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EXAMINING SCHOOL COUNSELOR ADVOCACY FOR LESBIAN, GAY, AND  
BISEXUAL STUDENTS:  
AN ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS TOWARD ACTION

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M.Ed., Counseling, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2005  
B.A., Psychology, Saint Louis University, 2000

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate School at the University of Missouri-St. Louis  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in  
Education with an emphasis in Counselor Education and Supervision

May 2015

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### Abstract

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students have been historically marginalized and at-risk for school dropout (Pope, Bunch, Szymanski, & Rankins, 2004), and school counselors advocate for them (ASCA, 2013a). For this survey study, empirical and conceptual literature pertaining to factors that were hypothesized to relate to school counselor advocacy for LGB students were reviewed. In particular, there has been limited empirical data that have addressed this issue. The underlying theoretical framework applied was the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985). The TPB has been used to predict a variety of behaviors such as teaching students with special needs (Casebolt & Hodge, 2010), participation in physical activity (Tsorbatzoudis, 2005), and knowledge sharing (Kuo & Young, 2008; Shipp, 2010). Data from a non-random sample of 398 middle and high school counselors located throughout the United States were analyzed. The school counselors completed the survey comprised of a demographic form and five subscales, three of which were either modified or developed for this study. Middle and high school counselors completed items from the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS), the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE), the Subjective Norm Scale (SNS), the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Intentions Scale (LGBAIS), and the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale (LGBAAS). School counselors' attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons; advocacy self-efficacy; and LGB advocacy intention were found to significantly predict LGB advocacy activity. LGB advocacy intention significantly mediated the effects of attitudes and advocacy self-efficacy on LGB advocacy activity. Significant differences

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with regard to each of the TPB factors except subjective norm were found. Implications for the assessment and training of pre-service and practicing school counselors were identified.

*Keywords:* advocacy, bisexual, gay, LGB students, lesbian, school counselor

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My dissertation is dedicated to all students, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning. May your voices be heard so that your hearts may sing. This dissertation is also dedicated to James D. Simons. Thanks for the music, folly, and love as well as the reminder to get out there. Beyond the AIDS Generation, your memory is alive and well.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Six to 10 percent of youth are estimated to identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) (Chung, Szymanski, & Amadio, 2006; Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network [GLSEN], 2008; Sladken, 1985). They face particular ongoing challenges in developing their sexual identity (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Calzo, Antonucci, Mays, & Cochran, 2011; Coleman, 1982; Russell, Clarke, & Clary, 2009), and they also experience discrimination. Familial rejection, which may lead to homelessness, is often reported (Corliss, Goodenow, Nichols, & Austin, 2011; Diamond et al., 2011).

In comparison to their heterosexual peers, LGB students are more likely to encounter bullying, especially in verbal forms (Espelage & Swearer, 2008; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012), face higher levels of emotional risk (Pope, Bunch, Szymanski, & Rankins, 2004), and lack emotional and/or financial support (Ryan, Russell, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2010). Harboring internalized heterosexism and guilt is common (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 2009; Moradi, Van Den Berg, & Epting, 2009; Savin-Williams, 1990, 1994), and LGB youth are more likely to resort to substance abuse (e.g., tobacco) (Washington, 2002). All of these factors often lead to poor academic progress (Diaz, Kosciw, & Greytak, 2010; Pope et al., 2004; Remafedi, 1987). In other instances, LGB youth become susceptible to sexual abuse (Biegel, 2010; GLSEN, 2008), or they resort to suicide (Gibson, 1989; Haas et al., 2011; Mustanski, Garofalo, & Emerson, 2010; Russell, 2003; Suicide Prevention Resource Center [SPRC], 2008). Studies suggest that LGB students experience high levels of emotional distress (e.g., anxiety and depression) (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azrael, 2009; Kelleher,

2009; Rivers & Noret, 2008; Robinson & Espelage, 2011; Sinclair, 2010), have trouble reconciling religious/spiritual values (Carr, 2010; Cates, 2007; Maher, 2007), and have limited autonomy (Goldstein, 2009; Hein & Matthews, 2010; Willoughby, 2008). The challenges LGB students face have also been studied outside of the United States (O'Higgins-Norman, 2009a, 2009b; Kelleher, 2009; McIntyre, 2009; Nairn & Smith, 2003; Pete & Taylor, 2011; Piznomy-Levy, Kama, Shalo, & Lavee, 2006; Sandfort, Bos, & Collier, 2010; Takács, 2006).

### **School Counselor LGB Advocacy Activity**

The school counseling profession is evolving to better meet the needs of LGB students (Stone & Dahir, 2006; Wingfield, Reese, & West-Olatunji, 2010), and, in response to court cases involving LGB students and heightened awareness concerning the impact of oppression on LGB mental health, more schools are instituting inclusive LGB policies (Biegel, 2010; Stone, 2003). School counselors are now expected to act as leaders and advocate for all students, particularly those who have been historically marginalized, including LGB students (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2005; Brubaker, Harper, & Singh, 2011; Rowley, 2000; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008; Shoffner & Briggs, 2001).

Recommendations for school counselor LGB practices have also been proposed (Bidell, 2011; Brubaker et al., 2011; DePaul, Walsh, & Dam, 2009; Pope, 2000; Pope, 2004; Pope et al., 2004; Reynolds & Koski, 1993; Stone, 2003). This form of advocacy includes learning about LGB issues and assisting LGB students in a variety of ways (Goodrich, Harper, Luke, & Singh, 2014). For example, Goodrich and Luke (2010)

recommended that school counselors develop the skills to run psycho-educational groups in schools for LGB students. Pope (2004) recommended using psychoaffective education and subtle signs as ways to offer visible support. Nonetheless, at present research on the specific factors that may relate to school counselor LGB advocacy is limited and the degree to which pre-service and practicing school counselors understand and advocate for LGB students varies (Bidell, 2012; Goodrich, Luke, & Scarborough, in review; McCabe & Rubinson, 2008; Simons, Kashubeck-West, & Althof, 2014). A relationship between school counselor self-efficacy and competent school counseling has, however, been identified (Goldsmith, 2011; Perrone, Perrone, Chan, & Thomas, 2000; Torrence, 2012). As part of a quantitative dissertation study, Goldsmith (2011) investigated the relationship between school counselor self-efficacy for advocacy of gifted students and school counselors' advocacy activities with gifted students. The results of her study indicated that self-efficacy was a significant predictor of school counselors' advocacy competency with gifted students. Perrone et al. (2000) analyzed data from 567 school counselors who completed the Career Counseling Self-Efficacy Scale (CCSES) and rated how important they thought several career counseling competencies were. Torrence (2012) assessed 116 practicing school counselors' attitudes toward students with disabilities, self-efficacy, and perceptions of preparedness to work with students with learning disabilities. School counselors' self-efficacy and attitudes were both related to school counselors' perceptions, and both factors contributed to a significant increase in the shared variance of perceived preparedness.

### **Theory of Planned Behavior**

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was the underlying theoretical frame for this study. TPB is a theoretical model used to assess the linkage between attitudes, perceived behavioral control, subjective norm, behavioral intention, and behaviors (Ajzen, 1985). The TPB has been utilized to predict a variety of intentions and behaviors across disciplines, including school counseling (McCabe & Rubinson, 2008; Shipp, 2010; Torrence, 2012). Thus, for this quantitative survey study, the TPB provided a lens for examining school counselors' intentions and current LGB advocacy acts. Ajzen (1985) proposed the TPB as an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), a model similarly used to assess how attitudes relate to behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

According to Cammock, Carragher, and Prentice (2009), the TRA has two factors that influence behavioral intention, a person's willingness to behave in certain ways. These two factors are attitude, a person's positive or negative view of certain behaviors, and subjective norm, a person's perception of the support or lack thereof (e.g., societal pressure) to follow through with certain behaviors. These two factors are utilized in the TPB, but a third factor is also included, perceived behavioral control (PBC). PBC is a person's perception of being in charge to enact a certain behavior (e.g., self-efficacy). The TRA and the TPB have been applied to understanding a variety of behaviors including teaching students with special needs (Casebolt & Hodge, 2010), participation in physical activity (Tsorbatzoudis, 2005), and knowledge sharing among school counselors

(Shipp, 2010). In applying the TPB to this study, the aforementioned variables as outlined by Ajzen (1985) were defined as follows:

1. Practicing middle and high school counselors' familiarity with and/or use of particular LGB advocacy activities during the 2014-2015 school-year was representative of LGB advocacy activity.
2. Practicing middle and high school counselor LGB advocacy intentions during the 2014-2015 school-year were representative of behavioral intention.
3. Middle and high school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons were representative of attitudes toward LGB persons.
4. Subjective norm was representative of perceptions of other school stakeholders' (students, faculty colleagues, and principals) views about five middle and high school counselor LGB advocacy activities: (a) LGB group sponsorship, (b) policy advocacy, (c) classroom guidance, (d) professional development, and (e) role modeling.
5. School counselor advocacy self-efficacy was representative of PBC to perform/intend to perform LGB advocacy.

According to the TPB, it was suggested that school counselors' LGB advocacy activity could be predicted from examining their attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, and LGB advocacy intentions. The independent variables were school counselors' attitudes toward LGB students, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm. The following sections address each of these independent variables.

### **Attitudes Toward LGB Students**

Most of the available research on the attitudes toward sexual minorities held by mental health professionals leaves out the views of school counselors; however, earlier and more recent articles include their views (Bidell, 2012; Fontaine, 1998; Grove, 2009; Israel & Hackett, 2004; Jimenez, 2009; McCabe & Rubinson, 2008; Price & Telljohann, 1991; Rainey and Trusty, 2007; Rudolph, 1988; Satcher & Legget, 2007; Schmidt, Glass, & Wooten, 2011; Sears, 1988, 1992).

Limited research on school counselors' perceptions of working with sexual minority students indicates that more research is needed to understand how school counselors' attitudes are related to LGB advocacy. "The counselor's attitude is a vital variable in the successful encounter with the adolescent as well as educating others on these issues" (Russell, 1989, p. 336). Despite increased concern for counselors to develop LGB counselor competence (Bidell, 2012; Goodrich et al., 2014), sexual minority individuals have historically been dissatisfied with mental health services (Rudolph, 1988).

### **Counselors and Therapy**

Until 1973, the American Psychiatric Association pathologized homosexuality, and despite its removal from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the practice of conversion therapy continued. "Sexual orientation conversion therapy or reparative 'therapy' refers to the practice of attempting to change an individual's sexual orientation and attractions from members of the same gender to those of the opposite gender" (Reitman, 2013, p. 508). Counselors attempt to change a person's sexual orientation through a practice that is coercive. LGB individuals may be incorrectly



diagnosed (Eubanks-Carter & Goldfried, 2006; Wiederman & Sansone, 2009) or encounter microaggressions by practitioners (Shelton & Delgado-Romero, 2011). These outcomes are prejudicial in nature and are not necessarily due to psychological difficulties but to compromised social support and the presence of chronic stress (Carter, Mollen, & Smith, 2013; Hart & Heimberg, 2001). On the other hand, when mental health professionals hold positive and resolved attitudes toward homosexuality, sexual minorities are more comfortable (Rudolph, 1988; Russell, 1989). These attitudes are related to competent and ethical school counseling practices with LGB students (Bidell, 2012).

### **School Counselors**

Bidell (2012) researched the sexual orientation competencies of school counselors' using the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS) arguing that school counselors' attitudes toward LGB students should be assessed, and, if they harbor negative attitudes, subsequent training should be provided. Limited empirical research exists on the assessment of school counselors' work with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth in schools. Further assessment of school counselors' attitudes, assumptions, and prejudices would be warranted. Bidell (2012) found that school counselors when compared to community counselors had significantly lower levels of competence in providing services to individuals with same-sex sexual orientation. Bidell (2012) has also called for more research assessing the relationship between the religious attitudes of school counselors and their LGBTQ practices in schools.

Satcher and Legget (2007) explored professional school counselors' levels of homonegativity. Using modified versions of the Homonegativity Scale and the Modern Homonegativity Scale, they assessed homonegativity among 215 female professional school counselors in the South with membership in the Southern region of the American Counseling Association. Findings indicated that school counselors who scored significantly lower on measures of homonegativity scores had friends who were gay or lesbian; had not gone to church in the past 30 days; participated in professional development related to sexual minority issues; or had assisted students around gay, lesbian, or questioning (sexual orientation) issues.

Jimenez (2009) has written about queering classrooms. In a study, two case scenarios were shared in which the perspectives of students pertaining to teachers and school counselor responses to school based queer events were discussed. In the first scenario by Cook, a teacher asked a student named Katerina to leave the classroom for yelling at another student who had used the derogatory term "lez" in response to a Shakespearean reading in which two females kissed (Jimenez, 2009). In the second scenario by Brush, a female science teacher forwarded a letter from a female student named Barbara who secretly liked her onto the principal and the school counselor (Jimenez, 2009). The student had not been informed of this response and was taken by surprise when her parents asked her about it. "The counselor felt it was beyond her. The recommendation was regular sessions with a shrink" (Brush, 2007, p. 31). Thereafter, Barbara lost friends and met with psychiatrists, including one who questioned her dress

and another who informed her that all junior high students would feel like outcasts at some time or another.

Schmidt et al. (2011) studied the knowledge and experiences of master's level school counseling students with regard to LGB students in the Southeast. The researchers argued for counselor education programs to place high emphasis on teaching LGB counseling skills. The Knowledge about Homosexuality Questionnaire (Harris, Nightengale, & Owens, 1995) was distributed and completed by 87 school counseling students. Data from their responses indicated that an abundance of LGB-related information for school counseling students existed, and the race/ethnicity of school counseling students was related to their skills. The researcher argued that school counseling students who are not inclusive of LGB students in their definition of diversity may not provide effective counseling services (Schmidt et al., 2011).

### **Pre-Service Counselors**

Grove (2009) conducted a study to assess the development of LGB counselor competency among pre-service counselors in Britain. She measured the attitudes, skills, and knowledge of 58 students using the SOCCS and discovered that attitudes were high during the first year but fell thereafter due to “an increased level of awareness in the students” (Grove, 2009, p. 82). Several responses for this outcome were offered. Regarding the initial high scores, Pelling believed it could have been due to an overestimation of high comfort level because of limited awareness and training, and Mohr believed it could have been related to democratic heterosexual identity in which individuals see all sexual orientations as the same (Grove, 2009). Dillon and Worthington

(2003) proposed this as “self-deceptive positivity,” (p. 248), which has been compared to answering items in a socially desirable way (Grove, 2009). The decrease in scores may have also resulted from an increased self-awareness of students. Dillon and Worthington (2003) shared that this could have resulted because the students had their unexplored attitudes challenged while in training (Grove, 2009).

McCabe and Rubinson (2008) completed a study with graduate students including some who were enrolled in a school counseling track. The students were asked questions about school based social justice (McCabe & Rubinson, 2008). Findings indicated that they had inadequate attitudes and knowledge concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students. They did not readily identify harassment aimed at LGBT students as injustice, nor did they report that they had been trained well enough to promote an affirmative LGBT position. The respondents appeared to have limited knowledge about LGBT issues and responsibility to LGBT students. These findings can help with improving professional development in the area of LGBT advocacy for school counselors in training (McCabe & Rubinson, 2008; Nastasi, 2008).

Rainey and Trusty (2007) examined variables that they thought could predict master’s level counseling students’ attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. One-hundred-thirty-two counselors-in-training enrolled in a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited counseling program in the Southwest completed a survey with items pertaining to religious views, politics, and prior experiences with gay men and lesbian women. In order to participate in the study, the counselors-in-training had to identify as heterosexual. Findings indicated that experiences

with lesbian women, religiosity, and political leanings were moderate predictors of attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. Those who participated in the study who had negative experiences with lesbians, were politically conservative, and were religious held greater negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians.

Israel and Hackett (2004) provided four interventions involving two types of training to 161 graduate students taking classes in social work and counseling in the Southwest. Training involved either providing LGB-related information to students or exploring LGB-related attitudes with students. The student participants completed the Homophobia Scale, the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men scale, the Index of Homophobia, and the Knowledge About Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues scale. Findings from the study indicated that a medium effect size of .51 for providing LGB-related information on the students' knowledge resulted. Conversely, a small effect size of .14 resulted in the opposite direction for trainings in LGB-related attitude exploration. "Although it is possible that exploring attitudes actually produced more negative attitudes, a more likely explanation of these findings is that the participants in the attitude-exploration conditions were challenged to reassess their actual feelings about LGB individuals" (Israel & Hackett, 2004, p. 10).

### **Earlier Studies**

Earlier studies have specifically researched the attitudes of school counselors in relationship to sexual orientation issues in schools as well (Price & Telljohann, 1991; Sears, 1988, 1992). Price and Telljohann (1991) examined school counselor's perceptions of adolescent sexual minorities. Some of the counselors perceived themselves as

incompetent to work with sexual minority students. In addition, it was found that if they were unable to provide an accurate estimate of the number of sexual minority students, they could not identify any activities they used in particular with them. Fontaine (1998) extended the findings of Price and Telljohann (1991). She updated a questionnaire and distributed it to K-12 school counselors at the Annual Conference of the Pennsylvania School Counselors' Association. She asked school counselors (elementary through high school) to answer questions about their school settings, training, and knowledge related to issues of sexual orientation. One-hundred-one surveys were returned and results indicated that at least one-fifth of school counselors had knowledge of students who were gay, lesbian, or questioning their sexual orientation. The school counselors' perceptions of students', faculty members', and administrators' (e.g., principal) attitudes toward homosexuality ranged from negative to intolerant.

Sears (1988) examined the attitudes of middle and high school counselors toward homosexual students. A survey developed from the Counselors' Perceptions of the Quality of School Life for Gays and Lesbians Survey (designed specifically for the study), the Modified Attitudes Toward Homosexuality survey, and the Index of Homophobia measure was distributed to the counselors and 142 were returned. The data indicated that a strong relationship existed between school counselors' activities and their attitudes toward homosexuality (Sears, 1988). In a later study, Sears (1992) discovered that less homophobic school counselors believed that they would be more likely to challenge homosexual prejudice and less likely to assist sexual minorities in overcoming same-sex attraction. This finding, however, was counter to the data provided by school

counselors who had less education and were African-American. They believed that sexual minority students should be able to overcome same-sex attractions.

### **Other School Members**

O'Higgins-Norman (2009a, 2009b) researched homosexuality in Irish schools to assess how attitudes were related to perceived bullying. Observational data were collected, and teachers, parents, administrators, and students were interviewed from five Dublin high schools. Findings indicated that homosexuality was considered abnormal and homophobic bullying was common (O'Higgins-Norman, 2009a, 2009b). Views of school counselors, however, were not included in the study. In 2001, a survey study was conducted in New Zealand with 821 faculty members and high school students (Nairn & Smith, 2003). Findings indicated that both groups had homophobic attitudes and observed violence aimed at specifically at sexual minorities. Fischer (1982) surveyed 255 educators using the Attitudes Toward Homosexuality Scale and discovered that educators were more likely to be non-accepting of homosexuality when compared to a general population sample. Of this sample, more accepting educators were younger in age, female, or those who had been exposed to city life versus rural life.

### **Advocacy Self-Efficacy**

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is “concerned with judgments of personal capability” (p. 11). Research has shown that self-efficacy can be measured and is directly related to what one chooses to do or not do in relationship to meeting the needs of students in schools (Perrone et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). It is self-efficacy that helps individuals to set goals and define beliefs about how well they

will perform as they strive to meet their goals. Therefore, this study was warranted to assess if school counselors with higher levels of advocacy self-efficacy were individuals who perceived meeting the needs of LGB students as a task to be mastered and not avoided or excluded in their efforts to advocate for LGB students. School counselors with low self-efficacy resist becoming change agents in their schools (Bemak & Chung, 2008). Therefore, they may neglect their professionally mandated responsibility to advocate for LGB students despite the call “for counselors and counselor educators to become more involved in [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning] LGBTQQ advocacy” (Brubaker et al., 2010, p. 44). Some display nice counselor syndrome (NCS). According to Bemak and Chung (2008), “the value these counselors place on being viewed as nice people by others overshadows their willingness to implement multicultural/social justice advocacy and organizational change services that predictably result in interpersonal disagreements and conflicts with other school personnel” (p. 374).

### **Subjective Norm**

Since this quantitative survey study focused on school counselor LGB advocacy, assessing subjective norm in addition to the attitudes and advocacy self-efficacy of school counselors was relevant too. The concept of subjective norm is the perception of someone such as a school counselor in regards to how socially acceptable others think it is for him/her or others to enact a behavior or a set of behaviors (Yang et al., 2010). Therefore, for example, how a school counselor perceives what other important referent groups (i.e., key school stakeholders) think about his/her enacting particular advocacy efforts on



behalf of LGB students determines the subjective norm, the unspoken rules/social pressure of a setting.

Kuo and Young (2008) discovered that subjective norm explained one's desire to share knowledge in relationship to attitude, controllability, and self-efficacy. The researchers studied teachers in a virtual community and discovered that 49% of the variance in the intention to share knowledge was accounted for by attitude, controllability, self-efficacy, and subjective norm altogether. Shipp (2010) stated that the constructs of subjective norm and organizational climate were similar. For professional school counselors who advocate for LGB students in many schools that remain unsafe (Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009), it is important that they consider enacting activities that have been shown to be effective in improving school climate for LGB students. For this study, five activities resulting from a comprehensive literature review were identified: (a) sponsorship of a student group for LGB students, (b) advocacy for formalized inclusive nondiscrimination and anti-bullying school policies, (c) guidance curriculum and resources on LGB issues, (d) professional training on LGB issues (e.g., how to intervene when students are harassed on the basis of their orientation or perceived orientation), and (e) visibility as either a sexual minority or an LGB ally. It was hypothesized that how school counselors perceived support from students, faculty colleagues, and principals (i.e., key referent groups) could be related to advocacy activity for sexual minorities (Fontaine, 1998; Simons et al., 2014). School counselors may advocate more on behalf of LGB students in schools who have supportive students, principals, and faculty members.

### **Purpose of Study**

Both empirical and conceptual literature on school counselor advocacy for LGB students were reviewed for this quantitative survey study. Empirical data, in particular, were limited; however, several factors were hypothesized to relate to school counselor involvement with LGB students (Bidell, 2012; Brubaker et al., 2011; Fontaine, 1998; Price & Telljohann, 1991, Reynolds & Koski, 1993; Rudolph, 1988; Simons et al. 2014; Szalacha, 2003). These factors included school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, LGB advocacy intentions, and LGB advocacy activity. The factors were assessed across demographic variables, and implications for the assessment, teaching, and practice of pre-service and practicing school counselors were identified.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were proposed to investigate school counselors' beliefs, behavioral intentions, and practices. The questions that guided this quantitative survey study were the following:

1. Does a relationship exist between school counselors' advocacy intentions and school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm?
2. Does a relationship exist between reported school counselor advocacy activity and school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, and LGB advocacy intentions?

### **Research Hypotheses**

Using the TPB, data from a nationwide sample of school counselors were predicted to show:

1. A positive relationship between attitudes toward LGB persons and LGB advocacy intentions.
2. A positive relationship between advocacy self-efficacy and LGB advocacy intentions.
3. A positive relationship between subjective norm and LGB advocacy intentions.
4. A positive relationship between LGB advocacy intentions and LGB advocacy activity.
5. The factors of attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm would be predictors of variance in school counselor LGB advocacy intentions.
6. Attitudes, self-efficacy, subjective norm, and intentions would predict school counselor advocacy activity.

### **Significance of the Study**

The present survey study was relevant to the practice of school counseling because it aimed to explain the factors that were related to school counselors' LGB intentions and/or activity in meeting the needs of LGB students, namely subjective norm, school counselors' attitudes toward LGB students, and school counselors' perceived levels of advocacy self-efficacy. Another advantage of this research project was that it may have assisted school counselors in examining which factors were related to their effectiveness in dealing with issues related to sexual orientation and how they advocated

for LGB students. This research area requires further empirical research (Bidell, 2012). Moreover, practicing school counselors could have developed a better understanding of which factors may or may not have contributed to school counselor LGB advocacy activity, and educators could learn how to enhance training programs and/or school settings to ensure that school counselors gain the knowledge and necessary skills to become advocates for LGB students. The challenges LGB students face pose life challenges; however, school counselors are in a unique position to counter LGB discrimination such as intervening when a homophobic remark is made, supporting the development of student support groups, and educating faculty, staff, administrators, and parents/guardians about the lives of LGB students (Pope, 2004; Stone, 2003).

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations of this study included:

1. The survey for this study was distributed electronically, thus school counselors who did not have access to or the skills to make use of e-mail/Internet were potentially excluded from the study.
2. The reliability data available on the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE) were for the long scale but not for the advocacy self-efficacy subscale. Therefore, the reliability data of the advocacy self-efficacy subscale items were not verified.
3. Carlson's (2004) scale to assess school counselor involvement with gifted and talented (GT) students was modified to assess school counselor LGB advocacy

intentions. Therefore, the reliability of the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Intentions Scale (LGBAIS) was not verified.

4. The Subjective Norm Scale (SNS) was developed for this study to assess school counselor perceptions of other school stakeholders' views of school counselor LGB advocacy activity. Therefore, the reliability of the SNS was not verified.
5. The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale (LGBAAS) was developed for this study to assess school counselor LGB advocacy activity. Therefore, the reliability data of the LGBAAS were not verified.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Attitude toward LGB persons.** Eagly and Chaiken (1993) defined attitude as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (p. 1). According to Eagle and Chaiken (1993), attitudes held by certain societal subgroups underlie the existence of social and political conflict. For example, although a person who favors same-sex marriage is perceived as having a *positive attitude* toward the policy, a person who does not favor same sex marriage is perceived as having a *negative attitude* toward the policy. Therefore, attitude was an important construct for this study. Attitude toward LGB persons was defined as the total scores on the attitudes subscale of the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competence Scale (SOCCS; Bidell, 2005).

**Lesbian, gay, and bisexual.** According to the Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling's Competencies for Counseling with

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Ally Individuals (2012), the categories lesbian, gay, and bisexual have been defined as the following:

1. Lesbian was defined as a woman who is emotionally, physically, mentally, and/or spiritually oriented to bond and share affection with other women.
2. Gay was defined as a man who is emotionally, physically, mentally and/or spiritually oriented to bond and share affection with other men.
3. Bisexual was defined as a man or woman who is emotionally, physically, mentally, and/or spiritually oriented to bond and share affection with both men and women.

It is important, however, to note that not all LGB persons may desire a particular label as lesbian, gay, or bisexual be assigned to them (Fassinger & Arseneau, 2007). According to the American Psychological Association Resolution on LGBTIQ Children and Youth in Schools Executive Summary (for comment) (2014), the language around sexual orientation continues to change, and “while these categories continue to be widely used, research has suggested that sexual orientation does not always appear in such definable categories” (p. 4).

**LGB advocacy intentions.** According to Cammock, Carragher, and Prentice (2009), behavioral intention is a person’s willingness to behave in certain ways. Thus, for this study, school counselor LGB advocacy intention was defined as the degree of willingness of a school counselor to advocate on behalf of LGB students in certain ways. LGB advocacy intention was assessed by the total scores on a modified version of Goldsmith’s (2011) Advocacy Activity Scale developed, with permission, from Carlson’s

(2004) knowledge of gifted subscale. This 12-item scale was referred to as the lesbian, gay, and bisexual advocacy intentions scale (LGBAIS).

**LGB advocacy activity.** School counselor advocacy activity on behalf of LGB students was defined as activities for students of sexual minority status such as equity of services, access to services, harmonious education, and equitable participation (Crethar, Torres Rivera, & Nash, 2008) Dixon, Tucker, and Clark (2010) recommended that school counselors make use of data, participate in experiential learning, and conduct action research. School counselor LGB advocacy activity was assessed by the total scores on the lesbian, gay, and bisexual advocacy activity scale (LGBAAS), a 30 item measure that has been developed for this study from a comprehensive literature review.

**Professional school counselors.** Professional school counselors were school counselors at middle and high school levels employed full-time in various school settings with school counseling certification/licensure through a certifying body (e.g., the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education). School counselors must strive to serve as leaders in supporting all students to succeed academically and emotionally (Stone & Dahir, 2006). As a result, discussions surrounding how competent they are in advocating for LGB students have emerged. Debate around this has also focused on the training of school counselors to become social justice advocates for all students including those who are LGB (Singh, 2010). Stone (2003) also offered recommendations for practice and highlighted how schools “can be forced to pay damages to failing to stop student-on-student sexual harassment” (p. 144).

**Perceived behavioral control.** Perceived behavioral control is how a person perceives how easy or difficult it would be to perform a behavior. Perceived behavioral control has been compared to self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is “concerned with judgments of personal capability” (p. 11). Self-efficacy helps people to set goals and define beliefs about how well they will perform as they strive to meet their goals. Individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy are individuals who perceive challenges (e.g., meeting the needs of LGB students) as tasks to be mastered and not avoided or excluded. Perceived behavioral control was defined as the total scores on seven items pertaining to advocacy from the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005).

**Subjective norm.** According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), how individuals perceive what they think others would like for them to do or not do is subjective norm. An example of this might be when a school counselor perceives that a supervisor does not want him/her to support LGB students. In a study by Simons et al. (2014), this appeared related to school climate. In another study by Diaz et al. (2010), it appeared related to the views of students. Many of these students reported hearing homophobic remarks but staff did not intervene to prevent them. Subjective norm was defined as the total score on 14 Likert-type scale items on the Subjective Norm Scale pertaining to views of other school stakeholders (i.e., principals, faculty colleagues, and students) concerning five school counselor advocacy acts.



