

Leadership in School Psychology

By

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School psychologists are expected to be leaders, yet there is not a domain-specific model of leadership to guide training and practice. Effective school psychologists must have the ability to adjust their leadership style to the environment. This study aims to identify the characteristics school psychologists perceive as important to be effective leaders. The study's focus is to collect information from school psychologists about their perceptions of leadership characteristics to determine if importance of characteristics differ dependent the situation. This study will present school psychologists with common ethical and neutral situations. Participants will be asked to rate which characteristics they perceive to be the most important to utilize within each scenario. The domains are assessments/evaluations, interventions (behavioral, crisis, academic), mental health issues, and consultation. The characteristics rated were adapted from Shriberg's (2010) survey: team skills, knowledge/expertise, personal character, interpersonal skills, and competence. It is predicted that competence will be rated as most important characteristic overall regardless of the situation and knowledge/expertise is rated highest in ethical situations. Analyses showed that knowledge/expertise was rated as the most important characteristic in the domains of Academic Interventions, Assessment/Evaluation, and Behavioral Interventions and Neutral scenarios. Interpersonal Skills were rated as most important in Consultation, Mental Health Issues, and in Ethical scenarios. Competence was rated as most important in Crisis Interventions and personal character was rated as the least important overall.

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Melissa Coolong-Chaffin, Ph.D., Thesis Advisor

Date

*To my husband, Dakota Nichols, who has consistently supported me in my education and has inspired me to reach my goals. Thank you for your continuous support, love, and guidance.*

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## Chapter I

### **Introduction**

The role of school psychologists in schools has transformed over the years. In the 1940s school psychologists primarily administered assessments to determine intelligence quotients (IQ) and academic achievement scores for eligibility purposes to place students in special education (Fagan, 2008). School psychologists were seen as the “gatekeepers” for access to special education as a result. As the need for special education services increased, they were seen as the experts in the selection and placement of children in those programs. In the 1960s and 1970s school psychologists wanted to spend less time giving assessments and more time on prevention of student learning problems and mental health consultation (Abramowitz, 1981). They did not have much interaction with general education and took on the main role of assessing students. Even now, there is still a desire for role change in the profession of school psychology. As it has been for many years, current roles are still focused on assessment and mainly serving special education students. Research shows that if school psychologists are able to engage in a broader role within their profession, they can contribute more effectively to positive outcomes for children and their families (NASP 2010, 2015, 2020). The NASP Practice Model calls for school psychologists to transition from their traditional assessment role to a more comprehensive service delivery model (NASP, 2020). With this promotion, school psychologists are seeking systems-level leadership opportunities (Walcott, McNamara, Hyson, & Charvat, 2018).

With the development of response to intervention, (RTI) school psychologists are hopeful for more of a role change within the education system (Smedley, & Wheeler,

2009). RTI is a multitiered service delivery that allows school psychologists to use skills such as data collection and analysis, consultation and collaboration, academic and behavioral interventions, crisis prevention, and systems organization (Smedley, & Wheeler, 2009). School psychologists want to be able utilize their expertise in areas of mental health, learning, and behavior to effectively advocate for children. A common goal is helping students succeed emotionally, socially, behaviorally, and academically using evidence-based decision-making (National Association of School Psychologists, 2020).

A survey of school psychologists regarding their roles, found that the newer roles of school psychologists require leadership skills (Smedley and Wheeler, 2009). Some examples of newer roles in the school psychology profession are being a resource to assist in coordinating mental health services, serving as a behavior intervention specialist, providing crisis consultation, and working on preventative programs (Smedley & Wheeler, 2009). These newer roles call for school psychologists to move from the position of “helper” to a “leader” within the educational system (Smedley & Wheeler, 2009, p. 219).

### **National Association of School Psychology (NASP)**

Despite the need for leadership skills given expanded roles, the national school psychology standards for professional practice have overlooked the role of leadership. In 1969, the National Association of School Psychology (NASP) was created to bring together school psychologists around the country to form a common identity within the profession (National Association of School Psychologists, 2020). More recently, in order to implement prevention services in schools, NASP created a Practice Model that

includes 10 domains of professional practice within the *NASP Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists*, which all school psychologists must attend to (Proctor & Meyers, 2014). The formation of NASP created standards for the preparation of school psychologists' professional competence (knowledge and skills) across all 10 domains of school psychology (National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). Graduate programs that are approved by NASP must adopt the 10 domains to ensure competency before beginning the professional practice in schools and other settings. The domains are as follows: (1) data-based decision making, (2) consultation and collaboration, (3) academic interventions and instructional supports, (4) mental and behavioral health services and interventions, (5) school-wide practices to promote learning, (6) services to promote safe and supportive schools, (7) family, school, and community collaboration, (8) equitable practices for diverse student populations, (9) research and evidence-based practices, and (10) legal, ethical, and professional practice (National Association of School Psychologists, 2020).

These standards imply that school psychologists are leaders when implementing system-change efforts as well as when advocating for children in schools. As school psychologists need to gain competency in all domains, it is important for them to develop leadership knowledge and skills to be effective. To this end, a leadership model specific to school psychology would be beneficial for training and practice (Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & James, 2010).

### **Leadership Models within the Business Literature**

As the research relating to leadership in school psychology is scarce, it is important to review existing models of leadership that could be applied to the discipline

of school psychology. In their examination of historical trends in leadership research, Antonakis, Cianciolo, and Sternberg (2004) propose eight areas of leadership (i.e., Behavioral, Contingency, Skeptic, Contextual (or situational), Relational, Trait, Information Processing, and Transformational) and identified the last four as having the most research over the past two decades. The leadership models chosen for Augstyniak's (2014) analysis were Trait, Information Processing, and Transformational leadership. The current study focuses on a review of the following models of leadership:

Transformational, Transactional, Trait, Contingency, and Distributed, Situational. These leadership models were chosen because Shriberg et al. (2010) discussed that his survey results matched best with the Transformational or Transactional models and Augustanyk (2014) reviewed Trait and Transformation Models based on their research. The models of Distributed, Contingency, and Situational were chosen because of how the researcher perceived them to be able to be applied to school psychology.

**Transformational/Transactional model.** Two of the most researched and supported modern leadership theories include the transactional leadership model and the transformational leadership model (Judge, & Piccolo, 2004; Kelloway, Turner, Barling, & Loughlin, 2012). These two models are very similar. The main difference between the two models is what their leaders and followers offer to one another. Transactional leadership is rewards-based while transformational leadership is value-based.

Transformational leadership is described as an interpersonal style and exchange process that emphasizes change through the use of inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and empowerment (Lim & Ployhart, 2004). These changes result in followers' trust, performing behaviors that contribute to the achievement of organizational goals and

motivation to perform at high levels (Bass, 1985). They also use a self-confident and enthusiastic approach to influence their followers (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

Bass and Avolio (2004) describe Transactional leadership as a style that focuses on setting standards and defining agreements to achieve goals and objectives in exchanges between leaders and followers. This occurs when a leader motivates followers by exchanging rewards for good performance and reprimanding mistakes for poor performance (Bass, 1985). Often, transformational leaders engage in transactional leadership but actually encourage followers to support them and put aside self-interest for the organization. Bass (1990) found that many times transactional leaders only intervene when standards for specific tasks have not been met.

Characteristics of transactional leaders, according to Bass (1990) are as follows: providing contingent rewards, management by exception (active), management by exception (passive), and *Laissez-faire*. Management by exception (passive) includes situations in which a leader only intervenes when standards are not being met. On the other hand, management by exception (active) is when the leader watches for deviations from rules and takes corrective action when necessary. In sum, active leaders monitor follower behaviors, anticipate problems, and take corrective action *before* the behavior becomes a larger issue. Passive leaders wait until behaviors have caused larger issues before taking action (Judge, et.al 2004).

In a meta-analysis Judge, et.al (2004) found that the transformational leadership generalizes across study settings including business professionals, college students, and the military. This finding is encouraging, as we may also be able to generalize this model into school settings. Also, they found that transformational and transactional leadership

are so similar, it makes it difficult to separate the two. Similarly, Bass (1990) viewed these two leadership styles as different but not mutually exclusive.

