescent population.

Youth and media interactivity. In a simplistic sense, human-to-human interactivity can simulate interpersonal communication through a systematic means (Kiousis, 2002). Learning how to navigate and maintain human connections is a pivotal part of adolescence. The addition of social media technologies has made an already challenging coming of age task, much more complex (boyd, 2014). Unlike past generations, youth today are trying to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships by interacting through, both, virtual and real life spaces. The situation is paradoxical at best. Youth today are more likely to interact through a screen rather than face-to-face with their peers; yet youth are more connected with their social networks than ever before because new media allows for them to connect anytime and anywhere (Tehranian, 2013). To youth, however, media use is more of an extension and support to preexisting social relations as opposed to a replacement of face-to-face interactions (boyd & Ellison, 2008; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). The role of media interactivity appears vital for youth as they fulfill the desire to establish meaningful interpersonal relationships even with physical inaccessibility to their peers and resort to social media to maintain their social lifelines (boyd, 2014). Today's youth are not only learning how to navigate interpersonal friendships and construct their own identities, they are doing so while creating and maintaining a mediated public image.

Identity in a Digital Social Landscape

Developmental psychologist Erikson believed adolescents were charged with the social task of identity formation during the adolescent developmental stage. The communication functions afforded by the Internet have allowed youth, especially teenagers, to co-construct their

own social environments. Research examining identity formation in the context of online processes is limited. However, in a study of Dutch adolescents, 246 of 600 participants shared that they would experiment with their identity online; with the most common reasons of doing so to be self-exploration, social compensation, and social facilitation (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). Though this study illustrates that the majority of adolescents did not engage in "different roles and identities", electronic media allowed teenagers to experiment with self-disclosure and self-presentation, "which are both important steps toward constructing a coherent identity" (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008, p. 139).

Mediated public image. Adolescents have a variety of communication technologies at their disposal, which allow them to navigate and manage very large webs of social connections (Manago et al., 2012). The emergence of social networking sites has been a main contributor to this phenomenon. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are attracting users worldwide and in mass quantities. Developed in 2004, and opened to the public in 2006, Facebook now has over one billion active users worldwide (Facebook, 2014), making it the world's most popular social networking website (Marshall, 2012). "76% of teenagers use at least one social media site and more than 70% maintain a "social media portfolio" of several selected sites" (Moreno et al., 2016, p.2). Utilizing social media has become a normative and daily part of teen lives. boyd and Ellison (2008) define social network sites as:

> Web based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. (p. 211)

Due to the vast engagement of online networking sites, young people are now playing out the majority of their social interactions in a virtual space. Greenfield and Yan (2006) state "children and adolescents live in a new, massive, and complex virtual universe, even as they carry on their

lives in the real world" (p.391). From a developmental perspective, the prevalence of online networking proposes challenges as well as opportunities, for youth as they engage in identity formation and develop, maintain, and navigate interpersonal relationships.

Socially mediated in public. Media influence opens up new possibilities to youth (e.g. diversity, values, and beliefs), can loosen parental control, and allow teenagers more freedom and choice in their means of socialization (Arnett, 1995). As such, social media has the ability to make private lives much more public in an unprecedented way. Baym and boyd (2012) state:

> Having to imagine one's audience is a fundamental human problem rather than one distinctive to social media. But social media make it particularly challenging to understand "who is out there and when" and raises the potential for greater misalignment between imagined and actual audiences. (p. 323)

Adolescents have the means to be able to actively construct their identities. In other words, teenagers are no longer considered passive audience members and are afforded control over both presentation and content (McMillan, 2006; Baym & boyd, 2012). Being socially mediated in public is an "ever shifting process throughout which people juggle blurred boundaries, multi-layered audiences, individual attributes, the specifics of the systems they use, and the contexts of their use" (Baym & boyd, 2012, p. 328). Adolescent's mediated public image is concerning to adults when developmentally adolescents may not be well equipped to handle the perceived control and new dimensions that are granted to electronic media users.

Privacy paradox. Internet use in general, creates a privacy paradox when teenagers are not fully aware of the public nature of the Internet. Youth may not be aware of the amount of audience members accessing their comments when making a "post" to a friend's profile and its ability to "go viral" in a matter of seconds. This creates a public image that can be everlasting in digital form. For an age group learning how to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships, being socially mediated in public can create major complications. Definitions of privacy are

continually fluctuating due to the changing social norms of what is considered private or public. The social norm is "rather than asking themselves if the information to be shared is significant enough to be broadly publicized, they question whether it is intimate enough to require special protection" (boyd, 2014, p. 62). The desire to make connections, yet maintain control of disclosure has profoundly altered the public versus private dichotomy. Electronic media allows for individuals to engage simultaneously in real and virtual worlds.

Socializing through electronic media often makes interactions visible to intended and unintended audiences. Social networking sites are created to be public by default and private through effort (boyd, 2014). Designed for social communication with broad public audiences, social media sites make it difficult to control the flow of personal information. New norms are needed to help establish what is appropriate when expressing friendship through public, albeit virtual, space. Media interactivity between youth and how it relates to their perceived mediated public image can be further understood through networked publics.

Networked publics. Teenagers desire to make a public space their own as they attempt to understand their relationship with broader society. The need for social connection and autonomy is not different to teenagers now then it was to teenagers in the 1950's. However, the social technologies in which youth engage to meet these coming of age needs has changed. Networked publics are public spaces that have been made possible through networked technologies. boyd (2014) describes networked publics as "simultaneously (1) the space constructed through networked technologies and (2) the imagined community that emerges as a result of the intersection of people, technology, and practice" (p. 8).

Networked publics allow for identities and social practices to be shared, which can be extremely enticing to youth. Networked publics are interconnected, allow for two-way

communication between individuals, groups, and corporations and aid in the understanding of society. “Networked publics that exist because of social media allow people to gather and connect, hang out, and joke around” (boyd, 2014, p. 9). By engaging in a networked public, youth are able to “become more aware of themselves relative to visible and imagined audiences and more aware of the larger publics to which they belong and which they seek to create” (Baym & boyd, 2012, p. 325). Participating in networked publics allows teenagers to contribute in public life that has often been considered adult only territory. New technology and the implementation of networked publics have created new social dynamics.

boyd (2014) explains four affordances that differ networked publics from traditional physical public spaces: persistence, visibility, spreadabilty, and searchability. Once a message, post, or comment is sent, communication endures and the virtual world has it indefinitely, thus making networked publics’ persistent. Messages are widely accessible, making visibility the second affordance to networked publics. In the realm of networked publics, the figure of speech often attributed to rumors or gossip, “it spread like wildfire” takes on new meaning when material on the Internet can be copied, pasted, and shared in a manner of seconds. Lastly, individuals’ communications are searchable; allowing for content to be retrieved and uncovered by whoever desires. The popular term “Facebook stalking” can largely be attributed to the ease in which information can be found on anyone in the digital era. These affordances are not new due to the onset of social media. For example, love letters written in the World War II era could be considered enduring communication. However “what is new is the way in which social media alters and amplifies social situations by offering technical features that people can use to engage in these well-established practices” (boyd, 2014, p. 13).

Opportunities and Challenges in a Digital Era

Opportunities

Expanded social networks. Engagement in electronic media has many positive and pro-social practices. Online social environments offer an "expanded and potentially globalized social milieu" (Greenfield & Yan, 2006, p. 392), ranging from small one-on-one interactions such as instant messaging to large networks found in blogs or chat rooms. With adolescents having "fewer places to be together in public than they once did" (boyd, 2014), social media offers a place to communicate, connect, and maintain relationships with their peers without having to physically go anywhere.

The added affordance of autonomy, allows individuals to experiment with their identity, image, and social relations, which is a key developmental task in adolescence. Electronic media ensures a level of control and access not typically afforded to teens in public spaces. The American Academy of Pediatrics shares that media can help children learn academically, teach empathy, racial and ethnic tolerance, as well as a variety of interpersonal skills (Strasburger & Hogan, 2013). Youth that have a difficult time connecting with peers in traditional settings such as school, have the ability to make connections that span their geographical confines, making what can be a lonely developmental time a little less lonely for youth who struggle with interpersonal relationships.

Social media support. Social media sites offer support and connections that were unimaginable before. The term crowd sourcing is used to describe "collecting and sharing valuable information with relevant social purposes" (Pereira et al., 2012, p. 497). For example, social media could be used to communicate a natural disaster or to foster awareness of a social issue. Cyberspace allows the creation of communities and networks, which provides users a

variety of methods for digital contact. Facebook facilitates social connections that can reach beyond a narrow circle of contacts, whereas rating sites such as Yelp, allow users to evaluate services, products and providers (Strom-Gottfried et al., 2014). Being able to actively engage and help co-construct interactions is empowering and purposeful.

Social media benefits in professional settings. Utilizing social media in the professional realm such as health care has been advantageous as well. Computer mediated communication has been used to "maintain or improve peer-to-peer and clinician-to-patient communication, promote institutional branding, and improve the speed of interaction between and across different health care stakeholders" (Grajales et al, 2014, p. 2). Mobile technologies and virtual reality games have also been used to enhance clinical interventions. The use of blogs created by professional or professional institutions have proven to increase effectiveness of best practice, assess client knowledge, as well as promote professional development (Grajales et al, 2014). Engaging in social media, whether in the professional or personal context, has the opportunity to provide support, openness, connection, sharing, and collaboration.

Challenges

New social dynamics. The creation of the "networked public space" has altered and transformed the preexisting social norms and conduct associated with "public" communication. As mentioned earlier, networked publics are different from other types of publics because of the persistence, replicability, searchability, and scalability they afford the user (Baym & boyd, 2012). Van Dijck (2011) states, "informal communication is no longer informal nor ephemeral, but every message is eternalized in digital space: you may (verbally) express a personal judgment, but publishing it on the web is a different strategy altogether" (p. 166). Technology

and social networking sites have allowed online and offline worlds to blend together, forcing long established socially acceptable norms and behavior to be reevaluated.

Electronic media in professional settings. The digitally connected culture of today has had substantial impacts on the delivery of services for many professionals. Grajales et al., (2014) state:

> A large number of stakeholders (e.g. clinicians, administrators, professional colleges, academic institutions, ministries of health, among others) are unaware of social media's relevance, potential applications in their day-to-day activities, as well as the inherent risks and how these may be attenuated and mitigated. (p.1)

Electronic media has required professionals to reexamine and reevaluate policy guidelines addressing ethical concepts such as client privacy, professional boundaries, self-disclosure, mandated reporting and informed consent. These common ethical challenges take on new meaning in lieu of the rapidly changing electronic environment. The coining of the term e-professionalism is an attempt to address the professional behavior practices needed in this digital era (Halabuza, 2014).

Interpersonal Relationships in a Digital Era

Friendships

Even though youth are more likely to be interacting on social media sites with people that they already have a preexisting offline relationship with, peer relations do not go unaffected by electronic communication. Subrahmanyam and Greenfield (2008) argue:

> Social networking sites…may by their very nature be transforming their peer relations. These sites make communication with friends public and visible. Through potentially infinite electronic lists of friends and "friends of friends," they bring the meaning of choosing one's social relationships to a new extreme. (p. 126)

Adolescents attempting to find their niche in society is normative and a ritual of all generations. "What the drive in was to teens in the 1950's and the mall in the 1980's, Facebook, texting,

Twitter, instant messaging and other social media are to teens now" (boyd, 2014, p. 20). However, instead of teenagers navigating one social sphere, youth today have online and offline public images to uphold, which essentially doubles the social norms, rules, and behaviors teenagers have to learn for successful interpersonal development. Through the use of e-mail, instant messaging, blogs, bulletin boards and personal profiles, teenagers are "basically co-constructing their own environments" (Greenfield & Yan, 2006, p. 392). Relationships today have additional complexities with the onset of electronic media especially when considering the developmental skills and behaviors teenagers have at this particular age.

Online communication is "increasingly becoming an integral part of everyday life and a popular way of maintaining relationships" (Elphinston & Noller, 2011, p. 631). Social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have added a complicated dynamic to romantic relationships as well. As discussed previously, social media is the space in which teens today "hang out". It is not uncommon that adolescents spend the majority of their free time with peers; however, what is unique is the social landscape. Teenagers are spending the majority of their time with peers in virtual worlds. Research shows that social networking sites are mostly used by teens to support preexisting, offline relationships rather than to meet new people. Adolescents use social media to flirt, gossip, chat, plan, coordinate, and joke around with their friends- in a semi-private, yet public space away from adults (boyd, 2014; Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). From an adolescent perspective, technology is not replacing face-to-face interactions, but rather addressing their desire to socialize.

Studies have shown that a vast majority of teenagers feel the Internet has improved their relationships with friends, are closer to friends offline because of their online relationship, and believe online communication allows for more effective self-disclosure (Subrahmanyam &

Greenfield, 2008). Online communities may provide youth who typically have a difficult time connecting with peers in traditional settings (e.g. school), an opportunity to interact, connect, and develop relationships from the comfort on their own home. Social networking sites allow teens to articulate and make their social networks "visible", which "mirrors, magnifies, and makes visible the good, bad, and ugly of everyday life" (boyd, 2014, p. 24; boyd & Ellison, 2008). In a study on Internet use and adolescent wellbeing, Gross, Juvonen, and Gable (2002) concluded that "normally adjusted adolescents use the Internet as yet another tool in their communications repertoire" (p.88), thus challenging the notion technology has only negatively impacted youth development.

Cyberbullying

A term made popular by news media, cyberbullying, takes traditional offline adolescent issues and places them in an online forum (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). Bullies harass other teenagers via text messaging, instant messaging, email, video games, and social media profiles alike. There is much debate if cyberbullying is a whole new phenomenon or whether technology has simply created a new site in which to bully on (boyd, 2014). What may be different in this digital era, as opposed to older generations, is that cyber bullies have the ability to be anonymous as well as victimize other adolescents who they might not even know in any offline context.

boyd (2014) explains that the persistence and visibility afforded by networked publics impacts how bullying is constructed and understood. Cruelty and meanness might be more visible now to school officials and parents than ever before; however, the adoption of electronic media has not radically changed the constructs of bullying behavior. Greenfield and Yan (2006) explain "we must see the Internet as a new social environment in which universal adolescent

issues such as identity, sexuality, and a sense of self-worth are played out in a virtual world in ways that are both new and old" (p. 392). Adolescents are faced with the developmental task of learning how to negotiate social relations and use the Internet as a tool to meet those needs. Additionally, electronic media has altered the social landscape for experimenting with romantic partners and establishing romantic relationships.

Romantic Relationships

Establishing romantic relationships is another integral part of youth's interpersonal relationship development. Adolescents tend to use electronic media to reinforce romantic relationships just as they do with preexisting friendships (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). This is not surprising due to the mainstream nature of social networking sites and its ability to foster a common ground for communication and social interaction. However, less is known about adolescents and romantic relationships in regards to social media as opposed to emerging adult and adult populations. Literature regarding adolescent romantic relationships appears to be more based on partner selection, where young adult populations tend to have more literature on the development, sustainability, and post-relationship recovery aspects of romantic relationships in a digital era. For the purposes of creating a well-rounded discussion on romantic partnerships and electronic media, both are discussed, however, it should not be considered exhaustive of the current available literature.

Relationship Opportunities in Digital Era

The anonymity afforded in online communication allows teenagers to practice partner selection and experiment with identity roles that challenge traditional gender norms. Females are more likely to initiate romantic relationships in the safe space that online environments provide (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). In a study that analyzed a sample of 12,000 responses and

comments in an adolescent chat room, researchers found that partner requests were happening as frequently as two per minute; and were typically initiated by older, female youth (p.128). The same 12,000 chat room comments also showed that 5% of the time comments were sexual in nature, suggesting that online communication also allows youth to engage in sexual exploration, which reinforces another key developmental task of teenagers.

In regards to the use of social networking sites such as Facebook in terms of romantic relationships, seeking casual sex partners or individuals to date ranked low in the site's functions for individuals. The most common reasons people use Facebook are (1) to keep in touch with others and (2) to monitor activities (Marshall, 2012). Facebook, however, did provide the opportunity for adolescents to inquire and gain information about potential romantic partners that they had met through family, friends, afterschool activities, or other face-to-face encounters (boyd, 2014). Virtual environments have allowed teenagers to more freely and frequently engage in partner selection then the "real" world had ever allowed this population before (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008).

Relationships Challenges in a Digital Era

The development, sustainability, and post relationship recovery of dating relationships are potential areas that school social workers, especially those serving high school students could be dealing with. There are several studies in the available literature that focus on how jealousy can be manifested through social media in young adult and adult populations. With specific focus on Facebook use, Elphinston and Noller's (2011) study demonstrated Facebook has the ability to create an environment that can promote jealous feelings. For example, when a member of the opposite sex posts a comment to their partner's wall, relationship dissatisfaction and insecurity of the relationship can occur. Utz and Beukeboom (2011) conducted an online study

with 194 students at a Dutch University to examine the role of social networking sites in romantic relationships. Regression analysis was conducted using social networking site (SNS) jealousy in high and low self-esteem individuals. In individuals with low self-esteem, SNS jealousy was predicted by trait jealousy, need for popularity and monitoring behavior. However in high self-esteem individuals, monitoring behavior and general social networking site use were the only main predictors of SNS jealousy. Significant differences among gender were not found regarding SNS jealousy. When examined relationship happiness, opposed to SNS jealousy, users were more likely to be happy about the public displays of affection the sites afforded the user, however, once self-esteem was accounted for, "the display of potentially jealousy-inducing events" could lead to negative experiences (p. 525).

Current literature also addresses how electronic media can interfere with post break up recovery in adult and young adult relationships. Findings suggest that exposure to an ex-partner through Facebook may obstruct the healing process and ability to move on from a past relationship (Marshall, 2012). Surveillance of an ex-partner's profile page and pictures, maintaining mutual friends, and remaining Facebook friends with an ex-partner, all contribute to lower personal growth and prolonged recovery. Frequent monitoring of an ex partner's Facebook page was associated with "greater current distress over the breakup, negative feelings, sexual desire, and longing for the ex-partner" (Marshall, 2012, p. 525).

In a qualitative study with a young adult population, participants believed Facebook "transformed them into anxious, jealous, and monitoring selves that they did not want to be" (Gershon, 2011, p. 866). Facebook served as a complicated medium between the individual's sense of who they are and who they should be perceived as in relation to their ex-partner. By continuously being "re-exposed" to ex-partners through the means of posts, updates, and

pictures, the use of Facebook had harmful implications to individuals trying to move on from a past romantic relationship. The effects young adults and adults experience regarding post relationship recovery in a digital era have only been investigated in a handful of studies. For adolescents who are not well equipped or experienced enough to deal with such complex emotions and threats to their personal identity, this poses great concern for any stakeholder in youth development.

Helping Professionals in a Digital Era

Moral panic

"Adolescents have greater control over their socialization on the dimension of the media than they do over socialization from family, school, community, and the legal system" (Arnett, 1995, p. 526). As such, the mass popularity of web-based communication has created a culture of moral panic and fear among parents and adults working with today's youth (Hoffman, 2013). The fear and anxiety associated with new technology or cultural trends is not new- the moral panic that arose with rock n' roll, the introduction of comic books, and women being allowed to ride bicycles may seem trivial now, however was taken very seriously at the time (boyd, 2014). In some respects, social media can be seen as not any different than the aforementioned cultural trends. However, for professionals working with 'digital youth', focus should be on attempting to understand youth's relationship with social media and its impacts on traditional developmental tasks, rather than attempting to label social media as good or bad.

Digital Culture

The field of psychology has started to address how social media is impacting youth development as well as the therapeutic relationship. Recognizing that electronic media has transformed the landscape of teenage culture, it has been argued, "children today need more

support, training and coping skills" (Best et al., 2014, p. 28). Hoffman (2013) suggested therapists could address this need by first recognizing that youth today are part of a distinct culture. Digital youth are bounded to a virtual world through which they are experiencing developmental tasks. Social media and technology have such a presence for today's youth that even the commonly used phrase "generation gap" that used to explain the difference between youth and their elders is now expanded. Today's youth are considered digital natives- those who have grown up in the era of digital technology; where digital immigrants are considered individuals who have not grown up in this era (Hoffman, 2013). Those serving youth today fall in the latter category, making the ability to connect and understand the environment in which digital youth reside more challenging.

Taking a culture-infused counseling approach to adolescents would allow therapists to design interventions that are culturally relevant, take into account both the positive and negative aspects of social media in adolescent developmental tasks and assess the influence social media has on the adolescent's presenting problem (Hoffman, 2014). Therapists becoming aware of digital youth culture, seeking knowledge to understand that culture and applying skills through a culturally competent lens, will allow professionals to engage in meaningful ways that address the challenges digital youth face.

Digital Competence

"Decades of research indicate that social connectedness and the ability to form close relationships are essential to well-being and psychological functioning" (Tao, 2014, p. 123). When individuals struggle to achieve these interpersonal goals, the work of a therapist or other helping professional alike are often sought. Though the interventions may differ across therapists or disciplinary fields (e.g. counseling, social work, education), typically the goal of such

professional is to help the client enhance interpersonal skills, gain self-awareness, and develop understanding in how these two elements can impact social functioning (Tao, 2014).

Therapists are beginning to see challenges in helping adolescents achieve these tasks due to the digital culture they are immersed in. There are new norms and practices in the electronic media driven environment that youth today are native to that professionals need to be mindful of. For example, traditional face-to-face counseling sessions may be less comfortable for adolescents due to being more accustomed to digital communication (Hoffman, 2013). Therapists may need to incorporate electronic communication in order to connect and help adolescents work through their presenting problem.

Additionally, therapists will need to be aware of how electronic media is constructed in teen's life and have an understanding of how the real and digital worlds play out in public and private spaces. For example, a teenager may be struggling with the end of a romantic relationship, which is not uncommon for this developmental age; however, therapists might not realize or understand the extent to which social media can amplify and alter this social situation. Perhaps an individual found out their partner wanted to break up via social media (e.g. Facebook) by their partner changing their relationship status to 'single' and defriending the other person. Not only is the person coping with the initial emotions that go along with a relationship ending, they are required to do so in a public space. Facebook comments from friends and "likes" from others all intensify the situation, resulting in the urgency of the individual to respond to their friends without first becoming fully aware of their own emotions (Tao, 2014). The speed and public nature alters this fairly normative social situation. This is one example of the many ways social situations are altered for today's youth due to electronic communication, which further validates the need for therapists to become culturally competent in digital youth

norms, behaviors, and language. Tao (2014) suggests therapists can serve as a bridge between technological and face-to-face worlds. Understanding the ways electronic communication is manifested in adolescent interpersonal relationships and how the psychotherapy process and therapeutic relationships are affected will be pivotal as networked publics continue to dominate today's culture.

Professional Guidelines

Personal and professional boundaries. Boundaries between client and professional, professional and colleagues, and even the professional and the profession become unclear with the variety, speed, and exposure that electronically shared information brings to users. The therapeutic relationship between client and professional can easily be manipulated, damaged or influenced through online forums. For example, a client could feel rejected or hurt if denied a "friend request" by the therapist. A survey of psychologists found that 24% of clients had asked them to be "friends", yet 98% of those psychologists reported having secure privacy settings (Tunick et al., 2011). Colleagues connected in online realms may make a comment that releases patient identifiers, thus violating patient confidentiality. A post, video, or comment that is inappropriate has the potential to damage the professionals' online reputation.

The conduct a professional engages in via electronic media platforms has the ability to affect not only their professional credibility, but that of the profession they are associated with as well. Take for example the Facebook post by a university professor that jokingly made reference to having a good day because he did not want to kill even one student. This post was intended for the select audience of this professor's Facebook friends, who assumedly understood the nature of his joke. However, when individuals outside his intended audience saw the post, this professor

faced suspension, sanctions, and disapproval from colleagues and students (Strom-Gottfried et al., 2014).

There has been an increased awareness of the need to discuss how professionals can protect themselves as well as those they serve in the era of electronic communication. The permanent "digital fingerprint" of social media has fundamentally changed the dynamics of professionalism. The adherence and maintenance of professional boundaries have become increasingly complicated with the popularity of online forums. Even though information can be restricted or set as 'private' to certain audiences, material that is posted and/or shared through social networking sites is considered public domain and users ultimately have little control over who has access to it (Halabuza, 2014).

In regards to the professional realm this is rather worrisome; discovered information has the ability to compromise relationships with colleagues and clients, damage a professionals' reputation, and negatively affect the integrity of the profession. Research on 332 psychotherapy clients found that 70% of clients reported finding personal information about their therapist online (Kolmes, 2012). Online content and behavior has the ability to be easily misconstrued, making careful consideration of self-disclosure a new priority for the digital era professional. Cases where staff members being dismissed because of "unprofessional" online behavior are becoming more common, yet many professional bodies do not have concrete guidelines for electronic media use (Karpman & Drisko, 2016).

Deciding where the professional life ends and the personal one begins proves to be challenging task in the digital era. Social media has warranted a need for further discussion on the ethical responsibilities a professional has. Though there is valid concern about a client being exposed to information online about professionals, a therapist exposed to client information via

online platforms confuses the responsibilities professionals have while "on and off duty". Psychotherapists and doctoral students of psychology have reported discovering information accidently as well as intentionally seeking information, about clients (Kolmes, 2012).

The ease, in which misunderstandings can occur with electronic communication and how different populations utilize social media, causes professional competence in the digital era to be especially vital. Individuals can literally type themselves into being (Strom-Gottfried et al., 2014) and younger populations may purposely create images that exhibit risky behavior (e.g. sexy, aggressive, deviant pictures). For this reason, it could be exceptionally problematic if professionals take online behavior at face value. The many complexities associated with real and online identities create ambiguity for professionals. Allowing the digital identities of clients to affect clinical decision-making and assessment poses serious ramifications to the professional realm (Kolmes, 2012). How this information is used or addressed by professionals merits careful consideration especially in regards to ethical considerations and behavior.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical dilemmas. The range and changing perceptions of electronic media have made it challenging for professional bodies to agree on specific guidelines. The majority of health care related social media polices discourage accepting patient "friend" requests from current and former clients, encourages the clinician to only speak in first person, and asserts that privacy and confidentially of clients must be upheld. Mayo Clinic's social media policy also includes language regarding the employee/supervisor dynamic; a supervisor is not to initiate a "friend request" (http://sharing.mayoclinic.org/guidelines/for-mayo-clinic-employees/). A private practice social media policy developed by Kolmes (2010) discusses in detail what behavior she will exhibit in online space (e.g. will not respond to any friend requests or will not use search

engines for client information). Kolmes (2010) discourages clients from using social networking sites to interact with her and email communication should only be used to modify or arrange appointments. Differing levels of digital literacy and educational credentials, plus the range of cultural, social, and political values in the health sector, developing a "standard of care" involving digital interactions regarding electronic media will remain a challenge (Grajales et al., 2014).

Clinical competence. The ethical dilemmas and challenges associated with professionals engaging in social networking sites add a layer of complexity to the therapeutic relationship that previously never existed. Clinical competence and training are solutions in how professionals can combat the ill effects social media can have in the therapeutic environment. An understanding of how individuals engage and experience social networking sites in relation to their developmental age is needed. For example, adolescents may use social media sites to experiment or create identities for specific audiences such as friends, family, boyfriends, girlfriends, and ex-partners; therefore it will be necessary for clinicians to not take information from social media profiles at face value (Kolmes, 2012). Engaging adolescents in discussions around intended audiences and perceptions that are intentionally or accidently created will help adolescents become aware of how digital identity relates to their offline self. Kolmes (2012), Strom-Gottfried et al., (2014), and Halabuza (2014) suggest it is necessary for health care workers to use informed consent at the start of service delivery to discuss the implications of social media.

Recommendations. Guidelines in current professional codes of ethics regarding social media behavior and standards are absent (Halabuza, 2014; Kolmes, 2012; Karpman & Drisko, 2016). Kimball and Kim (2013), encourage organizations, including academia, to be proactive in

creating polices that explain acceptable use of social media in order to avoid ethical and legal violations. Written language should address the incorporation of clients into social networks, personal and professional representation of the professional and organization, boundaries regarding clients' personal social media sites, and guidelines for professionals maintaining public forums (e.g. blogs, microblogs) (Kimball & Kim, 2013; Halabuza, 2014). Agencies can take a variety of approaches to efficiently address current and emerging social media issues. These approaches can include staff development, ongoing training, and committees developed specifically to operationalize policies and practices related to social media (Strom-Gottfried et al., 2014). Creating policies for practitioners to implement early in the treatment process will protect the therapeutic relationship and ensure appropriate service delivery, with the hope of protecting the client, professional, and profession simultaneously.

Today's helping professionals provide services to youth immersed in a digital culture, as such, these professionals must reevaluate practices and interventions. Literature from psychology can inform the school social work profession of ways the therapeutic relationships and services may be impacted with the onset of new media technologies. For example, informed consent at the beginning of service delivery may now need to include an electronic media element. The limited social media policies and professional guidelines regarding social media provide insufficient support to helping professionals, in particular to school social workers, on how best to serve digital youth. However, a review of the current school social work literature helps inform this study's focus.

School Social Work

School social workers represent a limited number of service providing professionals practicing within the school system (Minnich, 2014). School social work falls under the larger,

social work profession umbrella. However, what distinguishes school social work from that of the social work profession, is school social workers provide human and mental health services "within an environment where the primary goals include the teaching of reading, critical-thinking skills, and functioning within a global marketplace" (Minnich, 2014, p. 16). School social workers are required to take into account how the intersection of home-school-community affect behavior and academic achievement. School social work practice dates back to the early 1900's; since then, the role of the worker has constantly varied and evolved due to the changes educational institutions have experienced over the years (Massat et al., 2009). As such, the school social worker role has been frequently addressed and evaluated by studies throughout its establishment as a professional service within an education environment.

Task Analysis

Literature regarding the task analysis of school social workers roles is extensive. Numerous studies have been conducted at national, state, and local levels investigating the "evolving role and current tasks of the school social worker" (Staudt, 1991, p. 496). Costin (1968) conducted what is considered to be a "landmark study" that investigated how professional school social workers define the content of school social work and the relative importance of the functional tasks associated with such. Costin (1968) administered an instrument containing 107 behavior task items in which participants (N=254) used a rating scale to indicate the level of importance they felt each item held in relation to their job as a school social worker. Costin's (1968) factor analysis indicated nine themes essential to school social worker tasks. These themes were: (1) leadership and policy making; (2) casework services to parents and child; (3) clinical treatment of children; (4) educational counseling to parents and child; (5) liaison

between family and community agencies; (6) interpreting the child to the teacher; (7) personal service to the teacher; (8) interpreting school social work services; and (9) caseload management.

Costin (1968) efforts were successful in providing an understanding of how school social workers define and attribute importance to the various tasks associated with their practice. The instrument used for Costin's study was specifically developed for the purposes of the research by assembling a comprehensive list of tasks known to be associated with school social work practice (Costin, 1968). Thus, the reliability and validity of the instrument was unknown at the time the research was conducted. There was no report of a pilot study being conducted to combat this limitation. Costin (1968) reported a high response rate of 72.5%, however because a registry of school social workers did not exist at the time, the sample population was developed by state departments of public instruction identifying individuals as school social workers within their states. Respondents were identified from 40 states and the District of Columbia, however the study did not report the number of respondents per geographical area (Costin, 1968). Systematic random sampling was utilized by choosing the fourth name associated with each state registry (Gliner et al., 2009). Accommodations in the random sample were made if the individual state's roster contained fewer than four names. For an exploratory survey research design, in an era when advances in technology regarding databases, survey distribution and analysis had yet to be fully developed or utilized, Costin's study proved pivotal for the school social work profession (Staudt, 1991).

