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Western Michigan University

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ASSESSING MICHIGAN SCHOOL COUNSELORS' PREPAREDNESS TO MEET
THE NEEDS OF ATTRACTIONAL/SEXUAL MINORITY STUDENTS

by

J. Frederick Bland

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
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Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Advisor: Gary H. Bischof, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
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ASSESSING MICHIGAN SCHOOL COUNSELORS' PREPAREDNESS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ATTRACTIVE/SEXUAL MINORITY STUDENTS

J. Frederick Bland, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2010

This study assessed the attitudes, skills, knowledge, graduate counseling training, and willingness to engage in professional development of Michigan school counselors regarding issues and concerns of students who identify as lesbian, gay, biattractive, transgender, and students who are questioning their attractive orientation (LGBTQ).

A total of 120 Michigan school counselors completed useable surveys either online or a paper-and-pencil version at a Michigan school counseling conference. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the demographic variables age, gender, ethnicity, attractive/sexual orientation, and professional characteristics such as years of school counseling experience, school level, and school location (urban, suburban, rural). One-way ANOVAs were used to determine statistical significance for the previously mentioned independent variables with the dependent variables being the Attitudes, Skills/Experiences, and Knowledge subscales of the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS; Bidell, 2005), and overall rating of graduate school counseling training.

Results indicated: (a) no statistically significant differences regarding *attitudes* among the independent variables; (b) statistical significance regarding *skills/experiences*

was found only with the collapsed variables for ethnic background and attractional orientation, with White and nonheterosexual participants scoring higher on this subscale; and (c) regarding *knowledge*, statistical significance was found only with attractional/sexual orientation, with nonheterosexual participants scoring higher on knowledge of LGBTQ issues. Overall, school counselors in this study believed that their graduate school counseling training programs did *not* adequately prepare them to competently work with attractional minority students. Participants believed they were better prepared to work with gay males and lesbians and less prepared to work with biattractional, transgender, and questioning youth. The 30–39 age group believed themselves to be better prepared than older groups, and the 60 and above age group reported being the least prepared to work with LGBTQ students. Participants indicated they were willing to participate in professional development activities in this area and rated the top three continuing education activities as taking a course, attending an in-service training, and reading professional literature on LGBTQ issues. Implications for school counselor education programs and continuing education are presented, and recommendations for future research are offered.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On a daily basis, school counselors are responsible for executing a myriad of activities that are designed to enhance the intellectual, career, psychological, physical, and social development of all students. Students will self-refer or are referred to school counselors to receive assistance with a number of issues through counseling activities including, but not limited to, career planning, college selection, academic counseling, values clarification, course scheduling, developing decision-making skills, parents and teachers' conferences, group counseling, and counseling for personal/social considerations. Locke (1979), in his study assessing the functions and competencies of school counselors in North Carolina, found that at least 80% of the respondents reported being able to perform the previously mentioned counseling activities "with ease" (p. 24). Campbell and Dahir (1997) state, "school counselors work with all students, school staff, families, and members of the community as an integral part of the education program" (p. 8). However, there is a significant body of literature that suggests that the developmental needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender youth, and youth who are questioning their sexual orientation (LGBTQ; also referred to as sexual minority youth or same-gender attracted youth) are not being met or even addressed by the majority of school counselors in public, private, and parochial schools (Bailey & Phariss, 1996; Pollock, 2006; K. E. Robinson, 1994). As a result, sexual minority youth are considered

to be at-risk for dropping out of school, substance abuse, running away from home, sexually transmitted diseases, and suicide (Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1995; Jordan, 2000; Rotheram-Borus, Rosario, et al., 1994; S. T. Russell, 2003; Savin-Williams, 1994).

This study focuses on school counselors' abilities to meet the developmental needs of sexual minority students in Michigan schools. Specifically, this study assesses: (a) the attitudes, knowledge, and skills of school counselors regarding issues of sexual orientation and sexual minority students; (b) the training that school counselors have received as it relates to working with sexual minority students in Michigan schools; and (c) school counselors' willingness to engage in professional development as it relates to issues of sexual orientation and sexual minority students. Implications for school counselor education programs and comprehensive school guidance counseling programs are discussed.

Background of the Problem

Adolescence is a challenging time when teens are attempting to master cognitive, social, and developmental tasks (Hetrick & Martin, 1987). Often, they are expected to make adult-like decisions when faced with adult experiences without the necessary tools, resources, information, and guidance to do so. During this phase of life, the adolescent begins to ask questions that are existential in nature such as "Who am I?" and "What is my purpose in life?" The focus is on the physical, cognitive, psychological, and social tasks of development. This can be a tumultuous period in the life of an adolescent with or without adequate and available resources to consult and confer (Fontaine & Hammond, 1996).

One of the major tasks of adolescence is identity formulation and consolidation: discovering oneself and the purpose of being (Fontaine & Hammond, 1996). According to Erikson (1963), identity formation is the most important developmental task in adolescence because it serves as a trajectory to peer group interaction and acceptance, which further aid the adolescent in continuing to consolidate his or her self-concept. Another major component of this identity formation is sexual identity formulation: who one is as a sexual being (Fontaine & Hammond, 1996). Research regarding the development of sexual identity indicates that the process can begin during pre-puberty, puberty or early adolescence (Bailey & Phariss, 1996; Cass, 1979; Fischer, 1995; Uribe, 1994) and could possibly continue well into the post high school years (i.e., college) where the environment allows for freedom to explore issues of sexual identity (Fischer, 1995; Morrison & L'Heureux, 2001; Savin-Williams, 1995).

Sexual identity formulation for heterosexual adolescents can be a time of affirmation, praise, and positive self-imaging, having adequate and ample support, counsel, role models, and resources for building a positive self-concept. Due to societal and peer affirmation and the availability of literary and human resources, development of a heterosexual identity requires very little thought or conscious effort (Fontaine & Hammond, 1996). However, what about those adolescents who are struggling with the possibility of same-gender attraction? In what numbers do such adolescents exist? When does the process of sexual identity formulation begin for such adolescents?

Estimates suggest that there may be approximately 3,000,000 youth between ages 10–20 who are either predominantly or exclusively homosexual (Herring & Furgerson, 2000). Yet a study conducted in a five-county area in the southeast region of the state of

Michigan found that some high school counselors denied that their schools had any same-gender attracted students (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teachers Network of Detroit [GLSTN-Detroit], 1996).

Kissen (1993) surveyed gay and lesbian students attending public and parochial high schools in 17 states and one foreign country to assess perceptions of their teachers regarding sexual minority student issues. This study concluded that teachers who ignored or derided homosexuals (gay males and lesbians) might have been unaware that they had homosexual students in their classes. This denial of gay youth was also one of the findings of a more recent study assessing urban services providers' perspectives on school responses to sexual minority students (Varjas et al., 2007). Varjas et al. quoted one of the service providers' account of a school principal who expressed, "like, come on, are there gay kids? A lot of people can not wrap their minds around . . . that there are gay youth" (p. 115). Ginsberg's (1998) study sought to answer the question, "To what extent do middle and high school educators contribute to the problems of gay/lesbian adolescents?" (p. 3). The results of that study indicate that each time a middle or high school teacher addresses a class, there is likely to be one or more sexual minority students in attendance and the educator could, unknowingly, be contributing to their pain.

When does the process of sexual identity development begin for LGBTQ youth? Fischer (1995) posits that between the ages of 11 and 16, sexual minority adolescents begin to realize that there is something different about them. However, a study conducted by D'Augelli and Hershberger (1993) found that 13% of the sample of youths 21 years and younger reported awareness of same-gender attraction by age 5. Furthermore, Anderson (1998) studied a sample of gay male youths taken from 4-year college and

community college support groups to assess strengths and resilience. Results indicated that 89.6% of the respondents experienced preadolescent sense of difference at an average age of 7.2. Therefore, research supports the reality that same-gender attracted individuals do not all of a sudden appear in adulthood, but their same-gender affection may have started very early in life.

Just as heterosexual youth go through a period of identity formulation, clarification, and consolidation, so do LGBTQ youth. This period of formulation, clarification, and consolidation of sexual identity is accomplished through several processes including peer comparison, affirmation from peers, and confirmation from society (Fontaine & Hammond, 1996). Micro-systems such as family, community, church, and school also influence this process. In addition, these micro-systems are greatly influenced by macro-systems, which include politics, judicial systems, mass media, national and state policies, and prevalent cultural values (Morrison & L'Heureux, 2001). The avenues that are openly available to heterosexual adolescents that tend towards a healthy sexual identity (e.g., peers, family, church, and school), are, in most instances, unavailable to most adolescents who are dealing with same-gender attraction and feelings of differentness (Anderson, 1998; Telljohann & Price, 1993). Further, school libraries are generally bereft of positive and relevant information on same-gender attraction (Fischer, 1995). When information regarding same-gender attraction is given, in most instances, it is presented in such a negative, derogatory, and dehumanizing way (e.g., fundamentalist religion) that the adolescent's exploration is bombarded with feelings of guilt, shame, and fear. In many instances, such feelings lead to depression and

insecurity, which may serve as trajectories to school problems, substance abuse, running away, prostitution, and suicide (Savin-Williams, 1994).

Sexual identity issues have been noted as one of the key risk factors for adolescent suicide (Rotheram-Borus, Hunter, & Rosario, 1994; S. T. Russell, 2003; Schneider, Farberow, & Kruks, 1989), with gay and lesbian youth being three times more likely to commit suicide than heterosexual youth (Gibson, 1989). A study conducted by Gibson found that 30% of teen suicides completed were committed by youth dealing with sexual identity issues. A more recent study indicated that homosexual and bisexual adolescent males were seven times more likely to have attempted suicide than their heterosexual peers (Remafedi, French, Story, Resnick, & Blum, 1998). In most instances, the primary reason for suicidal attempts and suicide was not the realization of same-gender attraction but the debilitating effects of growing up in a homophobic society (Savin-Williams, 1994). Additionally, studies indicate that sexual minority youth (a) are confronted with physical and verbal abuse (Anthanasios & Larrabee, 2003; Cato & Canetto, 2003; Harris Interactive & GLSEN [Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, formerly known as GLSTN]), 2005; Henning-Stout, James, & Macintosh, 2000; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Safe Schools Coalition of Washington, 1995); (b) have a disproportionately high dropout rate compared to the general student population (GLSEN, 2005b; 2006; GLSTN-Detroit, 1996; Uribe, 1994); (c) suffer from comorbid alcohol and drug abuse (Blake et al., 2001; Jordan, 2000; Orenstein, 2001; Thompson & Johnston, 2003; Wu et al., 2004); and (d) find the educational milieu to be more stressful than their heterosexual peers (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; GLSTN-Detroit, 1996).

Sexual minority adolescents, once an invisible group, are becoming increasingly visible (Bailey & Phariss, 1996). The visibility of LGBT television personalities living openly, the media coverage of political and religious debates on the topics of same-sex marriage and civil unions, as well as an increasing number of LGBT individuals “coming out” to their families and friends, thus living openly and very visible in their neighborhoods, have raised awareness regarding same-gender attraction. Further, an increased emphasis on tolerance, embracing multiculturalism, and respecting diversity are helping to create an atmosphere wherein an increasing number of school-age youth are able to “recognize and label same-gender attractions at a very early age” (Floyd & Stein, 2002, p. 170). Therefore, sexual minority youth are accepting their sexual orientation, embracing it, and disclosing it to significant others at very young ages (Denizet-Lewis, 2009; Sanders & Kroll, 2000). Unfortunately, the increase in the number of visibly sexual minority students is also resulting in an increase in verbal harassment and various abuses towards these students coming from family, peers, and adults in the school setting (D’Augelli, 1998; D’Augelli & Hersherberger, 1993; Evans, 1998). Dunham (1989) states, “What helping professionals are beginning to realize is that these ‘invisible’ students are becoming more visible each day through increased numbers of referrals to school counselors, school social workers, substance abuse personnel, and varied support staff” (p. 5). Dunham’s statement made 20 years ago appears to hold true today. Unfortunately, in spite of the increase in violence toward sexual minority students, school administrators, faculty, counselors, teachers, religious leaders, parents, and other helping professionals are not adequately responding to the problem (Thurlow, 2001).

In school settings, sexual minority youth, those perceived as being such, and, in some instances, those who simply associate with sexual minority youth (Malinsky, 1997), are frequently discriminated against, prejudged, verbally harassed, and physically and emotionally abused by both peers and adults. Often, the perpetrators of the harassment and abuse continue to do so without consequences for their behavior, sending a message to the harasser that his or her behavior is sanctioned, and to the harassed that his or her life has no sanctity (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

With an increasing number of self-identified sexual minority students in the school setting, there is an increased need for affirming literature, resources and support groups on behalf of the students as well as skills training and understanding on the part of those who are currently working in schools or will be employed in the future (e.g., administrators, teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, bus drivers) (Pope, 2003).

As previously stated, sexual minority students in the school setting are frequently discriminated against, face physical and emotional abuses by peers and adults, and are becoming more visible each day through increased numbers of referrals to school counselors. Therefore, how are school counselors responding to referrals regarding sexual minority students? What are the attitudes of school counselors toward sexual minority students? What perceptions do school counselors hold regarding their ability to effectively and competently work with sexual minority students? Do school counselors believe that they have been appropriately prepared and adequately trained to meet the needs of sexual minority students? Do school counselors believe that specialized training regarding sexual minority students is necessary and currently needed?

Statement of the Problem

Graduate school counseling training programs and comprehensive school guidance programs are designed to prepare school counselors to competently meet the academic, personal, social, and vocational needs of all students (American School Counseling Association [ASCA], 2004; Pelsma & Krieshok, 2003). However, do graduate school counseling training programs provide school counselors with the necessary education and training to adequately prepare them to meet the academic, personal, social, and vocational needs of sexual minority students?

GLSTN-Detroit (1996) conducted a study assessing the school climate for sexual minority students in five southeast counties in the state of Michigan. Data were gathered from a questionnaire that assessed heterosexual and LGBTQ students' perceptions regarding the school climate for sexual minority students. Results indicated that verbal harassment, the use of gay slurs, isolation due to rejection, and emotional and psychological stress were "common problems" in the K-12 public, parochial, and independent schools of those counties surveyed (p. 6). Nearly 10 years later, Kosciw and Diaz (2006) conducted a study assessing the school climate for sexual minority students in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. During the Kosciw and Diaz study, the school climate for sexual minority students in Michigan was simultaneously assessed and data were collected. The findings of the Michigan school climate assessment reported by GLSEN (2005b) mirrored the findings of the GLSTN-Detroit (1996) study. The GLSEN (2005b) key findings indicated that (a) bullying, name calling, and harassment are serious problems; (b) biased and demeaning language (e.g., "faggot," "dyke," "that's so gay,"

“you’re so gay”) is a considerable problem; (c) physical harassment and assault “were not uncommon”; (d) most sexual minority students did not feel safe in school; (e) sexual minority students were experiencing poorer academic outcomes than their heterosexual peers; (f) sexual minority students lacked access to LGBTQ affirming resources and support in their schools; and (g) Michigan public schools lacked school personnel who worked openly as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender to serve as role models. This lack of school personnel working openly as LGBT individuals to serve as role models for sexual minority students in Michigan schools supports the findings that they “may choose to remain hidden because they fear the loss of the their job and rarely receive signs from their administrators that their school is safe” (GLSTN-Detroit, 1996, p. 13).

The data in the Michigan report were consistent with the key findings of the national school climate survey (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006), which found that biased remarks, harassment, and assaults toward sexual minority students were not endemic to Michigan, but pandemic for sexual minority students nationwide. Thus, the phenomenon of an unsafe school climate for sexual minority students is not only a state problem, but also a national one. The GLSEN (2005b) study reporting the unsafe school climate for sexual minority students in Michigan reflects the voices of sexual minority students. To date, however, no study has been identified that solely addresses school counselors’ perceptions of their current or potential effect on school climate for sexual minority students in Michigan.

School has a major influence on youths’ academic, social, and emotional functioning because it is the primary context for pubescent and adolescent development (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000) irrespective of sexual orientation. The responses of

middle and high school counselors received special attention in this study for several reasons. First, studies indicate that it is in middle school that students are most likely to show poor academic achievement as a result of low motivation to learn as well as the onset of negative peer associations that leads to negative conduct (Carnegie Council, 1995) regardless of sexual orientation. Second, “the acquisition of a homosexual identity is a long process, the critical time often beginning during the middle school years” (Uribe, 1994, p. 169; see also Denizet-Lewis, 2009). The struggle with sexual identity as a middle school and high school issue is supported by a Minnesota study (Remafedi, Resnick, Blum, & Harris, 1992), in which 35,000 junior and senior high school students with diverse demographic backgrounds were surveyed. Findings indicated that the following percentages of children at their respective ages were unsure of their sexual orientation: 25.9% at age 12 years, 17.4% at age 13, 12.2% at age 14, and 7.0% at age 15. These findings suggest that students experiencing sexual identity conflict are greatly represented at both the middle and high school levels. In addition, Weiler’s (2004) discussion of the legal and moral obligation that schools have toward sexual minority students posits that “by the time they reach middle school, most sexual minority students realize that they are physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same gender” (p. 40). Jones’ (2000) discussion on sexual minority students in his article “The New Minority to Protect under Title IX,” suggests that, whether we like it or not, public schools have become part of the coming-out process for sexual minority students. Third, data from an ethnographic study conducted in the United Kingdom on sixth grade students (ages 10/11) suggested that heterosexist and homophobic harassment expressed through name-calling, teasing, and bullying, occurred as early as primary

school (Renold, 2002). However, it is during middle and high school years that sexual minority students experience the greatest amount of verbal harassment and physical assaults that lead to missing school, dropping out, and other social ills resulting from academic failure (Weiler, 2004). Fourth, according to the 1989 Department of Health and Human Services Report on the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide, gay and lesbian youth are five times more likely to attempt suicide than their non-gay/lesbian peers and nearly one third of the suicide attempts occurred before age 17 (Gibson, 1989). Finally, junior and/or high school counselors are the counselors that are most likely to work with sexual minority students (Price & Telljohann, 1991) because therapy outside of the school may not be possible. Consequently, developing a trusting relationship with a school counselor may be the only accessible resource for sexual minority students (Uribe, 1994).

Many school counselors report perceptions of being ill-prepared to address the needs of sexual minority youth (GLSTN-Detroit, 1996; Henning-Stout et al., 2000; Phillips & Fischer, 1998; Thurlow, 2001). This study was designed to find out if these perceptions of ill-preparedness are present among school counselors in the state of Michigan.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this inquiry was to assess the attitudes, knowledge, and skills/experiences of school counselors in the state of Michigan regarding sexual orientation and students who identify as LGBTQ. This study also assessed the beliefs, perceptions, and evaluations of school counselors regarding their graduate counseling training experiences surrounding issues of sexual orientation in general and sexual

minority students in particular. In addition, this study assessed school counselors' willingness to engage in professional development activities in the next 12 months, as a component of training, to expand their knowledge and enhance their abilities to effectively work with sexual minority students. Further, this study assessed which continuing education activities school counselors would find most helpful in assisting them to work effectively and competently with sexual minority students. Possible differences due to age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale were also analyzed. The research method and design for this study involved a quantitative approach, using a survey for data collection.

Given the purpose of this study, the following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of Michigan school counselors regarding same-gender attractional orientation and sexual minority students?

Research Question 2: What is the level of skills/experiences of Michigan school counselors regarding sexual minority students?

Research Question 3: What is the level of knowledge that Michigan school counselors reflect regarding sexual minority issues?

Research Question 4: Do Michigan school counselors believe that their graduate counseling program adequately trained them to competently meet the needs of sexual minority students?

Research Question 5: Are Michigan school counselors willing in the next 12 months to participate in professional development that expands their knowledge

regarding issues of sexual orientation in general and sexual minority students in particular? And if so, in what activities would they be willing to engage? What activities do Michigan school counselors find most helpful in developing knowledge and competency skills to work with sexual minority students?

A more detailed listing of the research questions for this study is presented in Chapter III.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for a number of reasons. First, although there is a body of literature that speaks to the need for school counselors to be trained in issues pertaining to sexual minority students, very little of the literature specifically assesses school counselors' attitudes and perceptions of their preparedness and level of competence to work with sexual minority students. Therefore, this study assists in filling a gap in the literature and promotes discussion regarding school counselors and sexual minority students. Second, although bright and talented sexual minority students are suffering to the point of suicide attempts and suicide commissions due to harassment and isolation, school counselors are rarely indicated in the literature as advocating for these students even though they are in a strategic position to influence school climate and provide support through education and consultation. The Ethical Standards of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2004) require that school counselors serve as advocates for *all* students. The advocacy role of school counselors is further addressed in Chapter II. Third, there is a paucity of research-based literature that provides the perspectives of school counselors regarding issues of sexual orientation and sexual minority students. A comprehensive literature search was conducted regarding school

counselors' attitudes toward sexual minority students. Sears (1988) examined the quality of life for Southern gay and lesbian students based on the attitudes, experiences, and feelings of guidance counselors. Price and Telljohann (1991) collected data from a national survey assessing school counselors' perceptions of "adolescent homosexuality" (p. 433). However, no dissertations or published studies have been identified that examines school counselors' attitudes and perceptions of training and preparedness relative to working with sexual minority students in the state of Michigan. This study fills a void in the body of literature on school counseling and sexual minority youth in the state of Michigan with possible implications for research and practice in other states. Fourth, the first tenet of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) Ethical Standards emphasizes the right of each student to be respected, treated with dignity "and have access to a comprehensive school counseling program that advocates for and affirms all students from diverse populations regardless of . . . sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression . . . " (ASCA, 2004, Appendix L, p. 1). Based on the ASCA Ethical Standards, this study assessed whether school counselors are practicing ethically with regards to sexual minority students. Fifth, from an advocacy and social justice perspective, professional school counselors are to stand in support of all students and create opportunities for equal access and success by serving as collaborators, consultants, and change agents that bring about positive change in the entire educational system (ASCA, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Pelsma & Krieschok, 2003). A review of the literature (Fontaine, 1997, 1998; Sears, 1991; Telljohann & Price, 1993) suggests that school personnel in general and school counselors in particular are not adequately advocating for sexual minority students. Could this lack of advocacy stem from feelings

of ill preparedness due to the lack of training in school counselor education programs (Stone, 2003)? This study seeks to provide an answer(s) to this question. Finally, it is the desire of this researcher that the results of this study will inspire changes in school systems that will ameliorate the plight of sexual minority students. Given that policies and standards about such issues are made at the state level, gathering information specific to Michigan will assist in those efforts. Therefore, this study has the potential to make an important contribution to the literature with possible implications for school counselor education programs in Michigan and other states as well as comprehensive school guidance counseling programs developed at the local, state, and national levels.

Re-definitions of Key Terms

Language is important in any culture because language reflects what thoughts and behaviors are acceptable and permissible, states what the rules of conduct are, and sets the parameters for thinking because “it is impossible to think outside language” (Blumenfield, 1992, p. 43). There is an emergence of literature addressing topics on same-gender attraction that is calling for a re-evaluation of the terminology that has been historically and universally accepted as descriptors of attitudes and behaviors of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and individuals who are questioning their sexual orientation.

Clinical psychologist A. Robinson’s (2007) article, “Homosexual or Homoattractual? Re-evaluating Our Terminology,” posits that many of the terms used to describe “social identity groups” (e.g., homosexuals, heterosexuals, sexual minority) “are antiquated and pathologizing, therefore disempowering those who are given these labels. They reduce people to strictly sexual beings” (p. 7). Robinson decries the term

homosexual because “anything with the word ‘sexual’ in it denotes sexual behavior, what one does sexually. It is appropriate to use such terminology when we are specifically talking about sexual behavior” (p. 7). Instead, the term *homoattractional* is preferred for those “individuals or groups who we know by disclosure to be naturally attracted to the same gender . . .” (p. 7). Also, Robinson favors the term *attractional orientation* (defined as “one’s propensity toward being attracted to others emotionally, physically, sexually, socially, erotically and spiritually” (p. 7) over the term *sexual orientation* because attractional orientation is not limited to just gay and lesbian people, everyone has an attractional orientation, and attractorality is not exclusively sexual (A. Robinson, 2007).

Another example of terminology regarding gay and lesbian issues that is being challenged is the use of the term *homophobia*. Logan (1996), in her article “Homophobia? No, Homoprejudice,” investigated the degree to which anti-homosexual responses were (homo)phobic or (homo)prejudice. (Homo)phobia is categorized as unreasonable, irrational, and excessive fear and anxiety (of homosexuals/homosexuality) based on the criteria for a phobia diagnosis as outlined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV)*. (Homo)prejudice is categorized as “a hostile or negative attitude toward a distinguishable group [homosexuals] based on generalizations derived from faulty or incomplete information” (p. 34). Logan concluded that

the broad application of the term “homophobia” to describe anti-homosexual responses is inaccurate and inappropriate and should only be used to describe those few individuals who demonstrate a true phobic response to gays and lesbians . . . and the use of the term “homoprejudice” to describe such responses is recommended. (p. 50)

As a school counselor licensed by the State of Michigan and a counselor educator who practices and educates from an advocacy and social justice perspective, this researcher believes that there is a need to use terminology that reflects a contemporary understanding of people and is empowering and affirming. Therefore, this researcher is in agreement with A. Robinson (2007) and Logan (1996), who challenge us to eliminate inaccurate, inappropriate, antiquated, and disempowering terminology by replacing it with terminology that is updated, accurate, and affirming. The status quo is passivity in action; advocacy and social justice are activity in action. Therefore and henceforth, this study will use the following terms that are updated, more concise, and affirming towards same-gender attracted people. *Homoattractional* will replace the term homosexual. *Heteroattractional* will replace the term heterosexual. *Biattractional* will replace the term bisexual. *Attractional orientation* will replace the term sexual orientation. *Attractional minority students* will replace the term sexual minority students. *Attractional identity development* will replace the term sexual identity development. *Attractiveness* will replace the term sexuality when appropriate. *Same-gender orientation/attraction* will replace the term same-sex orientation/attraction. When quoting or referring to scholarly sources, however, the original terminology used by the authors will be used as appropriate in this study. Definitions of key terms are as follows:

- *Attractional Minority Youth* – For the purposes of this study, the term includes young people from ages 5 to 19, who are in different stages of their attractional and identity development and could yet be attending a K-12 public, private, or religious/faitth affiliated school for diploma or GED completion.

- *Attractional Orientation* – An individual’s attraction to the same gender, the opposite gender, or both genders (Human Rights Watch, 2001).
- *Biattractional* – Males and females who are physically, romantically, emotionally, sexually, and relationally attracted to both males and females.
- *Coming Out* – The process of becoming aware of one’s attractional orientation or gender identity, accepting it, and in time disclosing it to others. A totally integrated homoattractional identity (Cass, 1979; Coleman, 1982; GLSTN-Detroit, 1996; Human Rights Watch, 2001).
- *Competence* – “The attitude, knowledge, and skill competencies that counselors need to provide ethical, affirmative, and competent services to LGB clients” (Bidell, 2005, p. 268; see also Fassinger & Richie, 1997; Israel & Selvidge, 2003; Sue et al., 1982). For the purposes of this study this definition will also include providing competent services to transgender students (T) and students who are questioning their attractional orientation (Q).
- *Gay* – Attracted to a person of the same gender. This term is sometimes used to refer only to males who have physical, romantic, emotional, sexual, and relational attraction to males. The word *gay* “may also be used as a synonym for the more clinical term *homosexual*” (Human Rights Watch, 2001, p. xiii).
- *Gender Expression* – “All of the external characteristics and behaviors that are socially defined as masculine or feminine, including dress, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions” (Human Rights Watch, 2001, p. xiv).

- *Gender Identity* – “A person’s internal, deeply felt sense of being male, female, (or something other than or in between male and female)” (Human Rights Watch, 2001, p. xiv.).
- *Heteroattractional* – Attracted exclusively to the opposite gender (also referred to as being “straight”) (Human Rights Watch, 2001, p. xiv).
- *Homoattractional* – Attracted exclusively to a person of the same gender. Is interchangeably used with the terms lesbian and gay (Human Rights Watch, 2001).
- *Lesbian* – Females who are physically, romantically, emotionally, sexually, and relationally attracted to other females.
- *Out* – Individuals who live openly as lesbian, gay, biattractional, or transgender (Human Rights Watch, 2001).
- *Preparedness* – Refers to the possession of sufficient knowledge and skills to confidently and competently work with a specific clientele. In this study, the clientele are attractional minority students.
- *Questioning* – An individual who is uncertain about his or her attractional orientation or gender identity (Human Rights Watch, 2001) and therefore is in an exploration phase of attractional identity development.
- *Transgender* – An individual whose identity or behavior is expressed outside of stereotypical gender norms. This term also refers to individuals who are physiologically one gender but are psychologically the opposite gender (Pope, 2003).

Chapter I delineated the rationale for conducting this dissertation study. Chapter II involves a review of the literature on attractional minority student development, their in-school experiences, and their experiences with school counselors. Chapter II also includes a discourse on the legal and ethical issues surrounding attractional minority students and schools. Chapter II concludes with a discussion of advocacy and social justice toward attractional minority students. Chapter III discusses the research method and design for this study. Chapter IV reports the findings from the data analysis. Finally, Chapter V discusses the research findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, implications for graduate school counselor education, and implications for professional development and continuing education for school counselors.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter begins with a discussion on the developmental tasks of adolescence as they pertain to the formation of personal identities including attractional identities. More specifically, this chapter presents foundational and contemporary literature regarding both heteroattractional and homoattractional identity formulation in adolescents. Models regarding homoattractional, biattractional, and transgender development are discussed. Also in this chapter, attractional orientation and public schools in the United States are discussed, looking at the heteroattractionalized context of U.S. public schools and how attractional minority students are experiencing such contexts. Furthermore, this chapter reviews the literature regarding middle and high school counselors' attitudes, experiences, and training relative to attractional minority youth. This chapter also addresses both the legal responsibilities that school administrators, counselors, and staff have toward attractional minority students according to the United States Constitution and the ethical responsibilities that school counselors have toward attractional minority students according to the Ethical Standards of the American School Counseling Association and the Michigan School Counselor Association. Finally, this chapter discusses school counseling and attractional minority students from a social justice perspective.