**Trait model.** Earlier studies of leadership identified personal traits that distinguish leaders from nonleaders (Stogdill, & Bass, 1981; Antonakis, & Day, 2012; Augustyniak, 2014). Traits that have the strongest relationship to effective leadership are intelligence, self-confidence, stress tolerance, emotional maturity, dominance, and energy/activity levels (Bass, 1990). There has been controversy when it comes to the trait model of leadership. Problems surround the question of whether the individual possesses a specific trait before he/she is in a leadership position, or after (Bass, 1990). Also, the fact that individual differences are shaped by settings, developmental status, and experiences (Augustyniak, 2014) leads us to the question of whether leadership is situational or constant across settings. In fact, Breevaart, et.al., (2016) point out that leadership behaviors may fluctuate within individuals from day to day. For example, an individual who has the trait of high tolerance for stress may exhibit stress-related behaviors on one day but not another. It is unlikely that an individual's characteristics stay constant as situations change as well as day-by-day changes. The trait model approach to leadership ignores how situational variables influences how effective a leader is at any given time.

**Contingency Model.** Effectiveness of leadership is determined by the characteristic of the leader and situations they experience. Fred Fiedler (1978) developed the contingency theory of leadership model. Similar to the trait model approach, the contingency theory recognizes that personal characteristics influence how effective a leader is. Fiedler identified two styles of leadership, relationship-oriented and task-

oriented, and proposed that all leaders are characterized by one style or another (George & Jones, 2002) and cannot waiver between them.

Relationship-oriented leaders want to get along with and to be liked by everybody. This type of leader prioritizes relationships with followers ahead of task completion; this is the opposite for task-oriented leaders. Task-oriented leaders want their followers to perform at a high standard and complete their tasks assigned (George & Jones, 2002). According to Fiedler, whichever leadership style an individual embodies is a personal trait or characteristic of that individual. He states that leader style cannot easily be changed within a situation – the individual will use the same style of leadership in all situations (George & Jones, 2002).

Fiedler emphasizes that when a situation is “favorable” the leader will have an easier time guiding followers. There are three characteristics of a situation that determine favorability: leader-member relations, task structure, and position power (George & Jones, 2002; Hill, 1969). Leader-member relations are the relationships between the leader and members. Task structure is when the work assigned to members of an organization is explicitly defined to limit confusion. Position power is the amount of formal authority that a leader encompasses. When leader-member relations, task structure, and position power are high the situation is viewed as more favorable for the leader and easier to influence followers (George & Jones, 2002; Hill, 1969).

In sum, Fiedler views leadership styles as stagnant and leaders cannot be taught to be one style of leadership over the other. Factors that influence the effectiveness of a leader are favorable situations and the characteristic of style of the leader (George & Jones, 2002; Hill, 1969). It should be noted that in varying situations both styles of

leadership might be successful or fail. In other words, one style of leadership will not be successful in all situations (Hill, 1969).

**Distributed Leadership.** Among the many terms used to describe this leadership model the terms distributed and shared are the most popular. Distributed leadership takes the focus off of traits and behaviors of leaders to a collective view of leadership where there are multiple individuals who take part (Bolden, 2011). This type of leadership is viewed as a group activity that works through and within relationships (Bennett et al., 2003). As distributed leadership recognizes multiple individuals involved in leadership (called ‘leader-plus’), it also recognizes that interactions between those individuals and the situations within which leadership action occurs (Fitzsimons, et.al., 2011). Spillane et.al (2006) identified three types of distributed leadership: collaborated, collective, and coordinated distribution. Collaborated leadership involves the practice to be stretched out among two or more individuals. Collective leadership is similar to collaborated but the individuals work separately but interdependently. Co-ordinated leadership involves practice performed in a sequence (Fitzsimons, et.al., 2011). The advantage of distributed leadership is that the stress within an organization is spread among the individuals within it, therefore allowing for all to work towards a common goal.

**Situational Leadership.** The Situational Leadership Theory was developed by Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey in 1969. They believed that there is no “one size fits all” leadership style. Instead, the leader must adapt to the environment/situation they are in. The model focuses on the notion that the leader needs to select the way that best suits in a particular situation depending upon the readiness levels of followers. The model describes the followers’ readiness as their ability, willingness, and the level they assume



responsibility to perform organizational tasks (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977).

The situational leadership model of Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard describes telling, selling, participating, and delegating behaviors of a leader (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969). Within the Telling Style this is when the follower is unable and unwilling. The follower lacks capability and is unwilling or is insecure about the tasks. In this case more emphasis is on task and less on relationship (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969). Within the Selling Style the follower is unable but willing. In this situation the follower lacks capability but is willing or confident to perform the task. In this case, there is a high relationship and high task consideration to facilitate performance. Within the Participating Style the follower is able but unwilling. The follower possesses capability but is unwilling or insecure about the tasks. In this case, there is a high relationship and low task consideration to facilitate performance. Finally in the Delegating Style the follower is able and willing. The follower possesses capability and is willing or confident about the tasks. In this case, there is less emphasis is on task and relations (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969). Overall, the leaders must be flexible and adjust their styles according to the willingness and capacity of the followers.

### **Defining Leadership**

School psychologists have many roles within a school that require them to be effective leaders. Leadership roles of school psychologists pertain to high-stakes decision-making regarding testing and prevention, improving social and emotional climates in schools, professional development, collaboration with professionals and organizations, and developing research-based systems-level change initiatives (Shriberg, D., et. al., 2010; & Ross, M. R., et. al., 2002).

Leadership is a complex construct and there is no universal definition that applies to all disciplines. One field that has examined leadership extensively is business. Most researchers within the field of business would agree that leadership can be broadly defined as an influencing process and the outcomes of that process that occurs between a leader and followers (Antonakis, Cianciolo, & Sternberg, 2004). Leadership can also be defined as how the influencing process is explained by the leader's characteristics and behaviors, the follower's perceptions of the leader, and the context within which the process occurs. Even though there are many definitions of leadership that are discipline-specific in an area such as business, none of those definitions can be directly applied to the practice of school psychology (Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & James, 2010).

As leadership has been a neglected topic within the profession of school psychology, Shriberg, et.al (2010) attempted to identify a leadership model from the business literature that aligns with NASP leaders' perceptions of school psychologists' leadership. In a qualitative analysis, these researchers attempted to define a model of leadership that could be adopted in the profession of school psychology (Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & James, 2010). They received responses from 89 school psychology leaders to define leadership as it applies to school psychology and personal characteristics of school psychologists that would likely exhibit effective leadership. The survey contained four qualitative questions: 1) list the personal qualities, attributes, or characteristics they believed were associated with school psychologists who exhibit leadership in their work, 2) list the specific skills or competencies that they believed were associated with school psychologists who exhibit leadership in their work, 3) provide your own definition of leadership as it applies to the practice of school psychology, and

4) are there certain topics/areas/situations where leadership is typically expected from school psychologists? School psychologists reported the top five *skills* needed in the areas of leadership were facilitation of change/promoting positive outcomes, competence, vision, team collaboration, and persuasion/influence. Facilitation of change/promoting positive outcomes describes the way in which a school psychologist pulls information from a variety of sources and works with many people to advance the best outcomes for kids. Competence is the understanding a school psychologist has about different aspects of the profession and systems. Vision is the school psychologists big picture of their perception. Team collaboration relates to how well the school psychologist works with others and persuasion/influence refers to the way in which the school psychologist communicates ideas and knowledge to others to aid their understanding (Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & James, 2010).

The top five *personality characteristics* necessary for effective leadership were competence, team skills, knowledge/expertise, personal character, and interpersonal skills (Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & James, 2010). Competence is defined as performing job duties well, team skills are being able to collaborate and work well with others, knowledge/expertise is defined as an individual who understands and is familiar with important aspects of the profession, personal character is exhibiting follow through and having integrity, and interpersonal skills are having good communication to discuss with other professionals effectively (Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & James, 2010).

Topics, areas, and situations in which school psychologists are expected to show effective leadership was also a question on their survey. The most common responses included classroom/academic interventions, behavioral interventions, crisis interventions,

knowledge of special education law and processes, assessment/evaluation, and mental health issues (Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & James, 2010). This study allowed us to have an understanding of what leadership should look like, characteristics of a leader, and the different situations in which psychologists are required to use leadership skills.