### **Summary**

Chapter one has described challenges LGB students face, and the responsibility of school counselors in advocating for all students including those who are LGB. School counselors have reported many issues, including harboring unfavorable attitudes and a lack of knowledge concerning LGB students (Price & Telljohann, 1991; Rudolph, 1988). It has been found that a paucity of research exists on effective LGB competency training (e.g., psychoeducational group work with LGB adolescents) (Goodrich & Luke, 2010), and school counselor advocacy competency measures are limited to non-existent (Bidell, 2012; Clemens, Shipp, & Kimbel, 2011). Studies have shown that school counselor self-efficacy measures also lack LGB items (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines, & Johnston, 2008), and non-inclusive school climates appear related to lower levels of school counselor LGB advocacy activity (Fontaine, 1998; Simons et al., 2014; Szalacha, 2003). Findings such as these are unfortunate as educators who self-identify as LGB advocates (e.g., become sponsors of GSAs) hold protective attitudes toward LGB students (Valenti & Campbell, 2009). School counselors also appear more likely to advocate for LGB students when they are employed in more inclusive schools (e.g., schools with school-wide LGB training) (Simons, et al., 2014); and counselor self-efficacy appears related to competent school counseling (Goldsmith, 2011; Perrone, et al., 2000; Torrence, 2012). Due to these reasons, the attitudes toward LGB persons, subjective norm, and school counselors' advocacy self-efficacy hint or suggest that they were related to LGB advocacy intentions and activity. The TPB (Ajzen, 1985) was selected as the guiding theoretical lens for this study, which has previously been applied

to understanding a variety of behaviors across disciplines, and, more recently, was applied to understanding school counselors' competency in other areas (McCabe & Rubinson, 2008; Shipp, 2010; Torrence, 2012).

The purpose of this study has been explained and research questions and hypotheses have been proposed. Delimitations and their potential impact were shared, and the following seven items were defined: (a) attitudes toward LGB persons; (b) lesbian, gay, and bisexual; (c) LGB advocacy intention(s); (d) LGB advocacy activity; (e) perceived behavioral control; (f) professional school counselors; and (g) subjective norm.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Literature reviewed for this study included books, journal articles, and measures covering lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth/adolescents/students, counselor advocacy including school counselor LGB advocacy and/or activities, attitudes toward LGB students, school counselor advocacy self-efficacy, school climate, and the theoretical frame underlying this study, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). This literature review provided a lens through which to examine the unique challenges LGB students face within themselves, their families and schools, and factors that may relate to the evolving role of the school counselor to advocate for them. This study has been important because LGB students have been historically marginalized and empirical research on the role of the professional school counselor, a key resource in assisting them, is noticeably absent. “It has been a full decade since *Professional School Counseling* published its special edition on this topic” (Goodrich & Luke, 2009, p. 114). LGB students commonly experience verbal and physical abuse, sexual harassment, isolation and exclusion, and other problems (Espelage & Swearer, 2008; Kosciw et al., 2012; Valenti & Campbell, 2009). This chapter outlines these challenges and their outcomes with LGB students as a global concern, the role of the school counselor as an LGB advocate and both the individual and systemic levels, and factors that may contribute to the dynamics underlying to the practice of school counselor LGB advocacy. This study may inform assessment, training, and practice of school counselors so that more LGB students’ needs are met.

### **LGB Students**

While this research study focused on LGB students and factors potentially related to school counselor LGB advocacy for them, it did not specifically address gender identity issues. The issues that LGB students and gender-variant students both face include discomfort, discrimination, harassment, and violence, yet transgender students, in particular, deal with their own unique challenges (beyond those faced by LGB students) that require more focus beyond the scope of this study. In a study by Steensma, van der Ende, Verhulst, and Cohen-Kettenis (2013) the degree of gender nonconformity of 406 boys and 473 girls in 1983 was assessed using two items from the Child Behavior Checklist. Twenty-four years later the sexual orientation and gender discomfort of these individuals was also assessed. Results showed that the degree of gender nonconformity in childhood was related to homosexuality (i.e., 8 to 15 times more in those with childhood gender nonconformity) but not related to bisexuality or gender discomfort in adulthood. A significant relationship was found to exist between gender nonconformity in childhood and homosexual orientation in adulthood. This study has made reference to LGB students instead of LGBT students and/or LGBTQ students unless the latter two groups were represented in the referenced literature for this research study. This was done to avoid the erroneous assumption that transgender and/or questioning students face all the same challenges as LGB students.

### **Prevalence and Research**

Six percent of the student population in the United States has been estimated as LGB (GLSEN, 2008), and this estimate might be up to 10% (Sladken, 1985). LGB students are a minority class subject to discrimination and harassment on the basis of

their sexual orientation (Valenti & Campbell, 2009), and, subsequently, they face unique mental health outcomes and academic challenges. Research on LGB youth has increased over the past decade and has been conducted outside of the United States (Kelleher, 2009; McIntyre, 2009; Nairn & Smith, 2003; O’Higgin-Norman, 2008, 2009; Pete & Taylor, 2011; Piznomy-Levy et al., 2006; Sandfort et al., 2010; Takács, 2006). Similar to research conducted in the United States, this research also has captured why it is necessary for all educators (including school counselors) to advocate for LGB students (Almeida et al., 2009; Haas et al., 2011; Kelleher, 2009; Rivers & Noret, 2008; Robinson & Espelage, 2011).

### **Mental Health and Outcomes**

Many research studies address the effects of discrimination and harassment on LGB students’ mental health. Russell, Sinclair, Poteat, and Koenig (2012) studied the impact of discriminatory harassment (i.e., harassment based on someone’s underlying personal characteristics) by comparing bias-based harassment and general harassment between two populations, more than 24,000 students who completed the 2008-2009 Dane County (Wisconsin) Youth Assessment (DCYA) and 588,898 students who completed the 2007-2008 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS). Russell et al. (2012) shared that 35.8% of youth reported bias-based harassment on the DCYA (i.e., due to race, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation); and of those responses, 15.5% was specific to LGB-based harassment. Forty percent of youth reported biased-based harassment on the CHKS; and, of those responses, 10.2% was specific to LGB-based harassment. In addition, youth “who had experienced bias-based harassment were more likely than were

those who had not experienced harassment to report each of the risk outcomes” (Russell et al., 2012, p. 495), including having poorer mental health involving higher levels of substance use and truancy and greater instances of threats from others using weapons or damaging their property at school.

Diamond et al. (2011) qualitatively investigated sexual minority adolescents’ thoughts about factors that they believed contributed to their own psychological distress. Ten semi-structured interviews with nondirective, open-ended questions were conducted with these adolescents, seven of whom also presented with suicidal ideation. An example question that was asked was, “What do you think makes you feel depressed or suicidal?” The adolescents were recruited from the Adolescent Medicine Department of an East Coast children’s hospital and from local area LGB agencies. The researchers facilitated the study with sexual minority adolescents “to better understand how they conceived the cause of their depression/suicidal ideation” (Diamond et al., 2011, p. 133). The researchers were interested in understanding the adolescents’ attitudes toward counseling; however, questions about school counseling in particular were not asked. After the interviews were completed and transcribed, the researchers used Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill et al., 2005; Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997) methods to make meaning of the interview data. Findings were: (a) adolescents reported having multiple life stressors related to their sexual orientation, and everyone except one of them reported familial rejection on the basis of his/her sexual orientation; (b) more than half of the adolescents reported depression and/or suicidal ideation due to rejection; (c) there was one report that some adolescents had experienced positive family support as well as

support at school; (d) a desire for change existed as the adolescents desired strong and close relationships with family members especially parents; and (e) although two adolescents shared that they had had poor experiences in counseling, eight shared that counseling had been very important to them and the personal characteristics of their counselor mattered (i.e., the counselor was sensitive to or had experience with the LGB community) (Diamond et al., 2011).

Kelleher (2009) conducted a survey study that assessed three areas in relationship to the emotional well-being of 301 sexual minority youth from 16 to 24 years old: (a) sexual identity crisis, (b) awareness of stigma, and (c) the impact of heterosexism. While 80 respondents resided in Ireland, all completed an online survey comprised of the Workplace Heterosexist Experiences Questionnaire (Waldo, 1999), the Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire (Pinel, 1999), the Sexual Identity Distress Scale (Wright & Perry, 2006), and the Mental Health Inventory Psychological Distress I Subscale (Veit & Ware, 1983). Sexual identity crisis, awareness of stigma, and the impact of heterosexism (individually and combined) all were found to significantly correlate with levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation among sexual minority adolescents and young adults. Results supported the idea that an oppressive social environment for LGB youth is negatively related to their psychological well-being. Kelleher (2009), shared, “Attention needs to be focused on changing the oppressive cultural context in which LGBTQ youth live and so interventions need to address challenging heterosexism at both the cultural and individual level and to promote social change toward an inclusive society” (p. 377). In light of these findings, school counselors play a crucial role in doing this. They are in

leadership positions to advocate for developing counseling initiatives to meet the needs of LGB students (DePaul et al., 2009).

### **Behaviors**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBSs) are conducted by education and health groups to assess adolescent health-risk behaviors in the United States related to asthma, unintentional injuries, violence, suicide attempts, substance abuse, sexual activity, diet, weight, and being active versus sedentary. The surveys have questions about sexual identity and/or gender of sexual contacts. According to the CDC (2011), "Sexual minority students, particularly gay, lesbian, and bisexual students and students who had sexual contact with both sexes, are more likely to engage in health-risk behaviors than other students" (p. 2). Data were retrieved from a sample of adolescents at nine school sites from 2001 to 2009, and some of the findings were as follows:

- Self-identified gay and lesbian students were five times more likely to have been injured in a physical fight during the past year (out of a sample of 96,445, 15.5% of gay and lesbian students).
- Self-identified gay and lesbian students were almost three times more likely to have been physically abused by a partner the past year (out of a sample of 88,820, 27.5% of gay and lesbian students).
- Self-identified gay and lesbian students were three times more likely to have been forced physically to have intercourse (out of a sample of 62,042, 23.7% of gay and lesbian students).



- Self-identified gay and lesbian students were three times more likely to have been threatened or injured at school with a weapon (out of a sample of 112,596, 18.5% of gay and lesbian students).
- Self-identified gay and lesbian students were twice as likely to have been in a physical fight at school (out of a sample of 110,932, 22.2% of gay and lesbian students).
- Self-identified gay and lesbian students were five times as likely to have missed school at least one day 30 days before the survey because of safety concerns (out of a sample of 112,439, 21.1% of gay and lesbian students).
- Self-identified gay and lesbian students were four times as likely to have attempted suicide at least once during the past year before completing the survey (in a sample of 88,830, 25.8% of gay and lesbian students).

LGB students have also been found to be more likely than heterosexual students to utilize ineffective coping behaviors in response to harassment, neglect, and isolation. Noted behaviors include smoking cigarettes and/or marijuana, drinking alcohol, using other drugs such as cocaine, and making poor behavior choices (e.g., not wearing a seatbelt, carrying weapons at school, and riding in vehicles with people who are intoxicated (CDC, 2011).

### **School Climate**

The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's 2011 National School Climate Survey was distributed to 8,584 students between the ages of 13 and 20 (Kosciw et al., 2012). Kosciw et al. (2012) found that during the prior school-year (a) 81.9% of

sexual minority students were verbally harassed and 63.5% felt unsafe due to their minority sexual orientation, (b) 38.3% of sexual minority students were physically harassed (e.g., had been pushed), (c) 18.3% of sexual minority students were physically assaulted during the prior school-year, and (d) 55.2% of sexual minority students were cyber bullied. During the month prior: (a) 29.8% of sexual minority students missed at least one class, and (b) 31.8% of sexual minority students missed an entire school day. These outcomes contributed to an increased level of distress leading to mental health presenting problems such as homelessness, substance abuse, and suicidality (Corliss et al., 2011; Diamond, et al., 2011).

In another study which took place in 37 European countries with 754 people, schools were identified as the most challenging environments for sexual minority youth (Takács, 2006). Of those surveyed, 61% reported being discriminated against at school, 51% reported being discriminated against at home, 38% reported being discriminated against in the community, and 53% reported having experienced either violence or bullying. When asked about the school curriculum, 43% informed that it was discriminatory.

Sandfort et al. (2010) collected data from 518 students between 12 and 15 years of age enrolled at eight high schools in Amsterdam. The schools were part of an initiative to improve school safety for all students. The students were asked to voluntarily complete either a computer-based or paper and pencil form of a questionnaire with items on sexual attraction, mental health, and school climate. The data revealed that gender and level of same-sex attraction were significantly related to mental health problems of students. In

addition, the mental health of students was worse for students with same-sex attractions enrolled at schools with perceived less “consistent and clear rules and expectations” (Sandfort et al., 2010, p. 9).

Piznomy-Levy et al. (2006) studied the subjective experiences of sexual minority students at school in Israel with a focus on school climate. Descriptive data on social and demographic characteristics were collected. Students reported having to learn in heterosexist settings absent other identified sexual minority students. Harassment was common, and it contributed to challenges to social skills, mental health, and academics. Sexual minority students experience internalized homophobia in the forms of anxiety, denial, shame, and loneliness. Findings from these studies have appeared to illustrate the need for counselors to affirm LGB students, monitor therapeutic intentions, and advocate for support of LGB mental health.

**Policies and perceived discrimination.** Pete and Taylor (2011) studied perspectives of both heterosexual and non-heterosexual students in Canada to assess how LGBTQ students were represented in school policies and how this affected them. They discovered that non-heterosexual students perceived being harassed more as well as feeling detached or isolated. Moreover, the heterosexual students perceived that the non-heterosexual students were more at-risk. Whereas more than half of the non-heterosexual students felt unsafe at the school, only 15% of heterosexual students felt the same. Pete and Taylor (2011) also discovered that the presence of support groups for non-heterosexual students made them feel safer despite being continually harassed.

Almeida et al. (2009) studied the impact of perceived discrimination of LGBT students using data from a school-based survey distributed to 1,032 students ranging from 13 to 19 years old in Boston, Massachusetts. Ten-percent of the students were identified as LGBT. Results indicated that they had significantly higher levels of depression, and they were more likely than heterosexual students to report suicidal ideation or self-harm. Sexual minority individuals were at risk for depression, and, if they were male, they were at higher risk for self-harm and suicidal ideation. Almeida et al. (2009) concluded, “perceived discrimination is a likely contributor to emotional distress among LGBT youth” (Almeida et al., 2009, p. 1001).

School counselors are positioned to play a crucial role in this outcome and could also train teachers in assist LGB students. McIntyre (2009) conducted surveys and interviews to assess how teachers in Scotland might facilitate classroom discussions of sexuality in light of their knowledge and comfort levels. The researcher discovered that these teachers were not competent enough to handle these discussions nor did they possess the language necessary to discuss diverse sexualities. A number of teachers would have benefited from having more education in this area.

**Academic considerations.** LGB students may harbor internalized feelings of low self-esteem, self-pity, self-hatred, and trauma (Savin-Williams, 1990). These challenges can limit educational opportunities for LGB students and also contribute to greater levels of absenteeism, discipline referrals, and lower levels of academic achievement, including personal academic failure Diaz et al., 2010; Pope et al., 2004; Remafedi, 1987). According to Remafedi (1987), 80% of gay and lesbian students report academic

challenges. Robinson and Espelage (2011) evaluated the educational experiences of sexual minority youth. The researchers explored different aspects between LGBTQ youth and heterosexual youth by analyzing data from the Dane County Youth Assessment (DCYA) Survey to assess both the mental and physical well-being of students who independently completed the anonymous survey. The survey was distributed in 2008-2009, and data were retrieved from 13,213 middle and high school students in 30 schools in Dane County, Wisconsin. The survey consisted of 117 items covering topics from bullying and victimization to suicide, sexual behavior and identity, and drug use. Findings indicated that LGBTQ youth were more likely than their heterosexual counterparts (a) to have considered suicide in the past 30 days (25.9% of LGBTQ youth versus 8.1% of heterosexual youth), (b) to have attempted suicide at one time or another during the prior year (9.2% of LGBTQ youth), and (c) to have been victims of cyber-bullying (34% of LGBTQ youth). Middle school was when students were slightly more likely to be cyber-bullied, and it was also the time during which LGBTQ students' truancy levels were the highest, therefore the authors argued that "interventions aimed at reducing truancy of LGBTQ students should begin early" (Robinson & Espelage, 2011, p. 324).

Walls, Kane, and Wisneski (2010) examined nearly 300 LGBTQ youths' school experiences in light of the presence or absence of Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) in their schools in addition to their level of participation in such groups. The results of their study indicated that LGBTQ students perform better academically and attend school more regularly when GSAs are present. Similar to the positive effects on those who actually

attended the GSAs, those who had limited participation or who had not participated at all also were affected positively. Students enrolled in schools with GSAs have reported less experience of verbal prejudice and harassment as well as less physical abuse and absence (Kosciw et al., 2008). GSAs appear to be a powerful resource for school counselors. Students also perceive school counselors who sponsor GSAs as role models (Valenti & Campbell, 2009), another key factor in school-based LGB advocacy.

### **ACA Advocacy Competencies**

Student advocacy has been central to school counseling for decades. In 1998, Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) became a division of the American Counseling Association. CSJ was developed “to implement social action strategies to empower clients, students, and oppressed individuals and groups” (Green, McCollom, & Hays, 2008, p. 14). The American Counseling Association advocacy competencies were drafted in 2002 to advance the mission of CSJ (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2002). The competencies are based on a social justice philosophy and state that three domains exist where counselors advocate for change (client/student advocacy, school/community advocacy, and public arena advocacy) (Ratts, DeKruyf, & Chen-Hayes, 2007). Each domain has two levels. One represents counselor advocacy action with a particular stakeholder (e.g., a LGB student) or system, and another represents counselor advocacy action on behalf of a particular stakeholder. In the client/student advocacy domain, the two levels are client/student empowerment and client/student advocacy. In the school/community domain, the two levels are community collaboration and systems advocacy. In the public arena domain, the two levels are public information and

social/political advocacy. According to Crethar (2010), “examples of effective applications of the Advocacy Competencies at different levels with regard to sexual/affectional orientation include the LGBTQ affirmative training for school counselors (Whitman, Horn, & Boyd, 2007) and LGBTQ affirmative training of school professionals by school counselors (Bauman & Sachs-Kapp, 1998)” (p. 113).

Singh (2010) has recommended working with queer students at each level in each of the advocacy competency domains. In regards to empowerment and advocacy at the client/student level, school counselors assist LGB students in mitigating the effects of internalized heterosexism, the negative beliefs they have about themselves as LGB, and school counselors teach the community about queer concerns and have related resources available in the counseling center. In regards to systems advocacy and community collaboration at the school/community level, school counselors are allies and promote a safe school climate by using climate surveys, forming GSAs and LGBTQ advocacy teams, and developing best practices. They also use resources from and consult with organization such as Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), distribute survey to assess the effectiveness of programming already in place in schools, and develop a directory of queer resources. Lastly, in regards to public information and social/political advocacy in the public arena domain, Singh (2010) recommended that school counselors share the knowledge they have about their school communities with the public and work to identify the issues affecting queer students locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. School counselors should also be prepared to develop grassroots movements.

### **CACREP Standards**

Similar to the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2010), advocacy as a concept is woven throughout the CACREP (2009) standards, and it has been embedded in the following CACREP core counseling courses: addiction counseling; career counseling; clinical mental health counseling; marriage, couple, and family, counseling; school counseling; student affairs; and college counseling. CACREP (2009) has defined advocacy as the following:

Action taken on behalf of clients or the counseling profession to support appropriate policies and standards for the profession; promote individual human worth, dignity, and potential; and oppose or work to change policies and procedures, systemic barriers, long-standing traditions, and preconceived notions that stifle human development. (p. 59)

Specific to school counseling, the standards inform that advocacy is related to knowledge, skills, and practices including those for working with issues around sexual identity. CACREP (2009) requires that the school counselor-in-training

- understands the cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and political issues surrounding diversity, equity, and excellence in terms of student learning;
- identifies community, environmental, and institutional opportunities that enhance—as well as barriers that impede—the academic, career, and personal/social development of students;



- understands the ways in which educational policies, programs, and practices can be developed, adapted, and modified to be culturally congruent with the needs of students and their families;
- understands multicultural counseling issues, as well as the impact of ability levels, stereotyping, family, socioeconomic status, gender, and sexual identity, and their effects on student achievement;
- demonstrates multicultural competencies in relation to diversity, equity, and opportunity in student learning and development;
- advocates for the learning and academic experiences necessary to promote the academic, career, and personal/social development of students;
- advocates for school policies, programs, and services that enhance a positive school climate and are equitable and responsive to multicultural student populations; and
- engages parents, guardians, and families to promote the academic, career, and personal/social development of students.

According to Goldsmith (2011), “advocacy is not a destination, but a journey” (p. 28). Counselors improve their advocacy skills as they become more knowledgeable of policy considerations, goals for advocacy planning, and key relationships in their communities. Regarding LGB students, advocacy requires development of an understanding of the LGB community, the effects of oppression, sexual identity development, related curricula, and identification methods. As school counselors develop

this knowledge and obtain these skills, they will become more inclined to identify and assist LGB students (Goodrich & Luke, 2010).

### **ASCA National Model**

Dimmitt and Carey (2007) shared that model counseling programs aim to assist every student including LGB students in becoming academically successful through prevention education. The ASCA Model was developed based on *The National Standards for School Counseling Programs* (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Norm Gysbers, who developed a model for statewide guidance in Missouri in 1984, also contributed to its development (Good, Fischer, Johnston, & Heppner, 1994). The Model was developed “to expand on and integrate the ASCA National Standards into a comprehensive framework that addressed the ‘how’ of school counseling” (Erford, 2011, p. 45). “The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Program recommends the majority of the school counselor’s time be spent in direct service to all students so that every student receives maximum benefits from the program” (ASCA, 2005, p. 13). Stemming from decades of confusion regarding the role of school counselor and the need for more accountability, the model now provides a foundation to understand the evolving leadership role of the professional school counselor (Lieberman, 2004). Erford (2011) has written the following:

The ASCA National Model borrowed heavily from several existing and effective approaches (e.g., Gysbers & Henderson, 2006; Myrick, 2003). In doing so, professional school counselors were encouraged to switch from the traditional focus on services for some select needy students to program-centered services for

every student in the school and, by extension, their families and community. (p. 45)

The ASCA Model is comprised of four major components: (a) the foundation, (b) the delivery system, (c) the management system, and (d) accountability (ASCA, 2005). The foundation addresses what students will learn and do pertaining to a particular counseling program's beliefs and philosophy, mission statement, developmental domains, and national standards/student competencies. The delivery system informs what a counselor will do in his/her role such as offering guidance lessons, individual student planning, response to activities (e.g., referral and/or consultation), and systems support, which is advocacy, collaboration, leadership, professional development, and program management. The management system describes the organization of a program and includes principal/counselor agreements, the makeup of advisory councils, data usage, action planning, and time allocation. Accountability defines how a school counselor will report on how students are being included in the counseling program. This may involve referencing school counselor performance standards and using program audits and result reports. Schwallie-Giddis, ter Maat, & Pak (2003) reported that the model is a proactive tool that supports the development and maintenance of effective school counseling practices with an emphasis on student standards and academic success.

Additionally, the ASCA Model highlights four key themes: (a) leadership, (b) collaboration and teaming, (c) systemic change, and (d) advocacy. These

themes assist school counselors in assessing students' needs (including the family system). The themes also provide school counselors with a way "to use data to identify and meet needs, as well as to document program effectiveness" (Erford, 2011, p. 45). Leadership means that school counselors work to affect school-, district-, and state-wide systemic change. "School counselors promote student success by closing the existing achievement gap" (ASCA, 2005, p. 24).

Collaboration and teaming involves school counselors working with all school stakeholders to improve counseling services based on data and serving as referral resources in the school community. Systemic change emphasizes that school counselors are in a unique position to oversee the dynamics in schools both quantitatively and qualitatively, which impact every student (e.g., grades, course-taking patterns, and school-wide policies). Specific to advocacy, Erford (2011) has written the following:

Advocacy involves the systematic identification of student needs and accompanying efforts to ensure that those needs are met. Professional school counselors help every student to achieve academic success by setting high expectations, providing needed support, and removing systemic barriers to success. (p. 45)

As advocates, school counselors ensure that every student is being challenged academically. Additionally, they promote equity and excellence in education which benefits students who face barriers to their academic success (ASCA, 2005). One way in which this is done is through action research. Dahir

and Stone (2009) suggested that action research (i.e., the MEASURE approach) is the heart of counselor accountability. Action research serves as a way to gather information to improve the school as a whole as well as to make the school counseling program more visible.

### **Brown and Trusty's Competencies**

Brown and Trusty (2005) reviewed the literature and drew upon their own experiences as advocates, counselor educators, and school counselors to formulate advocacy competencies for professional school counselors. Unlike the ASCA Model, they identified knowledge, dispositions, and skills required for advocacy. According to Brown and Trusty (2005), when advocacy is conceptualized in terms of competencies, school counselors understand it, define it, and implement it better. The dispositions that they have proposed include advocacy, family support/empowerment, social advocacy, and ethics. Additionally, knowledge of resources, parameters, dispute resolution mechanisms, advocacy models, and systems change were proposed. Lastly, the skills that they have proposed for school counselors include communication, collaboration, problem-assessment, problem-solving, organization, and self-care. According to the authors, these skills are connected to school counselors' advocacy dispositions, the foundation for advocacy skill development. Brown and Trusty's advocacy competencies also inform development of a seven step stage model for school counselor advocacy. The stages are (a) developing advocacy dispositions, (b) developing advocacy knowledge and relationships, (c) defining an advocacy problem, (e) developing an

action plan, (f) implementing the plan, (g) conducting an evaluation, and (h) celebrating/regrouping around advocacy outcomes (Brown & Trusty, 2005).

The ACA Advocacy Competencies, the CACREP Standards, the ASCA National Model, and Brown and Trusty's Advocacy Competencies have been reviewed in the prior sections. A comprehensive review for this study has indicated that advocacy counseling remains an integral part of the counseling profession and has been central to the training and practice of school counselors. The field of school counseling remains deeply committed to the prospect of advocacy for all students. Advocacy activity skill and development are at the core of this movement and should be assessed in light of the needs of LGB students. This study has provided a greater understanding of this need as well as factors related to this call to conscience.

### **School Counselor Advocacy**

Advocacy is defined in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as “the act of supporting a cause,” and it has been part of the counseling field since 1971 when the American Counseling Association was referred to as the American Personnel and Guidance Association. At that time, Dworkin and Dworkin (1971) called for counselors to become social change agents, and renowned counseling theorists, Frank Parsons and Carl Rogers, envisioned change at both the individual and societal levels (McWhirter, 1997). More recently, Bemak and Chung (2008) called for school counselors to “take professional and personal risks to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to access high-quality education” (p. 380).

Professional school counselors who practice according to the ASCA Model (2005) strive to advocate for all student groups. According to the *ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (2010), school counselors advocate for all students regardless of ability/disability (including students who have special needs), age, appearance, family, gender, gender identity/expression, immigration status, language (ESL or ELL), marital status, race/ethnicity, religious/spiritual identity, sexual orientation, or social class. Advocacy is woven throughout the ethical standards under five areas: (a) Academic, Career/College/Post-Secondary Access and Personal/Social Counseling Plans; (b) Technology; (c) Responsibilities to the School, Communities and Families; (d) Responsibilities to Self; and (e) Responsibilities to the Profession. References to advocacy are most prominent under Responsibilities to Self in two sections, Professional Competence and Multicultural and Social Justice Advocacy and Leadership. The former section, Professional Competence, indicates that school counselors are responsible for their own advocacy and cultural competency levels, knowledge of current research, program coordination, understanding and use of technology, and use of data to assess for equity. The latter section, Multicultural and Social Justice Advocacy and Leadership, indicates that professional school counselors (a) self-monitor their advocacy knowledge and skills to avoid imposing their values on others, (b) affirm school stakeholders' cultural and linguistic identities and promote policies and practices (e.g., translation and/or use of bi/multilingual materials) on behalf of students who speak English as a second language as well as for students with disabilities, and (c) develop equity based programs to support all students in pursuing

their academic goals. The guidelines also denote that school counselors are responsible for seeking out consultation and receiving education and training to work effectively with all populations.

Similar to Parsons and Rogers who envisioned change taking place at both the individual and societal levels (McWhirter, 1997), school counselor advocates have been charged to address educational inequities at both a microlevel and a macrolevel (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Holcomb-McCoy (2007) described educational inequities as “unequal application of the same rule to unequal groups” (p. 18). At the microlevel, school counselors could teach students how to self-advocate or they might advocate on behalf of the students themselves. At the macrolevel, school counselors could advocate on behalf of students in a larger setting (e.g., the local community) to effect broader change. Therefore, school counselors should make a distinction between the microlevel and the macrolevel levels because if a problem exists at both levels, for example, the effectiveness of advocacy initiatives might be limited. Understanding this holds the potential to improve how students are taught and to expose them to more educational experiences (Musheno & Talbert, 2003). This is especially important for LGB students with regard to sexual identity development and wellness.

### **Personal Experiences and Definitions**

McMahan, Singh, Urbano, and Haston (2010) reviewed the literature on school counselor advocacy and discovered limited empirical research on why school counselors personally self-identify as advocates. In the literature, this has been referred to as the influence of personhood, qualities that confer what it means to be a distinct individual in



the practice of advocacy efforts. Research exists, however, that indicates school counselors' personality characteristics are related to their skills (Brott & Myers, 1999; Littrell & Peterson, 2001; Moyer & Yu, 2012). In a qualitative study with 16 school counselors who considered themselves social justice advocates, these school counselors held the belief that their identities were crucial to their advocacy role (Singh, Urbano, Haston, & McMahan, 2010). Seemingly, personal self-awareness is a key factor to assess in relationship to effective levels of social justice advocacy in schools. Assessing how and why self-identified school counselor advocates perform certain activities at particular levels on behalf of certain students (e.g., LGB students) is a relevant question for school counseling researchers to ask.