Adolescent Tasks

Adolescence is a challenging time in life when teens focus on the physical, cognitive, psychological, and social developmental tasks. During adolescence, the teen seeks for meaning and purpose in life and asks questions such as: “Who am I?” “Why am I here?” “What is my purpose in life?” and “What does the future hold for me?” There are developmental challenges that appear to be common to most adolescents and, outside of cultural influence, these challenges are basically the same. For example, all adolescents must develop social skills that will allow them to be able to navigate effectively through social and vocational networks. Most adolescents desire to fit into a chosen peer group(s) to fulfill a sense of belonging. Most, if not all adolescents, have concerns about body image; anatomically, how do they measure up to their peers? Most, if not all, adolescents seek to clarify their life’s calling by seeking information about careers that the individual feels will reflect his or her life’s calling. Furthermore, most adolescents seek to develop a sense of independence and individualism, wanting to try “flapping their wings” with only minimal support from family. Finally, most, if not all adolescents, are concerned with life after high school: “Will it involve college or vocational training? Being employed? Getting married? Rearing children? All of these concerns, in addition to uncertainty about the future, can be enormous sources of anxiety and stress and can lead to depression and suicide. Thus, the adolescent years are filled with searching for identity and purpose in life, concerns about physical strength and appeal, and the desire for independence, all of which appear to be universal for all youth as differentiated by their individual cultures (Diamond & Diamond, 1986; Weiler, 2004).

Adolescent Attractionality

Discovering self and the meaning and purpose of life are major components of identity formulation. However, another major component of this identity formulation is discovering who one is as an attractional being. Some studies regarding attractional identity development indicate that the process occurs during pre-puberty, puberty and early adolescence and could possibly continue well into the post high school years (e.g., college) when the environment allows freedom to explore issues of attractional identity (Cass, 1979; Fischer, 1995; Price & Telljohann, 1991). However, recent studies from the perspectives of developmental researchers report that the onset of attractional identity development occurs prior to puberty with the first awareness of same-gender attractional feelings occurring at about age 10 for males and age 11 for females (D'Augelli, 2006; Graber & Archibald, 2001; Smith, Dermer, & Astramovich, 2005). A youth-based study conducted by D'Augelli and Grossman (2001) reported that the mean age that gay youth (LGBTQ youth) in the study reported experiencing feelings of differentness was 8 years.

Adolescent attractionality is a taboo topic that very few school personnel care to engage in. The implementation of sex education curricula and prevention programs have, in most instances, been met with much opposition from parents, community, and religious leaders (Rienzo, 1987; van Wormer, Wells, & Boes, 2000; Varjas et al., 2007). However, the discussion regarding adolescent attractionality is not only necessary, but vital and critical to the future of our adolescents for several reasons. First, we are facing the reality that young people are becoming sexually active at a much younger age than previous generations (D'Augelli, 2006). Second, teenage pregnancies are occurring to the

extent that one middle school is considering dispensing birth control to its students (CNN Prime News aired October 16, 2007). Third, and extremely important is the fact that the incidence of sexually transmitted disease is on the rise among adolescents (Michigan Department of Community Health, 2006). Furthermore, according to the Epidemiological Profile of HIV/AIDS in Michigan (2006), the numbers of new HIV diagnoses have leveled out for all age groups except for those in the 13–19 year and the 20–24 year age ranges; their numbers are steadily increasing. According to figures provided by the Centers for Disease Control (as cited by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teachers Network [GLSTN], 1994-1996), 1 in 5 HIV-seropositive men had a very high probability of being infected during adolescence. Therefore, the reality of sex-related health issues, as they pertain to adolescents, gives relevance and urgency to identifying and responding to the psychological, health, and human service needs of adolescents (D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002; Savin-Williams & Cohen, 2007). The starting point for the discussion on adolescent attractionality is attractional identity development and the basic assumption of heteroattractionality (Rich, 1980; Striepe & Tolman, 2003).

Heteroattractional Bias

The discussion regarding adolescent attractionality focuses largely on heteroattractionality. There is a plethora of information on adolescent heteroattractionality (Furman, 2002; Striepe & Tolman, 2003) that is informative, confirming, affirming, and receives familial, peer, and societal approbation and support. Furthermore, this information is, to a great extent, available and accessible in both school and community

libraries as well as overtly observed through mass media and in daily life transactions in a predominantly heteroattractional society (Coleman, 1982).

Adrienne Rich (1980), speaking from a lesbian/feminist perspective, discusses the notion of compulsory heterosexual orientation for women. According to Rich, compulsory heterosexuality is a human-made institution that assumes that women are innately and biologically sexually attracted to men and, therefore, any other attraction between women is deviant and an acting-out of bitterness toward men. Further, compulsory heterosexuality is not women-oriented but is undergirded by male dominance for the purpose of meeting the male's needs, his fantasies about women, and his desire to control women. In addition, Rich contends that male control of laws, theologies, science, and economics, propagates compulsory or institutionalized heterosexuality, thus mandating the woman's sexual, familial, and societal roles. Finally, Rich believes that compulsory heterosexuality convinces women of the inevitability of marriage and attractional orientation toward men.

Compulsory heterosexuality requires no explanation for female heterosexuality but does require an explanation for lesbian attractorality. Thus, as a result of compulsory heterosexuality, strong female relationships, whether social or romantic, are generally marginalized (at best) or altogether invalidated (at worst).

Striepe and Tolman (2003) builds upon Rich's (1980) conceptualization of compulsory heterosexuality by further stating that heterosexuality has been made compulsory and is "part of a universally pervasive patriarchal institution organizing male and female development" (p. 524). Accordingly, compulsory heterosexuality is based on gender ideologies of femininity and masculinity from which heterosexual scripts

containing gender specific and explicit elements that are transmitted to girls and boys. For example, Striepe and Tolman state that regarding sexuality, scripts are written for girls and boys whose behaviors are expected to comply with those scripts. The scripts written for girls state that they are to be sexually pleasing and enticing to males, to believe that womanhood culminates in marriage to a man, and, as a result of being married to a man, motherhood is the apex of the life experiences for a woman. Scripts written for boys state that they are to be aggressive and pursue sexual conquests of females and that becoming a man entails having sex with women. Noncompliance with gender ideologies and the subsequent violation of heterosexual scripts will most likely occur with youth who self-identify as gay, lesbian, biattractional, transgender, and those who yet question their attractional orientation. As a result of noncompliance, the institution of heteroattractionality pathologizes gender-nonconforming youth, making them targets of various forms of harassment and abuse (D'Augelli, 1998).

There is a paucity of research examining the processes of attractional identity development in heteroattractional adolescents (Striepe & Tolman, 2003) partly because there is an assumption of heteroattractionality and heteroattractionality is considered a natural and normal orientation. This is not to say that heteroattractional adolescents sail smoothly through their attractional awareness and exploration period because, as was previously stated, adolescence is a challenging time for all youth, irrespective of attractional orientation. Adolescents in general, however, are not discriminated against and persecuted for identifying as heteroattractional; hence, the paucity of research on heteroattractional identity development appears to reflect “a norm requiring little conscious thought or effort” (Fontaine & Hammond, 1996, p. 819). Research suggests

that due to compulsory heteroattractiveness, all adolescents are pressured to comply with traditional heteroattractiveness gender ideologies and sexual scripts, irrespective of attractiveness orientation (Isay, 1996; Rich, 1980) and noncompliance results in feelings of differentness as well as differential treatment from a society that is intentional in supporting and maintaining the institution of compulsory heteroattractiveness (Haldeman, 2000; Striepe & Tolman, 2003).

Heteroattractiveness Privilege

“Privilege affords a choice, and a particular power and authority granted by systemic forces and, in the case of heterosexism, by numerical majority” (Fiegenbaum, 2007, p. 5). Heteroattractiveness persons are able to enjoy the benefits that privilege affords other dominant and majority groups in society (e.g., White, male, physically able) (Allen, 1995; Fiegenbaum, 2007; Goldsmith, 1982). Heteroattractiveness privilege spares those who are heteroattractiveness from having to stand up and declare their heteroattractiveness to family, peers, and friends because there is a strong cultural expectation to be heteroattractiveness, making it unnecessary to make such a declaration (Allen, 1995). Further, heteroattractiveness privilege allows heteroattractiveness persons not to have to think about their attractiveness orientation as well as ignore or condemn attractiveness orientations that are different from their own. In addition, heteroattractiveness privilege protects those who are beneficiaries of that privilege through denial that they are privileged (Allen, 1995; Fiegenbaum, 2007). Finally, heteroattractiveness privilege is realized in many ways through federal and state laws that affirm heteroattractiveness marriages while, in many states, banning same-gender marriages. Is the privilege experienced by heteroattractiveness

adults in the larger society also experienced by heteroattractational adolescents in the school setting?

Heteroattractational adolescents have an abundance of resources available to them so that this period of attractational identity formulation can be a time of affirmation, praise, and positive self-imaging, with adequate and ample support, counsel, and role models for building a positive self-concept. Heteroattractational adolescents do not have to worry about explaining their attractationality to their parents because, from birth, there is an assumption of heteroattractationality and unless there are overt signs of gender atypical behavior, heteroattractationality is assumed unless otherwise stated (Allen, 1995; Rich, 1980; Striepe & Tolman, 2003). Therefore, because there is an assumption of heteroattractationality from birth, much attention is given to the psychosocial and psychosexual development of heteroattractational adolescents. However, what of those adolescents who identify as lesbian, gay, biattractational, transgender, or are yet questioning their attractational orientation (LGBTQ)? Are their developmental trajectories the same as heteroattractational adolescents or do they differ? There is a growing body of literature that is focusing on the developmental needs of LGBTQ youth, also referred to as attractational minority youth. Let us now review foundational and contemporary literature regarding this often “invisible” group of adolescents (Dunham, 1989).

Adolescent Homoattractationality

There are developmental themes that are common to all adolescents while variations in developmental expression and outcome are often influenced by culture and community. Savin-Williams (1995) found that the onset of puberty, sexual activity, and

first orgasm did not differ between homoattractional and heteroattractional adolescents. However, there are additional issues that are particular to attractional minority youth (Kissen, 1993; Weiler, 2004).

Homoattractiveness and biattractiveness are often the most off-limits topics of discussion within family, church, and school (GLSTN-Detroit, 1996). Responding to the reality and needs of attractional minority students is frequently met with strong opposition. School administrators, faculty, and staff are afraid or unwilling to acknowledge the existence of attractional minority students and, therefore, adolescent homoattractiveness is an area that is either approached very delicately or altogether ignored (Uribe, 1994). A primary reason for school personnel in general and school counselors in particular not addressing the needs of attractional minority youth is that they have not been trained to do so (Barret, 1998; Marinoble, 1998). Additional reasons for school personnel inadequately addressing the needs of LGBTQ students include: (a) fear of collegial disapproval (Deisher, 1989); (b) the belief that homoattractiveness is only a phase that some youth goes through and they will ultimately outgrow it (Malyon, 1981; Ricketts, 1986; L. H. Robinson, 1980); (c) some researchers wanting to avoid being associated with such a stigmatized subject (Savin-Williams & Diamond, 1999); and (d) North American culture denying the existence of nonheteroattractional children and adolescents (Rofes, 1989; Savin-Williams & Diamond, 1999). Other reasons given for the inadequate response of school personnel to adolescent homoattractiveness include: (a) the fact that adults can ignore adolescent attractiveness simply because they are adults and can do so (Ricketts, 1986); (b) the fear that discussing homoattractiveness in school settings will “create” it (Uribe, 1994) or spread it as a contagious disease (Reed, 1994);

(c) fearing the reaction of the community, especially parents, if issues of attractional orientation are discussed openly (Marinoble, 1998; K. E. Robinson, 1994); (d) “teaching homosexuality” and discussing the topic will violate the rights of parents who want their children to be excluded from such discussions (Macgillivray, 2000); and (e) many parents as well as political, religious, and community leaders believing that discussing the reality of gay and lesbian students will promote and sanction adolescent homoattractionality and cause students to grow up gay or lesbian (MacGillivray, 2004; Rofes, 1989). Societal attitudes and beliefs play a major role in the lack of school personnel responding to the particular needs of attractional minority students. For example, schools and the general public yet show hostility toward homoattractional persons as well as schools’ policies limiting or prohibiting discussion on attractionality and attractional identity/expression with adolescents (Davis, Williamson, & Lambie, 2005). Finally, religious persuasion also accounts for the lack of school personnel serving attractional minority students. Personal religious convictions of school personnel prevent them from aiding students who either self-identify as same-gender attracted or are questioning same-gender attraction (Pope, 2003; Sadowski, 2001; Uribe, 1994). Rofes (1989), in his article addressing the needs of gay and lesbian youth, laments the “hush-hush” attitude of society in general and schools in particular:

It has been frustrating to observe critical youth issues enter the field of public debate, while widespread censorship results in the exclusion of the issues of gay and lesbian youth. . . . AIDS prevention counselors working with teenagers in the school frequently find themselves educating young people about how to remain uninfected, yet without giving any training or materials to deal with the issue of male-to-male sexual activity among youth. (p. 446)

Prevalence of Attractional Minority Students

The number of youth with same-gender attractions continues to be debated. Studies assessing the prevalence rates of gay adults and gay youth indicate that the number of individuals with same-gender attractions and fantasies or who engaged in same-gender sexual behavior far exceeded those who identified as gay, lesbian, or biattractional (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994; Savin-Williams & Cohen, 2007). Seidmann and Rieder (1994) suggest that predominant homoattractionality has a prevalence rate ranging from 2 to 4% and possibly greater than 10% in males and 1 to 3% in females. Orenstein's (2001) survey that sought to identify same-gender attracted students as well as assess substance use among gay and lesbian students at one Massachusetts high school found that prevalence rates for same-gender attractions and behavior (11%) far exceeded the rate of those who identified as gay (3%). Lock and Steiner (1999) surveyed 1,769 high school students to determine their self-identification with a particular attractional orientation group as well as determine the level of comfort with identifying with that group. Lock and Steiner found that while 6% self-identified as homoattractional or biattractional, 13% reported being uncertain about their attractional orientation. Barret (1998) reports that "percentages range from 3 to 15%, and the actual number may never be known" (p. 88). It should be noted that prevalence rates of attractional minority students are difficult to assess and determine because many youth do not self-identify as gay, lesbian, or biattractional until after adolescence and many who have a homoerotic orientation may never identify as gay (Savin-Williams & Cohen, 2007).

Statistics indicate that there are approximately 30 million young people between the ages of 10 and 20 in the United States (Herring & Furgerson, 2000) and 5 to 10% of those young people will discover that they are either predominantly or exclusively gay or lesbian before age 17 (Committee on Adolescence, 1993). Herdt (1989, cited in Dunham, 1989) states that “nearly 3 million of our country’s 29 million adolescents are gay” (p. 4). Ginsberg (1998) suggests that 1 in 20 adolescents who attend public schools in the United States is likely to be gay/lesbian based on an estimated 2,610,515 gay/lesbian student population derived from the 1995 Digest of Education Statistics. And finally, Regan and Fogarty (2006) reported that the number of school-aged gay, lesbian, and transgender youth exceeds 2 million; this does not include youth who are questioning their attractional orientation or are not yet out about their attractional orientation.

According to data obtained from the Center for Educational Performance and Information (n.d.), there were 1,612,425 students enrolled in public schools in Michigan and 130,169 students enrolled in nonpublic schools during the 2008-2009 school years. Counted in the nearly two million students enrolled in Michigan schools are attractional minority students who are relying on the expertise and services of school counselors to help them during their adolescent development.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker-based organization that is comprised of people of different faiths who are committed to social justice, provided a broader perspective on the prevalence rate of attractional minority students by including all students who could possibly be affected by issues of attractional orientation. The AFSC LGBTQ Youth Program (1991) estimated that 9 students in every classroom of 30 are affected by homoattractional issues in one way or another, whether through

having a gay or lesbian parent or sibling, a relative, or personally being gay or lesbian. Students in every classroom can also be affected by homoattractational issues by having a friend or social acquaintance who is homoattractational. Therefore, and in conclusion, the awareness that the number of attractational minority students in any school could be 10% or higher at any time speaks clearly to the reality that the topic of adolescent homoattractationality can no longer be feared, denied, or ignored.

Homoattractational Identity Formulation in Adolescents

Attractational identity models, also referred to as “coming out” models, were developed to understand the process by which individuals became aware of, acknowledged, accepted, and embraced a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender identity (Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1999). Research and conceptual models regarding same-gender attractational identity formation from the 1970s to the present have produced a number of models that propose that homoattractational identity formation is a process that occurs over time and in identifiable phases or stages, and thus are referred to as “stage models” (Eliason & Schope, 2007). Several foundational studies and stage models were constructed to illustrate and help elucidate the attractational identity formulation of gay, lesbian, biattractational, and transgender youth (Cass, 1979; Coleman, 1982; Devor, 2002; Paul, 1984; Troiden, 1989).

In 1973, the American Psychological Association depathologized homosexuality and removed it from its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* as sexually deviant behavior. Therefore, the stage models that will be presented are some of the first models to view homoattractational identity development from a nonpathological stance. In addition to the

stage models, other models were constructed that viewed homoattractational identity development in terms of “milestones” (Floyd & Stein, 2002) and “processes” such as the social identity model (Cox & Gallois, 1996). The literature on homoattractational identity development suggests that the stage models developed by Cass (1979), Coleman (1982), and Troiden (1989) are the most recognized and accepted models; therefore, those models will be discussed in greater detail than the other theoretical models presented. Reviews of these foundational models follow.

The Cass Six-Stage Model of Homoattractational Identity Development

The model that has served as the foundational model for same-gender attractational identity formation, upon which other models have been constructed and future models will most likely be compared (Zera, 1992), was developed by Vivienne C. Cass (1979) and encompasses the developmental experiences of both female and male homoattractational persons. Cass’s theory was developed from a psychosocial perspective “within the framework of interpersonal congruency theory” (p. 219). Accordingly, attractational identity development is based upon the individual’s interpersonal dynamics interacting with the immediate environment and society at-large. Cass’s model has been criticized as being rigid in its progression through the stages as well as being outdated (Degges-White, Rice, & Myers, 2000). Nonetheless, the Cass model continues to serve as the reference point for discussions regarding homoattractational identity development. Cass identifies six stages of development in the formation of a homoattractational identity: Identity Confusion, Identity Comparison, Identity Tolerance, Identity Acceptance, Identity Pride, and Identity Synthesis. A brief description of each stage follows.

Stage 1: Identity Confusion. This stage can occur during pre-puberty, puberty, or early adolescence and is marked by the heteroattractional identity being called into question. The youth wonders, “Could I be homoattractional?” Hollander (2000) suggests that the term *questioning youth* may be preferred instead of the term *confusion*. During this stage, issues regarding gay rights, information and media coverage on gay issues, and conversation about gays and lesbianism become personally relevant. Very little information, if any, is accessible in school libraries, but if the youth is inclined to study and seek out information, then during this stage, the youth will seek avenues to gain information regarding same-gender attraction. Few adolescents are trained to seek out other avenues of information, and when literature and information relevant to same-gender attraction is available (e.g., in public libraries), many adolescents are too ashamed to inform someone that they are seeking information for themselves on a subject that is considered taboo. Without the availability of literature and/or the courage to access it, adolescents at this stage live in a state of ignorance and confusion. It should be noted, however, that Cass’s (1979) model of attractional identity development was developed prior to the Internet and the World Wide Web. Today, through the use of the Internet, students have access to literature on practically any subject and in any language and can access that information in the privacy of their own homes or study quarters. Therefore, today’s youth have access to unlimited information and “are exposed to a plethora of sexual styles and behaviors” (Eliason & Schope, 2007, p. 15). In addition, students at increasingly younger ages are being trained to use computers and access information via the Internet. Therefore, today’s youth who have questions regarding their attractional orientation, are able to seek out relevant and affirming information without fear of being

embarrassed. This is contrasted with the youth and adults who experienced Identity Confusion during the time period when Cass initially presented her model of attractional identity development.

Stage 2: Identity Comparison. At this stage comes a greater degree of acceptance of same-gender attraction and the realization that “I might be homoattractional or biattractional” occurs. The youth may look at it as a “passing phase” by rationalizing that his or her same-gender attraction is to “just this one person.” The adolescent compares him/herself with peers and society and becomes aware of his/her differences from both. Feelings of isolation and a sense of not belonging sets in and, because other youth who may be experiencing the same confusion and feelings of isolation are not identifiable, thoughts that “I am the only one like this” may be entertained.

Stage 3: Identity Tolerance. This stage is characterized by the thought, “I probably am homoattractional.” At this stage, the youth has moved further away from the heteroattractional identity and closer to a homoattractional identity. Internal confusion and turmoil decreases, while feelings of differentness in comparison to other peers increases. Psychosocial needs are met by seeking out the company of other attractional minority persons. Stage 3 can be a difficult time for attractional minority youth if peer approval from a majority heteroattractional population is important to them. Often, attractional minority youth will seek approval from their heteroattractional peers by either dating members of the other gender and/or scrutinizing everything that they themselves say or do. Both are done in order to appear heteroattractional while maintaining secrecy about their same-gender attraction.

Stage 4: Identity Acceptance. At this stage, the youth has developed a more clearly defined homoattractional identity and now says, “I am homoattractional.” Contact with other attractional minority persons increases, usually with older individuals, because locating and identifying other attractional minority peers is quite difficult at this age. Many attractional minority youth, especially those living in small cities, rural areas, or towns where homoprejudice is intense, will feel the need to move to large urban areas primarily for the purpose of making contact with other attractional minority persons. In addition, due to homoprejudice, individuals at this stage are afraid to talk with their parent(s), school personnel, clergy, and their peers about their feelings of differentness. This stage is a very dangerous and crucial stage for many youth, especially if they meet another attractional minority person who has no interest in their personal growth, development, and welfare, but wants them only for sexual gratification. Such a scenario, in some instances, has resulted in attractional minority youth contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which could lead to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

Stage 5: Identity Pride. This stage is marked by a “them and us” mentality: “Them straight folks and us gays.” During this stage, there is strong identification with the gay culture and a minimizing of heteroattractonality. Youth at this stage have fully accepted their homoattractional orientation and, in some cases, display it overtly with an “in your face” attitude, which is outwardly displayed in the way they dress, talk, walk, and gesture. This stage is especially difficult for some ethnic attractional minority youth to move into due to strong religious beliefs that condemn nonheteroattractional behavior. As was previously stated, the Identity Pride stage is marked by a “them and us” mentality. For

ethnic attractional minority youth, the “them” can include all of their primary support systems (e.g., family, church, school) as well as both heteroattractional and homoattractional White America, and the cultural community, to name a few. This stage can be especially dangerous for ethnic attractional minority youth who, if ostracized, may lack the financial and social support systems that are afforded to many of their White attractional minority peers. The stage of identity pride is earmarked by attractional minority youth wanting to disclose their attractional orientation to their parent(s), trusted friends, and significant adults in their lives, also referred to as “coming out” (Cass, 1979; Coleman, 1982; Human Rights Watch, 2001).

Stage 6: Identity Synthesis. At this stage, the individual moves away from the “them and us” mentality and explores the similarities between the homoattractional and heteroattractional worlds. There is no longer the “in your face” attitude but an “I can live as being homoattractional and you can live as being heteroattractional in the same house” attitude. There are no longer two absolutes or two rigid and polarized views but, instead, a mixture and cohabitating of the two views and everything in between.

In summary, Cass (1979) presents a six-stage model for homoattractional sexual identity formation that begins with the adolescent being *confused* about his or her attractionality, thereby calling his or her heteroattractionality into question. The adolescent then *compares* him/herself to peers and society resulting in increased feelings of differentness and the belief that perhaps the individual is merely going through a phase of homoattractionality. At this point, the adolescent *tolerates* a possible homoattractional identity while yet seeking peer approval from a majority heteroattractional population, which may cause the adolescent to have an opposite gender relationship or be extremely

Careful with personal presentation in order to maintain secrecy of same-gender attraction. Depending upon social, cultural, and familial influences, the adolescent may move into *identity acceptance* and self-label as homoattractional and seek contact with other homoattractional persons, the association of which can engender *identity pride* and a sense of belonging to a group. This identity pride results in an “us and them” and “in your face” mentality, but with education and maturation, can be *synthesized* into a belief that homoattractional and heteroattractional persons can coexist and even dwell together in the same space.

It should be noted that Cass (1979) indicates that this is not a linear model of homoattractional identity development where individuals neatly progress from one stage to the next. Cass suggests, however, that individuals can move back and forth and through the stages, sometimes occupying multiple stages simultaneously. Finally, Cass posits that not everyone passes through all of the stages. *Identity foreclosure* can occur wherein the individual can choose not to develop any further, such identity foreclosure being capable of occurring at each stage.

The Coleman Five-Stage Model of Homoattractional Identity Development

Eli Coleman (1982) presented a five-stage model of homoattractional identity formation with the primary tenet being that the individual will work on the stage that is most pressing at that time. Coleman believed that any one or more of the stages could, at any given time and/or context, become unresolved, resulting in the need for revisitation and resolution. Therefore, Coleman, like Cass (1979), rejected the notion of homoattractional identity formulation following a linear path (i.e., individuals going

neatly from one stage to the next) but believed that any stage could be revisited, with the possibility of several stages being worked on at the same time. Stage One of Coleman's model is the *pre-coming out* stage when the individual senses his or her differentness and believes that others are also sensing that differentness.

Stage Two, the *coming out* stage, involves the individual coming out to himself or herself and others but does not necessarily mean that the individual will live as an openly attractional minority person. During this stage, acceptance from heteroattractional friends is very important because this acceptance helps to reverse negative self-images stemming from external and internalized homophobia. At Stage Three, the individual has *accepted* that he or she is a homoattractional person and explores this newly embraced attractionality through several sexual encounters. The individual may also self-medicate through the use of drugs and/or alcohol as a means to cope with both the stress of being homoattractional and the stigma attached to it. During this stage, the individual also begins to explore the possibility of genuine and serious romantic and social relationships with other homoattractional persons.

The *first romantic relationships* occur at the Fourth Stage and are usually tumultuous due to internalized homophobia, an unstable self-identity, and the fear of not being ready to cope with the consequences of automatically being "outed" as a result of being in a same-gender romantic relationship. Finally, at the Fifth Stage, *integration* occurs, which involves the individual consolidating both the private self and the public self. Also at this stage, self-identity becomes stable, thereby increasing the possibilities of successful same-gender romantic and social relationships.

The Troiden Four-Stage Model of Homoattractional Identity Development

Richard Troiden (1989) presents a four-stage homoattractional identity formation model from a sociological perspective. Troiden posits that attractorality/sexuality and sexual conduct are basically sociocultural in origin and the society with its culture defines the meaning and utility of attractorality as well as the manners and methods that attractorality can be expressed. Thus, according to Troiden, social forces play a major role in shaping attractorality and sexual conduct. Furthermore, Troiden proposes that no one is fixed into exclusive homoattractiveness or heteroattractiveness but develops attractorality along any point on the continuum of Kinsey's scale (Sanders, Reinisch, & McWhirter, 1990) and, thus, Troiden's model can accommodate biattractiveness. Moreover, according to Troiden, attractorality identity develops when individuals are able to interpret what their attractorality feelings mean to both themselves and society. Troiden presents a four-stage model of the formation of homoattractiveness identities. A brief description of each stage follows.

Stage 1: Sensitization. This stage occurs before puberty and is "characterized by generalized feelings of marginality and perceptions of being different from same-sex peers" (p. 50). These childhood feelings and perceptions of being different are socioculturally indicated for the youth. Youth at this stage explain their perceptions of difference with the use of "gender metaphors" (e.g., boys not wanting to be involved in sports; girls not wanting to be prissy) as opposed to "sexual scripts" (e.g., "I'm heteroattractiveness or homoattractiveness") while "the socially created categories of homosexual, heterosexual, and bisexual hold little or no significance for them" (p. 52).

Childhood feelings and perceptions of differentness ultimately serve as the foundation for the youth giving meaning to that differentness realized during adolescence.

Stage 2: Identity Confusion. This stage occurs during adolescence (12 years and beyond) when attractional minority youth begin to personalize same-gender attraction. They have not fully adopted a homoattractional orientation and yet have not fully accepted a complete heteroattractional orientation; therefore, they are in a sort of psychosexual purgatory, waiting and longing to understand “Who I am as an attractional being?” and then to be released to express that attractionality. During this stage, the adolescent experiences inner conflict and confusion regarding his or her attractional orientation. Childhood perceptions of differentness influence the degree of confusion at this stage. The adolescent responds to identity confusion in a number of ways including *denying* the homoattractional feelings and behaviors, trying to *eliminate* homoattractional feelings by seeking professional help, using various forms of *avoidance* to inhibit homoattractional feelings and behaviors, *redefining* behaviors and feelings so as not to contextually appear as homoattractional, and *accepting* one’s homoattractionality and seeking knowledge to understand it.

Stage 3: Identity Assumption. This stage occurs during or after late adolescence when the individual self-identifies as homoattractional and is willing to disclose that identity to others, at least other homoattractional persons which subsequently can serve as preparation for identity disclosure or “coming out.” The earmarks of identity assumption are: (a) self-identifying as homoattractional, (b) identity tolerance or acceptance (i.e., a present acceptance of homoattractional feelings and behaviors while holding on to the possibility of a future reality of heteroattractionality), (c) discovery and regular

association with other homoattractational persons, (d) sexual experimentation, and (e) the exploration of the homoattractational culture. Troiden (1989) emphasizes the role that context plays when self-labeling/self-identifying as homoattractational. Females generally self-identify as homoattractational persons in the context of intense affectionate and emotionally meaningful relationships with other women, whereas males generally self-identify as homoattractational persons in sociosexual contexts: in places where men meet for social and sexual purposes (e.g., gay bars, cruising parks, the Internet). In addition, Troiden posits that during this stage, a negative homoattractational experience (social or sexual) could influence negative attitudes toward homoattractationality, resulting in the adolescent rejecting both the homoattractational identity and the behaviors. On the other hand, positive social or sexual homoattractational experiences could assist in facilitating self-labeling as homoattractational. Finally, Troiden presents the concept of *disembodied affiliation* derived from the work of Ponce (1978) in which individuals self-label as homoattractational in the absence of affiliation with other homoattractational persons. By the end of this stage, individuals begin to accept their homoattractational orientation. The final stage of Troiden's four-stage model is commitment.

Stage 4: Commitment. Some of the internal and external indicators of this stage include: (a) embracing homoattractationality as a way of life; (b) the synthesis and fusion of same-gender attractionality and emotionality into a significant and meaningful whole; (c) coming out to a broadened arena of significant others ranging from self to a public audience; (d) entering into a same-gender romantic relationship; (e) increased happiness as a result of self-acceptance and feeling comfortable with the homoattractational identity; (f) homoattractational expressions (e.g., romance and sexual gratification) are

reconceptualized and accepted as valid, natural, and normal for the individual; and (g) a rearrangement in strategies to cope with and manage the stigma attached to being homoattractional.

In summary, Troiden (1989) holds the stance that sexual identity is socially learned and influenced by “social scripts of gender role behavior” (Eliason & Schope, 2007, p. 9). Troiden also views homoattractional identity formulation as being a continuous process occurring over a protracted period of time and can possibly span a lifetime. Further, the homoattractional identity is always emerging, never fully developed, and always subject to modifications based on time, place, and context. In addition, the stages in this four-stage model are not linear; in other words, an individual can move back and forth between any stage depending on the time and context. Finally, the overall process of homoattractional identity formation is greatly influenced by personal, social, familial, and professional contexts. Therefore, commitment to a homoattractional identity spans a continuum ranging from high to low levels of commitment.

