

Research Question Examples: Social Work

About this document

This PDF contains 52 **social work research question examples**, each quoted word for word from one of 24 completed dissertations and theses (2010–2026), grouped into 3 sections. Each question links to the thesis that asked it, so you can read how it was answered. Use them to see what a well-formed social work research question looks like, then adapt the shape to your own study.

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Descriptive questions

These questions ask *what is happening*: how much, how often, or what kinds. They describe a situation rather than explain it.

1. What are the aims and objectives of Phuthanang Home Based Care?

Asked in: [Challenges faced by Phuthanang Home Based Care in providing care and training in Mankweng Township in the Limpopo Province](#) · Chenjerai Muwaniki · University of Limpopo · 2010

2. What are the existing services and training programmes offered by caregivers at Phuthanang Home Based Care?

Asked in: [Challenges faced by Phuthanang Home Based Care in providing care and training in Mankweng Township in the Limpopo Province](#) · Chenjerai Muwaniki · University of Limpopo · 2010

3. What are the experiences of caregivers in relation to training for Home Based Care?

Asked in: [Challenges faced by Phuthanang Home Based Care in providing care and training in Mankweng Township in the Limpopo Province](#) · Chenjerai Muwaniki · University of Limpopo · 2010

4. What is the level of community participation in Phuthanang Home Based Care activities?

Asked in: [Challenges faced by Phuthanang Home Based Care in providing care and training in Mankweng Township in the Limpopo Province](#) · Chenjerai Muwaniki · University of Limpopo · 2010

5. What is the nature of foster families based on the ecological systems theory and conflict theory?

Asked in: [Competence and resource needs of foster families in communicating with the children's birth families](#) · Lea Sömer · TTK University of Applied Sciences · 2020

6. What is the preparation of the families before becoming a foster family?

Asked in: [Competence and resource needs of foster families in communicating with the children's birth families](#) · Lea Sömer · TTK University of Applied Sciences · 2020

7. What kind of support opportunities and measures are used in organizing the meetings and empowering the families in Estonia today?

Asked in: [Competence and resource needs of foster families in communicating with the children's birth families](#) · Lea Sömer · TTK University of Applied Sciences · 2020

8. What are the experiences and challenges of foster families in communicating with the birth families of the children?

Asked in: [Competence and resource needs of foster families in communicating with the children's birth families](#) · Lea Sömer · TTK University of Applied Sciences · 2020

9. What kind of additional support opportunities and measures do the foster families need to organize the meetings?

Asked in: [Competence and resource needs of foster families in communicating with the children's birth families](#) · Lea Sömer · TTK University of Applied Sciences · 2020

10. What are the experiences of students who have been suspended or expelled leading up to and including expulsion?

Asked in: [Experiences of Students Who Have Been Suspended or Expelled from School](#) · Jane Elizabeth Sanders · University of Toronto · 2020

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- 11. What were the reasons, counts, and trends over time for referrals to the local ITP for infants and toddlers who were documented to be exposed to and/or affected by illegal substance abuse?**

Asked in: [IDEA Part C referrals, determination of eligibility, and services recommended for infants and toddlers affected by illegal substances: A policy implementation study](#) · Asha-Lateef Williams · University of Maryland · 2010

- 12. What kinds of remote and hybrid work leadership practices are described in research on child protection social work?**

Asked in: [Leadership of hybrid work in child protection : A scoping review on leadership and organization in hybrid environments](#) · Kallioniemi, Anne · University of Helsinki · 2026

- 13. What challenges and opportunities do leadership in hybrid work introduce according to existing research?**

Asked in: [Leadership of hybrid work in child protection : A scoping review on leadership and organization in hybrid environments](#) · Kallioniemi, Anne · University of Helsinki · 2026

- 14. How do refugee resettlement workers describe the effects of recent refugee policies on their practice and their lives?**