McMahan et al. (2010) interviewed 16 professional school counselors who self-identified as social justice advocates working in a Southeastern part of the United States. They were required to hold a master's degree in counseling. The interviews lasted from 45 to 120 minutes, and, during the interview time, respondents answered open and flexible questions about advocacy. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded through open, axial, and selective coding techniques. The team discovered that the school counselors' advocacy work was related to three themes: (a) racial identity, (b) self-reflection, and (c) feminist style of work. In addition, four categories related to personhood resulted: (a) beliefs, (b) emotions, (c) experiences, and (d) personality. Respondents discussed how their own personal power was related to their racial/ethnic or other (e.g., minority) status. Additionally, they shared that personal self-reflection was a key component in their advocacy development. As the researchers reviewed data, they

also discovered that the school counselors' practices appeared feminist in nature. The counselors used collaborative and empowerment techniques. They helped clients to effectively use their voices, to raise their conscious awareness, and to self-reflect. In regards to personality, the counselors indicated that their personalities were integral to their work. They identified themselves as being resourceful, proactive, patient, direct, curious, headstrong, and flexible. Many had been exposed to diversity, culture, and social justice issues. The counselors also believed that they had a moral duty to include advocacy into their work and this was driven by emotion. "They were passionate, enthusiastic, and emotionally invested in their work as advocates" (McMahan et al., 2010, p. 19). The findings of this study indicated that school counselors draw on aspects of themselves in their realized vision to be advocates.

### **Capturing School Counselor Advocacy**

Singh et al. (2010) interviewed 16 school counselors noting that limited research existed on social justice advocacy training for school counselors. To examine school counselors' perceptions of their advocacy efforts, the researchers asked, "What advocacy strategies do school counselors who self-identify as social justice advocates use to enact change within their school communities" (Singh et al., 2010, p. 4). The counselors were (a) politically astute in their efforts to raise others' levels of consciousness around issues (e.g., they knew when to listen more than to speak), (b) able to begin and facilitate challenging discussions which would make some others uncomfortable, (c) intentional about developing relationships to rely on for social change, (d) viewed everyone who worked with them as potential allies, (e) had the ability to teach self-advocacy skills to

students through specific interventions or activities such as role play, (f) used data in their advocacy efforts (e.g., placement and/or referral data), and (g) taught others about the role of the school counselor as an advocate working as a proactive change agent.

Field (2002) researched school counselors' personal definitions of advocacy. She discovered that school counselor advocacy involved school counselors doing more than what was expected while continuing to provide individualized services to students. They were also willing to be unpopular. Bemak and Chung (2008) further examined this finding in light of school counselor multicultural/social justice advocacy. They explained how school counselors could close the achievement gap. Additionally, they explored nice counselor syndrome, a factor related to school counselors' unwillingness to become active change agents. Nice counselor syndrome (NCS) contributes to the resistance of school counselors to refrain from instituting changes to their role called for by social justice advocates (Bemak & Chung, 2008). According to D'Andrea and Daniels, "the value these counselors place on being viewed as nice people by others overshadows their willingness to implement multicultural/social justice advocacy and organizational change services that predictably result in interpersonal disagreements and conflicts with other school personnel, especially those interested in maintaining the existing educational status quo" (cited by Bemak & Chung, 2008, p. 374). They conform to the needs of others, many of which maintain inequity in the school. School counselors have also been found to undertake tasks (e.g., bus duty or substitute teaching) which detract from their specialized counseling skills and potential LGB advocacy activity. For school counselors

who overcome NCS, they are inclined to become school counselor advocates. Bemak and Chung (2008) have proposed 16 tasks to enhance school counselors' advocacy skills:

1. Aligning school counselor advocacy initiatives with a school's mission through improvement of student attendance, test scores, incidents of discipline, dropout rates, and school climate.
2. Making use of data driven strategies.
3. Maintaining effective levels of advocacy by not internalizing victimization.
4. Realizing that advocacy is about contributing to the greater good.
5. Standing up to NCS.
6. Avoiding the personalization of negative reactions to injustice.
7. Developing the courage to speak out.
8. Addressing the impact of history, environment, culture, politics, society, and organization on student development.
9. Taking calculated risks.
10. Taking time to process the effects of multicultural/social justice advocacy efforts.
11. Developing personal and professional partnerships.
12. Accepting conflict as a nature of the beast.
13. Becoming politically aware and knowledgeable.
14. Avoiding unproductive petty arguments and conflict.
15. Appreciating ambiguity with change.

16. Being faithful while appreciating those who have advocated before and will advocate after you for social justice and equality.

### **School Counselor LGB Advocacy Activity**

Simons et al. (2014) interviewed six self-identified high school counselor advocates as part of a qualitative research study exploring factors potentially related to school counselor LGB advocacy. They shared,

When I was in a counselor training program I was actually told by a professor that I had that I would never be able to be an out educator and work in the schools that we just were not there yet. And my response was that if I could not be who I was I was doing a disservice to the students. How could we let them know that it is okay to be who [*sic*] they are but yet deny or lie about who we were and I said I'll take my chances. (anonymous, personal communication, October 25, 2011)

So, you know, it is just something that I have just come around. It has been a long struggle. I think in '65 when I have started, even in the early '70s I would have been very uncomfortable advocating for Gay and Lesbian students. I wouldn't be that uncomfortable any more. (anonymous, personal communication, April 12, 2012)

You can tell by counselors that they have opinions about things that really should not color their work with students, but it will. So I went around and handed out – I have my little pyramid, my little GSA logo (...) so I expect everybody here will be supportive of all of our students no matter what their issues are. (anonymous, personal communication, April 12, 2012)

For this study school counselor LGB advocacy activity was assessed by utilizing the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale (LGBAAS) developed from a comprehensive literature review for the current study. It is important, however, to note that some of the empirical and conceptual research reviewed may not have explicitly used the word “advocacy.” Nonetheless, this research referenced appeared to have practical significance in relationship to recommended advocacy on behalf of LGB students (Byrd & Hays, 2012; Durby, 1994; Jordan, 2011; Pope, 2000; Pope et al., 2004; Reynolds & Koski, 1993). Border shared, “The terms school counselor and advocate can be used synonymously, which make it difficult to isolate advocacy skills from other skills school counselors display” (as cited by Clemens et al., 2011, p. 34). Definitions of and perspectives on school counselor advocacy have varied widely and no definitive definition for the construct of school counselor LGB advocacy exists. Therefore, research studies that offer recommendations for school counselors and other school stakeholders who work with LGB students were referenced to develop the LGBAAS.

Of the 34 ASCA Position Statements (2013), 22 explicitly reference advocacy, and the ASCA *Position Statement on the Professional School Counselor and LGBTQ Youth* (2013) reads:

Professional school counselors promote equal opportunity and respect for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Professional school counselors work to eliminate barriers impeding student development and achievement and are committed to the academic, career and personal/social development of all students. (p. 32)

Thompson (2012) has written a textbook on professional school counseling. In this book, she identified sexual minority youth as an at-risk population and highlighted that school counselor LGB advocates should be aware of the intersection of homophobia and race, sexual identity development and the coming out process, the principal's role in the school, and the need for school-based interventions. "Although controversial, there is a growing moral obligation for school-based interventions and educational training for school faculty and staff to create a safe, supportive, and nondiscriminatory environment for sexual minority youth from a social justice perspective" (Thompson, 2012, p. 325). As this occurs, LGB students will experience fewer challenges and subsequent mental health problems (Sinclair, 2010). I suggest that school counselors should possess the necessary knowledge and skills to become part of this movement.

Bidell (2011) provided an overview of the GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) in relationship to social justice and professional school counselor advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ students. He wrote about GSA history and why Gay Straight Alliances have been a recommended for school counselor LGBTQ advocacy. According to GLSEN (n.d.), GSAs exist in all 50 states. The groups began in "Fairfax High School in California and three Boston area high schools" (Bidell, 2011, p.6). Efforts negating the development of GSAs have been largely prevented in the federal courts based on the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and the Equal Access Act of 1984 (Biegel, 2010). Despite the attempts, however, to limit the formation of GSAs, the groups have continued to

spread throughout the United States (Kosciw et al., 2008; Russell et al., 2009).

GSA's are a key component to school counselor LGB advocacy.

DePaul et al. (2009) proposed a three-tiered action plan for school counselors working with LGB students in middle and high schools. School counselor LGB advocates work at the student level, the school staff level, and the institutional level (DePaul et al., 2009). At the student level, the students' needs are central (e.g., a counselor might witness how a LGB student is treated by his/her peers in high school). At the school staff level, the role that teachers and school counselors play in the lives of LGB students is highlighted (e.g., a school counselor becomes an LGB-ally role model). At the institutional level, school policies are addressed. School counselors advocate for inclusive LGB policies even though such discussions may be controversial (Macgillivray, 2004). Each level is related to the role of the school counselor in promoting whole-school prevention, targeted prevention, and intensive intervention. Whole-school prevention takes place when school counselors "enhance school climate through the use of strategies to enhance the visibility and acceptance of LGB issues" (DePaul et al., 2009, p. 302). Examples of these strategies include displaying symbols, promoting models, sponsoring a GSA, utilizing inclusive language, and challenging stereotypes. Targeted prevention is provided for student groups that are at-risk due to racism, classism, and heterosexism. School counselors offer professional development for teachers and push for the development of GSA's and partnerships with community groups that assist LGB students. Lastly, intensive intervention involves providing LGB students (and their family



members and others who care for them) individual and group counseling services and psychoeducation.

Whitman et al. (2007) have written about the training of school counselors to meet the needs of LGBTQ students. They proposed a training model “to train school counselors and other educational professionals to be agents of change within their own school community toward creating safer and supportive environments for LGBTQ youth” (Whitman et al., 2007, p. 144). They discussed the role of school counselors in participating in advocacy actions on behalf of LGBTQ youth whose academic and personal development is at-risk.

The role of the professional school counselor has emerged to include advocacy for LGB students. Brubaker et al. (2011) explored multicultural-social justice leadership strategies for counselors and counselor educators to use in advocating for LGBTQQ individuals in a collaborative session at the Multicultural Social Justice Leadership Development Academy at the 2010 ACA Conference. The session was part of an advocacy counseling initiative to strive for the rights of LGBTQQ persons, and it was divided into three parts. The first part was focused on foundational LGBTQQ knowledge. Topics discussed included language use, microaggressions, current LGBTQQ events and formal research, and strategies for use at each of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological levels. The second part was on LGBTQQ advocacy strategies and the need for counselors to speak out or do on behalf of LGBTQQ persons, to take risks, to respect diversity of viewpoints and cultural considerations in the LGBTQQ community, and to use nine leadership

advocacy strategies proposed by the Georgia Safe Schools Coalition [GSSC] (2009). The nine strategies proposed were to

- gain knowledgeable of your audience,
- convey messages with respectful,
- seek out commonalities,
- use language that will unite people,
- create a main message with supporting messages,
- reframe conversations when they center around myths and/or stereotypes of the LGBTQQ community,
- utilize opposition framing to challenge inaccurate information,
- share personal messages around LGBTQQ issues since they elicit strong emotion, and
- prepare and practice in advance to share clear messages to others who have differing opinions. (Brubaker et al., 2011)

The third part of the session was dedicated to a series of leadership narratives. Specific to school counseling, seven activities were recommended to facilitate development of similar advocacy initiatives outside Georgia. The first three recommendations included developing a comprehensive manual in a variety of formats, creating a Safe Zone sticker that counselors display in their work settings, and using technology such as social media and e-mail. Fourth, it was recommended that lobbying for inclusive LGBTQQ policies should be at the forefront of a group's action plan. Fifth, members should learn more about LGBTQQ issues. Final recommendations included

producing films to document that LGBTQQ persons exist everywhere, and identifying trained GSSC representatives to service each county in Georgia.

Stone (2003) wrote, “Counselors in schools are ideally situated to advocate for a safe and inclusive school climate for gay, lesbian, and bisexual students. (...) School counselors and community mental health counselors positioned in schools can be instrumental in advocating for [them]” (pp. 143-144). She called for the development of more humanistic schools “for the invisible minority” (Stone, 2003, p. 143). She offered 18 recommendations for these mental health professionals. According to her, they should

- seek consultation with professional peers to develop plans for countering harassment;
- promote collaboration and involve allies in development and implementation of school-based interventions;
- provide school officials with information on *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education*, a court case that resulted in a school district having to pay out a monetary settlement because sexual harassment between students persisted;
- promote inclusive policies with a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment;
- reach out to Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) for support and resources in use in schools;
- challenge verbal and derogatory remarks, promote use of inclusive language, and develop initiatives to promote diversity and multiculturalism;
- display support symbols to indicate to the students that one either an ally or friend;

- strategize to develop effective approaches to facilitate discussions around sexuality;
  - rely on unconditional acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning students regardless of community policies, standards, or values;
  - involve and assist parents of students if possible;
  - seek out training and offer training to school personnel;
  - utilize activities to limit violence;
  - foster family-school partnerships and communication;
  - become part of the team who selects and/or purchases books that include LGB information and promote their use in curriculum materials (e.g., Lipkin's list of well-known LGB people);
  - procure books that could be made available in the counseling center;
  - advocate for the reduction of hate crime in order to educate the community;
  - think about contributing to the literature on advocating for LGB youth; and
  - seek out ways to introduce the school community to positive LGB role models.
- (Stone, 2003)

Byrd and Hays (2012) researched three aspects of school counselor training and practice: self-awareness, sexuality identity development of LGBTQ individuals, and affirmative schools for LGBTQ students. They offered an activity for each of areas to assist school counselors in becoming more affirmative of LGBTQ persons while arguing that “the need for supportive and accepting counselors and educators is evident” (Byrd & Hays, 2012, p. 4). In regards to developing greater self-awareness and competence

around issues concerning LGBTQ sexual identity development, the authors recommended that educational and training programs offer present or future school counselors the opportunity to self-reflect over their own attitudes and beliefs about LGBTQ individuals including messages that they received as children. A GLSEN Safe Space Training activity was proposed as a way to facilitate this. In regards to learning about the sexual identity development of LGBTQ youth, the authors provided a case study for school counselors to read and assess how they might respond to a student who was coming out. A school counselor should

- be supportive but not make the assumption that help is needed;
- be accepting by using inclusive language and not making assumptions about one's sexual orientation;
- show appreciation for the courage of these students;
- be willing to listen for as long and as often is necessary;
- maintain confidentiality and respect privacy;
- use questions that convey acceptance, understanding, and compassion;
- remember that although a student comes out, s/he is still the same person;
- be willing to challenge traditions and expectations by reflecting over beliefs;  
and
- be willing to refer if unable to answer particular questions or offer the necessary emotional support (yet not due to unwillingness to see the student because of his/her LGBTQ status). (Byrd & Hays, 2012)

Fostering an affirmative LGBTQ-school climate must be undertaken as well (Pope et al., 2004). According to Byrd and Hays (2012), school counselors should brainstorm about ways to do this. School counselors should demonstrate visibility (e.g. display LGBTQ symbols in their office spaces). Pope et al. (2004) referred to this as making use of “subtle signs” (p. 711). Second, they should talk openly to others about being an ally for the success of LGBTQ students too. Third, school counselors should make use of inclusive/affirmative language. Fourth, school counselors should not neglect to respond to harassment or violence aimed at LGBTQ students. Lack of response to this injustice contributed to discrimination and put LGBTQ students at risk. Learning to intervene is a skill that fortunately can be practiced and learned over time. Five recommendations have been proposed by Durby (1994) pertaining to work with sexual minority youth in Israel and other countries. There were the following:

1. School members, including students, should talk about and include the topics of homosexuality and diversity in curriculum.
2. School settings should be safe for sexual minority youth, literature on sexual minority life should be available, and staff members should take an active stance against homophobic acts or statements.
3. Teacher training should include discussion about sexuality and sexual orientation.
4. Schools should teach parents about sexual identity development and counselors should have resources for them (e.g., a contact at PFLAG).
5. Accurate information about sexual orientation should be disseminated.

Members of a high school GSA in California made recommendations related to LGB advocacy (Jordan, 2011). According to these people, advocates of sexual minority youth should be proactive. LGBTQ students may not report harassment because they do not want to be threatened if their sexual orientation is discovered by others. Advocates demonstrate their support by on-going action. Students should be told that homophobic slurs will not be tolerated and offenders will be immediately reprimanded. Having safe places for LGBTQ youth which are labeled is important. LGBTQ students will be more likely to seek out for support from those who visibly support LGBTQ youth.

Pope (2000) has written about preventing violence aimed gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) youth highlighting that school personnel hold indifferent attitudes toward harassment (e.g. demeaning remarks ignored). These attitudes might be preferred or school personnel simply may not have the knowledge and skills necessary to intervene in these outcomes effectively. The professional school counselor is in a unique position to counter this (Pope et al., 2004). Pope et al. (2004) have recommended that professional school counselors promote policies that foster safe and inclusive school environments for sexual minority students, promote discussion around sexual minority issues that make speaking about sexuality less frowned upon, familiarize themselves about the challenges sexual minority students face, become knowledgeable about ethical and legal implications, offer interventions which challenge conscious and unconscious homophobic attitudes, support psychoaffective education and mental health and career counseling, utilize assessments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to promote valuing differences, and offer positive sexual minority role models. Having

resources available for sexual minority students to reference at the school or online is valuable as well. Additionally, sexual minority students and their family members should also have access to free counseling services and use of affirmative language in schools should become the norm (e.g., using the word partner instead of the words husband or wife) (Pope et al., 2004). A key feature of this article is that it also had a list of several diversity workshop resources from: (a) the American Friends Service Committee, (b) B'nai B'rith, (c) Besner and Spungin's (1995) book titled *Gay & Lesbian Students: Understanding Their Needs*; (d) GLSEN (i.e., the Teaching Respect for All Program); and (e) the National Coalition Building Institute.

Reynolds and Koski (1993) shared “unfortunately few school counselors have been trained to effectively work with LGB youth (...) [yet] there are a multitude of skills, sensitivities, and roles that school counselors can incorporate into their daily work lives to address the needs of LGB youth” (p. 88). Hunter and Schaecher and Wakelee-Lynchski (as cited by Reynolds and Koski, 1993) recommended that school counselors

- affirm and support LGB youth;
- provide accurate knowledge;
- be role models;
- provide counseling but also be willing to be a consultant/advisor;
- assist with self-awareness;
- improve competence through readings and trainings;
- provide information on LGB concerns, the process of coming out, HIV, and refute myths;



- provide information about local assistance including referral resources;
- be LGB or ally role models and disclose at appropriate times;
- be willing to talk to LGB adolescents;
- develop and open and sensitive office space;
- ensure confidentiality and privacy;
- offer trainings for the school community on sexual orientation; and
- present information on sexual orientation as part of everyday life.

### **School Counselor LGB Advocacy Intentions**

For this study LGB advocacy intentions were assessed by the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Intentions Scale (LGBAIS). The scale was developed from the work of Carlson (2004), and it had 17 items, which were used to measure school counselors' involvement with gifted and talented students for her dissertation study. Goldsmith (2011) made use of these same items to measure school counselors' advocacy activity with gifted students. For this study, the LGBAIS was modified to measure middle and high school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions. Ajzen (1988) reported that intention is related to effort levels. For example, school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions may relate to the levels of effort that they are willing to contribute in order to enact a group of LGB advocacy related behaviors. It was assumed that if school counselors possess higher levels of intention (e.g., therapeutic intentions) to advocate on behalf of LGB students, they would be more likely to perform or attempt to perform certain advocacy actions (e.g., provide affirmative therapy). Therapeutic intentions in particular involve counselors assisting clients (e.g., students) to establish goals for therapy. They also involve

counseling behaviors “central to the processes and outcomes of therapy” (Viney, 1996, p. 50). According to the TPB, three key factors are related to intention. For this study, these factors were school counselors’ attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm.

### **School Counselors’ Attitudes Toward LGB Students**

Attitudes are comprised of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). For this study, school counselors’ attitudes toward LGB persons (biases, prejudices, and stereotypes) were assessed by the 10-item Attitudes subscale of the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS; Bidell, 2005). According to Ajzen (1996), a general definition of attitude is how one responds to a concept, event, object, or person with some degree of favor or disfavor. Therefore, school counselors’ attitudes toward LGB persons were important to examine in the literature since school counselors have a major responsibility in working with this population. Sexual minority individuals have reported comfort when working with mental health providers who hold positive attitudes toward them (Rudolph, 1988). Bidell (2012) suggested school counselors’ attitudes toward LGB students should be assessed, and, if they harbor negative attitudes, subsequent training steps should be taken to improve such attitudes.

A comprehensive review indicated that limited research on school counselors’ perceptions of sexual minority students exists. Most of the research was focused on the attitudes held by other mental health professionals; however, literature was identified that included pre-service and practicing school counselors’ perspectives (i.e., their attitudes toward LGB youth and practices for LGB youth) (Bidell, 2012; Fontaine, 1998; Grove,

2009; Israel & Hackett, 2004; Jimenez, 2009; McCabe & Rubinson, 2008; Price & Telljohann, 1991; Rainey and Trusty, 2007; Rudolph, 1988; Satcher & Legget, 2007; Schmidt, Glass, & Wooten, 2011; Sears, 1988, 1992).

### **Cultural Considerations**

O'Higgins-Norman (2009a, 2009b) researched the attitudes in Irish culture toward homosexuality, the first of its kind in schools in Ireland. A research study was conducted to assess how attitudes relate to perceived bullying in schools. One-hundred people including teachers, parents, administrators, and students were interviewed from five Dublin high schools. Observational data were also collected. Findings indicated that homophobic bullying was common and tolerated and homosexuality was perceived as abnormal (O'Higgins-Norman, 2009a, 2009b). Views of school counselors, however, were not included for assessment in the study. In 2001, researchers conducted a survey in New Zealand with 821 faculty members and high school students (Nairn & Smith, 2003). They found that both groups harbored homophobic attitudes and observed violence aimed at sexual minority youth.

### **Counselor Perspectives**

Fontaine (1998) studied school counselors in particular and suggested that in general they have been shown to demonstrate high levels of homophobia. Additionally, Rudolph (1988) shared that "the counselor's attitude is a vital variable in the successful encounter with the adolescent as well as in educating others on these issues" (p. 336). Thus, one factor of the TPB that was hypothesized to relate to school counselor LGB advocacy activity was school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons.

Rudolph (1988) reviewed the literature on counselors' and psychotherapists' attitudes toward homosexuality and reported that many of these professionals held contradicting views regarding homosexuality and were unconscious of their attitudes toward homosexuals and homosexual behavior. "It can be seen that therapists are often of two minds when it comes to evaluating the acceptability of homosexuality" (Rudolph, 1988, p. 167). Upwards of 33% of these counselors in some of the studies were also identified as holding prejudicial attitudes, and gay clients therefore perceived their dissatisfaction with counseling related to this. Additionally, the review indicated that although survey research on counselors' perceptions of homosexuality had generally been helpful, it had been limited as well. What is warranted is the need for more survey research on school counselors' actual behavior with homosexual clients (e.g., in session and/or in a particular academic setting), a focus of this study. For example, some educators find it difficult (e.g., embarrassing) to speak with students about sexuality (Hall, 2006), and others find homosexuality abnormal and immoral (Harwood, 2004).

Price and Telljohnn (1991) wrote "counselors' attitudes toward homosexuality may influence their effectiveness in working with homosexual students" (p. 434). They mailed a 32-item questionnaire with a cover letter to a nationwide sample of high school counselors to assess their perceptions of and experiences working with adolescent sexual minorities. Internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha was found to be .76 after distributing the survey to 21 high school counselors enrolled in graduate school. Data from 289 counselors were collected using a national survey of secondary school counselors to answer eight questions. The questions were the following:

1. Have school counselors assisted students who are homosexual?
2. How had school counselors identified homosexual students?
3. How had school counselors offered assistance to homosexual students?
4. How competent did school counselors believe they were in assisting homosexual students?
5. How did school counselors perceive their role in working with homosexual students?
6. Where had school counselors received information about homosexuality?
7. How did school counselors perceive homosexual students?
8. How did the perceptions of school counselors vary by age, gender, education, and the number of years they had worked as school counselors?

Using descriptive statistics, chi-square analysis for nominal variables, F-tests, and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) for continuous variable data,

- 58% reported that homosexual students came to them,
- 25% reported that they identified sexual minority students by seeking them out,
- 25% reported high competence in working with sexual minority students,
- 20% reported low competence in working with sexual minority students,
- 20% reported that it would not be fulfilling to work with sexual minority students,
- 41% believed that sexual minority students needed more assistance,
- 44% believed that the American School Counselor Association should have taken a position on the issue (which it since has),

- 81% indicated that professional journals were a key resource,
- 39% believed that homosexuality was chosen,
- 26% believed that homosexuals had been sexually abused,
- 77% believed that an ongoing intimate same-sex relationship was indicative of homosexuality,
- 67% believed that sexual minority students were more likely to be isolated and rejected, and
- older school counselors were more likely to refer sexual minority students to psychiatrists or physicians.

Price and Telljohann (1991) reported that school counselors in this study had assisted homosexual students but cautioned generalizing this finding to other school counselors as the school counselors in the study who has reported assisting sexual minority students might have been the ones most likely to complete and return surveys.

Sears (1988) conducted a survey study examining middle and high school counselors' attitudes, experiences, and feelings toward homosexual students in South Carolina. One-hundred-forty-two counselors completed the survey comprised of the Counselors' Perceptions of the Quality of School Life for Gays and Lesbians Survey (a measure designed for the study), the Modified Attitudes Toward Homosexuality survey, and the Index of Homophobia measure. A strong relationship was found between school counselors' activities and the feelings and attitudes they had toward homosexuality (Sears, 1988).

Sears (1992) later conducted a two-part study with both students and educators around issues of homosexuality and the treatment of lesbian and gay students. A purposive sample of lesbian and gay young adults, who had recently graduated from high school, was interviewed every 90-minutes, and middle and high school counselors and pre-service teachers in the South were also surveyed. According to Sears (1992), the typical school counselor respondent was a late 30-year-old white female from South Carolina with a master's degree who had counseled rural adolescents for an average of 10 years, and the typical teacher respondent was a 28-year-old unmarried white female student who had taught high school where she had attended.

The school counselors and teachers completed the 30-item Attitudes Toward Homosexuality measure and the Index of Homophobia, and whereas the counselors completed a questionnaire regarding knowledge, beliefs, and experiences around homosexuality; the impact of school climate on homosexual students; and projected related continuing education, the pre-service teachers completed a questionnaire regarding their interactions with gay youth; knowledge of homosexuality; attitudes concerning homosexual school curriculum; and projected professional activity for working with homosexual students. Sears (1992) discovered that 80% of pre-service teachers and 67% of school counselors displayed negative attitudes toward homosexuals, and the school counselors' negative attitudes were slightly less homophobic than the teachers'. Sears (1992) discovered that less homophobic school counselors were also three times more likely to believe that they should challenge prejudice aimed at homosexuals and six times more likely to not believe that they should help homosexuals

“overcome” their same-sex attractions. School counselors with lower levels of education and experience and who were of African-descent were more like to believe that homosexual students should overcome their homosexual feelings. According to Sears (1992), “few counselors expressed positive feelings toward homosexuals or indicated positive reactions to situations wherein they might personally confront homosexuality. Moreover, many counselors were much more likely to express ambivalence on attitudinal items (e.g., the nature of sexual pleasure between members of the same sex)” (p. 55).

Satcher and Legget (2007) conducted an exploratory research study on professional school counselors’ levels of homonegativity, and the authors cited Ajzen’s attitude theory. Ajzen’s attitude theory posits that individuals behave either positively or negatively in light of their attitudes. “People who adhere to negative attitudes toward gays and lesbians may be less likely to take positive action on their behalf” (Satcher & Legget, 2007, p. 10). The researchers argued that since professional school counselors have been mandated to work with gay and lesbian students and research on their attitudes toward these students is limited, they assessed the levels of homonegativity among 215 female professional school counselors in a southern State across multiple demographic variables using modified versions of the Homonegativity Scale and the Modern Homonegativity Scale. A survey with a response rate of 35% was mailed to members of the Southern region of the ACA. The demographic variables that were assessed were the respondent’s age, race, number of gay or lesbian friends/acquaintances, political stance, frequency of church attendance, and professional training on gay and lesbian issues. Respondents were also asked if they had assisted students because the students had



identified as either gay or lesbian or were questioning their sexual orientation. School counselor respondents with significantly lower homonegativity scores had more friends/personal acquaintances who were gay or lesbian, had not attended church in the past month, participated in related training, or had assisted students in the past around gay, lesbian, or questioning (sexual orientation) issues. School counselor respondents with significantly lower homonegativity scores had similar experiences. Satcher and Leggett's (2007) results show that the views of professional school counselors toward gay and lesbian students may vary widely. Consequently, "how PSCs view homosexuality, however, may influence the services they provide for students who represent sexual minorities" (Satcher & Leggett, 2007, p. 14).

Bidell (2012) researched the sexual orientation competencies of school counselors' using the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS). The SOCCS is a valid and reliable measure that assesses the attitudes, skills, and knowledge of counselors who work with LGB people (Bidell, 2005). One-hundred-one participants from four universities consisting of master's and doctoral students and counselor educators/supervisors completed the SOCCS one week after completing the SOCCS along with three other instruments, the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG), the Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale (MCKAS), and the Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES). Internal consistency reliability was .90, and 1-week test-retest reliability was .84. Tests of criterion, convergent, and divergent validity established the psychometric soundness of the SOCCS. The sexual orientation of participants was examined to establish criterion validity, and, as predicted, for sexual

orientation, LGB respondents received significantly higher scores on the SOCCS,  $F(1, 301) = 30.14, p < .001$ . These scores were compared to the participants' scores on the ATLG, MCKAS, and CSES to establish convergent validity. The Attitudes subscale of the SOCCS correlated strongly with the ATLG,  $r(312) = -.78, p < .01$ ; the Skill subscale of the SOCCS correlated strongly with the CSES,  $r(312) = .65, p < .01$ ; and the Knowledge subscale of the SOCCS correlated strongly with the MCKAS Knowledge subscale,  $r(312) = .63, p < .01$ . To assess divergent validity, the participants' overall scores on SOCCS were compared to the mean score from a cluster of social desirability questions ( $M = 1.19, SD = .59$ ). A weak association was found between the SOCCS scores and the social desirability questions ( $r = .27$ ), the Attitudes subscale ( $r = -.03$ ), the Skills subscale ( $r = .33$ ), and the Knowledge subscale ( $r = .17$ ). For this survey study, school counselor respondents completed the Attitudes subscale of the SOCCS. Bidell (2005) has reported on the psychometric properties of the subscale referencing the ATLG. The 10-item ATLG assesses the negative attitudes of people hold toward lesbians and gay men. "Criterion validity was established by comparing ATLG scores with religious and political ideology, interpersonal contact with LGB individuals, and the respondent's own sexual orientation" (Bidell, 2005, p. 272).