Research and the literature regarding homoattractional identity formation has primarily addressed identity development in gay, lesbian, and biattractional persons, with little or no mention of transgender persons who are the most visible minority among same-gender attracted persons and “have been emblematic of homosexuality in the minds of most people” (Devor, 2002, p. 5).

Transgender Identity Development

Aaron Holly Devor (2004) presents a 14-stage model of transsexual identity formation—a model where attractional orientation intersects with gender identity. This

model is applicable to “a wide range of transgendered persons—the majority of whom have self-identified as female-to-male transsexed or transgendered” (p. 42). Devor’s model is based on two foundational themes. The first theme is *witnessing*, which involves validation of the transgendered person’s gender and sex identities by nontransgendered friends, family, co-workers, and significant others. The second theme is *mirroring*, which involves validation of the transgendered person’s gender and sexual identities by other transgendered persons. Devor proposes that transsexuals pass through 14 stages to achieve an integrated transsexual identity. For the sake of focus and brevity, the 14 stages will be only listed and are as follows: (1) Abiding Anxiety, (2) Identity Confusion about Originally Assigned Gender and Sex, (3) Identity Comparisons about Originally Assigned Gender and Sex, (4) Discovery of Transsexualism or Transgenderism, (5) Identity Confusion about Transsexualism or Transgenderism, (6) Identity Comparisons about Transsexualism or Transgenderism, (7) Tolerance of Transsexual or Transgendered Identity, (8) Delay Before Acceptance of Transsexual or Transgendered Identity, (9) Acceptance of Transsexual or Transgendered Identity, (10) Delay Before Transition, (11) Transition, (12) Acceptance of Post-Transition Gendersex Identity, (13) Integration, and (14) Pride. Devor offers a caveat by stating that this model cannot apply to all transgender persons in the same way due to the uniqueness of the person, the individual’s worldview, and the individual’s experiential base. Devor further contends that (a) the stages are not linear but can occur at different times in life; (b) all of the stages are not necessarily experienced by all people; (c) some people may pass through some stages more quickly or more slowly than others; (d) people will move through the stages in their

own time and in their own order, sometimes repeating some stages multiple times; and (e) “the model may be totally inapplicable to others” (p. 42).

Validation of the Stage Models

Research suggests that these theoretical models for homoattractional identity development are limited in their empirical validation. Eliason and Schope (2007) report that Cass (1979) has “some empirical validation,” Coleman (1982) has “no empirical validation,” Troiden (1989) conducted “interviews with 150 men,” and Devor (2004) has “no empirical validation” (pp. 7-8). Future empirical research should be conducted in order to determine the validity of these stage models. However, despite the existing limitation regarding empirical validation of these stage models, they are yet quite useful to mental health professionals because they simplify developmental processes that are quite complex. Stage theories provide for human service providers (e.g., school personnel, therapists, counselors) guidelines for therapeutic interventions for individuals who are dealing with issues of attractional orientation and need mental health assistance (Eliason & Schope, 2007).

Eliason and Schope (2007) point out that there are themes that are common throughout all of the stage models including (a) identity formation is developmental, (b) the process of homoattractional identity formation starts with feelings of differentness, (c) identity disclosure is an important stage in the process, (d) identity pride and cultural immersion are important and necessary, and (e) there is a need for identity integration.

Other Models of Homoattractional Identity Development

Models attempting to explain the process of homoattractional identity formation in adolescents have been dominated by stage models. Scholars, however, have recently constructed models that seek to explain attractional identity formation in adolescents in terms of “milestone” experiences (D’Augelli, 2006; Floyd & Stein, 2002).

Floyd and Stein (2002) developed a model indicating four key milestone events of homoattractional identity development based upon the four developmental stages of Troiden’s (1989) stage model. According to Floyd and Stein, these milestones are: “first recognition of same-gender attractions, first same-gender sexual activity, first disclosure to someone, and first disclosure to parent” (p. 172). Floyd and Stein proposed that the earlier these milestones are reached, the greater the comfort with having a same-gender attractional orientation and the earlier self-labeling occurs but with the cost of higher levels of emotional distress.

A study of a national sample of 542 youths (62% male and 38% female) conducted by D’Augelli (2006) regarding male and female adolescent attractional orientation development suggests that there are “milestones” related to same-gender attractional orientation and those milestones occur at different ages. According to D’Augelli the milestones are: (a) age of awareness of same-gender attraction; (b) age of self-labeling as lesbian, gay, or biattractional; (c) age at which one discloses his or her same-gender attractional orientation; and (d) age of the first same-gender sexual experience. D’Augelli’s study assessed milestones and the age at which the participants reported reaching those milestones and yielded the following results. First, awareness of

same-gender attractional feelings occurred about age 10 for male participants and age 11 for female participants. This finding regarding awareness of same-gender attractional feelings corroborates with the Smith, Dermer, and Astramovich (2005) study, which indicated that (a) youth develops a clear awareness of attractional orientation between 10 and 11 years of age; (b) self-labeling occurred 5 years after initial awareness, thus ages 15 and 16 for male and female participants, respectively; (c) the age of the first disclosure of attractional orientation for male and female participants occurred at approximately 17 with some youths reporting disclosure as early as age 10 and as late as age 21; and (d) about half (49%) reported having their first same-gender sexual experience between ages 15 and 18. Findings regarding the male participants in the D'Augelli study found that 83% of the male participants had their first same-gender sexual experience following their awareness of same-gender attraction with only 4% whose sexual experience preceded awareness. Further, 47% of the male participants' self-identification as gay preceded sex with a male; hence, awareness was followed by sexual experience. Noteworthy is that slightly over half of the male participants had heteroattractional sexual experience prior to self-identifying as gay. Additional findings regarding the female participants in the D'Augelli study found that in 83% of the female youths, awareness of same-gender feelings preceded same-gender sexual experiences, 45% self-identified as lesbian prior to having a same-gender sexual experience, and 53% of the female participants reported having their first same-gender sexual experience between age 15 and 18. Of note, 74% of the female participants reported having heteroattractional sexual experiences, with 68% of the participants having had sex with male partners prior to self-identifying as lesbian.

The final model of homoattractional identity formation to be presented is a process-oriented model developed by Cox and Gallois (1996). Cox and Gallois developed a model for gay and lesbian attractional identity formation based on social identity theory. Social identity theory looks at the effects of society on identity processes and how those processes affect social structures. Social identity theory is based on the premise that we all have several social identities (e.g., religious persuasion, political affiliation, gender, attractional orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) and all of the identities combined contribute to one's self-concept (Cox & Gallois, 1996). Furthermore, self-concept, being based on the totality of several identities, is influenced by time, popular culture, the ecological environment, and life circumstances (Eliason & Schope, 2007). This model explores two major processes: "self-categorization," which entails self-labeling and the adoption of the behaviors and values of the attractional minority culture, and "self-comparison," which involves comparing one's group to another's group or comparing one's self to other individuals within and without one's group. According to Cox and Gallois, self-categorization can be made not only on the basis of sexual behaviors, but also on sexual feelings and attractions, all of which can change over time, making this model fluid and applicable to many sexual identities. Hollander (2000) applied this social identity model when addressing the developmental needs of youth who are "questioning" their attractional identity and thus states:

Questioning youths, therefore, may be viewed as engaging in a process of characterization at the individual level, resolving a process of self-estimation within a group, managing dependence needs for a group, and shaping new information and representations for sexual orientation identity. (p. 177)

Attractional Identity Development in Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Most models of attractional identity development are largely based on the experiences and testimonies of middle and upper class White lesbians and gay men (Greene, 1994; K. E. Robinson, 1994) with little or no reference to ethnic minority lesbian, gay, biattractional, transgender, or individuals questioning their attractional orientation. Attractional minority youth, who are also members of an ethnic minority, become a minority within a minority, or as Chung and Katayama (1998) penned the phrase, the “invisible of the invisible” (p. 21). Many developmental issues are common to all attractional minority youth (e.g., self-acceptance, coming out, discrimination). Ethnic minority youth, however, face additional issues such as having to synthesize and integrate race, ethnicity, gender, and attractional orientation in a society that discriminates on the basis of those very identity markers. Thus ethnic minority youth face oppression on multiple fronts and “are required to manage more than one stigmatized identity, which increases their level of vulnerability and stress” (Ryan & Futterman, 1997, p. 14). The developmental outcome of ethnic attractional minority youth is largely based on how they deal with heteroattractionalism, homoprejudice, discrimination, oppression, and racism interculturally and intraculturally (Cass, 1979; Chung & Katayama, 1998).

Chung and Katayama’s (1998) discussion on ethnic and attractional identity development of Asian American gay and lesbian adolescents speaks of many Asian cultures ascribing to the key concept of “Yin-Yang” which represents harmony, complementarity, and balance. According to the concept of Yin-Yang, two opposites should complement each other and therefore persons of opposite genders should naturally

be attracted to each other. The cultural belief of Yin-Yang intensifies heteroattractiveness and homophobia in many Asian cultures to the extent that living openly as a homosexual person is rarely an option. In such cultures, sexual minority youth have no access to role models or information that can assist them in their sexual identity development (Chung & Katayama, 1998).

According to Chung and Katayama (1998), sexual identity development in Asian Americans follows two parallel psychological processes: (a) development of an integrated ethnic identity which involves accepting one's cultural heritage and other cultures, understanding racism and discrimination, and integrating ethnic and other identities; and (b) development of an integrated sexual identity, which entails accepting one's sexual orientation and the sexual orientations of others; understanding homophobia, heteroattractiveness, discrimination; and integrating one's sexual orientation with other personal identities. These parallel psychological processes seem applicable to other ethnic sexual minorities (e.g., African Americans, Latinos) who also must integrate ethnicity and sexual orientation. Regarding Asian-American sexual minority youth, Chung and Katayama posit that sexual identity development in Asian American youth could be easier in the United States than in their homelands and cultures due to the U.S. lesbian and gay community being more receptive to ethnic sexual minorities as manifested by interracial same-gender couples as opposed to many Asian homelands that find same-gender relationships anathema whether interracial or intraracial. However, Chung and Katayama believe that "fitting in the majority lesbian and gay community could be a frustrating experience" (p. 23).

Ethnic attractional minority youth must learn how to navigate and survive among many separate communities, each community governed and grounded by its own set of cultural values and beliefs. For example, African American attractional minority youths and adults must deal with: (a) racism from both mainstream society as well as the majority White lesbian and gay community; (b) homophobia from mainstream society and within the African American community; (c) sexism faced by lesbians of color from mainstream society and the African American community; (d) answering the question, “Am I black first or gay?”; (e) heteroattractionalism from all communities and society at large; and (f) rejection based on the religious values and beliefs that are culturally indicated by both the mainstream religious society and the African-American church (Diamond, 1994; Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1999; Eliason & Schope, 2007; Snider, 1996; Weiler, 2003).

In summary, stage models explaining homoattractional identity development suggest that individuals go through identifiable phases, stages, or events that are not necessarily linear and that any stage or combination of stages may need to be revisited at any time during the developmental process. Some models suggest that homoattractional identity formation entails individuals reaching milestones in the developmental process, while other models look at the interplay between the individual’s many social identities and his or her developing homoattractional identity. The literature suggests that there are salient themes that are common to all models addressing homoattractional identity formation. A partial summary of these themes are provided by Eliason and Schope (2007) and now will be briefly summarized. First, identity formation is developmental and can occur over the lifespan starting from puberty and possibly continuing well into adulthood.

Second, the onset of attractional identity development is triggered by feelings of differentness ranging from gender atypical behaviors to sexual attraction and fantasies. The origin of this differentness (e.g., innate, environment, life experiences) has not been determined by theorists; neither are youth able to attach meaning at the onset of these feelings of differentness. Third, disclosure of one's homoattractional identity or "coming out" (a) denotes an integration of the private and public self, (b) is necessary for personal empowerment, (c) generally results in an increase in self-esteem, and (d) leads to a healthier state of mind as compared to those individuals who remain closeted and whose lives become dominated by fear of being discovered.

Fourth, pride and immersion in the attractional minority culture can be expressed through both positive and productive behaviors as well as risky and even dangerous behaviors. For instance, individuals can immerse themselves in the positive elements of the attractional minority culture by seeking and gaining more knowledge about their newly accepted attractional orientation and become empowered to work toward self-actualization and social change. On the other hand, youth can immerse themselves in the negative elements of the attractional minority culture and become engaged in sexual promiscuity and drugs and other substances resulting in a downward spiral leading to low self-esteem, depression, and possibly suicide.

Fifth, all models seem to agree on the necessity to synthesize and integrate the homoattractional identity into all of the other social identities that the individual possesses (e.g., ethnicity, religion) so that attractional identity becomes no more and no less salient than the other identities. Unfortunately, ethnic and attractional minority identities seem to be two identities that Western culture keeps in the forefront of

consciousness, conversation, media coverage, and public debate and therefore those identities are not allowed to become less salient than others.

Sixth and finally, none of the models discussed provided any depth of discussion or understanding regarding ethnic minorities having to interface attractional orientation with ethnicity. The developmental trajectories of ethnic minority youth with same-gender attractional concerns present a need for them to establish dual identities as an ethnic minority and as an attractional minority in a climate of systemic racism and heteroattractionalism (Chung & Katayama, 1998; Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1999; Snider, 1996). Often, ethnic attractional minority youth are pressured into choosing between disclosing their same-gender attractionality or participating in their ethnic communities (Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1998). The results of a study on the attractional identity development of ethnic attractional minority male youth (Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1998) indicate that these youth have “ethnic-specific developmental experiences” (p. 1396) that differ from their White attractional minority peers. These ethnic-specific differences include timing of identity milestones, sequencing of identity milestones, disclosure to family members, and opposite-gender romantic relationships. Such a study strongly suggests that all of the homoattractional identity formation models previously mentioned need to be revisited and modified in order to be applicable to ethnic attractional minority youths.

This section on adolescent homoattractional identity development speaks to the need for knowledge and understanding of the developmental issues that are peculiar and specific to attractional minority students. If school counselors are not knowledgeable regarding the developmental issues of attractional minority youth, then they are not able

to adequately serve this student population and address their needs. If there is a lack of knowledge, then is it due to the lack of training in school counseling and counselor education programs? This study hopes to provide answers to questions regarding school counselors' knowledge and training relative to the issues of attractional minority students because the school climate greatly affects the developmental trajectories of these students. The next section explores the sexualized/attractionalized context of American public schools, focusing on attractional orientation, the experiences of attractional minority students in public schools, as well as the experiences of school counselors as they relate to providing services to attractional minority students.

Attractional Orientation and U.S. Public Schools

One of the greatest arenas of controversy in K-12 education is whether discussions on issues of adolescent sexuality should occur in the classroom or should be confined to family discussions at home (Witt & Greene, 2002). One position contends that issues of sexuality should be discussed in a family forum with the parents "having the primary right and duty to educate their children about sexuality" (Rilla, 1998, p. 65). Another position contends that school teachers and counselors, in tandem with parents, should have the conversation about sex education in the classroom where the students can get accurate information and formal learning (Witt & Greene, 2002). One middle school felt that the discussion on sexuality was so necessary that the question went from whether sex education should be discussed in classrooms to whether the school should dispense condoms to middle schools students (CNN Prime News aired October 16, 2007). A greater controversy, however, is whether issues of same-gender attraction should be

discussed in K-12 classrooms. Do public schools in general, have the climate and the context that will allow discussion and discourse on same-gender attraction? Do the climate and contexts of American public schools allow for positive development of attractional minority students? Answers to these questions can be addressed by looking at the context through which public schools operate and in which attractional minority students develop.

The Hetero-sexualized Context of U.S. Public Schools

Donald B. Reed (1994) conducted a study discussing the sexualized context of American public schools, looking at how attractional minority youth in general, and gay male youth in particular, experience this sexualized context. First, Reed reports that U.S. public schools are operated by organizational structures (comprised of formal and informal structures) and governed by organizational beliefs. The formal structure consists of curricula, extra-curricular activities, and the classes through which they are delivered. The primary relationship in the formal structure is between the teacher and student. The informal structure involves social phenomena between students, with the primary relationship being between students. Within the informal structure can be seen friendship groups, cliques, and lone students, all of which whose conduct is dictated and controlled by the students and influenced by the community at large.

Reed (1994) defines organizational beliefs as the collective value orientations of its members as to what is right and good for the organization and the members' relationship with it. Reed contends that the organizational beliefs regarding attractionality in U.S. public high schools is that officially and implicitly, heteroattractionality is normal,

good, and desirable and those students exhibiting heteroattractational behavior should be supported. Conversely, unofficially and implicitly, homoattractationality is abnormal, bad, and undesirable and those students exhibiting homoattractational behavior should not be supported but perhaps, even punished. Therefore, the pervasiveness of official support for heteroattractational behavior translates into schools whose organizational structures (both formal and informal) aid students in establishing healthy and appropriate heteroattractational identities through curricula and extracurricular activities that have heteroattractational themes taught and supervised by presumed heteroattractational staff (Chesir-Teran & Hughes, 2009; Wallis & VanEvery, 2000).

Traditional schooling officially supports heteroattractational identities through textbooks, movies, classroom debates and discussions, field excursions, guest speakers, and social events (Marinoble, 1998). On the other hand, the (unofficial) nonsupport and punishment for homoattractational behavior translates into schools whose formal and informal structures do not assist lesbian, gay, biattractational, transgender, or questioning students in establishing healthy and positive identities, but, on the contrary, denigrate and berate those students. The fact that school curricula are explicitly absent of anything alluding to homoattractationality is indicative of an implicit anti-homoattractational position (Chesir-Teran & Hughes, 2009; Reed, 1994; Wallis & VanEvery, 2000). Furthermore, if the members of the school organization have a collective belief system that homoattractationality is abnormal and bad, and if the beliefs of the members mirror the mores of the community within which the school functions, then there is a high probability that classroom discussions regarding attractational minority issues are not allowed for fear of creating or promoting homoattractationality (Uribe, 1994). The fear of

the possibility that homoattractability can be transmitted through discussion and association with another homoattractual person is one manifestation of homophobia, and homophobia unchecked in a heterosexualized school environment can become school-sanctioned homophobia. Unks (1993/1994) states that U.S. high schools may be the most homophobia institutions in society “and woe is to anyone who would challenge the heterosexist premises on which they operate” (p. 2).

U.S. Public Schools and Attractional Minority Youth

Attractional minority youth experience school in much the same way as nongay youth: as a social organization through friendships that are formed through individual and small group affiliation (Reed, 1993). A great portion of a student’s waking hours are spent in school and, in most instances, interactions with other students are more diverse, intense, and occur with greater frequency than do interactions with family members. Therefore, since school serves as a primary social organization and socializing agency, the developmental needs of all students must be taken seriously and receive the necessary attention and, when necessary, receive the necessary intervention.

Many schools in the United States are facing the reality of declining safety and an increase in violence, dropout rates, and suicide among their student populations. No schools are exempt: Public, private, and parochial schools located in large urban cities or small rural towns throughout the nation are reporting an increase in the daily amount of violence inflicted on students by other students. The reporting of violence in schools by the mass media has become a constant occurrence and a significant number of students feel unsafe in school (Kenny & Watson, 1996; Morley & Rossman, 1996). School

violence and harassment are generally attributed to the activities of drug dealing and gang members with the largest amount of school violence reported by mass media being presented within the context of drugs and gangs in low socioeconomic communities. Consequently, drug dealers and gang members are generally the primary targets for intervention strategies promoted in school curricula and dropout prevention programs (Huff & Trump, 1996; Kenney & Watson, 1996; Morley & Rossman, 1996). However, there is a growing body of literature that indicates that there is a population of students who are facing unsafe school environments on a daily basis, and these students have no affiliation or affinity with gangs or drug dealings. Students who self-identify as LGBTQ are being verbally and emotionally abused and physically attacked based solely on their actual or “perceived” attractional orientation. School administrators, faculty, and teachers, who, in most instances, are knowledgeable of the abuses, are not adequately responding to the problems that these students are facing (Thurlow, 2001).

The Massachusetts Governor’s Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth (1993, cited in GLSTN-Detroit, 1996) reported that students who self-identify as gay and lesbian or perceived to be gay and lesbian are confronted with verbal harassment, physical violence, and emotional abuse on a regular basis. A survey conducted by the National Gay Task Force (1984) reported that 45% of the gay men and 20% of the lesbians who participated in the study had experienced harassment during their secondary school years. The findings of surveys conducted by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teachers Network of Detroit (GLSTN-Detroit, 1996) and the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008) indicated that the high school environment was most stressful for students who identified as LGBTQ.

School Experiences of Attractional Minority Youth

The school experiences of attractional minority youth are in many ways similar to those of their heteroattractional peers. Issues regarding being accepted, belonging, and fitting in with particular peer groups, family relationships, and ranking oneself according to peer standards become very important for all adolescents (Ginsberg, 1998; Roeser et al., 2000). All students desire a welcoming and safe school environment that is conducive to academic, social, vocational, and personal development. For many attractional minority youth, however, school is all but a safe place to develop and excel. Attractional minority students often endure verbal and physical harassment, physical and sexual assaults from other students, as well as endure ridicule from adult school personnel. Often, school administrators turn a blind eye to the harassment, a deaf ear to their complaints, and an emotional disconnect to their pain (Sadowski, 2001). As a result of this indifference shown on the part of school personnel, school for attractional minority students can be a very frightening and fearful place resulting in these students experiencing feelings of isolation and alienation, low self-esteem, loss of friends, frequent absences from class, truancy, poor academic performance, dropping out, running away, substance abuse, and suicide (Bailey & Phariss, 1996; Ginsberg, 1998; Harris, 1997; Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Kosciw et al., 2008; Rivers, 2000; Savin-Williams, 1994; Sullivan & Wodarski, 2002). At this point, the general experiences of attractional minority youth in the school setting will be presented in terms of school climate, victimization, social isolation and alienation, school attendance and dropping out of school, the lack of exposure to attractional minority persons, and issues in school curricula and resources.

School Climate

One of the greatest determinants of a school's environment being conducive to learning and growth on the part of its student body is the school's climate. School climate is multidimensional and is comprised of the school's culture, values, available resources (Loukas & Murphy, 2007) as well as social networks, and organizational and instructional components (Roeser et al., 2000). School climate is greatly influenced by the values and beliefs of school administrators, personnel, staff, and the community in which the school serves. Harris Interactive and GLSEN (2005) state that school climate "is established by the behaviors and attitudes of the students, teachers and other school staff as well as the school's official policies" (p. 3). Loukas and Murphy report that when a school climate is perceived by students as being of good quality, then such a climate serves to protect each student, "moderating the impact of individual risk factors on adolescent emotional and behavioral adjustment" (p. 295). In addition, when students perceive that their school climate provides a sense of caring for each student and support for academic achievement and social development, then they are more likely to value school and feel academically competent and emotionally secure (Roeser et al., 2000). Conversely, if adolescents are in a climate where they feel marginalized, unprotected, disrespected, not cared for, disconnected, and academically and socially unsupported, then they are probably more apt to feel depressed, unmotivated, and unhappy; associate with negative peers; and exhibit poor academic and behavioral performances.

Studies indicate that the school climates in U.S. public schools, in general, are negatively impacting the academic, psychological, emotional, and social well-being of

attractional minority students (D'Augelli et al., 2002; Ginsberg, 1998; Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Harris, 1997; Kosciw et al., 2008; Rivers, 2000; Reed, 1993; Savin-Williams, 1994; Sullivan & Wodarski, 2002). Research suggests that attractional minority students are three times more likely than their heteroattractional peers to report feeling unsafe at school due to their actual or perceived attractional orientation and gender expression (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Kosciw et al., 2008). "School is not just uninviting, it is often dangerous" (Stone, 2003, p. 145). Furthermore, because the majority of the school systems do not have support groups such as Gay-Straight Alliances and openly attractional minority faculty and staff (Tharinger & Wells, 2000), attractional minority students are most likely to feel unsupported with no positive attractional minority identity. According to the *2005 National School Climate Survey* (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006) and the *2007 National School Climate Survey* (Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008), homophobic (homoprejudice) remarks were the most common biased language heard by students at school. Results from the *2007 National School Climate Survey* indicated that: (a) 73.6% of the students surveyed reported hearing the words "faggot" or "dyke," (b) 90.2% of the respondents reported frequently hearing the comments "that's so gay" and "you're so gay" in a manner meant to devalue the recipient of the comments and such comments were often made in the presence of faculty or school staff, (c) only 17.6% reported intervention by staff when homoprejudice remarks were made, (d) 63.0% of the students surveyed reported hearing homoprejudice remarks from teachers and other school personnel, (e) 60.8% of the students surveyed reported feeling unsafe in school primarily due to their attractional orientation, and (f) 38.4% felt unsafe due to gender expression. Results from the Harris Interactive & GLSEN (2005) survey indicated that

74.2% reported feeling unsafe due to attractional orientation, gender, or religion, a statistic not provided in the GLSEN 2008 (Kosciw et al., 2008) survey. Finally, GLSEN (2006) reported being appalled that a school board vice president in a school district in Pennsylvania referred to students of a high school Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) as “faggots” in a public meeting. GLSEN Pittsburgh called for an apology from that board member.

The *2007 National School Climate Survey* (Kosciw et al., 2008) analyzed data on school climate in U.S. schools as an aggregate, and also at the individual state level. Data obtained from 217 respondents participating in the national survey who, at the time of the national survey, were also attending schools in Michigan, indicated that the school climate in Michigan schools was not safe for many students who are lesbian, gay, biattractional, and transgender (Kosciw et al., 2008). Demographic descriptors of the 217 respondents in the Michigan survey indicated that 100% identified as lesbian, gay, biattractional, or transgender; 72% White, 9% Native American, 6% Latino, 4% African American, and 3% Asian/Pacific Islander; 94% attended public school, and 22% were in urban and 46% in suburban communities. Major findings derived from the Michigan respondents as they relate to attractional minority students indicate: (a) 97% reported hearing “high frequencies” of homoprejudice remarks (e.g., “faggot,” “dyke,” and “that’s so gay”) with little or no intervention on behalf of attractional minority students by teachers and staff; (b) 21% reported regularly hearing homoprejudice remarks from school staff and 21% reported regularly hearing negative remarks from school staff about a student’s gender expression; (c) 45% reported physical harassment in school due to their attractional orientation and 31% due to their gender expression; and (d) 21%

reported being physically assaulted in school because of their attractional orientation and 13% because of their gender expression. Of those who reported experiencing verbal and physical harassment and assault due to attractional orientation and gender expression, 72% reported feeling unsafe at their schools, 34% reported skipping class, and 32% reported skipping an entire day of school in the past month due to feeling unsafe. Additionally, attractional minority students experiencing a negative school climate also experienced diminished academic outcomes as a result of skipping classes and missing days of school for fear of harassment. A final note, LGBT-related resources and supports that could improve school climates (e.g., safe school policies, supportive staff, literature and curricula, GSAs) were inaccessible to the majority of students in Michigan schools.

The *2005 National School Climate Survey* (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006) and the *Report on School Climate in Michigan Survey* (GLSEN, 2005b) discussed teachers' perspectives in relation to attractional minority students but did not mention the role of school counselors, school counselors' perspectives, nor their ability or lack thereof to affect school climate change on behalf of this student population. The *2007 National School Climate Survey* (Kosciw et al., 2008) presented neither teachers' or school counselors' perspectives, only the perspectives of students. Therefore, a desired outcome of this current study is to bring the voice of school counselors into the discussion regarding meeting the needs of attractional minority students.

In summary, indicators of a negative school climate are verbal harassment that goes unchallenged; heterosexist texts and curricula which excludes positive images of gay and lesbian persons; attractional minority teachers, counselors, and staff, who could provide role models for attractional minority youth, must themselves remain in hiding;

and the lack of positively appropriate literature in school libraries that could assist in the developmental process of attractional minority students. Homoprejudiced remarks by students and/or teachers that are supported in a heterosexist and homoprejudice school climate can have a deleterious psychological and emotional effect on attractional minority students and serve as precursors to more serious acts of victimization.

Victimization

An estimated 2.9 million gay and lesbian students and an unknown number of heteroattractional students who are perceived to be gay are victims or at-risk for becoming victims of peer harassment (Klein, 2006). The Safe Schools Coalition of Washington State is a coalition comprised of 34 public agencies and private organizations whose primary task is to create a safe environment in all Washington public schools for attractional minority youth, their families, and attractional minority educators. The Coalition's 1995 study documented 27 anti-gay incidents of violence in Washington Public Schools against attractional minority students, including sexual assaults and six incidents of gang rapes. Of the gang rapes, two of the victims were urinated on, one target was vomited on, one target was ejaculated on, and one teen's hand was broken. Anti-gay slurs (e.g., faggot, dyke, queer, etc.) were used by the perpetrators while committing the assaults and rapes. The incidents involved both male and females with 25% of the victims being ethnic minorities. The attacks and constant harassment resulted in four youths dropping out of school, a suicide, and attempted suicides being reported. The qualitative study conducted by The Safe Schools Coalition of Washington State (1999) was grimmer than the 1995 study, reporting 111 documented incidents of anti-gay harassment resulting

in 10 students dropping out of school, 10 students attempting suicide, and 2 students committing suicide. In both the 1995 and 1999 studies, victimization occurred at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, with the youngest victim being 6 years old, and the perpetrators outnumbering the victim 2.5 to 1. A similar study conducted by the Austin [Texas] Human Rights Commission (1995) corroborated the Washington State studies, reporting that gay and lesbian youth in that city shared experiences of being beaten, spat on, and threatened for being gay and lesbian or perceived as gay or lesbian.

Klein (2006) contends that evidence in the high profile school shootings that took place between 1996 and 2001 suggests that the perpetrators of the school shootings were victims themselves of homophobia bullying and gay and gender-related verbal harassment in which they were called gay or were implicated as being homosexual. Data from an ethnographic study conducted in the United Kingdom on sixth grade students (ages 10–11) suggested that heterosexist and homophobic harassment expressed through name-calling, teasing, and bullying, occurred as early as primary school (Renold, 2002).

A study conducted by D'Augelli et al. (2002) on the incidence of victimization directly related to sexual orientation and its impact on the mental health of sexual minority students in high school yielded troubling results. More than 50% had been verbally abused, nearly 25% had been threatened with violence, more than 10% had been physically attacked, and over 20% had been threatened with the disclosure of their sexual orientation (also known as being “outed”). D'Augelli's (2006) study on the mental health among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth identified six “lifetime victimization experiences” (p. 45) along with their reported frequencies of occurrence.