It's important for school psychologists to have a model of leadership to follow, but it is possible that one sole model of leadership may not fit with this profession. Another contribution to the literature focused on the perceptions of leadership practices of school psychologists. The study surveyed school psychologists, administrators, and teachers in an attempt to understand each stakeholder's perception of the school psychologist's leadership practices (Augustyniak, Kilanowski, & Privitera, 2016). Their initial search looked at transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership models. Transformational leadership focuses on the connections formed between leaders and followers with emphasis on emotions and shared values. Transactional leadership is a style that emphasizes short-term goals and task management in exchange between leaders, colleagues, and followers. Passive-avoidant leadership is a less engaged approach to leadership where leaders tend to shy away from decision-making in a laissez-faire fashion (Augustyniak, Kilanowski, & Privitera, 2016).

The results indicated that dependent on the stakeholder responding, each had differing perceptions of the school psychologist's leadership. Teachers reported school psychologist's leadership mostly as passive-avoidant, school psychologists reported themselves as mostly exhibiting transformational leadership, and administrators reported school psychologists using transactional leadership. One possibility for the varied results is that many situational variables may affect school psychologists' leadership style. No

two schools or situations are the same. Effective school psychologists can adjust their leadership style to the environment. In order to understand which variables require which type of leadership, it is important to know the multiple variables that school psychologists may face.

### **Importance of Current Study**

School psychologists must provide services at the individual and systems-level within their school settings. They are available to all stakeholders (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents, students) within the school system and understand each group's needs. School psychologists are therefore well-poised to assume leadership positions within their schools (Ho, 2002; Ross et al., 2002, Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & James, 2010). *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice III (2006)* suggests that “there has never been a greater need for school psychologists to take leadership in ensuring quality mental health services for children” (p. 9). The literature reviewing a discipline-specific leadership model for school psychology is limited. This study aims to gain information from practicing school psychologists' perceptions of leadership characteristics to find a preexisting model of leadership that fits well with the perceptions.

This study presented school psychologists with ethical and neutral situational questions to identify whether certain leadership *characteristics* are more or less important based on the type of situation (e.g., assessment, academic intervention, crisis intervention, special education law, etc.). The purpose of this study is to add to the leadership literature towards creating a discipline-specific leadership model for school psychology in the future. It also explored which leadership characteristics are perceived

as most important in the actual practice of school psychology.

The following questions guided this study: Does the level of perceived importance of certain characteristics (e.g. competence, knowledge, team skills, etc.) differ when considering ethical situations compared to neutral situations? Which characteristics are most important to school psychologists in each domain (i.e. assessment, interventions, etc.) of the profession?

It was hypothesized that the leadership characteristic of competence will be rated as more important in all of the six domains based on previous research results from Schriberg et. al (2010). Competence is extremely important as school psychologists are called upon for their understanding and explanations in many areas of practice. It was also hypothesized that the leadership characteristic knowledge/expertise will be rated as most important in ethical situations. It becomes increasingly important to be knowledgeable and have expertise regarding many aspects of the profession, but especially when challenged with ethical situations. School psychologists are often placed in difficult scenarios which challenge them. It becomes vital to know laws, processes, and procedures fully especially when facing ethically challenging situations. Finally, it was hypothesized that interpersonal skills will be rated as most important in neutral situations as many aspects of the profession involve collaboration and consultation with others. Within the NASP practice model consultation is emphasized numerous times. Consulting with other professionals is an everyday occurrence in the profession of school psychology and to be effective school psychologists must display impactful interpersonal skills.

## CHAPTER II

**Method****Participants**

Participants in this study were all members of the Wisconsin School Psychologist Association (WSPA). Ninety-eight members began participating in the survey, fifty-seven participants' data were removed as they did not fully complete the survey. Forty-four participants' responses were used for data analysis (4 males, 40 females) and all identified as Caucasian. Ten of the participants had a Master's degree, 27 participants had a Specialist Degree or equivalent, 4 had a Doctoral Degree, 2 participants were graduate students, and 1 was not currently practicing. The participants' primary work settings were described as: rural (20), suburban (13), urban (1), or other (3). The school psychologists' years of experience (Table 1), student-to-psychologist ratio (Table 2), and school-to-psychologist ratio (Table 3) was documented.

Table 1.

School Psychologist Years of Experience

Years of Experience	N
<1 year	7
2-5 years	6
6-9 years	8
10 + years	23

Table 2.

Student-to-School Psychologist Ratio

Student-to-Psychologist Ratio	N
500 Students or less	12
700 – 999 Students	15
1,000 – 1,999 Students	15
2,000 Students or more	2

Table 3.

School-to-School Psychologist Ratio

School-to-Psychologist Ratio	N
1 School	16
2 Schools	17
3 or more Schools	11

## Materials

The *School Psychology Leadership Survey (SPLS)* was created for this study (See Appendix A). The SPLS consisted of 24 situations common to school psychology practice involving twelve neutral situations and twelve situations involving ethical dilemmas in the areas of academic interventions, behavioral interventions, crisis interventions, assessment/evaluation, consultation, and mental health. These areas were chosen as they were determined to be the most common topics, areas, and situations in which school psychologists are expected to show effective leadership as identified by Shriberg et al. (2010).

For each situation, participants were asked to rate the importance (on a 7-point Likert scale where 1 was “Not at all Important” and 7 was “Extremely Important”) of five personality characteristics necessary for effective leadership. Leadership characteristics to be rated were competence, team skills, knowledge/expertise, personal character, and interpersonal skills. These characteristics were chosen as they were the top five rated as most important for school psychologists in the study discussed by Shriberg et al. (2010).

Before beginning the survey, the participants were given definitions of each of the characteristics. “Competence” was defined as performing job duties well, “team skills” was defined as being able to collaborate and work well with others, “knowledge/expertise” was defined as an individual who understands and is familiar with important aspects of the profession, “personal character” was defined as exhibiting follow through and having integrity, and “interpersonal skills” was defined as having good communication to discuss with other professionals effectively (Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & James, 2010).



**Procedure**

In Spring 2018, the *School Psychology Leadership Survey (SPLS)* was emailed to all individuals who are practicing school psychologists who were also members of the Wisconsin School Psychologist Association (WSPA). Respondents were provided a Qualtrics link and directed to follow the directions to give consent to complete or opt out of the survey. The twenty-four scenarios were randomized through Qualtrics.

**Data Analysis**

The research design of this study is 6 x 2 repeated-measures/within-subjects design. All the participants' responses were placed into each of the six domains of practice (i.e., Assessment/Evaluation, Consultation/Collaboration, Academic Interventions, Crisis Interventions, Behavior Interventions, and Mental Health Issues), these six domains are within-subjects levels. All the participants' responses were also placed into each of the ethical and neutral scenarios (two within-subject levels). Each of the participants were presented with the same situations and were asked to rate importance of the same characteristics within neutral and ethical scenarios. A one-way repeated measures analyses evaluated whether mean scores differ across the six domains.