A decade after Costin's (1968) task analysis, Allen-Meares (1977) argued the school social worker definition, social work resources, and the public school environment underwent several changes from the original study, therefore justifying another task analysis. Allen-Meares (1977) conducted a modified replication of Costin's questionnaire that consisted of 84 items and

a revised demographic section. Allen-Meares' (1977) factor analysis, though identical to Costin's original study, found seven emerging themes: (1) leadership and policy-making; (2) educational counseling with the child and parents; (3) facilitating the utilization of community resources; (4) preliminary tasks to the provision of school social work services; (5) clarifying the child's problem to others; (6) facilitating school-community pupil relations; and (7) assessing the child's problem. This analysis provided support for the idea that school social work was shifting from a casework focus on just the individual student, as evidenced in the 1968 study, to a broader, systematic service delivery approach that incorporated home-school-community elements involving both students and parents (Allen-Meares, 1977).

The study that Allen-Meares (1977) conducted allowed for comparative analysis on Costin's (1968) task analysis study with MSW respondents. Names were randomly selected from 39 states that were contacted to obtain the sample of school social workers (Allen-Meares, 1977). A response rate of 51% was reported for this study; significantly less than the 72.5% response rate reported for Costin's (1968) study. Despite this difference, the total completed responses used for analysis were quite similar with Costin reporting a useable $N = 254$ and Allen-Meares reporting $N = 269$ (Costin, 1968; Allen-Meares, 1977). Replicating the study Costin conducted in 1968, allowed for Allen-Meares to systematically investigate differences, as well as similarities to the ever-evolving school social work profession.

In 1994, Allen-Meares conducted a national study of entry-level tasks for school social workers, which addressed the traditional and non-traditional roles school social workers perform (Allen-Meares, 1994). Using a similar version of the instrument administered in Costin (1968) and Allen-Meares (1977), five factors emerged from the data: (1) administrative and professional tasks; (2) home-school liaison; (3) educational counseling with children; (4) facilitating and

advocating families' use of community resources; and (5) leadership and policy-making (Allen-Meares, 1994).

Differing from the self-report nature of the studies mentioned above; Staudt (1991) conducted a role perception study of school social workers by asking principals and special education teachers their perceptions of school social worker roles. Counseling, liaison, and consultation were the three factors that emerged as priority tasks for school social workers (Staudt, 1991). Though a systems model approach was initially recommended by Costin (1975) and supported by Allen-Meares (1977), Staudt (1991) indicated that an individual student focus dominated outsiders' perception of the school social worker role, despite the need for parent intervention or group work. The sample used in Staudt's (1991) study was delimited to an intermediary educational agency, and the geographical location of the agency was not reported; therefore limiting the generalizability of the findings. Despite this limitation, targeting perspectives of school principals and special education teachers provided valuable and applicable insight into the school social work profession.

School Social Work Interventions

Studies of school social worker tasks, roles, and perceptions dominate the literature. However, very little, if any, discussion has taken place regarding how school social worker job dimensions are impacted due to the increased use of the Internet, technology-driven devices, electronic communication, and interactive media. Allen-Meares et al., (2013) conducted a national systematic review of school social work interventions. Though the scope of the article was to identify the school-based interventions social workers use and the effectiveness, interventions examined did not incorporate online elements. For example, aggression was examined in several studies; however, cyberbullying was not part of the operational definition

(Allen-Meares et al., 2013). School social worker perceptions about electronic media and how that has affected job dimensions within the school culture has yet to be explored.

The available literature in social work journals is fairly limited regarding electronic media and the social work profession. The Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics published two articles in 2014 discussing the need for professional standards and ethical guidelines to address emerging technologies (e.g., Web 2.0 communication tools). Recently, the Journal of Social Work Education published an article reviewing, as well as recommending social media policies in social work education (Karpman & Drisko, 2016). However, there are still no clear ethical guidelines in the United States from a professional body addressing social media use in the social work profession (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2006; Halabuza, 2014; Karpman & Drisko, 2016).

Perceptions on Cyberbullying

A study conducted by Slovak and Singer (2011) discussing school social workers' perceptions on cyberbullying could be considered the closest article in the social work literature to discuss the impacts cyberspace has on school social work practice. Slovak and Singer (2011) state, "traditional approaches to preventing and intervening with bullying might not be applicable to cyberbullying" (p. 13). Recognizing that age-old situations such as school bullying are taking on new dynamics due to the influence of digital communication, Slovak and Singer (2011) suggest that school social workers may not be equipped to handle the digital bullying landscape. A "need for trainings and clear practice guidelines" is in order for school social workers to improve their knowledge and skills (p. 13).

If traditional methods for addressing the specific situation of bullying are not appropriate in the onset of virtual realities, arguably the traditional methods, interventions, tasks, and

responsibilities typically associated with school social workers are also not appropriate for addressing more general issues with today's youth and electronic media driven culture. In order for the school social worker profession to respond appropriately to the impact electronic communication has on service delivery, it is vital to understand how school social workers perceive electronic communication affecting their overall practice, not just specific to cyberbullying.

The exploratory research design and data collection methods in the Slovak and Singer (2011) study greatly informed this study. A response rate less than 25% (*N*=399) was acquired utilizing a random sampling technique accessing school social worker's perceptions on cyberbullying (Slovak & Singer, 2011). A pilot test was conducted prior to data collection to increase the effectiveness of the survey instrument. The sample population was delimited to the Midwest School Social Work Council (MSSWC), where nine of the 11 member states participated in the research study. Generalizability of neither the findings nor comparative analysis was possible with the exploratory nature of Slovak and Singer's (2011) study. Nonetheless, it provided: (1) valuable insight into how school social workers address online violence within the educational system and (2) supported the need for additional training and research regarding electronic media and the school social work profession.

Web 2.0 Tools in the School Environment

Recent education literature has suggested that public education policies and practices in the United States are in need of reform due to the technological advances that have swept the country (DoBell, 2013); thus providing justification that school social work practice as well, could be impacted.

Digital Native Language

The digital differences between youth and instructors are much deeper than many educators suspect or realize (Prensky, 2001). The 'language' that digital immigrants speak compared to 'digital natives' is fundamentally "outdated". How today's students learn and relate to others is often a complete contrast to digital immigrants. For example, digital youth are used to receiving information quickly and are able to parallel process and multi-task (Prensky, 2001). On the other hand, today's educators from the digital immigrant generation, often believe students cannot learn successfully if engaged in multiple tasks and do not fully understand the instant gratification that today's youth require (Prensky, 2001). Even though some digital immigrants are adopting the technologies their students are fluent in, methodology, content, and how to form interpersonal relationships with today's youth need to be adapted and possibly reformed in order to accommodate for the unique characteristics of this digital generation.

Classroom Incorporation of Web 2.0 Tools

Incorporating elements of Web 2.0 tools within the classroom setting has illustrated a way to address the unique learning styles of today's youth. Evidence suggests that those educators with more self-confidence in their technological abilities are more likely to integrate new techniques into their teaching methods (Pan, 2011). Pan's (2011) finding supported that the increase of self-efficacy with teachers correlated with an increase use of Web 2.0 tools within the classroom. Another interesting finding from Pan's (2011) research is that professional development positively correlated with Web 2.0 tools integration. Prensky (2001) argues that a first step to bridging the gap between digital natives and digital immigrants is that teachers "have to learn to communicate in the language and style of their students" (p.4). Teachers can start adapting their learning strategies by incorporating Web 2.0 tools in the classroom setting. This

learning technique could be more readily welcomed and effective to today's youth opposed to traditional learning methods; however as Pan (2011)'s research concluded, professional development regarding these type of learning interventions will be necessary for implementation and effectiveness.

In another study examining teachers' self-efficacy with Web 2.0 tools, DoBell (2013) modified the instrument developed by Pan (2011), to measure Montana State science teachers' ability to facilitate knowledge while using Web 2.0 tools in their science course. DoBell (2013) found averages of the integration of Web 2.0 tools higher as compared to Pan's (2011) study. DoBell (2013) believes the reason for this difference is that teachers, two years after Pan's study was conducted are further realizing the importance Web 2.0 tools can have in the classroom. Interestingly, DoBell (2013) found that social media was the least likely form of Web 2.0 tools to be used to facilitate content knowledge in the classroom. This was supported in Pan's (2011) study as well. Despite social networking use being very prevalent among teenagers, DoBell (2013) argues the "[education] profession as a whole has not fully realized the impact" (p. 75). Again, providing support to the assumption school social practice has also been affected due to the onset of technological advances.

Conceptions of Social Media

A Finnish study conducted on secondary and higher education individuals sought to understand the different ways career practitioner's describe and think about social media in relation to career services (Kettunen et al., 2013). Focus groups were conducted in order to gain a collective experience level on how social media is perceived within career services. From the analysis of interview data, five categories of description within eight dimensions of variation emerged. Career practitioner's found, depending on the dimension of variation (e.g. attitude, role

in guidance, settings) social media in career services to be unnecessary, dispensable, possibility, desirable, or indispensable (Kettunen et al., 2013). Table 2.1 reflects these findings.

Table 2.1

Career Practitioners' Conceptions of Social Media in Career Services (Kettunen et al., 2013)

Categories	Unnecessary	Dispensable	Possibility	Desirable	Indispensible
Attitude	Negative	Skeptical	Unsure	Positive	Positive/excited
Role in Guidance	Not relevant	Passing fad	Potentially useful means	Complementary tool	Way to extend service
Settings	Everyday	Creating connections	Discussions	Reflective thought	Processing
Perceptions	Threat	Challenge	Change	Reality	Positive Potential
Guidance Locus	Supplier driven, time/space specific	Supplier driven, time specific	Demand driven, time specific	Citizen centered, time specific	Citizen/user centered
Guidance Paradigm	Individual face to face	Individual	Individual and group	Individual and group (with or without practitioner)	Self-help approach group
Role of Practitioner	Expert role	Advising role	Supporting role	Reflexive role	One resource among others on individuals life
Nature of Interaction	Practitioner to individual	Practitioner to individual	Practitioner to and from individual	Practitioner to and from individual, individual to and from peers	Individual to practitioner, individual to and from community members

The results from Kettunen et al.'s (2013) demonstrate that in order to understand career practitioners' conceptions of social media, consideration of "not only their practical knowledge, but also their prevailing personal conceptions" (p. 315) should be taken into account. This provides insight into how new technologies are integrated and understood in career fields and points relevance to the further development of training and support for practitioners.

The aforementioned studies conducted within the education literature provide insight and reference into how school social work practice could also be impacted due to the increase of technological advancements. Today's youth (i.e. students) inherently speak a different language than today's current educators or other helping professionals. Without understanding, training, support and modification of current practices, digital immigrants relating to today's youth may be hampered; thus providing support for this study's focus on how school social workers perceive their practice affected due to electronic media.

Theories to Guide Study

The theoretical framework of this research includes the integration and synthesis of systems theory, elements of development theory and the uses and gratifications approach.

Systems Theory

Due to the specific focus on the social work profession and school social workers, it is appropriate to utilize the theory that has had the greatest influence on the profession. Systems theory, or more specifically the ecological perspective, is a way of thinking that examines the interplay of relationships and connections between all the parts comprising a system. Finn and Jacobson (2003) state, the "ecological or ecosystems paradigm has powerfully shaped social work thought and practice in the United States" (p. 59). According to the ecological perspective, the human experience is extremely complex with various layers, systems, and processes that all

affect the individual's life. The complexity of cyberspace has added another layer to an already complex system. Payne (2005) argues, "the value of system theory is that it deals with 'wholes' rather than with parts of human or social behavior as other theories do" (p. 143). To truly understand an individual's experience, one needs to examine how it fits into the broader systematic context.

School social workers are trained to view situations from the ecological perspective. Although the social dynamics has changed due to the influence of electronic media, the lens social workers operate from remains unaffected. To the school social worker, electronic media is another layer in an already complex system influencing interactions. Examining social media through the ecological perspective allows the school social worker to systematically investigate how each component of a student's life can be affected by the influence of electronic media. Costin (1975) validates the use of systems theory within the school social work profession by stating:

> The school is a system that functions as a whole by virtue of its interdependent parts and their attributes. Pupils, teachers, administrators, other school personnel, school board members, parents, and other community representative-all who meet in a school- are bound together. Each person is an integral element of a whole. Relationships among its parts are what tie the system together. (p. 136)

Systems theory continues to be the most common and utilized theoretical approach for the social work profession (Finn & Jacobson, 2003; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2013). For this research, the ecological perspective directly aligned with the sample populations' approach to service delivery.

Developmental Theory

In order to thoroughly examine the impacts electronic media has on school social work practice, it is necessary to include a theory that encompasses the population school social

workers serve. Children and adolescents are typically the populations served by school social workers; therefore, incorporating elements of a developmental theory into the theoretical framework is imperative. Theorists in the field of life stages often limit focus to children and adolescents with mental health and behavioral issues, as such; utilizing a non-generalizable development theory for this research would be ineffective due to the vast diversity of students school social workers serve. Because school social workers are often available to all students in their district or school, the generalizable nature of Erikson's developmental theory was an appropriate fit.

Erikson suggests individuals experience a series of eight developmental stages that begin in infancy and conclude in late adulthood (Cherry, 2005). With focus on identity and formation of the self, individuals face challenges during each life stage that have the potential to help or hinder one's psychosocial development. Austrian (2008) stated, "Erikson stressed the importance of individual endowments, culture, and opportunities for different social roles in forming identity" (p. 142).

Adolescence is generally considered the transition period between childhood and adulthood. In Erikson's development theory, adolescents are faced with the challenge of identity versus role confusion (Cherry, 2005). Understanding how one's identity fits alongside their peers and community is the task of Erikson's adolescent stage. For example, navigating social relationships while one's body undergoes rapid physical and emotional changes makes for a developmentally challenging time; add in the complexities associated with electronic media and school social workers today could be faced with a difficult task in their service delivery.

The developmental implications associated with young people's use of digital communication require thoughtful research efforts that recognize the ever-changing landscape of

the Internet and youth's interactions with it. Because users are creating virtual worlds through social interaction processes "one would also expect to see them constructing the same developmental issues online as they do in their offline contexts" (Greenfield, 2008, p. 417). Developmental issues, such as bullying, are being played out in virtual realms and the traditional responses school social workers have may not be an appropriate fit given the new dynamics associated with virtual worlds (Slovak & Singer, 2011).

For the reasons outlined above, developmental theory is essential to use when exploring how electronic media affects the way school social workers serve children and adolescents. Greenfield (2008) argues, "young people are living life online and in public via these [social networking] sites . . . the communication opportunities within them are simply boundless, presenting many challenges and interesting questions for developmentalists" (p. 417). Research on developmental and practice implications in relation to the power and popularity of electronic communication is in its early stages, with many challenges and opportunities yet to be identified or fully explored.

In order to examine school social workers' perceptions of how electronic media has affected their practice, it is important to recognize that school social worker's formal training might not have included information on how electronic media can alter and affect key developmental tasks (e.g. identity formation and the interpersonal relationship skills of digital youth).

Uses and Gratifications Approach

The conceptual framework for this research is not complete without incorporating a model designed to address communication and media driven elements. Many media theories consider the effects media use has on individuals opposed to how individuals engage with media.

Communication studies offer the uses and gratifications approach, which is based on the assumption individuals use media to satisfy individual needs. As such, the approach shares several needs can be satisfied through media use: cognitive, affective, personal and social integrative, and tension release needs (Communication Studies, 2015). For example, youth today often use social media as a way to support and maintain preexisting social relationships (boyd, 2014). Therefore, the use of media by individuals allows the gratifications desired from media use to be intentionally sought out in a goal driven and rational way (Brown, Lauricella, Douai, & Zaidi, 2012).

With children and adolescents using social networking sites as a place to spend time with their peers, it is apparent youth use media to meet some of their socio-emotional needs (boyd, 2014). The uses and gratifications approach does not limit focus to one specific media platform. The approach emphasizes that the platform, which meets the most needs, will be used the most. For example, if social networking sites allow youth to meet more of their socio-emotional needs, as opposed to traditional forms of media (e.g. movies and television), the social media platform will be utilized more frequently. The uses and gratifications approach is "one of the most appropriate theories by which to gain insight into an audience's psychology and behavior" (Li (2007) as cited in Brown et al., 2012). This approach provides an explanation as to why youth choose to engage in social media and how challenging and/or opportunistic that behavior can be given the youth's current developmental stage.

The integration of systems theory, psychosocial developmental theory, and the uses and gratifications approach provided an applicable and appropriate conceptual framework for this study. Figure 2.1 illustrates how the theories integrate to guide this study.

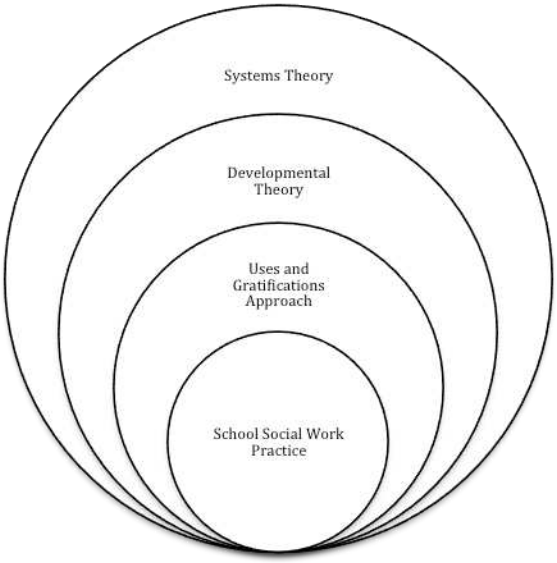

Figure 2.1. *Conceptual framework.*

Summary

In a mediated society, the solution of abstaining from electronic communication is unrealistic and unfeasible. Adolescents have adopted social media as a semi-private place to spend time with their peers and to experiment in identity formation and interpersonal relationships. Current research shows participating in electronic media can be beneficial, as well as concerning for youth. Maintaining a mediated public image has added a layer of complexity to identity formation and has created the need for careful consideration of intended audiences in public spaces. Adolescents today, though considered digital natives, developmentally may not be well equipped to handle the speed, intensity, and complications that living in a networked space generates. Professionals working with today's youth are witnessing the overlap of online and offline worlds, boundaries blurred, and altered and amplified social situations due to the normative practice of using electronic media.

Recent research shows the educational environment is fundamentally impacted due to the advancement of technologies that include Web 2.0 communication tools. These technological

advances have further expanded the generation gap between digital natives and digital immigrants (i.e. today's students and educators) (Prensky, 2001). The field of education is witnessing technological impacts on students, especially in relation to learning, and it seems fitting school social work practice could also be impacted due to these same technological advances. This research attempted to understand school social worker's perceptions on if and how electronic media has affected practice through an exploratory research design consisting of qualitative and quantitative components. Systems theory, developmental theory, and the uses and gratifications approach are the theories that guided this research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate school social workers perceptions about if and how electronic media (i.e. electronic communication) has affected school social work practice. Recent education literature suggests public education policies and practices are in need of reform due to the technological advances sweeping the country (DoBell, 2013). In reference to these technological advances, Prenksy (2001) argued, "Students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach" (p. 1). Claims like this support the idea that the advances made in technology may have affected social work practice as well. This study hoped to increase understanding and awareness among school social work practitioners and in the broader field of social work education about how electronic media affects service delivery. This chapter discusses the research questions, research design, and describes phase one's participants, instrumentation, procedures and analysis. Following phase one methods, phase two's participants, instrumentation, procedures, and analysis are presented. Analysis by research question concludes the chapter.

Research Questions

The research consisted of two phases. The first phase utilized a regional focus group and the second phase utilized an online survey. The following practice implications were explored: (1) the impact electronic media has on school social work practice; (2) the experiences school social workers have with electronic media within their practice; and (3) the perceptions school social workers have related to effective problem solving electronic media issues in their practice.

Familiarity with certain types of electronic media was also examined. A number of sub-questions were addressed in this two-phase non-experimental survey research design.

1. From the perspective of school social workers, what is the impact of electronic communication/social media on school social work practice?
    a. What do school social workers report as their primary job tasks?
    b. Do school social workers perceive a change in their job duties or roles associated with school social work because of electronic communication/social media? If so, what changes are school social workers reporting?
    c. Do school social workers perceive changes in their service delivery, including their ability to build rapport with students due to social media/electronic communication? If so, how?
    d. How, if at all, is electronic communication/social media formally addressed with the use of policies, guidelines or interventions within the school social worker's school and/or school district?
2. How are school social workers experiencing electronic communication/social media within their practice?
    a. Are school social workers experiencing ethical dilemmas in practice as a result of social media/electronic communication? If so, what kinds of ethical dilemmas are school social workers reporting?
    b. Are school social workers using electronic communication/social media within their practice? If so, how?
    c. How do school social workers perceive student's use of social media/electronic communication?
3. From the perspective of school social workers, how effective do they feel problem solving student issues related to electronic communication/social media?
    a. What do school social workers report as the primary student issues related to electronic media?
    b. Do school social workers report the need for practice guidelines; additional trainings or education related to electronic communication/social media? If so, what are school social workers reporting the need for to further inform their practice?
4. What kinds of electronic communication/social media do school social workers report being familiar with?

5. Are there differences in the school social worker responses based upon demographic variables such as current age of school social worker, community of practice, and population served?

Research Design

A phased research design with quantitative and qualitative components was utilized for this exploratory research. Data collection involved a two-phase process; (1) a regional focus group with a select group of current school social workers; and (2) an online survey questionnaire administered to a national sample of school social workers. Kruger and Casey (2009) assert, "Focus groups are often used to lay the groundwork for subsequent survey research" (p. 12). By utilizing a focus group, insights into languages, concepts, and factors are obtained, which allows for a meaningful instrument to be developed for larger samples (Kruger & Casey, 2009).

The data collection instrument for the focus group consisted of a set of semi-structured interview questions guided by an interview schedule. Refer to Appendix B. The data collection instrument for the second phase (online survey) consisted primarily of close ended, scaled, and unordered questions. Refer to Appendix E. Qualitative responses (i.e. text entry) on the "other" categories for specific questions were allowed in the survey instrument. Results from phase one informed the survey item structure and response categories in phase two. The "second phase was designed to expand upon and further explain results obtained in phase one" (Creswell & Plano Clark, (2007) as cited in Tungate (2008, p. 75).

Inclusion Criteria

Persons associated with the affiliate states of the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) that had met their states' requirements for a school social worker position and were actively employed by an educational agency, whether public or private, were included

in the study. Individuals that were supervisors or administrators but had also met their state requirements for a school social worker position were included as well. Additionally, individuals who had recently retired (within the last two years) and MSW interns in their last year of schooling, whose internship placement was within a school district, were also eligible to participate. School social workers currently practicing internationally were not included in the study, as the study's intent was to capture the perceptions of school social workers affiliated with the state chapters of SSWAA.

Phase One

Participants

A focus group was implemented prior to the survey instrument to gain a current snapshot of school social workers perceptions on the affects electronic media has on practice. A regional chapter of the California Association of School Social Work (CASSW) was selected for phase one due to CASSW fitting the scope of the study's targeted sample population of SSWAA state affiliates. Phase one participants consisted of five school social workers currently practicing in school districts located in Southern California. Participants served elementary, middle, and high school populations. Participant's assigned schools were located in city, suburb, or rural communities. The "town" community of practice was not represented within the focus group.

Interview Schedule

An interview schedule consisting of semi-structured questions was administered to CASSW members in the form of a focus group. The interview schedule consisted of two main sections. The first section was a document that included an introductory statement and a definition of electronic communication for focus group participants to reference. Demographic

questions were requested on the bottom of the document for participants to fill out and turn in at the end of the focus group.

The second section of the interview schedule consisted of the focus group questions. The questions were organized into opening, introductory, key, and concluding questions (Kruger & Casey, 2009). These questions were primarily open-ended questions or closed-ended with open-ended probes. The intention of the focus group was to spark dialog between school social work practitioners regarding their overall perceptions and beliefs around electronic communication within their practice. The focus group questions were intentionally developed in order to elicit narrative responses with explanations to help inform the items and response categories for the survey instrument in phase two.

Data Collection Procedures

The CASSW regional coordinator initially contacted members about their willingness to participate in the focus group. Identified potential focus group participants received a letter through e-mail that invited their participation in the research. The letter explained the purpose, procedures, confidentiality, and dissemination of the study. Once interest was established from a group of current school social workers, coordination efforts were made to establish when and where the focus group would take place. The focus group met at a location conveniently accessible to all potential participants. A reminder email was sent prior to the scheduled focus group. Informed consent was sought by providing a handout that described the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits of participation, voluntary nature of the study, and the IRB contact information of the study in detail. Informed consent was obtained by all focus group participants. All participants agreed to be audio recorded and contacted at a later date to review as well as to provide feedback on the developed instrument for phase two.

The interview schedule document and questions were distributed to all the participants. An overview of the topic and ground rules were discussed before any questions from the interview schedule were asked. Once ground rules were discussed, the audio recording equipment was turned on. A research assistant was responsible for monitoring the audio recording equipment and taking field notes throughout the discussion. Taking field notes throughout the focus group ensures as much data is collected as possible (Kruger & Casey, 2009). Questions followed the interview schedule. Time was managed to ensure all questions within the introductory, key and ending questions were addressed. One additional question was briefly discussed before time had gone past the two-hour mark.

Quality and Trustworthiness

Because the interview schedule consisted of semi-structured open-ended questions, primarily narrative and/or qualitative data emerged. This was designed in order to understand a variety of perceptions and beliefs regarding a complex topic. Qualitative data or rather data that is not quantifiable is needed to report and document the perceptions of the target audience (Kruger & Casey, 2009). Validity or trustworthiness of the data is often a debated topic within qualitative research (Glense, 2011). As such, several steps were taken to ensure the trustworthiness and accuracy of the data collected.

Focus group questions were peer reviewed and discussed with the researcher to ensure the clarity of the proposed questions. Rubin and Babbie (2008) state, "careful wording of the questions can also reduce significantly the respondent's own unreliability" (p. 387). The monitoring equipment recorded verbatim responses and the researcher and research assistant took immediate record of participant responses as well. These efforts contributed to the reliability and dependability of the data collected.

Member checking of the data collected was conducted at two separate times. The first was at the conclusion of the focus group, where participants were asked to verify the researcher's summary comments of the focus group (Kruger & Casey, 2009). The second was when focus group participants were asked to review and comment on the survey instrument that was specifically informed from the focus group data. Slight revisions and clarifications to the survey instrument were made to ensure the survey instrument was "representing them [school social workers] and their ideas accurately" (Glesne, 2011, p.49). Additionally, the multiple data collection methods (phase one and two) helped ensure triangulation of the data, thus contributing to the study's overall credibility and trustworthiness (Glense, 2011).

Adhering to systematic analysis procedures and good practices associated with focus group research, helped inform researcher behavior and provided the groundwork needed to ensure a quality study was conducted (Kruger & Casey, 2009). The researcher remained neutral to the content of discussion and valued all perspectives and beliefs that were presented at the focus group. Audio recording and transcribing the data ensured participant perspectives were reflected in their truest form.

Data Analysis

Data for phase one was collected in December 2015. The two-hour focus group was audio recorded. Field notes by the researcher and assistant were taken to ensure optimal data collection. The demographic data was categorized and measures of central tendency were calculated. The entire audio recording of the focus group was transcribed into a word processing program. Data transcription concluded in February 2016. Handwritten field notes from the researcher and assistant were also entered into a word processing program. Analysis was based

on a complete transcript of the focus group that was supplemented with the field notes (Kruger & Casey, 2009).

Coding of the qualitative data utilized a classic analysis strategy that implemented a constant comparison analytic framework to "identify patterns in the data and discover relationships between ideas or concepts" (Kruger & Casey, 2009, p.125). The classical analysis strategy was employed in a word processing program. The transcript was initially broken into each pre-determined category. Coding categories were pre-determined based on the focus group questions that followed the interview schedule. However, due to the nature of a "discussion" type atmosphere emerging within the focus group; some answers to questions were addressed early and/or later within the transcript. These sections of data were moved to the appropriate pre-determined category before line-by-line analysis began.

Within each question (i.e. pre-determined category) a line-by-line analysis was used to highlight key phrases and sections of data to determine patterns and relationships. This constant case comparison technique was used to analyze all of the focus group data. "Units of data deemed meaningful by the researcher are compared with each other in order to generate tentative categories and properties" (Merriam, 2002). Code words were grouped around a "particular concept in the data, called categorizing" (Merriam, 2002, p. 149). Established codes were then used to arrive at overarching themes within each category (i.e. question). All of the codes and overarching themes were used to inform and develop the structure, questions, and response categories of the survey instrument administered in phase two.

Focus Group Key Findings

A summary of the focus group participant's demographics and key findings are presented below. Appendix C provides a table of the themes/codes generated from each interview schedule question.

Sample characteristics. All five individuals were members of the CASSW. The age of participants ranged from 31 to 57 years old, two participants self-identified as male and three as female. The majority of the group (80%) identified as white or Caucasian ethnicity. Focus group participants served elementary, middle, and high school populations. Participants had a mean of nine years of school social work experience. All participants obtained their MSW between the years 1999-2012.

Job functions. Focus group participants identified their primary role as a school social worker was to "build bridges between the home-school-community" environments. For example, participants shared they provide individual and group counseling as well help parents get connected to community resources. All participants agreed that their job duties have been impacted due to electronic communication.

Rapport building. The use of electronic media lingo and emojis with students was the most prevalent example of how school social workers were building rapport with students. Participant 3 stated, "When I try to engage an older kid, I ask are you facing it or Facebooking it?" Engagement techniques and behavior modification were additional ways participants were using electronic media to build rapport. The use of electronic devices as "common ground" helped build rapport and facilitate peer relationship development as well.

Service delivery. Small and support groups were identified areas where school social workers were incorporating either electronic media (e.g. YouTube videos) or topics (e.g. video

game club) in their service delivery. Educating students on how to access information, how to respond and how to use electronic devices was a common pattern throughout the focus group. Additionally, participants shared their service delivery included a large parent education component; where many of the schools' "parent nights" were designed to educate parents on social media, cellphones, and cyberbullying.

Current policies. Participants' schools and districts did not have any formally written or employed electronic communication/social media policies. The policies that were employed included: (1) cyberbullying; (2) electronic device policy for staff and students; (3) videotaping policy; (4) student cell phone policy; and (5) staff cell phone policy.

Perceived effectiveness. Because focus group participant's school or district had limited policies regarding electronic media, the discussion around perceived effectiveness was minimal. However, this comment regarding the perceived effectiveness of their districts' cyberbullying is worth noting.

> I think it is helpful when we work with our kids because we can refer back to it and all of the students and parents have to sign a handbook which has the policy in it so we can always go right back to it… it is very cut and dry. For example, if the principal has to do consequences or has to talk to the family about it they can say, you signed it right here… (Participant 1)

This comment provides insight into why there is a perceived need for electronic media policies to inform service delivery.

Ethical dilemmas. Focus group participants discussed a variety of ethical dilemmas they encountered in practice. Discussion around professional boundaries dominated the conversation. Overall, focus group participants expressed concerns with the difficultly of trying to maintain and navigate boundaries given the social media driven culture of today and lack of direction and consistency from administration and/or professional bodies.

Electronic contact. Email was the main way students were contacting participants. It should be noted this was in reference to work email accounts, not personal email accounts. Additionally, participants identified that both current and former students were attempting to connect with them via their social media account pages. Text messaging was not an identified way students were connecting or contacting focus group participants.

Electronic media incorporation. The most sited form was the incorporation of webpages and/or online resources into their practice. Focus group participants shared they not only used online resources to help inform specific aspects of their practice (i.e. evidenced-based articles), but they also taught students how to navigate and find online resources. The incorporation of YouTube videos and applications were additional ways participants were using electronic media within their practice.