Eighty-one percent of the youth reported experiencing verbal abuse (54% experiencing three or more incidences); 38% reported threats of physical attacks (14% having been threatened with violence three or more times); 22% reported having objects thrown at them; 15% reported assaults (punched, kicked, or beaten); 6% reported threats with weapons; and 16% reported having been sexually assaulted. Further results from the D'Augelli study indicated that male participants had been threatened with violence more often than females; peers were identified as the most common assailants, followed by parents, with fathers being more verbally abusive toward sons than toward daughters. More mothers were perpetrators of physical attacks than fathers, with the attacks being directed at daughters more than sons. Additionally, the youth in this same report expressed fear of verbal harassment and attacks at school from other students. Finally, D'Augelli (2002) and D'Augelli et al. (2006) found that youth who had early awareness, self-identification as LGBT, gender atypical behavior and expression, and disclosed their same-gender attraction to others, reported more direct victimization due to attractional orientation over the lifespan. All of the previously mentioned studies are consistent with the national study conducted by GLSEN (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006; Kosciw et al., 2008) on school climate in the U.S. The in-school shooting death of Larry King, an openly gay eighth grade student at the E. O. Green Junior High School in Oxnard, California, committed by a 14-year-old fellow student named Brandon McInerney, is another horrific, sad, and tragic example of a school being a deadly place for an attractional minority student (Setoodeh, 2008).

The deleterious effects of the daily victimization of attractional minority students or those perceived as such can be clearly understood in the tragic deaths of two 11-year-

old boys. On April 6, 2009, 11-year-old Carl J. Walker-Hoover of Springfield, Massachusetts, committed suicide and the suicide was attributed to constant harassment and bullying. Carl, a middle school student and Boy Scout who played on the football, basketball, and soccer teams, did not identify as gay but was constantly taunted and called gay. Ten days later in Decatur, Georgia, 11-year-old Jaheem Herrera, a student who had all A's and B's on his report card, also committed suicide. Jaheem's suicide was attributed to constantly being taunted and called gay by bullies (Tresniowski, Driscoll, Thomas, Helling, & Breuer, 2009).

GLSEN (Kosciw et al., 2008) surveyed students regarding the school climate in U.S. schools. The major findings of the study indicate that (a) 73.6% of the teens reported frequently hearing homophobia remarks made in school by students; (b) 63% of the students reported hearing homophobia remarks made in school from teachers or other school staff; (c) 86.2% of the students reported being verbally harassed in school due to their attractional orientation and 66.5 had been verbally harassed in school due to gender expression; (d) 44.1% reported being physically harassed (e.g. shoving, pushing) in school due to attractional orientation and 30.4% due to gender expression; (e) 22.1% report being physically assaulted due to attractional orientation and 14.2% due to gender expression; (f) 9 in 10 reported hearing "that's so gay" or "you're so gay" in which gay is referred to as something derogatory; (g) attractional orientation and gender expression were cited as being the most prominent reason for frequent harassment at school with 90% of the students reporting harassment due to their attractional orientation; and (h) 54.8% of the respondents reported that their personal property (e.g., car, clothes, books) were stolen or deliberately damaged at school.

The impact of victimization on social interactions and relations were also assessed in the GLSEN (2008) study. Their findings indicated that 87.6% of the respondents reported being victims of “relational aggression” in which they were the targets of vicious rumors and lies for the purpose of damaging social relationships with peers. Also regarding relational aggression, 55.4% of the respondents reported “cyberbullying” in which they received threatening and harassing e-mails and/or text messages.

Comparing the *National School Climate Surveys* (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006; Kosciw et al., 2008) reporting the findings of 2005 and 2007 provide some positive trends. Biased language decreased slightly from 2005 (76%) to 2007 (73.6%). Intervention by staff, upon hearing biased language, slightly increased from 2005 (16.5%) to 2007 (17.6%) and feeling unsafe due to gender expression slightly decreased from 2005 (40.7%) to 2007 (38.4%). However, there are also some reasons for disappointment when comparing the two surveys. Homoprejudice expressions (e.g., “that’s so gay”) increased from 2005 (89%) to 2007 (92%), and feeling unsafe due to attractional orientation significantly increased from 2005 (40.7%) to 2007 (60.8%). However, there were no significant changes from 2001 to the present, regarding verbal harassment and assault relative to gender expression. The findings of other studies on the victimization of attractional minority students in school are congruent with the GLSEN findings. Charles (2000) interviewed 190 lesbian and gay young adults regarding their school experiences and found that 40% of those bullied because of their attractional orientation attempted suicide or harmed themselves. In this same study, many dropped out of school and 1 in 6 suffered posttraumatic stress disorder later in life.

GLSEN's report (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006) on school climate also assessed the attitudes of teachers regarding the victimization of attractional minority students. Sixty four percent of the middle school teachers and 53% of the high school teachers surveyed described bullying as a serious problem at their schools. In addition, 73% of the teachers strongly agree that they have a responsibility to ensure that the educational milieu is a safe learning environment for attractional minority students, and 47% of those teachers believe that anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies would assist in making the environment safer.

The GLSEN study (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006) surveyed teachers and students and reported their perspectives regarding the safety of attractional minority students in U.S. schools. However, the GLSEN study provided no perspective from school counselors. It is the intent of this study to assist in filling that lack of perspective from school counselors regarding attractional minority students in Michigan schools.

Social Isolation and Alienation

"No [hu]man is an island, entire of itself" (John Donne, 1572–1631). This statement can be understood to mean that human beings do not thrive when they are isolated from others but are interconnected to the extent that one person's demise diminishes everyone. Regarding adolescents in general not wanting to be an island, Ginsberg (1998) states succinctly, "The need to belong is the quintessential adolescent imperative" (p. 1). Opportunities to talk with family, significant adults, and peers and to share thoughts and feelings with them are common needs for all adolescents, especially

attractional minority adolescents who desire support and acceptance (Omizo, Omizo, & Okamoto, 1998).

School should be a place where students learn how to appropriately interact with peers and adults (Marinoble, 1998) and daily attendance at school provides students with lessons on acceptance, sharing, conflict resolution, and collaborating with others. School is generally recognized as “the predominant setting for adolescents’ socialization” (Pollock, 2006, p. 31). As previously mentioned, the heteroattractionalized context of U.S. public schools provides an atmosphere for positive social interactions with peers and adults for heteroattractional youth because heteroattractiveness is in sync with what is considered normal and praiseworthy. It also reflects what is expected and accepted in society and in the communities that public schools serve. However, the explicit heteroattractionalized context of school with its implicit (and sometimes explicit) anti-homoattractiveness nature can be a lonely, alienating, and hostile milieu for many attractional minority youth who in fear feel the need to hide and conceal their authentic selves. D’Augelli and Hershberger (1993) studied 194 lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, ages ranging from 15 to 21 who attended programs in 14 community centers. This study reported that 46% of the gay youth who “came out” to friends lost at least one friend due to their revealed attractional orientation. Marsiglio (1993) conducted a national survey of heteroattractional young people whose ages ranged from 15 to 19 regarding their attitudes about homosexual activity and having gays as friends. Results of the study found that 89% of the male respondents held negative stereotypes against gays, describing sex between two men as “disgusting,” and therefore were unlikely to have gays as friends.

Youth are taught from a very early age to be honest and authentic (i.e., “Be yourself” and “March to the beat of your own drum”). However, when students, in fear of their same-gender attraction being discovered, have to live dishonestly through concealing their same-gender attraction, guilt and shame can become both emotionally and psychologically dominating. Furthermore, because attractional minority youth fear being their authentic selves, the lack of authenticity (i.e., living a lie) becomes pervasive in all of their social relationships thus, leading to the development of a deceptive self (Cooley, 1998; Hetrick & Martin, 1987; Reed, 1992; Tasker & McCann, 1999; Zera, 1992). This deceptive self can lead to attractional minority youth withdrawing from many social events with peers resulting in increased feelings of social and psychological isolation and alienation (Tharinger & Wells, 2000). Feelings of isolation and alienation are exacerbated when family relationships are disrupted after the student discloses to his or her family that he or she is same-gender attracted.

While some attractional minority youth discover total acceptance by their families, others experience total rejection which can be manifested in the school setting through isolation, poor academic performance, lack of concentration, depression, and unexplained anger and hostility (Marinoble, 1998). Furthermore, feelings of isolation and invisibility may increase when school curricula make no positive reference to LGBT individuals and their historical as well as contemporary contributions to U.S. society and the world. In conclusion, the school experience for most attractional minority students involves being educated to remain invisible (Dunham, 1989). Social isolation and alienation can lead to attractional minority students becoming disenchanted and

disenfranchised with school possibly resulting in total withdrawal from academic pursuits.

School Attendance and Dropping Out

The Massachusetts Department of Education (as cited in Ireland, 2000) questioned approximately 4,000 high school students and determined that self-identified attractional minority students were seven times more likely than other students to have skipped school due to feelings of being unsafe. The dropout rate among attractional minority students is disproportionately high compared to their heteroattractional peers. Bart (1998) estimated the drop-out rate for attractional minority students to be three times the national average.

A study conducted in Seattle, Washington, by the Seattle Commission on Children and Youth (1988) estimated that 40% of the youth who dropped out of public schools and became “street children” in urban cities were youth who identified as lesbian, gay, and biattractional. A major study conducted by Virginia Uribe (1994) in one of the 10 largest school districts in the United States found that the dropout rate for gay and lesbian students “is disproportionately high in comparison to their statistical incidence in the general population” (Uribe, 1994, p. 11).

Schwartz (1994) summarized the findings from several studies conducted by the federal government and private organizations regarding youth dropping out of school. In Schwartz’s listing of “Who is at risk for dropping out?” and “Reasons why youth drop out,” there was no mention of gay and lesbian students or students struggling with attractional orientation issues as being at-risk for dropping out. However, Schwartz did

mention that one of the reasons that youth dropped out of school is that they did not feel safe in school; nevertheless, she failed to indicate the reason(s) for the students not feeling safe. Could the issue of attractional orientation have been one of the reasons for students not feeling safe in the Schwartz summary?

The 1993-94 drop out study reported by the School District of the City of Saginaw, Michigan (Claus & Quimper, 1995) gave 15 reasons why students dropped out of school. Once again, as in the Schwartz summary, there was no mention of attractional orientation issues or harassment of peers due to attractional orientation as possible factors influencing dropping out. A matter of fact, the School District of Saginaw reported that no one dropped out of school due to poor relationships with peers.

According to the National School Climate Surveys (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006; Kosciw et al., 2008) and McFarland and Dupuis (2001), attractional minority students, when compared with the general secondary school population, were (a) five times more likely to report skipping school in the previous month for fear of their safety than heteroattractional students; (b) twice as likely to report that they were planning not to finish high school or go to college; and (c) if frequently victimized, had a grade point average a half of grade lower than those who experienced less harassment. Furthermore, students who experienced frequent harassment based on attractional orientation and gender expression reported grade point averages significantly lower than students who experienced less harassment. In conclusion, when students do not feel safe in school, they are more likely to avoid an unsafe environment either through truancy or dropping out altogether.

School Curriculum and Resources

In a heteroattractionalized school context, the identity of heteroattractional students is constantly reinforced through the school curriculum, the media resources used as teaching tools in-class; library resources; and school administrators, teachers, staff, and guest speakers who all serve as heteroattractional role models. Furthermore, curricula and course content are primarily taught by heteroattractional instructors who teach as though they are only instructing heteroattractional students (Fontaine, 1998). An instructor teaching as though he or she is teaching only to heteroattractional students is problematic because, in such an instance, the heteroattractional viewpoint will most likely be the only viewpoint presented, with the possibility of saying words that may be damaging to those of other attractional identities. As homoattractional forms of identity, behavior, and relationships are ignored in curricula and classroom discussions, an assumed heteroattractional paradigm is perpetuated (Ginsberg, 1998). Telljohann and Price's (1993) examination of adolescents' life experiences as they relate to secondary school personnel indicated that 50% of the female and 37% of the male respondents reported that classroom discussions on homoattractuality were "handled negatively" to "pretty negatively," "briefly," "not very well," and with "no response by the teacher" (p. 49). Unfortunately, in most schools there is a wall of silence that prevents any positive reference to attractional minority issues (Bailey & Phariss, 1996; Rofes, 1989). For example, history textbooks make little or no reference to the contributions that attractional minority individuals have made in this country and the world. Sex education classes rarely, if ever, make positive mention of same-gender affection. Most school

library resources do not provide affirming and accurate information on homoattractiveness. And very few public schools will allow guest speakers who are gay, lesbian, biattractiveness, transgender, parents who are gay or lesbian, or parents of attractiveness minority youth, to come as guest speakers and share their experiences. Appropriate and accurate information along with positive role models will assist youth, gay or nongay, in developing into a fully functioning person (Jennings, 1995). Any segment of the school population that does not receive the needed resources for academic, social, vocational, and personal development is not receiving an appropriate education.

Powell (1987) wrote on “Homosexual Behavior and the School Counselor” over 20 years ago and posits that school counselors should “take the lead” in choosing literature on gay issues to be placed in school and local libraries as well as educating “officials” as to the need for this literature (pp. 206–207). When students in general and attractiveness minority students in particular do not receive accurate and appropriate information from an educational institution, there is the potential for students to become at-risk for many personal problems and social ills. In conclusion, the literature suggests that traditional public schools are doing little towards contributing to the positive identity development of attractiveness minority students which can increase these students’ propensity to engage in at-risk behaviors.

Attractiveness Minority Youth At-Risk

Research indicates that attractiveness minority youth are disproportionately at-risk for many personal and social ills as compared to their heteroattractiveness peers.

Attractional minority youth are at-risk for suicide, substance abuse, family conflict and homelessness, and sexually transmitted diseases.

Suicide

Attractional minority youth are among the most likely to report suicidal ideation, plans, and attempts (S. T. Russell, 2003), and suicide is considered the number one cause of death in U.S. gay and lesbian adolescents (Marinoble, 1998). Gibson's (1989) study of teen suicides, funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, found that suicide is the leading cause of death among attractional minority youth, they are 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heteroattractional peers, and attractional minority youth "may comprise 30 percent of completed youth suicides annually" (p. 110). The statistics in the Gibson study were once debated due to criticism that the samples consisted of self-identified gay and lesbian youth who were opportunistic and nonrepresentative and the study offered no comparison group or control group (S. T. Russell, 2003). However, the statistics Gibson cites regarding the suicide rate of attractional minority youth were later corroborated by the findings in subsequent studies (D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Rotheram-Borus, Rosario, et al., 1994; Schneider et al., 1989). The results of a national study on adolescent attractional orientation and suicide risk (Russell & Joyner, 2001) indicates that suicidal ideation was reported by the respondents to have occurred between 48 and 76%, while 29 to 42% of the respondents had attempted suicide.

Kourany (1987) suggested several risk contexts as causative factors leading to the high incidence of suicidality among attractional minority youth. The risks contexts

include “adolescent intrapsychic distress” (e.g., feelings of isolation, rejection, low self-esteem, identity confusion); socioenvironmental pressures such as external distress manifested in difficulty to communicate with peers and at school; psychiatric disorders (e.g., depression, character disorder); media exposure to suicide as a viable option; and drug and alcohol abuse. Other risk factors related to suicide among attractional minority students include a hostile school environment (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Kosciw et al., 2008; Price & Telljohann, 1991); multiple minority status (e.g., homoattractional and Latino/a, homoattractional, African American, and female) (Lebson, 2002); verbal and physical abuse attributed to attractional orientation (Savin-Williams, 1994); gender nonconformity; early awareness of homoattractional feelings; disclosure to family and friends; and the combined influence of lack of family support and lack of self-acceptance (Hershberger & D’Augelli, 1995).

However, Shaffer, Fisher, Parides, and Gould (1995) challenge the claim that suicidal ideation and suicide completions are the direct result of stigmatization and gay youth being unsupported. Shaffer et al. seem to purport that “suicide is most common in individuals with a psychiatric illness, rather than in individuals with a ‘hard life’” (p. 71). Furthermore, Shaffer et al. suggest that the suicide rate among attractional minority youth is not “significantly” higher than heteroattractional youth, nor do the risk factors for suicide among attractional minority youth differ when compared to those indicated for heteroattractional youth. The perspective posited by Shaffer et al. is also shared by Safren and Heimberg (1999), who, in comparing factors related to suicide between attractional minority and heteroattractional adolescents, suggested that other environmental factors (e.g., lack of social support, coping skills, stress related to coming out to family or being

discovered) which can be identified and changed through prevention and intervention, played a more salient role in suicidality than attractional orientation itself. Nonetheless, most published research suggests that the primary struggle that potentially leads to suicide is not the issue of same-gender attraction that students are experiencing, but living in a homophobic, homo-negative, and homo-hostile society that discriminates against and stigmatizes LGBT persons while failing to recognize that a substantial number of its youth have a gay or lesbian orientation. Savin-Williams (1994) referred to the factor most affecting gay adolescent suicide as the “debilitating effects of growing up in a homophobic society” (p. 266).

Substance Abuse

Many gay and lesbian youth will not choose suicide as a way of escaping the harsh realities of trying to develop a positive homoattractional identity in a school environment and a society that is homophobic, homohostile, and heterosexist (Bailey & Pharis, 1996; Johnson, 1996). However, there are those who choose other self-destructive behaviors including the use of illicit substances, in an attempt to cope with isolation, alienation, and internalized homophobia. Research indicates that attractional minority youth have a greater propensity to use and abuse cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs than their heteroattractional peers. Rosario, Hunter, and Gwadz (1997) conducted a study examining substance use and abuse among attractional minority youth in New York City. Their findings indicate that females were 6.4 times more likely to abuse substances than their heteroattractional female peers; furthermore, gay and biattractional males were 4.4 times more likely to use drugs than their heteroattractional male peers.

There are many reasons why attractional minority youth use and abuse alcohol and other drugs. Leading influences in the abuse of substances are internalized homophobia (the negative view that attractional minority youth have of themselves due to negative external influences) and externalized homophobia (the negative view that society acts out on attractional minorities in general). Other causative factors that lead to the abuse of alcohol and/or drugs among attractional minority youth include attempts to (a) defer feelings associated with self-hatred, low self-esteem, low self-image, and rejection by family and peers; (b) be accepted by heteroattractive peers that also encourage drinking and substance abuse; (c) decrease anxiety associated with the stigma felt in developing a homoattractive identity (Kus, 1988); (d) discharge sexual impulses more comfortably; (e) decrease feelings of depression and isolation; and (f) escape the pain of exclusion and ridicule. Additionally, although the Internet has provided an electronic means for social networking among all youth (e.g., chat rooms, instant messaging), there is often a lack of age-appropriate social outlets for attractional minority youth to meet face-to-face. Therefore, the secluded nature of the gay bar and its importance as a social center may become a social milieu for many attractional minority youth (Jordan, 2000). Unfortunately, the role models for many attractional minority youth who are just coming into the stage of integrating and synthesizing their homoattractive identity are attractional minority adults who use and abuse substances. Abuse of alcohol and other substances has been associated with many life problems including depression, which can ultimately lead to suicide (Wu et al., 2004).

Family Conflict and Homelessness

The family serves as the primary socializing institution for the transmission of morals and values, for providing psychological and emotional support, as well as being the primary means for supplying basic physical needs (e.g., food, shelter, sustenance) (Mallon, 1999). Often, attractional minority youth face major family disruption upon disclosure of their same-gender attraction or deciding to live openly as gay, lesbian, biattractional, or as a transgender person. The results of a qualitative study conducted by Telljohan and Price (1993) examining adolescent homoattractional life experiences indicated that 42% of the female and 30% of the male interviewees reported that their families negatively responded to their disclosure of their same-gender attractional orientation. Another qualitative study conducted by Mufioz-Plaza, Quinn, and Rounds (2002) indicated that during high school, most participants reported not having come out to their parents because family members would have offered only limited love and care, limited accurate information, and limited financial support. In this same study, one gay male interviewee stated that his primary fear of disclosure to his parents was being disowned, “having the doors changed, having the locks changed literally” (p. 56).

The negative response from parents upon learning of their child’s same-gender attractional orientation is sometimes fueled by their own personal feelings of guilt and fear, causing them to question as to whether their parenting skills were to blame (Telljohann & Price, 1993). In some instances, when youth “come out” to parents, the parents deny their claims with statements such as “You just haven’t met the right guy/girl yet.” Such a response is problematic because when attractional minority youths’

disclosures are strongly and/or consistently denied by family members, then discussion on the subject of attractional orientation eventually ceases. This hampers a positive relationship between parent and child (Pisha, 1996). In addition, some families simply refuse to discuss the issue of attractional orientation, resulting in possible psychological harm due to emotional ostracism of the adolescent who is now living in an environment that does not even acknowledge a major component of his or her being. In many instances, the emotional ostracism is so great that attractional minority youth will remove themselves from the home based on not feeling loved, accepted, or welcomed.

Attractional minority youth from families with very conservative religious and moral persuasions who believe that same-gender affection is sinful, are often placed in “reparative” or “sexual orientation conversion therapy” (psychotherapy or counseling aimed at eliminating or suppressing same-gender sexual desires) or “ex-gay” or “transformational ministries” (the use of religion to change attractional orientation) (Just the Facts Coalition, 2008; Karlake, 2007). Attractional minority youth whose families do not place them in therapies to “set the kid straight,” often force them out and push them away from their homes and into the streets where day-to-day survival becomes their preoccupation. These homeless youth may relocate to larger cities and find “houses” where other attractional minority youth have been taken off of the streets and provided food and shelter. Often, these houses are headed by older gay or lesbian persons who, depending on many factors, will either guide the ostracized youth in pathways that will lead to education, independence, and a productive life, or to a life of partying, nonproductivity, and sexual promiscuity. Due to limited education, these runaway or pushed away youth may be forced into prostitution with its potential dangers of physical

and sexual assaults as well as the constant threat of exposure to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS (Marinoble, 1998; Savin-Williams, 1994).

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

A great number of attractional minority youth are able to accept their same-gender attraction and ultimately synthesize and integrate that identity into all aspects of their lives. Not all attractional minority youth, however, accept their homoattractional orientation but, instead, try to deny or suppress it by becoming hypersexual with the opposite gender, thereby potentially heightening the likelihood of exposure to all types of drug-resistant sexually transmitted diseases including syphilis, gonorrhea, and HIV/AIDS. Other attractional minority youth, upon feeling unsupported in their search for understanding of their newly discovered attractional orientation, will seek out supportive adult relationships through impersonal casual sex which can also increase exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (Tellhohann & Price, 1993). Research indicates that many adults who are HIV positive were possibly infected during their adolescent years (GLSTN, 1994-1996). It is important to recognize, however, that not all attractional minority youth take the path of substance abuse, dropping out of school, sexual promiscuity, and other self-defeating behaviors when coping with their newly discovered same-gender attractional orientation. There are attractional minority youth who are resilient and choose a path of survival, productivity, and excellence.

Attractional Minority Youth and Resilience

A great number of attractional minority youth develop into intelligent, emotionally strong, and productive adults. A substantial amount of literature, much of it previously reviewed in this chapter, discusses the developmental issues of attractional minority youth. In most instances, the literature is written from a problem-focused perspective, focusing on the problems that attractional minority youth face such as negatively influenced homoattractional identity development, hostile school environments, running away, prostitution, substance abuse, familial and peer rejection, and suicide, which have been summarized above. Due to the majority of the literature being problem-focused, it is easy to assume and believe that all attractional minority youth follow a singular developmental trajectory that leads to personal ills and dysfunctional behaviors. However, this does not appear to be the reality for all attractional minority youth. There are many attractional minority youth who are well adjusted and receive unconditional love and support from their families, schools, and communities (Macgillivray, 2000).

Unfortunately, there is a paucity of research-based literature that discusses attractional minority youth from a strength-based perspective: focusing on their strengths, competent social skills, coping skills, and resilience. Rhee (2004) conducted a study comparing the resilience of attractional minority students and heteroattractional students who were recent high school graduates and had been victims of school violence. The study involved exploring a possible linkage between school violence victimization and students' ability to cope, seek and use social support, and engage in healthy behaviors.

Results indicated that attractional minority students experienced greater amounts of victimization and exhibited a greater degree of resilience and coping skills than their heteroattractional peers.

Webb's (2004) study of a national sample of young women who self-identified as being attracted to other women found that they were highly resilient at all stages of attractional identity development based on the results of several inventories assessing childhood gender role behavior, self-identity, daily hassles, and resilience using the Washington Resilience Scale. This same study found no correlation between pre-adolescent feelings of differentness and resilience level. Dubeau and Emenheiser (1999) discuss adolescents becoming aware of their attractional identity and suggest strategies that individuals, schools, organizations, and community resources can use to help build the resilience in attractional minority youth that will assist them in the coming out process.

Sanders and Kroll (2000) take a family systems approach when discussing resilience relative to gay and lesbian youth and their families. Sanders and Kroll suggest that when a child exhibits gender atypical behaviors and/or expresses the possibility of being transsexual, gay, or lesbian to his or her family, then the entire family along with the gay youth must be empowered to accept and work with all of the possibilities presented. Sanders and Kroll also provide strategies and suggestions that can foster resilience in gay and lesbian youth and their families.

Anderson's (1998) study of self-identified gay, urban, middle-class White males in their late adolescence, the majority of whom were recruited from support groups for attractional minority youth, provides examples of attractional minority youth who

demonstrated (a) self-esteem levels greater than youth overall (with non-White attractional minority youth scoring the highest); (b) competent social skills and good judgment in seeking out and utilizing those significant others who would be safe and supportive (e.g., parents, significant adults, gay and nongay peers) and sensing the appropriate time to seek such support; (c) reframing their attractional orientation by viewing it as a source of strength instead of a source of shame; (d) that their struggle was not with their same-gender attractional orientation but with trying to manage that identity in the midst of societal homophobia; and (e) the development of “crisis management skills that non-gay youth may not achieve until later in life” (p. 67). This same study also noted that youth of color reported that experiences with racism assisted them in dealing with discrimination associated with attractional orientation. Anderson’s study, however, has limitations due to the use of a nonrandom population. Therefore, he notes that the findings cannot be generalized to all gay youth, particularly youth of color. Nevertheless, the study does seem to suggest that, from a strengths perspective, “gay youth have insights into life-management skills that can be helpful to other young people” (p. 69).

There is a growing thread in the literature that presents attractional minority students from a strengths perspective. However, in many instances, the strengths of attractional minority students are not recognized until late adolescence when the students are at the end of high school, out of high school and attending college, or have transitioned from school to the world of work. The Anderson (1998) study indicates that the majority of participants was part of a support group and had strong and long-standing support from parents as well as support from other significant adults and nongay peers. The majority of the research, however, seems to suggest that such support is not typical

and not generally realized at the middle and high school educational levels. Also, the majority of the research appears to suggest that most attractional minority youth lack support and support groups with whom they can meet to receive encouragement. Therefore, the focus of this study continues to be on school counselors meeting the developmental needs of attractional minority students in Michigan schools who are most likely to receive little to no support from family, significant adults, and nongay peers. Unsupported attractional minority students genuinely speak to the need for school counselors to be able to competently assist them with their developmental needs.

School Counselors and Attractional Minority Students

Researchers indicate that attractional minority students and those students questioning their attractional orientation could possibly be the largest minority group represented in many schools (Cooley, 1998; Fontaine, 1998). In addition, attractional minority students may be one of the most persecuted groups in the school environment facing negative attitudes from peers, school administrators, teachers, and staff (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Stone, 2003), and possibly one of the most underserved student populations in the entire educational system. The literature previously reviewed in this study suggests that as a result of being verbally, emotionally, and physically victimized, attractional minority students may develop feelings of self-hatred, low-self esteem and low self-worth, which places them at a greater risk for poor academic performance, social isolation, depression, dropping out of school, running away, and suicide (Harris, 1997; Rivers, 2000; Savin-Williams, 1994). In addition, the literature provides supporting evidence that, not only do attractional minority students experience

harassment from their peers, but also from teachers and school personnel who actively or passively engage in the harassment (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Rivers, 2000). It is during this time of adolescent attractional identity development, that they need understanding and support from professional school counselors (Price & Telljohann, 1991; vanWormer & McKinney, 2003) especially since school counselors may be the first line of contact for attractional minority students to disclose to or explore the possibility of a nonheteroattractional orientation (Bailey & Phariss, 1996).

School counselors are in a strategic position to serve as advocates for attractional minority students, helping to create a safe and equitable learning milieu for all students to survive and develop into mature and healthy adults (Monier, 2000). Stone (2003) contends that school counselors, who are trained in communicating and developing interpersonal relationships, should be socially active, serve as agents for change, and address negative educational practices that can have a deleterious effect on students.

School Counselors' Attitudes Regarding Attractional Minority Students

The counselor's attitude regarding homoattractionality plays a major role in the adolescent's attractional identity development (T. G. Russell, 1989). Researchers suggest that, in general, smaller populations only mirror the attitudes of the society at large. Therefore, the negative attitudes that attractional minority youth face in educational institutions are similar to or the same as those experienced by adult homoattractional persons living in a homophobia, homo-hostile, and heterosexist society (Stone, 2003; Weiler, 2004). Sears (1991) surveyed 142 middle and high school counselors in South Carolina and found that nearly two thirds of those surveyed held negative attitudes or

feelings about homoattractiveness. GLSTN's (1994-1996) *Just the Facts: On Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students and Schools* provided data on school counselors and attractiveness minority students. The findings indicated that two thirds of the school counselors in the study held negative feelings toward gay and lesbian people.

More recently, Monier's (2000) study of school counselors in Washington State found that the majority of them held "relatively" positive beliefs about attractiveness minority students and were more likely to perform covert or private acts of assistance to those students (e.g., individual counseling). However, they were much less willing to engage in overt gay affirming behaviors (e.g., initiate a support group, advocate for attractiveness minority students in staff meetings). Satcher and Leggett (2007) assessed homonegativity among 215 female professional school counselors in a single Southern state (data from the 13 male participants was excluded due to the sample being too small to make gender comparisons). The results of the Satcher and Leggett study found the lowest measure of homonegativity among professional school counselors who (a) had a gay or lesbian friend or personal acquaintance; (b) had participated in training regarding gay and lesbian issues; (c) had worked with a client(s) who was gay, lesbian, or questioning his or her attractiveness orientation; (d) reported no monthly church attendance; (e) were African American; and (f) who identified as Democrats.

Bailey and Phariss (1996) purport that some school counselors, due to their own prejudices and biases regarding homoattractiveness, do harm to attractiveness minority youth by refusing to acknowledge or support their exploration of same-gender attraction and/or by providing attractiveness minority students with inaccurate information, thereby reinforcing myths about homoattractiveness. Research suggests that school counselors

need to undergo self-examination and challenge and confront their own heteroattractiveness (Pollock, 2006; K. E. Robinson, 1994) because when a school counselor's negative or ambivalent feelings about same-gender attraction have not been resolved, then the counselor could possibly meet attractional minority students with criticism, inaccurate information, condemnation, disapproval, and rejection, all of which can be damaging to the youth (Gibson, 1989). Professional school counselors must realize that their attitudes play a key role in being able to objectively and competently work with attractional minority students as well as educating others on attractional minority issues (T. G. Russell, 1989).