Asked in: [Narratives of refugee resettlement workers: The impact of recent policy changes on refugee resettlement](#) · Crooks, William Wesley · Texas Tech University · 2019

- 15. What changes do the study's participants report in their refugee resettlement organizations?**

Asked in: [Narratives of refugee resettlement workers: The impact of recent policy changes on refugee resettlement](#) · Crooks, William Wesley · Texas Tech University · 2019

- 16. What is the role of the family in the educational path of a young person?**

Asked in: [Reasons that lead to dropping out of vocational school based on to the values of young people who have dropped out of vocational secondary education](#) · Kertu Künnapu · TTK University of Applied Sciences · 2020

- 17. What is the role of the support system and the social worker surrounding the young person in preventing drop out?**

Asked in: [Reasons that lead to dropping out of vocational school based on to the values of young people who have dropped out of vocational secondary education](#) · Kertu Künnapu · TTK University of Applied Sciences · 2020

- 18. What does the process of refugee resettlement in the United States entail?**

Asked in: [Refugee Resettlement in the United States : Incorporating a Long-Term View of Integration Into Resettlement Policy and Practice](#) · De Boeck, Cecilia · Kalamazoo College · 2017

- 19. What are common problems faced by refugees during the resettlement process?**

Asked in: [Refugee Resettlement in the United States : Incorporating a Long-Term View of Integration Into Resettlement Policy and Practice](#) · De Boeck, Cecilia · Kalamazoo College · 2017

- 20. What is the role of the refugee throughout the process of resettlement?**

Asked in: [Refugee Resettlement in the United States : Incorporating a Long-Term View of Integration Into Resettlement Policy and Practice](#) · De Boeck, Cecilia · Kalamazoo College · 2017

- 21. How do social workers describe men's exposure to violence in close relationships?**

Asked in: [The Muzzled Violence : A qualitative study on men's exposure to domestic violence](#) · Khalil, Maha · Malmö University · 2021

22. What do employment-seeking [intimate partner violence] survivors and service providers identify as experiences relevant to empowerment (or alternatively, disempowerment)?

Asked in: [Theorizing, Conceptualizing, and Responding to the Employment Needs of Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence \(IPV\): A Grounded Theory Study](#) · Tarshis, Sarah · University of Toronto · 2020

23. What are the implications for empowerment practices for survivors of [intimate partner violence] seeking employment?

Asked in: [Theorizing, Conceptualizing, and Responding to the Employment Needs of Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence \(IPV\): A Grounded Theory Study](#) · Tarshis, Sarah · University of Toronto · 2020

24. What victim needs are not being addressed through the current system -- through which aftercare is provided?

Asked in: [Using Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centered Approaches To Provide Assistance to Survivors of Human Trafficking](#) · Rebecca Anne Batts · Valdosta State University · 2020

25. What barriers prevent identified victims from receiving needed services and what gaps exist in coverage or availability of services?

Asked in: [Using Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centered Approaches To Provide Assistance to Survivors of Human Trafficking](#) · Rebecca Anne Batts · Valdosta State University · 2020

26. What is the experience of virtual volunteers in a nonprofit organization?

Asked in: [Virtual Volunteer Fundraising Experience in a Nonprofit Organization: A Grounded Theory Study](#) · Brown, Bruce David Palmenberg · Texas A&M University · 2023

27. What are the most frequent stressors in professional social work?

Asked in: [Work stress among social workers in stressful circumstances](#) · Katrin Korjus · TTK University of Applied Sciences · 2020

28. What organizational factors affect the ability of newly graduated social workers to perform what they consider good social work?