Bidell's (2012) study examined the multicultural and sexual orientation counselor competency levels of community and school-based counselors. He found that school counselors had significantly lower levels of competence in both areas. The SOCCS holds the potential to further assess this discrepancy and inform school counselors about their own attitudes, assumptions, and prejudices related to same-sex sexual orientation.

Limited empirical research exists on the assessment of school counselors' work with LGBTQ youth in school. This study aimed to fill this gap. Bidell (2012) has explicitly called for more research using the SOCCS with school counselors (e.g., assessing the relationship between their religious attitudes and their LGBTQ advocacy practices in the schools).

### **Pre-service Counselors**

Schmidt, Glass, and Wooten (2011) examined the knowledge and experiences of master's level school counseling students in the Southeastern United States in working with gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) students. The aim of the quantitative study was "to illuminate current attitudes among master's level students in training to become school counselors towards GLB clients and issues" (Schmidt et al., 2011, p. 4). Eighty-seven school counseling students received online invitations to complete the Knowledge about Homosexuality Questionnaire (Harris, Nightengale, and Owens, 1995). The results indicated that there is a lot of GLB-related information for school counseling students to learn, and the race/ethnicity of these students may inform development of training strategies. One group that had lower levels of GLB knowledge was African-American students. The researchers suggested that these students therefore have a need for more knowledge in this area. A lack of knowledge may relate to how students from different racial/ethnic backgrounds practice with LGB students. If students from different racial/ethnic backgrounds do not think of diversity as including LGB people, the consequence is that LGB students may not receive counseling services that they need

because some school counselors' do not to manage LGB diversity in a sensitive way (Schmidt et al., 2011).

This section has been a report of the research on attitudes toward sexual minorities including LGB students/issues in schools. This is an important area to understand as sexual minorities have been historically marginalized and at-risk. LGB persons have also expressed discomfort with some mental health providers, and, until 1973, the American Psychiatric Association pathologized homosexuality. Today, researchers challenge the use of non-affirmative therapies (i.e., conversion/reparative therapy). School counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons (e.g., biases, prejudices, and stereotypes) may relate to their advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, LGB advocacy intentions, and LGB advocacy activity. These factors were assessed as part of this study using Bidell's (2005) Attitude subscale of the SOCCS, a valid and reliable measure of the attitudes, skills, and knowledge for working with LGB individuals.

### **School Counselors' Advocacy Self-Efficacy**

One way to increase the likelihood that school counselors will advocate for LGB students is to increase their self-efficacy. For this study, advocacy self-efficacy was assessed by seven items on the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE; Bodenhorn, 2001; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). School counselors indicated their confidence levels in performing several advocacy tasks recommended by the American School Counselor Association. Bandura (1995) defined self-efficacy as "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). According to Bodenhorn (2001), self-efficacy is related to social cognitive theory

(SCT). Self-efficacy has also been linked to perceived behavioral control, a construct within the TPB, which is influenced by efficacy expectations (i.e., how much time and/or energy one expects to expend in order to persist in the face adversity). For example, if school counselors find it challenging to assist LGB students, they may avoid providing students with information on sexuality and gender, or school counselors may just assume that there are not any LGB students in the school. Bandura (1986) saw individuals as proactive and self-organizing, reflecting, and regulating. Thus, the ways people develop are related to personal, behavioral, and environmental factors that interact. Within SCT, people are seen as active change agents in their own development fostered through their own independent actions. Central to this concept is the idea that the personal beliefs of people influence how they manage their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Similarly results have been found in studying the influence of personhood on counselor advocacy (McMahan et al., 2010). Bandura (1986) believed that one's attitudes, thoughts, and emotions affected his/her behavior. What people believe about themselves is instrumental to how they control their lives and utilize personal agency (e.g., how they advocate on behalf of LGB students). Therefore, people are "products and producers of their own environments and social systems" (Goldsmith, 2011, p. 29).

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is "concerned with judgments of personal capability" (p. 11). It is self-efficacy that helps one to set goals and define beliefs about how well they will perform as they strive to meet goals. Individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy are individuals who perceive challenges (e.g., meeting the needs of sexual minority students) as tasks to be mastered and not avoided or excluded.

Bandura (2001) believed that efficacy was the bedrock of human agency. Therefore, self-efficacy as the extent to how one manages his/her belief system, either enhances or detracts from one's motivation, wellness, and accomplishments. Bandura (2001) proposed that one's self-efficacy beliefs indicated that their levels of motivation, affect, and behaviors were inherently based on his/her beliefs than objective truth. His/her ability to hold either a favorable or unfavorable view of an action was contingent on personal efficacy beliefs. Consequently, researchers can assess the beliefs people hold about their ability to complete a task in order to predict if these people will enact certain behaviors because self-efficacy beliefs act as determinants of what people will actually do given their knowledge and skills.

Self-efficacy is developed in a variety of ways but most commonly in response to prior success (Bandura, 1986). If a person is successful, future success in the same area is likely to occur again. However, if a person is not successful, future success in the same area is not likely to occur. The person probably won't try to attempt again. A second way one's self-efficacy may be enhanced is through modeling. If a person sees someone succeed usually in an authoritarian role, this person's belief that s/he could be also successful in the same area increases. Two other ways in which self-efficacy is improved is through verbal persuasion and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1986). Verbal persuasion assists in modeling success to another person, and emotional arousal links emotions around ability to efficacy. In a similar fashion, counselor self-efficacy is influenced by what counselors believe about their ability to be successful in their work.

Although there is limited research on self-efficacy and school counselor advocacy, I have argued that it is important to explore school counselor advocacy self-efficacy in relationship to school counselor LGB advocacy activity. By doing this, a greater understanding of why and how school counselors assist these students was obtained. If school counselors are not confident in their training, knowledge, and skills to advocate on behalf of LGB students, then their perceptions of being prepared and their advocacy self-efficacy levels may reflect that.

Most of research on self-efficacy in counseling has been done in the areas of individual and career counseling (Bodenhorn, 2001). Bodenhorn (2001) developed the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE) to assess pre-service and practicing school counselors' confidence and competence in performing transformative school counseling as outlined by the *ASCA National Model*. Seven questions of the SCSE specifically assess advocacy self-efficacy. Owens, Bodenhorn, and Bryant (2010) used the SCSE and a multicultural competency scale to assess school counselor self-efficacy in relationship to school counselor multicultural competence. The researchers argued that as school counselors accrue more experience over time they will gain more multicultural competence. This supports Bandura's (1977) claim that how one performs a given task is significantly related to his/her self-efficacy. Owens et al. (2010) recommended that pre-service school counselors complete a multicultural counseling course and other continuing education to develop greater awareness of diversity.

Tang et al. (2004) studied how counselor self-efficacy was related to graduate level counseling students' training and experiences. They discovered that counselor self-

efficacy and coursework, clinical training, and number of internship hours were significantly correlated. The students who perceived that they had higher levels of counseling competence had completed more courses, internship hours, and related work opportunities in training.

### **Subjective Norm**

The TPB construct of subjective norm is one's perception of social pressure from others to behave in certain way. Thus, subjective norm informs that how school counselors perceive other school stakeholders' views (e.g., students' attitudes) toward LGB advocacy might relate to their LGB advocacy activity and/or intentions. Szalacha (2003) identified the importance of having "school policy primarily for administrators, faculty and staff training for professionals, and GSAs for students" (p. 69). It appears that it is also important for schools to have gay-positive curriculum (Lipkin, 1994; Whatley, 1991) and educators who are visible role models (Bahr, Brish, & Croteau, 2000; Griffin, 1992; Reynolds & Koski, 1993). For this study, middle and high school counselors completed the 14-item Subjective Norm Scale (SNS) to indicate how they perceive students, faculty, and administrators' views of five school counselor LGB advocacy acts/best practice recommendations (identified through a comprehensive literature review). School counselors were asked to report how they perceived the views of students, faculty, and administrators toward school counselor sponsorship of a LGB student group (e.g. a GSA), school counselor support for formalized inclusive LGB nondiscrimination and anti-bullying policies, professional training on LGB issues (e.g.,



how to intervene when students are harassed), guidance curriculum and resources on LGB issues, and school counselor visibility as either a sexual minority or an LGB ally.

### **Theoretical Frame**

Kosciw et al. (2009) have argued that as LGBTQ research evolves, researchers should study areas beyond the victimization of sexual minority youth. School counselors have been charged by the American School Counselor Association to advocate for all students including those who are LGB, yet as the literature review above suggests, research on school counselor advocacy for LGB students has been limited (i.e., mostly anecdotal/conceptual) while improving alongside research on the evolving role of the school counselor as an advocate.

In a qualitative study using grounded theory, McMahan et al. (2010) interviewed 16 school counselors to explore their aspects of “self” in relationship to advocacy, feminist, and racial identity development. The researchers discovered that school counselors’ personal beliefs were related to counseling skills (McMahan et al., 2010). Future research that focuses on school counselors advocacy should be theory driven such as this study and provide not only “how” different factors relate to school counselors’ LGB advocacy levels, but also “why” they relate to these levels (Whetten, 1989). Theories that focus on human behavior or intention to engage in a behavior would be well suited for this research stream (McCabe and Rubinson, 2008). For example, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) is a theory that has been used across disciplines to predict behavior or intention to perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) (see Figure 1).

McCabe and Rubinson (2008) examined the TPB constructs in relationship to social justice for LGBT students among graduate students enrolled in teacher education, school psychology, and school counseling programs at an institution with a social justice mission. Social justice was defined based on school psychology practice standards. The students were asked questions about school based social justice guided by the TPB (Ajzen, 1985) (McCabe & Rubinson, 2008). Findings indicated that while they displayed favorable attitudes about social justice pertaining to race, class, and language, they had inadequate knowledge of issues encountered by LGBT students. They recognized that LGBT students were often marginalized, but did not readily identify LGBT harassment as injustice. They also reported low levels of self-efficacy, inadequate training to promote an affirmative LGBT position in educational settings, unfavorable attitudes about LGBT students, indifference to the topic, concerns about LGBT advocacy efforts with school policy, and lack of power to advocate on behalf of LGBT students. However, “the TPB model provided a useful organizational framework with which to examine graduate students’ preparation and intention for proactive behavior change in schools” (McCabe & Rubinson, 2008, p. 469). The study was an important first step “in exploring the status quo of school psychology and providing directions for future research and action” (Nastasi, 2008, p. 487). These findings can help with improving aspects of related professional development for pre-service teachers, school counselors, and school psychologists (McCabe & Rubinson, 2008; Nastasi, 2008).

The literature supports the importance of school counselor advocacy for LGB students; however, there is an absence of research examining the dynamics of school

counselor advocacy. Since the TPB outlines key factors that are present in both behavioral and social sciences, the theory appears to hold the potential to assist researchers in understanding and predicting school counselor advocacy for LGB students (e.g., level of advocacy activities). Thus, for this study, school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm (perceptions of other stakeholders' views), LGB advocacy intentions, and LGB advocacy activity were assessed.

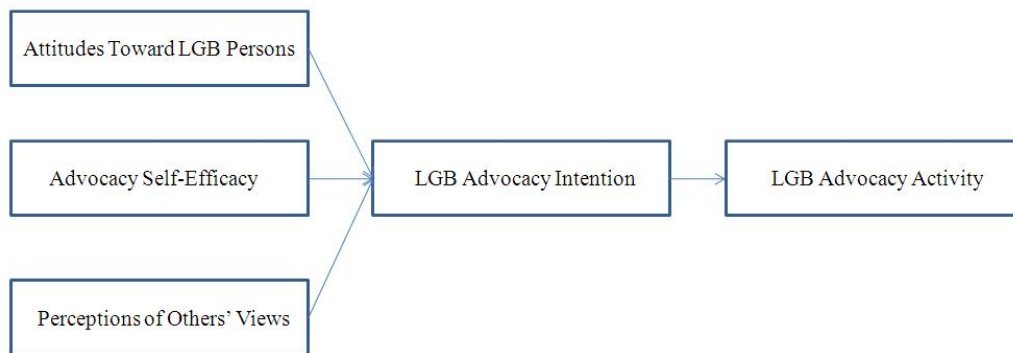


Figure 1. Factors in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985)

Torrence (2012) used the TPB “to determine the influence of attitudes toward students with disabilities and counselor self-efficacy on school counselors’ perceptions of preparedness to provide services to students with learning disabilities” (p. 2). After surveying 116 practicing school counselors, results indicated that self-efficacy was more related to preparedness than school counselors’ attitudes, yet both factors brought about a significant increase in the shared variance in perceived preparedness levels. Shipp (2010) used the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the predecessor to the TPB, in addition to two other theories to discuss knowledge sharing practices among school counselors in a qualitative study. The study, which involved interviewing seven counselors, was not

conducted to test the TRA but it did yield eight domains including the benefits and outcomes of knowledge sharing, consequences of not sharing knowledge, and factors that influenced knowledge sharing, just to name a few. These domains offer implications for school counselors, counselor educators, and educational leaders. Goldsmith (2011) explored school counselors' self-efficacy to advocate on behalf of gifted students. Practicing school counselors were asked to complete a four-part survey concerning their "self-efficacy, knowledge of gifted issues, and understanding of professional advocacy competencies" (Goldsmith, 2011, p. 1). Findings suggested that giftedness knowledge, advocacy self-efficacy, and building level were significant predictors of school counselors' advocacy competency and actions on behalf of gifted students. Under the umbrella of quantitative theory driven survey research, the TPB factors (attitudes, self-efficacy, subjective norm, and intentions) were identified as possible determinants of school counselors' LGB advocacy activity. The TPB has appeared to offer a rationale to support this study's purpose, proposed research questions, research methodology, and reportable findings.

### **Summary**

Chapter two has summarized and incorporated the literature on LGB students, the ASCA National Model and professional school counseling, school counselor advocacy (including LGB advocacy), attitudes toward sexual minorities including LGB students, other school stakeholders' views of LGB advocacy activity, school counselors' advocacy self-efficacy, school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions and activity, and the TPB. An argument for examining these factors has been developed throughout this literature

review. Supporting evidence for this study was apparent. This study has held the potential to validate the need to examine the possible influential factors of school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and others' views on school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions and activity.

Research has been conducted throughout the world in the area of sexual minority issues in schools. In addition, discussion about the role of the professional school counselor as a social justice advocate warrants assessment of school counselors' LGB advocacy activity. "Changing the school climate and engaging in advocacy activities are of particular importance to LGBTQ youth whose academic success, personal safety, and identity development are often comprised by hostile environments" (Whitman et al., 2007, p. 146). The majority of empirical research on sexual minority youth has focused on their mental and physical well-being, but it has overlooked the role of the school counselor. Additionally, the research on school counselor advocacy has been more conceptual in nature with the appearance of researchers focusing more on training considerations and practice recommendations instead of actual practice. Subsequently, this study aimed to further examine factors potentially related to school counselor LGB advocacy. Education research that is useful is cumulative and extends knowledge from earlier research in a given area (Boote & Beile, 2005). Research cited in this chapter has offered evidence that LGB students do exist, face complex challenges, and require support from school counselors (Stone, 2003). Additionally, the study's results have informed of assessment, training, and practice of school counselors in this emerging area.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The purpose of this quantitative survey study has been to investigate how school counselor attitudes toward LGB persons, school counselor advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norms relate to school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions and activity. A literature review has shown that students benefit from increased school counselor advocacy activity (Brubaker et al., 2011; Green et al., 2008; Ratts et al., 2007); and school counselor LGB advocacy activity in particular appears related to school counselors' attitudes and self-efficacy and subjective norm (Price & Telljohan, 1991; Fontaine, 1998; Reynolds & Koski, 1993; Rudolph, 1988; Simons et al., 2014). Thus, this chapter outlined and described the quantitative survey research design, the participant and sampling procedures, measurement, data analysis, and the processes of data collection from a sample of school counselors. In light of predictions from the TPB, the following six research hypotheses proposed were that there would be

1. a positive relationship between attitudes toward LGB persons and LGB advocacy intentions;
2. a positive relationship between advocacy self-efficacy and LGB advocacy intentions;
3. a positive relationship between subjective norms and LGB advocacy intentions;
4. a positive relationship between LGB advocacy intentions and LGB advocacy activity;

5. attitudes, self-efficacy, and subjective norm would be predictors of variance in school counselor LGB advocacy intentions; and
6. the factors of attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norms, and LGB advocacy intentions that contribute to the TPB model would be predictors of variance in LGB advocacy activity.

### **Research Design**

Quantitative survey research is a distinct form of educational research (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavich, 1996). Experimental and non-experimental/descriptive research designs are part of quantitative research methods. With experimental research, the researcher administers an independent variable to two or more groups. This is done to assess the effect on a dependent variable. With non-experimental/descriptive research, variables are not manipulated, but relationships among them are focused upon (Ary et al., 1996). One type of non-experimental research is survey research (Ary et al., 1996). This approach has been proposed for this study. Survey research allows the researcher to look at group characteristics or measure their attitudes. Using this research methodology, the following five variables were (a) school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, (b) school counselors' advocacy self-efficacy, (c) subjective norm, (d) school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions, and (e) school counselors' LGB advocacy activity.

Surveys are developed based upon who will take them and what they will measure (Dillman, Tortora, & Bowker, 1998). For example, whereas a census survey would assess an entire population, a sample survey would assess a portion of a population. Surveys are used to assess both tangible and intangible variables. Tangible

variables might be the number of students in a school. Intangible variables might be attitudes or beliefs (Ary et al., 1996). The survey used for this research project assessed attitudes, beliefs, and self-reported behaviors of school counselors. Thus, quantitative research survey methodology was employed to assess both tangible and intangible variables. The tangible variable was school counselor LGB advocacy activity, and the intangible variables were attitudes toward LGB persons, school counselor advocacy self-efficacy, the subjective norm, and school counselor LGB advocacy intentions.

### **Participants and Sampling**

Participants in this quantitative survey study were secondary school counselors working full-time with grades 7 to 12 in middle or high school settings who were certified in their respective states of employment (e.g., by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education). Given one dependent variable (school counselor LGB advocacy activity for the 2014-2015 school-year), three independent variables (school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norms of school counselor LGB advocacy activity), and one potential mediating variable (school counselor LGB advocacy intentions), at least 118 survey responses were necessary for a power of 80 at an alpha level of .01 with a medium effect size of .15 to conduct multiple regression with four predictor variables (Cohen, 1992). Carlson (2004) shared that "the number of surveys mailed should be equivalent to three times the number of survey items" (pp. 108-109). Therefore, for example, for survey distribution (online and paper and pencil), a response rate of at least 20% out of a pool of 1600 school counselors (i.e., 320) was adequate to conduct data analyses.



Participants were recruited from professional school counseling organizations and state school counseling certification bodies throughout the United States as well as through social media, listservs, and other related online groups. It was not necessary to recruit in person with paper and pencil surveys, nor was it necessary to distribute surveys more than twice despite recommendations by Dillman et al. (1998). They shared that e-mail messages regarding participation in surveys should be distributed up to four times. It was possible that professional school counselors recruited for this study were contacted more than once and/or that they were not employed full-time working with students in grades 7 to 12. To prevent invalid or multiple responses to the surveys, the informed consent stated, "This survey should not be completed more than once by a certified school counselor nor should it be completed by a school counselor who is not presently employed full-time working with students between grades 7 to 12 in a school setting." The survey was estimated to take 20 to 25 minutes to complete.

A total of 2,077 school counselors working in the United States received an invitation to complete the survey either from an email message or from accessing a web link posted online. Of the 2,077 school counselors who opened the survey online, 528 (25%) responded. Of these 528, 126 (24%) were removed from data analysis because they did not complete at least 85% of the survey items. Recruitment email messages or web links posted online included the following sentence, "Certificated or licensed middle and/or high school counselors who are working full-time are eligible to participate, regardless of the amount of experience they currently have." Therefore, in addition to the 126 who were removed, four more were removed because they did not work as either as

middle school or high school counselors. After this process, the study sample size was reduced to 398 respondents.

Web links for school counselors to click on for access to the survey were posted on listservs and social media sites. The listservs included the Counselor Education and Supervision Network (CESNET) Listserv which had 2,973 members, the American Psychological Association's Division 44's Listserv which has more than 1,250 members, the Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counselor (ALGBTIC) Listserv which has 443 members, and the South Dakota School Counselor Listserv which had 120 members. Social media utilized included Facebook to access the American School Counselor Association which had 18,748 members, the School Counselor Blog which had 10,631 members, and School Counselor Central which had 12,879 members. Use of LinkedIn provided access to the American School Counselor Association which had 20,948 members, School Counseling Leaders which had 4,375 members, a School Counselors Group which had 7,937 members, and a School Counselor Network which had 9,612 members. The online portals, Arizona Scene and ASCA Scene had 86 and 29,067 members, respectively.

Recruitment messages were posted on these aforementioned social media sites and portals. In addition, representatives of state school counselor associations and state departments of education were e-mailed recruitment messages in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In some states (e.g., Florida, South Dakota, etc.), the recruitment message was subsequently either forwarded on or posted on a website or listserv.

### **Measurement**

The participants in this quantitative research study were professional secondary school counselors employed full-time working in middle and high schools. They were recruited throughout the United States from professional school counseling organizations, state certification bodies, online using the Internet (e.g., listservs and social networking sites). The school counselors were asked to complete a demographic form, the Attitudes subscale of the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS; Bidell, 2005), the Advocacy Subscale of the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005), a Subjective Norm Scale (SNS), the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Intentions Scale (LGBAIS), and the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale (LGBAAS). The demographic form had 19 items, the Attitudes subscale of the SOCCS had 10 items, and the Advocacy subscale of the SCSE had seven items. The SNS, initially developed from 15 items, had 14 items. The LGBAIS, developed from 17 items, had 12 items. The LGBAAS, initially developed from 42 items had 30 items. In total, the survey had 92 items for respondents to complete. According to Goddard and Villanova (2006), quantitative surveys are used to assess “individuals’ perceptions of and beliefs about themselves, their immediate situation, and the relationship these perceptions and beliefs maintain with behavior” (p. 114). This study aimed to collect and interpret data from school counselors using the most readily available measures as way to examine the relationship between factors potentially related to school counselor advocacy for LGB students. The data were collected through distribution of on-line surveys to school counselors. Paper and pencil surveys were not necessary to use. Use of online surveys

provided a cost-efficient way to conduct the study and allowed for easy data retrieval from each respondent.

### **Demographic Form**

To inform this research study and future research, participants were asked to complete a 19-item demographic form about age, full-time employment status, certification/licensure status, gender, race/ethnicity, school setting, years of full-time experience as a school counselor, school position level, level of education, teacher certification, estimated number of LGB students assisted during career, sexual orientation, level of implementation and subscription to comprehensive guidance, number of LGB acquaintances, student to counselor ratio, state of practice, and level of identification as an advocate (see Appendix B). Demographic categories had information about the characteristics of participants and facilitated investigation of the factors in relationship to the TPB factors. Those respondents who were not yet 18 and/or employed full-time as school counselors in middle and/or high school settings were not eligible to participate in the study, and they were sent to a disqualification page if they tried to participate.

### **Sexual Orientation Competency Scale (SOCCS)**

The 29-item Sexual Orientation Competency Scale (SOCCS; Bidell, 2005) has been designed to assess for LGB counselor competence. With permission from the author, the Attitudes subscale of the SOCCS was administered to assess school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons. It is a 10-item subscale "dealing with a mental health professional's attitudes and prejudices about LGB individuals" (Bidell, 2005, p.

272, see Appendix C). The items assess LGB prejudices, stereotypes, and biases of a counselor. For each item, a 7-point response scale from 1 (*not at all true*) to 7 (*totally true*) is used. All 10 negatively worded items of the Attitudes subscale were reverse scored.

The psychometric properties of the SOCCS were assessed from a sample of 312 people (235 females and 77 males, mean age = 31.9 years). All analyses used this sample except for a one week test of test-retest reliability. A determination of test-retest reliability was examined using 101 master's- and doctorate students and counselor educators/supervisors working at four universities. For all other analyses, the sample population was voluntarily comprised of students and counselor educators/supervisors from 13 public and three private universities. The sample was made up of (a) 47 (15.1%) undergraduate psychology students; (b) 154 (49.4%) master's counseling students in CACREP-accredited counseling programs; (c) 62 (19.9%) doctorate students, of whom 32 were enrolled in CACREP-accredited counselor education programs and 30 were placed in counseling center internships approved by the American Psychological Association (APA); and (d) 49 (15.7%) doctoral-level counselor educators/supervisors, of whom 22 were working in APA-approved university counseling centers and 28 were working in CACREP-approved counselor education programs. According to Bidell (2005), 85.3% ( $n = 266$ ) of the sample identified as heterosexual; 12.2% ( $n = 38$ ) identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual; and 2.5% ( $n = 8$ ) did not identify in any way. Approximately 7.1% of the participants in the sample identified as African American/Black ( $n = 22$ ), 10.6% identified as Asian American ( $n = 33$ ), 61.2% identified

as European American/White ( $n = 191$ ), 13.1% identified as Latino ( $n = 41$ ), 2.2% identified as biracial/mixed ( $n = 7$ ), 1.3% identified as Native American ( $n = 4$ ), and 4.5% identified as other ( $n = 14$ ).

A factor analysis yielded a three-factor solution that accounted for 40% of the total variance. The coefficient alpha of the subscale was found to be .90 (Bidell, 2005). One-week test-retest reliability for the SOCCS was found to be .84. Assessment of criterion validity indicated that LGB participants and those with higher levels of education received significantly higher scores on the SOCCS. Convergent validity was assessed and the Attitudes subscale was found to strongly correlate with LGB bias, basic counseling skills, and multicultural knowledge, respectively. A weak relationship ( $r = -.03$ ) was found between total scores on the SOCCS and three social desirability questions pertaining to impression management indicated discriminant validity. Two-hundred-eighty-seven participants comprised of 49 undergraduate students, 156 masters students, 50 doctoral students, and 32 doctorate level psychologists were questioned about how familiar they were with the works of a nonexistent researchers known for their LGB research. An average social desirability subscore of 1.17 with a *SD* of .56 was found. Additionally, for each level of education the participants received, the mean Social Desirability subscale increased. Those with higher levels of education may have felt greater pressure to be competent and reported knowledge of the factitious researchers. With the sample in the present study, a Cronbach's alpha of .91 was found for the Attitudes Subscale of the SOCCS.

### **School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE)**

The School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE; Bodenhorn, 2001; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005) was developed to assess the self-efficacy levels of school counselors providing counseling services across a wide range of schools. According to Bodenhorn (2001), it is vital to develop an understanding of school counselors' self-efficacy in order to assess how confident they are in carrying out duties related to advocacy in the ASCA National Model. School counselors' advocacy self-efficacy should be displayed in their advocacy activity (e.g., on behalf of LGB students).

Prior to development of the SCSE, a sound school counselor self-efficacy measure did not exist (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). Items for the SCSE were developed using the National Standards for School Counseling (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs school counseling program standards (CACREP, 2001), and other established counseling self-efficacy scales. Additionally, a panel of school counseling practitioners and school counselor educators reviewed construction of the SCSE and selected 43 items for use.

With permission from the author, seven items from the SCSE were used to assess school counselor advocacy self-efficacy. With the sample in the present study, a Cronbach's alpha of .91 was found. As part of dissertation research, Goldsmith (2011) and a panel of four school counseling and advocacy experts selected and validated 7 out of 43 items on the SCSE to assess for school counselor advocacy self-efficacy (see Appendix D). Each member of the panel offered feedback on how items were worded, how clear they were, and how relevant they were. The seven items selected to assess

advocacy self-efficacy “relate directly to school counselor self-efficacy in the area of advocacy” (Goldsmith, 2011, p. 42). Assessing school counselors’ self-efficacy is key to identifying school counselors’ confidence levels in implementing ASCA National Model guidance (Bodenhorn, 2001). Competent school counselor LGB advocacy activity appears related to holding favorable attitudes toward LGB persons, having high levels of intention to assist them, and working with individuals who are perceived to be supportive. For each item, participants indicate the following pertaining to performance of certain advocacy tasks using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *never*, 2 = *rarely*, 3 = *occasionally*, 4 = *fairly often*, 5 = *frequently*). Bodenhorn and Skaggs (2005) have only reported reliability and validity data for the entire SCSE; therefore, similar data were not available for the advocacy self-efficacy subscale, which is a delimitation of the study. The researchers identified a coefficient alpha of .96 and a reliability coefficient of .97 for the SCSE in a sample of 116 master’s level students comprised of Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, biracial people, and others. They discovered that school counselors with three or more years of school counseling experience and training in the American School Counselor Association National Standards scored higher on the SCSE. Moreover, SCSE scores were found to be moderately correlated ( $r = .41$ ) with existing appropriate counseling self-efficacy measures. Construct validity was assessed by comparing the SCSE to four other measures. Twenty-eight master’s level students completed the Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory and the SCSE. A positive correlation of .41 resulted between the two measures. Students who reported higher counseling self-efficacy scores on the Counseling Self-



Estimate Inventory also scored higher on the SCSE. Another twenty-five master's students took the Social Desirability Scale and the SCSE. These scores found a small correlation ( $r = .31$ ) indicating that students did not answer items in a "faking positive" direction. Thirty-eight master's level students took the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory and the SCSE and significant negative correlations were found between the scores that were received. These correlations indicated that as students' anxiety levels decreased, their self-efficacy levels increased. Lastly, twenty-eight master's level students took the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) and the SCSE. The students' scores were not indicative of significant correlations between the two measures.