> As part of our restorative justice program, we have lessons on various topics such as bullying or domestic violence. Students will watch a video clip on their iPad and then complete worksheets or answer a few questions. The idea is to come in and have a discussion in person. And not just watch a movie and give a movie report. But to delve a little more into their motives and how they can see the consequences of their behavior. (Participant 4)

Focus group participants indicated they were incorporating forms of electronic media within support and small group settings.

Presenting student issues. Participants shared students would spread rumors or name call on social media accounts, sexually harass or exploit others (i.e. photos, sexting); videotape physical altercations and videotape for the purposes of emotional harassment. Additionally, participants helped students navigate and understand social media norms as well as assist in conflict resolution. Relationship development (i.e. flirting); social exclusion (e.g. unfriending or blocking a friend); threats of self-harm (self or peer); and popularity contests (i.e. how many likes can I get) were additional issues focus group participants reported students needing help

with. Interestingly, inappropriate relational support was also addressed within the focus group. For example, friends or family become involved in a conflict between two students because they witness the conflict over the student's social media account.

Effective problem solving. Focus group participants felt their ability to effectively problem solve student issues was impacted by their own digital knowledge and by the lack of solutions addressing social media related problems. Participants discussed how long term problem-solving solutions were non-existent and that students lack the ability to understand the long-term consequences of social media behavior. Participants shared students attempting to resolve conflict through electronic media as opposed to face-to-face impeded problem solving effectiveness at the practitioner level. Lastly, participants identified supervision, control and/or monitoring of student's electronic consumption was very difficult to achieve, which again, impacted the ability for practitioners to develop and implement effective solutions.

Practice guidelines. Participants universally agreed electronic media practice guidelines would be beneficial to their practice. Professional boundaries and mandated reporting guidelines were perceived as the most needed policies to further inform their social work practice. Personal cell phone guidelines for staff and students; electronic media correspondence; ethical decision-making; and professionalism on social media were additional guidelines identified in the data.

Trainings/education. Understanding and becoming familiar with current electronic media trends, lingo, and norms was a recognized need among focus group participants. Knowledge on interventions (e.g. trauma and social media); development stages (e.g. how electronic media impacts specific developmental stages); and general electronic device education were also identified needs by focus group participants. Participant 5 shared, "I feel unless we

receive specific and effective training…we are going to miss out on opportunities to really truly help kids and their families."

Phase Two

Participants

The intention of phase two was to understand if and how school social workers perceived their practice impacted due to electronic communication at a national level. School social workers in the United States that were state affiliates with the SSWAA were the sample population. At the time of data collection (October 2016), there were 29 state associations affiliated with the SSWAA[1]. The shaded states in Figure 3.1 represent the state affiliates that were represented in the study's sample population.

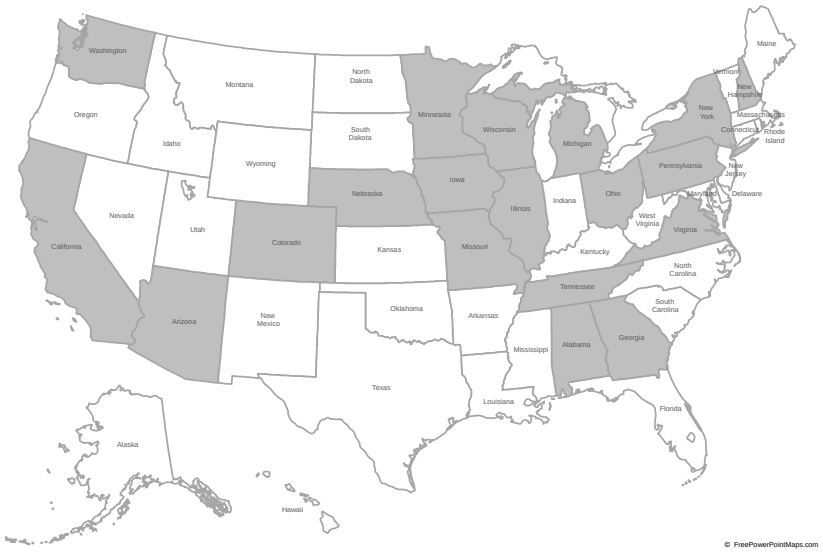

Figure 3.1. *SSWAA state affiliates represented in sample population.*

[1] Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin (http://www.sswaa.org)

All state association chapter presidents were contacted via email to participate in this study. In the invitation for research participation, chapter presidents were asked to disseminate the recruitment email and survey link to all current members of their association and if applicable, include the study in their association's e-newsletter. Despite three recruitment attempts, 11 state affiliate chapter presidents (Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) were unresponsive to the invitation to participate in the research study.

Survey respondents were recruited both through contact via local chapters and through SSWAA communications. The SSWAA included the recruitment email and survey link in two e-newsletters. A total of 20 state affiliates of the SSWAA were represented in phase two. Two respondents indicated their state of practice was in a non-affiliate SSWAA state (New Mexico and Rhode Island). These responses were excluded from the data analysis, making the total number of respondents *N*=379, with 20 of the 29 SSWAA state affiliates represented.

Online Questionnaire

The online questionnaire was informed and developed from the analysis of the focus group data, focus group participant member checking, analysis and synthesis of the available literature, and results and feedback from the pilot survey questionnaire. Data from the focus group guided response categories for instrument items in the questionnaire. Additionally, analysis and synthesis of the available literature provided insight on to what items should or should not be included within the questionnaire. By allowing the focus group data to inform the language, concepts, and factors, a meaningful instrument was developed that permitted "for larger samples and statistical analysis" (Kruger & Casey, 2009, p. 13).

Self-report measures were utilized due to the nature of exploring the perceptions school social workers have in regards to electronic media impacting their practice. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended, scaled, and unordered questions (Gliner, Morgan, & Leech, 2009). Qualitative entries for "other" categories on select items were allowed. Rubin and Babbie (2008) stated, "surveys can be excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes and orientations in a large population" (p. 367). Survey research is a very common and well-established research technique proven to be an effective tool for social science inquiry. The self-administered nature of an online survey appeared to be the most advantageous and appropriate design method for phase two (Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

The questionnaire comprised of 22 questions (not including demographic questions) and was divided into five sections: (1) job dimensions; (2) experiences with electronic communication; (3) perceptions/beliefs related to electronic communication and service delivery; (4) responses to electronic communication; and (5) demographics. At the end of the demographic section, respondents were provided an opportunity to share any additional comments in the form of an open-ended question. Refer to Appendix E for the survey instrument.

Job dimensions. This section consisted of seven questions aimed at understanding to what extent the use of electronic communication had changed the ways school social workers perform job duties. Focus was on communication and collaboration utilizing electronic modes with colleagues, administration, and parents. Incorporating the use of electronic media (e.g. online resources, YouTube videos, and applications) and how students were contacting school social workers electronically were addressed in this section.

Experiences. This section consisted of five questions aimed at understanding school social workers experiences with electronic media. Respondents were asked if electronic media

had changed the ways they engage with students, implement behavior modification techniques, and assimilate to youth culture. Two unordered type questions were used to gain insight on the problems school social workers were helping students resolve and the ethical dilemmas school social workers were encountering because of electronic communication. Additionally, school social workers were asked to share how often and the specific forms of electronic communication they use for personal purposes.

Perceptions/beliefs. This section was addressed by five questions. Scaled questions asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement regarding how they perceived their service delivery was affected due to electronic media. Respondents were asked if they incorporated youth culture and electronic media into service delivery and therapeutic interventions. Items addressing what school social workers discuss and help students in regards to electronic media were also included.

Responses. This section consisted of a combination of unordered and scaled questions addressing if and how the respondent's school or district formally addressed electronic communication through written policies. Scaled questions asked respondents to indicate their level of perceived necessity for certain practice guidelines and trainings. Respondents were asked to share their thoughts on being able to effectively problem solve student issues related to electronic media.

Demographics. To verify the representativeness of the sample, demographic data consisting of: current age, self-identified gender, state, race/ethnicity, years of school social work practice, social work formal education (i.e., BSW or MSW) and year obtained, population served (e.g. elementary, middle, or high school) and corresponding grade levels, and community of practice (e.g. city, suburb, town, rural) was sought. The last question in the demographic section

was an open-ended question asking respondents to share additional comments they felt were relevant to how electronic media has affected practice.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collected for phase two followed a quantitative survey method and utilized a purposeful sampling frame where respondents were based on those who self-selected to participate in the study (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). The following list outlines the steps that were taken for data collection.

1. In October of 2016, the president of each state affiliate of the SSWAA was contacted via email, explaining the purpose of the study and asking for the chapter's participation. A letter of support from the SSWAA was included in the initial contact email. Each chapter president was asked to disseminate the recruitment email and survey link to their members through email and if applicable, on the association's e-newsletter as well. State chapter presidents were offered an executive summary of the final report on the study. Follow up emails were sent at the one and two-week mark after the initial invitation email. Additionally, the SSWAA included the recruitment email and survey link in two e-newsletters (October 31, 2016 and November 14, 2016).
2. Chapter presidents agreeing to participate in the study were emailed the recruitment letter and survey link to be disseminated to their members. The recruitment (i.e. cover letter) explained the purpose of the study, IRB procedures, invited participation, and provided survey link.
3. Two weeks after the initial cover letter and survey link were emailed to chapter presidents; a follow up email was sent asking for chapter presidents to re-send the

recruitment email and link a second time to their members in hopes to solicit additional responses.

4. Data collection continued until January 2017; this allowed for each state association president to send out the recruitment email and link twice to their members within a month's time frame.
5. All correspondence between state affiliates was organized in an excel spreadsheet. This was to keep track of when follow up emails were to be sent and/or when recruitment attempts should discontinue. Additional notes were also kept in this document. For example, some chapter presidents requested a copy of the IRB Letter of Approval to share with their board members.
6. All surveys were administered and collected on Qualtrics. In January 2017, the survey was closed and data was uploaded into SPSS. Surveys uploaded consecutively by date received to maintain organization.

Individual respondents were offered an email copy of the final executive summary of the study. If a study participant wished to receive a copy of the summary, the survey instrument included an email address where participants could independently send a request to receive a summary of the results. This was to ensure there was no association between the participant's identity and his or her individual survey responses in order to keep the surveys anonymous. A total of 52 individual respondents requested a copy of the executive summary.

It should be noted initial IRB approval was for the recruitment of 300 respondents. At the beginning of December 2016, responses exceeded the 300 limit. IRB was contacted immediately and an amendment to recruit an additional 100 individuals was submitted. Data collection resumed on December 13, 2016 following the approved amendment.

Reliability and Validity

The instrument attempted to understand school social workers' perceptions regarding if and how electronic media has affected practice. The instrument was based on focus group participant responses and member checking of the instrument, prior task analysis studies, available literature, and synthesis of that data. The items were specifically designed for this study, which limits the opportunity for comparative analysis to establish reliability. However, it should be noted that the intent of this exploratory survey instrument was to gather data, as opposed to measure concepts.

Even though the overall instrument's reliability and validity are unknown due to the nature of this study; additional efforts were made to compensate for this limitation. The exploratory research design, in part, included pilot testing the instrument for appropriateness and clarity, as well as reliability testing of the scaled items to provide additional insight into the overall reliability and validity of the online questionnaire.

Pilot Study

The president of the Washington Association of School Social Workers (WASSW) offered to pilot test the instrument for this study. Refer to Appendix D. The intention of the pilot study was to check the clarity and appropriateness of the items in the survey instrument. The instrument was given to school social work board members of the WASSW for review. It should be noted the pilot was implemented after phase one participants member checked and provided feedback on the draft instrument.

Internal reliability. Seven individuals completed the survey, with no partial responses recorded. Internal reliability was conducted on the pilot instrument. Cronbach's alpha (α) is often used for multi-scale items to access their internal reliability. Within the pilot instrument,

there were 15-scaled questions. Table 3.1 reports the Cronbach's alpha for each scaled item. Typically, an alpha coefficient of .70 and higher is considered acceptable (Morgan et al., 2013).

Table 3.1

Cronbach's Alpha for Scaled Items in Pilot Instrument

Item	*n* of Valid Cases	α	*n* of Response Categories
Q5: Electronic Communication has changed how I…	6	.84	7
Q6: How often do you use the following with colleagues?	7	.44	4
Q7: How often do you use the following with admin?	7	.60	4
Q8: How often do you use the following with parents?	7	.79	4
Q9: How often do you use the following ways to collaborate with colleagues?	7	.08	5
Q10: How often incorporating into practice?	7	.49	3
Q13: Electronic Communication has changed how I… (engage)	7	.44	3
Q16: How often are you using the following for personal use?	5	.63	6
Q18: I incorporate youth culture into my service delivery by using…	7	.24	3
*Q19: I use electronic devices to…	7	.40	3
*Q20: I provide education	7	.50	2
*Q21: I provide therapeutic interventions...	7	.88	2
Q22: I discuss with students…	7	1.0	3
Q25: If applicable, how effective do you perceive the following school district policies?	4	.18	5
*Q27: What training or education programs related to social media would be helpful to your practice?	7	.82	4

*****Question was reworded for the final instrument in phase two

Results. Results from the internal reliability analysis for the pilot study were used to inform some of the survey instruments' revisions. Questions with an alpha coefficients above .70 were considered to be strong and were included in the final instrument (Morgan et al., 2013).

Questions that had an alpha coefficient less than .70 were assessed individually. Ten questions had low alpha coefficients. Scaled questions with a low alpha were individually assessed for appropriateness to be included in the survey instrument. The primary purpose of questions 6, 7, 9, 10, 16 and 18 was to measure the frequency of certain types of electronic communication (e.g. email, text messages) school social workers use. Question 25's purpose was to describe school social worker's perceived effectiveness of written policies regarding electronic communication within their district. Because these questions were designed with the purpose of informing and describing school social worker's current practice setting, they were included in the survey instrument despite the low alpha coefficient.

It should be noted question 22 had an alpha coefficient of 1.0. A high coefficient (e.g. greater than .90) suggests items may be repetitious (Morgan et al., 2013). In this particular case, question 22 asked if school social workers discuss with students: (1) how to respond regarding electronic communication; (2) short term consequences; and (3) the long-term consequences of electronic communication use. It was assumed the short and long-term items were the repetitious items within the scale. However, due to the small pilot sample size, question 22 was not revised for the final instrument, with the understanding the items needed to be examined separately.

Revisions. Upon review of the alpha coefficients and feedback from pilot participants, it was determined several questions needed to be either reworded and/or restructured. Three questions within the perceptions/beliefs section were reworded for clarity (questions 19-21). An additional item of "how to use the Internet safely" was added under the "I provide education" (question#20) item. Three items in the responses to electronic communication section were reworded and/or restructured. The pilot instrument included two rank order items, which were not assessed for an alpha coefficient (question # 26 and #28). However, qualitative feedback

from pilot participants suggested these rank order questions did not accurately capture the perceptions school social workers had in regards to needing additional practice guidelines and/or trainings. These two questions were restructured to Likert style questions. The response categories remained the same. Question 27 required the anchors to be changed from "not helpful/helpful" to "not necessary/necessary". Lastly, question 13 had a low alpha coefficient, but did not receive any qualitative feedback from pilot participants. As such, it was decided to leave the question as is for the final instrument, again with the understanding that items would be analyzed separately due to their lack of consistency (Morgan et al., 2013).

Results from the pilot study and focus group participant's member checking the instrument informed the language used in the survey's questions, responses and structure. Because the survey was revised to incorporate the feedback addressed above, it was assumed the instrument had acceptable content validity, meaning the language used in the instrument represented the content one was attempting to measure (Gliner & Morgan, 2000).

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The intention of the pilot study was to ensure clarity and appropriateness of what was being asked. The Cronbach's alpha provided insight into the internal structure of the instrument; however a high alpha does not necessarily suggest evidence that a measure contains one dimension or construct (Gliner et al., 2009). Additional measures are required to provide evidence for internal structure. Exploratory Factor Analysis is an approach used to assess evidence for validity. Morgan et al., (2013) indicate, "Principal axis factor analysis should never be used if the number of items (variables) is greater than the number of participants" (pg. 119). By adhering to this, an exploratory factor analysis was only conducted on the finalized survey instrument. Results of the exploratory factor analysis are presented in Chapter 4.

Data Analysis

Data was collected via the online survey instrument between October 2016 and January 2017. 381 completed survey responses were downloaded from Qualtrics and uploaded into SPSS. At the time the survey link was closed; three partial responses were recorded. These responses were not officially recorded nor uploaded with the raw data. 147 variables for each survey respondent were entered. Variables included numeric and qualitative (i.e. text) data entries. All text entry responses were compiled within the appropriate pre-determined category (i.e. questionnaire item) in a word processing program. The constant comparison strategy utilized in phase one was applied to determine codes and themes among the qualitative responses.

Data was accessed for adherence to the study's inclusion criteria. Due to the scope of the study focused on school social workers practicing within SSWAA state affiliates, two respondents were extracted from the data set due to practicing in non-affiliate states. No other inclusion criteria were violated. The total number of usable surveys for analysis was N=379.

An exploratory data analysis was conducted to provide information on any errors associated with the data and allow for assumptions to be checked (Morgan et al., 2013). Data was checked and edited; to ensure the data was "clean" for further analysis. Below describes the data analysis by research question. Refer to Appendix A for a matrix of the research questions with corresponding phases, data collection instrument(s), key variables, and analysis.

Analysis by Research Question

Research Question One

1. From the perspective of school social workers, what is the impact of electronic communication/social media on school social work practice?
    a. What do school social workers report as their primary job tasks?

b. Do school social workers perceive a change in their job duties or roles associated with school social work because of electronic communication/social media? If so, what changes are school social workers reporting?

c. Do school social workers perceive changes in their service delivery, including their ability to build rapport with students due to social media/electronic communication? If so, how?

d. How, if at all, is electronic communication/social media formally addressed with the use of policies, guidelines or interventions within the school social worker's school and/or school district?

1a. What do school social workers report as their primary job tasks?

Research question one was addressed by the phase one focus group and phase two survey instrument. Specifically, sub-questions 1a. through 1d. were answered via interview schedule questions (1-2, 5-6, and 11) and survey instrument questions (5-9, 13, 18-20, 22, and 24-25). The items from the interview schedule had predetermined response categories and were addressed within the opening (question 1), introductory (question2), key questions (questions 5 and 6) and ending (question 11) sections of the interview schedule. These questions were a combination of open-ended and close-ended with prompts in order to generate a robust discussion among focus group respondents. This was intentional in order to solicit responses that gained insight into focus group participants' perspectives. To answer these questions, codes and themes were generated based on the responses within the pre-determined response categories. Corresponding survey items were developed based on the codes and themes that were generated from the classic analysis strategy.

1b. Do school social workers perceive a change in their job duties or roles associated with school social work because of electronic communication/social media? If so, what changes are school social workers reporting?

Survey items 5-9 were addressed in the Job Dimensions section of the questionnaire. Frequencies and means were generated for questions 6-9 to describe how often school social

workers reported using electronic communication to perform their job duties. Means, standard deviations, and skewness measures were generated for question 5. Additionally, question 5 was deemed an appropriate subscale in the exploratory factor analysis. Items within question 5 were used to develop the Job Function key subscale. All key subscales were analyzed for differences among age, community of practice, and population served under research question 5.

1c. Do school social workers perceive changes in their service delivery, including their ability to build rapport with students due to social media/electronic communication? If so, how?

The first question within the Experiences section of the survey instrument was question 13. This was a Likert type scaled question asking respondents to indicate their level of agreement using the range strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4) on how they perceived electronic media changing engagement, behavior modification, and assimilation to youth culture in their practice. The Cronbach's alpha conducted on this question indicated the items did not scale together. Means, standard deviations, and skewness measures were produced for question 13. Pearson correlations between age of school social worker and population served were generated for each item individually in question 13.

Survey items 18-20 and 22 were addressed in the Perceptions/Beliefs section of the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions on the extent they incorporate, use, and help students in regards to electronic communication in their service delivery. Response categories included a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Pearson correlations between age and each item in question 18 were conducted. Associations between population served and question 18 and 22 items were also explored. Means, standard deviations, and skewness measures were generated for question 19 and 20. Survey items 19 and 20 were found to be appropriate subscales within the exploratory

factor analysis and were used to develop the Electronic Media and Electronic Education key subscales.

1d. How, if at all, is electronic communication/social media formally addressed with the use of policies, guidelines or interventions within the school social worker's school and/or school district?

Question 24 and 25 of the survey instrument addressed research question 1.d; asking respondents to indicate what written policies their school/district were currently employing. And if applicable, how effective did they perceive those policies to be. Percentage frequencies and/or means were generated for question 24 and 25. Additionally, survey questions 20, 24 and 25 included an "other" response category. Text responses for questions 20 and 24 were analyzed using the constant comparison method. The qualitative responses in question 25 did not generate enough data to be effectively analyzed.

Research Question Two

2. How are school social workers experiencing electronic communication/social media within their practice?

    a. Are school social workers experiencing ethical dilemmas in practice as a result of social media/electronic communication? If so, what kinds of ethical dilemmas are school social workers reporting?

    b. Are school social workers using electronic communication/social media within their practice? If so, how?

    c. How do school social workers perceive student's use of social media/electronic communication?

2a. Are school social workers experiencing ethical dilemmas in practice as a result of social media/electronic communication? If so, what kinds of ethical dilemmas are school social workers reporting?

Sub question 2a. was answered via interview schedule (question 9) in the key question section and survey instrument (question 15). Question 9 asked focus group participants to describe an ethical dilemma or issue they have encountered within their practice because of

electronic media. Codes were generated from the pre-determined category of question 9 using constant comparison analysis. The units of data deemed meaningful were used to develop overarching themes, which informed the response categories in question 15 of the survey instrument.

Question 15 was addressed in the Experiences section of the survey instrument and asked respondents to identify ethical dilemmas they have encountered in their practice because of social media/electronic communication (close-ended, unordered; check all that apply). Respondents were given eight response categories in addition to an "other" category. The text generated from the "other" category was analyzed using frequent constant comparison analysis. Percentage frequencies were generated for each ethical dilemma encountered. Additionally, Pearson's Chi-square was used to determine differences among the ethical dilemmas encountered and populations served.

2b. Are school social workers using electronic communication/social media within their practice? If so, how?

This sub question was addressed in the introductory section of the interview schedule (questions 3 and 4) and survey instrument questions (10, 11, 21). Interview schedule question 3 invoked brief responses within the focus group and data was categorized into responses without the need for further analysis. Question 11 in the survey instrument directly corresponded with this interview item. Question 11 was a close-ended; check all that apply item asking respondents "how are student contacting/connecting with you electronically?" Percent frequencies were generated for the items in question 9 and 11. Additionally, there was an "other" category. The qualitative responses were analyzed using the frequent constant comparison method. A Pearson's Chi-square was conducted to assess differences among electronic contact and population served.

Responses for question 4 of the interview schedule were generated through a close-ended with open-ended prompts query. Focus group participants were asked "do you incorporate electronic communication into your practice, and if so, how?" Responses to this question were coded and grouped into meaningful categories. Two distinct concepts emerged from the data. School social workers define the incorporation of electronic media by the frequency and mode of the therapeutic invention.

To reflect this discovery, two separate questions (question 10 and 21) were developed for the survey instrument. Question 10 asked respondents how often they were using specific types of electronic media as part of their practice with students. The response categories for all the items within question 10 were based on a Likert type scale ranging from never (1) to very often (4). Means, standard deviations, and skewness measures were generated to provide an outline of how school social workers are incorporating electronic media (e.g. webpages, YouTube videos, applications) into their practice. Items within question 10 did not scale together as evidenced by a low Cronbach's alpha score. Pearson's Correlation was conducted on all items within question 10 to assess associations between the incorporation of electronic media and current age of the respondent.

Question 21 was a Likert style question in the Perceptions/Beliefs section of the survey asking respondents to indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) if they incorporate an electronic media component in the therapeutic interventions they provide (e.g. small and support groups). Means, standard deviations, and skewness measures were generated for question 21. The initial exploratory factor analysis provided evidence that question 21 items scaled together, and were included in the Therapeutic Intervention key subscale.

2c. How do school social workers perceive student's use of social media/electronic communication?

This research question was addressed in the additional question section of the interview schedule. Focus group participants were asked, "what are the pros and cons of electronic communication/social media within your practice?" Due to time constraints, a thorough discussion of this question was not generated. Data obtained from the focus group for this question was too minimal for patterns within the data to be identified. As such, it was not appropriate to include a corresponding item within the survey instrument to address this research question. To address this gap, the survey instrument included an open-ended question, located in the demographic section of the survey asking respondents "do you have any additional comments you would like to add about social media impacting school social work practice?" Data collected from this question generated a variety of positive and negative responses regarding how school social workers perceive electronic media impacting their practice. Data from this question was combined with the data obtained from the focus group. Responses were coded and grouped into two meaningful themes.

Research Question Three

3. From the perspective of school social workers, how effective do they feel problem solving student issues related to electronic communication/social media?

    a. What do school social workers report as the primary student issues related to electronic media?

    b. Do school social workers report the need for practice guidelines; additional trainings or education related to electronic communication/social media? If so, what are school social workers reporting the need for to further inform their practice?

3a. What do school social worker's report as the primary student issues related to electronic media?

Sub question 3a. was addressed by interview schedule questions 7 and 8 and survey instrument questions 14 and 28. Question 7 was an open-ended inquiry in the key question section of the interview protocol asking respondents to "describe some of the presenting problems students come to you for help using electronic communication/social media". In the key question section, question 8 was a close-ended with open-ended prompt query asking "do you feel like you can effectively problem solve student issues related to or by using electronic communication/social media? Can you tell me what made you feel that way?" Both of these interview questions elicited open-ended, narrative responses. Analysis employed coding the data within the pre-determined category. Overarching themes emerged from the data, which informed the response categories in questions 14 and 28 of the survey instrument.

The Experience section housed question 14 of the survey instrument which was an unordered, close-ended question asking respondents to check all that apply. An "other" category was included. Data collected from the qualitative responses were analyzed using constant comparison analysis. Respondents were asked to identify the types of problems students were coming to them for help within their practice. Frequencies of each item were generated to provide a comprehensive description of the primary issues students are seeking help with. Pearson's Chi-square was conducted to assess differences among student issues and population served.

Question 28 was addressed under the Responses to Electronic Communication section of the survey instrument. Respondents were asked to use a Likert type scale to indicate which items affected their ability to problem solve student issues related to electronic media. The scale ranged from no impact (1) to strong impact (4). Based upon the initial factor analysis, it was

determined two factors were being measured within question 28. Scaled items were grouped together to create two subscales within question 28; the Digital Knowledge and Meaningful Solutions key subscales. Means, standard deviations, and skewness measures were calculated for each of these key subscales.

3b. Do school social workers report the need for practice guidelines, additional trainings or education related to electronic communication/social media? If so, what are school social workers reporting the need for to further inform their practice?

Research sub question 3b was answered with interview schedule questions 10 and 12 and survey instrument questions 26 and 27. Question 10 and 12 were included in the ending section of the interview schedule and queried focus group participants using a close-ended with open-ended prompts question. The focus of questions 10 and 12 was on practice guidelines, education, and trainings. More specifically, whether focus group participants thought practice guidelines, additional education and trainings would be helpful for their practice. Data was coded using a constant comparison framework and meaningful themes emerged. These themes informed the response categories for question 26 and 27 in the survey instrument.

In the Responses to Electronic Communication section, question 26 asked respondents to indicate what policies they thought were most needed to further inform their practice by utilizing a Likert type scale ranging from not necessary (1) to extremely necessary (4). The exploratory factor analysis provided evidence items in question 26 scaled together; which informed the development of the Practice Guidelines key subscale. Means, standard deviations, and skewness measures were also generated for question 26.

Question 27 utilized the same scale as described above, however respondents were asked to indicate what trainings or education programs they felt were most needed to further inform their practice. Items on question 27 did not scale together as evidenced by a low alpha

coefficient. In the exploratory factor analysis, it was discovered an item within question 27 (youth culture) cross-loaded with several items within question 28. The placement of youth culture with the items in question 28 represented the sub scale more appropriately on items associated with school social workers need for education in regards to digital knowledge. The item of youth culture within question 27 was then combined with the subscale in question 28 and analyzed under research question 5.

Pearson's correlation was generated to examine the need for education and the current age of the respondent. A constant comparison analysis was conducted on the qualitative responses from the "other" category. Responses were minimal, however some meaningful data emerged. Means, standard deviations, and skewness measures were also generated.

Research Question Four

4. What kinds of electronic communication/social media and tasks do school social workers report being familiar with?

Question 16 in the Experiences section asked respondents to indicate how often they used select forms of electronic communication for personal use. Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate the types of social media they used in a text entry box. A Likert type question ranging from never (0) to daily (4) was used to measure how frequently school social workers were using select forms of electronic media (e.g. social networking sites). Frequencies were generated in order to provide an idea of how familiar respondents were with certain types of electronic media as indicated by personal use. Pearson's correlation was generated to examine the use of electronic media and the current age of the respondent.

Research Question Five

5. Are there differences in the school social worker responses based upon demographic variables such as current age of school social worker, community of practice, and population served?

Key subscales identified in the exploratory factor analysis were used to identify differences among school social worker responses based upon key attribute variables (e.g. current age, community of practice, and population served). Each question selected for the key subscales had strong loadings and strong Cronbach's alpha scores; providing evidence for internal structure validity. Pearson's correlation was used to investigate if there was an association between current age and the key sub scales. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means of the key subscales to the community of practice and populated served attribute variables. Post hoc Tukey HSD tests were also conducted to test the strength of the differences.

Summary

This research utilized qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect data. A constant comparative analytic framework was utilized to analyze the regional focus group data obtained from CASSW members in phase one. Descriptive, correlation, exploratory factor analysis, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to analyze data generated from phase two. Three primary attribute variables were the main focus of the study: population served, current age, and community of practice. Descriptive analysis was used for demographic data in both phases. Additionally, frequencies, means, standard deviations, and skewness measures were generated on applicable items. The sample population was school social worker state-affiliated members of the SSWAA. The instrument used in phase two was informed by the results obtained from phase one, professional experts, a review of the literature and a pilot study. A national sample within phase two was sought; with school social workers practicing across 20 states represented.

Appendix B provides a copy of the interview schedule and handout to focus group participants. Appendix D provides a copy of the pilot survey instrument; Appendix E provides a copy of the final survey instrument administered in phase two. Appendix C provides a table of the codes/themes generated from each interview schedule question from phase one. Appendix A provides a matrix that corresponds the research questions with phases, data collection instrument, key variables, and analysis.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate school social workers' perceptions about if and how electronic media has affected practice. This exploratory research utilized a two-phase research design with quantitative and qualitative components. The first phase collected information from a regional group of practicing school social workers regarding current practice and if and how they perceived their service delivery affected due to electronic communication. Phase one's data directly informed the online survey instrument that was developed and administered in phase two. The second phase sought to gather information from a national school social work sample from members of the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) state affiliates. Data from phase two was obtained from an online questionnaire administered through Qualtrics.

Findings are organized by research question. Before the findings are discussed, the sample population characteristics obtained from the demographic section is presented. Appendix A provides a matrix that corresponds the research questions to the focus group questions (phase one) and online questions (phase two). Appendix C provides a table of the themes/codes generated from each interview schedule question.

Sample Characteristics

The SSWAA state affiliates were invited to participate in this research study. A total of 20 state affiliates were represented. The shaded states in Figure 4.1 represent the state affiliates that were represented in the sample population. The total number of usable survey responses for phase two was N=379.