Asked in: ["Som ny är det svårt att säga till om man har för mycket" - En kvalitativ studie om nyutexaminerade socialsekreterares arbete inom barn och unga](#) · Jonsson, Ronja · Umeå University · 2023

29. What strategies do newly graduated social workers use to address challenges in their daily social work?

Asked in: ["Som ny är det svårt att säga till om man har för mycket" - En kvalitativ studie om nyutexaminerade socialsekreterares arbete inom barn och unga](#) · Jonsson, Ronja · Umeå University · 2023

30. What are the organizational and personal conditions for applying courage in practical social work?

Asked in: ["Som ny är det svårt att säga till om man har för mycket" - En kvalitativ studie om nyutexaminerade socialsekreterares arbete inom barn och unga](#) · Jonsson, Ronja · Umeå University · 2023

31. Do local guidelines about how preschool teachers should act when suspecting that a child is being mistreated exist, and are they being followed?

Asked in: [För barnets bästa? : En kvalitativ undersökning om förskollärare och rektorers tankar kring sin anmälningsskyldighet](#) · Rebecca Ander · Kristianstad University · 2010

32. How do the relatives perceive the care that the demented person receives?

Asked in: [God Omsorg : En studie utifrån anhörigas uppfattning om god omsorg inom demensomsorg](#) · Olsson, Ann Sofie · University of Gävle · 2016

33. What is the social participation of asylum seekers, who receive welfare service from the city of Reykjavík?

Asked in: [Mikilvægi félagslegrar virkni fyrir andlega og líkamlega heilsu: Rannsókn á félagslegri virkni hælisleitenda í Reykjavík](#) · Þórhallur Guðmundsson · University of Iceland · 2017

34. What factors are considered important by the social workers in assessments of responsible municipality?

Asked in: [Vem vill ha Adam och Monika? : En kvantitativ vinjettstudie om tolkningar av vistelsebegreppet på 12 socialjourer i Sverige](#) · Nicklas Enroth · Stockholm University · 2013

35. What discretion do the social workers consider that they have in assessments of responsible municipality?

Asked in: [Vem vill ha Adam och Monika? : En kvantitativ vinjettstudie om tolkningar av vistelsebegreppet på 12 socialjourer i Sverige](#) · Nicklas Enroth · Stockholm University · 2013

36. What is the status of school social work in Iceland?

Asked in: [Viðhorf skólastjórnenda til hlutverks skólafélagsráðgjafa í grunnskólum og lögbindingu á stöðu þeirra](#) · Dagný Jóhanna Friðriksdóttir · University of Iceland · 2014

37. How well informed are school administrators in primary schools about the role and work of school social workers?

Asked in: [Viðhorf skólastjórnenda til hlutverks skólafélagsráðgjafa í grunnskólum og lögbindingu á stöðu þeirra](#) · Dagný Jóhanna Friðriksdóttir · University of Iceland · 2014

38. Do school administrators in primary schools believe that school social work needs to be made mandatory?

Asked in: [Viðhorf skólastjórnenda til hlutverks skólafélagsráðgjafa í grunnskólum og lögbindingu á stöðu þeirra](#) · Dagný Jóhanna Friðriksdóttir · University of Iceland · 2014

Exploratory questions

These questions ask how or why something happens, usually where little research exists yet. They are common in qualitative studies built on interviews or observation.

39. How do the family members of individuals with substance use disorder experience the effects of the substance abuse on their mental health regarding depression, anxiety, and stress?

Asked in: [Addiction within Families The impact of substance use disorder on the family system](#) · Jóna Margrét Ólafsdóttir · University of Lapland · 2020

40. How do social workers employed in palliative care settings define and describe the term tension?

Asked in: [Examining Tension in the Provision of Palliative Care: Social Workers' Experiences](#) · Michael R. Bennett · University of Windsor · 2022

41. How do hybrid work leadership practices affect the organization of work, professional judgement, and occupational well-being in child protection social work?

Asked in: [Leadership of hybrid work in child protection : A scoping review on leadership and organization in hybrid environments](#) · Kallioniemi, Anne · University of Helsinki · 2026

42. What role does education play in their mobility towards economic sustainability from [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families] and public housing programs?