### **Subjective Norm Scale (SNS)**

The Subjective Norm Scale (SNS) was developed for this study and thus no data on reliability and validity exists. Development was based on the following question, "Which school stakeholders' views would be most likely to relate to a school counselor's willingness and/or unwillingness to advocate on behalf of for lesbian, gay, and bisexual students?" The SNS includes 14 seven point Likert-type scale items as standard measures for participants to complete in order to assess perceived levels of support from principals, faculty members, and students to enact five school counselor LGB advocacy acts/best practice recommendations. Items on the SNS were developed from an exhaustive literature review, a pilot qualitative research study with 12 self-identified school counselor advocates (Simons et al., 2014), and Ajzen's recommendations for constructing a TPB questionnaire (Ajzen, n.d.). Szalacha (2003) found that the concurrent presence of GSAs, teacher training, and inclusive school policies had the strongest positive impact on

school climate when controlling for other factors such as gender, race, grade level, and sexual orientation. Poirier (2012) identified nondiscrimination and anti-bullying policies, professional development, inclusive curriculum, and support groups as best practices to “promote the safety and well-being of these [sexual minority] youth” (p. 165). In a qualitative study by Simons et al. (2014) with high school counselors it was concluded that school climate was another factor to assess in relationship to self-efficacy, subjective norm, school counselor LGBTQ advocacy action and intentions. Other positive indicators of school counselor advocacy in this area have been visible role models and support from principals, counselors, teachers, and students (Diaz et al., 2010; Griffin, 1992; Simons et al., 2014; Szalacha, 2003; Whatley, 1991). Subjective norm for school counselor LGB advocacy was scored by adding up the total scores from 14 items which participants rates using a Likert-type scale from one to seven (1 = *not at all true* to 7 = *totally true*) (see Appendix E). A limitation to using this newly developed scale is that reliability data were absent. However, with the sample in the present study, a Cronbach’s alpha of .97 was found.

To validate 14-items for the SNS, the items were e-mailed to an expert panel comprised of five individuals with expertise in school counseling and sexual minority issues. Members of the expert panel indicated if the skill or knowledge assessed by each item was essential, useful but not essential, or not necessary to assess subjective norms. In addition, the panel members were asked to provide non-required feedback on the clarity, relevance, and word use of each item. After each member reviewed the items, a content validity ratio was calculated for each item based on guidelines proposed by

Lawshe (1975). Items that had less than a value of two were excluded for use in the study. Of the 15 items assessed, one was removed concerning subjective norm and perceptions of students' views of school counselors offering professional training on LGB issues. Wording was also modified (i.e., words added or changed) for five items. The content validity index (CVI) of the SNS was .94. The CVI is the mean of the content validity rating values of the items retained for the scale. For the SNS, the range of the mean ratings for all the items was 1.8 to 2.0 with a median of 2.0.

### **LGB Advocacy Intentions Scale (LGBAIS)**

Carlson (2004) developed 17 items as part of dissertation survey research to assess school counselors' level of involvement with gifted and talented students. Items were developed from a review of professional literature on gifted and talented education (Carlson, 2004). Goldsmith (2011) made use of these items to measure school counselors' advocacy activity on the behalf of gifted students. "Cronbach's alpha coefficients, measures of reliability, were computed to measure the degree of internal consistency for each of the items included" (Carlson, 2004, p. 112), and in a sample of 320 school counselors, the internal consistency for the advocacy items ranged from .74 to .81. For this study, Carlson's scale was modified to create the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Intentions Scale (LGBAIS) noting that no other similar assessment measure has been made readily available. In addition, Kielwasser and Wolf (1994) have argued that gay and lesbian adolescents are gifted in that they possess the strength and creativity necessary to thrive in adulthood. With the sample in the present study, a Cronbach's alpha of .93 was found.

Carlson's original 17 items were piloted on 17 counseling interns in their last year of a school counseling master's program during the fall, 2003. The interns were recruited from a family counseling course, and their participation in the pilot study was voluntary. The interns shared feedback on the appropriateness and clarity of the items, which have been modified or removed for use in this study. The scale is comprised of 12 items to assess school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions (see Appendix F). The LGBAIS was scored by adding up the total scores from the 12 items which participants rated using a Likert-type scale from one to five (1 = *never*, 2 = *rarely*, 3 = *occasionally*, 4 = *fairly often*, and 5 = *frequently*). A limitation of this scale was that reliability data were absent. With the sample in the present study, however, a Cronbach's alpha of .94 was found.

The 17 items were emailed to an expert panel of four counselors with expertise in school counseling and sexual minority issues. The panel experts were asked to provide responses similar to those required in the content validity assessment of items on the SNS. A review of the content validity ratios for each of the items led to removal of 5 out of the 17 items assessed. Initially, those items that referenced "gifted students" to "LGB students" were modified. Item number nine was further modified to indicate the workshop topics of sexual identity development and the effects of prejudice instead of time management and test anxiety for LGB students. The item, however, was later dropped from the scale in addition to four other items. The wording of several other items was changed as well. The CVI of the LGBAIS was .87. For the LGBAIS, the range of the mean ratings for all the items was 1.6 to 2.0 with a median of 2.0.

### **LGB Advocacy Activity Scale (LGBAAS)**

A comprehensive literature review of research on school counselor advocacy and/or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth was undertaken to develop the LGB advocacy activity scale (LGBAAS) (see Appendix G). Similar to the Subject Norms Scale and LGB Advocacy Intentions Scale, content validity ratios for each of the scale's items were computed from feedback provided by a five person panel of experts with expertise in school counseling and LGBTQ issues (two counselor educators, a school counselor, a psychologist, and a doctorate student in Counselor Education). The LGBAAS was administered to assess school counselors' LGB advocacy activity. It was scored by adding up the total scores from 30 items which participants rated using a Likert-type scale from one to two (0 = *unfamiliar*, 1 = *familiar*, 2 = *use*). A limitation to using this newly developed scale was that reliability data were absent. An initial version of the LGBAAS with 42 items was emailed to a five person panel of experts with expertise in school counseling and sexual minority issues. The panel experts rated each item for content validity and 15 items with content validity ratio values less than two were removed. In addition, three items were changed into six to limit the effects of using double barreled items. On the basis of the review, the items were placed into three categories defined as the following: (a) personal, (b) school, and (c) community. The CVI of the LGBAAS was .90. For the LGBAAS, the range of the mean ratings for all the items was 1.6 to 2.0 with a median of 2.0.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Online survey use was the primary method for data collection to increase the ease, time, and overall efficiency of survey administration, data collection, and data analysis and to limit costs associated with distributing paper and pencil surveys. This also allowed for scales in the survey to be presented in random order to the participants. Random distribution limits context effects (i.e., when responses on one questionnaire could affect later responses on another questionnaire) (Whitley & Kite, 2013). And the likelihood that participants would respond more honestly was increased (Knapp & Kirk, 2003). This was beneficial because the assumption was made that some individuals might have found it difficult to answer questions about sexual minority issues in relationship to school counseling. An e-mail message was distributed to practicing school counselors throughout the United States with a consent letter and link to the survey in Qualtrics, a secure online resource for developing surveys and distributing, collecting, and managing survey data (see Appendix H). An incentive (\$10 Amazon gift card) was made available to 65 participants who choose to enter their contact information (name, e-mail address, and phone number) into a raffle. Participants were asked to share this information in a second survey in order to keep this information separate from response information that they had provided in the first survey.

The minimum sample size was reached, so participants were not sought out through other means (i.e., in person). Thus, paper and pencil surveys were not used. Additionally, participants were recruited through LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social media sites. If a paper and pencil survey had been used, recommended techniques for increasing response rate would have been used (Fox, Crask, & Kim, 1988). Also, the

paper and pencil surveys would have been printed on green stationery and cover letters printed on University of Missouri – St. Louis’ letterhead. A tea bag for each respondent would have been included as an incentive. Alreck and Settle (1995) argued that use of incentives for survey completion demonstrates goodwill to entice individuals to participate. Approval to conduct this quantitative survey study online and in paper and pencil format (due to low online response rate) was obtained by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Missouri – St. Louis.

### **Recruitment**

Participants were recruited throughout the United States from professional school counselor organizations and state certifying/licensing bodies. Permission to make use of membership directories was requested (see Appendix I), and a letter requesting similar access to certified school counselors was sent to state certifying or licensing bodies from me or from my advisor and dissertation chair on behalf of me (see Appendix J).

Participants were sent an invitation letter to participate in the study and a link to access the web-based Qualtrics survey. Once the link was accessed, they were directed to the letter which detailed the study’s purpose, potential benefits and risks, and steps for exiting the study at any time. If the need would have arisen to distribute the survey packets in paper and pencil format, appropriate locations would have been identified to recruit school counselor participants for the study. These locations would have included local, state, regional, national, and international counselor conferences, education sessions, and counseling settings. The survey packets would have included a cover page

with study and consent information, the demographic form, and randomized survey instruments.

Data retrieved from participants were securely locked in an office file cabinet to ensure confidentiality. Data collected online from participants were collected anonymously and stored on Qualtrics ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)), a secure website for instrument development and data retrieval and management. E-mail addresses, phone numbers, and names (not linked to item responses) was the only identifiable information used to contact participants if they participated in a second survey in order to have been entered into a raffle to win a \$10 Amazon gift card. This survey was kept separate from the first survey, and participants clicked on a link at the end of the first survey that took them to it. On the second survey, a statement indicating that participants' information was not connected in any way to their responses in the first survey was shared.

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data retrieved from the survey were assessed to examine the relationships between the factors within the TPB in relationship to school counselor LGB advocacy intentions. Statistics were calculated using the SPSS version 17.0 (Aug 23, 2008). Pearson's  $r$  was used to assess the first four hypotheses (assuming a linear relationship). For the first hypothesis, the independent variable was attitudes toward LGB persons and the dependent variable was LGB advocacy intentions. For the second hypothesis, the independent variable was advocacy self-efficacy and the dependent variable was LGB advocacy intentions. For the third hypothesis, the independent variable was subjective norms and the dependent variable was LGB advocacy intentions. For the



fourth hypothesis, the independent variable was LGB advocacy intentions and the dependent variable was LGB advocacy activity. A regression model was used for both the fifth and sixth hypotheses. For the fifth hypothesis, the independent variables were attitudes toward LGB persons, school counselor advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm. School counselor LGB advocacy intention was the dependent measure. For the sixth hypothesis, the independent variables were attitudes toward LGB persons, school counselor advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm. School counselor LGB advocacy activity was the dependent measure. School counselor LGB advocacy intention was tested a mediator variable using a bootstrapping method in PROCESS (Preacher & Hayes, 2013).

Bootstrapping has become a recommended method for testing hypotheses involving mediation. “More and more, statisticians are advocating a move away from statistical procedures that rely on assumptions, particularly when they are unrealistic, to computationally intensive methods such as *bootstrapping*, as these methods typically make fewer unwarranted assumptions and, as a result, can produce more accurate inference” (Preacher & Hayes, 2008, p. 25). The indirect effects of attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm on LGB advocacy activity through LGB advocacy intentions was bootstrapped using the PROCESS Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) bootstrapping macro identified by Preacher and Hayes (2004). The macro may be found online at <http://www.afhayes.com/spss-sas-and-mplus-macros-and-code.html>. Bootstrapping involves taking a random sample of observations at least 1000 times with replacement (i.e., for potential repeat selection) from a data set. The

process allows for resampling and subsequent identification of indirect effects along with point estimates and percentile-based confidence intervals. These intervals indicate how significant the mediation effects are. If zero is not inside the span of the confidence intervals, the null hypothesis is thrown out and significant mediation effects are reported.

The degree to which the data results are generalizable to the larger audience of school counselors was also assessed. Thus, descriptive statistics were computed to determine the mean and standard deviation for each main study variable in order to describe school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons; school counselors' advocacy self-efficacy; subjective norm; and school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions and activity. ANOVAs and MANOVAs were utilized with the data to determine if statistically significant differences existed between groups based on demographic data as well as the other school stakeholders' views of LGB advocacy and school counselors' attitudes, advocacy self-efficacy, LGB advocacy intentions, LGB advocacy activity. If statistical significance resulted, then post hoc procedures were conducted to compare pairs of means to identify which ones also possessed significant differences. The methods proposed in this chapter have been offered to answer the following research questions. Did a relationship exist between school counselors' advocacy intentions and school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm? And, did a relationship exist between reported school counselor advocacy activity and school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, and LGB advocacy intentions?

### **Summary**

Like their other minority groups, LGB students are also at risk (Pope et al., 2004). Proposed ethics codes have required that school counselors advocate for all students (Stone & Dahir, 2006; Wingfield et al., 2010); therefore, it has been plausible to further investigate potential factors related to school counselor LGB advocacy (Bidell, 2012; Goodrich et al., in review; McCabe & Rubinson, 2008; Simons et al, 2014). Quantitative survey research appears relevant to this research area, which has garnered more attention by the educational community despite a noticeable lack of empirical research on competencies and best practices for school counselors who work with LGB students. One theory that has been identified to assess factors has been the TPB (Ajzen, 1985). The TPB offered a rationale for examining school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, school counselors' perceived levels of advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm in relationship to school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions and activity.

This study involved recruiting certificated/licensed middle and high school counselors employed full-time in schools throughout the United States. The counselors were initially recruited online (i.e., offered access to a web link to request completion of the survey developed in Qualtrics). Other locations could have been sought out to recruit eligible school counselors if there had been a low online response rate. These locations included, but were not limited to, conferences, trainings, and schools. Paper and pencil surveys could have been utilized, but they were not.

School counselors' attitudes toward LGB students were assessed using the Attitudes subscale of the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS;

Bidell, 2005). School counselors' advocacy self-efficacy was assessed from the participants' total scores on seven items from one factor of the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE; Bodenhorn, 2001; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). Subjective norm was assessed from the participants' total scores on a 14-item Subjective Norm Scale (SNS) developed for this study. School counselors' LGB advocacy intentions were assessed by total scores on a 12-item Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Intentions Scale (LGBAIS), a scale modified and developed from the work of Carlson (2004). School counselors' LGB advocacy activity was assessed by total scores on a 30-item Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale (LGBAAS), a scale developed from a literature review for this study.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

The purpose of the study was to explore factors related to school counselor advocacy for LGB students: school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective, and school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions and activity. In this chapter, the following is presented: (a) research hypotheses, (b) procedures for data analysis, (c) power and sample size, (d) descriptive statistics, (e) means and standard deviations of the TPB variables and subscale items, and (f) data analyses.

### **Research Hypotheses**

Data were predicted to show

- a positive relationship between attitudes toward LGB persons and LGB advocacy intentions;
- a positive relationship between advocacy self-efficacy and LGB advocacy intentions;
- a positive relationship between subjective norm and LGB advocacy intentions;
- a positive relationship between LGB advocacy intentions and LGB advocacy activity
- that the factors of attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm would be predictors of variance in school counselor LGB advocacy intentions; and
- the factors of attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, and LGB advocacy intentions that contribute to the TPB model would be predictors of variance in LGB advocacy activity.

To test the first hypothesis, Pearson correlations were calculated to determine a relationship between attitudes toward LGB persons and LGB advocacy intentions. To test the second hypothesis, Pearson correlations were calculated to determine a relationship between advocacy self-efficacy and LGB advocacy intentions. To test the third hypothesis, Pearson correlations were calculated to determine a relationship between subjective norm levels and LGB advocacy intentions. To test the fourth hypothesis, Pearson correlations were calculated to determine a relationship between LGB advocacy intentions and LGB advocacy activity. To test the fifth and sixth hypotheses, regression models were utilized. For the fifth hypothesis, this was done to measure how well school counselor LGB advocacy intention could be predicted from school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, school counselor advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm. For the sixth hypothesis, this was done to measure how well school counselor LGB advocacy activity could be predicted from school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, school counselor advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, and school counselor LGB advocacy intention, which was also tested a mediator variable. LGB advocacy intentions were proposed to mediate the relationships between attitudes toward LGB persons and LGB advocacy activity, advocacy self-efficacy and LGB advocacy activity, and subjective norm and LGB advocacy activity.

### **Procedures for Data Analysis**

A survey was developed and distributed online during the summer and fall of 2014. Surveys were collected through October 2014. The data were downloaded as a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data file and opened for analysis with

SPSS version 17.0 (Aug 23, 2008). All 10 items from the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS) Attitudes Subscale (Bidell, 2005) were reverse coded. Data analyses required the use of correlation analysis, regression analysis, bootstrapping, multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs), and analyses of variance (ANOVAs). The generalizability of the data to the larger population of school counselors was also assessed. The mean and standard deviation values for each main study variable were reported, and MANOVAs and ANOVAs were utilized to determine if statistically significant differences existed.

When running MANOVAs and ANOVAs with all main study variables as dependent variables, group sizes included at least 20 observations in light of findings by Simmons, Nelson, and Simonsohn (2011). Using data analysis techniques with different degrees of freedom, the researchers assessed the likelihood of obtaining false-positive results. They discovered that, for non-significant results even when 10 additional observations per cell were collected on top of an already collected 20 observations, a 50% false-positive response rate resulted. When three t-tests were calculated on two dependent variables using 20 observations per cell, the likelihood of obtaining false-positive results nearly doubled. When less than 20 observations per cell were used the rate of false-positive results also showed an increase. The authors recommended that researchers use at least 20 observations per cell or provide significant justification for why not doing so. Thus, in the present study variables for data analysis were collapsed together or removed from analysis as necessary. Post hoc procedures were used to identify which pairs of means that possessed significant differences. Spearman's rank-

order correlations were also calculated to assess the relationship of several demographic items across the main study variables.

### **Power and Sample Size**

Calculations for minimum sample size were computed using G\*Power power analysis software (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). To test the first through fourth hypotheses, an a priori power analysis for correlations to achieve a power of .80 at an alpha level of .05 with a medium effect size of .30 was run. A minimum sample size of 111 was determined to be required. To test the fifth hypothesis, an a priori power analysis for a two-tailed linear multiple regression to achieve a power of .80 at an alpha level of .05 with a medium effect size of .30 with three predictors was run. A minimum sample size of 29 was determined to be required. To test the sixth hypothesis, an a priori power analysis for a two-tailed linear multiple regression to achieve a power of .80 at an alpha level of .05 with a medium effect size of .30 with four predictors was run. Same as hypothesis five, a minimum sample size of 29 was determined to be required.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Seventeen demographic questions were asked to identify the characteristics of respondents who completed at least 85% of the survey items. The following sections reflect these data as well as missing data. Percentages reported were based on the total number of respondents who responded to each question. Respondents were required to be 18-years-old or older to participate in the study. Ages of the respondents ranged from 23 to 70 ( $M = 42$ ,  $SD = 10.48$ ). In this study, a large portion of respondents identified as female, white, and exclusively heterosexual (see Table A1).



### **Employment Environment**

Since this study evaluated school counselors' attitudes, self-efficacy, subjective norm, and LGB advocacy intentions and activity, it was relevant to assess (a) school type, (b) school level, and (c) school location (see Table A2). A large portion of respondents worked in public school settings at either the high school level or the middle/junior high school level. Forty-five percent worked in rural areas and 54% worked in cities and suburbs.

### **State of Practice**

The data suggest that 32.7% of respondents ( $n = 130$ ) were practicing in Missouri. Higher numbers of school counselor representation were from Missouri, Connecticut, New York, and Ohio. There were 50 counselors from Connecticut (12.6%), 38 counselors from New York (9.5%), and 25 counselors from Ohio (6.3%). Lower numbers of school counselors were from 23 other states represented in the study (see Table A3).

### **Training and Experience**

This study assessed the training and experiences of school counselors in the form of education level and teacher certification/licensure (see Table A4). The findings below reflect these considerations. A large number of respondents held a master's degree, and whereas 51.3% of the sample respondents held certification/licensure to teach, 47.5% of the sample respondents did not. The duration of full-time experience reported by 393 school counselors ranged from 0 to 38 years ( $M = 10.24$  years,  $SD = 7.18$ ) (see Table A5).

### **Contact with LGB Persons and Student to Counselor Ratio**

School counselor respondents were asked to estimate the number of self-identified LGB students they had assisted during their careers as well as the number of self-identified LGB acquaintances, family members, or friends they had contact with. Additionally, they were asked to report their caseload sizes in the form of student to counselor ratios (see Table A5). As reported, 390 school counselors' responses ranged from assisting 0 to 125 LGB students throughout their careers ( $M = 13.06$ ,  $SD = 18.07$ ). Eight counselors (1.3%) did not respond to this item. With regard to the number of LGB acquaintances, family members, or friends each school counselor knew, 397 counselors reported knowing 0 to 500 ( $M = 12.06$ ,  $SD = 29.94$ ). One school counselor (.3%) did not respond to this item. Reported student to counselor ratios from the respondents ranged from 15:1 to 975:1 ( $M = 320.31:1$ ,  $SD = 131.62:1$ ). Two school counselors (.5%) did not respond to this item.

### **ASCA Model Considerations**

School counselors were asked to respond to items related to current American School Counselor Association initiatives. School counselors were asked to report the degree to which they identified as a school counselor advocate, the importance of the ASCA National Model in relationship to their work, and the level of implementation of the Model at their school (see Table A6). With regard to their level of identification as a school counselor advocate, 79% of the respondents reported the identification as either mostly true of self or true of self. With regard to how important they viewed the ASCA National Model, 70% reported that it was important or very important. Lastly, school

counselors were asked about the level of implementation of the ASCA Model at their schools, and 77% reported that implementation was either complete or had been started.

**Means, standard deviations, and ranges of TPB variables.** The mean scores and standard deviations for each of the TPB variables were calculated for the Attitudes toward LGB Persons Subscale (A-SOCCS), the Advocacy Self-Efficacy Subscale (ASES), the Subjective Norm Subscale (SNS), the School Counselor Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Subscale (LGBAIS), and the School Counselor Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Subscale (LGBAAS) (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Mean Scores Theory of Planned Behavior Subscales*

	<i>N</i>	Missing	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Independent Variable Scales							
Attitudes Subscale	391	7	52	65.57	8.72	-2.90	9.08
Advocacy Self-Efficacy Subscale	395	3	17	31.57	3.31	-1.16	1.29
Subjective Norm Subscale	392	6	84	51.43	23.77	0.13	-0.90
LGB Advocacy Intentions Subscale	393	5	48	41.34	10.63	-0.28	-0.64
LGB Advocacy Activity Subscale	379	19	60	39.16	12.62	-0.70	-0.07

**Attitudes scale.** The Attitudes subscale of the SOCCS had a possible range of 10 to 70 with a midpoint cut-off score of 40 (see Table 2). Items of the subscale were reversed scored. Overall scale scores above 40 were indicative of positive attitude towards LGB persons, whereas scores below 40 were indicative of negative attitudes towards LGB persons.

Table 2

*Mean Scores on Attitude Towards LGB Persons Subscale (Bidell, 2005)*

Items ( <i>N</i> = 391)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. The lifestyle of a LGB client is unnatural or immoral.	6.44	1.39
2. It's obvious that a same sex relationship between two men or two women is not as strong or as committed as one between a man and a woman.	6.79	0.86
3. I believe that being highly discreet about their sexual orientation is a trait that LGB clients should work towards.	6.54	1.03
4. I believe that LGB couples don't need special rights (domestic partner benefits, of the right to marry) because that would undermine normal and traditional family values.	6.50	1.37
5. It would be best if my clients viewed a heterosexual lifestyle as ideal.	6.61	1.13
6. I think that my clients should accept some degree of conformity to traditional sexual values.	6.47	1.10
7. I believe that LGB clients will benefit most from counseling with a heterosexual counselor who endorses conventional values and norms.	6.73	0.81
8. Personally, I think that homosexuality is a mental disorder or a sin and can be treated through counseling or spiritual help.	6.76	0.92
9. I believe that all LGB clients must be discreet about their sexual orientation around children.	6.36	1.29
10. I agree with the statement: "You should love the sinner but hate or condemn the sin."	6.39	1.51

\* For all Attitudes subscale items, a 7-point Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 1 (*Not At All True*) to 7 (*Totally True*). All items were reversed scored.

***Advocacy self-efficacy scale.*** The Advocacy Self-Efficacy Scale had a possible range of 7 to 35 with a midpoint cut-off score of 21 (see Table 3). Overall scale scores above 21 were indicative of higher levels of school counselor advocacy self-efficacy, whereas scores below 21 were indicative of lower levels of school counselor advocacy self-efficacy.

Table 3

*Mean Scores School Counselor Advocacy Self-Efficacy Subscale*

Items ( <i>N</i> = 395)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. I advocate for integration of student academic, career, and personal development into the mission of the school.	4.47	0.80
2. I advocate for myself as a professional school counselor and articulate the purpose of the goals of school counseling.	4.43	0.79
3. I provide resources and guidance to the school population in times of crisis.	4.58	0.71
4. I communicate in writing with staff, parents, and the external community.	4.45	0.81
5. I consult with external agencies that provide support services for our students.	4.37	0.79
6. I understand the viewpoints and experiences of students and parents who are from a cultural background different from mine.	4.50	0.60
7. I can find some way of communicating with any student in my school.	4.79	0.45

\*For all Advocacy Self-Efficacy Scale items, a 5-point Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 7 (*Frequently*).

***Subjective norm scale.*** The Subjective Norm Scale had a possible range of 14 to 98 with a midpoint cut-off score of 56 (see Table 4). Overall scale scores above 56 were indicative of the higher social pressure to advocate for LGB students, whereas scores below 56 were indicative of lower the social pressure to advocate for LGB students.

Table 4

*Mean Scores School Counselor Subjective Norm Subscale*

Items ( <i>N</i> = 392)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. If I were to sponsor a student group for LGB students, I would care a lot about what my principal thinks.	3.94	1.88
2. If I were to sponsor a student group for LGB students, I would care a lot about what my faculty colleagues think.	3.21	1.78
3. If I were to sponsor a student group for LGB students, I would care a lot about what my students think.	4.22	2.10
4. If I were to advocate for inclusive (e.g., nondiscrimination and anti-bullying) school policies for LGB students, I would care a lot about what my principal thinks.	3.94	2.12
5. If I were to advocate for inclusive (e.g., nondiscrimination and anti-bullying) school policies for LGB students, I would care a lot about what my faculty colleagues think.	3.49	2.04
6. If I were to advocate for inclusive (e.g., nondiscrimination and anti-bullying) school policies for LGB students, I would care a lot about what all of my students think.	4.06	2.26
7. If I were to offer guidance curricula and resources on LGB issues, I would care a lot about what my principal thinks.	3.92	2.04
8. If I were to offer guidance curricula and resources on LGB issues, I would care a lot about what my faculty colleagues think.	3.18	1.85
9. If I were to offer guidance curricula and resources on LGB issues, I would care a lot about what all of my students think.	3.95	2.18
10. If I were to offer professional training on LGB issues (e.g., how to intervene when students are harassed), I would care a lot about what my principal thinks.	4.02	2.07
11. If I were to offer professional training on LGB issues (e.g., how to intervene when students are harassed), I would care a lot about what my faculty colleagues think.	3.58	2.04
12. If I were to be visible as either gay or lesbian or as an LGB ally, I would care a lot about what my principal thinks.	3.32	2.02
13. If I were to be visible as either gay or lesbian or as an LGB ally, I would care a lot about what my faculty colleagues think.	2.96	1.85
14. If I were to be visible as either gay or lesbian or as an LGB ally, I would care a lot about what my students think.	3.62	2.13

\*For all Subjective Norm Scale items, a 7-point Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 1 (*Not At All True*) to 7 (*Totally True*).

***Lesbian, gay, and bisexual advocacy intentions scale.*** The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Intentions Scale had a possible range of 12 to 60 with a midpoint cut-off score of 36 (see Table 5). Overall scale scores above 36 were indicative of the higher intention to advocate for LGB students, whereas scores below 36 were indicative of lower intention to advocate for LGB students.

Table 5

*Mean Scores Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Intentions Subscale*

Items (N = 393)	M	SD
1. Advocating for LGB students by assisting with their individual progress through appropriate school experiences.	4.00	1.02
2. Working with teachers, principals, and other staff to foster a better school climate for LGB students.	3.73	1.12
3. Consulting with other school professionals regarding problems and needs of individual LGB students.	3.71	1.10
4. Providing individual counseling for LGB students, as warranted, based on the understanding of their expressed needs.	4.04	0.99
5. Referring LGB students for academic support as appropriate.	4.05	1.05
6. Referring LGB students for emotional support as appropriate.	4.15	0.98
7. Providing group counseling for LGB students, as warranted, based on an understanding of their expressed needs.	2.74	1.40
8. Providing family counseling for LGB students and their families, as warranted, based on an understanding of their expressed needs.	2.48	1.26
9. Consulting, as needed, with parents of LGB students.	3.44	1.16
10. Engaging in professional development activities through which knowledge and skills in the area of programming for the needs of LGB students are regularly updated.	3.24	1.23
11. Providing leadership in the establishment of training and awareness programs concerning LGB students to administrators and staff.	2.77	1.28
12. Evaluating and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the school counseling program for LGB students.	3.01	1.28

\*For all Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Intentions Scale items, a 5-point Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 7 (*Frequently*).

***Lesbian, gay, and bisexual advocacy activity scale.*** The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale had a possible range of 0 to 60 with a midpoint cut-off score of 30 (see Tables 6, 7, and 8). Overall scale scores above 30 were indicative of higher levels of familiarity with or use of advocacy activities on behalf of LGB students, whereas scores below 30 were indicative of lower levels of familiarity with or use of advocacy activities on behalf of LGB students.