## CHAPTER III

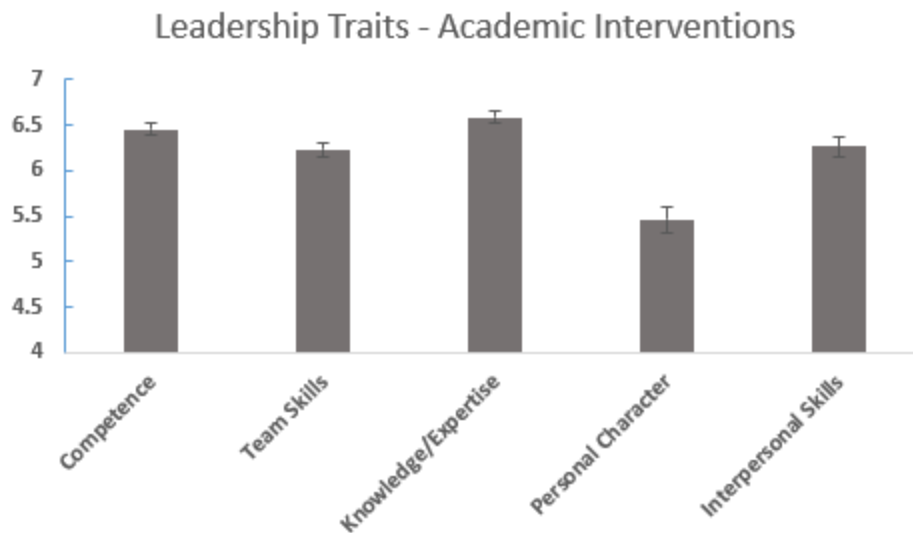
### Results

#### Academic Interventions Domain

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA indicated a significant within-subjects effect of the relative importance of leadership traits in the academic intervention domain. Assumptions of Mauchly's Test of Sphericity were violated and corrections via Greenhouse-Geisser were applied, indicating a significant main effect of leadership traits in the Academic Interventions domain,  $F(2.16, 95.08) = 31.21, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .42$ . Subsequent pairwise comparisons indicated that knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.59, SD = .40$ ) was rated as significantly more important within the Academic Interventions domain than were interpersonal skills ( $M = 6.27, SD = .72, p = .043$ ), team skills ( $M = 6.23, SD = .57, p = .001$ ), and personal character ( $M = 5.46, SD = .99, p < .001$ ). Pairwise comparisons also indicated that knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.59, SD = .40$ ) was rated as marginally more important than competence ( $M = 6.46, SD = .43, p = .033$ ). Pairwise comparisons also indicated that competence ( $M = 6.46, SD = .43, p = .033$ ) was rated as significantly more important than team skills ( $M = 6.23, SD = .57, p = 0.59$ ) and personal character ( $M = 5.46, SD = .99, p < .001$ ). Pairwise comparisons indicated that personal character ( $M = 5.46, SD = .99, p < .001$ ) was significantly less important overall in the area of Academic Interventions.

Figure 1.

Leadership Characteristics within the Academic Interventions domain.



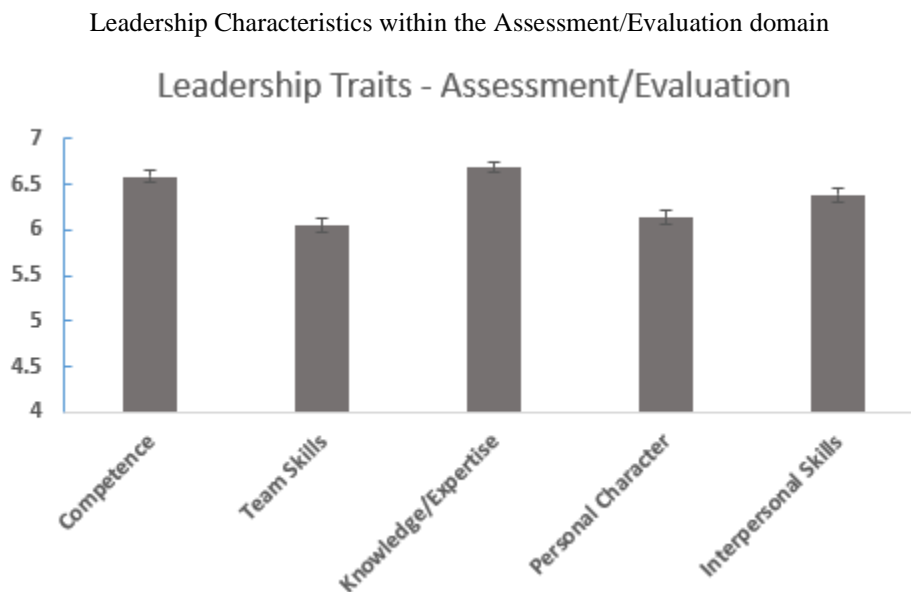
Note. Figure 1 displays the Means and Standard Error of Measurement for all characteristics within the Academic Intervention Domain.

### Assessment/Evaluation Domain

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA indicated a significant within-subjects effect of the relative importance of leadership traits in the Assessment domain. Assumptions of Mauchly's Test of Sphericity were violated and corrections via Greenhouse-Geisser were applied, indicating a significant main effect of leadership traits in the Assessment/Evaluation domain,  $F(3.10, 136.39) = 23.55, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .35$ . Subsequent pairwise comparisons indicated that knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.69, SD = .40$ ) was rated as significantly more important within the Assessment domain than interpersonal skills ( $M = 6.27, SD = .72, p = .002$ ), team skills ( $M = 6.23, SD = .57, p < .001$ ), and personal character ( $M = 5.46, SD = .99, p < .001$ ), but not more important than competence. Pairwise comparisons also indicated that personal character ( $M = 5.46, SD = .99, p < .001$ ) was rated as significantly less important than competence ( $M = 6.59, SD = .48, p < .001$ ), knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.69, SD = .40, p < .001$ ), and interpersonal

skills ( $M = 6.27$ ,  $SD = .72$ ,  $p = .019$ ) but not significantly less important than team skills ( $M = 6.23$ ,  $SD = .57$ ,  $p = 1.00$ ). Pairwise comparisons indicated that competence ( $M = 6.59$ ,  $SD = .48$ ,  $p < .001$ ) was rated as significantly more important than team skills ( $M = 6.23$ ,  $SD = .57$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and personal character ( $M = 5.46$ ,  $SD = .99$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but not knowledge/expertise and interpersonal skills.

Figure 2.



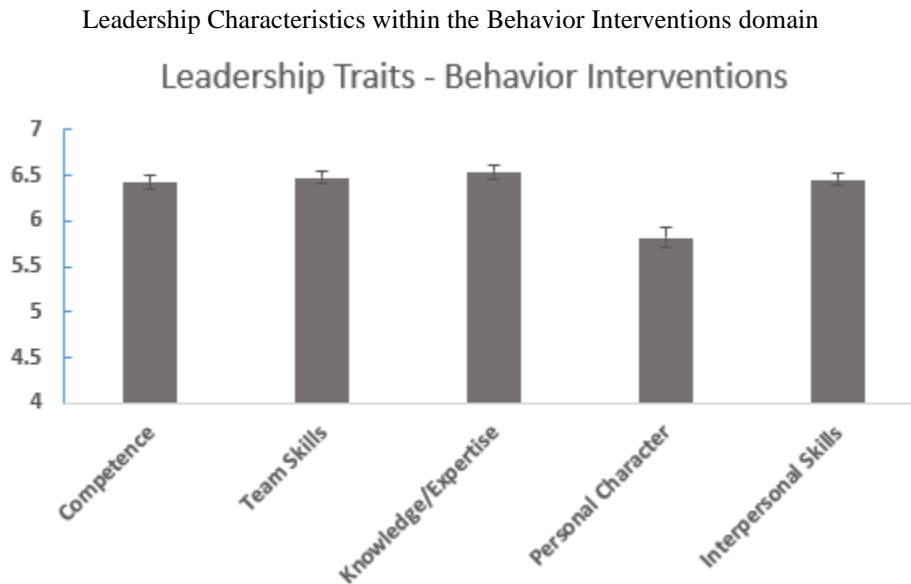
Note. Figure 2 displays the Means and Standard Error of Measurement for all characteristics within the Assessment/Evaluation domain.

### Behavior Interventions Domain

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA indicated a significant within-subjects effect of the relative importance of leadership traits in the Behavior Intervention domain. Assumptions of Mauchly's Test of Sphericity were violated and corrections via Greenhouse-Geisser were applied, indicating a significant main effect of leadership traits in the Behavior Intervention,  $F(2.40, 105.78) = 31.59$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .42$ . Subsequent pairwise comparisons indicated that personal character ( $M = 5.82$ ,  $SD = .70$ ) was rated as

significantly less important within the Behavior Intervention domain than all other areas including: competence ( $M = 6.42, SD = .49, p < .001$ ), team skills ( $M = 6.47, SD = .44, p = .000$ ), knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.54, SD = .48, p < .001$ ), and interpersonal skills ( $M = 6.46, SD = .50, p < .001$ ). There were no other significant differences.

Figure 3.