School Counselors' Experiences Working With Attractional Minority Students

School counselors regularly come into contact with self-identified attractional minority students and those who are questioning their attractional orientation (Cooley, 1998). Price and Telljohann (1991) surveyed 289 middle and high school counselors and found that 71% of the respondents reported having counseled at least one attractional minority student during their careers. In spite of the inevitability of school counselors having contact with at least one attractional minority student, research suggests that school counselors, in general, are unwilling to address issues of attractional orientation with these students. A study done by Sears (1991) surveying 142 middle and high school counselors in South Carolina found that a great majority of the school counselors would not choose to counsel students on matters of attractional orientation. Interestingly, in the Price and Telljohann study, 16% of the school counselors reported that there were no attractional minority students in their schools and 63% reported that no more than 1 to

5% of the students attending school were homoattractional. A report from school counselors that there are no attractional minority students in their schools gives a strong indication that there are attractional minority students who are afraid to “come out,” are living in fear of being discovered, and are attending school in a climate that do not respect diversity nor welcome it.

Fontaine (1998) surveyed 101 elementary, junior, and senior high school counselors in Pennsylvania and found that 51% of the junior and high school respondents reported that they had worked with at least one student who was questioning his or her attractional orientation and 42% reported having worked directly with at least one self-identified gay or lesbian student. Fontaine also reported that among the elementary school counselors, 21% reported awareness of students in their schools who were either self-identified as gay or lesbian or were questioning their attractional orientation.

The Fontaine (1998) study differed from the Price and Telljohann (1991) study in that Fontaine included elementary school counselors who reported having “seen” a total of nine fifth and sixth grade students who were questioning their attractional identities. Monier (2000) surveyed elementary, middle, high school, and alternative school counselors in Washington State regarding their experiences of counseling attractional minority students within the preceding 2-year time period. The school counselors surveyed included both members and nonmembers of the Washington School Counselor Association. Results indicated that 73.3% of the respondents reported that they had talked with at least one student about attractional orientation issues during their career and felt “relatively” comfortable doing so. Approximately 27% reported that they had never addressed issues of attractional orientation with a student. Regarding counseling self-

identified attractional minority students, more than half of the respondents (58.6%) indicated that they had not counseled any students, while 24.1% reported having counseling one or two students, and 17.3% reported having counseled three or more attractional minority students. Finally, regarding counseling students who were questioning their attractional orientation, Monier reported that 46.5% of the counselors surveyed indicated that they had not counseled any students questioning their attractional orientation, while 38.9% reported counseling one or two students, and 14.6% reported counseling three or more students questioning their attractional orientation. In conclusion, the data strongly suggest that school counselors will inevitably work with some attractional minority students during their careers (consciously or unconsciously). Therefore, there is a need to ensure that school counselors receive training that will adequately prepare them for the task of meeting the developmental needs of attractional minority students.

School Counselors' Training Related to Attractional Minority Students

Research assessing school counselors' beliefs about their competence to work with attractional minority students is limited. The literature that exists gives a strong indication that the majority of school counselors do not feel competent and comfortable working with students with issues of attractional orientation. For instance, Sears' (1991) study of 142 middle and high school counselors in South Carolina found that the majority of those surveyed reported not feeling prepared to work with attractional minority youth due to lack of training. Price and Telljohann's (1991) study of 289 middle and high school counselors discovered that the majority of the respondents reported obtaining

information about same-gender attraction from professional journals, mass media, gay/lesbian friendships, workshops and professional conferences and textbooks, with only 2% reporting obtaining information from in-service training. A positive note in this same study is that 89% of the respondents indicated interest in obtaining additional training in matters of counseling and attractional orientation. Monier's (2000) survey assessing training and the perceived level of knowledge regarding attractional orientation among school counselors in Washington State found that the two most common sources of information on attractional orientation issues were (a) self-education through the reading of books and journal articles (72.1%), and (b) interacting and communicating with attractional minority friends or family members (66%). In this same study, respondents reported additional ways of obtaining information regarding attractional orientation issues including having attended a seminar/workshop (49.7%), lectures or presentations in graduate classes (34.7%), mass media information (27.2%), a formal class that was part of their graduate training program (15%), and attending a school in-service training (15.6%). Only 9.5% reported not having received any training regarding attractional orientation issues and none reported having been offered a course that exclusively addressed issues of attractional orientation.

Phillips and Fischer (1998) examined the training experiences of graduate students relative to lesbian, gay, and biattractional (LGB) issues. The participants were graduate students in counseling psychology and clinical psychology doctoral programs that were in the last year of their programs prior to internship. Phillips and Fischer developed a survey instrument, *The Survey of Training Experiences* (STE), which assessed a number of areas of training as they relate to gay, lesbian, and biattractional

issues. Regarding LGB issues, the STE assessed graduate students' experiences with LGB issues in coursework, course content, hours in didactic training, supervisor's expertise in LGB issues, self-exploration assessing heterosexist biases, number of LGB clients, presence of "out" LGB faculty, feelings of competence, and other dimensions of experiences in LGB issues. The findings of this study indicated that (a) training in LGB issues was inadequate, (b) "the vast majority of respondents did not feel adequately prepared by their graduate coursework to work with LGB clients compared to heterosexual clients" (p. 725), (c) LGB issues were not integrated into doctoral level coursework in either counseling psychology or clinical psychology programs, (d) the majority of the respondents could not identify an "out" faculty, (e) the respondents could not identify one faculty member with expertise in LGB issues, (f) 50% of the respondents had not been encouraged to explore their own heterosexist biases, and (g) training in LGB issues during practicum was "less than adequate" (p. 728). It should be noted that these findings were substantiated both quantitatively and qualitatively. The participants responded to the survey that was sent to them and the surveys were supported by 30 respondents submitting "unsolicited comments" attached to their surveys. The conclusion to the whole matter of graduate student training in LGB issues is that graduate programs are not adequately preparing counselor trainees to be able to effectively and competently work with attractional minority individuals.

The Phillips and Fischer (1998) study is extremely significant to this study in that it assesses many of the same dimensions of practice and training in attractional minority issues that this study wishes to assess. The Phillips and Fischer study, however, assessed doctoral students in counseling psychology and clinical psychology training programs but

did not assess graduate students in school counseling programs whose future jobs and duties will be to guide all students into pathways of self-determination and self-actualization. Currently, there are no identifiable research studies assessing school counselors' attitudes, work experiences, and training experiences in LGBTQ issues in the State of Michigan. This study endeavors to fill that void in the literature. Robert Earl Powell (1987), who authored an earlier article titled "Homosexual Behavior and the School Counselor," saw the necessity for change in counselor education training for school counselors regarding attractional orientation issues. Thus, his statement of over 20 years ago still remains true today:

Counselors, therefore need to try to overcome the results of a "benign neglect" in counselor education and teacher education programs: an inadequate preparation of professionals for this challenging task. They should be aware of the need for their own continuing education and for continuous involvement with the issues of adolescent homosexuality. (p. 207)

Attractional Minority Students' Perception of School Counselors

Attractional minority youth often feel an overall disconnect when it comes to adults addressing issues of adolescent attractional orientation. Ireland (2000) provides statements from a 19-year-old lesbian and a 22-year-old gay male from Texas who lament the lack of inclusiveness of young gays and lesbians in the adult gay community. The 19-year-old lesbian stated that the older gay community is afraid of them and looks at them as "jailbait" due to societal images of adult gays being pedophiles. The 22-year-old gay male feels that not only are homoattractional adults not building relationships with attractional minority young people but also they fail to create a comfortable atmosphere for those young people who attend their local meetings. These testimonies of feeling

marginalized reflect the general perception that attractional minority youth have towards adults in the gay community. What are their perceptions regarding the school community in general and school counselors in particular?

Telljohann and Price (1993) conducted a qualitative study examining the life experiences of homoattractive adolescents as they related to high school personnel, including counselors. One of the questions asked in the study that relates to this current study is “If they [attractive minority students] had been able to talk to their school counselor concerning their homoattractive orientation and, if they had, whether the counselor was helpful?” (p. 48). The results of this study (1993) indicated that nearly 1 in 4 females (23%) and males (25%) reported being able to talk to their school counselor regarding their attractive orientation, and the majority of those students reported the experiences to be “helpful” or “supportive” (p. 48). Furthermore, the Telljohann and Price study reported that 86% of the females and 64% of the males, of those who reported being able to talk to their school counselor, stated that the interaction with their counselor regarding their attractive orientation was “a positive experience” (p. 48). However, a couple of questions that remain unanswered from this Telljohann and Price study are, What was the plight of the three in four females and males (nearly 75%) who did not report being able to talk to their school counselor regarding their attractive orientation?, and What were the reasons or circumstances behind them not being able to talk to their school counselor regarding their attractive orientation?

Attractive minority students will self-refer to school counselors to discuss personal issues related to attractive orientation if they feel a sense of unconditional positive regard. For example, the results of a study conducted by Fontaine (1998)

indicated that 50% of the attractional minority students were self-referred and the majority of those who self-referred were male students. On the contrary, if attractional minority students (or any student) do not feel that a counselor will be receptive and understanding of their presenting issue(s) in general terms, then that student will most likely avoid discussing intimate matters with that counselor.

Mufioz-Plaza et al. (2002) conducted a qualitative study examining the perceived social support systems available to 12 sexual minority students in their respective high school environments in North Carolina. The definition of social support in the Mufioz-Plaza et al. study was based on House's (as cited in Mufioz-Plaza et al., 2002) description of four types of social support behaviors: (a) *emotional support* manifested through affective behaviors (e.g., love, trust, listening); (b) *appraisal support* manifested through positive feedback or affirmation; (c) *instrumental support* manifested through the sharing of resources and assistance (e.g., money, time, labor); and (d) *informational support* exhibited through the giving of advice and information. Results of the Mufioz-Plaza et al. study indicated that the 12 attractional minority youth respondents perceived that in their respective high school milieus (a) heteroattractional and LGBT-identified friends and nonfamily adults provided emotional and instrumental support; however, heteroattractional peers to whom they disclosed their attractional orientation provided limited emotional support; (b) LGBT-identified peers and adults provided emotional, instrumental, and valuable informational supports; and (c) the respondents believed that during high school, family members would have offered only limited emotional, appraisal, and informational support; therefore, most participants reported refusing to come out to parents during high school. Furthermore, the attractional minority students in

this study perceived that school administrators, faculty, and staff, including counselors, put great effort into upholding the “heterosexual model as normative, a perspective that was in direct conflict with the participants’ emerging sense of sexual identity” (p. 56). In conclusion, attractional minority students perceive an overall disconnect and unresponsiveness on the part of school counselors to the needs of students in general and to the developmental needs of attractional minority students in particular. Do schools have a legal responsibility towards attractional minority students? The next section will seek to answer this question.

Legal Responsibilities of Schools Toward Attractional Minority Students

Title IX of the 1972 Federal Education Amendment

Schools have a legal and ethical responsibility to provide equal access to a quality education, in an environment that is safe and affirming, for all students (Weiler, 2004). Title IX of the 1972 Federal Education Amendment was the first comprehensive federal law to prohibit discrimination based on sex, against students and employees of educational institutions receiving federal funds. Title IX guarantees equal protection from sex discrimination and the various forms of sexual harassment and it applies to all elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, as well as activities affiliated with schools that receive federal funds. Because public schools are among those educational institutions that receive federal funds, Title IX is applicable to any form of sexual harassment in schools, whether the harassment comes from students or teachers because, in any case, sexual harassment creates a hostile learning environment. It should

be noted that Title IX does not specifically bar harassment or discrimination based on attractional orientation; however, it does prohibit any harassing behavior of a sexual nature irrespective of attractional orientation. Considering, in most instances, that harassment toward attractional minority students involves behaviors with sexual underpinnings (Jones, 2000), Title IX is applicable to attractional minority individuals in such cases.

The Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection Clause

Schools are required to provide equal protection for all students. The United States Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection Clause requires equal protection under the law for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, attractional orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Research suggests, however, that in spite of the Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection Clause, many attractional minority students find school to be a major source of stress and day-to-day survival, an environment where they do not feel protected. As reported earlier, surveys conducted by GLSEN (2001; Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005) indicate that attractional minority students, students who are questioning their attractional orientation, and heteroattractional students who are perceived as being gay or lesbian, are victimized in many ways including verbal and physical harassment, physical assaults, being spat on, urinated on, ejaculated on, threatened and assaulted with weapons, having their clothes pulled off, and even gang-raped (Jones, 2000; Weiler, 2004). In many instances, school administrators and personnel witnessed the

victimizations or were informed of the harassment and assaults and either blamed the victim or simply did nothing at all (GLSEN, 2001; Weiler, 2004).

The landmark case for equal protection under the law for attractional minority students in public schools is *Nabozny v. Podlesny* (1996). Jamie Nabozny, of Ashland, Wisconsin, had experienced anti-gay harassment from other students throughout middle school and partly through high school. Forms of harassment against Jamie because of his same-gender attractional orientation included verbal harassment, being mock-raped in a classroom, urinated on, kicked, and beaten so badly that he required hospitalization. Jamie and his parents often complained to school officials but were reportedly told by one school official that he had to expect that kind of harassment because he was “homosexual” (Jones, 2000). Eventually, Jamie was beaten to the extent that he required surgery to stop the internal bleeding and at that point, in 1995, Jamie filed a lawsuit against the Ashland School District. The U. S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in November 1996 upheld his lawsuit and a jury ruled that the abuse that Jamie had suffered was a crime and that school officials had violated the Fourteenth Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause. The Ashland School District was found liable not only because the district failed to protect Jamie, but also because school officials had responded appropriately, according to policies, to other forms of peer-to-peer in-school harassment directed at others but did not enforce those same policies to the same extent for Jamie. The school district was ordered to pay \$900,000 in damages to Jamie Nabozny.

This landmark case resulted in many lawsuits and threat of lawsuits being filed due to negligence on the part of school officials to protect attractional minority students from victimization. A GLSEN (2005a) publication, *Fifteen Expensive Reasons Why Safe*

Schools Legislation Is in Your State's Best Interest, presents summaries of 15 cases brought against school districts for failing to protect students from discrimination and harassment on the basis of attractional orientation. In the case of *Flores v. Morgan Hill Unified School District* (N.D. Cal.), six former students who, on a daily basis, faced threats of violence and actual violence based on real or perceived same-gender attractional orientation, were awarded \$1.1 million. In addition, training regarding discrimination and harassment based on attractional orientation and gender identity was mandated for all administrators, teachers, school counselors, and other personnel who work with students.

In *Theno v. Tonganoxie Unified School District of Kansas* (2005), Dylan J. Theno, a heteroattractional student, endured being taunted as being gay beginning in the 7th grade and into high school. He endured being taunted and threatened for 4 years. Students who perceived him as being gay spread rumors about him resulting in verbal and relational harassment. School administrators ignored his complaints and failed to take action to stop the harassment. The harassment became so severe that he dropped out of school in the 11th grade. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, Dylan was originally awarded \$250,000 in August of 2005, but as a result of the school district appealing the decision and losing the appeal, in December, 2005, Dylan won the appeal and the award was increased to \$440,000 (C. Hampton [GLSEN], personal communication, January 23, 2008).

In the case of *Ramelli and Donovan v. Poway Unified School District* in California (2005), Joseph Ramelli and Megan Donovan were two attractional minority students in high school who were repeatedly threatened and harassed. Ramelli was spat

on, kicked and punched, in addition to his car being vandalized. School officials were informed of the harassment but failed to take action and therefore were found liable. A jury awarded Ramelli and Donovan a total of \$300,000. In another case, Derek Henkle (*Henkle v. Gregory*, 2001), an attractional minority student in Nevada, was harassed for years due to his same-gender attractional orientation. Harassment towards Henkle took the forms of name calling, assaults, threats, being punched in the face, lassoed around the neck, and being told to “keep silent about his sexual orientation” (GLSEN, 2005a, p. 2). Due to the severity of the anti-gay harassment, he was eventually placed in an adult education program. Derek Henkle sued and the school district settled to pay him \$451,000 along with agreeing to implement LGBT-inclusive safe school policies as well as implementing anti-harassment training for school personnel.

Timothy Dahle, an attractional minority student in the Titusville Area School District in Pennsylvania (*Dahle v. Titusville Area School District*, 2001), was forced to drop out of high school and attempted to commit suicide because the anti-gay harassment he endured became so severe. Timothy’s complaints about the harassment went ignored; therefore, he filed a lawsuit against the school district. According to the American Civil Liberties Union document *The Cost of Harassment* (n.d.), the Titusville Area School District initially denied that Timothy had complained to them about the harassment but “suddenly” ended the lawsuit, paying him \$312,000.

The lawsuits against school districts that were previously discussed share two common points that are noteworthy. First, all of the plaintiffs won their lawsuits based on either the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Civil Rights Act of

1964, or a combination thereof. Secondly, regarding the lawsuit settlements reported by GLSEN (2005a), several of the case settlements involved “injunctives” requiring mandatory training of school personnel on issues of diversity, LGBT-specific issues, and sensitivity training and/or amending anti-harassment policy to include actual or perceived attractional orientation.

In short, schools have a legal obligation to provide a safe learning environment for all students irrespective of race, creed, gender, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and attractional orientation. A number of legal cases involving lawsuits were presented which indicate that school districts and school personnel can be held personally liable if they fail to appropriately respond to any form of harassment irrespective of whether the harassment comes from a student or adult. Again, as the court cases show, financial retribution can be costly, but the emotional and psychological costs of anti-gay harassment toward attractional minority students cannot be quantified by dollar amounts. School counselors are in a strategic position to present accurate information to school administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents regarding issues that pertain to attractional minority students so as to avoid lawsuits claiming negligence on the part of school personnel to respond to the harassment of these students. In addition, school counselors have an ethical obligation to advocate for attractional minority students. In order to advocate, however, school counselors must first be armed with awareness and knowledge regarding the developmental needs, struggles, and resilience of attractional minority students and then present that awareness and knowledge to schools via in-service training to all personnel who work with these students.

Based on the legal right of all students to be equally protected under the law from bullying and harassment, it is in any school district's best interest to voluntarily seek training for all school personnel regarding anti-gay harassment rather than have the training made mandatory as a result of litigation by students. Most important, school personnel should be knowledgeable of the needs of attractional minority students because they are members of the student population that deserve to be in a learning environment where they can survive, strive, and thrive as any other student. If school counselors, who are in the first line of the school setting to provide guidance for all students, cannot advocate and assist attractional minority students, then who can and will? In conclusion, school counselors have a legal responsibility to meet the needs of all students irrespective of any demographic including attractional orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Schools not only have a legal responsibility to meet the needs of attractional minority students, but an ethical responsibility as well.

Ethical Responsibilities of Schools Toward Attractional Minority Students

School Counselors' Responsibility According to ASCA

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) is the professional organization that establishes and governs the professional practices and conduct of school counselors. ASCA's Ethical Standards, approved June 26, 2004 clearly outline the responsibilities and obligations that school counselors have to all students as individuals and as a collective student body. Do the ASCA Ethical Standards address school counselors' role regarding attractional minority students? This question can be answered

through a review and discussion of those sections of the Ethical Standards that are relevant to school counseling and attractional orientation/attractional minority students. The review and discussion will begin with the Preamble of the ASCA Ethical Standards (2004).

The Preamble of the ASCA Ethical Standards

The Preamble of the ASCA Ethical Standards (2004) has four tenets of professional responsibility, three of which are applicable to school counselors and attractional minority students. The first two tenets speak to school counselors' responsibilities to all students, including attractional minority students.

The first tenet states in part that each student has a right to be treated with respect and dignity "and have access to a comprehensive school counseling program that advocates for and affirms all students from diverse populations regardless of . . . sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression" (ASCA, 2004, Appendix L, p. 1). Tenet 1 clearly states that school counselors are to serve as advocates, addressing the needs of attractional minority youth, and affirming their being.

The second tenet states in part that each student has "the right to receive the information and support needed to move toward self-direction and self-development and affirmation within one's group identity" (ASCA, 2004, Appendix L 1). This tenet appears to indicate that as heteroattractional students are provided access to information that is designed to assist them in their psycho-social and psycho-sexual development, the same access to relevant and appropriate information in the forms of literature, audio and visual media, counseling, and role models should be provided to attractional minority students

both individually and collectively as individual members of a minority group (group identity). The second tenet also states in part that “special care be given to students who have historically not received adequate educational services: students of color, low socioeconomic students, students with disabilities and students with nondominant language background” (ASCA, 2004, Appendix L 1). The second tenet, however, does not identify or mention attractional minority youth as students who, historically, have not received adequate services in spite of the fact that the literature presented in this chapter strongly suggests that attractional minority youth have historically and currently are being grossly underserved in U.S. schools (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Marinoble, 1998; Reed, 1992; Savin-Williams, 1994; Savin-Williams & Cohen, 2007; Tharinger & Wells, 2000; Uribe, 1994). The tenets of the Preamble to the ASCA Ethical Standards that are relevant to school counselors and attractional minority students have been briefly discussed; there will now be a discussion on the purpose of the ASCA Ethical Standards as they relate to attractional minority students.

The Purpose of the ASCA Standards

Three purposes are given for developing the ASCA Ethical Standards. The first purpose of the Ethical Standards is to “serve as a guide for the ethical practices of all professional school counselors” regardless of level (i.e., elementary, middle, high school), area (e.g., urban, suburban, rural), and population served (including sexual minority students) (Appendix L 1). According to this purpose, unethical practices are occurring if attractional minority students are being underserved, poorly served, or not being served at all by school counselors. The second purpose states that the Ethical Standards are to

provide “self-appraisal and peer evaluations regarding counselor responsibilities to students, parents/guardians, colleagues and professional associates, schools, communities, and the counseling professions” (Appendix L 1). Self-appraisal and peer evaluations should cause each counselor to ask himself/herself two questions: “Am I practicing in accord with the Ethical Standards by competently meeting the needs of attractional minority students?” and “Are my fellow counselors practicing in accord with the Ethical Standards by competently meeting the needs of attractional minority students?” If the answer to either the self- or peer-appraisal question is “yes,” then the follow-up question that should be asked is, “How am I and my colleagues competently meeting the needs of attractional minority students?” If the answer to the self- or peer-appraisal questions is “no,” then the follow-up question should be, “Why am I and/or my colleagues not competently addressing the needs of attractional minority students?” According to the second purpose of the Ethical Standards, another self- peer-evaluative question that school counselors should be answering is, “Am I, as a professional school counselor, executing my responsibilities by serving as an advocate for attractional minority students and as a consultant to parents/guardians, colleagues, schools and other institutions and others who work with attractional minority students?” If the answer is “yes,” then the follow-up question that should be asked is, “What are measurable indicators that I am serving as an advocate?” If the answer is “no,” then the follow-up question that should be asked is, “Why am I not serving as an advocate for attractional minority students?”

The third purpose of the Ethical Standards (2004) speaks of “acceptable counselor practices and expected professional behavior” (Appendix L 1). The Ethical Standards clearly indicate that accepted counselor practice involves advocating, supporting, and

affirming all students regardless of attractional orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Expected professional behavior should reflect school counselors performing “accepted counselor practices.”

ASCA Ethical Standards Applied to Attractional Minority Students

A.1. – Responsibilities to Students

A.1.a. states that the school counselor “has a primary obligation to the student, who is to be treated with respect as a unique individual” (p. L 2) Therefore, if that “uniqueness” lies in attractional orientation and/or gender identity/expression, then such uniqueness *must* be treated with respect.

A.1.b. states that the counselor is to be concerned with all phases of a student’s development, which includes the “educational, academic, career, *personal and social needs* [italics added] . . . of every student” (p. L 2). In addition, the counselor is to encourage “the *maximum development of every student* [italics added]” (p. L 2). This standard suggests that school counselors are required to do what is necessary to facilitate the maximum development of each and every student. All humans develop as a result of receiving, synthesizing, and integrating the information that is received from many different sources under many different circumstances. Attractional minority students are no exception. They must also receive affirming information from different sources as well as the assistance as to how to integrate and apply that information to their lives. School counselors are in a strategic position to provide accurate, appropriate, and affirming

information for attractional minority students and to assist them in the practical application of that information to their lives.

A.1.c. This section of the standard states in part that the school counselor “respects the student’s values and beliefs and does not impose the counselor’s personal values” on students (p. L 2). Studies indicate that there is a significant amount of homophobia, or anti-homosexual sentiment, among school counselors (GLSTN, 1994-1996; Sears, 1991). This Standard suggests that in spite of school counselors’ religious convictions, spiritual persuasions, and personal beliefs regarding homosexuality, the etiology of homosexuality, and attractional minority students, none of these personal convictions should be imposed on students nor hinder the school counselor from executing the tasks that will lead to the maximum development of all students.

A.1.d. states in part that the school counselor is “knowledgeable of laws, regulations and policies relating to students and strives to protect and inform students regarding their rights” (p. L 2), especially those laws that relate to sexual harassment and discrimination. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits sexual harassment toward both heterosexual and homosexual students. The United States Constitution Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection Clause provides equal protection under the law for all students. Legal issues were discussed in the previous section.

A.3. – Counseling Plans

Item a. states that the school counselor “provides students with a comprehensive school counseling program that includes a strong emphasis on working jointly with all students to develop academic and career goals” (p. L 3). *All students* infer that every student is to be included and no student is to be excluded. Without comprehensive school guidance counseling programs that include addressing the needs of attractional minority students, then these students, who are considered by some as the most verbally, physically, and sexually harassed group among the school-age population, are at greater risk for poor academic performance and career failure.

A.5. – Appropriate Referrals

Section a. states that the school counselor “makes referrals when necessary or appropriate to outside resources” (p. L 3). This Standard seems to suggest that if school counselors do not choose to work with attractional minority students whether due to personal beliefs or feelings of incompetence or ineffectiveness, then, at the least, they should be knowledgeable of local, county, and state resources (e.g., Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, Triangle Foundation, PFLAG) where these students can go for support and information. However, if the school counselor has a bias against attractional minority persons, be it personal or religious, then the school counselor is most likely to generalize those biases to organizations that would support and assist those students and, thus, a referral is less likely to occur. Nevertheless, this Standard clearly states that the professional school counselor is to be aware of and utilize “related professionals,

organizations and other resources to which the student may be referred” (p. L 6). Therefore, it is incumbent upon all school counselors to be knowledgeable of those resources that will assist attractional minority students *and* refer students to those resources. School counselors have an additional responsibility to share information with other professionals.

C.2. – Sharing Information With Other Professionals

Section b. states that the professional school counselor provides “professional personnel with accurate, objective, concise and meaningful data necessary to adequately evaluate, counsel and assist the student” (p. L 6). This Standard seems to suggest that regarding attractional minority students, school counselors should be providing in-service training for all school personnel that work directly with students (i.e., teachers, school psychologist, school social workers, and administrators). Further, this Standard appears to suggest that practicing school counselors should provide pre-service training for school counselor trainees regarding issues related to attractional minority students. In addition, this Standard seems to strongly suggest that the professional school counselor is responsible for educating students, colleagues, school personnel, professional associates, schools, and the community at-large regarding the developmental needs of attractional minority students. We will now consider the ASCA Ethical Standards and school counselors’ professional and ethical responsibilities to attractional minority students in terms of the overall theme of diversity.

E.2. – Diversity

Section E.2.a. indicates that the school counselor “affirms the diversity of students, staff, and families” (p. L 8). Students who self-identify as gay, lesbian, biattractional, transgender, and students who are questioning their attractional orientation, have parents who are gay or lesbian, as well as faculty/staff who identify as an attractional minority, are covered by the umbrella of diversity. Therefore, as the Standard requires affirmation in spite of religious, socioeconomic, and ethnic diversity, the Standard seems to also require affirmation among “attractionally” diverse students, their families, and staff.

Section E.2.c. states that a school counselor “possesses knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination and stereotyping affects her/him personally and professionally” (p. L 8). Very few historians would dispute the fact that historically, attractional minority persons have faced discrimination. New York’s Stonewall riot in June 1969 occurred primarily because the gay and lesbian community grew tired of harassment and discrimination (Armstrong & Crago, 2006). GLSTN (1994-1996) indicates that two thirds of the school counselors they surveyed held anti-homoattractional sentiment. Therefore, school counselors must be aware of their own prejudices, biases, and attitudes toward attractional minority students and how their attitudes affect their service toward these students.

Section E.2.d. explicitly states that the professional school counselor “acquires educational, consultation and training experiences to improve awareness, knowledge, skills and effectiveness in working with diverse populations: ethnic/racial status,

. . . sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression, family type, religious/spiritual identity and appearance” (p. L 8). This standard appears to be one of the capstones of the ASCA Ethical Standards. This standard clearly states that school counselors are responsible for acquiring the information and necessary skills, whether through education, consultation, or practicum, to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Intentionally and explicitly included in the roll call of diversity is attractional orientation and gender identity/expression. This final section will discuss school counselors’ responsibilities to the school counseling profession regarding attractional minority students.

F. Responsibilities to the Profession

Section F.1.d. states that the professional school counselor “adheres to ethical standards of the profession, other official policy statements, such as ASCA’s position statements, role statement and the ASCA National Model, and relevant statutes established by federal, state, and local governments, *and when these are in conflict works responsibly for change* [italics added]” (p. L 8). This standard explicitly validates school counselors’ roles as both advocates and agents of change. School counselors should do all that is possible to comply with professional standards and the laws of the land and when there seems to be a conflict between the two, then school counselors should work to bring about a resolution that will serve the best interest of all students. This standard works in conjunction with Standard G – Maintenance of Standards, which states in part that all professional school counselors, both association members and nonmembers, are expected to adhere to the standards at all times. Furthermore and most important, Standard G states that “if counselors are forced to work in situations or abide by policies that do not reflect

the standards as outlined in these Ethical Standards for School Counselors, the counselor is “*obligated*” [italics added] to take appropriate action to rectify the condition” (p. L 9).

Unethical behavior of counselors is primarily thought of in terms of dual relationships with the most common being a counselor having an intimate relationship with a client. However, should it be regarded unethical if school counselors are not addressing the needs of a population of students who are at-risk for dropping out, running away, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, prostitution, and suicide? Should it not be determined unethical if school counselors do not acquire the knowledge and the skills necessary to assist attractional minority students in maximizing their potential during their developmental years at all school levels?

The research on the plight of attractional minority students spans several decades. The statistics on attractional minority students have been gathered, analyzed, published, and discussed. What has emerged from the data is a predominantly grim picture regarding the past and current states of attractional minority students in U.S. public schools. The key findings of GLSEN’s biannual National School Climate Surveys (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005) (GLSEN, 1999; Kosciw & Cullen, 2001; Kosciw, 2004; Kosciw & Diaz, 2006), which have documented the experiences of attractional minority students in U.S. high schools, indicate that verbal and physical harassment, discrimination, and violence continue to be the rule—and not the exception—in U.S. schools. Could this downward trend be due to school personnel in general and school counselors in particular, not accepting the obligation to “take appropriate action to rectify the condition?” Therefore, several questions arise: Do the policies and procedures that the ASCA Ethical Standards provide, that serve as a guide to dealing with unethical conduct, apply to school

counselors who are not willing and/or not able to address the needs of attractional minority students? Further, is it unethical at the training level for school counselor education programs to not have an educational component (didactic and experiential) that is specific to the needs of attractional minority youth? Finally, is it unethical on the part of each school administrator to not seek in-service training for practicing school counselors on issues related to attractional orientation in general and attractional minority students in particular? School counselors are in an important position to bring about change that will ameliorate the educational milieu for lesbian, gay, biattractional, transgender students, and students who are questioning their attractional orientation.