Table 6

*Mean Scores Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Subscale (Personal Items)*

Items (N = 379)	M	SD
Personal		
1. I use affirmative/LGB inclusive and intentional language (e.g., saying partner versus husband or wife).	1.55	0.62
2. I reflect over my own attitudes, beliefs, and LGB advocacy practices.	1.80	0.51
3. I participate in continuing education to improve my ability to promote advocacy for LGB students.	1.47	0.66
4. I have identified resources to use when offering LGB education activities.	1.43	0.71
5. I am knowledgeable of the impact of heterosexism.	1.40	0.79
6. I am knowledgeable of the common myths/stereotypes around LGB issues.	1.77	0.52
7. I am able to reframe conversation to correct misinformation around LGB issues.	1.72	0.58
8. I am knowledgeable about the coming out process.	1.43	0.74
9. I am knowledgeable of my own sexual identity development.	1.77	0.54
10. I am knowledgeable of the sexual identity developmental models.	1.20	0.81

\*For all Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale items, a 3-point Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 0 (*Unfamiliar*) to 2 (*Use*).



Table 7

*Mean Scores Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Subscale (School Items)*

Items (N = 379)	M	SD
School		
11. I use affirmative counseling techniques with LGB students.	1.50	0.77
12. I utilize a student needs assessment that includes an LGB component.	0.88	0.71
13. I intervene in response to harassment and/or violence aimed at LGB students (i.e., LGB statements or actions).	1.89	0.40
14. I ensure that resources are made available to LGB students at school and/or online.	1.57	0.64
15. I talk openly about being lesbian, gay, or an LGB ally to others in my school.	1.35	0.75
16. I assist in promoting policies that foster inclusive school environments for LGB students.	1.49	0.67
17. I assist in promoting policies that prohibit harassment/bullying of LGB students.	1.78	0.52
18. I provide in-service/faculty development/trainings on LGB issues and diversity.	0.85	0.60
19. I provide parent education sessions on LGB issues and diversity.	0.76	0.54
20. I share community resource information specifically for LGB persons.	1.24	0.76
21. I share community resource information specifically for LGB persons' family members.	1.19	0.72
22. I create and/or display signs that indicate to others that I support the LGB community (e.g., a sticker, poster, brochures, or other symbols).	1.19	0.75
23. I consult with colleagues about LGB issues (e.g., LGB harassment) to improve my ability to promote advocacy for LGB students.	1.55	0.68

\*For all Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale items, a 3-point Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 0 (*Unfamiliar*) to 2 (*Use*).

Table 8

*Mean Scores Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Subscale (Community Items)*

Items (N = 379)	M	SD
Community		
24. I belong to and/or participate in community organizations dedicated to supporting the LGB community.	0.94	0.68
25. I lobby for LGB inclusion and rights at the governmental levels (e.g., by contacting my legislatures and representatives).	0.83	0.63
26. I share about Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) as a resource for the LGB community.	0.83	0.78
27. I share about the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight, Education Network (GLSEN) as a resource for the LGB community.	0.84	0.81
28. I share about GLAAD, formerly known as the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, as a resource for the LGB community.	0.78	0.75
29. I maintain contact information for local LGB community resource centers.	1.06	0.84
30. I maintain contact information for local LGB community mental health professionals.	1.10	0.83

\*For all Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale items, a 3-point Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 0 (*Unfamiliar*) to 2 (*Use*).

**Analyses for Hypothesis Testing**

To test hypotheses one through four, Pearson’s product-moment correlations were computed (see Table 9). For hypothesis one, school counselors’ attitudes toward LGB persons were found to have a small to moderate positive relationship with school counselors’ LGB advocacy intention ( $r = .22$ ), meaning that more positive attitudes were related to more intentions to advocate for LGB students. A small to moderate relationship was indicative of a relationship between .10 and .30. For hypothesis two, school counselors’ advocacy self-efficacy was found to have a small to moderate positive relationship with school counselors’ LGB advocacy intention ( $r = .27$ ), meaning that more positive advocacy self-efficacy was related to more intentions to advocate for LGB

students. For hypothesis three, no relationship was found to exist between subjective norm and school counselors' LGB advocacy intention ( $r = .03$ ), meaning that subjective norm was not related to intentions to advocate for LGB students. For hypothesis four, school counselors' advocacy intentions were found to have a large positive relationship with school counselors' LGB advocacy activity ( $r = .59$ ), meaning that more positive advocacy intentions were related to more advocacy activity for LGB students.

Table 9

*Correlations between Four Variables and LGB Advocacy Intentions*

Variable	Advocacy Intentions	N
Attitudes Toward LGB Persons	.22**	386
Advocacy Self-Efficacy	.27**	390
Subjective Norm	.03	388
LGB Advocacy Activity	.59**	376

\*\*  $p < .01$

To test hypotheses five and six, hierarchical regression was used. Before conducting analyses, all predictor and outcome variables were formally assessed for normality by examining skewness, kurtosis, and frequency histograms for each of the subscale results. Whereas two variables (LGB advocacy intention and LGB advocacy activity) appeared to be normally distributed, four variables (attitudes towards LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm) did not. The determination was made, however, not to transform these variables or further investigate extreme cases because of the large sample size. In such instances, the effects of non-normality tend to be limited. Additionally, necessary assumptions to perform regression modeling (i.e., normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity) were examined. Scatterplots of regression standardized residuals against regression standardized predicted values

were examined to determine whether the assumptions of random errors and homoscedasticity had been met. Resulting patterns did not indicate that the variables of the residuals were different over the range of predicted values. P-P plot of standardized residuals were examined as well to determine whether the assumptions of linearity and normality were met. All of the standardized residuals data points did not curve. They fell close to an “ideal” diagonal line, indicating that findings could be generalized from the sample to a population of school counselors.

It was hypothesized that the factors of attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm would be predictors of variance in school counselor LGB advocacy intentions. To test this fifth hypothesis, school counselors’ advocacy self-efficacy, attitudes toward LGB persons, and subjective norm were used in a stepwise multiple regression analysis to predict LGB advocacy intention (see Table 10). All correlations except for the one between subjective norm and LGB advocacy intention were statistically significant. The regression model was reached in three steps.

At step 1, advocacy self-efficacy accounted for 7.2% of the variation in LGB advocacy intention ( $F(1, 376) = 29.014, p < .001$ ). At step 2, entry of school counselors’ attitudes (along with advocacy self-efficacy) accounted for 11.2% of the variation ( $R^2$  change = .04, ( $F$  change (1, 375) = 17.24,  $p < .001$ ). At step 3, entry of subjective norm increased the variance to 11.5% ( $R^2$  change = .002, ( $F$  change (1, 374) = .88,  $p = .35$ ). With all three predictors present at step 3, only attitudes toward LGB people and advocacy self-efficacy were found, however, to be statistically significant, with advocacy self-efficacy having a higher beta value ( $\beta = .24, p < .001$ ) than attitudes toward LGB

persons ( $\beta = .21, p < .001$ ). I found that a moderate portion of the variance with LGB advocacy intention (11.5%) could be predicted using school counselor advocacy self-efficacy and attitudes toward LGB persons.

Table 10

*Regression Summary for Relationship between Model Predictor Variables and School Counselors' LGB Advocacy Intention (N = 378)*

Step	Predictor Variable	B	SEB	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>
1	Advocacy Self-Efficacy	0.86	.16	.27***	.07
2	Advocacy Self-Efficacy	0.79	.16	.25***	.11
	Attitudes Toward LGB Persons	0.25	.06	.20***	
3	Advocacy Self-Efficacy	0.78	.16	.24***	.12
	Attitudes Toward LGB Persons	0.26	.06	.21***	
	Subjective Norm	0.02	.02	.05	

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

It was hypothesized that the factors of attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norms, and LGB advocacy intentions that contribute to the TPB model would be predictors of variance in LGB advocacy activity. To test this sixth hypothesis, school counselors' advocacy self-efficacy, attitudes toward LGB persons, subjective norm, and LGB advocacy intention were used in a stepwise multiple regression analysis to predict LGB advocacy intention (see Table 11). All correlations except for the one between subjective norm and LGB advocacy activity were statistically

significant. At step 1, advocacy self-efficacy accounted for 8.6% of the variation in LGB advocacy activity ( $F(1, 361) = 35.02, p < .001$ ). At step 2, entry of school counselors' attitudes increased the variance to 15.1% ( $R^2$  change = .06, ( $F$  change (1, 360) = 26.54,  $p < .001$ ). At step 3, entry of LGB advocacy intentions increased the variance to 34.2% ( $R^2$  change = .19, ( $F$  change (1, 359) = 104.03,  $p < .001$ ). The three predictors present at step 3, advocacy self-efficacy, attitudes toward LGB people, and LGB advocacy intention were found to be statistically significant, with LGB advocacy intention having the highest beta value ( $\beta = .46, p < .001$ ) followed by attitudes toward LGB persons ( $\beta = .16, p < .001$ ) and advocacy self-efficacy ( $\beta = .16, p < .001$ ).

Table 11

*Regression Summary for Relationship between Model Predictor Variables and School Counselors' LGB Advocacy Activity (N = 363)*

Step	Predictor Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
1	Advocacy Self-Efficacy	1.14	.19	.30***	.09
2	Advocacy Self-Efficacy	1.02	.19	.27***	.15
	Attitudes Toward LGB Persons	0.36	.07	.25***	
3	Advocacy Self-Efficacy	0.60	.17	.16***	.34
	Attitudes Toward LGB Persons	0.23	.06	.16***	
	LGB Advocacy Intention	0.55	.05	.46***	

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

The PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2009) was written by Andrew F. Hayes. It is an add-on to SPSS, which may be used to assess for mediation using continuous outcome data. The macro was used in this study to assess whether LGB advocacy intention mediated the relationships between attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm with LGB advocacy activity. Preacher and Hayes (2008, 2013) recommended the bootstrapping method to quantify indirect effects (i.e., to compute confidence intervals around indirect effects). The multiple independent variables linked to LGB advocacy intention in this study were attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm.

The first analysis tested whether LGB advocacy intention mediated the relationship between attitudes toward LGB persons and LGB advocacy activity. The unstandardized beta coefficient for the path between attitudes toward LGB persons and advocacy activity without LGB advocacy intention in the model was .23 ( $p < .001$ ); with LGB intention in the model and controlling for advocacy self-efficacy and subjective norm, the unstandardized beta coefficient for the path attitudes towards LGB persons was .14 ( $p < .001$ ) (see Figure 2). The indirect effect equaled .14, 95% CI lower bound = .08, 95% CI upper bound = .22. Because zero fell outside the confidence interval, LGB advocacy intention had a significant mediation effect ( $p < .05$ ). Higher favorable attitudes toward LGB persons were associated with increased LGB advocacy intention, which, in turn, was related to an increase in LGB advocacy activity.

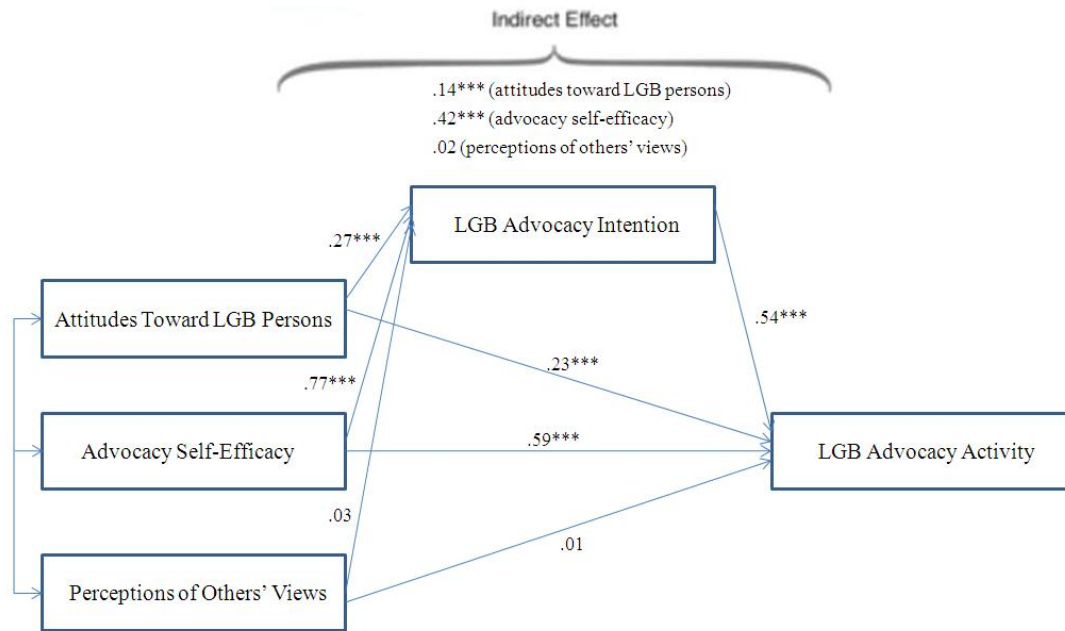


Figure 2: Indirect effect of Attitude Toward LGB Persons, Advocacy Self-Efficacy, and Perceptions of Others' Views on LGB Advocacy Activity via LGB Advocacy Intention.

The second analysis tested whether LGB advocacy intention mediated the relationship between advocacy self-efficacy and LGB advocacy activity. The unstandardized beta coefficient for the path advocacy self-efficacy and advocacy activity without LGB advocacy intention in the model was .27 ( $p < .001$ ). With LGB intention in the model and controlling for attitudes toward LGB persons and subjective norm, the unstandardized beta coefficient for the path advocacy self-efficacy and advocacy activity was .42 ( $p < .001$ ) (see Figure 2). The indirect effect equaled .42, 95% CI lower bound = .23, 95% CI upper bound = .63. Because zero fell outside the confidence interval, LGB advocacy intention had a significant mediation effect ( $p < .05$ ). Higher advocacy self-efficacy was associated with increased LGB advocacy intention, which, in turn, was related to an increase in LGB advocacy activity.



In the third analysis, LGB advocacy intention was examined as a mediator of the relationship between subjective norm and LGB advocacy activity (see Figure 2). The indirect effect was .02, with a 95% CI lower bound of -.01 and a 95% CI upper bound of .04. Thus, LGB advocacy intention did not mediate the relationship between subjective norm and LGB advocacy activity. A statistically significant relationship was not found between subjective norm and LGB advocacy activity because zero fell inside the identified confidence interval.

### **Demographic Variables**

An additional purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between demographic variables and the five main study variables. For discrete demographic data, MANOVAs were run. Prior to running the MANOVAs, data were reviewed to assess whether or not assumptions (independence of observations, adequate sample size, review of outliers, normality, linearity, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and absence of multicollinearity) had been satisfied. Multicollinearity was not found between any of the dependent variables (i.e., no correlations were greater than .75). If the MANOVAs were significant, follow-up ANOVAs were conducted. For continuous demographic data, Spearman's rank-order correlations were run.

### **Spearman's Rank-Order Correlations**

Spearman's rank-order correlations were run for each main study variable (attitudes, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, LGB advocacy intention, and LGB advocacy activity) in relationship to school counselor respondents' self-reported age, years of experience, number of LGB students assisted, number of LGB persons known,

student to counselor ratio, level of school counselor advocacy identification, level of ASCA Model importance, and level of ASCA National Model implementation. Sample sizes were large (i.e., greater than 50 cases), and it has been found that use of numerical methods can be overly sensitive with very small or very large sample sizes (e.g., the Shapiro-Wilk’s test). Thus, visual tests to assess linearity and normality were run. Ten variables were transformed prior to running correlations (see Table 12)

Table 12

*Transformations of Variables*

Main Study Variable	Transformation
Attitudes Toward LGB Persons*	Reflect and inverse
LGB Advocacy Intention	Reflect and square root
LGB Advocacy Activity	Reflect and square root
Demographic Variable	
Years of Experience	Square root
Number of LGB Students Assisted	Logarithmic
Number of LGB Persons Known	Logarithmic
Student to Counselor Ratio	Square root
Level of Advocacy Identification	Reflect and logarithmic
Importance of the ASCA Model	Reflect and logarithmic
Level of ASCA Model Implementation	Reflect and square root

\*Although the attitudes variable was transformed, the transformation was not as effective as the transformations applied to the other variables.

Spearman's rank-order correlations were run to assess the relationship between each of the five main study variables (attitudes, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, LGB advocacy intention, and LGB advocacy activity) and school counselors’ attitudes toward LGB persons and age, years of experience, number of LGB assisted, number of LGB known, student to counselor ratio, level of school counselor advocacy identification, level of ASCA Model importance, and level of ASCA National Model implementation. Three significant relationships were identified in regards to attitudes (see Table 13). There were small negative correlations between attitudes toward LGB persons and age

and level of advocacy identification. Thus, as age and level of advocacy identification increased, attitudes toward LGB persons became less positive. There was a medium positive correlation between attitudes toward LGB persons and the number of LGB persons known. As participants reported knowing more LGB people, their attitudes toward LGB persons became more positive.

Table 13

*Significant Effect for Attitudes*

Attitudes	<i>r<sub>s</sub></i>	<i>N</i>
Age	-.15**	391
Number of LGB Persons Known	.25**	370
Level of Advocacy Identification	-.12*	389

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Five significant relationships were identified in regards to advocacy self-efficacy (see Table 14). There were three small positive correlations between advocacy self-efficacy and years of experience, number of LGB students assisted, and number of LGB persons known. Thus, as years of experience, number of LGB students assisted, and number of LGB persons known increased, advocacy self-efficacy became more positive. Two of the five significant relations were negative. Whereas one was a small negative correlation between advocacy self-efficacy and level of ASCA Model implementation, the other one was a medium negative correlation between advocacy self-efficacy and level of advocacy identification. As participants reported lower levels of ASCA Model implementation and identification as advocates, their advocacy self-efficacy became more positive.

Table 14

*Significant Effect for Advocacy Self-Efficacy*

Advocacy Self-Efficacy	$r_s$	$N$
Years of Experience	.12*	390
Number of LGB Students Assisted	.14*	369
Number of LGB Persons Known	.14**	374
Level of Advocacy Identification	-.25**	393
Level of ASCA Model Implementation	-.21**	393

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Four significant relationships were identified in regards LGB advocacy intention (see Table 15). There were three small correlations between LGB advocacy intention and the number of the LGB students assisted, number of LGB persons known, and the level of ASCA Model implementation. The two former were negative and the latter was positive. Thus, as the number of LGB students assisted and the number of LGB persons known increased, LGB advocacy intention became less positive. When higher levels of ASCA Model implementation were, however, reported by participants, LGB advocacy intention became more positive. One of the four significant relationships was a medium positive correlation between LGB advocacy intention and the level of advocacy identification. As participants reported higher levels of identification as an advocate, their LGB advocacy intention became more positive.

Table 15

*Significant Effect for LGB Advocacy Intention*

LGB Advocacy Intention	$r_s$	$N$
Number of LGB Students Assisted	-.17**	367
Number of LGB Persons Known	-.15**	372
Level of Advocacy Identification	.25**	391
Level of ASCA Model Implementation	.15**	392

\*\*  $p < .01$

Four significant relationships were identified in regards to LGB advocacy activity (see Table 16). There were three medium correlations between LGB advocacy activity and the number of the LGB students assisted, number of LGB persons known, and the level of advocacy identification. The two former were negative and the latter was positive. Thus, as the number of LGB students assisted and the number of LGB persons known increased, LGB advocacy activity became less positive. When the participants, however, reported higher levels of advocacy identification, LGB advocacy activity became more positive. One of the four significant relationships was a small positive correlation between LGB advocacy activity and the level of ASCA Model implementation. As participants reported levels of ASCA Model implementation increased, their LGB advocacy activity became more positive.

Table 16

*Significant Effect for LGB Advocacy Activity*

LGB Advocacy Activity	$r_s$	$N$
Number of LGB Students Assisted	-.31**	356
Number of LGB Persons Known	-.28**	358
Level of Advocacy Identification	.31**	377
Level of ASCA Model Implementation	.15**	378

\*\*  $p < .01$

**MANOVA Analysis for Gender**

Responses fell into four categories: (1) male, (2) female, (3) cisgender female, and (4) transgender male. After omitting the one transgender male and moving the cisgender female into the female category, there were 55 school counselors who identified as male and 297 school counselors who identified as female. Inspection of subscale scores using the normal Q-Q plots indicated that all of the subscale scores

except on the attitudes subscale appeared to be normally distributed. Wilks's  $\Lambda$  was utilized, and no significant differences were found to exist  $F(5, 347) = 1.33, p = .25$ ; Wilks's  $\Lambda = .98$ ; partial  $\eta^2 = .02$ . Thus, respondents' scores on the attitudes subscale, the advocacy self-efficacy subscale, the subjective norm subscale, the LGB advocacy intention subscale, and the LGB advocacy activity subscale did not differ by gender.

#### **MANOVA Analysis for Race/Ethnicity**

The multivariate analysis of variance was calculated with three groups: (a) Caucasian / White, (b) African American / Black, and (c) Other (all others were collapsed into this group). Inspection of subscale scores using the normal Q-Q plots indicated that all of the subscale scores appeared to be normally distributed except the attitudes subscale across three race/ethnicity groups. Wilks's  $\Lambda$  was utilized, and no significant differences were found,  $F(10, 712) = 1.77, p < .06$ ; Wilks'  $\Lambda = .95$ ; partial  $\eta^2 = .02$ . Thus, respondents' scores on the attitudes subscale, the advocacy self-efficacy subscale, the subjective norm subscale, the LGB advocacy intention subscale, and the LGB advocacy activity subscale did not differ by race/ethnicity.

#### **MANOVA Analysis for Sexual Orientation**

Inspection of subscale scores using the normal Q-Q plots indicated that all of the subscale scores appeared to be normally distributed except for the attitudes subscale across the two groups, 336 heterosexuals and 26 sexual minority persons (i.e., all heterosexuals were collapsed together and all sexual minority persons were collapsed together). These group sizes were unequal, thus Pillai's Trace was utilized, and

significant differences were found,  $F(5, 356) = 3.46, p < .01$ ; Pillai's Trace = .05; partial  $\eta^2 = .05$ . Subsequently, five analysis of variance calculations were executed.

ANOVA results indicated that a significant difference was found on attitudes toward LGB persons. School counselors who identified as heterosexual ( $M = 65.36, SD = 8.96$ ) scored lower on positive attitudes toward LGB persons than school counselors who identified as sexual minorities ( $M = 68.78, SD = 2.49$ ) (see Table 17). A significant difference was found between the two groups of school counselors' mean scores on the LGB advocacy activity scale. Heterosexual school counselors' scores ( $M = 38.61, SD = 12.31$ ) significantly differed from sexual minority school counselors' scores ( $M = 46.85, SD = 13.83$ ) (see Table 19). These results have suggested that sexual orientation is related to attitudes toward LGB persons and LGB advocacy activity. School counselors who identified as members of a sexual minority group demonstrated more favorable attitudes toward LGB persons and higher levels of LGB advocacy activity than their heterosexual counterparts.

Significant differences were not found between the two groups of school counselors' mean scores on advocacy self-efficacy,  $F(1, 392) = 0.53, p = .47, \omega^2 = 0.001$ . Non-significance was found for the effect on subjective norm,  $F(1, 388) = 1.40, p = .24, \omega^2 = 0.004$ . This was also the outcome for LGB advocacy intention,  $F(1, 389) = 1.92, p < .17, \omega^2 = 0.005$ .

Table 17

*Significant Attitudes*

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	65.36 <sup>a</sup>	8.96
Sexual Minority	68.78 <sup>b</sup>	2.49
School Location		
Rural	64.54 <sup>a</sup>	9.89
Suburban	67.47 <sup>b</sup>	5.53
Region		
Northeast	67.94 <sup>a</sup>	4.98
Ohio Valley	65.62 <sup>b</sup>	7.99
South	58.07 <sup>b</sup>	14.11

Note: Means that have no superscript in common are significantly different from each other the  $p < .05$  level.

**MANOVA Analysis for School Type**

Inspection of subscale scores using the normal Q-Q plots indicated that all of the subscale scores appeared to be normally distributed except on the attitudes subscale across two school type groups. Wilks's  $\Lambda$  was utilized, and no significant differences were found,  $F(5, 352) = 1.70, p = .13$ ; Wilks'  $\Lambda = .98$ ; partial  $\eta^2 = .02$ . Thus, respondents' scores on the attitudes subscale, the advocacy self-efficacy subscale, the subjective norm subscale, the LGB advocacy intention subscale, and the LGB advocacy activity subscale did not differ by school type.

**MANOVA Analysis for School Level**

Inspection of subscale scores using the normal Q-Q plots indicated that all of the subscale scores appeared to be normally distributed except for the scores from the attitudes subscale across the three school level groups. Since group sizes were unequal, Pillai's Trace was utilized. No significant differences were found,  $F(10, 710) = 0.77, p = .65$ ; Pillai's Trace = .02; partial  $\eta^2 = .01$ . Thus, respondents' scores on the attitudes



subscale, the advocacy self-efficacy subscale, the subjective norm subscale, the LGB advocacy intention subscale, and the LGB advocacy activity subscale did not differ by school level.

### **MANOVA Analysis for School Location**

Inspection of subscale scores using the normal Q-Q plots indicated that all of the subscale scores appeared to be normally distributed except for scores from the attitudes subscale across three school location groups. Group sizes were unequal, thus Pillai's Trace was utilized. Significant differences were found,  $F(10, 706) = 2.09, p < .05$ ; Pillai's Trace = .06; partial  $\eta^2 = .03$ . Post hoc analysis was conducted using the Games-Howell method because unequal variances were present. The mean score on the attitudes subscale for school counselors who lived in rural areas ( $M = 64.40, SD = 10.14$ ) was significantly different from the mean score for the school counselors who worked in the suburbs ( $M = 67.69, SD = 5.41$ ). Also, the mean score on LGB advocacy intentions subscale for school counselors who lived in rural areas ( $M = 40.02, SD = 10.13$ ) was significantly different from the mean score for the school counselors who worked in the suburbs ( $M = 43.42, SD = 10.30$ ). These results have suggested that the location where school counselors work appears to have an effect on their attitudes toward LGB persons and their levels of LGB advocacy intentions. School counselors who worked in the suburbs demonstrated higher levels of LGB advocacy intentions and more favorable attitudes toward LGB persons when compared to school counselors who worked in rural areas.

Five analysis of variance calculations were calculated. A significant effect of school location on attitudes toward LGB persons was found for three groups,  $F(2, 384) = 4.29, p < .05, \omega^2 = 0.02$ . Post hoc analysis using the Tukey method with the three groups indicated that the mean score for school counselors who worked in rural areas ( $M = 64.54, SD = 9.89$ ) was significantly different from the mean score for school counselors who worked in the suburbs ( $M = 67.47, SD = 5.53$ ) (see Table 17). School location appeared to have an effect on attitudes toward LGB persons. Specifically, school counselors who were working in suburban areas demonstrated higher levels of positive attitudes towards LGB persons when compared to school counselors who were working in rural areas.

Additionally, a significant effect of location on LGB advocacy intention was found for three groups,  $F(2, 386) = 2.97, p < .05, \omega^2 = 0.02$ . This was also the case for the effect on LGB advocacy activity,  $F(2, 372) = 3.49, p < .05, \omega^2 = 0.02$ . For LGB advocacy intention, post hoc analysis using the Tukey method with the three groups indicated that the mean score for school counselors who worked in rural areas ( $M = 40.16, SD = 10.15$ ) was significantly different from the mean score for school counselors who worked in the suburbs ( $M = 43.17, SD = 10.12$ ) (see Table 18). For LGB advocacy activity, the same analysis indicated that the mean score for school counselors who worked in rural areas ( $M = 40.16, SD = 10.15$ ) was significantly different from the mean score for school counselors who worked in cities ( $M = 41.30, SD = 11.90$ ) (see Table 19).

School location appeared to have an effect on LGB advocacy intention. Specifically, school counselors who were working in suburban areas demonstrated higher

levels of LGB advocacy intention when compared to school counselors who were working in rural areas. Significant differences were not found between the three groups of school counselors' mean scores on advocacy self-efficacy,  $F(2, 388) = 0.61, p = .55, \omega^2 = 0.003$ . A similar outcome was found as well for the effect of location on subjective norm,  $F(2, 385) = 0.27, p = .77, \omega^2 = 0.001$ .

Table 18

*Significant LGB Advocacy Intention*

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
School Location		
Rural	40.16 <sup>a</sup>	10.15
Suburban	43.17 <sup>b</sup>	10.12

Note: Means that have no superscript in common are significantly different from each other the  $p < .05$  level.

**MANOVA Analysis for Region of Practice**

In the interest of preserving as many responses as possible, a multivariate analysis of variance was calculated using the school counselors' regional levels of practice as opposed to their state levels of practice. School counselors who worked in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, and New York were combined into a Northeast region group; school counselors who worked in Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin were combined into an Upper Midwest region group; school counselors who worked in Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, and Tennessee were combined into an Ohio Valley region group; school counselors who worked in Kansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi were combined into a Southern region group; school counselors who worked in North Carolina, Virginia, and Florida were combined into a Southeast region group; school counselors who worked in California and Hawaii were combined into a West region

group; school counselors who worked in Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico were combined into a Southwest region group; and school counselors who worked in Idaho, Montana, and South Dakota were combined into a Northern Rockies and Plains region group.

There were 103 school counselors from the Northeast, four school counselors from the Upper Midwest, 163 school counselors from the Ohio Valley, 29 school counselors from the South, 7 school counselors from the Southeast, 4 school counselors from the West, 25 school counselors from the Southwest, and 25 school counselors from the Northern Rockies and Plains. All counselors were represented by region in the multivariate analysis of variance unless they were from a region with fewer than 20 school counselors who responded to the survey. Regions with fewer than 20 respondents included the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, and the West.