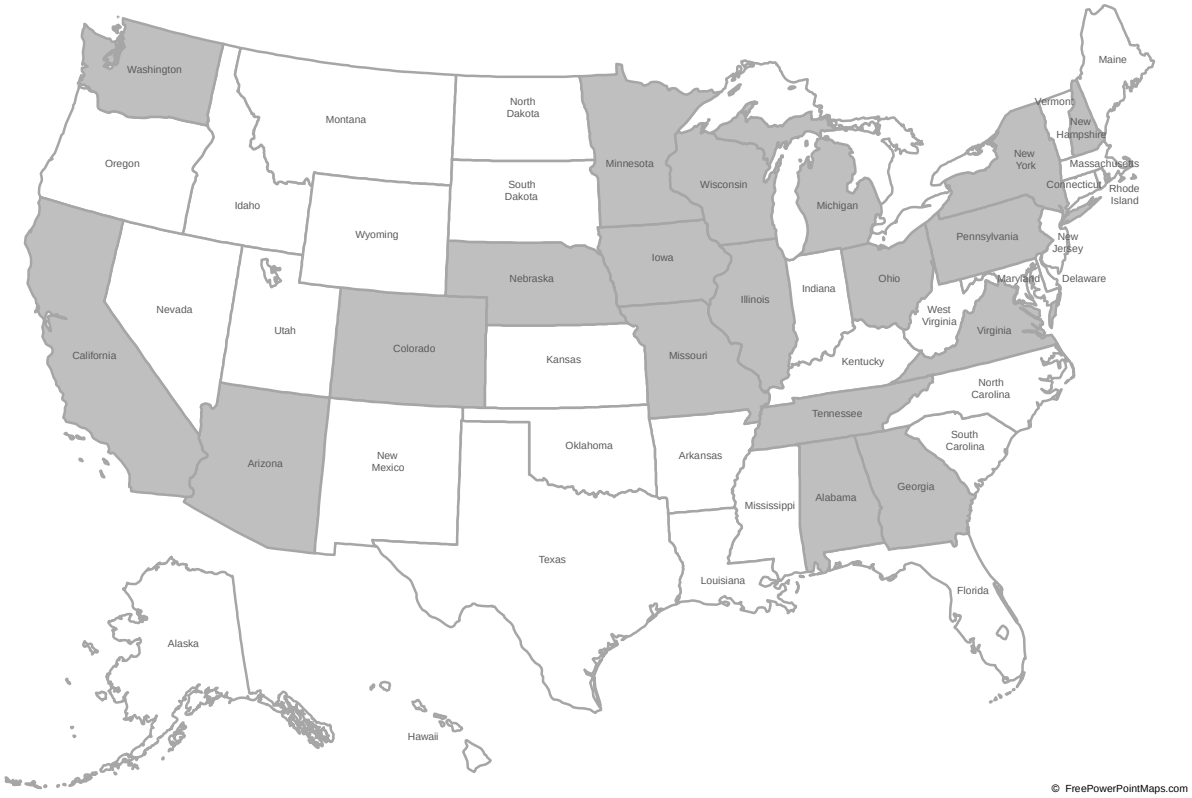

Figure 4.1. *SSWAA state affiliates represented in sample population.*

General demographics. Data from 379 school social workers was collected. The age of survey respondents ranged between 23 and 68 years old; with the mean age of 43 years old. The overwhelmingly majority consisted of female respondents (93.9%) and individuals that self-identified as white or of Caucasian race/ethnicity (84.6%). Table 4.1 shows the frequencies and percentages of phase two participants by age, biological sex, and ethnicity.

Table 4.1

Reported General Demographics of Sample Population

	n	*%*
Current Age		
<25	2	.6
25-30	57	15.2
31-35	52	13.7
36-40	44	11.7
41-45	59	15.7
46-50	54	14.4
51-55	45	12.0
56-60	39	12.0
61-65	20	5.3
66-68	3	.9
Biological Sex		
Female	356	93.9
Male	23	6.1
Race/Ethnicity		
White or Caucasian	319	84.6
Black or African American	26	6.9
Other	15	4.0
Hispanic	11	2.9
Asian	3	.8
American Indian	3	.8

Practice demographics. School social workers serving elementary, middle school, high school, and district populations were represented. The majority of individuals served elementary school populations (36.1 %). Table 4.2 shows the frequencies and percentages of participants by student population served, community of practice, and state. Slightly more than 80% of all survey respondents served elementary (kindergarten through 6th grade), middle school (7th-8th grade) or high school (9th -10th grade) populations. Additionally, the majority of survey respondents practiced school social work in suburb (30.9%) or city (30.9%) communities. Respondents practicing in Minnesota (22.7%) or Illinois (22.4%) accounted for 45% of the sample population.

Table 4.2

Reported Practice Demographics of Sample Population

	n	*%*
Population Served		
Elementary	137	36.1
High School	108	28.5
Middle School	62	16.4
Other*	39	10.3
District	33	8.7
Community of Practice		
Suburbs	116	30.9
City	116	30.9
Rural	94	25.1
Town	49	13.1
State of Practice		
Minnesota	86	22.7
Illinois	85	22.4
New York	39	10.3
California	31	8.2
Georgia	25	6.6
Nebraska	17	4.5
Colorado	14	3.7
Washington	13	3.4
Wisconsin	10	2.6
Alabama	9	2.4
Iowa	9	2.4
New Hampshire	8	2.1
Pennsylvania	8	2.1
Ohio	7	1.8
Arizona	5	1.3
Virginia	5	1.3
Maryland	3	.8
Missouri	2	.5
Michigan	2	.5
Tennessee	1	.3

Respondents were provided an opportunity to write in qualitative comments (i.e. text entry) for "other" categories. Table 4.3 shows the frequency constant comparison analysis of the "other" responses (*n*=31).

Table 4.3

Reported "Other" Choice for Population Served of Sample Population

	n	*%*
Prek-12th Grade	9	2.4
K-8th	6	1.6
Early Childhood (2-5 years)	6	1.6
Special Education	5	1.3
Middle & High School	3	.8
Higher Education	2	.5
Homeless Liaison (District Wide)	1	.3
Transition Services	1	.3

Experience and education demographics. Survey respondents were asked to share the amount of years they have been a school social worker. Years of school social work experience ranged from less than one year to 37 years; with a mean of 12.2 years and median of 10 years. The overwhelmingly majority (83.3%) indicated their social work education to be at the MSW level. The year participants obtained their highest degree ranged from 1975 to 2016, with most individuals earning their degree between the years of 2011-2015. Table 4.4 shows the frequencies and percentages of participants' school social worker experience, highest level of formal education and year obtained.

Table 4.4

Reported Experience and Education Demographics of Sample Population

	n	*%*
Years of SSW Experience		
< 2 years	19	5.8
2-5	80	24.4
6-10	67	20.4
11-15	44	13.4
16-20	67	20.4
21-25	26	7.9
26-30	15	4.6
31-35	9	2.7
>36	1	.3
Formal Education		
BSW	20	5.3
MSW	314	83.3
Other*	43	11.4
Year Obtained Highest Degree		
1975-1980	3	1.7
1981-1985	6	3.7
1986-1990	7	4.3
1991-1995	20	12.4
1996-2000	24	14.9
2001-2005	24	14.9
2006-2010	29	18.0
2011-2015	44	27.4
2016	4	2.5

Using a frequency constant comparison analysis, the “other” formal education choice is further described in Table 4.5. The majority of individuals who indicated “other” held their State’s licensure for clinical social work practice (54.8%).

Table 4.5

Reported "Other" Choice for Formal Education of Highest Degree of Sample Population

	n	*%*
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)	23	54.8
Education Specialist (Ed. S.)	3	7.1
Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.)	2	4.8
DSW Candidate	2	4.8
Ph.D. Candidate	2	4.8
DSW	2	4.8
MSW Intern	2	4.8
Associate Clinical Social Worker (ASW)	2	4.8
Masters of Education	2	4.8
Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.)	1	2.4
Licensed Mental Health Practitioner	1	2.4

Interpreting Results

Statistical Significance

A calculated value is determined to provide information if a result can be viewed as not attributed to chance. "If the probability is less than the present alpha level (usually .05)" the results can be considered statistically significant (Morgan et al., 2013, p. 99). All results were considered statistically significant at the .05 level or below.

Effect Sizes

The effect size "indicates the strength of the relationship or magnitude of the difference" (Morgan et al., 2013, p. 103). For correlations and chi-squares (i.e. Cramer's V) association measures belong to the *r* family of effect sizes and are reported accordingly. Post hoc tests (i.e. magnitude of difference) measures belong to the *d* family of effect sizes and are reported accordingly. All effect sizes are based on Cohen's (1988) interpretation.

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Skewness

The mean is the "arithmetic average of all the available information: and is "computed by adding up the raw scores and dividing by the number of scores" (Morgan et al., 2013, p. 47). The

standard deviation (*SD*) is "based on the deviation of each score from the mean" (p. 48). Skewness refers to the frequency of the distribution of data.

Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's alpha was used to compute the internal consistency reliability of the scaled items/questions. The alpha coefficient should be above .70 in order to be considered strong (Morgan et al., 2013).

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Strategy

The construction of key subscales was determined to be the most appropriate approach to analyze differences among the key attribute variables. Because there were multiple domains within the instrument, several key subscales were developed opposed to the development of one global construct. The development of an overall global construct falls outside the scope of this exploratory survey design. The strategy outlined in Morgan et al., (2013) was used for making composite key sub scales. First, the Cronbach's alpha data obtained from the pilot and survey instrument was used to inform which items should be included in the exploratory factor analysis. Secondly, an initial factor analysis was conducted on the identified items to determine the belongingness of items to inform the development of the key sub scales. Lastly, if "items are deleted, modified or moved from one scale to another" (Morgan et al., 2013) after the initial factor analysis, the Cronbach's alpha will be need to be recomputed.

Cronbach's alpha

There were a total of 16-scaled questions in the survey instrument. Seven questions were identified as potential items to inform the exploratory factor analysis for key subscale

development because they conceptually captured the multiple domains of the instrument. A Cronbach's alpha was conducted on these seven items; refer to Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Cronbach's Alpha for Selected Scaled Items to Inform Key Subscale Development

Item	*n* of Valid Cases	α	*n* of Response Categories
Q5: Electronic communication has changed how I… (e.g. communicate/collaborate)	358	.85	7
Q19: I use electronic media as part of my practice to:	365	.64	4
**Q20: I help students:	364	.79	3
Q21: I incorporate an electronic media component into the therapeutic interventions I provide.	353	.85	2
*Q26: What guidelines/policies are most needed to further inform your practice?	357	.88	6
Q27: What training or education programs are needed to further inform your practice?	357	.72	5
*Q28: What impacts your ability to effectively problem solve student issues related to electronic media?	334	.83	8

*was a rank item originally in the Pilot Study **other category was excluded

Initial Factor Analysis

A total of 33 variables were represented within these seven-scaled items. Question 20 and 27 included "other" categories that allowed text entry. These items were extracted from the initial factor analysis due to the ambiguity the "other" category represents. The item "provides supervision for MSW Interns" was also extracted from the initial factor analysis. This question had a significantly lower response (*n*=314) then the rest of question 5 items; which suggests not all school districts provide opportunities for MSW interns. Therefore, conceptually it did not make sense to include the item within the factor analysis. The purpose of a factor analysis is to "examine the underlying conceptual structure of a set of dependent variables by examining the

correlations between each variable in the set with every other variable in the set" (Coolidge, 2006, p. 385).

Assumptions

Within the factor analysis, additional assumptions are tested. The determinate should be more than .001 in order for the assumption to be met (Morgan et al., 2013). The determinant was 1.68; meeting this assumption. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures whether or not enough items are predicted by each factor. The KMO was .805, measuring above the minimum recommended value of .70. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity computes whether or not the variables are correlated high enough to offer an acceptable basis for a factor analysis. The Bartlett test should be significant at .05 or less (Morgan et al., 2015). The test of was significant at .000.

Results

Principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to assess the underlying structure for seven questions within the survey instrument. These seven questions, supported by literature and phase one findings, were selected for representing the multi domains assessed in the survey instrument. Eight factors were extracted from the data. The eight factors cumulatively accounted for 55.6% of the variance. Table 4.7 displays the items and factor loadings for the rotated factors. The average percentage of variance accounted for in factor analysis of behavior data is 56% (Peterson, 2000); based upon this, the cumulative variance found in this study is appropriate.

The first factor seemed to index question 26 (the perceived need for practice guidelines) and had strong loadings for all six items. The second factor seemed to index question 5 (job functions) and had strong loadings for all five items. Factor three indexed three items within

question 28 (digital knowledge), and one item cross-loaded with factor four. Additionally, the item from question 27 addressing youth culture also indexed to factor three. The fourth factor indexed to the remaining question 28 items (meaningful solutions); with the "having to navigate large amounts of data" item cross loading with factor three. The fifth factor indexed all items in question 20 (electronic education) with fairly strong loadings. The sixth factor indexed all items with question 19 (electronic media); again with fairly strong loadings across all items. Factor seven indexed both items within question 21 (therapeutic interventions) with strong loadings, however the support group item had a small .3 cross-loading with factor six. Lastly, factor eight indexed the remaining three items within question 27, with the general item cross-loading with both factor three and one. The result of this initial factor analysis provides slight support for validity; namely there are eight factors measured by the seven questions. Based upon these findings, revisions were made to the items selected to compromise the key subscales in order to the increase internal structure validity.

Table 4.7

Exploratory Factor Analysis Results of Factor Loadings for the Rotated Factors

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Q26: Professionalism on social media	0.86							
Q26: Social media boundaries	0.83							
Q26: Ethical decision making	0.76							
Q26: Social media correspondence/communication guidelines	0.74							
Q26: Personal Cell Phone guidelines for staff & students	0.61							
Q26: Mandated reporting & electronic communication	0.56							
Q5: Collaborate with colleagues		0.86						
Q5: Communicate with administration		0.83						
Q5: Collaborate with administration		0.80						
Q5: Communicate with colleagues		0.78						
Q5: Communicate with parents		0.43						
Q28: Lack of knowledge on programs/apps			0.88					
Q28: Keeping up with programs/apps student use			0.79					
Q28: Having to understand the program/app before I am able to understand the dynamic of the interpersonal situation			0.61	0.30				
Q27: Youth Culture (e.g. lingo, norms)			0.39					0.35
Q28: Students lack ability to understand long term consequences				0.75				
Q28: Students attempt to resolve conflicts through social media opposed to face to face				0.65				

Q28: Supervision/control/monitoring of students use of social media is difficult to achieve			0.59				
Q28: Having to navigate large amounts of data		0.31	0.50				
Q28: Long term problem solving solutions are non-existent			0.39				
Q20: How to navigate and find services online				0.83			
Q20: How to properly use a cell phone				0.69			
Q20: How to use the Internet safely				0.67			
Q20: Provide online resources/webpages				0.36			
Q19: Assist in student engagement					0.75		
Q19: Facilitate peer relationships					0.63		
Q19: Serve as a reward for behavior					0.46		
Q21: Small groups						0.79	
Q21: Support Groups					0.31	0.77	
Q27:Interventions							0.67
Q27: Developmental Stages							0.57
Q27: General (e.g. electronic device education)	0.31	0.35					0.41

Note. Loadings <.30 are omitted

Revised Factor Analysis

Factor one (practice guidelines), factor two (job functions), factor five (electronic education) and factor six (electronic media) were determined to have clear and high enough loadings to be used as key subscales without additional changes. For factor eight (question 27), it was decided to extract all the items within the factor, thus eliminating the factor all together. This was decided due to the general item cross-loading on three factors, two items having smaller loadings and one item cross-loading stronger on factor three. Conceptually, factor eight (question 27) did not seem to effectively capture what kinds of trainings and education programs school social workers perceived were needed to further inform their practice to be used as a key subscale. For factor seven, two items indexed to question 21, with support groups cross-loading. The support group cross-loading was .31 compared to the .77 loading to factor seven. Therefore, it was determined to keep support groups associated with factor seven (therapeutic intervention).

The initial factor analysis results suggested the items in question 28 were measuring two factors opposed to one. Upon further review, it was determined that question 28 should be divided into two subscales. The three items: (1) lack of knowledge on programs/apps; (2) keeping up with programs/apps student use; and (3) having to understand the program/app when combined with the cross-loading youth culture item from question 27 were used to develop the digital knowledge key subscale. Conceptually, the digital knowledge subscale made better sense to measure school social worker's perceived level of digital knowledge impacting their ability to effectively problem solve student electronic media issues. The other five items associated with question 28 compromised the other key subscale. The items: (1) students lack ability to understand long term consequences; (2) students attempt to resolve conflicts through social media opposed to face to face; (3) supervision/control/monitoring of students use of social media

is difficult to achieve; (4) having to navigate large amounts of data; and (5) long term problem solving solutions are non-existent were used to develop the meaningful solutions key subscale. The meaningful solutions key subscale made more sense when measuring the items impacting school social workers ability to effectively problem solve student related issues.

Recomputed Cronbach's alpha

After the initial factor analysis is conducted, the Cronbach's alpha should be recomputed if items were modified or deleted (Morgan et al., 2013). Refer to Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Recomputed Cronbach's Alpha for Key Subscales

Item	*n* of Valid Cases	α	*n* of Response Categories
Q5: Electronic communication has changed how I… (e.g. communicate/collaborate)	358	.84	6
Q19: I use electronic media as part of my practice to:	365	.68	3
*Q20: I help students:	364	.75	4
Q21: I incorporate an electronic media component into the therapeutic interventions I provide.	353	.84	2
Q26: What guidelines/policies are most needed to further inform your practice?	357	.88	6
*Q28: SUBSCALE A How SSW Perceive Digital Knowledge Impacting their practice	342	.80	4
*Q28: SUBSCALE B What impacts your ability to effectively problem solve student issues related to electronic media?	338	.78	5

*****Items were modified

Development of Key Subscales

The finalized subscales indexing to seven factors were used to analyze differences among responses based on the current age of school social worker, population served, and community of practice variables. Refer to Table 4.9 for the grouping of items associated within each of the factors.

Table 4.9

Key Subscales Informed by Exploratory Factor Analysis and Corresponding Survey Item(s)

Subscale	Corresponding Items
Perceived Need for Practice Guidelines	Q26: Professionalism on social media Q26: Social media boundaries Q26: Ethical decision making Q26: Social media correspondence/communication guidelines Q26: Personal Cell Phone guidelines for staff & students Q26: Mandated reporting & electronic communication Q26: Professionalism on social media Q26: Social media boundaries
Job Functions	Q5: Collaborate with colleagues Q5: Communicate with administration Q5: Collaborate with administration Q5: Communicate with colleagues Q5: Access knowledge/information Q5: Communicate with parents
Digital Knowledge	Q28a: Keeping up with programs/apps student use Q28a: Having to understand the program/app before I am able to understand the dynamic of the interpersonal situation Q28a: Youth Culture (e.g. lingo, norms)
Meaningful Solutions	Q28b: Students lack ability to understand long term consequences Q28b: Students attempt to resolve conflicts through social media opposed to face to face Q28b: Supervision/control/monitoring of students use of social media is difficult to achieve Q28b: Long term problem solving solutions are non-existent Q28b: Having to navigate large amounts of data
Electronic Education	Q20: How to navigate and find services online Q20: How to properly use a cell phone Q20: How to use the Internet safely

	Q20: Provide online resources/webpages
Electronic Media	Q19: Assist in student engagement Q19: Facilitate peer relationships Q19: Serve as a reward for behavior
Therapeutic Intervention	Q21: Small groups Q21: Support Groups

Findings by Research Question

Research Question One

1. From the perspective of school social workers, what is the impact of electronic communication/social media on school social work practice?
    a. What do school social workers report as their primary job tasks?
    b. Do school social workers perceive a change in their job duties or roles associated with school social work because of electronic communication/social media? If so, what changes are school social workers reporting?
    c. Do school social workers perceive changes in their service delivery, including their ability to build rapport with students due to social media/electronic communication? If so, how?
    d. How, if at all, is electronic communication/social media formally addressed with the use of policies, guidelines or interventions within the school social worker's school and/or school district?

1a. What do school social workers report as their primary job tasks?

Because school social work task analysis literature is extensive, questions regarding primary job tasks were not developed for the instrument. However, to gain a baseline and compare with the available task analysis literature, phase one participants were asked in the opening question of the survey instrument to share "the job duties you perform in your role as a school social worker". The overarching theme of acting as a liaison between school-home-community environments for students emerged from the data. Codes within each of these areas were established. Within the school environment, focus group participants shared that they provide individual and group counseling, psychosocial education (i.e. social skills groups),

general classroom education groups (i.e. anti-bullying curriculum), supervise MSW interns, perform crisis management and implement restorative practices. In regards to the home and community environments, Participant 5 shared "I bridge that gap of what takes place at home and what takes place at school and finding that happy medium." Focus group participants indicated they develop and implement parent education nights, help parents get connected to community resources, provide wraparound services, provide support to improve student's attendance and help develop and implement 504 and IEP's for students who need additional support within the education setting.

1b. Do school social workers perceive a change in their job duties or roles associated with school social work because of electronic communication/social media? If so, what changes are school social workers reporting?

Question 5. The survey instrument asked respondents to indicate how they perceived electronic communication/social impacting specific job functions within their practice. A scale of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4) was used. Table 4.10 provides the means, standard deviation and skewness for question 5. Access to knowledge/information (*M*=3.7) and communicate with colleagues (*M*=3.5) were the most impacted job duties due to electronic communication. Items within question 5 were used to develop the Job Function key subscale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for question 5 items was .85, indicating a strong association.

Table 4.10

Overall Perceived Impact on Job Functions (key subscale)

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
Access knowledge/Information	3.7	.60	-2.1
Communicate with Colleagues	3.5	.66	-1.3
Communicate with Administration	3.3	.72	-.96
Collaborate with Colleagues	3.3	.68	-.84
Collaborate with Administration	3.2	.73	-.63
Communicate with Parents	2.9	.81	-.42
Provide supervision for MSW Interns*	2.4	.86	.79

*item not included in subscale

Questions 6-8. The survey instrument queried respondents on how often and what types of electronic communication school social workers reported using to communicate with colleagues, administration, and parents. A scale of never (1) to very often (4) was used. Refer to Table 4.11 for frequency percentages on the types of electronic communication. Email was the most used form of electronic communication across all three groups.

Table 4.11

Reported Use of "Very Often" For Type of Electronic Communication Used in Practice

Item	Communication with Colleagues	Communication with Administration	Communication with Parents
Email	86.4	68.6	23.9
Text messages	14.2	6.1	5.1
Personal cell phone after school hours to text	10.1	5.3	1.6
Personal electronic devices to email after school hours	20.4	14.0	4.5

Question 9. Respondents were asked to state how often they used specific types of electronic communication to collaborate with administration and colleagues. A scale of never (1) to very often (4) was used. Electronic working folders (e.g. Google Docs) were the most utilized electronic tool to collaborate with administration and colleagues (80.4%). Monitoring software (73.5%); electronic files (71.6 %); network drives (54.8%), and log entries (44.4%) were also identified as ways respondents collaborated electronically with colleagues "often" and "very often".

1c. Do school social workers perceive changes in their service delivery, including their ability to build rapport with students due to social media/electronic communication? If so, how?

Question 13. The survey instrument asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement using the range strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4) on how they perceived electronic media changing their practice. Assimilating to youth culture was perceived as the area most impacted by electronic media (*M*=2.8). Table 4.12 provides the means, standard deviation and skewness for question 13. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .44, indicating these items did not scale together and were not utilized as a key subscale.

Table 4.12

Overall Perceived Impact of Electronic Media Changing Practice (question 13)

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
Engage with students	2.34	.82	-.088
Implement behavior modification	2.4	.86	-.017
Assimilate to youth culture	2.8	.76	-.588

Question 18. Using a scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4), respondents were asked to share if they incorporated elements of youth culture into their service delivery. Youth lingo (*M*=2.6) and emojis (*M*=2.5) were found to be included in service delivery the most often. Table 4.13 provides the means, standard deviation, and skewness for question 18. The alpha coefficient for question 18 had a low score of .24 and weak factor loadings; therefore was not utilized as a key subscale.

Table 4.13

Overall Reported Incorporated Elements of Youth Culture into Service Delivery (question 18)

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
Youth Lingo	2.6	.84	-.48
Emojis	2.5	.89	-.29
Hashtags	1.9	.78	.64

Question 19. The survey instrument asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement using the range strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4) on how they use electronic media in their practice. Table 4.14 provides the means, standard deviation, and skewness for question 19. Respondents were most likely to use online resources/webpages as part of their practice. The Cronbach's alpha was low at .40; however, these items had evidence for strong factor loadings within the exploratory factor analysis. These items were used to inform the Electronic Media key subscale.

Table 4.14

Overall Reported Use of How Electronic Media in Incorporated into Practice (question 19)

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
Provide online resources/webpages*	3.2	.75	-.90
Assist in student engagement	2.5	.82	-.46
Serve as a reward for behavior	2.4	.90	-.02
Facilitate peer relationships	2.2	.84	.04

*item not included in subscale

Question 20. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement using the range strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4) on how they help students in regards to electronic media. Respondents were most likely to help students how to use the Internet safely (*M*=2.8). Table 4.15 provides the means, standard deviation, and skewness for question 20. The Cronbach's alpha was low at .50; however, these items had evidence of strong factor loadings within the exploratory factor analysis. These items were used to develop the Electronic Education key subscale.

Table 4.15

Overall Reported on How Respondents Help Students with Electronic Media (question 20)

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
How to use the internet safely	2.8	.89	-.68
How to navigate and find services online	2.6	.93	-.34
Other*	2.4	1.3	.11
How to properly use a cell phone	2.2	.90	.05

*item not used in Electronic Education Subscale

Question 20 "other" text entries. Respondents were asked to indicate additional ways they were helping students in regards to electronic media. Two overarching themes emerged from the data: (1) cyber etiquette; and (2) electronic boundaries. The cyber etiquette theme involved school social workers helping students respond and use social media in appropriate ways. Respondents reported: (1) helping students "practice kindness and empathy" on electronic mediums; (2) providing "social media social skills" groups; (3) teaching students to relate and read text content without drama; and (4) teaching students how to respect each other on social media accounts. Electronic boundaries emerged as the second theme. Respondents' specified helping students develop electronic boundaries by (1) setting limits in regards to electronic consumption; (2) understanding age appropriate technology use; and (3) providing education on sites where bullying is a common occurrence (e.g. Kik).

Question 22. The survey instrument asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement using the range strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4) on what they discuss with students in regards to electronic communication. Table 4.16 provides the means, standard deviation and skewness for items in question 22. Respondents reported discussing the short and long term consequences of electronic media use the most. Cronbach's alpha was computed at .40; indicating a weak association. Additionally, weak factor loadings were found; therefore these items were not utilized as a key subscale.

Table 4.16

Overall Reported Electronic Media Focused Discussions with Students (question 22)

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
Short term consequences	3.0	.80	-.88
Long term consequences	3.0	.83	-.74
How to respond regarding electronic media	2.9	.79	-.73

1d. How, if at all, is electronic communication/social media formally addressed with the use of policies, guidelines or interventions within the school social worker's school and/or school district?

Question 24. The majority of respondents indicated their district employed student cell phone policies (88.4%); cyberbullying policies (85.0 %) and electronic device policies (80.2 %). Table 4.17 shows the overall percent frequencies of current policies employed by participants' school districts.

Table 4.17

Reported Policies and/or Guidelines Currently Employed by School Districts (question 24)

	n	%
Student Cell Phone	335	88.4
Cyberbullying	322	85.0
Electronic Device Policy	304	80.2
Videotaping Policy	253	66.8
Staff Cell Phone Policy	188	49.6
Other	16	4.2
None	7	1.8

Question 24 "other" text entries. Respondents were asked to share additional policies and/or guidelines their school district employed that were not addressed in question 24. The qualitative data had a low response rate of *n*=14. Several respondents indicated their school district had photo policies. Similarly, another respondent shared their school had a policy on posting photos of students on personal social media sites. Other guidelines respondents indicated their districts employed were: (1) staff social media policies; and (2) professionalism on social

media. Lastly, one respondent specified that all students in their district complete a required Internet safety training.

Question 25. Respondents were asked if applicable, how effective they perceived their school districts policies to be by utilizing a four-point scale, ranging from 1 (not effective) to 4 (very effective). The majority of polices were perceived to be slightly or moderately effective; with the videotaping policy perceived to be the most effective policy. Table 4.18 provides the mean and percentage frequencies of perceived effectiveness.

Table 4.18

Reported Perceived Policy and/or Guideline Effectiveness

Item	*M*	Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Very Effective
Student Cell Phone	2.4	20.1	31.2	39.5	9.2
Cyberbullying	2.4	16.6	33.1	42.7	7.6
Electronic Device Policy	2.5	14.9	31.3	41.4	12.5
Videotaping Policy	2.6	13.5	27.6	39.7	19.2
Staff Cell Phone Policy	2.3	22.1	32.6	35.1	10.1

Question 25 "other" text entries. The qualitative responses within question 25 did not generate enough data nor did the data collected provide insight into the perceived effectiveness of other employed polices within the respondents school district. No additional analysis was conducted.

Research Question Two

2. How are school social workers experiencing electronic communication/social media within their practice?

    a. Are school social workers experiencing ethical dilemmas in practice as a result of social media/electronic communication? If so, what kinds of ethical dilemmas are school social workers reporting?

    b. Are school social workers using electronic communication/social media within their practice? If so, how?

c. How do school social workers perceive student's use of social media/electronic communication?

2a. Are school social workers experiencing ethical dilemmas in practice as a result of social media/electronic communication? If so, what kinds of ethical dilemmas are school social workers reporting?

Question 15. Respondents were asked "what ethical dilemmas have you encountered within your practice because of social media/electronic communication?" Professional boundaries (e.g. parents/students sending Facebook friend requests) were the most frequently encountered ethical dilemma (60.7 %). Table 4.19 shows the percentage frequencies of the ethical dilemmas encountered by respondents. Slightly more than 50% of respondents indicated "personal cell phone has provided the ability for staff to be "on call" 24/7" and "texting colleagues/staff with personal cell phones" as ethical dilemmas encountered within practice.

Table 4.19

Overall Reported Frequencies of Ethical Dilemmas Encountered

	n	*%*
Professional Boundaries	230	60.7
Personal Cell Phones "24/7"	204	53.8
Texting colleagues/staff	193	50.9
Students using social media accounts and do not meet age minimum	160	42.2
Privacy Violations	153	40.4
Conflicts of Interest	118	31.1
Witnessing threats of physical harm	39	10.3
Being asked to "snoop" on colleagues social media accounts	29	7.7
Other	22	5.8

Question 15 "other" text entries. Respondents were asked to share additional ethical dilemmas experienced in their practice. Qualitative responses were sorted for topic relevance. Within the relevant data, several additional ethical dilemmas emerged. These included: (1) being asked to or witnessing colleagues "snoop" on student's social media accounts; (2) knowing

students are creating fake Facebook accounts; (3) teachers texting pictures of students; (4) teachers sending screenshots of student's post from the student's personal Facebook page; (5) counselors asking for student's to sign in to their Facebook account and then reading and printing off the messages; and (6) principals and counselors texting each other about families using first names.

2b. Are school social workers using electronic communication/social media within their practice? If so, how?

Question 10. Respondents were asked to share how often they were using specific types of electronic media as part of their practice with students. A scale of never (1) to very often (4) was used for analysis. Table 4.20 reports the mean and percentage frequencies for each item within question 10. Webpages/online resources (57.3%) was the most incorporated type of electronic media. Cronbach's alpha was computed at .49, indicating a weak association between items. Question 10 was not utilized as a key subscale.