We have discussed ASCA's ethical stance regarding school counselors' responsibilities toward attractional minority students. Let us now look at what the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program, as developed by the Michigan School Counselor Association, has to say with regards to school counselors and attractional minority students.

School Counselors' Responsibility to Attractional Minority Students According to MSCA

The Michigan School Counseling Association (MSCA) formally adopted the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) Ethical Standards for School Counselors as its code of ethics. Therefore, the ethical responsibilities of professional school counselors with regards to attractional minority students as discussed in the previous section are applicable to all school counselors practicing in the state of Michigan. Nevertheless, let us look at some specific items in the Michigan's guidance

and counseling program as they relate to working with attractional minority students in Michigan schools.

Based on the ASCA National Model, there are two underlying assumptions on which the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP/MSCA, 2005) is based. The MCGCP assumes that (a) each student is unique, and (b) that individuals *normally* [italics added] grow and develop in ways similar to other students their same age. Though both assumptions are considered true regarding attractional minority students, there are developmental issues that are specific to attractional minority students (Fontaine, 1998; Weiler, 2004). Therefore, does the use of the word *normally* as it relates to “other students their same age” imply that attractional minority youth “abnormally” develop in ways different from their heteroattractional peers?

The professional school counselor, as defined by the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP, 2005), is certified/licensed and trained to address the academic, personal/social, and career developmental needs of *all* students. Accordingly, the role of the professional school counselor involves (a) attending to the developmental stages of student growth; (b) promoting equal access to educational opportunities for all students through leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and cooperation; (c) supporting a safe learning milieu; (d) working to protect the human rights of all students; and (e) addressing the needs of all students through prevention and intervention.

According to the MCGCP (2005), the role of the school counselor is carried out through three areas of service. The first area of service is the *school guidance curriculum*,

which consists of structured lessons designed to equip all students with developmentally appropriate knowledge and skills. The second area of service is *response services*, which are preventative and interventative in nature, the purpose being to help students deal with personal life issues. Response services include individual and/or group counseling, consultation with parents/guardians and educators, referrals to school and community resources, providing appropriate information, and providing peer assistance. In addition, response services require the school counselor to develop confidential relationships with students in order to assist them with developmental problems and issues. The area of response services is the most germane area of service for school counselors working with attractional minority students because it requires direct contact, counseling, referrals, and providing pertinent and accurate information. Therefore, the question arises: “Do school counselors feel competent and/or are willing to take advantage of this opportunity to assist attractional minority students?” Finally, the third area of service that assists school counselors in fulfilling their roles is *systems support*, which includes professional development, consultation, collaboration, program management and operations (MCGCP, Appendix M). This area of system support is an important area of service that school counselors can utilize to develop training modules that focus on issues specific to attractional minority youth. LGBTQ-specific training modules can be used for in-service training of school teachers and other school personnel as well as used for classroom lessons on appreciating, accepting, and respecting student diversity.

In conclusion, the role of the professional school counselor according to the Ethical Standards of both ASCA (2004) and MSCA (2005) is clear regarding school counselors’ responsibility to attractional minority students. School counselors are to assist

students in discovering their authentic selves and help them develop strong positive social, ethnic, cultural, and attractional identities that will contribute to them becoming successful and productive citizens in society (Pope, 2003). According to the ASCA Ethical Standards, professional school counselors are expected to be knowledgeable regarding attractional minority issues in order to advocate for attractional minority students. As appropriately stated by Pope, “Failing to create a safe environment for all children is criminal and unethical behavior, whether it comes from a school board member, a principal, a teacher, or especially a school counselor” (p. 51).

Transforming School Counseling for Social Justice

The Pledge of Allegiance is often recited in public schools by both students and school personnel stating the ending words “with liberty and justice for all.” Liberty and justice for all translate into just and fair treatment of every citizen and for the purpose of this study, every student regardless of race, religion, creed, socioeconomic status, attractional orientation, or any other demographic. The literature previously discussed in this chapter, however, indicates that LGBTQ students are not receiving just treatment as they are denied the same educational opportunities and developmental support that are provided to heteroattractional students. The academic, personal, social, and vocational needs of attractional minority youth are not being adequately met by the public school system in the U.S. for whom the Pledge of Allegiance was originally written to be recited by—“with liberty and justice for all.” Therefore, the need for school counselors to advocate for attractional minority students is not only a matter of principle but also an issue of social justice.

Social Justice

Social justice is a concept embedded in the idea of human rights in which individuals and groups of people at every level are respected and have fair access to opportunities (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Social justice promotes the notion of a just society in which all people are treated with equity to the extent that the effects of all forms of systematic oppression (e.g., racism, heterosexism, sexism) are minimized and ultimately eliminated. School counseling with a social justice emphasis works to eliminate those systemic oppressive “isms” that can potentially result in student underachievement, low self-esteem, low self-worth, conditions that impede psychological and emotional well-being (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007).

Social justice addresses issues in which people are demeaned and marginalized and the studies mentioned throughout this chapter support a grim reality that attractional minority students in public schools are demeaned, marginalized, ignored (Fischer, 1995), verbally and physically harassed (D’Augelli & Grossman, 2001), and oppressed and underserved (GLSEN, 2005b; GLSTN, 1996). Social justice also addresses the issue of quality of life for students at school. Research indicates that the quality of in-school life for many attractional minority students in U.S. public schools is less than desirable compared to their heteroattractional peers. In fact, the quality of life for attractional minority students in the school milieu can be so poor that the effects are manifested through poor academic performance, skipping classes, truancy, and ultimately dropping out of school (GLSEN, 2005a, 2005b, 2007; Human Rights Watch, 2001). The reality of attractional minority students dropping out of school due to a negative educational

environment makes the plight of attractional minority students in U.S. public schools not only a quality of education concern, but also a quality of life concern (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Howard & Solberg, 2006).

School Counseling for Social Justice

The traditional approach to counseling focuses on cognitions and affect (the intrapsychic forces of clients) whereas the social justice approach to counseling brings attention to what Kiselica and Robinson (2001) refer to as the “many extrapsychic forces that adversely affect the emotional and physical well-being of people” (p. 387). Lee’s (1998) exposition on counselors as change agents states that social justice work involves “helping clients challenge institutional and social barriers that impede academic, career, or personal-social development” (pp. 8–9). Social justice targets groups of people who are marginalized, disadvantaged, and have suffered “systematic oppression in the forms of racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, and other biases” (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007, p. 17). Heteroattractionalism, hetero-normativity, homonegativity, homo-prejudice, compulsory heterosexuality, and a heterosexualized school context are systematic challenges that adversely affect identity development in attractional minority youth (Barret, 1998; Macgillivray, 2000, 2004; Oesterreich, 2002; Reed, 1994; Rich, 1980; Stone, 2003). Macgillivray’s (2000) discourse on educational equity promotes the notion that LGBTQ students “like all students, deserve social justice, equal representation, and developmental support into adulthood from America’s schools” (p. 303). A social justice approach to school counseling focuses on reducing the effects of oppression on students

and making educational services equitable and accessible to all students (Holcomb-McCoy, 2007).

American Counseling Association – Advocacy Competencies

In March 2003, the Governing Council of the American Counseling Association (ACA) endorsed Advocacy Competencies for all counselors of all clients and students. A set of 43 Counselor Competencies were established under the following six advocacy domains:

Client/Student Empowerment – identifying strengths and resources in the client and in his or her environment to produce systems change and skills for self-advocacy.

Client/Student Advocacy – identifying external barriers that impede students' growth, connecting them with needed resources for success.

Community Collaboration – developing alliances by identifying resources within the community and with the individual members that can bring about systemic change.

Systems Advocacy – using data to justify the need for change and developing a sequential plan to implement and assess the change process.

Public Information – understanding the effects of oppression on healthy development and disseminating public information to awaken the general public regarding the macro- and micro-systemic issues that adversely affect human dignity.

Social/Political Advocacy – identifying those problems that can best be resolved through social/political recourse and aligning with those who will help build alliances for change (American Counseling Association, 2003).

The Education Trust was established to make equitable education a reality for all students.

The Education Trust – Transforming School Counseling

The Education Trust was established as a nonprofit organization in 1990 by the American Association for Higher Education “to encourage colleges and universities to support K-12 [educational] reform efforts” (The Education Trust, 2007, p. 1) and to effect systemic changes that would affect all aspects and all levels of education. The primary goal of The Education Trust is to bring attention to the achievement and opportunity gap between low-socioeconomic students and students of color compared to other students. The Education Trust functions on the premise that reform in postsecondary education is paramount to achieving reform in K-12 education and therefore must occur simultaneously. The Education Trust is comprised of staff with experiences in pre-K-12 and postsecondary education as well as advocacy and community-based organizations who, in turn, collaborate with local education and community activists in order to “improve the education of all students, and particularly those students whom the system has traditionally left behind” (p. 1), namely minority and low-income students. Finally, The Education Trusts provides: (a) *advocacy* that encourages community-wide collaboration to assist all students to reach high academic achievement; (b) *analysis and expert testimony* to help institute policies that will improve education along with writings and presentations aimed at addressing etiological factors that affect achievement gaps between groups of students; (c) *research and wide public dissemination of data* that identifies patterns of achievement among different groups of students; and (d) assistance

towards the efforts of school districts, colleges, and community-based organizations to raise student achievement levels with a primary focus on minority students and students living in poverty (The Education Trust, 2007).

The Education Trust recognizes that the public education school system in the U.S. will change only as the result of systemic reform at all levels of education (pre-K-12 and postsecondary) and within all personnel ranks. Therefore, in June 2003, the National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) was established by the Education Trust and the MetLife Foundation based on the premise that “school counselors are ideally positioned to serve as advocates for students and create opportunities for all students to reach these new high academic goals” (The Education Trust, 2003, p. 1). It should be noted that, although research has identified poor, ethnic minority and attractional minority students as being “underserved,” yet attractional minority students are not mentioned by The Education Trust or the NCTSC as a target population for interventions.

Do school counselors possess the knowledge, attitudes, experience, and training to competently advocate for attractional minority students in Michigan schools? It is of utmost importance that this question be answered because not only is this population at-risk for many personal and social ills including academic failure, but they also comprise a potential talent pool that will be essential for the future economic growth of the state of Michigan and the United States of America. This study will endeavor to answer this question.

Summary

Adolescence is a time of exploration and discovery. The developmental tasks of adolescence include discovering one's purpose in life, understanding who one is as a social being, and exploring and discovering who one is as an attractional being. Heteroattractionality is assumed and affirmed by family, peers, and society unless otherwise indicated or suspected. Developmental issues of attractional minority students are similar to those of their heteroattractional peers with the exception that attractional minority students must come to terms with their same-gender attraction in a family, community, school, and societal environment that is often heterosexist, homophobic, homo-negative, and homo-hostile. The identity development of attractional minority youth can begin pre-pubertal with feelings of differentness that are usually not attached to attractional orientation and can continue well into adulthood. Developmental researchers and theorists attempting to clarify and explain homoattractional, biattractional, and transgender identity development in adolescence have proposed a number of developmental models. Some developmental models suggest that adolescent homoattractional identity development occurs in stages while other models purport that homoattractional identity development occurs as a result of achieving milestones. Nevertheless, these developmental theorists seem to agree that same-gender attractional identity development, whether occurring in phases or milestones, does not occur in a linear fashion and can involve movement between stages, working on several stages simultaneously, and revisiting earlier stages based on the current environment and situations.

Attractional identity developmental processes occur during a period of mandatory school attendance in which attractional minority youth must come to understand themselves as sexual/attractional beings in a heteroattractional school context where heteroattractionality of all students is assumed, considered normal, and thus explicitly sanctioned through school personnel, school curricula, and extra-curricular activities. On the contrary, homoattractionality in a heteroattractionalized school context is implicitly considered abnormal and thus demonized and condemned. As a result, attractional minority youth and those perceived to be, suffer verbal and physical harassment and physical assaults (often with school personnel being actively or passively engaged in the harassment), which has a deleterious effect on the academic performance and school attendance of those being harassed and assaulted. As a result of the harassment and assaults experienced in school, attractional minority youth often experience social isolation and alienation both at school and at home, placing them at greater risk for dropping out of school, substance abuse, running away, prostitution, exposure to STDs/HIV, and suicide attempts and completions vis-à-vis their heteroattractional peers.

Much of the literature regarding attractional minority students and their school experiences speaks from the perspectives of theorists, researchers, teachers, and attractional minority students themselves. What is lacking in the literature is the voice of professional school counselors relative to their attitudes, experiences, knowledge, and training with regards to attractional minority students. A search of the literature revealed that Phillips and Fischer's (1998) study assessed the training programs of doctoral students in counseling psychology and clinical psychology regarding lesbian, gay, and biattractional issues but did not assess graduate students in school counseling programs.

Other studies regarding school counselors and attractional minority students (Fontaine, 1998; Price & Telljohann, 1991; Sears, 1991) are 10 years old and beyond; therefore, more contemporary studies are needed. The GLSEN National School Climate Surveys (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007) (GLSEN, 1999; Kosciw & Cullen, 2001; Kosciw, 2004; Kosciw & Diaz, 2006; Kosciw et al., 2008) that have assessed the overall safety of attractional minority students attending public schools in the United States make little to no mention of professional school counselors' roles regarding school climate and attractional minority students. Furthermore, to date, no study has been identified that assesses the attitudes, experiences, knowledge, and training of professional school counselors in public schools throughout the entire state of Michigan relative to gay, lesbian, biattractional, and transgender students as well as those students questioning their attractional orientation as this study proposed to do. Therefore, this study helps to fill a void in the literature and possibly encourage similar studies in other states and regions of the country.

This chapter has discussed the legal responsibilities of schools toward attractional minority students. Lawsuits filed and won by attractional minority students against school districts who failed to protect them from verbal and physical harassment and physical assaults, speak to the legal responsibilities which school counselors, administrators, and personnel have toward attractional minority students according to the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. Also discussed in this chapter are the ethical responsibilities that school counselors have toward attractional minority students according to the Ethical Standards of ASCA. Finally, there is a call for school counselors to act as advocates for social justice on behalf

of all students who have historically been neglected and underserved, namely, students who are low-income and/or ethnic minorities. Organizations such as The Education Trust, the National Center for Transforming School Counseling, and the American Counseling Association, endorse advocacy competencies for its members and indicate the need for counselors in general and school counselors in particular to recognize their strategic position and responsibility to advocate for social justice. However, when discussing advocacy and social justice, these organizations and associations rarely, if ever, mention social justice advocacy for attractional minority students, a population that has historically and currently appears to be neglected and underserved. Chapter III discusses the methods that were employed to conduct this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate Michigan professional school counselors' preparedness to meet the academic, career, and the personal/social needs of students who identify as lesbian, gay, biattractional, transgender, and students who are questioning their attractional orientation (LGBTQ). This chapter describes the research methodology and procedures that were used in this study. Specifically, this chapter outlines and describes the research design, participants and sampling, procedures employed to obtain the sample, data collection, and data analysis procedures. A summary of this chapter is provided at the end.

Research Design

Quantitative research is one of three basic categories of educational research (qualitative and historical research being the other two categories) (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996). Quantitative research is based on certain assumptions including: (a) there are objective truths relative to groups, and (b) those truths can be objectively quantified by assigning numbers to the constructs of interest (Asner-Self, 2009). Within the quantitative research methodology, there are two research categories: experimental and nonexperimental/descriptive designs. In an experimental research design, an independent variable(s) is administered by the researcher to two or more groups to

determine the effect on another variable called the dependent variable. In nonexperimental/descriptive research, variables are identified but not manipulated, and relationships among the variables are sought (Ary et al., 1996). Three categories within nonexperimental research are identified: causal comparative research, correlational research, and survey research (Ary et al., 1996). Since survey research was used for this study, a brief description follows.

Survey research is a nonexperimental/descriptive methodology that entails using a questionnaire to gather information from groups of subjects. Survey research “permits the researcher to summarize the characteristics of different groups or to measure their attitudes and opinions toward some issue” (Ary et al., 1996, p. 22). Within this research inquiry, Michigan school counselors’ attitudes, knowledge, skills/experiences, and willingness to engage in professional development regarding issues of attractional orientation in general, and attractional minority students in particular, were assessed in order to determine preparedness to meet the needs of attractional minority students.

Surveys vary relative to the population being assessed and information being sought. A survey that is used to assess the entire population of interest is referred to as a *census survey*. Often, however, it is not possible to assess an entire population of interest but only a sample; thus, the survey is referred to as a *sample survey*. Furthermore, surveys can seek information regarding *tangible* variables (e.g., how many students are enrolled in free lunch programs) or *intangible* variables “such as attitudes, opinions, values, or other/psychological and sociological constructs” (Ary et al., 1996, p. 428). Since this research study assessed the attitudes, knowledge, skills/experiences, and opinions (psychological/sociological constructs) of a portion of Michigan school counselors (a

sample), the research design for this study is quantitative research using a sample survey methodology to assess intangible variables.

Participants and Sampling

Professional school counselors residing in Michigan and who are members of the Association of Michigan School Counselors (AMSC), a division of the Michigan Counseling Association (MCA) and/or the Michigan School Counselor Association (MSCA), a state division of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), were recruited for this study. Both the AMSC and the MSCA share a common purpose of providing leadership, support, and advocacy for school counselors K-12 as well as provide opportunities for growth and development so that their members may more effectively serve their students. Professional school counselors who are members of AMSC and/or MSCA were chosen because membership in those associations denotes agreement to practice according to the Ethical Standards of the school counseling profession. It is understood that there are participants who may be members of both AMSC and MSCA. Therefore, to avoid duplication of response, a statement was placed in the (informed) consent document requesting that the respondent complete the survey only once. While it was likely that many school counselors in Michigan did not belong to any professional school counseling association and thus would not be recruited for this study, the decision was made to use a Web-based survey that could facilitate recruitment of participants through the use of professional association lists.

The state of Michigan was chosen for several reasons. First, a review of the literature revealed that, although national and regional studies were conducted to assess

school counselors' attitudes, experiences, and perceptions regarding adolescent same-gender attraction (Price & Telljohann, 1991; Sears, 1988, 1991), no such study has been identified as being completed in the state of Michigan. Second, given that educational policies and standards regarding attractionality and school-aged youth are made at the state or local levels, gathering information specific to Michigan will make available current information that might inform such policy development as it relates to school counselors and homoattractual youth. Finally, according to the Michigan

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MSCA, 2005):

School counseling programs are data driven. . . . In addition, it is important to disaggregate data, which is the process of separating out data by variables such as gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, to examine equity issues and the needs of various student groups. (pp. 11–12)

Since educational and legislative reforms in policies and procedures are data-driven, this study may provide data that could influence changes needed in educational policies and procedures and legislation that will positively affect the educational experiences of all students in general, and attractual minority students in Michigan schools in particular.

Data Collection Procedures

Research Context: Online Survey and Paper-and-Pencil Survey

Two survey methods were used to gather participants' self-reported data for this study: an online survey and a pencil and paper survey. An online survey was chosen as the primary method for data collection for several reasons, including increased speed of survey administration and data collection, increased ease of survey construction, greater potential to reach more participants, faster response time, and decreased cost associated

with survey administration (Laughlin, 2002). Additional advantages of online surveys include increased potential for demographic diversity (Lewis, Watson, & White, 2009), increased response rate (Sax, Gilmartin, Lee, & Hagedorn, 2003), and an increased potential for participants responding more accurately and honestly when compared to paper-and-pencil surveys (Knapp & Kirk, 2003). Knapp and Kirk also cited a study conducted by the National Longitudinal Survey Youth Cohort in which participants reported a preference for the computer over the paper-and-pencil method, reporting that the computer interview was “shorter and more interesting, enjoyable, confidential, accurate, and understandable” (p. 120).

Though research studies report the many benefits of using an online survey method, such methodology comes with challenges and disadvantages, including the lack of accessibility to technology by disadvantaged and underrepresented populations (Sax et al., 2003) and concerns regarding data security (Smith & Leigh, 1997). In addition, an online survey methodology has the potential for technical problems (e.g., Internet connection failure). Nevertheless, it appears that the benefits of using online surveys outweigh the challenges. Generally, school counselors use computers to execute and accomplish their daily tasks, and nonreliable Internet connections do not appear to have been documented as a problem in the literature. Therefore, it was decided that an online survey would be appropriate for this research sample.

Online Survey Procedure

The researcher sent letters to members of the executive boards of both the Association of Michigan School Counselors (AMSC) and the Michigan School

Counselor Association (MSCA) requesting an electronic dissemination of the survey for this study (see Appendix D). Both the AMSC and the MSCA agreed to do an initial e-mail blast and a follow-up e-mail blast a week or two later, sending the electronic survey to all of their members twice. The AMSC and the MSCA each reported having approximately 400 members, making the potential sample pool approximately 800 members. However, considering those individuals who are members of both associations, the potential sample pool would be less than 800. The MSCA did two e-mail blasts, which resulted in the majority of the online responses. The AMSC provided an introduction to this study with a link to the consent form and survey in the first e-mail blast along with five other items of business; only six responses were received. Board members of the AMSC denied a request to send a second e-mail blast per an e-mail sent to the researcher dated May 4, 2009.

An introduction to the study was e-mailed to potential participants giving them a brief explanation about the study and inviting them to participate (see Appendix C). School counselors who decided to participate were required to click on a link that took them to the (informed) consent page (see Appendix D), which informed them that the purpose of the survey was to assess Michigan school counselors' attitudes, skills/experiences, knowledge, training, and overall preparedness to work with LGBTQ students. The (informed) consent page also informed potential participants that participation in the study was voluntary, and they were provided the option to participate or not to participate in the study. Individuals who chose to participate were taken to the 55-question survey (see Appendix E) requiring approximately 10–15 minutes to complete. If they chose not to participate, then they were taken to the Exit Page to exit the

survey. The (informed) consent page also included notice that the study and survey had been approved by the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) for 1 year, and if the survey of this study was being administered after the 1-year time period, then they were not to participate in the study.

All participants were informed of their rights of participation as required and outlined by the HSIRB at Western Michigan University. Participants were informed of possible risks and benefits that may derive from participating in the study. Though there was no reason to believe that any direct harm would come from participating in this study, it was possible that participants who identified as lesbian, gay, biattractional, or transgender could experience some mild discomfort when responding to some of the questions as they recalled some negative experiences (e.g., harassment, violence, isolation) during their K-12 school years. Furthermore, it was possible that participants who identified as heteroattractional but have family, friends, or significant others who identify as gay, lesbian, biattractional, and transgender or are perceived as such, and have had negative experiences, could experience mild discomfort when responding to certain questions. Participants were provided with the telephone numbers and/or e-mail addresses of the principal and student investigators and the Western Michigan University HSIRB should they have questions or concerns. The (informed) consent document asked participants to give their consent to participate in the study and use their responses as well as inform them that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained during and after the study. All documents related to the study were secured in a locked file in the office of the student investigator. The electronic survey and the data from completed surveys have been collected and stored on a password-protected Web-based survey site for a 1-year

period where no one has access to the log-in and password except the principal and student investigators. In order to further ensure confidentiality, all documents related to the electronic survey were downloaded to a jump drive and secured in a locked file cabinet in the student investigator's office, where no one else has access to the file cabinet.

To encourage participation, survey participants were offered, upon completion of the survey, the option to be entered into a drawing to win one of four \$50 gas cards. A separate link apart from the survey was provided to enter the drawing in order to ensure that identifying information for the drawing was not associated with a participant's survey responses.

Paper-and-Pencil Survey Procedures

The use of a paper-and-pencil survey was not in the original research methodology for data collection. The researcher learned, however, that the Association of Michigan School Counselors (AMSC) and the Michigan School Counselor Association (MSCA) were scheduled to host a joint conference on April 27, 2009, at Eastern Michigan University with the theme "School Counselors Collaborating for Change." Since the target population for this study was Michigan school counselors and since they would be converging at this conference, the researcher decided that this would be a viable means to collect data and increase the number of participants in the study by making available paper-and-pencil copies of the survey at the conference. One hundred and eighty-six school counselors were expected to attend the conference. Therefore, the researcher obtained protocol approval from the Western Michigan University Human

Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) (see Appendix A) to disseminate paper-and-pencil copies of the survey for this study at the joint conference (see Appendix F). The paper-and-pencil survey and the online survey were identical. However, an “Anonymous Survey Informed Consent” was developed for the paper-and-pencil survey that informed a potential participant of the purpose of the study and that the completed survey indicated consent to participate in the study and to use the answers supplied (see Appendix D).

The researcher arrived at the conference 2 hours prior to the opening session and placed surveys with prepaid returned envelopes attached to the surveys on each table for registrants to voluntarily complete. In addition, in order to provide surveys to registrants who either arrived late to the opening session or chose not to sit at a table but in chairs placed around the perimeter of the conference ballroom, the researcher stood at the entrance to the ballroom, and, as registrants entered, the researcher asked if they would be willing to participate in this research study. Further, in order to bring additional attention to this study, the researcher suspended from his neck a round and bright yellow circle that read, “Ask Me About My Research and a \$50 Gas Card.” One hundred and fifty paper-and-pencil surveys were accepted by conference attendees: approximately 135 surveys were placed on tables and 15 surveys were handed to registrants at the ballroom entrance. Attendees who completed their surveys at the conference site and desired to return them immediately were able to do so as they exited the conference ballroom by placing them in a black opaque shopping bag that was open at the top. Data from the returned paper-and-pencil surveys were manually entered into the electronic data base (SurveyMonkey) with care by the researcher. The completed paper-and-pencil surveys were stored in a locked

file cabinet in the student investigator's office where no one had access to that cabinet but the student investigator.

Survey Response Rate

One hundred and fifty paper-and-pencil surveys were accepted by attendees at the AMSC/MSCA joint conference on April 27, 2009. Fifty-nine paper-and-pencil surveys were returned for a 39% response rate. The responses from the returned paper-and-pencil surveys were entered manually by the researcher into the electronic survey database (SurveyMonkey) with care. Seventy-five participants clicked on the link to participate in this study online, but 5 of these individuals did not answer any questions. Of the remaining 70 online participants, 9 were determined unusable due to those participants refusing to answer a majority of the questions in the survey or failing to complete all or a substantial portion of the demographics section of the survey. Failure to complete the majority of the questions in a survey including the demographic questions rendered that survey unusable for the purposes of data analysis. This resulted in a total of 61 usable surveys from the online process for a final total of 120 usable surveys.

A response rate for the online option was difficult to determine. AMSC and MSCA had originally agreed to send out an initial e-mail and a follow-up e-mail to their members for whom an e-mail address was available. As noted above, AMSC sent out only one e-mail, and the information introducing this study was just one of several topics covered in the e-mail. AMSC reported having sent the e-mail introducing the study to 422 e-mail addresses but was not sure if any of those were duplicates to the same person (J. Burdick, personal communication, November 2, 2009). MSCA sent both the initial

e-mail and a follow-up e-mail and reported that the survey was sent two times to 419 members. One hundred and thirteen members (31.5%) opened the e-mail and, of those, 46 (40.7%) clicked on the link to the survey (J. Pyne, personal communication, November 2, 2009). Some school counselors belong to both state school counseling associations and were instructed to complete the survey only once. Using the total of e-mails sent by the two associations ($n = 841$), and the fact that 70 individuals responded to at least a portion of the online survey, a conservative response rate of 8.3% is calculated for the online version. The online response rate for usable surveys (61 of 841) was 7.3%. The overall response rate of usable online and paper-and-pencil surveys (120 of 841) was 14.3%.

One method that was used as an incentive to increase the response rate for both the online survey and the pencil-and-paper survey, involved offering \$50 gas cards to four randomly selected participants who completed the survey. Online survey participants were informed about the incentive in the informed consent (see Appendix D). Paper-and-pencil participants (delegates at the AMSC/MSCA joint conference) were informed about the incentive via an announcement to the general delegation during the opening session and by the researcher wearing around his neck a round and bright yellow circle that read, "Ask Me About My Research and a \$50 Gas Card." The researcher placed in a bag the names and e-mail addresses of all those who volunteered to participate in the drawing for the \$50 gas cards. The researcher had a colleague randomly draw four names from this bag. The researcher notified the winners via e-mail and mailed the gas cards to the winners upon confirmation of their contact information.

Instrumentation: The Survey

The instrumentation used in this study was a survey comprised of questions from two different instruments derived from previous studies in the area of attractional orientation (Bidell, 2005; Phillips & Fischer, 1998) and combined with questions created by the researcher (see Appendices E and F). A written request to use and modify both instruments for this study was sent to both Drs. Bidell and Phillips. Demographic information was obtained from Questions 42–55. A description of each instrument follows.

The Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS) (Bidell, 2005) is a self-report 29-item instrument that was used to measure counselor competency to work with attractional minority clients. The SOCCS uses three subscales: Skills/Experiences (11 questions), which assesses direct clinical experience and skills that a counselor has had working with attractional minority clients; Attitudes (10 questions), which focuses on counselors' attitudes and prejudices regarding attractional minority individuals; and Knowledge (8 questions), which examines counselors' understanding of mental health issues specific to attractional minority individuals. This instrument uses a 7-point Likert-type format (Not at all True = 1 to Totally True = 7) and respondents were asked to rate the truth of each item as it applied to them by circling the appropriate number.

Scoring. All 10 questions comprising the Attitudes subscale (Questions 9, 17, 18, 22, 24, 28, 30, 34, 35, and 36) and 1 question of the Skills/Experience subscale (Question 29) are negatively worded and, as such, were reversed scored (1 = 7, 2 = 6, 3 = 5, 4 = 4, 5 = 3, 6 = 2, 7 = 1). The raw score for Questions 8–36 was calculated by adding up all items

(remembering to add the reverse scores for those questions designated as being negatively worded). The total score was calculated by dividing the raw score by 29 (the total number of questions). The scores ranged from 29 to 203 with higher scores indicating higher levels of attractional orientation competency. The raw score for each subscale was calculated by adding up all items in that subscale (remembering to reverse score designated items) and then dividing that raw score by the total number of questions in that subscale. For example, using the Attitudes subscale, the raw score is derived by adding all 10 items (remembering to reverse score all 10 items before adding) and then dividing by 10 (the total number of questions in the Attitudes subscale) to get the total score. Total scores ranged from 1 to 7 with higher scores indicating higher levels of attractional orientation competency.