Inspection of subscale scores using the normal Q-Q plots indicated that all of the subscale scores appeared to be normally distributed except for the scores on the attitudes subscale across six of the seven regions of practice. Pillai's Trace was utilized, and significant differences were found,  $F(20, 1356) = 2.22, p < .05$ ; Pillai's Trace = .13; partial  $\eta^2 = .03$ . Tukey post-hoc analysis confirmed a significant effect for attitudes toward LGB persons among school counselors who worked in the Northeast ( $M = 68.10, SD = 4.88$ ) versus school counselors who worked in the Ohio Valley ( $M = 65.64, SD = 8.14$ ) and school counselors who worked in the South ( $M = 58.86, SD = 13.66$ ).

In addition, five analyses of variance were calculated to assess whether group differences existed among those school counselors who reported working in different

regions. A significant effect of work region on attitudes toward LGB persons was found for five groups,  $F(4, 368) = 8.73, p < .05, \omega^2 = 0.09$ . Post hoc analysis using Game's Howell method with the five groups indicated that the mean score for school counselors who were working in the Northeast ( $M = 67.94, SD = 4.98$ ) was significantly different than the mean score for school counselors who were working in the Ohio Valley ( $M = 65.62, SD = 7.99$ ) or school counselors who were working in the South ( $M = 58.07, SD = 14.11$ ) (see Table 17). Work region appears related to attitudes toward LGB persons. School counselors who were working in the Northeast demonstrated higher levels of positive attitudes towards LGB persons when compared to school counselor who were working either in the Ohio Valley or in the South. Additionally, a significant effect of work region on LGB advocacy activity was found across the five groups,  $F(4, 356) = 5.37, p < .05, \omega^2 = 0.06$ . Post hoc analysis using Scheffé's method with the five groups indicated that the mean score for school counselors who were working in the Northeast ( $M = 42.56, SD = 11.41$ ) was significantly different than the mean score for school counselors who were working in the South ( $M = 31.33, SD = 14.53$ ) (see Table 19). Work region appears related to LGB advocacy activity. School counselors who were working in the Northeast demonstrated higher levels of LGB advocacy activity when compared to school counselors who were working in the South. A significant difference was not found between the five groups of school counselors' mean scores on advocacy self-efficacy,  $F(4, 372) = 2.30, p = .06, \omega^2 = 0.02$ . Non-significance was found for the effect on subjective norm,  $F(4, 369) = 0.48, p < .75, \omega^2 = 0.005$ . This was also the outcome for LGB advocacy intention,  $F(4, 370) = 2.39, p = .05, \omega^2 = 0.03$ .

Table 19

*Significant LGB Advocacy Activity*

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	38.61 <sup>a</sup>	12.31
Sexual Minority	46.85 <sup>b</sup>	13.83
Location		
Rural	40.16	10.15
City	41.30	11.90
Region		
Northeast	42.56 <sup>a</sup>	11.41
South	31.33 <sup>b</sup>	14.53

Note: Means that have no superscript in common are significantly different from each other the  $p < .05$  level.

**MANOVA Analysis for Level of Education**

Inspection of subscale scores using the normal Q-Q plots indicated that all of the subscale scores appeared to be normally distributed except for the scores on the attitudes subscale across two education levels. Wilks's  $\Lambda$  was utilized, and no significant differences were found,  $F(5, 342) = .69, p = .64$ ; Wilks's  $\Lambda = .99$ ; partial  $\eta^2 = .01$ . Thus, respondents' scores on the attitudes subscale, the advocacy self-efficacy subscale, the subjective norm subscale, the LGB advocacy intention subscale, and the LGB advocacy activity subscale did not differ by level of education.

**MANOVA Analysis for Teacher Certification**

Inspection of subscale scores using the normal Q-Q plots indicated that all of the subscale scores appeared to be normally distributed except for the scores on the attitudes subscale across the two groups. Wilks's  $\Lambda$  was utilized, and no significant differences were found,  $F(5, 352) = 1.57, p = .17$ ; Wilks's  $\Lambda = .98$ ; partial  $\eta^2 = .02$ . Thus, respondents' scores on the attitudes subscale, the advocacy self-efficacy subscale, the

subjective norm subscale, the LGB advocacy intention subscale, and the LGB advocacy activity subscale did not differ by teacher certification.

### **Chapter 5: Discussion**

The literature on school counselor advocacy for LGB students was reviewed for this quantitative survey study. This area in particular requires further empirical research (Bidell, 2012). Additionally, although it appears that some school counselors might appear perfectly positioned and professionally expected to advocate for LGB students (Pope, 2004; Stone, 2003), this might not be the case. This is important to study because the challenges LGB students face in school reflect life challenges encountered by LGB youth and adults; however, questions still exist about the process by which school counselors advocate for LGB students. The factors hypothesized in this study to relate to school counselor involvement with LGB students included (a) school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, (b) advocacy self-efficacy, (c) subjective norm, (d) school counselor LGB advocacy intention, and (e) school counselor LGB advocacy activity. These factors were assessed using an online survey and implications for the assessment, teaching, and practice of pre-service and practicing school counselors are identified in this chapter.

The theoretical framework applied to the study was the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985). A non-random sample was composed of 398 school counselors. The school counselor respondents were located throughout the United States. They were invited to participate in the study with the assistance of state departments of education, state school counselor professional organizations, listservs, and social media

sites including Facebook and LinkedIn. School counselors accessed the survey using Qualtrics ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)) by clicking on a web link in the electronic invitation. Once they accessed the survey, they were asked to complete a demographic form, the attitudes subscale of the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competence Scale (A-SOCCS), the Advocacy Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES), the Subjective Norm Scale (SNS), the School Counselor LGB Advocacy Intention Scale (LGBAIS), and the School Counselor LGB Advocacy Activity Scale (LGBAAS).

The TPB has been useful to school counselors in assessing factors hypothesized to conceptualize school counselor LGB advocacy activity (Simons et al., 2014). These factors included attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, and school counselor LGB advocacy intention. Attitudes toward LGB persons and advocacy self-efficacy demonstrated statistical significance in predicting school counselor LGB advocacy intention, accounting for 7.2% and 4% of the variance, respectively. Subjective norm was not identified as a statistically significant predictor. In assessing school counselor LGB advocacy activity as a dependent variable, attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and school counselor advocacy intention demonstrated statistical significance. When assessed altogether, the variables accounted for 34% of the variance. The model has demonstrated that school counselors report high levels of school counselor LGB advocacy activity. In this chapter, findings have been summarized and interpreted and recommendations for future research have been proposed. Limitations of the study have also been discussed.

## **Findings**



Correlation analyses were utilized to assess the relationship between factors related to school counselors' intention to advocate on behalf of LGB students. The following factors were found to have statistically significant relationships to school counselor LGB advocacy intention: (a) attitudes toward LGB Persons ( $r = .22$ ), (b) advocacy self-efficacy ( $r = .27$ ), and (c) school counselor LGB advocacy activity ( $r = .59$ ).

Regression analyses were conducted to assess attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and subjective norm in predicting school counselor LGB advocacy intention as well as the overall application of the TPB model in predicting school counselor LGB advocacy activity. In support of the theory, attitudes toward LGB persons and advocacy self-efficacy were identified as statistically significant predictors of school counselor LGB advocacy intention, which was also found to be a significant predictor of school counselor LGB advocacy activity. School counselor LGB advocacy intention was also assessed as a mediator variable, and two significant mediating effects were identified, the indirect effects of attitude toward LGB persons and advocacy self-efficacy via LGB advocacy intention on LGB advocacy activity.

The findings from the regression analyses indicated that school counselors' levels of advocacy self-efficacy and attitudes toward LGB persons have a significant influence, which account for a small portion (i.e., 11%) of the identified variance for predicting school counselor LGB advocacy intention using the TPB. These results have shown that school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons and levels of advocacy self-efficacy were integral to the development of behavioral intention to advocate for LGB students

with advocacy self-efficacy being the most crucial. The data suggests that advocacy self-efficacy has practical implication. School counselor development of advocacy self-efficacy related to advocacy for all students is related to an increase of advocacy for LGB students.

### **Attitudes Toward LGB Persons**

School counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons were found to have a small to moderate positive relationship with school counselors' LGB advocacy intention, meaning that more positive attitudes were directly related to intentions to advocate for LGB students. For this study, female school counselors were overly represented. Moreover, a small portion of the variance with LGB advocacy intention (11.5%) was predicted with statistical significance from school counselor advocacy self-efficacy and attitudes toward LGB persons. Pertaining to school counselor LGB advocacy activity, a moderate portion of the variance with LGB advocacy activity (34.2%) could be predicted with statistical significance from advocacy self-efficacy, attitudes toward LGB persons, subjective norm, and LGB advocacy intention. By including school counselors' attitudes in the stepwise regression analysis, in particular, the variance with LGB advocacy activity increased from 9.0% to 15.1% ( $R^2$  change = .06, ( $F$  change (1, 360) = 26.54,  $p < .001$ ).

School counselor respondents ( $N = 391$ ) who completed the attitudes subscale of the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competence Scale had scores that ranged from 18 to 70 with a mean score of 65.57, a score indicative of positive attitudes toward LGB persons. Specific to survey items, the participants received the highest rating values for the following items that were reversed scored: (a) "It's obvious that a same sex relationship

between two men or two women is not as strong or as committed as one between a man and a woman,” (b) “Personally, I think that homosexuality is a mental disorder or a sin and can be treated through counseling or spiritual help,” and (c) “I believe that LGB clients will benefit most from counseling with a heterosexual counselor who endorses conventional values and norms.” Attitudes toward LGB persons were found to relate with statistical significance to an increase of both LGB advocacy intention and activity. In addition, the following factors were related to more favorable attitudes by school counselors: (a) practice in schools in the Northeast, (b) identification as part of a sexual minority group, (c) practice in the suburbs, and (d) contact with more LGB persons.

**Interpretation of findings regarding attitudes.** This study is the first of its kind (i.e., nationwide assessment) known to assess school counselors’ attitudes toward LGB persons in relation to LGB advocacy intention and activity. Historically, studies addressing the attitudes of counselors toward sexual minorities were focused on mental health professionals, and the views of school counselors were rarely included (Rudolph, 1988). Today, studies such as this one have, however, included the assessment of the attitudes of school counselors toward sexual minorities (Bidell, 2012; Bland, 2010; Jimenez, 2009; Satcher & Legget, 2007; Schmidt, Glass, & Wooten, 2011; Sears, 1988, 1992). This study found that school counselors who possessed higher levels of LGB advocacy activity had less contact with LGB persons, yet the counselors were more likely to hold more favorable attitudes toward LGB persons. These findings support findings by Bidell (2012), Satcher and Legget (2007), and Sears (1988, 1992).

Bidell assessed counselors' levels of competence in working with sexual minority persons, and his assessments included an assessment of counselors' attitudes. He found that counselors who have higher levels of sexual orientation counseling competence tend to display more favorable attitudes toward LGB persons. His work, however, did not confirm the need for less contact with LGB persons. It seems that more research in this area is needed to distinguish if more counselor contact with LGB persons is necessary for the development of school counselor LGB advocacy intention and activity.

Satcher and Legget (2007) assessed homonegativity among 215 female professional school counselors in the South using modified versions of the Homonegativity Scale and the Modern Homonegativity Scale. They found that school counselors who had significantly lower homonegativity scores also had gay or lesbian friends and had assisted students regarding sexual minority issues. Sears (1988) studied middle and high school counselors' attitudes toward sexual minority students. The Modified Attitudes Toward Homosexuality survey was completed by 142 counselors along with the Index of Homophobia. A strong relationship was found to exist between school counselors' activities and their attitudes toward sexual minority students (Sears, 1988). Sears (1992) also discovered that school counselors who held more favorable attitudes toward sexual minority students were three times more likely to believe they should challenge homosexual prejudice and six times more likely to believe they should not consider conversion therapy as valid.

### **Advocacy Self-Efficacy**

For this study, results indicated that school counselors' levels of advocacy self-efficacy had a small to moderate positive relationship with school counselors' LGB advocacy intention. More positive advocacy self-efficacy appeared related to an increase in intention to advocate for LGB students. Advocacy self-efficacy was also found to account for 7.2% of the variance in LGB advocacy intention,  $F(1, 376) = 29.01, p < .001$ . Pertaining to school counselor LGB advocacy activity, advocacy self-efficacy accounted for 8.6% of the variance,  $F(1, 361) = 35.02, p < .001$ .

School counselor respondents ( $N = 395$ ) completed an advocacy self-efficacy subscale that was comprised of seven items from the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE; Bodenhorn, 2001; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). The counselors indicated their self-efficacy levels in performing advocacy tasks recommended by the American School Counselor Association. Their scores ranged from 18 to 35 with a mean score of 31.57, a score that indicated higher levels of advocacy self-efficacy. Specifically, the participants provided the highest ratings for the item, "I can find some way of communicating with any student in my school." Advocacy self-efficacy levels were found to have a significant positive correlation with both LGB advocacy intention and activity. Use of the SCSE in this study extended its application in assessing these factors' relationships with a nationwide non-random sample of school counselors. The following factors were related to statistically significantly higher levels of advocacy self-efficacy: (a) more years of experience, (b) more LGB students assisted, and (c) more LGB persons known. School counselors were less likely to possess higher levels of advocacy self-

efficacy if they indicated identifying more with that the advocacy definition by Singh et al. (2010) and if the ASCA National Model was more implemented in their respective school settings.

**Interpretation of findings regarding advocacy self-efficacy.** Results of this study have indicated that significant negative relationships exist between school counselors' levels of advocacy self-efficacy and both levels of ASCA Model implementation and levels of identification as an advocate. These findings fill a gap in the research on self-efficacy and school counselor advocacy. The two following factors were related to lower levels of advocacy self-efficacy: (a) employment in school counseling settings with more fully implemented ASCA Model guidance and (b) more identification as an advocate. To increase the likelihood that school counselors will advocate for LGB students (e.g., provide information to students on sexuality and gender minorities), school counselors need to assess and work at improving their levels of advocacy self-efficacy.

School counselors might benefit from taking an advocacy self-efficacy assessment while in training or practice to ascertain their likelihood of advocating for LGB students. Additionally, training may be offered for professional development in school districts or at national conferences. By spending more time in the profession and building on their successes related to LGB advocacy (e.g., exploring their own sexual or gender identities, volunteering in LGB communities), school counselors might develop an increase in advocacy self-efficacy. Additionally, requiring coursework on advocacy self-efficacy in relationship to school counselor effectiveness may be useful for both pre-

service and practicing school counselors. Discussions about the limitations of the ASCA Model and the effects of school counselors identifying at higher levels of advocacy related to this area might also be warranted. This study's results and recommendations extend earlier research.

Bandura (2001), McMahan et al. (2010), and Teng et al. (2004) posited that people's beliefs about themselves were related to personal agency (e.g., how they advocate on behalf of LGB students). McMahan et al. (2010), in particular, related this to one's "personhood." Bandura (2001) believed that one's self-efficacy beliefs were indicative of levels of action, intention, and affect. Earlier, Bandura (1986) found, if a person is successful in becoming more confident in a particular area, future success in the same area is likely.

Other ways in which self-efficacy may be enhanced beyond assessment is through modeling, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. Arguably, counselor education programs or schools in which school counselors work should employ educators who are comfortable discussing topics related to gender and sexuality so that more LGB students' needs are likely to be met. Tang et al. (2004) studied how counselor self-efficacy was related to graduate level counseling students' training and experiences. Results indicated that counselor self-efficacy and coursework, clinical training, and number of internship hours were significantly correlated. Students with higher levels of counseling competence had taken more courses and completed more internship hours and related training.

### **Subjective Norm**

The 14-item Subjective Norm Scale was crafted from a comprehensive literature

review developed using guidelines proposed by Ajzen (n.d.), reviewed by a group of validity raters, and found to have an alpha coefficient of .97. School counselor respondents ( $N = 392$ ) who completed the subjective norm scale (SNS) had scores that ranged from 14 to 98 with a mean score of 51.43, a score that was indicative of school counselors perceiving lower social pressure to advocate for LGB students. Specifically, school counselors provided the lowest rating on the following item that read, “If I were to be visible as either gay or lesbian or as an LGB ally, I would care a lot about what my faculty colleagues think.” Out of all of the items presented, the school counselor respondents indicated that this item was the least likely to be true for them. Items, however, that school counselors responded to that were likely to be most true of themselves were the following: (a) “If I were to sponsor a student group for LGB students, I would care a lot about what my students think,” (b) “If I were to advocate for inclusive (e.g., nondiscrimination and anti-bullying) school policies for LGB students, I would care a lot about what all of my students think,” and (c) “If I were to offer professional training on LGB issues (e.g., how to intervene when students are harassed), I would care a lot about what my principal thinks.” These results are important given the findings of the regression analyses. The analyses indicated subjective norm was non-significant in predicting LGB advocacy intention and LGB advocacy activity.

**Interpretation of findings related to subjective norm.** The results of this study indicated that subjective norm was not a statistically significant factor in predicting LGB advocacy intention or activity. It may be concluded that it may have been irrelevant to measure subjective norm or the subjective norm scale was not developed effectively. The



latter point was supported by participant feedback. Two respondents emailed the researcher about the scale. More research might be warranted in this area. Noting the ambiguity of the subjective norm items, two school counselor respondents shared the following:

I always care what my principal thinks [*sic*]. In answering the questions I felt as though if I answered that I care a lot about what my principal thinks that it might be construed in a different context. Same thing for my colleagues and students. If the question is/was...do I care if they have a negative opinion of LGB students, I do not. And I would be disheartened by that type of opinion/reaction (anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2014).

I very much do care about what staff members/administrators (one of whom identifies as lesbian) think, but not for the reasons that I assume those questions were asked (i.e. not because there is a stigma attached to being an ally from the staff's perspective) (anonymous, personal communication, September 19, 2014).

The subjective norm scale assessed how school counselors perceived students', faculty members', and administrators' views of five school counselor LGB advocacy acts/best practice recommendations: (a) sponsorship of a LGB student group (e.g. a Gay Straight Alliance), (b) school counselor support for formalized inclusive LGB nondiscrimination and anti-bullying policies, (c) professional training on LGB issues (e.g., how to intervene when students are harassed), (d) guidance curriculum and resources on LGB issues, and (e) school counselor visibility as either a sexual minority or

an LGB ally. It appeared, however, these items were difficult for at least two school counselor respondents to answer. Findings have also suggested that subjective norm was not an important factor to assess in this study; however, the researcher included it.

Subjective norm was included to assess the overall application of the TPB as the theoretical frame for this study. The aim was to capture the influence of subjective norm in light of school policy (Szalacha, 2003), Gay Straight Alliances (Bidell, 2011; Szalacha, 2003), gay positive curriculum (Lipkin, 1994; Whatley, 1991), and the presence of role models (Bahr, Brish, & Croteau, 2000; Griffin, 1992; Reynolds & Koski, 1993). In studies that have utilized the TPB to understand or predict behavior intention or action, many have not included a subjective norm assessment. Researchers who have tried to assess subjective norm have done this as a way to assess how one's perception of social pressure from others is related to their behavior(s).

### **LGB Advocacy Intention**

For this study, school counselors' advocacy intention had a large positive relationship with school counselors' LGB advocacy activity (.59) at the  $p < .01$  level. Higher positive advocacy intention scores were related directly to higher advocacy activity scores for LGB students. This was the largest correlation identified among the factors addressed in the study. Pertaining to school counselor LGB advocacy activity, a statistical significant portion of its variance (34.2%) was found to be predicted from advocacy self-efficacy, attitudes toward LGB persons, and LGB advocacy intention. By including school counselors' LGB advocacy intention in stepwise regression analysis, the variance increased from 15% to 34.2% ( $R^2$  change = .19, ( $F$  change (1, 359) = 104.03,  $p$

< .001). Of the three predictors, LGB advocacy intention had the highest beta value (beta = .46,  $p < .001$ ) followed by attitudes toward LGB persons (beta = .16,  $p < .001$ ) and advocacy self-efficacy (beta = .16,  $p < .001$ ). These findings supported application of the TPB absent subjective norm.

School counselor respondents ( $N = 393$ ) who completed the LGB Advocacy Intentions Subscale (LGBAIS) had scores that ranged from 12 to 60 with a mean score of 41.34, a score that was indicative of higher intention by school counselors to advocate for LGB students. Specifically, school counselors provided the highest ratings on the following items: (a) “Referring LGB students for emotional support as appropriate,” (b) “Referring LGB students for academic support as appropriate,” (c) “Providing individual counseling for LGB students, as warranted, based on the understanding of their expressed needs,” and (d) “Advocating for LGB students by assisting with their individual progress through appropriate school experiences.” School counselors provided the lowest ratings on these items: (a) “Providing family counseling for LGB students and their families, as warranted, based on an understanding of their expressed needs,” (b) “Providing group counseling for LGB students, as warranted, based on an understanding of their expressed needs,” and (c) “Providing leadership in the establishment of training and awareness programs concerning LGB students to administrators and staff.” The higher rated items by school counselors appeared to exist for tasks that could be applied to any type student and appeared to be more responsive to students in nature. The lower rated items by school counselors appeared to exist for tasks that were more specialized and less responsive to students.

For this study, the LGBAIS was modified from the work of Carlson (2004) and Goldsmith (2011) to measure middle and high school counselors' LGB advocacy intention. Scores on the LGBAIS were found to have statistically significant positive correlations to levels of attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and LGB advocacy activity. In addition, identification with an advocacy definition and practice in the suburbs were related to an increase in LGB advocacy intention.

**Interpretation of findings regarding LGB advocacy intention.** It appears that a higher likelihood exists for LGB student to have their needs met (since LGB advocacy intention was found to strongly correlate with LGB advocacy activity) if school counselors are employed in school settings in the suburbs, and if they identify at higher levels as an advocate. According to the work of Ajzen (1988), it was hypothesized that, if school counselors possessed the intention to advocate on behalf of LGB students, they would be more familiar with or more likely to implement LGB advocacy activity. The present study has confirmed this.

### **LGB Advocacy Activity**

School counselor respondents ( $N = 379$ ) who completed the LGB advocacy activity scale (LGBAAS) had scores that ranged from zero to 60 with a mean score of 39.16, a score that was indicative of more familiarity with or use of advocacy activities on behalf of LGB students. The scale was developed from a review of the literature on advocacy practices for working with LGB students (Byrd & Hays, 2012; Durby, 1994; Jordan, 2011; Pope, 2000; Pope et al., 2004; Reynolds & Koski, 1993). Specifically, school counselors provided the highest ratings on the following items: (a) "I intervene in

response to harassment and/or violence aimed at LGB students (i.e., LGB statements or actions),” (b) “I reflect over my own attitudes, beliefs, and LGB advocacy practices,” (c) “I assist in promoting policies that prohibit harassment/bullying of LGB students,” (d) “I am knowledgeable of the common myths/stereotypes around LGB issues,” and (e) “I am knowledgeable of my own sexual identity development.”

School counselors provided the lowest ratings on the following items: (a) “I provide parent education sessions on LGB issues and diversity,” (b) “I share about GLAAD, formerly known as the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, as a resource for the LGB community,” (c) “I lobby for LGB inclusion and rights at the governmental levels (e.g., by contacting my legislatures and representatives),” (d) “I share about Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) as a resource for the LGB community,” (e) “I share about the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight, Education Network (GLSEN) as a resource for the LGB community,” (f) “I provide in-service/faculty development/trainings on LGB issues and diversity,” (g) “I utilize a student needs assessment that includes an LGB component,” and (h) “I belong to and/or participate in community organizations dedicated to supporting the LGB community.”

Results of the study indicated that a statistically significant moderate portion of the variance with LGB advocacy activity (34.2%) could be predicted using advocacy self-efficacy, attitudes toward LGB persons, subjective, and LGB advocacy intention. Correlations between these factors were statistically significant with LGB advocacy activity except for subjective norm. Subjective norm was non-significant to LGB advocacy intention and LGB advocacy activity. In addition, the following factors were

related to familiarity with or enactment of LGB activities: (a) practice in the Northeast, (b) fewer LGB students assisted, (c) fewer LGB persons known, (d) identification at higher levels with an advocacy definition, (e) practice in the suburbs, and (f) identification as a sexual minority.

**Interpretation of findings related to advocacy activity.** Findings from this study suggest that items from the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale (LGBAAS) could be reviewed by pre-service and practicing school counselors, especially those who do not identify as advocates, who do not work in the suburbs or in the Northeast, or who do not identify as sexual minority persons. Additionally, school counselors who have had less contact with LGB persons could be targeted. Review and discussion of the LGBAAS items in light of what it means to be an effective school counselor LGB advocate might be warranted. The findings of this study contribute empirical evidence towards identifying what key LGB advocacy activities might be the most important to shares with school counselors who are trying to become more familiar with the process of LGB advocacy activity.

### **Advocacy Identification**

One survey item in particular was provided for school counselors to indicate their level of agreement with an advocacy definition by Singh et al. (2010) who wrote that school counselor advocates view social justice advocacy as a political process. They do not claim neutrality nor do they fear being unpopular. They pick their battles; are deliberate in selecting when, where, how, and to whom to speak; self-promote; build intentional relationships; and aim to teach students self-advocacy skills. The findings of

this study have confirmed and extended use of the proposed definition to the measurement of school counselors' advocacy self-efficacy, LGB advocacy intention, and LGB advocacy activity. That is, the results of the study have shown that the advocacy definition developed from the work of Singh et al. (2010) could be useful in assessing school counselor advocacy identity development with school counselors. Given this outcome, this definition has been proposed as an integral resource for practicing and pre-service school counselors to review in regards to assessment of their advocacy self-efficacy, LGB advocacy intention, and LGB advocacy activity.

### **ASCA Model Implementation**

This study did not provide any further evidence to support or dispute findings related to (a) race/ethnicity, (b) teacher certification, (c) education level, (d) student counselor ratio, (e) perceptions of ASCA Model importance, (f) gender, (g) school type, and (h) school level. Related to the ASCA Model, it appeared that relevance was not with what school counselors thought about the ASCA Model but with how the ASCA Model was implemented in their respective school settings. A decrease in school counselor advocacy self-efficacy was related to working in school settings more fully implemented ASCA Model guidance.

### **Implications**

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985) has been the underlying theoretical framework applied to this study. The TPB has been used to predict behaviors such as teaching students with special needs (Casebolt & Hodge, 2010), participating in physical activity (Tsorbatzoudis, 2005), and sharing knowledge (Kuo & Young, 2008;

Shipp, 2010). Therefore, the TPB could be useful when applied to understanding the practice of school counselor LGB advocacy in particular school counseling settings with different school counselors. Based on the findings of this study, the following implications and recommendations are suggested.

### **Training for School Counselors**

The results of this study hold implications for the training, practice, and assessment of school counselors in the area of LGB advocacy. Three factors of the TPB were found to be statistically significant predictors of school counselor LGB advocacy activity (attitudes, advocacy-self-efficacy, and LGB advocacy intention). The findings of this study resulted from collecting responses from school counselors located throughout the United States. It can be surmised that different levels of the three predictors would result in different subscale scores, depending on the advocacy identity, sexual orientation, number of LGB persons known, level of ASCA Model implementation, school location, and school region of a particular school counselor. In response to this outcome, four of the five subscales used for this study could be administered to and reviewed with pre-service school counselors or practicing school counselors (after being hired) to develop professional growth plans.

**Assessment.** Assessment of school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and school counselor LGB intention seems warranted. School counselors could be assessed when they begin their degree programs or during employment in a school counseling position. Assessment scores could be evaluated to identify training interventions or professional development opportunities. For example,



after attitude, advocacy self-efficacy, and school counselor LGB intention scores are retrieved, a professional development plan may be developed for each pre-service or practicing school counselor.

Education reform at both the state and federal levels is contingent upon input from school counselors who have been trained as experts in LGB advocacy. Through their voices, more LGB students' needs may be met. The present study has proposed a specialized LGB advocacy approach that may be instituted both the individual and systems levels. These findings (responses to a demographic measure and scores from subscale measures of attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, and LGB advocacy intention and activity) indicate that more assessment and coursework/continuing education is necessary to ensure that school counselors throughout the United States advocate for LGB students. Related knowledge and skills in educational programs or places of employment lead to the development of favorable attitudes toward LGB persons and an increase in school counselor advocacy self-efficacy, two factors statistically significantly related to LGB advocacy intention and activity.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study had several limitations that should be addressed. Limitations of this study included the following: (a) the survey was an electronic survey so some school counselors might not have had the opportunity to take it using email or Internet and were excluded, (b) the reliability data for the advocacy self-efficacy subscale items could not be verified because the reliability data reported was from the long form of the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE), (c) the reliability data for the Lesbian, Gay, and

Bisexual Advocacy Intentions Scale (LGBAIS) could not be verified because Carlson's (2004) scale for assessment of school counselor involvement with gifted and talented (GT) students was modified to assess school counselor LGB advocacy intention, and (d) reliability data for both the Subjective Norm Scale (SNS) and the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale (LGBAAS) could not be verified. Despite each subscale having high levels of validity, the absence of reliability data for four of the five subscales is a major limitation.

Additionally, people who had access to email or Internet and who received a link to participate in the study may have started and completed responses to appear a certain way. School counselor respondents may have also been more likely to complete the study if they were interested in LGB research. Thus, response bias could have been introduced. Before the survey was distributed, however, all items were reviewed and several were either removed or modified.

This study was a correlational study. Consequently, causation cannot be presumed and conclusions should not be drawn by examining the relationships that exist between the variables. The analyses used in this study were employed to assess correlation and to assess whether or not the hypothesized variables were predictors of school counselor LGB advocacy intention or school counselor LGB advocacy activity.