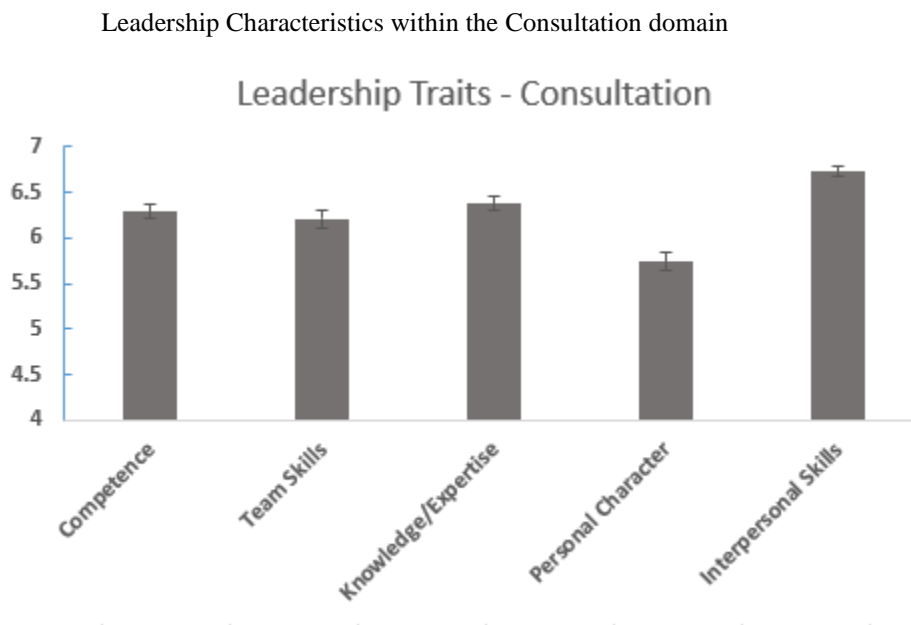
Note. Figure 3 displays the Means and Standard Error of Measurement for all characteristics within the Behavior Interventions domain.

### Consultation Domain

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA indicated a significant within-subjects effect of the relative importance of leadership traits in the Consultation domain. Assumptions of Mauchly's Test of Sphericity were violated and corrections via Greenhouse-Geisser were applied, indicating a significant main effect of leadership traits in the Consultation domain,  $F(3.12, 137.20) = 31.14, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = .41$ . Subsequent pairwise comparisons indicated that interpersonal skills ( $M = 6.73, SD = .39$ ) was rated as significantly more important within the Consultation domain than all other areas including: competence ( $M = 6.29, SD = .54, p < .001$ ), team skills ( $M = 6.21, SD = .68, p$

< .001), knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.38$ ,  $SD = .54$ ,  $p = .001$ ), and personal character ( $M = 5.74$ ,  $SD = .69$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Pairwise comparisons also indicated that knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.38$ ,  $SD = .54$ ,  $p < .001$ ), competence ( $M = 6.29$ ,  $SD = .54$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and team skills ( $M = 6.21$ ,  $SD = .68$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were all rated as significantly more important than personal character ( $M = 5.74$ ,  $SD = .69$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Figure 4.



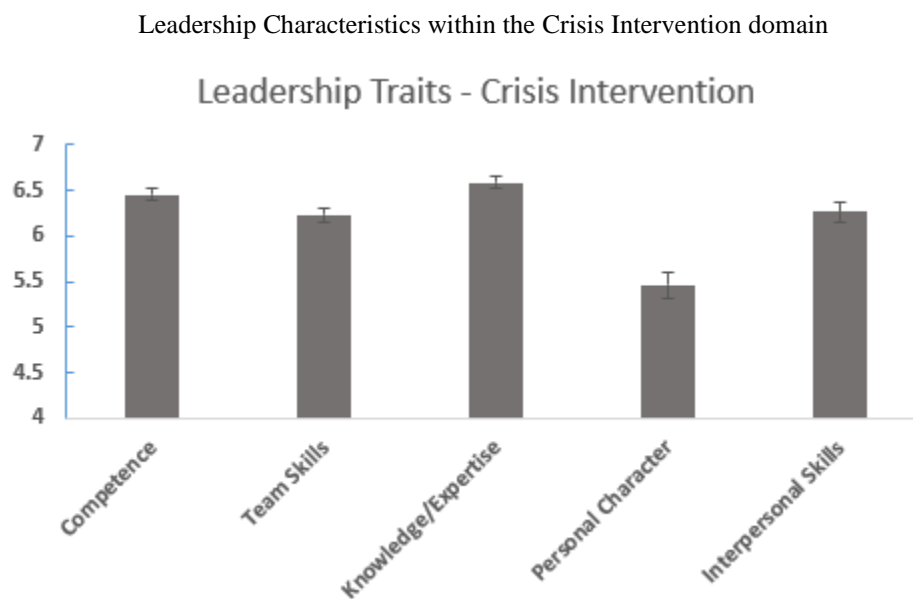
Note. Figure 4 displays the Means and Standard Error of Measurement for all characteristics within the Consultation domain.

### Crisis Intervention Domain

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA indicated a significant within-subjects effect of the relative importance of leadership traits in the Crisis Intervention domain. Assumptions of Mauchly's Test of Sphericity were violated and corrections via Greenhouse-Geisser were applied, indicating a significant main effect of leadership traits in the Crisis Intervention domain,  $F(3.35, 147.74) = 19.16$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .30$ . Subsequent pairwise comparisons indicated that interpersonal skills ( $M = 6.75$ ,  $SD = .56$ ) was rated as

significantly more important within the Crisis Intervention domain than team skills ( $M = 6.09, SD = .59, p < .001$ ) and personal character ( $M = 5.88, SD = .65, p < .001$ ). Personal character ( $M = 5.88, SD = .65$ ) was rated as significantly less important than knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.49, SD = .42, p < .001$ ) and competence ( $M = 6.41, SD = .52, p < .001$ ). Knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.49, SD = .42, p < .001$ ) was rated significantly more important than competence ( $M = 6.41, SD = .52, p < .001$ ). Competence ( $M = 6.41, SD = .52, p = .006$ ) was rated significantly more important than team skills ( $M = 6.09, SD = .59, p = .006$ ).

Figure 5.



Note. Figure 5 displays the Means and Standard Error of Measurement for all characteristics within the Crisis Intervention domain.

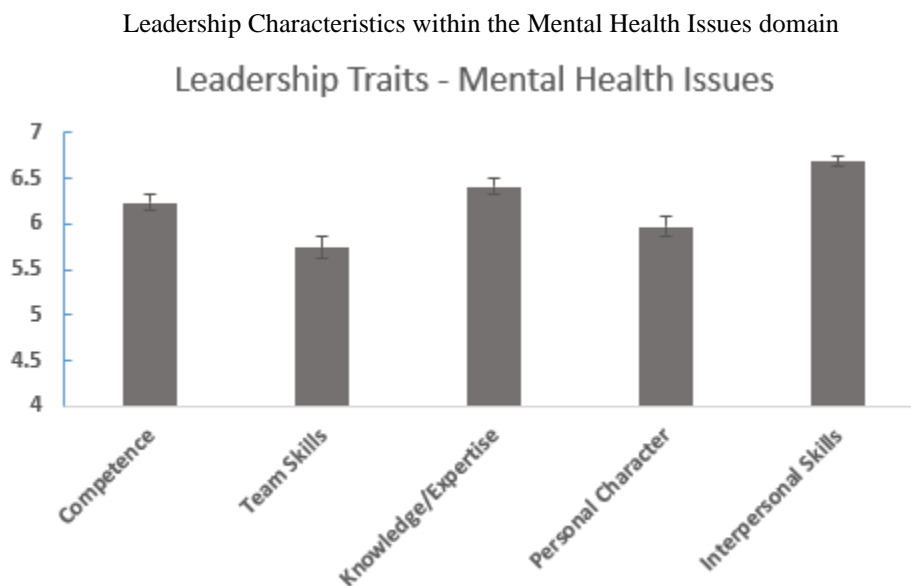
### **Mental Health Issues Domain**

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA indicated a significant within-subjects effect of the relative importance of leadership traits in the Mental Health Issues domain. Assumptions of Mauchly's Test of Sphericity were violated and corrections via Greenhouse-Geisser were applied, indicating a significant main effect of leadership traits

in the Mental Health Issues domain,  $F(2.92, 128.41) = 26.97, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .38$ .