Table 4.20

Reported Use of Specific Forms of Electronic Media Means Included in Practice (question10)

Item	*M*	Never	Rarely	Often	Very Often
Webpages/online resources	2.6	10.0	32.5	42.1	15.2
YouTube/videos	2.4	13.0	41.8	37.8	7.4
Applications	2.2	18.2	48.9	25.4	7.5

Question 11. Respondents were asked to share the ways students were contacting or connecting with them electronically. Email (46.2%) was the most reported way students were contacting respondents. Table 4.21 shows the percent frequencies of the ways students were connecting/contacting respondents electronically. The "other" category generated the second most responses.

Table 4.21

Overall Reported Ways Students are Contacting/Connecting Electronically with Respondents

	n	*%*
Email	175	46.2
Other	110	29.0
Former student social media request	68	17.9
Current student social media request	13	3.4

Question 11 "other" text entries. Numerous responses (*n*=107) were generated from the text entry category asking participants to identify additional ways students were contacting or connecting with them electronically. Respondents indicated that students either were not contacting them electronically (37.4%) or that the use of electronic communication was not applicable (13.1%) with the population they serve (e.g. preschool age students).

A frequency constant comparison analysis was conducted on the remaining relevant qualitative responses. Students' text messaging respondents was the most common "other" way students were connecting with school social workers. Table 4.22 shows the percent frequencies of the additional ways students were connecting with respondents electronically. Remind.com is a communication tool designed for educators that allows one and two way conversations with students and parents in real time, while maintaining privacy (www.remind.com). Schoology, Google Docs, Blackboard, and Seasaw are similar digital platforms that allow users to share, create, and manage content and resources.

Table 4.22

Reported "Other" Ways Students are Communicating Electronically with Respondents

	n	*%*
Text Message	14	3.7
Remind.com	7	1.8
Google Docs	6	1.6
Facebook Messenger	4	1.1
Schoology	3	.8
Text Message in Crisis/Emergency	2	.5
Seesaw App	1	.3
Blackboard	1	.3

Question 21. Using a scale of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4) respondents were asked to share if they incorporated an electronic media component into therapeutic interventions. Electronic media was slightly more included in small groups than in support groups. Table 4.23 provides means, standard deviations, and skewness for question 21. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for question 21 was .84, indicating a strong association. These items were used to inform the Therapeutic Intervention key subscale.

Table 4.23

Overall Reported Incorporation of Electronic Elements in Therapeutic Interventions (question 21)

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
Small Groups	2.4	.82	-.328
Support Groups	2.2	.79	.001

2c. How do school social workers perceive student's use of social media/electronic communication?

Respondents were asked "do you have any additional comments you would like to add about social media impacting school social work practice?" This was the only opened-question on the survey instrument. Additional comments were recorded from 82 respondents. Qualitative responses were sorted for topic relevance (e.g. some of the comments were "none at this time" or

"interesting research!"). Units of data deemed applicable to understanding how school social workers perceive student's use of electronic media were combined and analyzed using the constant comparison method. Opportunities and challenges were the two overarching themes that emerged from the data.

Opportunities. Respondents identified advantages they felt practice was afforded due to electronic media. Several respondents shared their ability to engage and communicate with parents had increased significantly due to text messaging. One respondent stated, "parents are much more apt to respond to a text than a phone call". Similarly, another respondent shared that unlimited text messaging or text messaging apps have allowed parents with limited income an ability to remain in contact even when they no longer have any minutes available for calls. Another respondent shared that electronic media has been a positive addition with special education populations:

> We use apps to help children communication. Specifically children with autism have a hard time if they are verbally impacted. Working on social skills with their peers with the use of media, they are able to ask for a turn, say no, or please stop. (Survey Respondent)

Additionally, respondents shared that students were generally "pretty honest" when it comes to their social media accounts. Meaning, students are willing to share texts, posts, screenshots, pictures, and videos with staff; which affords practitioners the ability to problem solve more effectively.

Challenges. Respondents identified additional challenges on how they felt electronic media affects practice. Concerns surrounding student's psycho-social-emotional development emerged.

> I am deeply concerned about the lack of personal face-to-face communication [my students have] and their lack of interest and/or inability to resolve conflict without blasting their opinions on social media. (Survey Respondent)

Students' conflict management, lack of communication skills, and lack of opportunities to engage in meaningful face-to-face conversations were major concerns among respondents. Respondents explained that the dependence on technology has interrupted the social and emotional development and that students are presenting with significant weaknesses in basic social skills (e.g. listening and starting conversations).

> Students don't seem to understand that texting is not the same as talking. Many are uncomfortable to have a talking phone conversation. Also, then talking with students-it has to be concretely identified as really verbally talking to get clarity as to what form of communication they have been having. It gets really confusing. (Survey Respondent)

Self-image and relationships were other identified areas that electronic media is affecting student's psycho-social-emotional growth. "Amongst their peers, students are measuring their relationships based on "likes" and possession of devices" (Survey Respondent).

Additionally, respondents identified a variety of parent-related electronic media issues impacting school social work practice. Electronic consumption not just by the student, but by their parents/guardian was a major concern of respondents. One respondent commented, "[How can I] teach students the appropriate way to use social media when they observe their parents using it inappropriately?" Moreover, respondents shared that parents are not adequately monitoring or supervising student's electronic media use at home.

> Largest problem is in dealing with the parents. Parents purchase these devices and do not set limits, nor do they prevent their children from using apps that are problematic. Biggest issue with social media is the parents. NO guidance, just here it is and see ya. (Survey Respondent)

Respondents expressed frustration over the lack of control and monitoring of electronic use because parents expect social media related issues to be resolved within the school setting, despite most of the student's electronic use is at home.

Research Question Three

3. From the perspective of school social workers, how effective do they feel problem solving student issues related to electronic communication/social media?

    a. What do school social workers report as the primary student issues related to electronic media?

    b. Do school social workers report the need for practice guidelines; additional trainings or education related to electronic communication/social media? If so, what are school social workers reporting the need for to further inform their practice?

3a. What do school social worker's report as the primary student issues related to electronic media?

Questions 14. Respondents were asked to identify the types of problems students were coming to them for help. Relational aggression (80.7%) was the student issue that respondents reported encountering the most related to electronic media. Table 4.24 shows the percent frequencies of all the student issues related to electronic media addressed in question 14. Respondents were also given the opportunity to identify issues not included in the response categories. See below for the "other" qualitative data analysis.

Table 4.24

Overall Reported Student Issues Respondents are Encountering Related to Electronic Media

	n	*%*
Relational Aggression	306	80.7
Peer Conflicts	284	74.9
Threats of Self-Harm (self or peers)	218	57.5
Social Exclusion	198	52.2
Sexual Exploitation	155	40.9
Threats of Physical Aggression (self or peers)	168	44.3
Inappropriate Relational Support	167	44.1
Sexual Harassment	149	39.3
Videotape Physical Altercations	119	31.4
Relationship Development	118	31.1
Navigating Social Media Norms	107	28.2
Videotape Emotional Harassment	62	16.4
Popularity Contests	79	20.8
Conflict Resolution	78	20.6
Other	42	11.1

Question 14 "other" text entries. Respondents were asked to share additional problems students needed help solving because of electronic communication/social media. Qualitative data were sorted for topic relevance. Several additional problems emerged: (1) social media account hacking; (2) electronic consumption (i.e. overuse, too much screen time); (3) inappropriate content (e.g. watching videos of drug use, nude photos); (4) electronic device theft; and (5) social isolation in regards to not having an electronic device like their peers and/or not engaging with peers because too consumed by electronic use.

Question 28. Using a scale of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4), respondents were asked to share which items impacted their ability to effectively problem solve student issues. Based upon the exploratory factor analysis, two factors were being measured within question 28. Scaled items were grouped together to create the Digital Knowledge and Meaningful Solutions key subscales. Respondents identified "keeping up with program and apps (i.e. which apps are currently popular among students) as having the most impact on their ability

to effectively problem solve student issues (*M*=2.7). Table 4.25 provides the means, standard deviation, and skewness for the Digital Knowledge subscale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for Digital Knowledge was .80, indicating a strong association.

Table 4.25

Perceived Digital Knowledge Impacting Respondents Ability to Effectively Problem Solve Student Issues (question 28)

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
Keeping up with programs/apps student use	2.7	1.0	-.258
Youth Culture (e.g. lingo, norms)	2.6	1.0	.127
Having to understand the program/app before I am able to understand the dynamic of the interpersonal situation	2.5	1.1	.067
Lack of knowledge on programs/apps	2.4	1.0	.093

Students lacking the ability to understand long-term consequences (*M*=3.3) and the lack of supervision, control and/or monitoring of students' electronic consumption (*M*=3.3) had the most perceived impact on the respondent's ability to effectively problem solve student issues. Table 4.26 provides the means, standard deviation, and skewness for the Meaningful Solutions subscale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .78, indicating a strong association.

Table 4.26

Perceived Issues Impacting Respondents Ability to Effectively Problem Solve Student Issues (question 25)

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
Students lack ability to understand long term consequences	3.3	.87	-1.0
Supervision/control/monitoring of students use of social media is difficult to achieve	3.3	.87	-.98
Students attempt to resolve conflicts through social media opposed to face to face	3.1	1.0	-.79
Having to navigate large amounts of data	2.5	.99	.13
Long term problem solving solutions are non-existent	2.4	1.0	.06

3b. Do school social workers report the need for practice guidelines, additional trainings or education related to electronic communication/social media? If so, what are school social workers reporting the need for to further inform their practice?

Questions 26. Respondents were asked to share what policies they felt were most needed to further inform their practice. A range from not necessary (1) to extremely necessary (4) was used. The overwhelming majority of the guidelines listed in question 27 have a mean of 3.0 or higher. In other words, respondents perceived these guidelines were necessary to further inform practice. Table 4.27 provides the means, standard deviation, and skewness for question 26. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .87; indicating a strong association. These items were used to develop the Practice Guidelines key subscale

Table 4.27

Overall Reported Need for Practice Guidelines to Inform Practice (question 26)

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
Mandated Reporting and Electronic Communication	3.3	.90	-1.0
Social Media Boundaries	3.2	1.0	.13
Ethical Decision Making	3.1	1.0	-.83
Social Media Correspondence/communication Guidelines	3.0	1.0	-.67
Professionalism on social media	3.0	1.0	-.64
Personal Cell Phone Guidelines for Staff and Students	2.7	1.1	-.29

Question 27. Respondents were asked to share what trainings or education programs they felt were needed to further inform their practice by utilizing a range from not necessary (1) to extremely necessary (4). Trainings on interventions (*M*=3.2) and developmental stages (*M*=3.1) were the most needed to further inform school social work practice. Table 4.28 provides the means, standard deviation, and skewness for question 27.

Table 4.28

*Overall Reported Need for Additional Trainings/ Education to Inform Practice (*question 27)

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
Interventions	3.2	.85	-.81
Developmental Stages	3.1	.85	-.76
Other	2.9	1.14	-.56
Youth Culture	2.6	1.0	-.08
General (e.g. electronic device)	2.6	1.1	-.06

Question 27 "other" text entries. Respondents were asked to share additional education or trainings they felt were needed to further inform their practice. Several respondents indicated the need to teach parents on how to respond and monitor their student's use of social media. Another respondent indicated the need for training on how to incorporate electronic media in therapy groups. Lastly, one respondent specified the need for more knowledge on gaming systems and how that corresponds with development.

Research Question Four

4. What kinds of electronic communication/social media do school social workers report being familiar with?

Question 16. Using a scale of never (0) to daily (4), respondents were asked to share how often they used electronic communication/social media for personal purposes. Almost all respondents used email (94.9%) and text messages (94.1%) daily in their personal lives. Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook) were the most used form of social media (61.1%). Table 4.29 shows the percent frequencies for daily use of electronic communication. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat and YouTube were the most cited forms of social media used among respondents.

Table 4.29

Overall Reported Daily Use of Electronic Media

Item	*n*	*%*
Email	375	94.9
Text Messages	372	94.1
Social Networking Sites	365	61.1
Instant Messenger	359	24.5
Photo/Image Sharing Sites	345	15.4
Professional Networking Sites	359	7.0
Video/ Media Sharing Sites	340	6.2
Blogs	347	2.3
Microblogs	338	.6

Research Question Five

5. Are there differences in the school social worker responses based upon demographic variables such as current age of school social worker, community of practice, and population served?

The exploratory factor analysis informed the development of seven key subscales. These subscales were used to identify differences among school social worker responses based upon attribute variables (e.g. current age, community of practice, and population served). Table 4.30 shows the means, standard deviation, and skewness for each subscale. The Job Functions subscale had the highest mean (*M*=3.3).

Table 4.30

Key Scales Used for Current Age, Community of Practice, and Population Served Analysis

Item	*M*	*SD*	Skewness
Job Functions	3.3	.52	-1.2
Practice Guidelines	3.1	.82	-.681
Meaningful Solutions	2.9	.69	-.66
Electronic Education	2.7	.65	-.45
Digital Knowledge	2.6	.81	-.06
Electronic Media	2.4	.67	-.32
Therapeutic Intervention	2.3	.75	-.250

Cronbach's alpha was computed for each subscale to indicate how closely related the set of items were as a group. Table 4.31 reports the alpha coefficient for each key subscale. Morgan et al., (2013) indicate the alpha coefficient should be above .70. All key scales had an alpha coefficient of .70 or higher with the exception of the Electronic Media subscale.

Table 4.31

Reported Cronbach's Alpha for Key Subscales

Item	*n*	α	*n* of Response Categories
Practice Guidelines	365	.88	6
Job Functions	366	.85	6
Digital Knowledge	350	.80	4
Meaningful Solutions	346	.78	5
Electronic Education	372	.75	4
Electronic Media	372	.68	3
Therapeutic Intervention	361	.84	2

Current Age

In the demographic section of the survey instrument, respondents were asked to share their current age. A Pearson Correlation statistic was calculated to investigate if there was a statistically significant association between age and the key subscales. Correlations were also computed separately on applicable survey questions where the items did not scale together.

Key Subscales

Statistical significance was found in the following subscales: Digital Knowledge, *r(357)=.29, p=.000*; Meaningful Solutions, *r(357)=.12, p=.020*; Electronic Media, *r(370)=-.27, p=.000*; and Therapeutic Intervention, *r(358)=-.13, p=.018.* Figure 4.2 shows a line graph of the correlation between age and the Digital Knowledge subscale. The direction of the correlation was positive for Digital Knowledge and Meaningful Solutions, which means the older the school social worker, the higher they perceived digital knowledge and meaningful solutions impacting

their abilities to effectively problem solve. The effect size was considered medium for digital knowledge and small for meaningful solutions (Cohen, 1988).

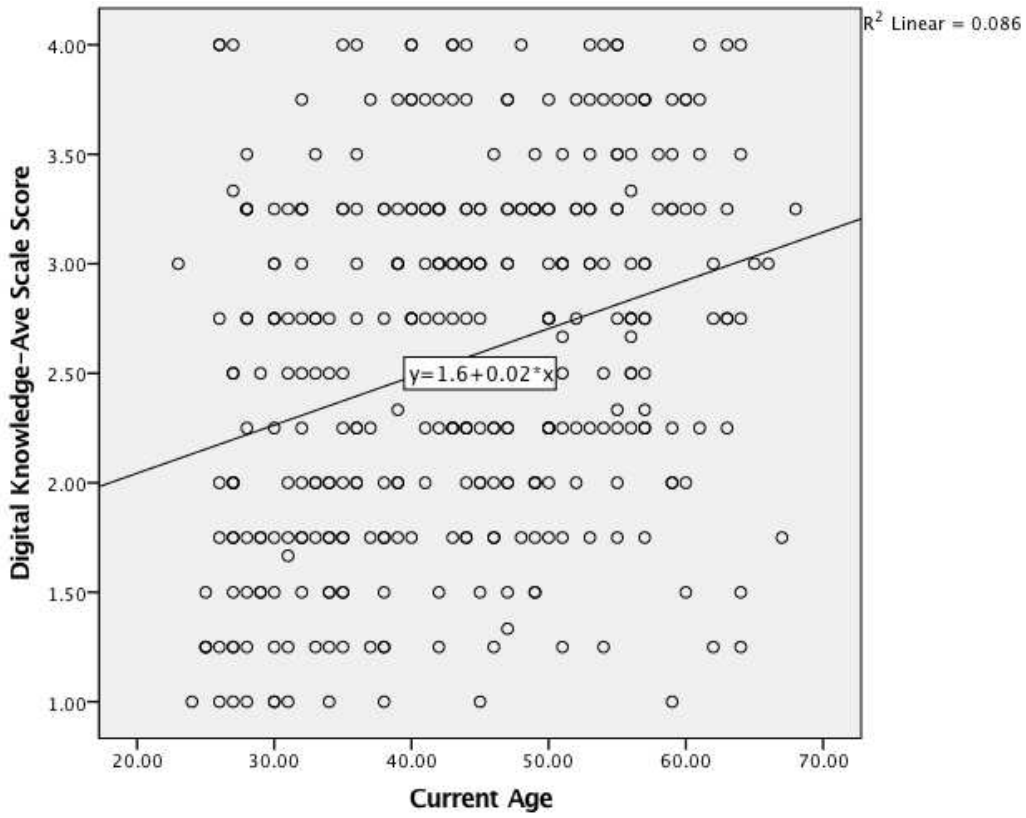

Figure 4.2. *Current age by mean digital knowledge subscale.*

For the Electronic Media and Therapeutic Intervention subscales, the direction of the correlation was negative, which means the younger the school social worker, the more likely to incorporate elements of electronic media into their practice. Figure 4.3 shows a line graph of the correlation between age and the Electronic Media subscale. The effect size is considered small for therapeutic intervention and medium for electronic media (Cohen, 1988).

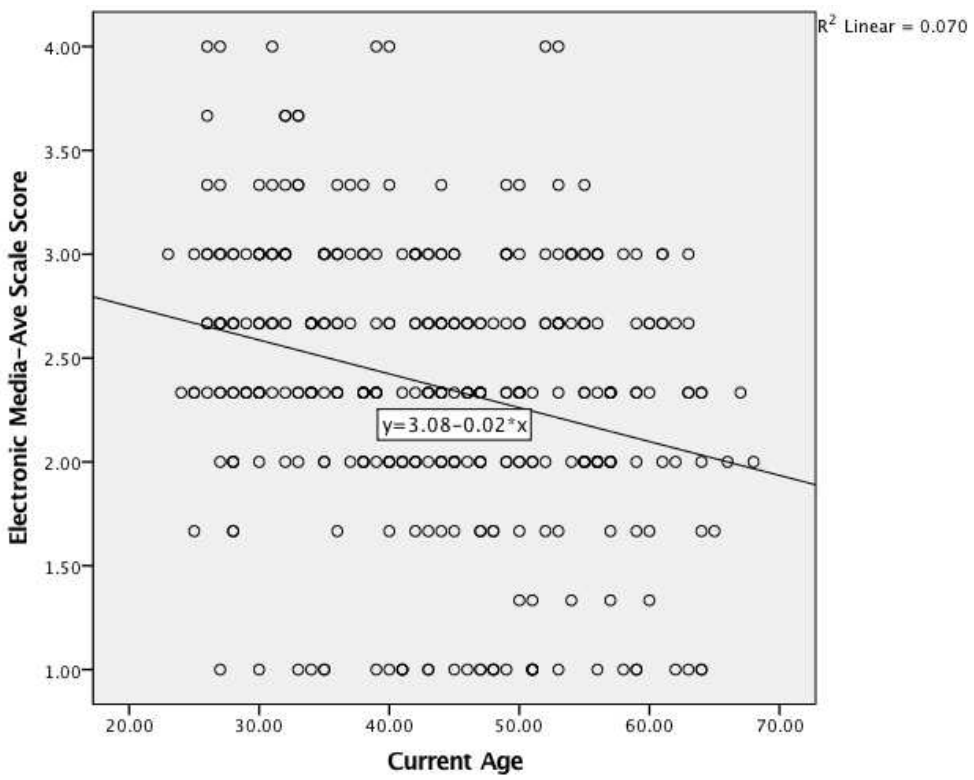

Figure 4.3. *Current age by mean electronic media subscale.*

Additional Correlations Related to Research Question 5

Service delivery (question 13). To investigate if there was a statistically significant association between age and engagement with students, behavior modification, and assimilate to youth culture, correlations were computed. Pearson Correlation statistic was calculated for each item: engagement with students, *r (374) =-.15, p=.025*, implement behavior modification *r (373) =-.20, p=.000,* and assimilate to youth culture, *r (374) =-.20, p=.000.* There was a negative correlation for all three items, which means the younger school social workers were, the more likely they were to perceive electronic media changing how they engage with students, implement behavior modification and assimilate to youth culture. Using Cohen's (1988) guidelines, the effect sizes are small for engagement with students and small to medium for implement behavior modification and assimilate to youth culture.

Youth culture (question 18). To investigate if there was a statistically significant association between age and the incorporation of youth lingo, hashtags or emojis, correlations were computed. Pearson Correlation statistic was calculated*: r (372) =-.20, p=.000* for youth lingo; *r (371) = -.20, p=.000* for hashtags; and r *(371) =-.16, p=.002* for emojis. There was a negative correlation for all three items, which means younger school social workers were more likely to incorporate youth lingo, hashtags or emojis into their service delivery. The effect size is small for emojis, and small to medium for youth lingo and hashtags (Cohen, 1988).

Electronic media incorporation (question 10). Correlations were computed to investigate if there was a statistically significant association between age and the use of electronic media within practice (e.g. webpages, YouTube, applications). Statistical significance was found on the use of webpages/online resources *r (371) =-.20, p=.000,* and use of YouTube videos, *r (372) = -.170, p=.001*. Statistical significance was not found for the use of applications within practice. Figure 4.4 demonstrates the association between age and incorporation of webpages/online resources within practice. The direction of the correlation was negative for both webpages/online resources and YouTube videos, which means the younger school social workers were, the more likely to incorporate webpages/online resources and YouTube videos into their service delivery. The effect size is small for YouTube videos, and almost medium for webpages/online resources (Cohen, 1988).

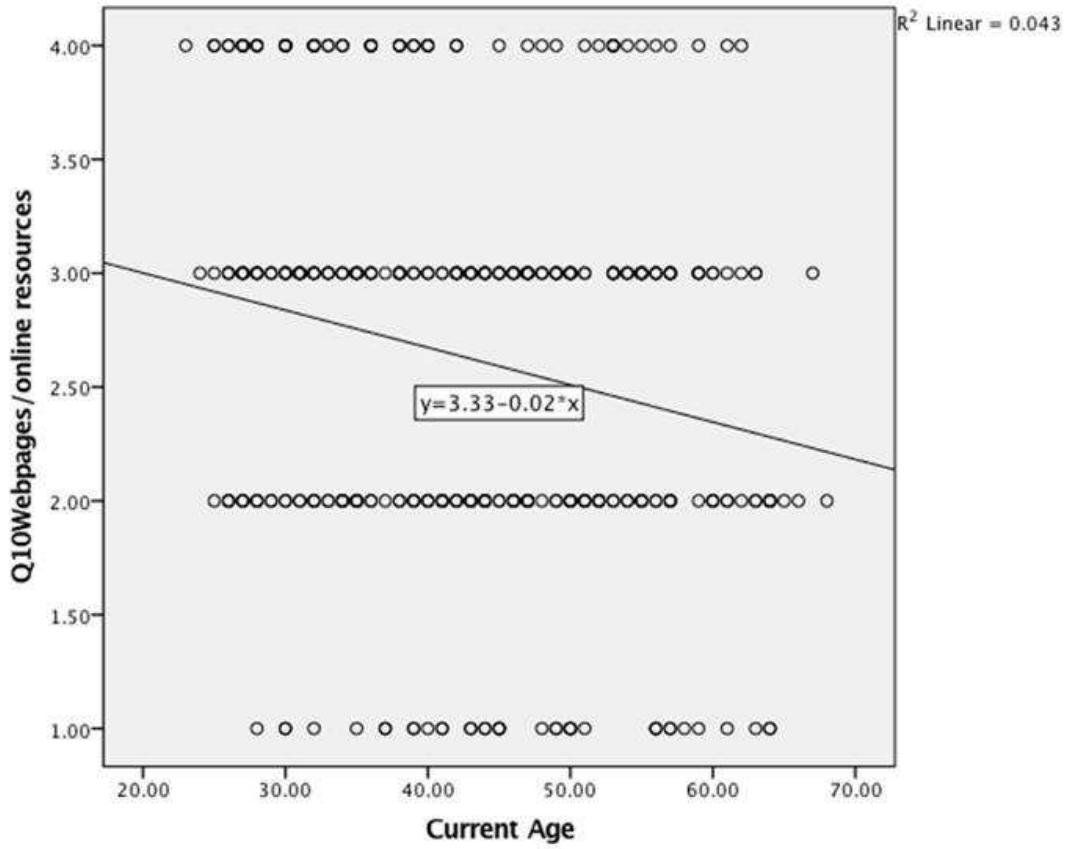

Figure 4.4. *Current age and incorporation of webpages/online in practice.*

Additional trainings (question 27). Pearson Correlation statistic was calculated to investigate if there was a statistically significant association between current age and need for additional trainings. Statistical significance was found on the need for general electronic device education, *r(362)=-.21, p=.000*. Figure 4.5 shows mean differences among age and need for general electronic device education. The direction of the correlation was negative for general electronic device education, which means the older the school social workers was, the more general device education was felt needed to further inform their practice. The effect size is small to medium for this association (Cohen, 1988).

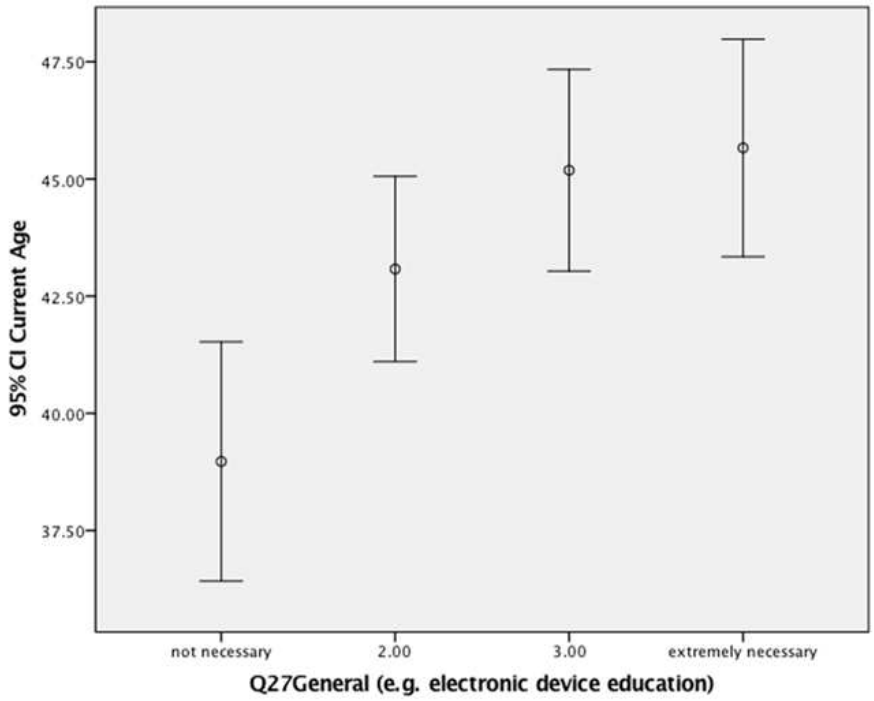

Figure 4.5. *Current age and perceived need for general electronic device education.*

Personal use of electronic media (question 16). A Pearson Correlation statistic was calculated to investigate if there was a statistically significant association between age and the types electronic media reported for personal use. Statistical significance was found for social networking sites *r (361) =.15, p=.004.* The direction of the correlation was positive for social networking sites, which means younger school social worker were more likely to use social networking sites. The effect size is considered small for this association (Cohen, 1988).

Community of Practice

Within the demographic section of the survey instrument, respondents were asked to describe their community of practice (i.e. city, town, suburb, or rural). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means of the four groups with the key subscales.

Key Subscales

Test of Homogeneity. Levene's test was used to check the assumption of variances among the communities of practices were equal for each of the key subscales. The assumption was not violated for all scales except for the Meaningful Solutions subscale. For the Meaningful Solutions subscale *(p=.043),* indicating Levene's test is significant and the assumption of equal variances is violated. A non-parametric test (Kruskal-Wallis) was used on this subscale.

One-way ANOVA. A statistically significant difference was found among the four levels of community of practice on Job Functions, *F(3,370)=4.07, p=.007,* and Therapeutic Interventions, *F(3, 353)=2.88, p=.036.* School social work practitioners in suburb communities perceived their job functions and therapeutic interventions the most impacted. Table 4.32 shows the one-way ANOVA summary comparing community of practice on key subscales.

Table 4.32

One-Way Analysis of Variance Summary Table Comparing Community of Practice on Key Subscales

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Perceived Need for Practice Guidelines					
Between groups	3	1.11	.372	.540	.655
Within groups	362	249.47	.689		
Total	362	250.59			
Job Functions					
Between groups	3	3.34	1.11	4.07	.007*
Within groups	370	101.07	.273		
Total	373	104.41			
Digital Knowledge					
Between groups	3	1.05	.350	.530	.662
Within groups	353	233.23	.661		
Total	356	234.28			
Meaningful Solutions					
Between groups	3	1.53	.334	1.06	.366
Within groups	353	170.48	.483		
Total	356	172.02			
Electronic Education					
Between groups	3	1.00	.512	1.06	.366
Within groups	364	158.94	.483		
Total	367	159.94			
Electronic Media					
Between groups	3	1.51	.504	1.13	.335
Within groups	366	162.79	.445		
Total	369	164.30			
Therapeutic Intervention					
Between groups	3	4.81	1.60	2.88	.036*
Within groups	353	196.34	.556		
Total	356	201.16			

*statistically significant

Post hoc. Post hoc Tukey HSD tests indicate city and suburb school social workers differed significantly in perceived impact of electronic media on job functions with a small effect size *(p=.026, d=.19)* as well as town and suburb *(p=.017, d=.26)* with a small to medium effect size. For the Therapeutic Intervention subscale, Post Hoc Tukey HSD tests indicate rural and suburb school social workers differed significantly in their incorporation of electronic media with a medium effect size *(p=.027, d=.30*). Figure 4.6 shows mean differences among communities of practice and the therapeutic intervention subscale. Suburb school social workers are more likely to incorporate electronic media in the small or support groups they provide.