For this study, threats to external validity might have existed. The question is, "What was it that differentiated the school counselors who completed the survey from those who did not complete it?" The response rate for the study was 25%. Thus, a biased sample not representative of the school counselor population could have contributed to

this rate or vice versa. To control for this effect, responses from school counselors who did not complete at least 85% of the items were removed. Many of these responses that were removed due to this condition were completed in a short period of time (i.e., in a timeframe much shorter than what would have been necessary for the average respondent to complete the survey), or the responses indicated a particular pattern (e.g., all the same Likert-type scale responses). Another technique utilized was to conduct a non-random sample of school counselors throughout the United States to maximize the response rate (with a wide range of viewpoints within a large sample). In addition, an incentive for completion of the survey in its entirety was provided (i.e., a \$10 Amazon gift card), and the survey was offered online via Qualtrics. Yet, one demographic form and five subscales made up the survey, which, in total, was over 90 items in length. It might have been that for school counselors who were invited to participate in the survey and clicked on the survey link had been too busy to participate, which precluded them from being willing to or having the opportunity (i.e., enough time) to complete the survey in its entirety. Additionally, some of the school counselor respondents might have completed the survey because they were very interested in the research topic.

### **Future Research and Training**

Additional research should be conducted using the TPB to predict school counselor LGB activity. Beyond the use of correlation and regression analyses to test the hypotheses, structural equation modeling could have been used as well. Although the TPB was applied as the underlying theoretical frame for this study, the main intent of the current study was not to test the model per se. It was, however, used to assess the TPB

factors as potential predictors of school counselor advocacy. The significant factors identified were (a) attitudes toward LGB persons, (b) advocacy self-efficacy, and (c) school counselor LGB advocacy intention. School counselor LGB advocacy intention also served as a mediator variable in conjunction with the attitude and advocacy self-efficacy factors.

Additional research in this area could offer recommendations and content for improving educational and continuing education programs in place for pre-service and practicing school counselors, respectively. Arguably, in light of findings from this study, educational and continuing education programs would allow for assessment of school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, LGB advocacy intention, and LGB advocacy activity. The results of the assessments would provide training programs and school districts with an opportunity to develop professional development plans for school counselors. Special attention should be given pre-service and practicing school counselors who score low in any of the subscale areas especially if they are not of sexual minority status, know few LGB persons or students, do not work in the Northeast, do not work in the suburbs, do not identify as a school counselor advocate, or do not hold favorable attitudes toward LGB persons.

Future studies in the area of school counselor LGB advocacy should pay special attention to the role of advocacy self-efficacy in the effectiveness of school counselors in training or practicing. This study has confirmed that school counselors who display advocacy self-efficacy are more likely to advocate for LGB students; however, they may not necessarily work in a school setting that subscribes to the ASCA Model or have much

contact with LGB persons. Additional research is needed to understand these results, and subsequent findings from researchers should inform development of coursework or continuing education opportunities for school counselors to become more acquainted with LGB advocacy activities. Research could also be conducted to further examine the validity of the subscale measures used in this study (e.g., the Subjective Norm Scale) either nationally or internationally. Practicing school counselors may begin to undertake research studies in their respective school settings to assist in the development of school counselor advocacy competencies for working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and ally youth. The needs of transgender students should be included in future studies as well. One school counselor respondent shared,

Is there a reason that you left off transgendered students? The current issue is to be all inclusive within the community and LGBT is what we are seeing all over the country. I would be interested in participating but feel strongly that this group of students should be included in the study (anonymous, personal communication, September 21, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this research study was to assess factors related to school counselor LGB advocacy. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) served as the underlying theoretical frame applied to the study. As hypothesized, school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons and levels of advocacy self-efficacy were found to significantly positively correlate with LGB advocacy intention. Moreover, each these factors were identified as significant predictors of LGB advocacy activity. LGB advocacy

intention in particular was found to mediate the relationship between the two and LGB advocacy activity. Subjective norm, however, was not found to be statistically significant in relationship to any of the other TPB factors, which was inconsistent with the TPB (Ajzen, 1985). This was also the case when assessed across demographic items.

School counselors who are more confident in advocating as school counselors and who hold favorable attitudes toward LGB person are more likely to possess higher levels of LGB advocacy intention and LGB advocacy activity than those school counselors who do not. Additionally, it appears that it might be favorable for training programs and school districts alike to assess school counselors to develop professional development plans. It is also important for pre-service and practicing school counselors to learn about what it means to subscribe to an advocacy definition and to ASCA Model use in schools. These methods increase the likelihood that LGB students will have their needs met by school counselors who are familiar with or who are already implementing recommended LGB advocacy activities. A less expected finding indicated that subjective norm had no bearing on how effective school counselors were in advocating for LGB students.

This study has contributed to the body of research on school counselor advocacy and LGB students. It has offered empirical research findings in a research area that has been largely conceptual. In addition to extending the application of the TPB to the field of school counseling and LGB issues, these findings have improved the understanding of school counselors' attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, subjective norm, and LGB advocacy intention in relationship to LGB advocacy activity.

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*Appendix A*

Table A1

*Demographics of Study Participants*

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	323	81.1
Male	60	15.1
Transgender Male	1	0.3
Total	384	96.5
No Response	14	3.5
Total	398	100
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Caucasian / White	349	87.7
African American / Black	26	6.5
Hispanic / Latino/a	11	2.8
American Indian / Native American and Caucasian / White	3	0.8
American Indian / Native American	2	0.5
Asian American / Pacific Islander / Asian	2	0.5
American	1	0.3
African American / Black and Caucasian / White	1	0.3
Caucasian / White and Hispanic / Latino/a	1	0.3
Hispanic / Latino/a and Chicano	1	0.3
American Indian / Native American and African American / Black, and Caucasian / White	1	0.3
Total	398	100
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
Exclusively Heterosexual	343	86.2
Mostly Heterosexual	25	6.3
Bisexual	5	1.3
Mostly Lesbian / Gay	4	1
Exclusively Lesbian / Gay	15	3.8
Queer	1	0.3
Pansexual	1	0.3
Asexual	2	0.5
Total	396	99.5
No Response	2	.5
Total	398	100

Table A2

*Employment Environment*

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
<b>School Type</b>		
Public	369	92.7
Charter	7	1.8
Private	6	1.5
Parochial	6	1.5
Independent	1	0.3
Alternative Public	1	0.3
Residential School for the Gifted	1	0.3
Magnet School	1	0.3
Private Special Education	1	0.3
Total	393	98.7
No Response	5	1.3
Total	398	100
<b>School Level</b>		
High School	217	54.5
Middle School / Junior High School	125	31.4
7-12	27	6.8
K-12	15	3.8
K-8	5	1.3
6-12	3	0.8
PK-12	2	0.5
8-12	1	0.3
Total	395	99.2
No Response	3	0.8
Total	398	100
<b>School Location</b>		
Rural Area	179	45
Suburbs	124	31.2
City	91	22.9
Town	2	0.5
Total	396	9.5
No Response	2	0.5
Total	398	100

Table A3

*State of Practice*

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
State		
Arizona	2	0.5
California	3	0.8
Colorado	19	4.8
Connecticut	50	12.6
Delaware	5	1.3
Florida	3	0.8
Hawaii	1	0.3
Idaho	1	0.3
Illinois	11	2.8
Iowa	1	0.3
Kansas	2	0.5
Kentucky	9	2.3
Louisiana	11	2.8
Maine	15	3.8
Maryland	2	0.5
Michigan	2	0.5
Mississippi	19	4.8
Missouri	130	32.7
Montana	10	2.5
New Mexico	12	3
New York	38	9.5
North Carolina	2	0.5
Ohio	25	6.3
South Dakota	17	4.3
Tennessee	2	0.5
Virginia	2	0.5
Wisconsin	1	0.3
Total	393	98.7
No Response	5	1.3
Total	398	100

Table A4

*Training*

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Education Level		
Doctorate Degree	17	4.3
Education Specialist Degree	41	10.3
Master's Degree	337	84.7
Bachelor's Degree	1	0.3
Total	396	99.5
No Response	2	0.5
Total	398	100
Teacher Certification/Licensure		
Yes	204	51.3
No	189	47.5
Total	393	98.7
No Response	5	1.3
Total	398	100

Table A5

*LGB Students, Student to Counselor Ratio, and Years of Experience*

Variable	<i>f</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Number of LGB Assisted	390	13	18
No Response	8		
Total	398		
Number of LGB Known	397	11	19
No Response	1		
Total	398		
Student to Counselor Ratio	396	320	132
No Response	2		
Total	398		
Years of Experience	393	10	7
No Response	5		
Total	398		



Table A6

*Advocacy and ASCA Model*

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
<b>Advocacy Identity</b>		
Mostly True of Myself	182	45.7
True of Myself	135	33.9
About Halfway True of Myself	44	11.1
Slightly True of Myself	31	7.8
Not At All True of Myself	4	1
Total	396	99.5
No Response	2	0.5
Total	398	100
<b>Importance of ASCA Model</b>		
Very Important	86	21.6
Important	196	49.2
Neither Important nor Unimportant	66	16.6
Unimportant	16	4
Very Unimportant	32	8
Total	396	99.5
No Response	2	0.5
Total	398	100
<b>Implementation Level of ASCA Model</b>		
Completed	103	25.9
Started	206	51.8
Not Implemented	56	14.1
Unknown	31	7.8
Total	396	99.5
No Response	2	0.5
Total	398	100

*Appendix B*

**Demographic Form**

What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you presently employed full-time as a school counselor working with students who are enrolled in middle or high school?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 No

Do you hold state certification or licensure to practice as a school counselor?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 No

What is your gender? Please write out your response in the textbox.

\_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity? (check as many as apply)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 American Indian / Native American
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Asian American / Pacific Islander / Asian
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3 African American / Black
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4 Caucasian / White
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5 Hispanic / Latino/a
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following best describes your school setting?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Public
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Private
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3 Parochial
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4 Charter
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5 Independent
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

How many years of experience do you have as a full-time employed school counselor? \_\_\_\_

Which school level do you work in as a full-time professional school counselor?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Middle School/Junior High School
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 High School

- 3 7th to 12th grades
- 4 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What is your highest level of education?

- 1 Bachelor's Degree
- 2 Master's Degree
- 3 Education Specialist Degree
- 4 Doctoral Degree

Have you ever or do you currently hold state certification/licensure to teach?

- 2 Yes
- 1 No

How many self-identified lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual students have you provided counseling services to during your career as a full-time employed professional school counselor? Please provide a number to the best of your ability. \_\_\_\_\_

What is your sexual orientation?

- 1 Exclusively Heterosexual
- 2 Mostly Heterosexual
- 3 Bisexual
- 4 Mostly Lesbian/Gay
- 5 Exclusively Lesbian/Gay
- 6 Queer
- 7 Pansexual
- 8 Asexual
- 6 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

How fully implemented is American School Counselor Association (ASCA) comprehensive model guidance at your school?

- 0 I don't know
- 1 Not implemented (ASCA model guidance not in place)
- 2 Started (ASCA model guidance begun, but not completely implemented)
- 3 Complete (ASCA model guidance fully implemented)

Personally, how important do you believe ASCA National Model guidance is to you as a school counselor?

- 1 Very unimportant
- 2 Unimportant

\_\_\_\_\_ 3 Neither important or unimportant

\_\_\_\_\_ 4 Important

\_\_\_\_\_ 5 Very important

Where is your school located?

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 Rural

\_\_\_\_\_ 2 City

\_\_\_\_\_ 3 Suburbs

\_\_\_\_\_ 4 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

How many self-identified lesbian, gay, and bisexual acquaintances, family members, or friends do you have? Please provide a number to the best of your ability. \_\_\_\_\_

What is your student to counselor ratio? (e.g., 1:250) \_\_\_\_\_

What state do you practice in full-time as a school counselor?

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 Alabama

\_\_\_\_\_ 2 Alaska

\_\_\_\_\_ 3 Arizona

\_\_\_\_\_ 4 Arkansas

\_\_\_\_\_ 5 California

\_\_\_\_\_ 6 Colorado

\_\_\_\_\_ 7 Connecticut

\_\_\_\_\_ 8 Delaware

\_\_\_\_\_ 9 Florida

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 Georgia

\_\_\_\_\_ 11 Hawaii

\_\_\_\_\_ 12 Idaho

\_\_\_\_\_ 13 Illinois

\_\_\_\_\_ 14 Indiana

\_\_\_\_\_ 15 Iowa

\_\_\_\_\_ 16 Kansas

\_\_\_\_\_ 17 Kentucky

\_\_\_\_\_ 18 Louisiana

\_\_\_\_\_ 19 Maine

\_\_\_\_\_ 20 Maryland

\_\_\_\_\_ 21 Massachusetts

\_\_\_\_\_ 22 Michigan

\_\_\_\_\_ 23 Minnesota

\_\_\_\_\_ 24 Mississippi

\_\_\_\_\_ 25 Missouri

\_\_\_\_\_ 26 Montana

- 27 Nebraska
- 28 Nevada
- 29 New Hampshire
- 30 New Jersey
- 31 New Mexico
- 32 New York
- 33 North Carolina
- 34 North Dakota
- 35 Ohio
- 36 Oklahoma
- 37 Oregon
- 38 Pennsylvania
- 39 Rhode Island
- 40 South Carolina
- 41 South Dakota
- 42 Tennessee
- 43 Texas
- 44 Utah
- 45 Vermont
- 46 Virginia
- 47 Washington
- 48 West Virginia
- 49 Wisconsin
- 50 Wyoming

To what degree do you identify as a school counselor advocate? According to Singh, Urbano, Haston, & McMahan (2010), school counselor advocates view social justice advocacy as a political process. They do not claim neutrality nor do they fear being unpopular. They pick their battles; are deliberate in selecting when, where, how, and to whom to speak; self-promote; build intentional relationships with others who become allies; and aim to teach students self-advocacy skills.

- 1 Not at All True of Myself
- 2 Slightly True of Myself
- 3 About Halfway True of Myself
- 4 Mostly True of Myself
- 5 True of Myself

*Appendix C*

**Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS) Attitudes Subscale\*  
(Bidell, 2005)**

Using the following scale, rate the truth of each item as it applies to you by selecting the appropriate number.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not At All True			Somewhat True			Totally True

The lifestyle of a LGB client is unnatural or immoral.

It's obvious that a same sex relationship between two men or two women is not as strong or as committed as one between a man and a woman.

I believe that being highly discreet about their sexual orientation is a trait that LGB clients should work towards.

I believe that LGB couples don't need special rights (domestic partner benefits, of the right to marry) because that would undermine normal and traditional family values.

It would be best if my clients viewed a heterosexual lifestyle as ideal.

I think that my clients should accept some degree of conformity to traditional sexual values.

I believe that LGB clients will benefit most from counseling with a heterosexual counselor who endorses conventional values and norms.

Personally, I think that homosexuality is a mental disorder or a sin and can be treated through counseling or spiritual help.

I believe that all LGB clients must be discreet about their sexual orientation around children.

When it comes to homosexuality, I agree with the statement: "You should love the sinner but hate or condemn the sin."

\* All items are reversed scored.

*Appendix D*

**School Counselor Advocacy Self-Efficacy Items**

Using the following scale, rate each item as it applies to you by selecting the appropriate number.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Fairly Often	Frequently

I advocate for integration of student academic, career, and personal development into the mission of the school.

I advocate for myself as a professional school counselor and articulate the purpose of the goals of school counseling.

I provide resources and guidance to the school population in times of crisis.

I communicate in writing with staff, parents, and the external community.

I consult with external agencies that provide support services for our students.

I understand the viewpoints and experiences of students and parents who are from a cultural background different from mine.

I can find some way of communicating with any student in my school.

*Appendix E*

**Subjective Norm Scale (SNS)**

Using the following scale, rate the truth of each item as it applies to you by selecting the appropriate number.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not At All True			Somewhat True			Totally True

If I were to sponsor a student group for LGB students, I would care a lot about what my principal thinks.

If I were to sponsor a student group for LGB students, I would care a lot about what my faculty colleagues think.

If I were to sponsor a student group for LGB students, I would care a lot about what my students think.

If I were to advocate for inclusive (e.g., nondiscrimination and anti-bullying) school policies for LGB students, I would care a lot about what my principal thinks.

If I were to advocate for inclusive (e.g., nondiscrimination and anti-bullying) school policies for LGB students, I would care a lot about what my faculty colleagues think.

If I were to advocate for inclusive (e.g., nondiscrimination and anti-bullying) school policies for LGB students, I would care a lot about what all of my students think.

If I were to offer guidance curricula and resources on LGB issues, I would care a lot about what my principal thinks.

If I were to offer guidance curricula and resources on LGB issues, I would care a lot about what my faculty colleagues think.

If I were to offer guidance curricula and resources on LGB issues, I would care a lot about what all of my students think.

If I were to offer professional training on LGB issues (e.g., how to intervene when students are harassed), I would care a lot about what my principal thinks.

If I were to offer professional training on LGB issues (e.g., how to intervene when students are harassed), I would care a lot about what my faculty colleagues think.



If I were to be visible as either gay or lesbian or as an LGB ally, I would care a lot about what my principal thinks.

If I were to be visible as either gay or lesbian or as an LGB ally, I would care a lot about what my faculty colleagues think.

If I were to be visible as either gay or lesbian or as an LGB ally, I would care a lot about what my students think.

*Appendix F*

**Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Intentions Scale (LGBAIS)**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Fairly Often	Frequently

In general, what level of involvement *do you aim to have* in the following?

Advocating for LGB students by assisting with their individual progress through appropriate school experiences.

Working with teachers, principals, and other staff to foster a better school climate for LGB students.

Consulting with other school professionals regarding problems and needs of individual LGB students.

Providing individual counseling for LGB students, as warranted, based on the understanding of their expressed needs.

Referring LGB students for academic support as appropriate.

Referring LGB students for emotional support as appropriate.

Providing group counseling for LGB students, as warranted, based on an understanding of their expressed needs.

Providing family counseling for LGB students and their families, as warranted, based on an understanding of their expressed needs.

Consulting, as needed, with parents of LGB students.

Engaging in professional development activities through which knowledge and skills in the area of programming for the needs of LGB students are regularly updated.

Providing leadership in the establishment of training and awareness programs concerning LGB students to administrators and staff.

Evaluating and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the school counseling program for LGB students.

*Appendix G*

**Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Advocacy Activity Scale (LGBAAS)**

0	1	2
Unfamiliar	Familiar	Use

Pertaining to your school counseling work for the 2014-2015 school-year, please rate each item as to whether you (a) are unfamiliar with this practice, (b) are familiar with the practice though do not use it, or (c) use this practice. Please choose only one response.

**Personal**

I use affirmative/LGB inclusive and intentional language (e.g., saying partner versus husband or wife).

I reflect over my own attitudes, beliefs, and LGB advocacy practices.

I participate in continuing education to improve my ability to promote advocacy for LGB students.

I have identified resources to use when offering LGB education activities.

I am knowledgeable of the impact of heterosexism.

I am knowledgeable of the common myths/stereotypes around LGB issues.

I am able to reframe conversation to correct misinformation around LGB issues.

I am knowledgeable about the coming out process.

I am knowledgeable of my own sexual identity development.

I am knowledgeable of the sexual identity developmental models.

**School**

I use affirmative counseling techniques with LGB students.

I utilize a student needs assessment that includes an LGB component.

I intervene in response to harassment and/or violence aimed at LGB students (i.e., LGB statements or actions).

I ensure that resources are made available to LGB students at school and/or online.

I talk openly about being lesbian, gay, or an LGB ally to others in my school.

I assist in promoting policies that foster inclusive school environments for LGB students.

I assist in promoting policies that prohibit harassment/bullying of LGB students.

I provide in-service/faculty development/trainings on LGB issues and diversity.

I provide parent education sessions on LGB issues and diversity.

I share community resource information specifically for LGB persons.

I share community resource information specifically for LGB persons' family members.

I create and/or display signs that indicate to others that I support the LGB community (e.g., a sticker, poster, brochures, or other symbols).

I consult with colleagues about LGB issues (e.g., LGB harassment) to improve my ability to promote advocacy for LGB students.

### **Community**

I belong to and/or participate in community organizations dedicated to supporting the LGB community.

I lobby for LGB inclusion and rights at the governmental levels (e.g., by contacting my legislatures and representatives).

I share about Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) as a resource for the LGB community.

I share about the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight, Education Network (GLSEN) as a resource for the LGB community.

I share about GLAAD, formerly known as the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, as a resource for the LGB community.

Simons, Jack, 2015, UMSL, p. 214

I maintain contact information for local LGB community resource centers.

I maintain contact information for local LGB community mental health professionals.

*Appendix H*

**Qualtrics Survey Informed Consent Letter**

Examining School Counselor Advocacy for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Students:  
An Assessment of Factors Toward Action Project # 622003-1  
**Campus IRB Approved [Enter Date Here]**

Dear Professional School Counselor:

My name is Jack Simons, and I am a Doctoral Candidate in Counselor Education and Supervision with specialization in School Counseling and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Issues in Counseling at the University of Missouri – St. Louis. My dissertation chair is Brian Hutchison, Ph.D. I am conducting research to examine factors that may relate to school counselor advocacy for lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students. Demographic factors will also be explored. You are invited to participate in this study as you have been identified as school counselor; therefore, the knowledge that you may provide may be useful in the field of school counseling research.

This survey should not be completed more than once by a certified school counselor nor should it be completed by a school counselor who is not presently employed full-time working with middle and/or high school students in a school setting. There are no anticipated risks or direct benefits associated with your voluntary participation in this research. However, if you feel uncomfortable completing items, you may choose to discontinue participation in the survey at any point. You will NOT be penalized should you withdraw at any time. Once you complete and submit the survey, it will be considered that you have given the researcher consent to use the data. Please do not provide your name or any other identifying information on the survey unless you would like to enter your name, phone number, and e-mail address on a second survey in order to be entered into a raffle for one of 65 \$10 Amazon gift cards.

While there is the possible risk that your IP address could be linked to your responses (a potential breach of confidentiality), they will be anonymized upon completion of the survey. Your IP address will be removed from your responses at the end of the survey, and the responses will not be traceable back to you. Once survey data are obtained, the data will be stored on a password-protected computer and on Qualtrics ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)), a secure online resource for developing surveys and distributing, collecting, and managing survey data. Data retrieved from participants who complete paper-and-pencil surveys will be securely locked in an office file cabinet to ensure confidentiality.

In order to maintain anonymity, if you are completing a paper and pencil version of this survey in particular, please complete and deposit it into the survey box located in the place noted. Please do not provide any identifying information about yourself on the

survey. If you would like to be entered into a raffle upon completion of the survey, please list your name, telephone number, and email address on the piece of paper located adjacent to the survey box and deposit it into the raffle box. Neither the survey box nor the raffle box will be monitored by the surveyor(s).

If you are eligible (at least 18 years of age and employed full-time as a certified middle and/or high school counselor) and agree to participate in this research study, I invite you to complete an online survey (20 to 25 minutes) about the perceived views of principals, faculty, and students on LGB advocacy activity as well as your attitudes toward LGB persons, advocacy self-efficacy, and advocacy intentions and activity on behalf of LGB students.

With further questions about the study, please feel free to contact me at 636-236-8849 or my faculty advisor at 314-516-6093. You may exit the study at any time. If you have questions about participating in a research study, you may contact the University of Missouri – St. Louis Office of Research Administration at 314-516-5899 or [ora@umsl.edu](mailto:ora@umsl.edu). The office is located at **341 Woods Hall, One University Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63121.**

Thank you kindly in advance for considering participation in my research.

Sincerely,

Jack Simons, M.Ed., LPC, NCC, NCSC  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Missouri – St. Louis

“I have read and I understand the research study procedure described above. I agree to participate in this study and I may print this page out for my records. By checking the box below, I indicate my consent to participate in this research study.”

*Appendix I*

**Recruitment Letter for a State School Counselor Association**

My name is Jack Simons, and I am a Doctoral Candidate in Counselor Education and Supervision with specialization in School Counseling and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling at the University of Missouri – St. Louis working under the supervision of faculty member, Brian Hutchison, Ph.D. I am writing to inquire about seeking the \_\_\_\_\_ School Counselor Association's assistance in recruiting school counselors as soon as possible to participate in my dissertation study once I am given the approval to begin collecting data.

I am conducting a quantitative survey study to investigate how school counselor attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) persons; school counselor advocacy self-efficacy; and the perceptions of others' views relate to school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions and activity. A literature review has shown that LGB students benefit from increased school counselor advocacy activity. Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to investigate how these factors relate to school counselor advocacy efforts for these students. The findings of this study will inform practice and policy in the area and may support counselor education programs and schools in their development.

The participants of this study will be a nationwide sample of certified and full-time employed middle and high school level counselors. They will be asked to complete an online survey, which will take 20 to 25 minutes total to complete. However, in the event of a low response rate, a paper and pencil survey may also be used. The survey also contains questions about demographic information. Participation in the study will be voluntary and anonymous. Prior to beginning this research, approval will be obtained from the IRB Committee of the University of Missouri – St. Louis and my dissertation committee. Additionally, personally identifiable information will only be collected after the survey from participants who choose to become eligible to win one of 65 \$10 Amazon gift cards. The data I receive will be maintained through the most secure means possible and only aggregate data will be published.

I would appreciate your assistance in this research endeavor and therefore would like to request an e-mail list of your membership in order to distribute the online survey during Summer/Fall 2014. If however you believe there is a more feasible method please let me know and I will be more than happy to make other arrangements with you. I believe the findings will contribute significantly to the school counseling literature and also will help me to complete my degree. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following telephone number or e-mail address: (636) 236-8849, [jdsWC3@umsl.edu](mailto:jdsWC3@umsl.edu).

Thank you for the consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.



Sincerely,  
Jack Simons, Counselor Education Doctoral Candidate  
University of Missouri – St. Louis

*Appendix J*

**Recruitment Letter for a State School Counselor Certifying/Licensing Body**

My name is Jack Simons, and I am a Doctoral Candidate in Counselor Education and Supervision with specialization in School Counseling and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling at the University of Missouri – St. Louis working under the supervision of faculty member, Brian Hutchison, Ph.D. I am writing to inquire about seeking \_\_\_\_\_ assistance in recruiting school counselors as soon as possible to participate in my dissertation study once I am given the approval to begin collecting data.

I am conducting a quantitative survey study to investigate how school counselor attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) persons; school counselor advocacy self-efficacy; and perceptions of others' views relate to school counselors' LGB advocacy intentions and activity. A literature review has shown that LGB students benefit from increased school counselor advocacy activity. Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to investigate how these factors relate to school counselor advocacy efforts for these students. The findings of this study will inform practice and policy in the area and may support counselor education programs and schools in their development.

The participants of this study will be a nationwide sample of certified and full-time employed middle and high school level counselors. They will be asked to complete an online survey, which will take 20 to 25 minutes total to complete. However, in the event of a low response rate, a paper and pencil survey may also be used. The survey also contains questions about demographic information. Participation in the study will be voluntary and anonymous. Prior to beginning this research, approval will be obtained from the IRB Committee of the University of Missouri – St. Louis and my dissertation committee. Additionally, personally identifiable information will only be collected after the survey from participants who choose to become eligible to win one of 65 \$10 Amazon gift cards. The data I receive will be maintained through the most secure means possible and only aggregate data will be published.

I would appreciate your assistance in this research endeavor and therefore would like to request an e-mail list of your membership in order to distribute the online survey during Summer/Fall 2014. If however you believe there is a more feasible method please let me know and I will be more than happy to make other arrangements with you. I believe the findings will contribute significantly to the school counseling literature and also will help me to complete my degree. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following telephone number or e-mail address: (636) 236-8849, [jdswc3@mail.umsl.edu](mailto:jdswc3@mail.umsl.edu).

Thank you for the consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Jack Simons, Counselor Education Doctoral Candidate  
University of Missouri – St. Louis

*Appendix K*

**Recruitment E-mail Message for E-mail, Listserv, and Website Distribution –  
Long Form**

You are invited to participate in a study regarding school counselor advocacy for lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students. The purpose of this research is to examine factors that may relate to school counselor LGB advocacy for lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students. If you are a certified school counselor and presently employed full-time in a middle and/or high school, I would greatly appreciate your participation in my study. The knowledge that you may provide may be useful in the assessment, teaching, and practice of middle and high school counselors.

When you have finished the survey, you will have the option to enter a raffle for one of 65 \$10 Amazon gift cards. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students have been historically marginalized and at-risk. Currently, there is limited empirical data which addresses this issue in relationship to school counselor advocacy; however, several factors (i.e., attitudes, self-efficacy, and perceptions of others' views) are hypothesized to relate to school counselor LGB advocacy. I believe that exploring these factors is critical to developing a better understanding of school counselor advocacy for LGB individuals.

The survey is anonymous, and takes about 20-25 minutes to complete. For those interested in participating in this study, click on the following hypertext link ([https://umsl.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_d4gTs2FG01Tmmh](https://umsl.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_d4gTs2FG01Tmmh)) which will take you to the consent form and survey. This research has been approved by the Institutional Review Board for protection of human subjects at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Please feel free to forward this e-mail announcement to eligible friends and other relevant listservs. Thanks in advance for your help with this project!

*Appendix L*

**Recruitment Message for E-mail, Listserv, and Website Distribution –  
Short Form**

School counselors are currently being recruited to participate in an online survey about advocacy for lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. Certificated or licensed middle and/or high school counselors who are working full-time are eligible to participate, regardless of the amount of experience they currently have. The survey will take 20 to 25 minutes, and participants may enter their contact information to be entered in a drawing for one of 65 \$10 Amazon gift cards. Please use this link to read the consent form and access the survey: [https://umsl.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_d4gTs2FG01Tmmh](https://umsl.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_d4gTs2FG01Tmmh)  
Any questions should be directed to Jack Simons, M.Ed., Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Counseling and Family Therapy, University of Missouri – St. Louis, [jdswc3@mail.umsl.edu](mailto:jdswc3@mail.umsl.edu).

*Appendix M*

**Human Research Participants Training Form**

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n Subject Research Participants

<http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/cert>