The psychometric properties of the SOCCS were examined by Bidell (2005) and were found to have an internal consistency of .90, a 1-week test-retest reliability of .84. Bidell further states that the “criterion, concurrent, and divergent validity tests established the SOCCS as a psychometrically sound instrument” (p. 267). A study examining the psychometric properties of the SOCCS has been reported only by Bidell.

The SOCCS was designed to assess counselor competency to work with attractional minority clients in general. Therefore, the questions from this instrument were slightly modified to use language that was inclusive of all attractional minority persons and to specifically assess school counselors’ attitudes, skills/experiences, knowledge, and training relative to working with attractional minority students. Written permission to use and modify the SOCCS was obtained from Markus P. Bidell, Ph.D., the author of the

study prior to the launch of the survey (see Appendix B). Questions 8–36 in the survey for this study were adapted from the SOCCS.

The Survey of Training Experiences (STE) (Phillips & Fischer, 1998) is a self-report 13-item questionnaire that was used to “assess participants’ training experiences in LGB issues in their doctoral programs” prior to internship (p. 717). The item content of the STE covers the following areas: (a) coursework, (b) comprehensive examinations, (c) practicum, (d) faculty expertise in LGB issues or whether any faculty was “out” as LGB, (e) other sources of information on LGB issues in counseling, and (f) how prepared the doctoral students felt to work with LGB people vis-à-vis heterosexual people. The STE is comprised of three types of questions: (a) closed-ended (requiring a Yes or No response), (b) a 3-point Likert-type scale (Well, Somewhat, Not Very Well), and (c) checking all that apply.

The STE was designed to assess counseling and clinical psychology doctoral students’ training experiences with LGB issues in general; therefore, the questions from this instrument were slightly modified to specifically assess school counselors’ training experiences relative to working with attractional minority students. No psychometric properties were examined or reported by the authors of the STE or any other author.

In order to avoid duplication of questions and to make the survey for this study as succinct as possible, the following steps were taken regarding the STE. Two questions on the STE that assessed whether respondents were encouraged to explore personal biases and heterosexism regarding LGBTQ clients during coursework and practicum were collapsed into Question #5 (“Were you encouraged to explore possible personal biases and heterosexism with regard to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students during

your graduate counseling program?") in the current survey. Four questions on the STE that assessed whether issues were addressed in coursework, readings, and examinations were collapsed into Question #37 ("LGBTQ concerns were infused into the courses of my graduate counseling training program") in the current survey. Therefore, Questions 1–6 and #37 in the survey for this study were adapted from the STE. Prior to the launch of the survey, written permission to use and modify the STE was obtained from Julia C. Phillips, Ph. D., the first author of the study (see Appendix B).

Several questions were generated by the researcher to gain additional perspectives from school counselors regarding their graduate counseling training and their role(s) as school counselors with regards to LGBTQ issues. Question 7 was generated by the researcher to assess school counselors' perceptions of their role(s) regarding assisting attractional minority students. Question 38 was generated to acquire a general sense of school counselors' beliefs regarding the efficacy of their graduate counseling programs relative to preparing them to work with attractional minority students. Questions 39 and 40 were generated to assess school counselors' willingness to engage in professional development and to assess what continuing education activities they found most helpful in assisting them to work with attractional minority students. Finally, Question 41 was generated to assess their beliefs regarding the prevalence of attractional minority students in their individual schools.

Demographic Information

Demographic information was collected for this study to describe the study participants as well as for data analysis to test the research questions. The following

demographic information was collected: *Age* by range: 20–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, or 60 and above. *Gender*: male, female, transgender, or intersex. *Ethnic background*: African American, Asian American/Pacific/Islander, Euro American/White, Hispanic/Latino/a, Middle Eastern, Multiracial, or Native American/Alaska Native. *Attractional/sexual orientation*: gay male, lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual, transgender, or questioning. *Graduate Counseling Program*: whether participants graduated from a CACREP-accredited counseling program (yes, no, or don't know); the number of credit hours in their counseling programs (less than 48 credit hours or 48 credit hours or more), and whether their counseling programs were completed in Michigan or out-of-state. *School counselor credential*: endorsement to a teaching certificate, school counseling license (SCL), or none. *Professional school counselor association membership*: Association of Michigan School Counselors [AMSC], Michigan School Counselor Association [MSCA], or American School Counseling Association [ASCA]. *Years of school counseling experience* by range: 0–4, 5–9, 10–14, 15–19, 20–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, or Above 40. *Years of counseling experience outside of school setting* by range: 0–4, 5–9, 10–14, 15–19, 20–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, or Above 40. *Type of school*: public, private, or religious/faith affiliated. *Current school level(s)* where you serve as a school counselor: elementary school, middle school/junior high, high school, alternative school, or none. *School locale*: urban, suburban, or small town or rural. *County of school*: as indicated by participants. And whether the school had an *active Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA)*: yes, no, do not know, or unsure of what a GSA is.

Human Institutional Review

Approval to conduct this study was obtained by the researcher from the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB). The HSIRB application was approved February 24, 2009 (see Appendix A).

Research Questions for the Current Study

The current review of the literature indicates a number of studies conducted to assess school counselors' attitudes, skills/experiences, knowledge, and training regarding homoattractuality and attractional minority student. Sears (1991) surveyed 142 middle and high school counselors in South Carolina and found that two thirds of those surveyed held negative attitudes or feelings about homoattractuality, a great majority of the school counselors would not choose to counsel students on matters of attractional orientation, and the majority of those surveyed reported not feeling prepared to work with attractional minority youth due to lack of training. GLSTN's (1994-1996) *Just the Facts: On Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students and Schools* provided data on school counselors and attractional minority students and found, like the Sears study, that two thirds of the school counselors in the study held negative feelings toward attractional minority people. Price and Telljohann (1991) surveyed 289 middle and high school counselors and found that 71% of the respondents reported having counseled at least one attractional minority student during their careers. It should also be noted, however, that in the Price and Telljohann study, 16% of the school counselors reported that there were no attractional

minority students in their schools and 63% reported that no more than 1% to 5% of the students attending school were homoattractional.

Five research questions guided this study that are specifically related to school counselors' attitudes, knowledge, skills/experiences, and training to meet the needs of attractional minority students. The research questions (RQs) are answered through the use of descriptive statistics and are as follows:

RQ-1: *What are the attitudes of Michigan school counselors regarding same-gender attractional orientation and attractional minority students?* Questions 9, 34, 36, 22, 24, 28, 35, 17, 18, and d30, addressed this research question.

RQ-2: *What is the level of counseling skills/experiences of Michigan school counselors regarding attractional minority students?* Questions 11, 14, 25, 15, 13, 19, 21, 8, 33, 29, and 10 addressed this research question.

RQ-3: *What level of knowledge do Michigan school counselors possess regarding attractional minority issues?* Questions 32, 31, 27, 20, 16, 12, 26, 23, and 41 addressed this research question.

RQ-4: *Do Michigan school counselors believe that their graduate counseling program adequately trained them to competently meet the needs of attractional minority students?* Question 38 addressed this research question.

RQ-5: *What professional development activities would Michigan school counselors be willing to engage in within the next 12 months to expand their knowledge regarding issues of attractional orientation in general and attractional minority students in particular? What are the three top ranking continuing education activities that Michigan school counselors would find most helpful in*

assisting them with working with LGBTQ students? Questions 39 and 40 addressed this research question.

Additional questions were asked to gain further school counselors' perspectives regarding LGBTQ issues. Questions 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 assessed school counselors' experiences relative to LGBTQ issues in their graduate counseling training programs. Question 2 assessed to what extent school counselors believed their graduate counseling programs prepared them to work with each category of LGBTQ students. Questions 7 assessed school counselors' perspectives regarding their role(s) with assisting LGBTQ students (e.g., assist with family relations, explore attractional orientation). Question 37 assessed to what extent school counselors believed LGBTQ issues and concerns were infused into courses throughout their graduate counseling programs.

The literature summarized in Chapter II suggests that school counselors in general (a) hold both positive and negative attitudes about homoattractionality with the majority holding negative attitudes; (b) hold both positive and negative attitudes about attractional minority adolescents, with the majority holding negative attitudes; (c) exhibit little to no knowledge about issues concerning attractional minority students; (d) believe that their school counseling graduate training programs did not adequately prepare them to competently work with attractional minority students; (e) are willing to participate in professional development focusing on issues of attractional orientation in general and attractional minority students in particular in a nonpersonal way (e.g., attending a workshop or seminar on LGBTQ issues with other school personnel); and (f) are willing to participate in professional delivery services that are supportive to faculty and students regarding issues of attractional orientation in general and attractional minority students in

particular, with the majority willing to participate in ways that are more private than public (e.g., individual counseling with an attractional minority student vs. advocating for attractional minority students in a faculty meeting). The literature suggests that there may be some differences in school counselors' attitudes regarding issues of attractional orientation and attractional minority students based on age and ethnic background (Sears, 1988). The findings of one study (Sears, 1991) assessing attitudes of educators regarding attractional minority issues suggested that:

People with negative attitudes report . . . a more conservative religious ideology. . . . Those harboring negative attitudes about homosexuality are also more likely to have lived in the *Midwest* [italics added] or the South, to have grown up in rural areas or in small towns, and to be male, older, and less well-educated than those expressing more positive attitudes. (p. 38)

Given the Midwest culture and the ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diverse populations in Michigan, what the general literature suggests may or may not reflect the perceptions of school counselors in Michigan. Therefore, this study offers the following hypotheses (Hs):

H-1: There will be statistically significant differences in the current attitudes about same-gender attractional orientation and attractional minority students among school counselors vis-à-vis their age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale (Sears, 1991).

H-2: There will be no statistically significant differences in the level of counseling skills/experiences of Michigan school counselors regarding attractional minority students when comparing school counselors' age, gender, ethnic background,

sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale (Phillips & Fischer, 1998; Sears, 1991).

H-3: There will be statistically significant differences in the level of knowledge that Michigan school counselors reflect regarding attractional minority issues vis-à-vis age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale (Bidell, 2005).

H-4: There will be no statistically significant differences in the beliefs regarding the quality of training of Michigan school counselors by their graduate counseling programs to meet the needs of attractional minority students when comparing age, gender, ethnic background, attractional orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale (Bidell, 2005; Phillips & Fischer, 1998).

Statistical Analyses

The statistics in this study were calculated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17.0. Descriptive statistics, such as percentages, means, and medians were used to describe the respondents demographically in addition to their attitudes, skills/experiences, knowledge, training, and willingness to engage in professional development relative to lesbian, gay, biattractional, transgender students, and students who are questioning their attractional orientation. The generalizability of the sample population to the overall study population could not be determined due to the demographics of the AMSC and the MSCA not being available. Therefore, the sample population was compared to the participants of other relevant studies, the Bidell (2005)

and Phillips and Fischer (1998) studies being the primary studies used for comparisons. Several statistical methods were employed to analyze the data in this study. This study compared groups based on age, gender, ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale, and therefore a one-way ANOVA was used for research questions 1–4. Descriptive statistics were used for research question 5 and survey questions 1–7. When possible, post hoc procedures were conducted for variables showing statistical significance in order to determine which means were statistically different from other means within subgroups.

Summary

In this study, school counselors who reside in Michigan and are members of the AMSC and/or the MSCA were either e-mailed a brief description of the study and a link to an electronic survey or handed a paper-and-pencil survey asking them to inform the investigators of their attitudes, skills/experiences, knowledge, graduate counseling training, and their willingness to participate in professional development regarding LGBTQ issues in general, and attractional minority youth issues in particular. Descriptive data were collected to determine what attitudes Michigan school counselors held regarding same-gender attraction in general and attractional minority adolescents in particular, what level of counseling skills/experiences they had regarding counseling attractional minority students, what level of knowledge they possessed regarding issues pertaining to attractional minority people, their beliefs regarding how well their graduate counseling training programs prepared them to effectively and competently work with attractional minority students, and if Michigan school counselors were willing to engage

in professional development for the next 12 months regarding issues related to same-gender attractional orientation and attractional minority students. A number of statistical methods including one-way analysis of variance were employed to analyze the data and to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between groups based on age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale. If statistical significance was determined, then post hoc procedures were conducted when possible to compare all possible pairs of means and determine which means were significantly different from one another.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate Michigan professional school counselors' preparedness to meet the academic, career, social, and personal needs of students who identify as lesbian, gay, biattractional, transgender, and students who are questioning their attractional orientation (LGBTQ; also referred to as attractional minority students). Specifically, this study assessed Michigan school counselors' attitudes, skills/experiences, knowledge, training, and willingness to engage in professional development regarding issues related to attractional orientation and attractional minority students. In addition, this study assessed general issues related to school counselors' perception of their preparation through graduate training along with other details as they relate to working with LGBTQ students. This chapter will discuss (a) demographic and professional profile information provided by the sample population with emphasis given to the variables used in statistical analysis (age, gender, ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school levels, and school locale); (b) the five research questions and hypotheses that guided this study; (c) the analysis of the data, the statistical procedures employed to analyze the data, and the results of the data analysis; and (d) additional school counselors' perspectives on LGBTQ student issues and training. A summary is provided at the end of this chapter.

Demographics and Professional Profile

Fourteen demographic and professional profile questions were asked in the survey to determine the characteristics of the survey participants and to allow for comparisons of the sample population to the general memberships of both the Association of Michigan School Counselors (AMSC) and the Michigan School Counselor Association (MSCA) from whom the sample was drawn. In order to make comparisons of the sample population to the association memberships, specific demographic information about their members was requested from both associations near the end of data collection; however, none was available from either association. Therefore, the following discussion reflects the characteristics of the survey participants in this study. Be advised that the valid percentage of these frequencies was used based on the total number of participants who actually responded to the question, which, in some cases, was less than 120.

Age

Forty participants (33.3%) reported being 50–59 years of age, slightly more than those who reported being 30–39 years of age (30.8%; $n = 37$). A further breakdown of the participants' ages indicates that 20.8% ($n = 25$) of the participants reported being in the 40–49 age group, 10.8% ($n = 13$) reported being in the 60 and above age group, and 4.2% ($n = 5$) reported being in the 20–29 age group (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics of Study Participants

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Age		
20–29	5	4.2
30–39	37	30.8
40–49	25	20.8
50–59	40	33.3
60 and above	13	10.8
Total	120	100.0
Gender		
Female	103	85.8
Male	17	14.2
Total	120	100.0
Ethnic Background		
Euro American/White	106	88.3
African American/Black	9	7.5
Asian American/Pacific Islander	1	0.8
Hispanic/Latino(a)	1	0.8
Native American/Alaska Native	1	0.8
Total	118	98.3
No Response	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0
Sexual Orientation		
Heteroattractiional	112	93.3
Gay male	2	1.7
Lesbian	4	3.3
Biattractional	1	0.8
Questioning	1	0.8
Total	120	100.0

Gender and Ethnic Background

An overwhelming majority (85.8%; $n = 103$) of the participants were females, and 14.2% ($n = 17$) were males. None of the survey participants reported being transgender or

intersex. With regards to ethnicity, 88.3% ($n = 106$) of the participants reported being Euro-American/White, 7.5% ($n = 9$) reported being African American/Black, 1 participant reported being Asian American/Pacific/Islander (0.8%), 1 participant reported being Hispanic/Latino(a) (0.8%), and 1 participant reported being Native American/Alaska Native (0.8%). Middle Eastern and Multiracial groups were not reported as participants in this survey. Two participants abstained from responding to this demographic question (see Table 1).

Attractional/Sexual Orientation

The majority of the participants (93.3%; $n = 112$) reported being heteroattractional, 3.3% ($n = 4$) reported being lesbian, 1.7% ($n = 2$) reported being gay males, 1 participant reported being biattractional (0.8%), and 1 participant (0.8%) reported questioning his or her attractional orientation. No one reported as being transgender (see Table 1).

Graduate Counseling Program

Since this study assessed school counselors' training experiences regarding issues of attractionality and attractional minority students, three professional profile questions inquired as to whether participants graduated from a graduate counseling program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), if the graduate counseling program was less than or more than a 48-credit-hour program, and if the graduate counseling program was completed in Michigan or out-of-state. As shown in Table 2, 68 participants (56.7%) reported

graduating from a CACREP-accredited program, 17.5% ($n = 21$) participants reported that they did not graduate from a CACREP-accredited program, and a surprisingly high number (25.0%; $n = 30$) of participants reported not knowing if their graduate counseling program was CACREP-accredited. One participant did not answer this question. Eighty-two participants (68.3%) reported that their graduate counseling program was 48 credit hours or more, while 30.8% ($n = 37$) reported their graduate counseling programs being less than 48 credit hours. One participant did not answer this question. Finally, 90.8% ($n = 109$) of the participants reported completing their graduate counseling programs in Michigan, while 7.5% ($n = 9$) reported having completed their graduate counseling programs out-of-state. Two participants provided no answer to this question (see Table 2).

School Counselor Credential

In this study, school counselors were asked about their school counseling credentials (i.e., license, endorsement). Regarding school counseling credentials, as shown in Table 2, 58.3% ($n = 70$) of the participants reported that their school counseling credential was an endorsement to their teaching certificate, while 39.2% ($n = 47$) indicated that they held a school counseling license. Three participants provided no response to this question.

School Counseling Association Membership

Participants in this survey were asked whether they held memberships in professional school counseling associations, namely the Association of Michigan School

Table 2

Details of Graduate Counseling Program and School Counseling Credentials

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
CACREP accreditation		
Was CACREP accredited	68	56.7
Was not CACREP accredited	21	17.5
Don't know if CACREP accredited	30	25.0
Total	119	99.2
No Response	1	.8
Total	120	100.0
Required Credit Hours		
48 credit hours or more	82	68.3
Less than 48 credit hours	37	30.8
Total	119	99.2
No Response	1	.8
Total	120	100.0
Counseling Program Completed		
In Michigan	109	90.8
Out-of-state	9	7.5
Total	118	98.3
No Response	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0
School Counselor Credential		
Endorsement to teaching certificate	70	58.3
School Counseling License	47	39.2
Total	117	97.5
No Response	3	2.5
Total	120	100.0

Counselors (AMSC), the Michigan School Counselor Association (MSCA), and the American School Counseling Association (ASCA). One hundred and four participants responded to this question. As shown in Table 3, 41 participants (34.2%) reported membership in AMSC, 70.0% ($n = 84$) of the participants reported membership in MSCA, and 39.2% ($n = 47$) reported membership in ASCA. In addition, many of the

participants in this study held joint memberships in several school counseling associations. See Table 3 for a complete breakdown of the participants' single and joint professional school counselor association memberships. Sixteen participants did not provide a response to this question.

Table 3

Professional School Counselor Association Membership

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
AMSC	41	34.2
MSCA	84	70.0
ASCA	47	39.2
Total	172	143.4
Single and Joint Memberships		
AMSC only	12	10.0
MSCA only	38	31.7
ASCA only	5	4.2
MSCA and AMSC	7	5.8
MSCA and ASCA	20	16.7
AMSC and ASCA	3	2.5
AMCS, MSCA, and ASCA	19	15.8
Total	104	86.7
No Response	16	13.3
Total	120	100.0

Years of School Counseling Experience

Participants were asked to report their years of school counseling experience, selecting from various ranges of years. With respect to years of school counseling experience, 29.2% ($n = 35$) of the participants reported 0–4 years, 26.7% ($n = 32$) reported 5–9 years, 15.8% ($n = 19$) reported 10–14 years, 12.5% ($n = 15$) reported 15–19 years, 5.8% ($n = 7$) participants reported 20–24 years, 1 participant (0.8%) reported 25–29

years, 5.0% ($n = 6$) reported 30–34 years, and 1.7% ($n = 2$) reported 35–39 years of school counseling experience. There were 3 participants (2.5%) who did not respond to this question (see Table 4).

Table 4

Years of Counseling Experiences

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Years of School Counseling Experience		
0–4	35	29.2
5–9	32	26.7
10–14	19	15.8
15–19	15	12.5
20–24	7	5.8
25–29	1	0.8
30–34	6	5.0
35–39	2	1.7
Total	117	97.5
No Response	3	2.5
Total	120	100.0
Years of Counseling Experience Outside of School Setting		
0–4	88	73.3
5–9	13	10.8
10–14	5	4.2
15–19	1	.8
20–24	3	2.5
25–29	2	1.7
Total	112	93.3
No Response	8	6.7
Total	120	100.0

Years of Counseling Experience Outside of School Setting

Participants were asked to report their years of counseling experience outside of the school setting; As shown in Table 4, 88 participants (73.3%) reported 0–4 years,

10.8% ($n = 13$) reported 5–9 years, 4.2% ($n = 5$) reported 10–14 years, 1 (0.8%) reported 15–19 years, 2.5% ($n = 3$) reported 20–24 years, and 1.7% ($n = 2$) reported 25–29 years. There were 8 participants (6.7%) who did not respond to this question. Thus, the data indicate that slightly over half of the school counselors in this study (55.8%) have less than 10 years of experience as school counselors and over three fourths (75.2%) have less than 5 years of counseling experience outside of a school setting.

Type of School and Current School Level(s)

Participants were asked the type of school (public, private, or religious/faith affiliated) and the current school level(s) (elementary, middle, high school, alternative high school, none) where they served as school counselors. Regarding type of school, 92.5% ($n = 111$) reported counseling in public schools, 1.7% ($n = 2$) reported counseling in private schools, and 1.7% ($n = 2$) reported counseling in religious/faith-based schools. Five participants did not respond to this question (see Table 5).

Regarding current school level(s) where school counselors were currently serving, participants were provided five categories to choose from: (a) Elementary School, (b) Middle/Junior High School, (c) High School, (d) Alternative High School, and (e) None (not currently serving in a school). Instructions were given to “check all that apply.” One hundred and fifteen participants responded to this inquiry. As shown in Table 5, 15.8% ($n = 19$) reported serving at elementary schools, 35.8% ($n = 43$) at middle/junior high schools, 49.2% ($n = 59$) at high schools, 5.0% ($n = 6$) at alternative high schools, and 10% ($n = 12$) reported not currently serving at any school level.

Table 5

School Types and Levels

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Type of School		
Public	111	92.5
Private	2	1.7
Religious/Faith Affiliated	2	1.7
Total	115	95.8
No Response	5	4.2
Total	120	100.0
School Levels		
Elementary	19	15.8
Middle/Junior High	43	35.8
High School	59	49.2
Alternative High School	6	5.0
No Level	12	10.0
Total	139	112.8
Single- and Multi-Level Appointments		
Elementary only	10	8.3
Middle/Junior High only	25	20.8
High School only	46	38.3
Alternative High School only	3	2.5
None	12	10.0
Elem., Middle/Junior, and High Schools	5	4.2
Middle/Junior High, and High Schools	8	6.7
High and Alternative High Schools	1	.8
Elem., Middle/Junior, and High Schools	3	2.5
Middle/Junior and Alternative High Schools	1	.8
Elem., Middle, High, Alternative High Schools	1	.8
Total	115	95.7
No Response	5	4.2
Total	120	100.0

Many participants reported working simultaneously at multiple school levels.

Table 5 shows an additional breakdown of school counselors serving at single-school levels and multiple-school levels. Five participants did not respond to this question.

School Locale and County of School

Participants were asked about the location of their schools (urban, suburban, rural/small town) and the counties wherein their schools reside. Regarding school locale, 46.7% ($n = 56$) of the participants reported that their schools were in suburban areas, 15.8% ($n = 19$) reported that their schools were in urban areas, and 30.8% ($n = 37$) reported that their schools were in small town or rural areas. Eight participants did not respond to this question (see Table 6). Regarding the counties wherein participants' schools resided, school counselors reported serving in schools from 31 counties in Michigan with the largest participation coming from southeast Michigan. Seventeen participants provided no responses to this question.

Table 6

Location of Schools

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
School Locale		
Suburban	56	46.7
Urban	19	15.8
Small Town/Rural	37	30.8
Total	112	93.3
No Response	8	6.7
Total	120	100.0

Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)

Finally, school counselors were asked if their schools had an active Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). Of those who responded to this question ($n = 112$), 67.5% ($n = 81$) of the participants reported that their schools did not have an active GSA, 20.8% ($n = 25$)

reported that their schools did have an active GSA, 3.3% ($n = 4$) reported not knowing if their school had an active GSA, and 1.7% ($n = 2$) reporting being unsure of what a GSA is. Eight participants (6.7%) did not respond to this question (see Table 7).

Table 7

Gay Straight Alliance

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Gay Straight Alliance at your school?		
No	81	67.5
Yes	25	20.8
Do Not Know	4	3.3
Unsure of what a GSA is	2	1.7
Total	112	93.3
No Response	8	6.7
Total	120	100.0

Overall, the demographics of the participants in this study suggest a profile of a school counselor who is female, Euro-American/White, heteroattractual, between the ages of 50–59 or 30–39; has a school counseling endorsement to her teaching certificate; counsels in a high school or middle school, located in the suburbs, that has no active GSA; has 0–4 or 5–9 years of school counseling experience and 0–4 years of counseling experience outside of the school setting; is a graduate of a Michigan graduate counseling program that was 48 credit hours or more and was CACREP-accredited; and is a member of a professional school counseling association.

Data Analyses

The purpose of this study was to assess Michigan school counselors' preparedness to work effectively and competently with attractional minority students. Therefore, participants in this study were asked questions relative to their attitudes, skills/experiences, knowledge, training, and willingness to engage in professional development regarding issues of attractional orientation and attractional minority students. This section presents the results of the five research questions that guided this study. Statistical calculations were made using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17.0. The benchmarks for statistical significance for all analyses were a p -value of 0.05 with a 95% confidence interval.

Descriptive Statistics

Research Questions 1–3 assessed the attitudes, skills/experiences, and knowledge of Michigan school counselors. As stated previously, questions 8–36 of the survey for the current study were taken from the *Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale* (SOCCS) (Bidell, 2005) and modified to meet the needs of this study. This scale includes subscales Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge as well as a total score for overall school counselor competency using a 7-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of competency relative to working with attractional minority students and their concerns. Missing data for the occasional items in the SOCCS questionnaire that were not answered were replaced by the mean score of that item for participants who did respond to the item for the following three research questions. In addition, due to the small

representation of ethnic minority and attractional/sexual minority participants in this study, the variable *ethnic background* was also collapsed into a new variable consisting of two ethnic categories: *White and Non-White*. Likewise, the variable *attractional/sexual orientation* was collapsed into a new variable consisting of two categories:

Heteroattractional and Nonheteroattractional. Further, the variable *years of school counseling experience* had a year range choice (25–29 years) with only 1 participant.

Therefore, the 25–29 year range choice was collapsed into the 30–34 year range choice, creating a new variable: *years of school counseling experience collapsed* reflecting the expanded ranges of 25–34 years. Below, results related to ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, and years of school counseling experience are reported for both the full range of options for those questions and for the collapsed options.

SOCCS Total Score

The overall mean of the total score for the SOCCS in this study was 4.64 ($SD = 0.833$) with scores ranging from 2.44 to 6.31, suggesting that, overall, Michigan school counselors in this study reported to be slightly more than *somewhat* competent to meet the needs of attractional minority students (score of 4 = somewhat true). A one-way ANOVA was conducted with each independent variable (age, gender, ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, years of school counseling, school locale, school levels) being run alone with *total score* as the dependent variable. Results indicated *statistical significance* with the variables *attractional/sexual orientation* and the collapsed variable *attractional/sexual orientation* (see Table 8).

Table 8

One-Way ANOVAs—Total Score

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Age	4	1.978	0.102
Gender	1	1.191	0.277
Ethnic Background	4	1.592	0.181
Attractional/Sexual Orientation	4	3.001	0.021*
Years of School Counseling Experience	7	1.850	0.085
School Levels	4	0.329	0.858
School Locale	2	0.530	0.590
Ethnic Background (Collapsed)	1	3.013	0.085
Attractional/Sexual Orientation (Collapsed)	1	10.635	0.001*
Years of School Counseling Experience (Collapsed)	6	2.151	0.053

*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Regarding attractional/sexual orientation ($F = 3.001, p = .021$), though statistical significance was found for the full range of options, post hoc analysis could not be performed to determine the meaning of the significance due to the categories bisexual and questioning having only 1 participant each. Regarding the collapsed variable *attractional/sexual orientation* ($F = 10.635, p = .001$), the means (with standard deviations in parentheses) for Nonheteroattractional and Heteroattractional participants for the overall total score on the SOCCS were 5.53 (0.462) and 4.58 (0.818), respectively,

which suggested Nonheteroattractual participants having a higher level of attractional/sexual orientation counselor competency than Heteroattractual participants.

The performance of one-way ANOVAs with *total score* as the dependent variable indicated *statistical nonsignificance* for the independent variables age, gender, ethnic background, years of school counseling experience, school levels, and school locale, ethnic background collapsed, and years of school counseling experience collapsed. It should be noted, however, that *years of school counseling collapsed* approached statistical significance ($p = 0.053$) (see Table 8).

Research Question 1 – Attitude

What are the attitudes of Michigan school counselors regarding same-gender attractional orientation and attractional minority students?

Research hypothesis. The researcher assumed that there would be statistically significant differences in the attitudes about same-gender attractional orientation and attractional minority students among school counselors vis-à-vis their age, gender, ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale. This assumption was based on previous research (Sears, 1991).

Results. The assumption that there would be statistically significant differences was *not* confirmed in this analysis. The scores from the Attitude subscale were used for these calculations. A one-way ANOVA was conducted with each independent variable (age, gender, ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, years of school counseling, school locale, school levels) being run alone with *Attitude* as the dependent variable. Results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in

attitudes regarding *age* (F -value = 1.555; p -value = 0.191), *gender* (F -value = 0.018; p -value = 0.894), *ethnic background* (F -value = 0.648; p -value = 0.629), *attractional/sexual orientation* (F -value = 0.737; p -value = 0.569), *years of school counseling experience* (F -value = 1.925; p -value = 0.072), *school levels* (F -value = 0.501; p -value = 0.735), and *school locale* (F -value = 0.150; p -value = 0.861). It should be noted, however, that while none of the variables showed statistical significance, the variable *years of school counseling experience* did approach significance ($p = 0.072$).

Additionally, one-way ANOVAs were run with *Attitudes* as the dependent variable and the collapsed variables for ethnic background (White and Non-White), attractional/sexual orientation (Heteroattractional and Nonheteroattractional), and years of school counseling experience (25–34 years) as the independent variables. Results indicated statistical nonsignificance for the *ethnic background collapsed* variables (F -value = 0.659; p -value = 0.419) and for the *attractional/sexual orientation collapsed* variable (F -value = 1.940; p -value = 0.166 (see Table 9). However, statistical significance was indicated with the collapsed variable *years of school counseling experience* ($F = 2.243$; $p = 0.044$) with post hoc analysis indicating significant mean differences between the range of years 15–19 ($M = 6.66$; $SD = 0.336$) and 25–34 ($F = 5.40$; $SD = 0.833$). These data suggest that participants with 15–19 years of school counseling experience have a more positive and supportive attitude regarding attractional orientation and LGBTQ students concerns than participants with 25–34 years of school counseling experience (see Table 9).