Subsequent pairwise comparisons indicated that interpersonal skills ( $M = 6.69, SD = .39$ ) was rated as significantly more important within the Mental Health Issues domain than team skills ( $M = 5.73, SD = .81, p < .001$ ), personal character ( $M = 5.97, SD = .71, p < .001$ ), knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.41, SD = .58, p = .014$ ), and competence ( $M = 6.24, SD = .55, p < .001$ ).

Figure 6.



Note. Figure 6 displays the Means and Standard Error of Measurement for all characteristics within the Mental Health Issues domain.

### **Ethical Dilemmas versus Neutral Situations**

To analyze the role that types of situations (ie., ethical dilemmas vs. neutral situations) have on the perceived importance of the five leadership characteristics, a series of two one-way repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted. The first one-way repeated measures ANOVA evaluated the relative importance of personality characteristics for ethically challenging scenarios and the second evaluated the relative importance of personality characteristics in neutral scenarios. The decision to conduct



two separate one-way analyses rather than a 2 x 5 analysis was made on the basis of sample size and power for conducting the analysis.

**Ethically Challenging Scenarios.** A one-way repeated measures ANOVA indicated a significant within-subjects effect of the relative importance of leadership traits in the ethically challenging scenarios. Assumptions of Mauchly's Test of Sphericity were violated and corrections via Greenhouse-Geisser were applied, indicating a significant main effect of leadership traits was significant for ethical scenarios,  $F(2.77, 122.19) = 16.67, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .28$ . Subsequent pairwise comparisons indicated that interpersonal skills ( $M = 6.64, SD = .39$ ) was rated as significantly more important within ethically challenging scenarios than all other characteristics including: knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.36, SD = .46, p = .014$ ), team skills ( $M = 6.34, SD = .49, p = .002$ ), competence ( $M = 6.18, SD = .53, p < .001$ ), and personal character ( $M = 6.06, SD = .52, p = .002$ ). Knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.36, SD = .46$ ) was rated significantly more important than competence ( $M = 6.18, SD = .53, p = .004$ ) and personal character ( $M = 6.06, SD = .52, p = .001$ ). Team skills ( $M = 6.34, SD = .49$ ) was not rated significantly more important than competence ( $M = 6.18, SD = .53, p = 1.00$ ).

Figure 7. Importance of Characteristics within Ethically Challenging Scenarios

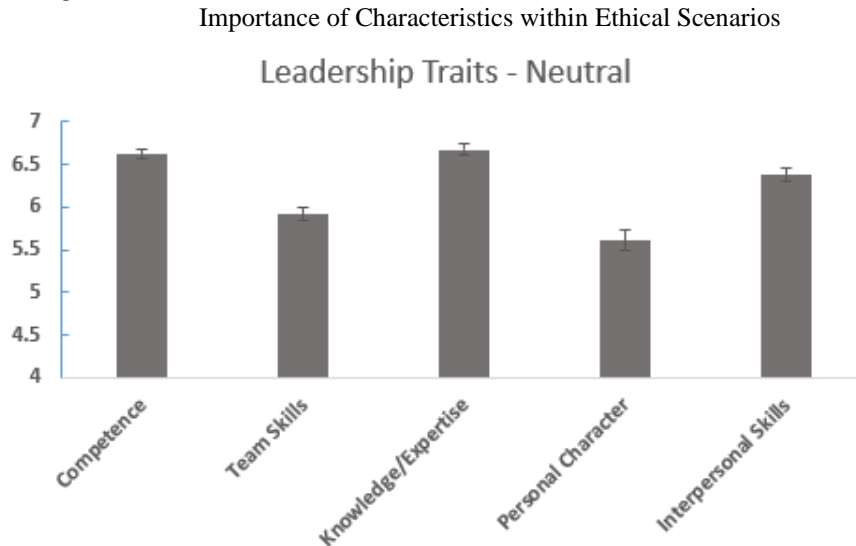


Note. Figure 7 displays the Means and Standard Error of Measurement for all characteristics within Ethical Scenarios.

**Neutral Scenarios.** A one-way repeated measures ANOVA indicated a significant within-subjects effect of the relative importance of leadership traits in the neutral scenarios. Assumptions of Mauchly's Test of Sphericity were violated and corrections via Greenhouse-Geisser were applied, indicating a significant main effect of leadership traits was significant for neutral scenarios,  $F(2.03, 89.15) = 63.93, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .59$ . Subsequent pairwise comparisons indicated that knowledge/expertise ( $M = 6.68, SD = .38$ ) was rated as significantly more important within neutral scenarios than interpersonal skills ( $M = 6.37, SD = .51, p < .001$ ), team skills ( $M = 5.92, SD = .57, p < .001$ ), personal character ( $M = 5.61, SD = .83, p < .001$ ), but not more than competence ( $M = 6.62, SD = .38, p = .390$ ). Competence ( $M = 6.62, SD = .38$ ) was also rated more important than interpersonal skills ( $M = 6.37, SD = .51, p = .002$ ), team skills ( $M = 5.92, SD = .57, p < .001$ ), personal character ( $M = 5.61, SD = .83, p < .001$ ), but not more than

knowledge/expertise. Team skills ( $M = 5.92$ ,  $SD = .57$ ,  $p < .001$ ) was rated as more important than personal character ( $M = 5.61$ ,  $SD = .83$ ,  $p = .025$ ).

Figure 8.



Note. Figure 8 displays the Means and Standard Error of Measurement for all characteristics within Neutral Scenarios.

### Observations

Further analyses of the data were completed to better understand the results.

When considering the data, the leadership characteristics that were perceived as the most important over other areas was knowledge/expertise and interpersonal skills.

Knowledge/expertise was rated as the most important characteristic in the domains of Academic Interventions and Assessment/Evaluation. Knowledge/expertise was also rated as most important in Neutral scenarios. Knowledge/expertise and competence were the most important in the Behavioral Interventions domain.

The second leadership characteristic rated as most important was interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills were rated as most important in the domains of Consultation, Mental Health Issues, Crisis Intervention, and within Ethical scenarios. The leadership characteristic that appeared to be rated as least important by school psychologists was

personal character overall. Personal character was rated as least important in all six domains of school psychology practice. Personal character was also rated as least important within Ethical and Neutral scenarios. The characteristics of team skills, competence, and interpersonal skills overall were rated similarly in each of the six domains as well as Ethical and Neutral scenarios.

## CHAPTER IV

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore whether certain leadership characteristics are perceived as more important by school psychologists in different domains of school psychology. Another purpose was to explore whether certain characteristics were perceived as more important in ethically challenging versus neutral situations. This study also sought to describe a leadership model for school psychologists to reference and add to the literature in creating a domain-specific leadership model.

Many aspects of a school psychologist's profession include collaboration with other professionals and families. Therefore, it was hypothesized that the leadership characteristic of competence would be rated as most important in all six domains. It was also hypothesized that the leadership characteristic knowledge/expertise would be rated as most important in ethically challenging situations as it becomes increasingly important to be knowledgeable about many aspects of the profession when challenged with ethical situations. Finally, it was hypothesized that interpersonal skills would be rated as most important in neutral situations as many aspects of the profession involve collaboration and consultation with others. As there is currently no domain-specific model of leadership for school psychologists, the present study adds to the research regarding leadership within this profession.

Contrary to the hypotheses, the leadership characteristic of knowledge/expertise was rated as the most important characteristic in the domains of Academic Interventions and Assessment/Evaluation. Knowledge/expertise was also rated as most important in Neutral scenarios. The characteristic of interpersonal skills was rated as most important

in the domains of Consultation, Mental Health Issues, and within Ethical scenarios. The leadership characteristic of competence was rated as most important in the Crisis Intervention domain. Overall, personal character was rated as the least important characteristic in all domains.