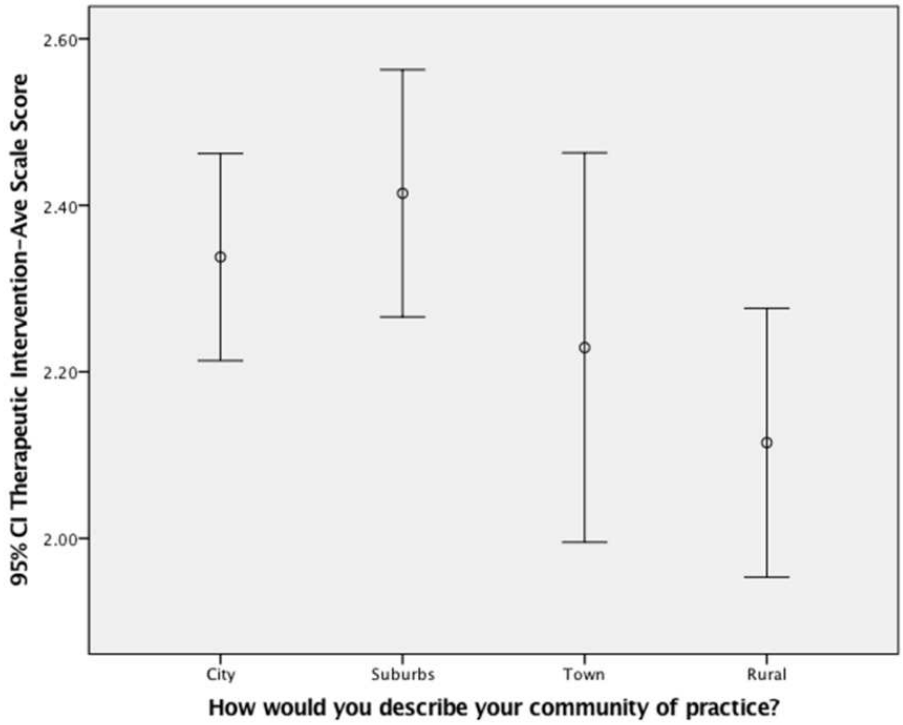

Figure 4.6. *Community of practice by mean Therapeutic Intervention Subscale.*

Kruskal-Wallis. Because there were unequal variances, a Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric test was conducted to test if there was a difference between community of practice and the Meaningful Solutions subscale. The test indicated there was no statistical difference between community of practice and the Meaningful Solutions subscale, x^2 *(3,N=108)=2.23, p=.526.*

Population Served

Within the demographic section of the survey instrument, respondents were asked to describe the population they served (e.g. elementary, middle school, high school, district, other). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means of the five groups with the key subscales. Correlations and Chi-squares were also computed separately on applicable survey questions where the items did not scale together.

Key Subscales

Test of Homogeneity. Levene's test was used to check the assumptions of variances among the population served are equal for each of the key scales. For all subscales, the assumption was not violated.

One-way ANOVA. A statistically significant difference was found among the five levels of population served on Job Functions, $F(4,373)=2.95$, $p=.020$, Digital Knowledge, $F(4,356)=4.55$, $p=.001$, and Electronic Education $F(3, 367)=10.92$, $p=.000$. Table 4.33 shows the one-way ANOVA summary comparing population served on key subscales. School social workers serving elementary populations perceived their job functions impacted the most. Practitioners at the district level perceived digital knowledge impacting their ability to effectively problem solve more than elementary, middle, high school or other practitioners. Middle and high school social workers helped students with electronic education the most.

Table 4.33

One-Way Analysis of Variance Summary Table Comparing Population Served on Key Subscales

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Perceived Need for Practice Guidelines					
Between groups	4	4.61	1.15	1.70	.150
Within groups	365	247.71	.679		
Total	369	252.32			
Job Functions					
Between groups	4	3.21	.810	2.95	.020*
Within groups	373	102.19	.274		
Total	377	105.43			
Digital Knowledge					
Between groups	4	11.5	2.89	4.55	.001*
Within groups	356	226.19	.635		
Total	360	237.77			
Meaningful Solutions					
Between groups	4	3.36	.840	1.76	.137
Within groups	356	107.03	.478		
Total	360	173.39			
Electronic Education					
Between groups	4	17.13	4.28	10.92	.000*
Within groups	367	143.80	.392		
Total	371	160.94			
Electronic Media					
Between groups	4	3.21	.804	1.81	.126
Within groups	369	163.98	.444		
Total	373	167.20			
Therapeutic Intervention					
Between groups	4	.620	.155	.273	.895
Within groups	356	202.07	.568		
Total	360	202.69			

*statistically significant

Post hoc. Post Hoc Tukey HSD tests indicate elementary and high school social workers differed significantly in perceived impact on job functions with a small effect size *(p=.021, d=.20*). For Digital Knowledge, Post Hoc Tukey HSD tests indicate elementary and middle

school social workers differed significantly in the perceived impact of digital knowledge on practice with a medium to large effect size *(p=.017, d=.38)* as well as district and elementary school social workers with a large effect size of *(p=.010, d=.53).* For Electronic Education, elementary and middle school populations differed significantly, as indicated by a medium to large effect size *(p=.002, d=.37)* and elementary and high school populations differed with a large effect size *(p=.000, d=.52).* Figure 4.7 shows the mean differences among population served and the Digital Knowledge subscale.

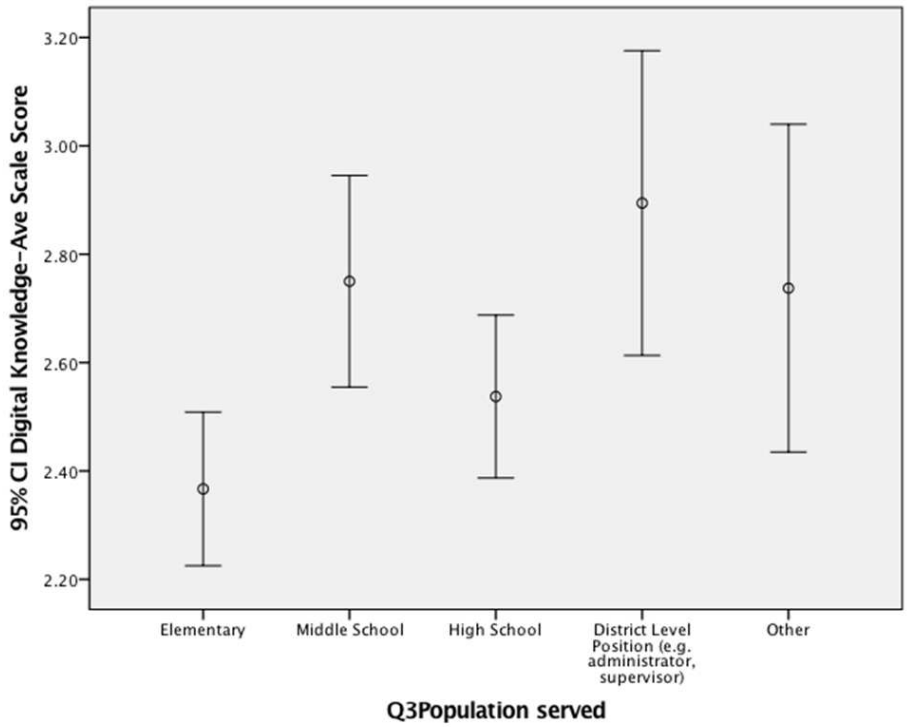

Figure 4.7. *Population served by mean Digital Knowledge Subscale.*

Additional Correlations and Chi-squares Related to Research Question 5

Youth culture (question 18). Pearson correlations were used to investigate if there was a statistically significant association between population served and the incorporation of youth lingo, hashtags and emojis. No significant associations were found between youth lingo and hashtags but there was a statistically significant association between population served and the

incorporation of emojis in service delivery, *r (375) =-.12, p=.018.* The direction of the correlation was negative, which means the younger the school population served (e.g. elementary); the more likely school social workers were to incorporate emojis into practice. The effect size is considered small of this study (Cohen, 1988).

Discussions around electronic media (question 22). There were statistically significant associations between population served and school social workers having electronic media focused discussions. A Pearson Correlation statistic was calculated: how to respond regarding social media, *r (302) =.16, p=.002*; long term consequences *r (368) = .13, p=.022*; and short term consequences *r (369) =.12, p=.012*. There was a positive correlation for all three items, which means the older school population (e.g. high school) served, the more likely school social workers were to discuss social media responses and consequences with students. The effect size is considered small for all three items (Cohen, 1988). Figure 4.8 demonstrates the differences among population served and responses to electronic communication.

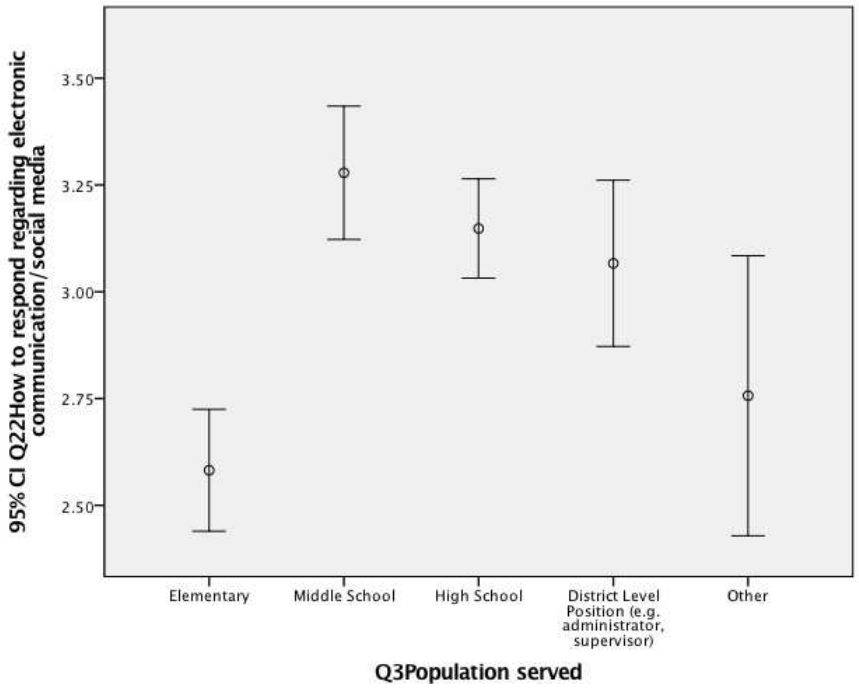

Figure 4.8. *Population served by mean responses to electronic communication.*

Ethical dilemmas (question 15). A Chi-square was used to investigate whether population served affects the types of ethical dilemmas encountered in practice. For "witnessing threats of self-harm" and "being asked to snoop on colleagues' personal social media accounts", the expected frequencies were less than five; therefore assumptions were not met. Assumptions were checked and were met for the remaining items. Table 4.34 shows the Pearson chi-square results and indicates statistical significance was only found on the "knowing students are using social media accounts and do not meet the age minimum" ethical dilemma *(x^2 =24.9, df=4, N=149, p=.000*). School social workers serving elementary school populations were more likely to encounter this ethical dilemma. Cramer's V was calculated to test the strength of association, *V (149) =.26, p=.000.* This is considered a small to medium effect size (Morgan et al., 2013).

Table 4.34

Chi-square Analysis of Prevalence of Ethical Dilemmas among Populations Served

	n	Elementary	Middle School	High School	District	x^2	*p*
Conflict of Interest	106	53	14	29	10	6.70	.153
Privacy Violations	140	50	28	50	12	4.04	.400
Know students using social media that do not meet age minimum	149	78	28	30	13	24.9	.000
Personal Cell phone (24/7)	185	78	27	61	19	4.07	.397
Texting Colleagues with personal cell phones	171	69	29	57	16	1.41	.888
Professional boundaries	209	90	35	64	20	2.76	.598

Electronic contact (question 11). To investigate whether population served differed on the type of electronic contact students used to connect with school social workers, a chi-square statistic was conducted. Assumptions were checked and were met for all items except "current student social media "friend" requests". Table 4.35 shows the Pearson chi-square results. Statistical significance was found with the email category *(x^2 =83.5, df=4, N=149, p=.000*),

which means school social workers serving high school populations were more likely to be contacted by students utilizing email than school social workers serving younger populations. Additionally, statistical significance was found within the "other" category *(x^2 =12.8, df=4, N= 94, p=.012.* Cramer's V was calculated to test the strength of association. The "other" item had a small effect size, *V (94) =.18, p=.012).* A medium to large effect size was found within the "email" category, *V (159) =.47, p=.000.*

Table 4.35

Chi-square Analysis of Prevalence of Electronic Contact among Populations Served

	n	Elementary	Middle School	High School	District	x^2	*p*
Email	159	29	29	86	15	83.5	.000
Former student social media "friend" requests	60	22	8	25	5	3.73	.443
Other	94	37	21	21	15	12.8	.012

Student issues (question 14). A Chi-square was used to investigate whether population served differed on the types of issues students experienced as related to electronic media. Assumptions were checked and met for all items except the "other" category. Table 4.36 shows the Pearson chi-square results. Statistical significance was found on all items except navigating and understanding social norms. School social workers serving high school aged populations were more likely to encounter students needing help regarding these electronic media generated issues than school social workers serving younger populations.

Table 4.36

Chi-square Analysis of Prevalence of Student Issues among Populations Served

	n	Elementary	Middle School	High School	District	x^2	*p*	*df*
Relational Aggression	283	88	60	107	28	69.8	.000	4
Sexual Harassment	136	24	28	71	13	60.4	.000	4
Social Exclusion	183	51	45	72	15	35.2	.000	4
Sexual Exploitation	141	22	32	70	17	65.4	.000	4
Navigating Social Norms	96	28	20	40	8	8.90	.061	
Threats of Self-Harm	201	45	44	88	24	70.3	.000	4
Threats of Physical Aggression	155	33	39	66	17	46.3	.000	4
Peer Conflicts	263	77	59	103	24	72.4	.000	4
Videotape Physical Altercations	113	11	29	60	13	76.4	.000	4
Videotape Emotional Harassment	61	9	16	31	5	31.1	.000	4
Conflict Resolution	70	14	20	31	5	19.1	.001	4
Popularity Contests	75	20	17	33	5	14.4	.006	4
Relationship Development	108	21	27	52	8	36.3	.000	4
Inappropriate Relational Support	157	37	37	67	16	42.1	.000	4

Cramer's V. Cramer's V was calculated to test the strength of association. Measuring the relationship of two nominal variables when one or both have three or more levels is best done using Cramer's V (Morgan et al., 2013). Refer to Table 4.37 for the reported Cramer's V of each item and interpretation of the effect size (Cohen, 1988).

Table 4.37

Cramer's V and Effect Size for Electronic Media Related Student Issues

	n	Cramer's V	*p*	Effect Size
Relational Aggression	283	.429	.000	Medium to large
Sexual Harassment	136	.399	.000	Medium to large
Social Exclusion	183	.305	.000	Medium
Sexual Exploitation	141	.415	.000	Medium to large
Threats of Self-Harm	96	.431	.000	Medium to large
Threats of Physical Aggression	201	.350	.000	Medium
Peer Conflicts	155	.437	.000	Medium to large
Videotape Physical Altercations	263	.449	.000	Medium to large
Videotape Emotional Harassment	113	.287	.000	Small to medium
Conflict Resolution	61	.225	.001	Small to medium
Popularity Contests	70	.194	.001	Small
Relationship Development	75	.309	.000	Medium
Inappropriate Relational Support	108	.333	.000	Medium

Summary

Findings were based on data from *N*=379 school social worker state-affiliated members of the SSWAA. The mean age of respondents was 43 years, with 12.2 mean years of school social work experience. The majority of respondents were female (93.9%) and identified as Caucasian (84.6%). About 60% of the sample population practiced in suburb or city communities. Slightly more than 80% of all survey respondents served elementary, middle school or high school populations.

Descriptive, correlation, exploratory factor analysis, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to analyze the data obtained from phase two. The exploratory factor analysis informed the development of seven key subscales. These subscales were used to identify differences among school social worker responses based on age, community of practice, and population

served. These attribute variables were the main focus of the study. Correlations or chi-squares were computed separately on applicable questions where items did not scale together.

Older school social workers perceived their digital knowledge impacting their ability to effectively problem solve student issues more so than younger school social workers. Elements of electronic media were more likely incorporated within younger school social workers' practice. School social workers practicing in suburb communities were more likely to perceive job functions impacted by electronic media. Additionally, suburb practitioners were more likely to incorporate electronic media in small and/or support groups than rural practitioners. Electronic media had a greater impact on job functions with elementary school social workers; whereas middle and high school social workers were more likely to help students with electronic education and have electronic media discussions than elementary practitioners. Moreover, student issues regarding electronic media were more prevalent with high school populations than any other population served.

Age, community of practice, or population served were not found to be a contributing factor to ethical dilemmas encountered or the perceived need for electronic media policies to further inform practice. In other words, all respondents experienced ethical dilemmas and desired more electronic media policies and/or education. Professional boundary issues in regards to electronic communication were the most reported ethical dilemma encountered among respondents. Guidelines related to mandated reporting and social media boundaries in regards to electronic media were the top two policies respondents identified needing the most to further inform their practice.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter first provides a summary on the study's purpose, key aspects of the literature review, conceptual framework, methodology, and major findings. Following the summary, a discussion of the results is presented. Discussion is organized by the research questions that guided the study. This is superseded by a discussion on limitations, recommendations, and a conclusion.

Summary

Purpose

The overall purpose of this study was to gain understanding of how school social work practitioners perceive practice being affected by electronic media. Perceptions, beliefs, and experiences from the perspective of school social workers were explored. School social work is unique to the social work profession because school social workers provide human and mental health services within an environment whose overarching focus is on education. In reference to technology advances and electronic media, DoBell (2013) argues the "[education] profession as a whole has not fully realized the impact" (p. 75). As such, it was imperative to explore if school social workers perceived electronic media affecting their practice especially in regards to job functions, service delivery, and perceived efficacy.

Literature Review

In a mediated society, the solution of abstaining from electronic communication is unrealistic and unfeasible. Professionals working with today's youth are witnessing the overlap

of online and offline worlds, boundaries blurred, and altered social situations due to the normative practice of using electronic media.

Current research shows participating in social media can be beneficial, as well as concerning for children and adolescents. Maintaining a mediated public image has added a layer of complexity to identity formation and has created the need for careful consideration and awareness of intended audiences in public spaces. Adolescents today, though considered digital natives, developmentally may not be well equipped to handle the speed, intensity, and complications living in a networked space generates These technological advances have further expanded the generation gap between digital natives and digital immigrants (i.e. today's students and educators) (Prensky, 2001). The field of education is witnessing technological impacts on students, especially in relation to learning; therefore it seemed likely school social work practice could also be impacted due to these same technological advances.

Conceptual Framework

Systems theory, developmental theory, and the uses and gratifications approach guided this research. These theories were supported by the study's findings. Respondents' feedback addressed the need for a systems perspective as well as systematic solutions in how to understand and address the affects electronic media has on school social work practice. Results also suggested recognition from respondents in how the development, more specifically the psycho-social-emotional development of students is impacted due to electronic consumption and dependence on electronic media to socialize. How respondents perceived students using electronic media and how they personally incorporated electronic elements into service delivery acknowledged the underlying premises of the uses and gratifications approach. For example,

respondents perceived student's electronic consumption allowed students to simultaneously stay "connected" (i.e. socialize) with peers as well as socially isolate.

Methodology

An exploratory research design consisting of qualitative and quantitative components was employed to understand school social worker's perceptions on how electronic media has affected school social work practice. A two-phase research design was utilized. The first phase collected information from a regional group of school social workers about if and how they perceived their practice affected due to electronic communication. The constant comparison technique of reducing the data to codes and themes was the primarily analysis used on the qualitative data generated from the focus group. The codes and themes were then used to inform and develop the online survey questionnaire that was administered to a national sample in phase two. The second phase gathered information from school social work state affiliate members of the SSWAA. Data was obtained from an online questionnaire administered through a web-based platform.

Findings

Data from (N=379) school social workers practicing in 20 states were used for analysis. The key attribute variables of current age, community of practice (e.g. suburbs, town, city, rural), and population served (e.g. elementary, middle, high school, district) were used to explore differences among perceived impact of electronic media on school social work practice.

Older school social workers perceived digital knowledge impacting their ability to effectively problem solve student issues more so than younger school social workers. Elements of electronic media were more likely incorporated within younger school social workers' practice. School social workers practicing in suburban communities were more likely to perceive job functions affected by electronic media and more likely to incorporate electronic

media into the small and/or support groups they provide. Elementary school social workers perceived electronic media having a greater impact on job functions, whereas middle and high school social workers were more likely to help students with electronic education and discuss electronic media. Moreover, student issues regarding electronic media were more prevalent with high school populations than any other population served. Age, community of practice or population served were not found to be a contributing factor to ethical dilemmas encountered or the perceived need for electronic media policies to further inform practice. In other words, all respondents experienced ethical dilemmas and desired more practice guidelines.

Discussion

Research Question One

1. **From the perspective of school social workers, what is the impact of electronic communication/social media on school social work practice**?

Results pertaining to the first research question addressed: reported job tasks, perceived changes in job functions and service delivery; and formal written electronic media policies or guidelines currently employed by respondents' school districts.

The overall perceived impact of electronic media on school social work practice job tasks and service delivery vary. Results indicate that school social workers perceive electronic communication affecting how they access information and communicate and collaborate with colleagues, administration, and parents. Additionally, school social workers incorporate, use, and help students in regards to electronic media also appears to fluctuate among respondents. Assimilating to youth culture was perceived as the area most impacted by electronic media. It was found respondents incorporated youth lingo and emojis in service delivery as a way to connect and/or build rapport with students. Becoming familiar with digital youth norms,

behaviors, and language appeared to be how some school social workers are responding to the popularity of electronic media use in student populations.

The majority of employed policies found among respondents' school districts were student and parent focused. For example, cyberbullying policies discuss the disciplinary actions the school will take if a student is found to be threatening or harassing another student via online platforms. Respondents were asked to share additional policies and/or guidelines their school district employed that was not addressed in the survey instrument. Within this qualitative data, only three individuals shared their school employed some type of electronic media/communication related policy. This may be considered concerning, yet this finding appears to reflect current literature. Few schools serving grades k-12 have technology policies that address social media (Ahn, Bivona, & DiScala, 2011 as cited in Karpman & Drisko, 2016). The limited or absent electronic communication policies may provide insufficient support for service delivery and professionalism in a digital world. As such, respondents may be realizing youth are living the majority of their lives through online means (Yardi, 2012; Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008) and are trying to respond to this by expressing the need for electronic media policies to inform practitioner behavior.

Research Question Two

2. **How are school social workers experiencing electronic communication/social media within their practice?**

This question sought to explore how school social workers are experiencing electronic media within their practice. To what degree and types of ethical dilemmas are school social workers encountering in practice as a result of electronic media? How are school social workers incorporating electronic media into their practice and how do they perceive student's

consumption of electronic media? These topics were explored with school social workers in both phases using a combination of open-ended and close-ended questions.

School social worker respondents experienced a variety of ethical dilemmas related to electronic media; with the majority of the sample population experiencing more than one kind of ethical dilemma (e.g. professional boundaries and privacy violations). Based upon the qualitative responses generated within the "other" category, it appears a theme of colleagues utilizing electronic media and involving school social workers was a common ethical dilemma encountered. For example, school administrators "snooping" on a student's social media account. This can have a direct result on the disciplinary decisions made by the administrator due to biases formed based on the student's "digital identity". Allowing the digital identities to affect decision-making poses serious ramifications to the professional realm (Kolmes, 2012). How this information is used or addressed merits careful consideration especially in regards to ethical considerations and behavior. The digital culture of today is having school social workers reexamine and reevaluate ethical concepts such as student privacy, professional boundaries, self-disclosure, mandating reporting, and informed consent.

In addition to experiencing a wide range of ethical dilemmas, how respondents' incorporated and perceived student's electronic media use also varied among respondents. Integrating electronic elements such as webpages and YouTube videos into service delivery was found to be common practice among respondents; 57.3% of respondents reported incorporating webpages/online resources often in practice. There appeared to be a general consensus among respondents that student's use of electronic media provided challenges as well as opportunities; however different from the opportunities and challenges found in the literature addressing student use (Greenfield & Yan, 2006; boyd, 2014; Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008; Gross et

al., 2002). For example, the literature discusses how social media affords youth the opportunity to connect, maintain and communicate with their peers without having to physically be anywhere (boyd, 2014). The opportunities and challenges that emerged within the study, however, addressed what is afforded to school social work practice because of student's use. Ironically, most of the challenges and opportunities identified had the underlying premise of parent behavior and engagement.

Parents' not adequately monitoring or modeling inappropriate social media behavior at home was perceived as a significant issues impacting school social work practice. In regards to opportunities, several respondents shared their relationships with parents/guardians have been strengthened because of the electronic communication. Online communication is "increasingly becoming an integral part of everyday life and a popular way of maintaining relationships" (Elphinston & Noller, 2011, p. 631). Respondents perceived this as a direct benefit to students and their school social work practice.

Several studies have been conducted that examine parental involvement, boundaries, and privacy between adolescence and their parents within online realms (Erickson, Wisniewski, Xu, Carroll, Rosson, & Perkins, 2015). A recent study showed when parents of young children were preoccupied with a mobile device; they were less likely to talk with the child (Radesky et al., 2015 as cited in Moreno et al., 2016). There is limited research examining how parent's own electronic consumption can impact the psycho-social-emotional development in children and adolescence; however it is apparent this warrants further exploration. Research that explores how a parent's own electronic consumption can affect children specifically within the scope of education is limited or non-existent in the current literature.

Research Question Three

3. **From the perspective of school social workers, how effective do they feel problem solving student issues related to electronic communication/social media?**

Research question three sought first to understand the types of issues and/or problems school social workers were helping students resolve due to electronic communication. Then, school social worker's perceptions on the need for practice guidelines; trainings or education related to electronic media was also explored.

With online communication a normative and everyday practice of digital youth, querying school social workers on what they perceive to be the main student issues related to electronic communication was a vital topic to be explored within this study. School social workers indicate that 74.9% of issues they report helping students with are attributed to peer conflicts. This finding suggests that technology has created a new site for peer conflicts to occur on that are more visible to school officials and parents than before. The typical, normative and developmentally appropriate issue of peer conflicts is further exacerbated and complicated due to these conflicts being played out on online platforms. As such, some parents may interpret this as cyberbullying and not as peer conflict; which may be problematic. Peer conflicts represent an important form of social interaction and are a normative part of development (Wheeler, 1994); so understanding how electronic media affects the interpersonal development of youth (boyd, 2014; boyd & Ellison, 2008; Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008) will be an important aspect of current school social work practice.

The need to help youth learn and navigate successful interpersonal relationships is more prevalent than ever before; and is supported by the amount of relational issues reported by school social workers in this study. In Erikson's development theory, the development of peer relations and comparing oneself with peers is the essential focus of children between 6-12 years old. In

adolescence, the focus on peer relationships is further developed by youth attempting to understand and explore their identity in relation to their peers and community (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2013). Developmental issues are being played out in virtual realms and the traditional responses school social workers have may not be an appropriate fit given the new dynamics associated with virtual worlds (Slovak & Singer, 2011).

In addition to the variety of student issues respondents reported helping students solve, school social worker respondents perceived almost an extremely necessary need for electronic media practice guidelines in order for their school social work practice to be effectively advised. Mandated reporting in regards to electronic communication and social media boundary guidelines were the top two policies that respondents identified needing the most to further inform their practice**.**

Within the qualitative text generated from the additional trainings/education "other" category a topic emerged: parent education. Respondents shared trainings on how to teach parents about monitoring, responding, and supervising their child's use of electronic media as well as the parent's own electronic consumption were needed. This finding corresponds with what respondents identified as one of the greatest challenges impacting current school social work practice- parental involvement and electronic consumption.

An interesting concept found within the literature is the idea of a Family Media Use Plan or Media Use Plans. The idea behind media use plans is to establish electronic boundaries as a family unit (e.g. content and personal information); maintain rules about electronic use that are developmentally appropriate and facilitate open discussions about media (Moreno et al., 2016; www. healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan). Training on how to help families develop media plans and maintain them for long term sustainability might be an initial first step in aiding school

social workers with the tools and resources to combat the perceived challenges associated with electronic media use and practice.

Research Question Four

4. **What kinds of electronic communication/social media do school social workers report being familiar with?**

School social workers were asked to share how often they used electronic communication for personal purposes. Evidence suggests that those educators with more self-confidence in their technological abilities are more likely to integrate new techniques into their teaching methods (Pan, 2011). It was thought this idea could be translated to school social worker practice. For example, school social workers more familiar with electronic media might already or be willing to incorporate electronic elements into their practice. In conjunction with the digital native and digital immigrant concept, this research question sought to explore how frequently and what types of electronic media school social workers were using for personal purposes. By exploring personal use of electronic media, preliminary implications could be made about "digital generation gap" between respondents and youth.

An overwhelming majority of respondents used email (94.9%) and text messages (94.1%) daily in their personal lives. Social networking sites (61.1%) was the most utilized form of social media among respondents. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and YouTube were the most cited forms of social media used among respondents. This mirrors Karpman and Drisko (2016) finding as the primary sites visited among social media users, with the exception of Snapchat and YouTube. Results suggest younger school social workers were more likely to report daily use of social networking sites. Daily use of social networking sites declined the older the school social worker was. This finding may not be surprising due to younger school social workers being exposed to digital customs earlier in life

than older school social workers. As such, it may be speculated that younger practitioners are not only closer to digital youth via age, but possibly by electronic media capabilities as well.

Research Question Five

5. **Are there differences in the school social worker responses based upon demographic variables such as current age of school social worker, community of practice, and population served?**

A principal factor analysis suggested grounds for the development of key subscales that would provide information on how school social workers perceive practice being affected by electronic media. Seven key subscales were used because of the complex nature of the survey instrument addressing multiple domains. Results indicated several differences among school social worker perceptions based upon key attribute variables. Refer to Table 5.1 for a summary of the statistically significant associations and differences found between age, community of practice, and population served and the key subscales.

Table 5.1

Summary of Statistically Significant Associations or Differences Found between Key Attribute Variables and the Key Subscales

Subscale	*M*	SD	*p*
Age			
Digital Knowledge	2.56	.812	.000
Meaningful Solutions	2.91	.694	.020
Electronic Media	2.37	.669	.000
Therapeutic Interventions	2.29	.750	.018
Community of Practice			
Job Functions	3.31	.528	.007
Therapeutic Interventions	2.29	.750	.036
Population Served			
Job Functions	3.31	.528	.020
Digital Knowledge	2.56	.812	.001
Electronic Education	2.69	.658	.000

Interestingly, no associations or differences were found between the Practice Guidelines subscale and any of the key attribute variables. This was the only subscale to not generate any statistically significant results, despite having the second highest overall mean of all the sub scales.

Current Age

The age of the school social worker was found to be a determining factor in how school social workers' perceived electronic media affecting their practice. Digital knowledge, rapport building, the incorporation of electronic media elements and the perceived need for additional trainings all seemed to be influenced by the age of the respondent. Older school social workers were more likely to perceive digital knowledge impacting their school social work practice. For example, having to keep up with the programs, devices, and applications that students' use affected a respondent's perceived digital knowledge. School social workers 45 years and older were also more likely to perceive general electronic device education was needed to further inform their practice. The "digital native" vs. "digital immigrant" concept can again rationalize this finding (Prensky, 2013; Hoffman, 2013).

Digital immigrants may experience more difficulty connecting and understanding the environment in which digital youth reside in. An aspect of understanding the environment youth reside in is familiarity with the electronic devices youth are routinely using. Training on smartphones may afford digital immigrants the basic knowledge of what these devices are capable of; which in turn, may create more awareness on how youth are incorporating them in everyday life. By identifying that general electronic device education is needed, older school social workers are exposing an area that warrants attention in order to further inform their practice. Interestingly though, older school social workers were more likely to perceive the lack

of meaningful solutions (e.g. supervision of student's electronic use) impacting their overall practice more so than their digital knowledge. So despite the greater age difference between youth and older school workers; older school social workers perhaps perceive the lack of systematic solutions around electronic media impacting their practice more so than their digital capabilities.

Younger school social workers were more likely to incorporate youth culture and elements of electronic media into their small and support groups. Because younger school social workers are less removed from technological advances, they may be more aware of how digital elements are constructed in youth's lives and are able to integrate those aspects into their service delivery more effectively. DoBell (2013) and Pan (2011) demonstrated how differences in age and familiarity among Web 2.0 users could influence the incorporation of such tools within teaching practice. Digital immigrants' ability to incorporate electronic communication/social media into education strategies and interventions was influenced by the age of the teacher (DoBell, 2013). The correlations between age, rapport building, youth culture and electronic incorporation may suggest that: (1) younger school social workers perhaps feel more comfortable using electronic media in their practice because they are more familiar with it; or (2) younger school social workers are more willing to "to learn to communicate in the language and style of their students" (Prensky, 2001, p. 4) opposed to older practitioners.