Asked in: [Post-Secondary Education Pathways: The Disconnection for Texas Women Receiving TANF and Public Housing Assistance](#) · Scott, Cedric M. · Texas State University · 2024

43. How are the different identities of employment-seeking survivors linked to social location (as given by gender, race and sexual identity), and how do these structural factors impact experiences of empowerment?

Asked in: [Theorizing, Conceptualizing, and Responding to the Employment Needs of Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence \(IPV\): A Grounded Theory Study](#) · Tarshis, Sarah · University of Toronto · 2020

44. How do providers of aftercare to victims of trafficking define and implement the concepts of “trauma-informed” and “victim-centered” care?

Asked in: [Using Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centered Approaches To Provide Assistance to Survivors of Human Trafficking](#) · Rebecca Anne Batts · Valdosta State University · 2020

45. How do virtual volunteers prepare themselves for their roles in a nonprofit organization?

Asked in: [Virtual Volunteer Fundraising Experience in a Nonprofit Organization: A Grounded Theory Study](#) · Brown, Bruce David Palmenberg · Texas A&M University · 2023

46. How do preschool teachers experience the treatment from colleagues, principals and social welfare officers when they’ve done or wanted to do a report?

Asked in: [För barnets bästa? : En kvalitativ undersökning om förskollärare och rektorers tankar kring sin anmälningsskyldighet](#) · Rebecca Ander · Kristianstad University · 2010

47. How do preschool teachers experience the reactions of a report from custodians?

Asked in: [För barnets bästa? : En kvalitativ undersökning om förskollärare och rektorers tankar kring sin anmälningsskyldighet](#) · Rebecca Ander · Kristianstad University · 2010

48. How does lack of social participation, while waiting for a decision on their status in Iceland, impact asylum seekers?

Asked in: [Mikilvægi félagslegrar virkni fyrir andlega og líkamlega heilsu: Rannsókn á félagslegri virkni hælisleitenda í Reykjavík](#) · Þórhallur Guðmundsson · University of Iceland · 2017

Relational questions

These questions ask whether two things tend to go together, such as study time and exam results, without claiming that one causes the other.

49. What is the relationship for adolescents between informal mentorship and upward economic mobility?

Asked in: [Does informal mentoring contribute to upward mobility for low-income adolescents? A mixed-methods multi-stage study](#) · Grace Gowdy · Boston University · 2019

50. What is the relationship between foster youths' access to academic support services and enrollment at age 19?

Asked in: [Effect of Independent Living Program Services on Enrollment of Foster Youth](#) · Porter, Jennifer L. · Valdosta State University · 2021

51. What is the relationship between foster youths' access to budgeting and financial management services and enrollment at age 19?

Asked in: [Effect of Independent Living Program Services on Enrollment of Foster Youth](#) · Porter, Jennifer L. · Valdosta State University · 2021

52. What is the relationship between foster youths' access to mentoring services and enrollment at age 19?

Asked in: [Effect of Independent Living Program Services on Enrollment of Foster Youth](#) · Porter, Jennifer L. · Valdosta State University · 2021

How to adapt a question to your own study

Every question here was asked by someone else, about their own setting. These four steps turn one into a question that is yours.

- 1. Pick the shape, not the wording.** Notice whether the question compares, explores, explains or measures. That shape is what transfers to your study.
Recommended reading: [How to write a research question](#)
- 2. Swap in your own population and setting.** Change who, where and when, and check the question still makes sense.
Recommended reading: [How to find a research gap](#)
- 3. Check it fits your method.** A "how" or "why" question usually points to qualitative work; "how much" or "is there a relationship" to quantitative.
Recommended reading: [Qualitative vs quantitative research](#)
- 4. Line up your aims, objectives and questions.** Your committee will check that they agree.
Recommended reading: [Research aims, objectives and questions](#)

Do this with two or three questions and compare them: the one you can actually answer with the time and access you have is usually the right one.