Compared to the Shriberg et al. (2010) study, results were somewhat different. Their study asked participants to answer an open-ended question regarding what personal qualities, attributes, or characteristics they associate with school psychologists who exhibit leadership in their work. The most common characteristics in order were competence, team skills, knowledge/expertise, personal character, and interpersonal skills. In the current study, knowledge/expertise and interpersonal skills were rated as the most important characteristics.

Considering the nature of the profession, it makes sense that knowledge/expertise was the leadership characteristic that was rated as most important in many domains of practice as well as the Neutral scenarios. Some examples of roles in the school psychology profession are being a resource to assist in coordinating mental health services, as a behavior intervention specialist, providing crisis consultation, and working on preventative programs (Smedley & Wheeler, 2009). School psychologists also have traditionally been involved with evaluating students for special education which includes having a broad understanding of assessment/evaluation tools and special education laws/processes. Each of these areas within the practice requires the school psychologist to have a comprehensive understanding of each to provide sufficient support.

It also is not surprising that the leadership characteristic of interpersonal skills was perceived as most important in the domains of Consultation, Mental Health Issues,

and within Ethical scenarios. Within the NASP practice model there are two standards that focus on working with others: consultation and collaboration and family, school, and community collaboration (National Association of School Psychologists, 2020).

Interpersonal skills are important, but they become even more important when consulting with others as mental health and ethical issues are involved. As situations within the profession become more complex the skills needed to interact with others effectively such as listening, collaboration, nonverbal communication, and respect become increasingly more important to provide effective support.

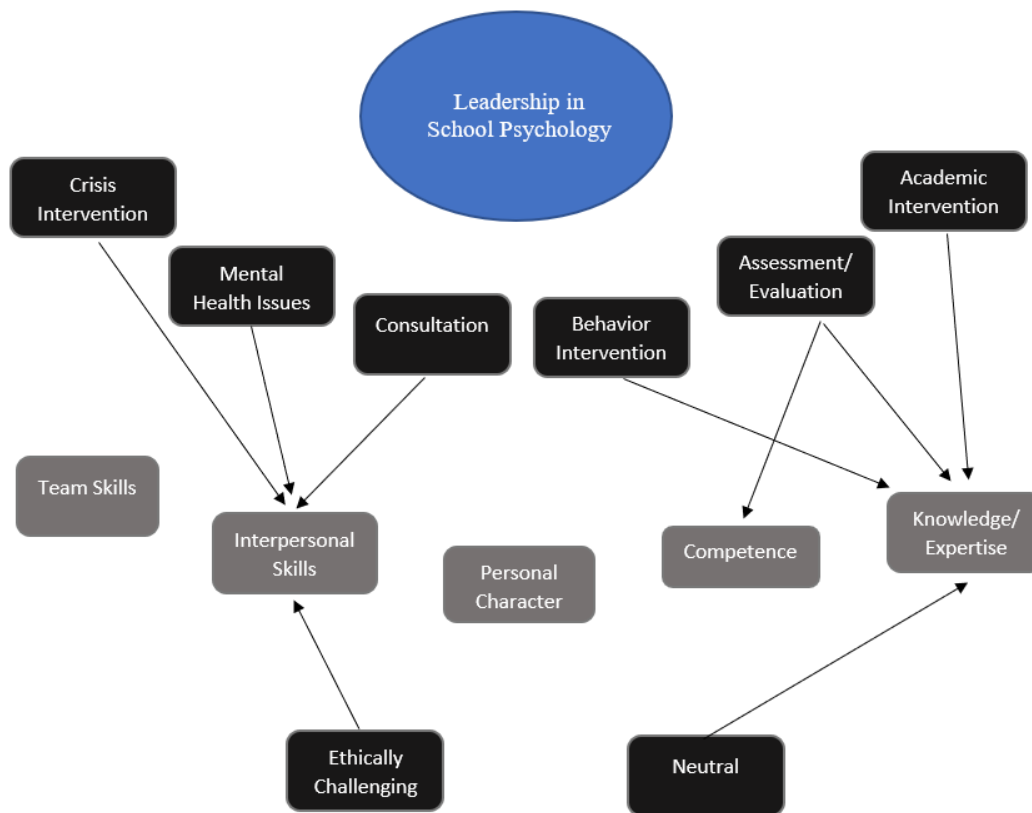
One possibility for the varied results is that many situational variables affect school psychologists' leadership style. No two schools or situations are the same. Effective school psychologists can adjust their leadership style to the environment. In order to understand which variables require which type of leadership, it is important to know the multiple variables that school psychologists may face. Such variables could include the number of resources available, engagement/cooperation of parents, follower readiness, personality factors of administrators, teachers, and students, and the situation as a whole. The notion that leaders must adjust dependent on the situation is researched within the business literature and is called situational leadership.

The Situational Leadership Theory developed by Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey focuses on the notion that there is no "one size fits all" leadership style. Instead, the leader must adapt to the environment/situation they are in. Based on the results of the survey, Situational Leadership seems to be most fitting for school psychologists as the profession includes a wide variety of situations that call for differing types of leadership. School psychologists need to be flexible and able to adapt to the situation that they face

and adapt their leadership style. The leaders must be flexible and adjust their styles according to the willingness and capacity of the followers. Figure 9 depicts the leadership characteristics in which school psychologists perceived as most important within each domain of practice as well as in ethically challenging and neutral scenarios. School psychologists must adapt their leadership style to match the developmental level of the follower(s) they are trying to influence as well as to the situation they are put in. Leaders must adapt their leadership style based on changes in any situation. In many areas of a school psychologist profession there is a lot of teaching, building relationships, and providing examples of competency in subtle ways. Based on the results of the survey, Situational Leadership seems to be a theory that would fit well within the profession.

Figure 9.

*Leadership in School Psychology*



*Note.* Figure 9 displays the leadership characteristics in which school psychologists perceived as most important within each domain of practice as well as in ethically challenging and neutral scenarios.



Several aspects of the study need to be examined when considering the results of this study. The following sections will discuss how the current study relates to research on leadership models, limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

**Sample Limitations.** Power analyses were conducted with GPower to determine the needed sample size to have an 80% likelihood of finding a true effect of medium-small effect size (One-way ANOVAS) at the  $p = .05$  significance level. Based on the analyses, the study needed to have about 305 participants. The current study received a total of ninety-eight responses but only forty-four participants' responses were able to be used for data analysis due to incomplete responses. The sample size is small and inadequate to be confident in the results of the study.

Another issue with the sample is that the demographic characteristics of the participants did not vary. Overall, there were 40 females and 4 males who participated fully in the study. These participants are all Caucasian, work in Wisconsin, and are part of the Wisconsin School Psychologist Association (WSPA). The lack of varying demographics poses the question of whether the results can be generalized to other states or countries. Because the sample size in this study is so small it is difficult to conclude that the leadership characteristics deemed as most important relate to other parts of the country. Future research should expand the sample size by sending the survey to a larger sample of school psychologists such as those who are members of the National Association of School Psychology (NASP). It would be interesting to explore whether results with a larger, more diverse sample size would produce similar results.

**Design Problems.** A repeated measures design was used as this analysis allowed the same participants to experience every situation. This removed variance in scores that is due to individual differences. While the use of a repeated measures design has positives it also poses additional problems. One issue that needed to be considered is that of order effects. To combat the issue of order effects the researcher randomized the questions provided to the participants. Another issue with repeated measures designs is that of sensitization. Each participant was required to respond to a total of 24 situations. This is an issue as the participants may have tried to answer in a way to appease the researcher's expectations instead of their true ratings.

**Measure Limitations.** As the School Psychology Leadership Survey (SPLS) was newly developed for this study, previous evaluation of reliability and validity of the tool has not been completed. The domains and characteristics were chosen as they were determined to be the most common topics, areas, and situations in which school psychologists are expected to show effective leadership as identified by Shriberg et al. (2010). The survey was also lengthy as each participant was required to respond to 24 situations and to rate 5 characteristics for each situation. This is an issue because the survey took an average of thirty minutes for each participant to complete. Many participants responses had to be thrown out as they did not finish the complete survey.

Future research should explore other measures that are shorter and have established reliability and validity. This is important to be able to be more confident in the results. The School Psychology Leadership Survey (SPLS) was created by the researchers based off of other study's results that determined what the most important leadership characteristics and situations are in the profession.