Community of Practice

School social work practitioners in suburban communities were more likely to perceive electronic media impacting how they communicate and collaborate with colleagues, administration and parents and were also more likely to incorporate elements of electronic media into their therapeutic interventions. Practitioners in rural communities were the least likely to

incorporate electronic media in practice. The incorporation of electronic media was slightly higher in small groups than support groups. Given the more intimate nature of support groups and more diverse make up of small group topics (e.g. video game clubs, social skills), clinically, this finding made clinical sense.

A hypothesis may be drawn on these differences found among community of practice. The more complex road systems in suburban communities as compared to rural areas could possibly infer that suburban communities have more resources available. As such, it can be speculated that suburban school districts may also have more monetary resources available to them, which may allow practitioners to more easily incorporate electronic media into their service delivery. Or rather, suburban school social workers feel the need to include electronic elements because their students have greater access to and own electronic devices than students in rural communities. Again, it should be noted this is only a hypothesis to the differences found based on community of practice, as socio economic status among communities especially in regards to school district funding is incredibly complex.

Population Served

School social workers serving elementary populations were more likely to incorporate a specific element of youth culture into their service delivery- emojis (e.g. picture representations of emotions). The use of emojis in elementary populations may allude to the idea that the immersion into digital realms is becoming more prevalent at younger ages. In other words, elementary aged students might be exhibiting characteristics of digital youth more readily than otherwise thought. According to Subrahmanyam and Smahel (2011), as cited by Hoffman (2013) one of the six characteristics that describe digital youth is that emoticons are often used to express emotion (e.g.:P to express joking or being silly, :(to express sadness or unhappiness).

On the other hand, this finding may demonstrate that elementary school social workers are developmentally meeting the emotional need and level of their students by using pictures, which happen to be emojis in practice to help identify, learn and understand emotions. Regardless, respondents that are aware of how emojis can be used with elementary populations for emotional expression may be able to engage in meaningful ways that connect and help youth address aspects of emotional development in a digital culture. As such, electronic consumption and the use of personal electronic devices might be becoming more common with younger populations and this may be impacting how elementary school social workers perform key aspects of their jobs.

Conversely, middle school social workers perceived a greater practice impact associated with their digital knowledge than elementary school social workers. This finding may be attributed to older youth being more active users of electronic media and are living the majority of their lives through online means (Yardi, 2012; Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). As such, elementary practitioners may not perceive "understanding the programs/apps students are using" necessary to inform effective problem solving. Where as knowledge on youth norms, lingo and behavior as related to electronic media could play an important role in how school social workers relate and respond to middle school populations.

School social workers serving middle and high school populations were more likely to provide electronic education and have electronic media charged discussions than practitioners serving younger populations. 76% of teenagers use at least one social media site; with 70% of them maintaining a social media account (Moreno et al., 2016, p. 2). Teenagers regularly post and upload content to be disseminated amongst their social networks. As such, it was found respondents are often teaching students how to use the Internet safely. School social workers

appear to be tailoring service delivery to include electronic focused discussion and education for student consumers of digital technology. Older youth are using electronic media to meet various developmental needs (e.g. identity exploration); therefore it is a fitting response that school social workers serving older youth are providing education on electronic media use.

School social workers serving high school aged populations were more likely to encounter 93% of the issues examined in the survey instrument. Table 5.2 shows the reported student issues by population served. The significant and robust finding that high school students are experiencing these electronic media issues more frequently than younger populations is supported by electronic consumption literature in children and adolescents.

Table 5.2

Reported "Check all the Apply" Student Issues by Population Served

	n	Elementary	Middle School	High School	District
Relational Aggression	283	88	60	107	28
Sexual Harassment	136	24	28	71	13
Social Exclusion	183	51	45	72	15
Sexual Exploitation	141	22	32	70	17
Navigating Social Norms	96	28	20	40	8
Threats of Self-Harm	201	45	44	88	24
Threats of Physical Aggression	155	33	39	66	17
Peer Conflicts	263	77	59	103	24
Videotape Physical Altercations	113	11	29	60	13
Videotape Emotional Harassment	61	9	16	31	5
Conflict Resolution	70	14	20	31	5
Popularity Contests	75	20	17	33	5
Relationship Development	108	21	27	52	8
Inappropriate Relational Support	157	37	37	67	16

Uncovering that " three-quarters of teenagers today own a smart phone and one quarter of teenagers describe themselves as "constantly connected" (Moreno et al., 2016, p. 2); the idea that the psycho-social-emotional development of high school students (14-18 years) being affected by electronic media may be more substantial than originally thought. Greenfield (2008) suggested "one would also expect to see them [adolescents] constructing the same developmental issues online as they do in their offline contexts" (p. 417). However, with the magnitude of electronic media issues high school populations are facing, it can be argued that the "same developmental issues" may in fact, not be the same anymore given the amplified speed and public nature these issues are now being played out in. From a uses and gratifications approach, the platform that meets the most needs will be used most by the user. It can be speculated that though high school students are experiencing more issues, their use of electronic media is also meeting a variety of their psycho-social-emotional needs. As a school social worker it may be important to identify and understand what these needs are in order to tailor services that take into account electronic media consumption and engagement.

Limitations

Design and Instrumentation

There are several limitations related to the design and instrumentation of the study that impacts the overall validity of the findings. The survey instrument, which attempted to explore school social workers' perceptions on how electronic media has affected practice, was based on only on focus group (e.g. phase one findings) and available literature. As such, the instrument was specifically developed for this study, which limits the opportunity for comparative analysis and makes the survey instrument's overall reliability and validity unknown.

However it should be noted that focus group participants reviewed the instrument and was it pilot tested with a small sample. Revisions were made based on the feedback and pilot results.

Another limitation regarding the survey instrument is that respondents may have had different understandings of the terms and/or responses categories within survey questions. For example, question #26 asked respondents to share what practice guidelines they felt were necessary to further inform their practice. Response categories included "social media boundaries" and "social media communication/correspondence". Various interpretations of these terms could have occurred among respondents. Due to the potential of various interpretations of terms/response categories, the questions may not have been responded to consistently among survey participants. Within the demographic section, "town" and "rural" communities of practice may have also been inconsistently responded to as some respondents may perceive these terms as more similar than dissimilar. Additionally, more variability may have been found among responses if a different scale had been utilized within applicable survey items. For example, instead of using a four-point scale to measure perceived impact of electronic communication on job functions, a larger point scale could have been utilized, which may have achieved more overall variability among scaled items.

Within data collection, an additional fault surfaced. One respondent commented that "Hispanic" was not listed as an option for the race/ethnicity question in the demographic section. This was realized after more than half of the surveys had been completed.

After consulting with the study's advisor, the Hispanic variable was added in hopes to capture the most accurate demographic data available within the remaining data collection window. This calls into question the reliability of the demographic measures within the study.

Generalizability

The sample population was comprised of only SSWAA-affiliated members and the overwhelmingly majority of respondents identified as Caucasian females. It is suspected that SSWAA members differ from school social workers at large in the area of support and resources. SSWAA members receive professional liability insurance and are provided with professional advocacy and public policy development trainings on behalf of the two national government relation specialists that the SSWAA employs to lobby on its behalf (SSWAA, 2014). Additionally, it is suspected that the study's population is also not representative or generalizable to even those school social workers state affiliate members. Chapter presidents that disseminated the survey instrument to their members were inconsistent in providing a total count of members within their organization that received the survey invitation. Thereby, the ability to accurately calculate a response rate was compromised. Moreover, groups within the sample population were not represented equally. For example, the majority of the sample population indicated serving elementary aged populations.

The utilization of an online survey program also limited respondents to only those with a valid email address and a computer capable of accessing the Internet. As such, respondents of this study may be perceived as more "tech savvy" then other school social workers due to their computer literacy skills of navigating and completing an online questionnaire. Despite these limitations, the SSWAA participant affiliate states represented a diverse cross-section and range of school populations located in various city, suburb, town, and rural communities.

Finally, an exploratory research design is a typical approach when a researcher is examining a subject that is relatively new and unstudied; and surveys are a well-established research technique used to primarily describe the attitudes and orientations in large populations

(Rubin & Babbie, 2008). As such, the goal of the research was not to test a hypothesis or make findings generalizable to larger populations. Rather, the goal was to explore school social workers' perceptions on how electronic media has affected school social work practice. Additionally, in exploratory research, it is not possible to establish if statistical significance implies clinical significance. Therefore further research is warranted and elaborated on below.

Recommendations

Professionalism and service delivery have taken on new forms due to electronic media. As such, it is important to acknowledge the situations created or influenced by electronic media are incredibly complex. Though this study provides insight into how school social workers perceive the need for practice guidelines, formulating best practices and guidelines that address technology within the school social work profession will be challenging given the complexity of electronic communication. The school social work profession may find guidance in how health care related fields are addressing social media. For example, Mayo Clinic's social media policy discourages accepting patient "friend" requests and includes language regarding the employee/supervisor dynamic (http://sharing.mayoclinic.org/guidelines/for-mayo-clinic-employees/). Kolmes (2012), Strom-Gottfried et al., (2014), and Halabuza (2014) suggest it is necessary for health care workers to use informed consent at the start of service delivery to discuss the implications of social media. This idea could be transferred to school social work practice, especially at the beginning of the school year. School social workers could possibly engage students and parents in discussions around social media boundaries and the behavior the professional (i.e. school social worker) will exhibit in online space.

Social work's professional body, the NASW, has also attempted to acknowledge the prevailing topic of social media and technology. Though not included in the Code of Ethics, a

"tip sheet" has been published for NASW social work members to reference. The tip sheet includes eight suggestions that social workers should implement within practice. Examples include: not "friending" clients; implementing a social media and technology policy; and managing privacy and location settings (www.socialworkers.org/nasw/ethics/ethics8series/social_media). These tips may serve as a baseline for school social workers, however they may not provide any additional guidance for school social work practitioners in regards to mandated reporting and electronic communication, colleagues use or misuse of social media/electronic communication and "friending" parents of minors. The majority of policies found implemented within respondents' school districts were guidelines for students and parents (e.g. cyberbullying, videotaping/photography of students) and not addressing how practitioners (i.e. educators) should be behave. Kimball and Kim (2013) and Halabuza (2014) believe written language should address the incorporation of clients into social networks, personal and professional representation of the professional and organization, boundaries regarding clients' personal social media sites, and guidelines for professionals maintaining public forums (e.g. blogs, microblogs). The NASW tip sheet starts to address these complex issues, however it is not exhaustive; and given the nature of digital interactions, developing electronic media best practices for school social workers will remain a challenge.

As such, practice and research recommendations may be drawn from this study and addressed at various system levels. From the incorporation of electronic media elements into direct practice to the need for practice guidelines/policies from professional bodies; the systematic context of electronic media is vast. Findings indicate that school social workers do perceive their practice affected by electronic media to varying capacities. Clearly, further inquiry is needed to explore how the intersection of home-school-community service delivery is

impacted specifically in regards to the psycho-social-emotional development of students and the absence of electronic media practice guidelines. Literature is becoming more robust on how electronic media is altering the social and professional landscape, and this, with the knowledge of how school social workers perceive their practice impacted, provides a basis for developing and implementing practice guidelines and policies to ensure appropriate and effective service delivery in a digitally driven culture.

Research Recommendations

1. Systematic inquiry on the school, district, and state of education departments regarding policies and/or practice guidelines associated with professional e-boundaries, professional e-communications and electronic media use among administrators, certificated and classified educators is needed. Perhaps districts have written policies but they are not enforced; which is why respondents did not perceive their district having any electronic media related policies or practice guidelines.
2. Because this survey was administered on electronic platforms (i.e. online questionnaire) the school social worker respondents may represent a more "tech savvy" group of school social workers. Further inquiry and through different modes (e.g. phone surveys) would provide additional information on the perceived impact electronic media has on school social work practice; as the challenges identified in this research may have only scratched the surface.
3. Exploring how parents own electronic consumption can affect children specifically within the scope of education is clearly justified. This was identified as a major challenge impacting school social work practice. Inquiry into the associations between parent electronic consumption and student's psycho-social-emotional development would

provide insight into how the digital culture of today is impacting parenting skills and abilities. A focus on not only "how to parent" in a digital age, but focus on "digital age parents" is needed to understand digital youth's development and success in education.

4. Exploring the difference between social workers and students on race ethnicity is also warranted. The majority of the sample population was Caucasian (84.6 %). However school districts within some of the states represented could have student populations that are 70% Hispanic. This may influence the engagement with school social workers and the use of electronic media. Therefore, changing ability to engage may be more about ethnic and cultural differences with use of electronic media tools as subset of that process. Students may be using different electronic media tools with a generational, language, and cultural divide making further inquiry in this area necessary.

Recommendations for Practice

1. Encourage professional bodies such as the National Association of Social Work to address emerging technologies and electronic media within their Code of Ethics. Guidelines should "address the use of social media during work hours, constructing a professional identity online, boundaries between personal and professional activities, client confidentiality, and interactions with clients on social media" (Karpman & Drisko, 2016; Voshel & Wesala, 2015).
2. Encourage district administrators to develop and employ consistent electronic media practice policies that discuss professional e-boundaries, professional e-communications and electronic media use among educators and students, families, and community members.

3. Encourage school social workers to seek out professional development courses that address emerging technologies, especially within mental health, psycho-social-emotional development and education fields.
4. Encourage school social workers to engage students and parents in discussions around social media boundaries and the behavior the professional (i.e. school social worker) will exhibit in online space(s) at the beginning of the school year.
5. Encourage school social workers to explore the idea of Internet safety trainings as well as Family Media Use Plan or Media Use Plans to implement with their students and families. Training on how to help families develop media plans and maintain them for long term sustainability might be an initial first step in aiding school social workers with the tools and resources to combat the perceived challenges associated with electronic media use and practice.

Recommendations for Social Work Education

1. Evaluation or review on the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited bachelor and master level social work programs for "educating students on the appropriate professional use of social media" (Karpman & Drisko, 2016). Educational Policy and Accreditations Standards, Competency 1 states, "social workers understand emerging forms of technology" and "use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes" (CSWE, 2015). Therefore, inquiry on how social work education programs are addressing social work professionalism in a digital era is warranted.

Conclusion

Digital technology has complicated professional and personal lives. As such, the purpose of this study was to focus on school social work practitioners' perceptions and experiences on how electronic media has affected their practice. School social workers are finding technology impacting their practice in several ways and to varying capacities. Depending on the age of the practitioner, community of practice, or population served; perceptions on how electronic media affects communication and collaboration, the assimilation to youth culture and service delivery (i.e. incorporation of electronic media elements) fluctuate. The differing perceptions, experiences, and identified need for practice guidelines to further inform practice found in this study demonstrate the systematic complexities associated with electronic media use.

From the qualitative comments generated within the survey instrument, it appears not only student's use of electronic media, but parents' own electronic use is impacting school social work practice. Parents modeling inappropriate electronic media use and providing minimal electronic supervision at home may be impacting long-term sustainable solutions. Respondents appear to be trying to tailor interventions that address the impact electronic media has on the psycho-social-emotional development of students. For example, school social workers were found to provide information on how to use the Internet safely and/or help students develop electronic boundaries. The dependence on technology, from both students and parents, has impacted family lives and is manifested in the school environment. Setting boundaries and finding a balance of electronic use at home is an issue many family units may need to address and attempt to work towards.

As the influence of electronic media and technological advances continue to dominate the education landscape, school social workers may perceive the need for the profession to shift

focus and tasks that are more in line with leadership and policy making in order to help inform best practice guidelines. School social worker practice appeared to be more impacted by parents, colleagues, and administrations use of electronic media than student's use; reiterating the complexity electronic media has on systems and relationships. It is hoped that the results of this research would be used to guide: (1) recommendations for practice guidelines and social work education; (2) future research that will further inform school social work practice and support school social workers providing services in a digital era.

REFERENCES

Ahn, J., Bivona, L. K., & DiScala, J. (2011). Social media access in K–12 schools: Intractable policy controversies in an evolving world. Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 48(1), 1–10.

Allen-Meares, P. (1977). Analysis of tasks in school social work. *Social Work,* 196-201.

Allen-Meares, P. (1994). Social work services in schools: a national study of entry-level tasks. *Social Work, 39*(5), 560-565.

Allen-Meares, P., Montgomery, K. L., & Kim, J. S. (2013). School-based social work interventions: a cross-national systematic review. *Social Work, 58*(3), 253-262.

Arnett, J. J. (1995). Adolescents' uses of media for self-socialization. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *24*(5), 519-533.

Austrian, S. G. (2008). *Developmental theories through the life cycle* (2nd ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Baym, N. K., & boyd, D. (2012). Socially mediated publicness: an introduction. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 56*(3), 320-329.

Best, P., Manktelow, R., & Taylor, B. (2014). Online communication, social media and adolescent wellbeing: A systematic narrative review. *Children and Youth Services Review, 41,* 27-36.

boyd, D. (2014). *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. New Haven and London: Yale University

boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2008). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13,* 210-230.

Brown, D., Lauricella, S., Douai, A., & Zaidi, A. (2012). Consuming television crime drama: A uses and gratifications approach. *American Communication Journal*, *14*(1), 46-60.

Buckingham, D. (2007). Selling childhood? *Journal of Children and Media*, *1*(1), 15-23.

Cherry, K. A. (2005). Erikson's stages of psychosocial development. Retrieved from http://psychology.about.com/od/psychosocialtheories/a/psychosocial.htm

Cohen, J. (1988) Statistical power and analysis for the behavioral sciences (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum

Coolidge, F. L. (2006). *Statistics.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Costin, L. B. (1968, October 17). An analysis of the tasks in school social work. *Social Services Review*, *43*, 274-285.

Costin, L. B. (1975). School social work practice: a new model. *Social Work*, 135-139.

Demers, D. (2005). *Dictionary of mass communication and media research: a guide for students, scholars and professionals*. Spokane, WA: Marquette Books.

DoBell, R. (2013). *The relationship between Montana state teachers self-efficacy and the integration of Web 2.0 elements in the classroom with a student population over 900* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from www.proquest.com

Elphinston, R. A., & Noller, P. (2011). Time to face it! Facebook intrusion and the implications for romantic jealously and relationship satisfaction. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *14*(11), 631-635.

Erickson, L.B., Wisniewski, P., Xu, H., Carroll, J.M., Rosson, M.B., & Perkins, D.F. (2015). The boundaries between: Parental involvement in a teen's online world. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 67(6), 1384-1403.

Finn, J. L., & Jacobson, M. (2003). Just practice: steps toward a new paradigm. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *39*(1), 57-78.

Gershon, I. (2011). Un-friend my heart: Facebook, promiscuity, and heartbreak in a neoliberal age. *Anthropological Quarterly*, *84*(4), 865-894. Retrieved from

Glesne, C. (2011). Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction. 4th edition. Boston, MA. Pearson.

Gliner, J. A., & Morgan, G. A. (2000). Research methods in applied settings: An integrated approach to design and analysis. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gliner, J. A., Morgan, G. A., & Leech, N. L. (2009). *Research methods in applied settings: an integrated approach to design and analysis* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Grajales, F. J., Sheps, S., Ho, K., Novak-Lauscher, H., & Eysenbach, G. (2014). Social media: A review and tutorial of applications in medicine and health care. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *16*(2).

Greenfield, P. M. (2008). Virtual worlds in development: implications of social networking sites. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *29*, 417-419.

Greenfield, P., & Yan, Z. (2006). Children, adolescents, and the Internet: A new field of inquiry in developmental psychology. *Developmental Psychology*, *42*(3), 391-394.

Gross, E. F., Juvonen, J., & Gable, S. L. (2002). Internet use and well being in adolescence. *Journal of Social Issues*, *58*(1), 75-90.

Halabuza, D. (2014). Guidelines for social workers' use of social networking websites. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, *11*(1), 23-32. http://dx.doi.org/Retrieved from

Hitchcock, L. I., & Battista, A. (2013). Social media for professional practice: Integrating twitter with social work pedagogy. *Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work*, *18*, 32-46.

Hoffman, A. (2013). Bridging the divide: Using culture-infused counseling to enhance therapeutic work with digital youth. *Journal of Infant, Child, and Adolescent Psychotherapy*, *12*, 118-133.

Karpman, H.E. & Drisko, J. (2016). Social media policy in social work education: A review and recommendations. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 52 (4), 398-408.

Kettunen, J., Vuorinen, R., & Sampson, Jr., J. P. (2013). Career practitioners' conceptions of social media in career services. *British Journal of Guidance & Counseling*, *41*(3), 302-317. http://dx.doi.org/Retrieved from

Kimball, E., & Kim, J. (2013). Virtual boundaries: Ethical considerations for use of social media in social work. *Social Work, 58*(2), 185-188. http://dx.doi.org/Retrieved from

Kiousis, S. (2002). Interactivity: a concept explication. *New Media and Society*, *4*(3), 355-383.

Kolmes, K. (2010, April 26). My private practice social media policy [comment]. Retrieved from www.drkkolmes.com/doc/socmed.pdf

Kolmes, K. (2012). Social media in the future of professional psychology. *Professional Psychology*, *43*(6), 606-612. http://dx.doi.org/Retrieved from

Kruger, R.A. & Casey, M.A. (2009). Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research. 4th edition. Los Angeles, CA. Sage.

Li, D. (2007). *Why do you blog: A uses-and-gratifications inquiry into bloggers' motivations* (Masters thesis, Milwaukee, Wisconsin). Retrieved from http://commonsenseblog.typepad.com/common_sense/files/Li_Dan_Aug_2005.pdf

Lynch, D., Vernon, R. F., & Smith, M. L. (2001). Technotes: Critical thinking and the web. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *37*(2), 381-386.

Manago, A. M., Taylor, T., & Greenfield, P. M. (2012). Me and my 400 Friends: The anatomy of college student's Facebook networks, their communication patterns, and well-being. *Developmental Psychology, 48*(2), 369-380.

Marlin-Bennett, R., & Thornton, E. N. (2012). Governance within social media websites: Ruling new frontiers. *Telecommunications Policy, 36*, 493-501.

Marshall, T. C. (2012). Facebook surveillance of former romantic partners: associations with postbreakup recovery and personal growth. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *15*(10), 521-526.

Massat, C. R., Constable, R., McDonald, S., & Flynn, J. P. (2009). *School social work: practice, policy, and research* (7th ed.). Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books.

McAndrew, F. T., & Jeong, H. S. (2012, August 3). Who does what on Facebook? Age, sex, and relationship status as predictors of Facebook use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2359-2365.

McMillan, S. J. (2006). Exploring models of interactivity from multiple research traditions: users, documents, and systems. In L. A. Lievrouw, & S. M. Livingstone (Eds.), *The handbook of new media*). London: Sage.

Merriam, S. B. A. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Minnich, K. J. (2014). *A phenomenological study of workplace empowerment and self-efficacy of school social workers* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from www.proquest.com

Mohr, D. C., Burns, M. N., Schueller, S. M., Clarke, G., & Klinkman, M. (2013). Behavioral intervention technologies: Evidence review and recommendations for future research in mental health. *General Hospital Psychiatry*, *35*, 332-338.

Moreno, M.A., Chassiakos, Y.R., & Cross, C. (2016). Media use in school-aged children and adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 138 (5), 1-8.

Morgan, G. A., Leech, N. L., Gloeckner, G. W., & Barrett, K. C. (2013). *IBM SPSS for introductory statistics use and interpretation* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

National Association of Social Workers. (2006). In *Code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers* (pp. 1-27). Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

Pan, S. (2011). *The relationship between teachers' self efficacy and the integration of Web 2.0 tools in k-12* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from www.proquest.com

Payne, M. (2005). *Modern social work theory* (3rd ed.). Chicago: Lyceum.

Pereira, G. C., Furtado Rocha, M. C., & Poplin, A. (2012). E-participation: Social media and the public space. Computational Science and its Applications, 491-501.

Peterson, R. A. (2000). A meta-analysis of variance accounted for and factor loadings in exploratory factor analysis. Marketing Letters, 11(3), 261-275.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon, 9*(5).

Radesky, J., Miller, A.L., Rosenblum, K.L., Appugliese, D., Kaciroti, N., Lumeng, J.C., (2015). Maternal mobile device use during a structured parent-child interaction task. Academy of Pediatrics. 15(2), 238-244.

Rubin, A. (2010). *Statistics for evidence-based practice and evaluation* (2nd ed.). Canada: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. R. (2008). *Research methods for social work* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson.

Seligman, S. (2011). Effects of new technologies on child psychotherapy: Discussion of clinical papers from the conference, "where the wired things are: children and technology in treatment". *Journal of Infant, Child, and Adolescent Psychotherapy, 10*, 422-427.

Slovak, K., & Singer, J. B. (2011). School social workers' perceptions of cyberbullying. *National Association of Social Workers, 33*(1), 5-16.

Staudt, M. (1991). A role perception study of school social work practice. *Social Work, 36*(6), 496-498.

Strasburger, V. C., & Hogan, M. J. (2013). Children, adolescents, and the media. *Pediatrics, 132*(5), 958-961.

Strasburger, V. C., Jordan, A. B., & Donnerstein, E. (2010). Health effects of media on children and adolescents. *Pediatrics, 125*(4), 756-764.

Strom-Gottfried, K., Thomas, M. S., & Anderson, H. (2014). Social work and social media: reconciling ethical standards and emerging technologies. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics, 11*(1), 54-65.

Subrahmanyam, K., & Greenfield, P. (2008). Online communication and adolescent relationships. *Future of Children, 18*(1), 119-140.

Subrahmanyam, K., & Greenfield, P. M. (2008). Virtual worlds in development: Implications of social networking sites. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 29*, 417-419.

Subrahmanyam, K., & Smahel, D. (2011). *Digital youth: The role of media in development*. New York, NY: Springer.

Tao, K. W. (2014). Too close and too far: Counseling emerging adults in a technological age. *Psychotherapy, 51*(1), 123-127.

Tehranian, Y. (2013). *Social Media, Social Kids: Sociocultural Implications of 21st Century Media for Development in the Preteen Period* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from www.proquest.com

Tunick, R. A., Mednick, L., & Conroy, C. (2011). A snapshot of child psychologists' social media activity: professional and ethical practice implications and recommendations. *Developmental Psychology, 42*(6), 440-447.

Utz, S., & Beukeboom, C. J. (2011). The role of social network sites in romantic relationships: Effects on jealousy and relationship happiness. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 16*, 511-527.

Van Dijck, J. (2011). Facebook as a tool for producing socially and connectivity. *Television and New Media, 13*(2), 160-176.

Villani, S. (2001). Impact of media on children and adolescents: a 10-year review of research. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 40*(4), 392-401.

Voshel, E. H., & Wesala, A. (2015). Social media & social work ethics: Determining best practices in an ambiguous reality. Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics, 12(1), 67 76.

Wheeler, E.J. (1994). Peer conflicts in the classroom. ERIC Digest, 1-6.

Yardi, S. A. (2012). *Social media at the boundaries: Supporting parents in managing youth's social media use* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from www.proquest.com

Zastrow, C.H. & Kirst-Ashman, K.K. (2013). *Understanding human behavior and the social environment (9th ed.)* Canada: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.

APPENDIX A:

RESEARCH QUESTION MATRIX

Research Question	Sub-Question	Interview Schedule (Focus Group)	Survey Instrument	Key Attribute Variable	Qualitative Analysis	Quantitative Analysis
1. From the perspective of school social workers, what is the impact of electronic communication/social media on school social work practice?	A. What do school social workers report as their primary job tasks?	Q1. Please describe for me the job duties you perform in your role as a school social worker?	Q6-Q9		Constant Comparison	Means Frequencies
	B. Do school social workers perceive a change in their job duties or roles associated with school social work because of electronic communication/social media?	Q2. Do you believe that the use of electronic communication/social media has changed the ways you perform your job duties as a school social worker? If yes, can you describe for me the ways your practice has changed because of electronic communication/social media?	Q5. Job Function Subscale	Age Population Served Community	Constant Comparison	Correlation ANOVA ANOVA t test
	C. Do school social workers perceive changes in their service delivery, including their ability to build	Q5. Do you believe that the use of electronic communication/social media has changed how you build rapport with	Q13. Electronic communication has changed how I: engage with students; implement	Age Population Served	Constant Comparison	Correlation

rapport with students due to social media/electronic communication?	your students? If so, how? communication? If so, how?	bx mod; assimilate to youth SCALED			
	Q6. Is your service delivery to students any different because of social media/electronic	Q18. I incorporate youth culture into my service delivery by: youth lingo, hashtags, emojis SCALED	Age Population Served	Constant Comparison	Pearson Correlation
		Q19. Electronic Media key subscale	Age Population Served Community		Correlation ANOVA ANOVA t test
		Q20. Electronic Education subscale TXT ENTRY	Age Population Served Community	Constant Comparison	Correlation ANOVA ANOVA t test
		Q22: I discuss with students: how to respond; short term; long term SCALED	Population Served		Pearson Correlation

D. How is electronic communication/ social media addressed within the school social worker's school and/or school district?	Q11. Does your school/district employ policies, guidelines and/or universal interventions that formally address electronic communication/social media use with students and staff?	Q24. What polices does your school/district currently employ? Included "check all that apply" and "none" TXT ENTRY	Constant Comparison	Frequencies
	If yes, can you describe what your school district/school uses?			Constant Comparison
	Q11. Do you perceive these [interventions/policies/etc.] to be helpful to you in your practice?	Q25. If applicable, how effective do you perceive your school district policies to be for your practice? Cyberbullying; device; videotaping; student cell; staff cell; other SCALED TXT ENTRY	Constant Comparison	Means Frequencies

						Constant Comparison
2. How are school social worker's experiencing electronic communication/social media within their practice?	A. Are school social workers experiencing ethical dilemmas in practice as a result of social media/electronic communication?	Q9. Can you tell me and/or describe an ethical dilemma/issue that you have encountered within your practice because of social media/electronic communication use?	Q15. What ethical dilemmas have you encountered within your practice because of social media/electronic communication use? CHECK ALL TXT ENTRY	Population Served	Constant Comparison	Chi-square Frequencies
	B. How are school social workers using electronic communication/social media within their practice?	Q3. Tell me the ways students are contacting/connecting with you electronically.	Q11. : How are students contacting/ connecting with you electronically? Email; current student friend requests; former student; other CHECK ALL TXT ENTRY	Population Served	Constant Comparison Constant Comparison	Chi-square Frequencies

					Constant Comparison	
		Q4. Do you incorporate electronic communication/social media into your practice? If so, how? (e.g. text message parents, online groups).	Q10. How often are you using electronic media as part of your practice with students? Webpages; you tube; apps SCALED	Age	Constant Comparison	Correlation
			Q21 Therapeutic Interventions key subscale	Age Population Served Community		Correlation ANOVA ANOVA t test
	C. How do school social workers perceive students use of social media/electronic communication	Additional Question. What are the pros and cons of electronic communication/social media within your practice?	Q37: Do you have any additional comments you would like to add about social media impacting SSW practice?		Constant Comparison	
3. From the perspective of school social workers, how effective do they feel problem solving student	A. What do SSW report as the primary student issues related to electronic/social media?	Q.7 Please describe some of the presenting problems students come to you for help using electronic communication/social media.	Q14. What kinds of problems are students coming to you for help because of electronic	Population Served	Constant Comparison	Chi-square Frequencies

issues related to electronic communication/social media?			communication? CHECK ALL Text Entry			Constant Comparison
		Q8. Do you feel like you can effectively problem solve student issues related to or by using electronic communication/social media? Can you tell me what made you feel that way?	Q28. Digital Knowledge key subscale Meaningful Solutions key subscale	Age Population Served Community Age Population Served Community	Constant Comparison	Correlation ANOVA ANOVA t test Correlation ANOVA ANOVA t test
	B. Do school social workers report the need for additional practice guidelines, trainings or education related to electronic communication/ social media?	Q10. Do you think practice guidelines regarding social media/electronic communication would be helpful? If yes, can you please tell me what kinds of practice guidelines would be most helpful to you? (e.g. language in the NASW code of ethics, etc.)	Q26. Practice Guidelines key subscale	Age Population Served Community	Frequency Constant Comparison Constant Comparison	Correlation ANOVA ANOVA t test

	Q12. Do you think a training or education program related to electronic communication/social media and school social work practice would be helpful? If so, what do you think would be most helpful?	Q27. What training or education programs are needed to further inform your practice related to electronic/media? SCALED Text Entry	Age	Constant Comparison Constant Comparison	Correlation
4. What kinds of electronic communication/social media are school social workers familiar with?	NA	Q16: Approximately how often do you use the following forms of electronic communication/social media for personal use? SCALED TXT ENTRY	Age	NA Constant Comparison	Frequencies Correlation
5. Are there differences in the school social worker responses	NA	Key Subscales: Practice Guidelines Job Function	Age		Correlation

based upon demographic variables such as current age of school social worker, community of practice, and population served?	Digital Knowledge Meaningful Solutions Electronic Education Electronic Media Therapeutic Interventions	Population Served Communit y	ANOVA ANOVA t test

APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND HANDOUT

Introduction Statement

We are living in a digital age. As such, relationships have been impacted due to electronic communication. Using electronic communication, such as text messaging, email, and social media to interact with others is a normative and daily part of life for children, adolescents, and adults. The use of electronic communication poses new challenges as well as opportunities for helping professionals such as school social workers who provide services to today's youth. The purpose of today' focus group is to gain an understanding based upon your experiences of how electronic communication/social media has influenced your school social work practice.