## **Implications**

The findings of the current study are important for the profession of school psychology, specifically, in determining or creating a domain-specific leadership model for school psychologists. First, the results indicate that leadership characteristics that are perceived as most important depend on the topic, situation, and context that the school psychologist is in. The results also show that situations that are ethically challenging call for different leadership characteristics than common, everyday situations. However, limitations discussed highlight key variables of importance in future research focusing on leadership in school psychology. As a school psychologist it would be helpful to know which leadership characteristics or style is best within certain situations. This will be a challenge as there are many variables to consider.

The current study also highlights the need to have a measure that is not as lengthy and that has established reliability and validity. It is possible that the SPLS is not encompassing the most relevant situations for school psychologists across the country. Previous literature has primarily focused on determining which situations and leadership characteristics are most important for school psychologists.

Lastly, the current study provides a basis to adding to the leadership literature specific to school psychology. It is important for a domain-specific leadership model to be established for school psychologists as the profession naturally puts them in a leadership position. This study addresses the research gap regarding leadership in school psychology. More research regarding this topic is needed.

## CHAPTER V

### Summary

While the topic of leadership has been heavily established and researched within the business literature, there is a gap in the research regarding leadership in the profession of school psychology. The focus of this study was to add to the leadership literature towards creating a discipline-specific leadership model for school psychology in the future. It also intended to help explore which leadership characteristics are perceived as most important in the actual practice of school psychology dependent on different domains of practice.

The following questions guided this study: Does the level of importance of certain characteristics (e.g. competence, knowledge, team skills, etc.) differ in ethical situations compared to neutral situations? Which characteristics are most important to school psychologists in each domain (i.e. assessment, interventions, etc) of the profession? It was hypothesized that the leadership characteristic of competence would be rated as more important in all six domains. It was also hypothesized that the leadership characteristic knowledge/expertise would be rated as most important in ethical situations as it becomes increasingly important to be knowledgeable about many aspects of the profession when challenged with ethical situations. Finally, it was hypothesized that interpersonal skills would be rated as most important in neutral situations as many aspects of the profession involve collaboration and consultation with others.

Results indicated that the leadership characteristic of knowledge/expertise was rated as the most important characteristic in the domains of Academic Interventions, Assessment/Evaluation, and Behavioral Interventions. Knowledge/expertise was also

rated as most important in Neutral scenarios. The characteristic of interpersonal skills was rated as most important in the domains of Consultation, Mental Health Issues, and within Ethical scenarios. The leadership characteristic of competence was rated as most important in the Crisis Intervention domain. Overall, personal character was rated as the least important characteristic in all domains. Limitations of the study assist in further understanding the results. Future research should expand the sample size by sending the survey to a larger sample of school psychologists such as those who are members of the National Association of School Psychology (NASP). It would be interesting to explore whether results with a larger, more diverse sample size would produce similar results.

Future research should explore other measures that are shorter and have established reliability and validity. This is important to be able to be more confident in the results. The School Psychology Leadership Survey (SPLS) was created by the researchers based off of other study's results that determined what the most important leadership characteristics and situations are in the profession.

As newer roles call for school psychologists to move from the position of "helper" to a "leader", it has become increasingly important for there to be a domain-specific leadership model for the profession of school psychology (Smedley & Wheeler, 2009, p. 219). Even though there are many definitions of leadership that are discipline-specific in other domains such as business, none of those definitions can be directly applied to the practice of school psychology (Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & James, 2010). Leadership has unfortunately been a neglected topic within the profession but the need for school psychologists to act as leaders continues to increase. This study's results add to the gap in literature regarding leadership.

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## APPENDICES

### School Psychology Leadership Survey

1. What is your gender? Mark your response.  
 Male       Self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Female       Prefer not to answer       Non-binary
2. Please specify your Ethnicity: Mark your response  
 White  
 Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin  
 Black or African American  
 Asian/Pacific Islander  
 Other (please indicate): \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the highest degree you have earned? Mark all that apply.  
 Master's Degree  
 Specialist Degree or equivalent  
 Doctorate Degree  
 Other (please indicate): \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your primary work setting as a school psychologist? Mark all that apply.  
 Rural  
 Urban  
 Suburban  
 Other (please indicate): \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many years of experience do you have as a practicing school psychologist?  
 Mark response.  
 Less than 1 year  
 1 – 3 years  
 4 – 7 years  
 8 – 10 years  
 10 years or more
6. What grade level(s) do you primarily serve? Mark all that apply.  
 Early Childhood Center       Middle School  
 Head Start       Junior High  
 Preschool       High School  
 Elementary School       Other: \_\_\_\_\_
7. What your student-to-psychologist ratio? Mark response.  
 500 students or less  
 600 – 999 students  
 1,000 – 1,999 students  
 2,000 students or more
8. How many schools do you serve? Mark response.  
 1 School  
 2 Schools  
 3 or more schools

Listed below are definitions for leadership as well as characteristics and qualities of a leader. Please refer back to the definitions throughout the survey if needed.

**Leadership** defines an individual who facilitates change through the use of teams and systems in schools to promote positive outcomes for student success.

**Team skills** include effectively and clearly communicating with a group, which involves conflict resolution, collaboration, and participating for the good of the group/system.

**Knowledge/Expertise** involves the information and skills acquired through experience and training to perform at high level.

**Competence** is the possession of a required skill, knowledge, or qualification and the ability to do something successfully and efficiently.

**Interpersonal Skills** are the skills needed to interact with others effectively such as listening, collaboration, nonverbal communication, and respect.

**Personal Character** involves exhibiting follow through, having integrity, and continuing a task until it is completed.



2. Instead of requesting for an extension of the 90-day evaluation period, you are asked to change the dates on records to meet the original date.
3. As the school psychologist you fill the role of an administrator/Local Educational Agent (LEA) in evaluation and individualized educational plan (IEP) meetings.
4. A special education teacher requests that you explain the procedure of due process in a case involving a disciplinary suspension and special education placement.
5. The general education teacher is not willing to provide instruction to a student in his least restrictive environment (LRE) after qualifying under the category Emotional/Behavioral Disability (EBD).
6. You are asked to use the same Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) for all students who have outbursts in class.
7. You are asked to conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) for a student who is throwing frequent tantrums in class.
8. You lead school-wide data meetings to analyze behavioral data and discuss students within each tier of supports. These meetings include members such as general education and special education teachers, the school counselor, and principal.
9. A child's teacher resorts to blaming academic challenges solely on the student's lack of motivation and is unwilling to consider ecological explanations.
10. First grade students who perform below benchmark on oral reading fluency screeners are placed in a reading comprehension intervention.
11. You are responsible for assisting teachers in collecting baseline data, setting rate of improvement goals, and analyzing progress-monitoring data for all academic interventions.
12. You are asked to research evidence-based interventions that target improving phonics skills and to present the advantages and disadvantages of each intervention.
13. The principal does not feel that it is necessary to practice the newly implemented, school-wide crisis plan in case of an intruder.
14. Instead of following the crisis intervention plan the principal resorts to calling the police on students who have behavioral outbursts of destroying classroom property.
15. You are responsible for creating a crisis intervention plan for a student who threatens to self-harm.
16. A student is having an outburst consisting of wandering the halls, slamming doors, and yelling. Within the intervention plan, staff members are directed to use de-escalation techniques.

17. A private practitioner refuses to share previous psychological reports with the school when asked what assessments have been administered for a student under current evaluation for special education.
18. A teacher does not allow a student with significant anxiety to see you for counseling services without a prior appointment.
19. A student is referred to you after writing a paper for an assignment, which involved explicit details about suicidal thoughts and how to commit suicide.
20. A student comes to your office because the teacher is concerned about his withdrawal from participating in classes he used to enjoy.
21. In your effort to gather information regarding a child's academic and behavioral challenges in class, the student's teacher refuses to give you information about her previous instructional strategies.
22. A special education teacher refuses to discuss alternative strategies to effectively teach a student identified under Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
23. Parents of a student want to discuss what it means now that their son has qualified for special education.
24. You are asked by a special education teacher to look over and guide with her evaluation plan for a student.