Definitions

Electronic communication: communication that takes place without having to be "face to face"- text messaging, email, social media, and instant messaging are all examples of electronic communication.

Examples of Social Media: Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Myspace), video sharing sites (e.g. YouTube), photo sharing sites (e.g. Instagram), blogging, and microblogging (e.g. Twitter). Social media sites allow participants to create and share their own content.

Demographics

Demographic information is helpful in analyzing the data for similarities and differences. If you are willing, please provide the following information:

Current Age:
What best describes you? (circle one) Male Female Self-Identified
Race/Ethnicity you most identify with:
How long have you been a school social worker? (number of years)
What best describes your highest formal education obtained? (circle one) BSW MSW Other:
What year did you obtain your highest formal education degree?
What best describes your community of practice? (circle one)* City Suburbs Rural Town
What best describes the overall school population you serve? (circle one) Elementary (grade 1-6) Middle School (grades 7-8) High School (grades 9-12)
What grades levels do you specifically serve?

***City:** Territory inside an urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more;
Suburb: Territory outside a principal city in an urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more;
Town: Territory located 10 or more miles from an urbanized cluster with a population between 25,000 and 50,000;
Rural: Territory located 2.5 miles or more from an urban cluster or 5 miles or more from an urbanized area

Interview Schedule

Opening:

1. Please tell the group what population you currently work with (e.g. grade level) and the job duties you perform in your role as a school social worker.

Introductory:

2. Do you believe that the use of electronic communication/social media has changed the ways you perform your job duties as a school social worker? If yes, can you describe for me the ways your practice has changed because of electronic communication/social media?

3. Tell me the ways students are contacting/connecting with you electronically.

4. Do you incorporate electronic communication/social media into your practice? If so, how? (e.g. text message parents, online groups).

Key Questions:

5. Do you believe that the use of electronic communication/social media has changed how you build rapport with your students? If so, how?

6. Is your service delivery to students any different because of social media/electronic communication? If so, how?

7. Please describe some of the presenting problems students come to you for help because of electronic communication/social media.

8.Do you feel like you can effectively problem solve student issues related to or by using electronic communication/social media? Can you tell me what made you feel that way?

9. Can you tell me and/or describe an ethical dilemma/issue that you have encountered within your practice because of social media/electronic communication?

Ending Questions:

10. Do you think practice guidelines regarding social media/electronic communication would be helpful? (Would you consider this social media/electronic communication a different type of cultural competence?) If yes, can you please tell me what kinds of practice guidelines would be most helpful to you? (e.g. language in the NASW code of ethics, etc.)

11. Does your school/district employ policies, guidelines, and/or universal interventions that formally address electronic communication/social media use with students and staff? If yes, can you describe what your school district/school uses? Do you perceive these [interventions/policies/etc.] to be helpful to you in your practice?

12. Do you think a training or education program related to electronic communication/social media and school social work practice would be helpful? If so, what do you think would be most helpful?

13. Do you feel like you have the skills and are comfortable navigating and relating to students? Can you tell me what made you feel that way?

Additional Questions
What are the pros and cons of electronic communication/social media within your practice?

What is particularly frustrating about electronic communication/social media use within your practice?

APPENDIX C:

CODES & THEMES BY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE QUESTION

Phase One: Codes and Themes by Interview Schedule Question

Opening:

1. Please tell the group what population you currently work with (e.g. grade level) and the job duties you perform in your role as a school social worker.

Themes	Codes
School	Provide individual and group counseling; psychosocial education; general classroom education groups; supervise school of social work interns; crisis management; restorative practices.
Home	parent education nights, provide wraparound services; provide support to improve student's attendance; 504 and IEP's
Community	Help students/families get connected to community resources

Introductory:

2. Do you believe that the use of electronic communication/social media has changed the ways you perform your job duties as a school social worker? If yes, can you describe for me the ways your practice has changed because of electronic communication/social media?

Themes	Codes
Collaborating with Colleagues & Administration	data collection (log entries, bx observations) google docs (electronic folders, files, network drive)
Communication with Colleagues & Administration	email text use of personal cell phones to text, email etc. after school hours (ie. On call)
Communication with Parents	e-newsletters email blasts text blasts

3. Tell me the ways students are contacting/connecting with you electronically.

Theme	Codes
Electronic Contact	Email Facebook Friend Requests Current Students Facebook Friend Requests Former Students

4.Do you incorporate electronic communication/social media into your practice? If so, how? (e.g. text message parents, online groups).

Themes	Codes
School-District Level	e-newsletters;
	blast emails;
	blast text messages
Practitioner Level	Webpages/Online Resources
	YouTube/ Videos
	Applications (i.e. Apps)

Key Questions:

5.Do you believe that the use of electronic communication/social media has changed how you build rapport with your students? If so, how?

Themes	Codes
Incorporation of Youth Culture	Lingo
	Emoijis
	Hashtags
Engagement	Use of electronic devices as common ground
	Assist in facilitating peer relationships
	Assist in student engagement
	Text parents
Behavior Modification	Reward to use electronics

6.Is your service delivery to students any different because of social media/electronic communication? If so, how?

Themes	Codes
Therapeutic Focus	Small groups (e.g. video game club)
	Support groups (e.g. antibullying)
	How to respond with or without social media?
	Electronic communication/social media use consequences ?
Education	Proper use of cell phone
	Online resources (how to navigate & find services)
	Parent Nights/Social Media focus

7.Please describe some of the presenting problems students come to you for help because of electronic communication/social media.

Themes	Codes

Harassment	Relational Aggression/Emotional Bullying Sexual harassment Sexual exploitation (e.g. sexting) Threats of physical aggression (self or peer reported) Videotaping of physical altercations Videotaping for purposes of emotional harassment
Relational Dynamics	Social Exclusion (e.g.unfriending, blocking) Navigating/Understanding social norms Conflicts Threats of self-harm (self or peer reported) Popularity contests (e.g. how many likes) Relationship development (e.g. flirting) Inappropriate relational support (E.g. friends/family becoming involved because witnessing a conflict occur over social media account)

8.Do you feel like you can effectively problem solve student issues related to or by using electronic communication/social media? Can you tell me what made you feel that way?

Themes	Codes
Digital Knowledge	Lack of knowledge on programs/apps used by students; Having to keep up with social media trends; Needing to understand app before able to understand dynamic of interpersonal situation; Have to navigate large volumes of data
Meaningful Solutions	Long term solutions non-existent Students attempt to solve problems via electronic media, not face to face; Supervision, control, monitoring difficult to achieve

9.Can you tell me and/or describe an ethical dilemma/issue that you have encountered within your practice because of social media/electronic communication?

Themes	Codes
Ethical Dilemmas	Professional boundaries; Conflict of interest; Privacy violations; Age restrictions; Threats of harm; Use of personal cell phones (i.e. on call; text after hours)

	"snoop" on social media accounts

Ending Questions:

10.Do you think practice guidelines regarding social media/electronic communication would be helpful? (Would you consider this social media/electronic communication a different type of cultural competence?) If yes, can you please tell me what kinds of practice guidelines would be most helpful to you? (e.g. language in the NASW code of ethics, etc.)

Themes	Codes
Practice Guidelines	Social media boundaries; Mandated reporting and electronic media; Ethical decision making; Professionalism on social media; Social media correspondence/communication guidelines; Personal cell phone (staff and student)

11.Does your school/district employ policies, guidelines, and/or universal interventions that formally address electronic communication/social media use with students and staff? If yes, can you describe what your school district/school uses? Do you perceive these [interventions/policies/etc.] to be helpful to you in your practice?

Themes	Codes
Policies	Cyberbullying; Electronic device; Videotaping; Student cell phone; Staff cell phone;

12.Do you think a training or education program related to electronic communication/social media and school social work practice would be helpful? If so, what do you think would be most helpful?

Themes	Codes
Trainings/Additional Education	Youth culture (e.g. lingo, norms); Interventions; Developmental stages; General

13.Do you feel like you have the skills and are comfortable navigating and relating to students? Can you tell me what made you feel that way?

*data was combined with question 8

Additional Questions

What are the pros and cons of electronic communication/social media within your practice?

Themes	Codes
Opportunities	Student honesty; Students connecting with each other; Foundation for relationship development; Provides common ground; Electronic communication is comfortable for young people; Email is efficient way for collaborating
Challenges	Workload is increased; Non-verbal communication is absent in electronic communication; "staying on top" of latest trends; Digital lives create barriers to rapport building

What is particularly frustrating about electronic communication/social media use within your practice?

question did not get answered within the allotted time frame

APPENDIX D:

PILOT INSTRUMENT

School Social Worker Perceptions on Electronic Communication/Social Media PILOT

Q1 Dear School Social Workers,

Thank you for your willingness to share your thoughts on your school social work practice. This study seeks to understand how electronic communication may be impacting your practice. Your responses are vital for this research.

The survey takes about 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be anonymous. There will be no identifying information linking you to your responses. If you would like an executive summary of the findings, instructions on how to obtain this are at the end of the survey. Your willingness to and completion of, this questionnaire indicates your personal willingness and implies your consent to use your responses for the research purposes.

By continuing on to the questionnaire, you agree to participate in the survey and for data to be collected. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at ricro_irb@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

Thank you so much for your time and help with this research endeavor.
-Annie Keeney, Ph.D. Candidate Colorado State University annie.keeney@colostate.edu

Q2 INTRODUCTION: Using electronic communication, such as text messaging, email, and social media to interact with others is a normative and daily part of life for children, adolescents, and adults. The use of electronic communication poses new challenges as well as opportunities for helping professionals such as school social workers who provide services to today's youth. As such, this questionnaire seeks to gain an understanding based upon your experiences of how electronic communication/social media has influenced your school social work practice. The questionnaire is divided into 5 sections. You will be asked questions regarding:

I. Current job duties;
II. Your Experiences on how you are encountering electronic communication within your practice;
III. How you perceive your service delivery impacted;
IV. Responses to electronic communication;
V. Demographics

Thank you so much for your participation!!!!

Q3 School social workers often work across grade levels/populations for the districts they serve. For the purposes of this study, please indicate which population and specific grade level you are going to base your responses on:

- ❍ Elementary (1) _____
- ❍ Middle School (2) _____
- ❍ High School (3) _____
- ❍ District Level Position (e.g. administrator, supervisor) (4) _____
- ❍ Other (5) _____

Q4 I. Job Dimensions This section seeks to understand to what extent the use of electronic communication/social media has changed the ways you perform your job duties as a school social worker.

Q5 Electronic communication/social media has changed how I...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
Collaborate with colleagues (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Collaborate with administration (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Communicate with colleagues (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Communicate with administration (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Communicate with parents (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Provide supervision for MSW interns (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Access knowledge/information (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q6 How often do you use the following when communicating with COLLEAGUES regarding school matters?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Often (3)	Very Often (4)
Email (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Text messages (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal cell phone to text after school hours (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal electronic devices to email after school hours (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q7 How often do you use the following when communicating with ADMINISTRATION regarding school matters?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Often (3)	Very Often (4)
Email (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Text messages (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal cell phone to text after school hours (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal electronic devices to email after school hours (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q8 How often do you use the following when communicating with PARENTS regarding school matters?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Often (3)	Very Often (4)
Email (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Text messages (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal cell phone to text after school hours (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal electronic devices to email after school hours (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q9 How often do you use the following ways to collaborate/communicate with colleagues/administration?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Often (3)	Very Often (4)
Electronic Files (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Electronic working folders (e.g. google docs) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Log entries (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Network Drives (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Monitoring software (e.g. attendance, behavior) (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q10 How often are you incorporating the following into your school social work practice?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Often (3)	Very Often (4)
Webpages/online resources (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
YouTube/videos (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Applications (i.e. apps) (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q11 How are students contacting/connecting with you electronically? Check all that apply

- ❑ Email (1)
- ❑ Current student social media "friend" requests (e.g. Facebook friend request) (2)
- ❑ Former student social media "friend" requests (e.g. Facebook friend request) (3)
- ❑ Other (4) _____

Q12 II. Experiences
This section seeks to understand your experiences with electronic communication/social media in your school social work practice.

Q13 Electronic communication/social media has changed how I...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly agree (4)
Engage with students (e.g use electronic devices as common ground) (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Implement behavior modification (e.g. reward good behavior with use of electronic devices) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Assimilate to youth culture (e.g. lingo, emojis) (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q14 What kinds of problems are students coming to you for help because of electronic communication/social media? Please check all that apply.

- ❑ Relational Aggression/ Emotional Bullying (e.g. spreading rumors) (1)
- ❑ Sexual harassment (2)
- ❑ Social exclusion (e.g. unfriending/blocking) (3)
- ❑ Sexual exploitation (e.g. sexting) (4)
- ❑ Navigating/understanding social media norms (5)
- ❑ Threats of self harm (self or peer reported) (6)
- ❑ Threats of physical aggression (self or peer reported) (7)
- ❑ Peer conflicts via social media/electronic communication (8)
- ❑ Use of electronic devices to video tape physical altercations (9)
- ❑ Use of electronic devices to video tape for emotional harassment purposes (e.g. To Be Real videos) (10)
- ❑ Attempted conflict resolution (11)
- ❑ Popularity contests (e.g. how many likes did a post get) (12)
- ❑ Relationship development (e.g. flirting) (13)
- ❑ Inappropriate relational support (e.g. friends and family of students becoming involved in a conflict between 2 students because they witnessed the conflict over a social media account) (14)
- ❑ Other (15) _____

Q15 What ethical dilemmas have you encountered within your practice because of social media/electronic communication use? Please check all that apply.

- ❑ Conflicts of Interest (1)
- ❑ Privacy Violations (2)
- ❑ Being asked to "snoop" on colleagues social media accounts (3)
- ❑ Witnessing threats of physical harm (4)
- ❑ Knowing students are using social media accounts and do not meet the age minimum (i.e. age restrictions) (5)
- ❑ Personal cell phones have provided the ability for staff to be "on call" 24/7 (6)
- ❑ Texting colleagues/staff with personal cell phones (7)
- ❑ Professional boundaries (e.g. parents/students/staff sending you Facebook friend requests) (8)
- ❑ Other (9) _____

Q16 Approximately how often do you use the following forms of electronic communication/social media for personal use? Please indicate the specific types of social media you use if applicable (e.g. Facebook for social networking sites etc.)

	Daily (1)	Weekly (2)	Monthly (3)	Yearly (4)	Never (5)
Blogs (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Microblogs (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Social Networking Sites (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Professional Networking Sites (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Photo/Image Sharing Sites (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Video/Media Sharing Sites (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Text messages (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Email (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Instant Messaging (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q17 III. Perceptions/Beliefs
This section seeks to understand how you perceive your service delivery impacted due to electronic communication/social media. Please read the following statements and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement.

Q18 I incorporate youth culture into my service delivery by using...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly agree (4)
Youth Lingo (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hashtags (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Emojis (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q19 I use electronic devices to...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
Assist in facilitating peer relationships (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Assist in student engagement (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Serve as a reward for behavior (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q20 I provide education...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
On how to properly use a cell phone (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
On how to navigate and find services online (e.g. online resources) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
On Internet Safety (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q21 I provide therapeutic interventions that have an electronic communication/social media component in:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
Small groups (e.g. video game club) (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Support Groups (e.g. anti-bullying) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q22 I discuss with students:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
How to respond regarding electronic communication/social media (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Short term consequences of electronic communication/social media use (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Long term consequences of electronic communication/social media use (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q23 IV. Responses to Electronic Communication

This section asks questions how your school/district formally (i.e. written policies) addresses electronic communication/social media use with students and staff. In addition, questions on how to best improve school social work practice in regards to electronic communication/social media will be asked.

Q24 What policies does your school/district currently employ? Please check all that apply:

- ❑ Cyberbullying (1)
- ❑ Electronic device policy (e.g. laptops to not be used for side businesses) (2)
- ❑ Videotaping policy (3)
- ❑ Student cell phone policy (4)
- ❑ Staff cell phone policy (5)
- ❑ Other (6) _____
- ❑ None (7)

Q25 If applicable, how effective do you perceive your school district policies to be for your practice?

	Not effective at all (1)	Slightly effective (2)	Moderately effective (3)	Very effective (4)
Cyberbullying (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Electronic device policy (e.g. laptops to not be used for side businesses) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Videotaping policy (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Student cell phone policy (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Staff cell phone policy (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q26 What practice guidelines/policies would you find to be most helpful for you in dealing with electronic communication/social media? Please rank the six following practice guidelines, with 1 being the guideline(s) that would be most helpful to your practice and 6 being the least helpful guideline(s) to your practice.

_____ Personal cell phone guidelines for staff and students (1)
_____ Social media correspondence/communication guidelines (2)
_____ Professionalism on social media (3)
_____ Social media boundaries (4)
_____ Ethical decision making (5)
_____ Mandated reporting and electronic communication (6)

Q27 What training or education program (s) related to electronic communication/social media do you think would be helpful to your school social work practice?

	Not helpful (1)	(2)	(3)	Extremely helpful (4)
Youth Culture (e.g. lingo, norms, current trends etc.) (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interventions (e.g. trauma and social media; teaching students how to respond) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Developmental Stages (e.g. how electronic communication impacts specific developmental stages) (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
General (e.g. electronic device education) (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q28 Please indicate the top three items that MOST impact your ability to effectively problem solve student issues related to social media/electronic communication?

- ❑ Lack of knowledge on programs/apps student use (1)
- ❑ Keeping up with programs/apps student use (2)
- ❑ Long term problem solving solutions are non-existent (3)
- ❑ Students attempt to resolve conflicts through social media opposed to face to face (4)
- ❑ Students lack ability to understand long term consequences (5)
- ❑ Having to navigate large amounts of data (e.g. when did cyberbullying begin etc.) (6)
- ❑ Supervision/control/monitoring of students use of social media is difficult to achieve (7)
- ❑ Having to understand the program/app before I am able to understand the dynamic of the interpersonal situation (8)

Q29 V. Demographics
Demographic information is helpful in analyzing the data for similarities and differences. Please provide the following information: An opportunity to add any additional comments and

instructions on how to request an executive summary of this study is provided at the end of the survey

Q30 What is your current age?

Q31 Please select which best describes you:
- ❍ Male (1)
- ❍ Female (2)
- ❍ Self Identified (3) _____

Q32 What state are you a school social worker in?

Q33 How many years have you been a school social worker?

Q34 Indicate which level of social work education you have and the year obtained:

- ❍ BSW (1) _____
- ❍ MSW (2) _____
- ❍ Other (3) _____

Q35 How would you describe your community of practice?

- ❍ City (1)
- ❍ Suburbs (2)
- ❍ Town (3)
- ❍ Rural (4)

Q36 How would you describe your race/ethnicity?

	White (1)	Black or African American (2)	American Indian or Alaska Native (3)	Asian (4)	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)	Other (6)
Click to write Statement 1 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q37 Do you have any additional comments you would like to add about social media impacting school social work practice?

Q38 Would you like to receive an executive summary of the findings from this study?

- ❍ Yes (1)
- ❍ No (2)

Display This Question:

If Would you like to receive a report of the findings from this study? Yes Is Selected

Q39 If you would like to receive an executive summary of the findings from this study, please email annie.keeney@colostate.edu indicating you wish to receive an executive summary of the findings.

Q40 THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!!!

APPENDIX E:

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

SSW Perceptions on Electronic Media

Q1 Dear School Social Workers,

Thank you for your willingness to share your thoughts on your school social work practice. This study seeks to understand how electronic communication may be impacting your practice. Your responses are vital for this research.

The survey takes about 10-15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be anonymous. There will be no identifying information linking you to your responses. If you would like an executive summary of the findings, instructions on how to obtain this are at the end of the survey.

Your willingness to and completion of, this questionnaire indicates your personal willingness and implies your consent to use your responses for the research purposes.

By continuing on to the questionnaire, you agree to participate in the survey and for data to be collected. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at ricro_irb@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

Thank you so much for your time and help with this research endeavor.

-Annie Keeney, Ph.D. Candidate Colorado State University annie.keeney@colostate.edu

Q2 INTRODUCTION: Using electronic communication, such as text messaging, email, and social media to interact with others is a normative and daily part of life for children, adolescents, and adults. The use of electronic communication poses new challenges as well as opportunities for helping professionals such as school social workers who provide services to today's youth. As such, this questionnaire seeks to gain an understanding based upon your experiences of how electronic communication/social media has influenced your school social work practice.

The questionnaire is divided into 5 sections. You will be asked questions regarding:

I. Job Dimensions;
II. Experiences with electronic communication;
III. Perceptions/Beliefs related to electronic communication & service delivery;
IV. Responses to electronic communication;
V. Demographics

Thank you so much for your participation!!!!

Q3 School social workers often work across grade levels/populations for the districts they serve. For the purposes of this study, please indicate which population and specific grade level you are going to base your responses on:

- ❍ Elementary (1) _____
- ❍ Middle School (2) _____
- ❍ High School (3) _____
- ❍ District Level Position (e.g. administrator, supervisor) (4) _____
- ❍ Other (5) _____

Q4 I. Job Dimensions
This section seeks to understand to what extent the use of electronic communication/social media has changed the ways you perform your job duties as a school social worker.

Q5 Electronic communication/social media has changed how I...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
Collaborate with colleagues (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Collaborate with administration (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Communicate with colleagues (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Communicate with administration (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Communicate with parents (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Provide supervision for MSW interns (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Access knowledge/information (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q6 How often do you use the following when communicating with COLLEAGUES regarding school matters?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Often (3)	Very Often (4)
Email (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Text messages (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal cell phone to text after school hours (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal electronic devices to email after school hours (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q7 How often do you use the following when communicating with ADMINISTRATION regarding school matters?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Often (3)	Very Often (4)
Email (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Text messages (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal cell phone to text after school hours (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal electronic devices to email after school hours (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q8 How often do you use the following when communicating with PARENTS regarding school matters?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Often (3)	Very Often (4)
Email (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Text messages (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal cell phone to text after school hours (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use personal electronic devices to email after school hours (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q9 How often do you use the following ways to collaborate/communicate with colleagues/administration?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Often (3)	Very Often (4)
Electronic Files (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Electronic working folders (e.g. google docs) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Log entries (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Network Drives (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Monitoring software (e.g. attendance, behavior) (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q10 How often are you using electronic media as part of your practice with students? Use the drop down box to select your answer for each item.

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Often (3)	Very Often (4)
Webpages/online resources (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
YouTube/videos (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Applications (i.e. apps) (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q11 How are students contacting/connecting with you electronically? Check all that apply:

- ❑ Email (1)
- ❑ Current student social media "friend" requests (e.g. Facebook friend request) (2)
- ❑ Former student social media "friend" requests (e.g. Facebook friend request) (3)
- ❑ Other (4) _____

Q12 II. Experiences
This section seeks to understand your experiences with electronic communication/social media in your school social work practice. For questions 13 and 16, use the drop down box to select your answer.

Q13 Electronic communication/social media has changed how I...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly agree (4)
Engage with students (e.g use electronic devices as common ground) (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Implement behavior modification (e.g. reward good behavior with use of electronic devices) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Assimilate to youth culture (e.g. lingo, emojis) (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q14 What kinds of problems are students coming to you for help because of electronic communication/social media? Please check all that apply.

- ❑ Relational Aggression/ Emotional Bullying (e.g. spreading rumors) (1)
- ❑ Sexual harassment (2)
- ❑ Social exclusion (e.g. unfriending/blocking) (3)
- ❑ Sexual exploitation (e.g. sexting) (4)
- ❑ Navigating/understanding social media norms (5)
- ❑ Threats of self harm (self or peer reported) (6)
- ❑ Threats of physical aggression (self or peer reported) (7)
- ❑ Peer conflicts via social media/electronic communication (8)
- ❑ Use of electronic devices to video tape physical altercations (9)
- ❑ Use of electronic devices to video tape for emotional harassment purposes (e.g. To Be Real videos) (10)
- ❑ Attempted conflict resolution (11)
- ❑ Popularity contests (e.g. how many likes did a post get) (12)
- ❑ Relationship development (e.g. flirting) (13)
- ❑ Inappropriate relational support (e.g. friends and family of students becoming involved in a conflict between 2 students because they witnessed the conflict over a social media account) (14)
- ❑ Other (15) _____

Q15 What ethical dilemmas have you encountered within your practice because of social media/electronic communication use? Please check all that apply.

- ❑ Conflicts of Interest (1)
- ❑ Privacy Violations (2)
- ❑ Being asked to "snoop" on colleagues social media accounts (3)
- ❑ Witnessing threats of physical harm (4)
- ❑ Knowing students are using social media accounts and do not meet the age minimum (i.e. age restrictions) (5)
- ❑ Personal cell phones have provided the ability for staff to be "on call" 24/7 (6)
- ❑ Texting colleagues/staff with personal cell phones (7)
- ❑ Professional boundaries (e.g. parents/students/staff sending you Facebook friend requests) (8)
- ❑ Other (9) _____

Q16 Approximately how often do you use the following forms of electronic communication/social media for personal use? Please indicate the specific types of social media you use if applicable (e.g. Facebook for social networking sites etc.)

	Daily (1)	Weekly (2)	Monthly (3)	Yearly (4)	Never (5)
Blogs (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Microblogs (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Social Networking Sites (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Professional Networking Sites (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Photo/Image Sharing Sites (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Video/Media Sharing Sites (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Text messages (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Email (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Instant Messaging (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q17 III. Perceptions/Beliefs
This section seeks to understand how you perceive your service delivery impacted due to electronic communication/social media. Please read the following statements and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement.

Q18 I incorporate youth culture into my service delivery by using...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly agree (4)
Youth Lingo (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hashtags (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Emojis (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q19 I use electronic media as part of my practice to:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
Facilitate peer relationships (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Assist in student engagement (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Serve as a reward for behavior (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Provide online resources/webpages (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q20 I help students...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
How to properly use a cell phone (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
How to navigate and find services online (e.g. online resources) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
How to use the Internet safetly (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q21 I incorporate an electronic media component into the therapeutic interventions I provide..

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
Small groups (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Support Groups (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q22 I discuss with students:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
How to respond regarding electronic communication/social media (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Short term consequences of electronic communication/social media use (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Long term consequences of electronic communication/social media use (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q23 IV. Responses to Electronic Communication:
This section asks questions how your school/district formally (i.e. written policies) addresses electronic communication/social media use with students and staff. In addition, questions on how to best improve school social work practice in regards to electronic communication/social media will be asked. For questions 26-28; use the drop down box to select your answer.

Q24 What policies does your school/district currently employ? Please check all that apply:

- ❑ Cyberbullying (1)
- ❑ Electronic device policy (e.g. laptops to not be used for side businesses) (2)
- ❑ Videotaping policy (3)
- ❑ Student cell phone policy (4)
- ❑ Staff cell phone policy (5)
- ❑ Other (6) _____
- ❑ None (7)

Q25 If applicable, how effective do you perceive your school district policies to be for your practice?

	Not effective (1)	Slightly effective (2)	Moderately effective (3)	Very effective (4)
Cyberbullying (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Electronic device policy (e.g. laptops to not be used for side businesses) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Videotaping policy (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Student cell phone policy (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Staff cell phone policy (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q26 From your perspective, what guidelines/policies do you think are most needed to further inform your practice? Using a scale of 1 to 4, with 1= not necessary and 4=extremely necessary, please rate the following:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)
Personal Cell Phone guidelines for staff & students (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Social media correspondence/communication guidelines (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Professionalism on social media (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Social media boundaries (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ethical decision making (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mandated reporting & electronic communication (12)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q27 From your perspective, what training or education program (s) are needed to further inform your practice related to electronic communication/social media? Using a scale of 1 to 4, with 1= not necessary and 4=extremely necessary, please rate the following:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (5)	4 (6)
Youth Culture (e.g. lingo, norms, current trends etc.) (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interventions (e.g. trauma and social media; teaching students how to respond) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Developmental Stages (e.g. how electronic communication impacts specific developmental stages) (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
General (e.g. electronic device education) (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q28 What impacts your ability to effectively problem solve student issues related to electronic media? Using a scale of 1 to 4, with 1= no impact and 4=strong impact, please rate the following:

	1 (23)	2 (24)	3 (25)	4 (40)
Lack of knowledge on programs/apps student use (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Keeping up with programs/apps student use (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Long term problem solving solutions are non-existent (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Students attempt to resolve conflicts through social media opposed to face to face (23)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Students lack ability to understand long term consequences (24)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Having to navigate large amounts of data (e.g. when did cyberbullying begin etc.) (25)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Supervision/control/monitoring of students use of social media is difficult to achieve (26)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Having to understand the program/app before I am able to understand the dynamic of the interpersonal situation (27)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q29 V. Demographics
Demographic information is helpful in analyzing the data for similarities and differences. Please provide the following information. An opportunity to add any additional comments and instructions on how to request an executive summary of this study is provided at the end of the survey

Q30 What is your current age?

Q31 Please select, which best describes you:
- ❍ Male (1)
- ❍ Female (2)
- ❍ Self Identified (3) _____

Q32 What state are you a school social worker in?

Q35 How would you describe your community of practice?
- ❍ City (1)
- ❍ Suburbs (2)
- ❍ Town (3)
- ❍ Rural (4)

Q33 How many years have you been a school social worker?

Q34 Indicate which level of social work education you have and the year obtained:
- ❍ BSW (1) _____
- ❍ MSW (2) _____
- ❍ Other (3) _____

Q36 How would you describe your race/ethnicity?

	White (1)	Black or African American (2)	American Indian or Alaska Native (3)	Asian (4)	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)	Other (6)	Hispanic (7)
Race/ethnicity (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q37 Do you have any additional comments you would like to add about social media impacting school social work practice?

Q38 Would you like to receive an executive summary of the findings from this study?
- ❍ Yes (1)
- ❍ No (2)

Q39 If you would like to receive an executive summary of the findings from this study, please email annie.keeney@colostate.edu indicating you wish to receive an executive summary of the findings.

Q40 THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!!!