Table 9

One-Way ANOVAs—Attitudes Subscale of the SOCCS

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Age	4	1.555	0.191
Gender	1	0.018	0.894
Ethnic Background	4	0.648	0.629
Attractional/Sexual Orientation	4	0.737	0.569
Years of School Counseling Experience	7	1.925	0.072
School Levels	4	0.501	0.735
School Locale	2	0.150	0.861
Ethnic Background (Collapsed)	1	0.659	0.419
Attractional/Sexual Orientation (Collapsed)	1	1.940	0.166
Years of School Counseling Experience (Collapsed)	6	2.243	0.044*

*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The mean score for the Attitudes subscale for the entire sample was 6.22 ($SD = 0.941$) with scores ranging from 2.7 to 7. This mean score suggests that overall, Michigan school counselors reported positive and supportive attitudes relative to issues of same-gender attractional orientation and attractional minority students.

Research Question 2 – Skills/Experiences

What is the level of counseling skills/experiences of Michigan school counselors regarding attractional minority students?

Research hypothesis. Based on previous research (Phillips & Fischer, 1998; Sears, 1991), the researcher anticipated that there would be statistically significant differences in the level of counseling skills/experiences as they pertained to working with attractional minority students among school counselors vis-à-vis their age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale.

Results. The assumption that there would be statistically significant differences was *not* confirmed in this analysis. The scores from the Skills subscale were used for this calculation. A one-way ANOVA was conducted with each independent variable (age, gender, ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, years of school counseling, school locale, school levels) being run alone with *Skills* as the dependent variable. As shown in Table 10, there were no statistically significant differences in the level of *skills/experiences* relative to *age* (F -value = 1.853; p -value = 0.123), *gender* (F -value = 0.990; p -value = 0.322), *ethnic background* (F -value = 2.348; p -value = 0.059), *attractional/sexual orientation* (F -value = 1.992; p -value of 0.100), *years of school counseling experience* (F -value = 1.588; p -value = 0.147), *school levels* (F -value = 0.306 p -value = 0.873), and *school locale* (F -value = 1.086; p -value = 0.341).). It should be noted, however, that while none of the variables showed statistical significance, the variable *ethnic background* did approach significance (p = 0.059). Additionally, one-way ANOVAs were run with *Skills* as the dependent variable and the collapsed variables for ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, and years of school counseling as the independent variables. As shown in Table 10, statistical significance was indicated for the ethnic background collapsed variable (F -value = 5.909; p -value = 0.017) and the

attractional/sexual orientation collapsed variable (F -value = 5.625; p -value = 0.19). Post hoc analyses could not be run due to each of those variables having less than three groups. Results indicated statistical *nonsignificance* for *years of school counseling experience collapsed* ($F = 1.785$; $p = .109$).

Table 10

One-Way ANOVAs—Skills Subscale of the SOCCS

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Age	4	1.853	0.123
Gender	1	0.990	0.322
Ethnic Background	4	2.348	0.059
Attractional/Sexual Orientation	4	1.992	0.100
Years of School Counseling Experience	7	1.588	0.147
School Levels	4	0.306	0.873
School Locale	2	1.086	0.341
Ethnic Background (Collapsed)	1	5.909	0.017*
Attractional/Sexual Orientation (Collapsed)	1	5.625	0.019*
Years of School Counseling Experience (Collapsed)	6	1.785	0.109

*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The mean Skills subscale scores for the collapsed ethnic background categories *White* and *Non-White* are 3.88 and 2.78, respectively, with scores for Whites ranging from 3.59–4.16 and scores for Non-Whites ranging from 1.93–3.63 (from a scale of 1–7). These data suggest that though both means indicate the participants in this study have less

than a *somewhat* level of counseling skills/experiences regarding attractional minority students, the White participants in this study reported a higher level of counseling skills/experiences than did the Non-White participants. The mean Skills subscale scores for the collapsed attractional/sexual orientation categories Heteroattractional and Nonheteroattractional are 3.70 and 4.98, respectively, suggesting that the Nonheteroattractional participants in this study have a higher level of counseling skills/experiences regarding attractional minority students than do the Heteroattractional participants in this study.

Overall, the mean score for the Skills subscale for the entire sample was 3.78 ($SD = 1.51$) with scores ranging from 1.00 to 6.72 (from a scale of 1–7) suggesting that the Michigan school counselors in this study reported having a moderate level of counseling skills and experiences relative to attractional minority students.

Research Question 3 – Knowledge

What level of knowledge do Michigan school counselors reflect regarding attractional minority issues?

Research hypothesis. There will be statistically significant differences in the level of knowledge that Michigan school counselors reflect regarding attractional minority issues vis-à-vis age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale. This assumption is based on the Bidell (2005) study.

Results. The scores from the Knowledge subscale were used for this calculation. A one-way ANOVA was conducted with knowledge as the dependent variable and age,

gender, ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school levels, and school locale as the independent variables. The assumption that there would be statistically significance differences in knowledge *was confirmed only* for the variable *attractional/sexual orientation* with an F -value = 2.963 and p -value = 0.023 (see Table 11). A post hoc analysis for *attractional/sexual orientation* could not be performed to give meaning to this significance due to two groups within the attractional/sexual orientation demographic having fewer than two participants (bisexual, $n = 1$; and questioning/curious, $n = 1$). Additionally, a one-way ANOVA was conducted with the collapsed variable for attractional/sexual orientation and results yielded statistical significance (F -value = 10.612; p -value = 0.001). The mean Knowledge subscale scores for the collapsed attractional/sexual orientation categories Heterosexual and Nonheterosexual are 3.78 and 4.89, respectively, with scores for the Heteroattractional (heterosexual) participants ranging from 3.61–3.96 and the scores from the Nonheteroattractional participants ranging from 4.24–5.54. These data suggest that the Nonheteroattractional participants in this study have a higher level of knowledge regarding LGBTQ minority issues than do the Heteroattractional participants in this study.

The performance of one-way ANOVAs with *Knowledge* as the dependent variable indicated *statistical nonsignificance* for the variables *age* (F -value = 0.274; p -value = 0.894), *gender* (F -value = 2.095; p -value = 0.150), *ethnic background* (F -value = 0.566; p -value = 0.687), *years of school counseling experience* (F -value = 0.587; p -value = 0.766), *school levels* (F -value = 0.436; p -value = 0.783), and *school locale* (F -value = 0.530; p -value = 0.590). One-way ANOVAs were conducted with knowledge as the

dependent variable and the collapsed variables for ethnic background and years of school counseling experience as the independent variables. Results indicated *statistical nonsignificance* for collapsed ethnic background (F -value = 0.477; p -value = 0.491) and years of school counseling experience (F = 0.686; p = 0.661) (see Table 11).

Table 11

One-Way ANOVAs—Knowledge Subscale of the SOCCS

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Age	4	0.274	0.894
Gender	1	2.095	0.150
Ethnic Background	4	0.566	0.687
Attractional/Sexual Orientation	4	2.963	0.023*
Years of School Counseling Experience	7	0.587	0.766
School Levels	4	0.436	0.783
School Locale	2	0.530	0.590
Ethnic Background (Collapsed)	1	0.477	0.491
Attractional/Sexual Orientation (Collapsed)	1	10.612	0.001*
Years of School Counseling Experience (Collapsed)	6	0.686	0.661

Overall, the mean score for the Knowledge subscale for the entire sample was 3.86 (SD = .966) with scores ranging from 1.00–7.0 (from a scale of 1–7) suggesting that the Michigan school counselors in this study reported having a moderate level of

knowledge relative to same-gender attractional orientation and attractional minority students.

In summary, the mean total score of the SOCCS indicated that, overall, the school counselors in this study believed that they were *somewhat* competent to meet the needs of attractional minority students. The mean total score of this study mirrored the exact same mean total score of the Bidell (2005) study. Also, the participants in this study reported a high mean score on the Attitude subscale indicating a positive and supportive attitude towards attractional minority students and their concerns. The Bidell study also reported a high mean score on the Attitude subscale. In addition, participants in this study reported a mean score on the Skills/Experience subscale that indicated a *less than somewhat* level of counseling skills and experience relative to working with attractional minority students. The mean score of the Skills/Experience subscale was slightly higher than the mean score of the same subscale of the Bidell study. Finally, the participants in this study reported a mean score on the Knowledge subscale that indicated a *less than somewhat* level of knowledge regarding attractional minority orientation issues and attractional minority students and their concerns. The Bidell study reported a slightly higher mean score on the Knowledge subscale (see Table 12).

Mean scores are based on a 1–7 scale with higher scores indicating a higher level of competence (Bidell, 2005).

Table 12

SOCCS Mean Scores of Counselor Competency

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Bidell Mean	Bidell Std. Deviation
Total Score	120	4.64	0.833	4.64	0.89
ASubScore	120	6.22	0.941	6.49	0.79
SSubScore	120	3.78	1.505	2.94	1.53
KSubScore	120	3.86	0.966	4.66	1.05

Research Question 4 – Training

Do Michigan school counselors believe that their graduate counseling program adequately trained them to competently meet the needs of attractional minority students?

Research hypothesis. There will be no statistically significant differences in the belief about the quality of training of Michigan school counselors by their graduate counseling programs to meet the needs of attractional minority students when comparing age, gender, ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale. This hypothesis is based on research studies conducted by Phillips and Fischer (1998) and Bidell (2005).

Results. In order to gain a general perspective of Michigan school counselors' beliefs about their graduate counseling training surrounding LGBTQ students and their concerns, participants were asked to rate the statement "I believe that my graduate counseling training program prepared me to work effectively and competently with

LGBTQ students and their concerns.” The analysis of this hypothesis was based on the responses to this question, which used the same 7-point Likert scale as did the items from the SOCCS. The results of the analysis of the responses for this question follow.

According to the frequency of responses shown in Table 13, 70.9% of the participants believed this statement to be *less than somewhat true to not true at all* and 19.9% believed this statement to be *above somewhat true to totally true*.

Table 13

Overall Belief Regarding Graduate Counseling Training Toward LGBTQ Students

	<i>n</i>	%
1 = Not at all True	33	27.5
2	38	31.7
3	14	11.7
4 = Somewhat True	11	9.2
5	10	8.3
6	7	5.8
7 = Totally True	7	5.8

The mean score for this statement was 2.80 ($SD = 1.813$), with scores ranging from 1 to 7 (from a scale of 1–7); nearly three-fourths (70.9%; $n = 85$) of the participants scored below the *somewhat true* point. These results suggest that, in general, the participants in this study believed that their graduate counseling training programs *had not* prepared them to work effectively and competently with LGBTQ students and their concerns.

The research hypothesis assumed that there would be *no* statistically significant differences in the beliefs of Michigan school counselors with regards to their graduate

counseling training programs preparing them to meet the needs of attractional minority students when comparing age, gender, ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale. Employing one-way ANOVA procedures, the assumption of nonsignificance *was confirmed* for the variables gender, ethnicity, attractional/sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school locale, and school level, attractional/sexual orientation collapsed, and ethnic background collapsed (see Table 14). However, this assumption was *not confirmed* for the variables *age* and *years of school counseling experience collapsed* (see Table 14). Regarding *age*, using a one-way ANOVA, results showed an *F*-value of 5.468 with a *p*-value of 0.000.

Table 14

One-Way ANOVAs—Overall Perception of Adequate Graduate Training on LGBTQ Issues

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Age	4	5.468	0.000*
Gender	1	1.206	0.274
Ethnic Background	4	0.737	0.569
Attractional/Sexual Orientation	4	0.886	0.475
Years of School Counseling Experience	7	2.047	0.055
School Levels	4	0.039	0.997
School Locale	2	2.023	0.137
Ethnic Background (Collapsed)	1	1.958	0.164
Attractional/Sexual Orientation (Collapsed)	1	2.921	0.090
Years of School Counseling Experience (Collapsed)	6	2.409	0.032*

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

A post hoc analysis was conducted applying a Tukey procedure and results indicated that there were statistically significant differences when making mean comparisons between three pairs of age groups: (a) age group 30–39 ($M = 3.70$) with age group 50–59 ($M = 2.40$); (b) age group 30–39 ($M = 3.70$) with age group 40–49 ($M = 2.24$); and (c) age group 30–39 ($M = 3.70$) with age group 60 and above ($M = 2.00$) (see Table 15). These results suggest that school counselors in the 30–39 age group believed that their graduate counseling training programs prepared them to work more effectively and competently with LGBTQ students than school counselors in the 50–59 age group, the 40–49 age group, and the 60 and above age group. The 60 and above age group reported that their graduate counseling training programs prepared them the *least* to work effectively and competently with LGBTQ students compared to the 30–39, 40–49, and 50–59 age groups.

Table 15

Post Hoc Tests—Overall Perception of Adequate Graduate Training—Age of Participants

Age Group	Mean	Age Group	Mean	Mean Difference	Standard Error	Sig.
30–39	3.70	50–59	2.40	–1.30	0.386	0.010*
30–39	3.70	40–49	2.24	–1.46	0.438	0.009*
30–39	3.70	60 and above	2.00	–1.70	0.545	0.019*

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

Regarding the collapsed variable for years of school counseling experience, a one-way ANOVA was conducted and the results indicated statistical significance ($F = 2.409$; $p = 0.032$). However, post hoc analysis using a Tukey procedure revealed no p -values

among the subgroups that were statistically significant (see Table 16). It is likely that the Tukey post-hoc test did not show any significance among the subgroups due to uneven group sizes, with the subgroup 35–39 having only 2 participants.

Table 16

Post Hoc Tests—Overall Perception of Adequate Graduate Training—Years of School Counseling Experience (Collapsed)

Years	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	Sig.
0–4	3.26	2.049	.297	.997
5–9	3.09	1.957	.311	1.000
10–14	3.05	1.810	.404	1.000
15–19	1.73	.884	.454	.083
20–24	1.43	.535	.665	.166
25–34	2.14	1.069	.665	.726
35–39	2.50	.707	1.244	1.000

Research Question 5 – Professional Development

What professional development activities would Michigan school counselors be willing to engage in within the next 12 months to expand their knowledge regarding issues of attractional orientation in general and attractional minority students in particular? What are the three top ranking continuing education activities that Michigan school counselors would find most helpful in assisting them with working with LGBTQ students?

Michigan school counselors' willingness to engage in professional development activities will first be discussed followed by a discussion on the top three ranked continuing education activities.

Professional Development Activities

Results. Participants were asked "Would you be willing to participate in the following activities for professional development regarding issues pertaining to LGBTQ students during the next 12 months?" Three activities were provided as choices: (a) "Attend conferences and workshops"; (b) "Read professional articles"; and (c) "Attend in-service training at school." There were four possible responses for each choice from which participants were asked to choose only one response for each activity: (a) *yes*, (b) *no*, (c) *possibly*, and (d) *unsure*. One hundred and twenty participants responded to all three of the activities. The following are the results for each professional development activity as also shown in Table 17.

Table 17

Willingness to Participate in Professional Development Activities Regarding LGBTQ Issues

Activity	Yes	%	No	%	Possibly	%	Unsure	%	Total
Conference & Workshops	79	65.8	8	6.7	32	26.7	1	.8	100.0
Reading Professional Articles	96	80.0	2	1.7	21	17.5	1	.8	100.0
Inservice Training	90	75.0	8	6.7	19	15.8	3	2.5	100.0

Attend conferences and workshops. Seventy-nine participants (65.8%) reported that they *would be willing* to attend conferences and workshops, 26.7% ($n = 32$) reported that they *would possibly* attend, 6.7% ($n = 8$) reported that they *would not* attend, and 1 participant ($n = 0.8\%$) expressed *being unsure* regarding attendance.

Read professional articles. Ninety-six (80%) of the participants reported that they *would be willing to read* professional articles on LGBTQ topics, 17.5% ($n = 21$) of the participants reported that they *would possibly read* professional articles, 1.7% ($n = 2$) of the participants reported that they *would not read* professional articles, and 1 participant ($n = 0.8\%$) reported *being unsure about reading* professional articles.

Attend in-service training at school. Ninety (75%) of the participants reported that they *would be willing* to attend in-service training at school, 15.8% ($n = 19$) of the participants indicated that they *would possibly attend* in-service training, 6.7% ($n = 8$) of the participants reported that they *would not attend*, and 2.5% ($n = 3$) reported being *unsure* as to whether they *would be willing* to attend in-service training at school.

Most Helpful Continuing Education Activities

The second part of Research Question 5 was addressed by a question which asked participants to “Please indicate the top three activities by rank that you would find most helpful in assisting you in working with LGBTQ students.” Six activities were provided as choices: (a) In-service training, (b) Reading professional literature on LGBTQ topics, (c) Attending an LGBTQ resource center, (d) Consulting with LGBT persons who are living open, (e) Taking a specific course on adolescent sexuality/LGBTQ adolescents, and (f) Reading personal accounts of LGBT persons.

Activities were ranked using a weighted score in which each response as a #1 choice was given 3 points, each response as a #2 choice was given 2 points, and each response as a #3 choice was given 1 point. The sums for each activity are calculated as total weighted scores (see Table 18). Results are being reported according to rank, starting with the most highly rated option: (1) Taking a specific course on adolescent attractionality/sexuality (200 pts.), (2) In-service training (197 pts.), (3) Reading professional literature on LGBTQ topics (123 pts.), (4) Consulting with LGBT persons who are living open (78 pts.), (5) Attending an LGBTQ resource center (63 pts.), and (6) Reading personal accounts of LGBT persons (53 pts.).

Table 18

Most Helpful Continuing Education Activities Regarding LGBTQ Issues

Activity	#1 Choice		#2 Choice		#3 Choice		Choice Total
	<i>n</i>	Weighted score	<i>n</i>	Weighted score	<i>n</i>	Weighted score	
Taking a course	49	(147)	19	(38)	15	(15)	200
Inservice training	43	(129)	29	(58)	10	(10)	197
Read LGBTQ literature	18	(54)	24	(48)	21	(21)	123
Consult open LGBT persons	12	(36)	13	(26)	16	(16)	78
LGBTQ center	10	(30)	9	(18)	15	(15)	63
Read personal LGBTQ accounts	8	(24)	4	(8)	21	(21)	53

These results indicate three top-ranked choices according to participants' responses with the top two being weighted almost identically. Scoring closely at the top were *taking a specific course* on adolescent sexuality/LGBTQ adolescents and *attending an in-service training*. The next most popular choice was *reading professional literature* on LGBTQ topics. Three activities comprised the bottom three choices: *consulting with LGBT persons who are living open*, *attending an LGBTQ resource center*, and *reading personal accounts of LGBT persons*. This information can provide guidance for future continuing education for school counselors in the area of attractional minority issues and LGBTQ students.

In summary, results suggest that school counselors *are* willing to engage in professional development within the next 12 months in order to broaden their understanding of LGBTQ student issues, with over 75% of school counselors indicating they were willing to attend a conference or workshop, read professional literature on LGBTQ topics, or attend an in-service training at school. The top two ranked professional development activities were taking a specific course on LGBTQ adolescent issues and attending an in-service training.

Additional School Counselors' Perspectives on LGBTQ Issues and Training

Research Question #4 – Training, assessed school counselors' overall beliefs regarding the effectiveness of their graduate counseling training programs relative to preparing them to work competently with attractional minority students. Results suggested that in general, the participants believed that their graduate counseling training programs *had not* prepared them to work effectively and competently with attractional

minority students and their concerns. The following questions assessed school counselors' perspectives regarding their role(s) with assisting LGBTQ students and their beliefs regarding the prevalence of attractional minority students at their schools. Additional questions regarding school counselors' experiences in their graduate counseling training programs are discussed later.

School Counselor Role With LGBTQ Students

School counselor participants in this study were also asked about their attitudes regarding the role of the school counselor in helping with students with LGBTQ issues and concerns. Seven roles for school counselor were provided and participants were asked to check all of the roles that they believed were applicable. As shown in Table 19, results indicate that 96.7% ($n = 116$) believed that school counselors should *assist students with finding support*; 92.5% ($n = 111$) believed that school counselors should *assist students with relationships with friends/peers*, 87.5% ($n = 105$) of the participants believed that school counselors should *assist students with relationships with family members*, 43.3% ($n = 52$) believed that school counselors should *assist students with exploring their sexual/attractional identity*, 41.7% ($n = 50$) believed that school counselors should *assist students with accepting an LGBT orientation*, 1 participant believed that school counselors should *assist students with changing their attractional/sexual orientation*, and 3.3% ($n = 4$) believed that *it is not the role of the school counselor to assist a student with LGBTQ concerns*.

Table 19

School Counselors' Role With LGBTQ Students

Role	<i>n</i>	%
Assist with finding support	116	96.7
Assist with friends/peers relationship	111	92.5
Assist with family relationships	52	43.3
Assist with accepting LGBTQ orientation	50	41.7
Assist with changing LGBTQ orientation	1	0.8
Not the role to assist LGBTQ students	4	3.3

These results suggest that, overall, school counselors believed it was their role to provide support and assist LGBTQ students with relationships with family and friends. School counselors were less certain if it was their role to assist students with accepting an LGBT orientation, or to assist students with exploring their attractional/sexual identity, as only slightly over 40% thought these were roles of the school counselor. Only a very small percentage believed it is *not* the role of the school counselor to assist a student with LGBTQ concerns and an even smaller proportion believed that it is the role of the school counselor to assist students with changing their attractional/sexual orientation.

Estimates of LGBTQ Students in Their School

Estimates regarding the prevalence of attractional minority students in schools was assessed through the question: "What percent of adolescent students in your school

do you think are LGBTQ?” Three participants (2.5%) reported that there were *no LGBTQ students* in their schools, 49.2% ($n = 58$) reported 1–5%, 41.5% ($n = 49$) reported 6–10%, and 6.8% ($n = 8$) reported 11–19%. Thus, results indicate that most Michigan school counselors in this study (89.2%) thought there were between 1–10% of their students who are LGBTQ students.

Experiences With LGBTQ Issues in Graduate Counseling Programs

A major focus of this study was to assess school counselors’ experiences with regards to LGBTQ issues during their graduate counseling training programs. Participants were asked several questions assessing whether: (a) there were open LGBTQ faculty in their graduate programs, (b) there were faculty with expertise regarding LGBTQ issues, (c) they were encouraged to explore possible biases and heteroattractiveness (heterosexism), (d) they had clinical training experiences serving LGBTQ clients/students, (e) they took a course solely devoted to LGBTQ concerns, (f) they were prepared by coursework to work with various types of LGBTQ students, and (g) LGBTQ concerns were infused into courses in their graduate counseling training program.

Open LGBT faculty members. Participants were asked if there were any faculty in their graduate counseling program who were openly lesbian, gay, biattractiveness/bisexual, or transgender. As shown in Table 20, 27.5% ($n = 33$) reported that there were openly LGBT faculty members in their graduate counseling programs, while 72.5% ($n = 87$) of the participants reported that there were *no* openly LGBT faculty members in their graduate counseling programs.

Table 20

Issues in Graduate Counseling Training

Experiences	Yes		No		Cumulative Percent
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Open LGBT faculty?	33	27.5	87	72.5	100.0
Faculty expertise in LGBTQ issues?	38	31.7	82	68.3	100.0
Encouraged to explore possible biases and heterosexism?	70	58.3	50	41.7	100.0
Clinical training with open LGBTQ students?	31	25.8	89	74.2	100.0

Faculty expertise in LGBTQ issues. Generally, graduate training programs consist of individual faculty members who have specific research interests and/or areas of expertise. Question 3 of the survey asked participants “Were there any faculty members in your graduate counseling program whose areas of expertise included lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning issues?” As shown in Table 20, 68.3% ($n = 82$) reported that their graduate counseling training program *did not* have a faculty member whose area of expertise included LGBTQ issues and 31.7% ($n = 38$) of the participants reported that there *was* a faculty member whose area of expertise included LGBTQ issues. The results indicate that more than two thirds of the participants *did not* have a faculty member in their graduate counseling training program with acknowledged expertise in LGBTQ issues and concerns.

Exploring biases and heteroattractiveness. Participants were asked if they were encouraged to explore possible biases and heteroattractiveness with regard to lesbian, gay, biattractiveness/bisexual, and transgender students during their graduate counseling programs. Of those who responded, 41.7% ($n = 50$) gave a *no* response to this question while 58.3% ($n = 70$) responded *yes*, suggesting that a slight majority of the participants believed they were encouraged to explore possible biases and heteroattractiveness with regard to LGBTQ students during their graduate counseling training programs (see Table 20).

Clinical training and LGBTQ clients/students. Clinical training (i.e., practicum or internship) prior to graduating from a graduate counseling training program assists counselors in developing skills considered necessary for competent practice. Participants were asked if there were opportunities during their clinical training to work with LGBTQ clients/students who were living openly. Table 20 shows that 89 participants (74.2%) indicated that they *did not* have opportunities to work with LGBTQ clients/students who are living open during their clinical training, while 31 participants (25.8%) reported that they *did* have opportunities to do so during their clinical training. The results suggest that nearly three-fourths of the school counselors in this study completed graduate counseling training programs without having a clinical training experience working with open LGBTQ clients (see Table 20).

Course Solely Devoted to LGBTQ Counseling Issues

Participants were asked if their graduate counseling training program offered a course solely devoted to counseling issues with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and

questioning students. Table 21 shows that 86.7% ($n = 104$) reported *no*, 4.2% ($n = 5$) reported *yes, it was optional and I took the course*, 4.2% ($n = 5$) reported *yes, it was required and I took the course*, 5.0% ($n = 6$) reported *yes, it was optional and I did not take the course*. Thus, the data suggest that a significant majority of respondents in this study received graduate-level counseling training that *did not* include a course solely devoted to LGBTQ issues and concerns.

Table 21

Course Devoted to LGBTQ Student Issues

Course Options	<i>n</i>	%
No (course was not offered)	104	86.6
Yes, it was optional and I took the course	5	4.2
Yes, I was required and I took the course	5	4.2
Yes, it was optional and I did not take the course	6	41.7
Total	120	0.8

LGBTQ Concerns Infused Into Courses

Participants were asked if LGBTQ concerns were infused into courses in their graduate counseling training programs. As indicated in Table 22, 39 (32.5%) of the participants selected *1* on a 7-point scale (Not at all True), 15.8% ($n = 19$) of the participants selected *2* on a 7-point scale, 12.5% ($n = 15$) selected *3* on a 7-point scale, 15.8% ($n = 19$) selected *4* on a 7-point scale (Somewhat True), 4.2% ($n = 5$) selected *5* on

a 7-point scale, 7.5% ($n = 9$) selected 6 on the a 7-point scale, and 11.7% ($n = 14$) selected 7 on a 7-point scale (Totally True).

Table 22

LGBTQ Concerns Infused Into Courses

	<i>n</i>	%
1 = Not at all True	39	32.5
2	19	15.8
3	15	12.5
4 = Somewhat True	19	15.8
5	5	4.2
6	9	7.5
7 = Totally True	14	11.7
Total	120	100.0

The mean score for this statement was 3.13 ($SD = 2.085$), which suggests that participants believed that LGBTQ issues were *less than somewhat* infused into courses in their graduate counseling training programs. One-way ANOVAs were run for each of the independent variables (age, gender, ethnic background, attractional/sexual orientation, years of school counseling experience, school level, and school locale) with *LGBTQ Concerns Infused Into Courses* as the dependent variable. Results indicated statistical *nonsignificance* for ethnic background ($F = 0.583$; $p = 0.676$), attractional/sexual orientation ($F = 1.094$; $p = 0.363$), school level ($F = 0.586$; $p = 0.673$), and school locale ($F = 0.701$; $p = 0.498$) (see Table 23). However, as shown in Table 22, statistical significance was indicated for the variables age ($F = 6.393$; $p = 0.000$), gender ($F = 4.772$; $p = 0.031$), years of school counseling experience ($F = 5.422$; $p = 0.000$), and the collapsed variable for years of school counseling experience ($F = 5.946$; $p = 0.000$).

Table 23

One-Way ANOVAs—LGBTQ Concerns Infused Into Courses

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Age	4	6.393	0.000*
Gender	1	4.772	0.031*
Ethnic Background	4	0.583	0.676
Attractional/Sexual Orientation	4	1.094	0.363
Years of School Counseling Experience	7	5.422	0.000*
School Levels	4	0.586	0.673
School Locale	2	0.701	0.498
Ethnic Background (Collapsed)	1	1.097	0.297
Attractional/Sexual Orientation (Collapsed)	1	3.817	0.053
Years of School Counseling Experience (Collapsed)	6	5.946	0.000*

*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Regarding *age*, the Tukey post hoc procedure was performed to assess pairwise differences among the five age groups. Results indicated that the 30–39 age group ($M = 4.19$; $SD = 1.970$) differed significantly from the age groups 50–59 ($M = 2.65$; $SD = 2.032$), 40–49 ($M = 2.80$; $SD = 1.893$), and 60 and above ($M = 1.62$; $SD = 1.387$). The results of this post hoc analysis suggest that the 30–39 age group reported a higher level of infusion of LGBTQ concerns into coursework when compared to the 50–59, 40–49, and 60 and above age groups. In addition, the age group 20–29 ($M = 4.60$; $SD = 1.817$) differed significantly from the age group 60 and above ($M = 1.62$; $SD = 1.387$) suggesting

that the 20–29 age group reported a higher level of infusion of LGBTQ concerns into coursework when compared to the 60 and above age group.

Regarding *gender*, results indicated that the mean score of the female participants ($M = 3.29$; $SD = 2.131$) differed significantly from the mean score of the male participants ($M = 2.12$; $SD = 1.453$) suggesting that female participants reported a higher level of LGBTQ concerns infused into coursework than reported by male participants.

With regards to the variables *years of school counseling experience* ($F = 5.422$; $p = 0.000$) and *years of school counseling experience collapsed* ($F = 5.946$; $p = 0.000$), One-way ANOVAs indicated statistical significance for both variables. Post hoc procedures, however, could not be performed for the expanded variable years of school counseling experience due to the 25–29 years group containing only 1 participant. However, a post hoc was conducted for the *collapsed* variable *years of school counseling experience* (25–34 year range) applying a Tukey procedure and results indicated that there were statistically significant differences when making mean comparisons between the following years of experience groups: (a) 0–4 years of experience ($M = 3.74$; $SD = 2.034$) with 15–19 years of experience ($M = 1.53$; $SD = .915$) and 20–24 years of experience ($M = 1.14$; $SD = .378$), (b) 5–9 years of experience ($M = 3.72$; $SD = 2.083$) with 15–19 years of experience ($M = 1.53$; $SD = .915$) and 20–24 years of experience ($M = 1.14$; $SD = .378$), and (c) 10–14 years of experience ($M = 3.84$; $SD = 2.267$) with 15–19 years of experience ($M = 1.53$; $SD = .915$) and 20–24 years of experience ($M = 1.14$; $SD = .378$). These results suggest that school counselors having 0–14 years of school counseling experience reported higher levels of LGBTQ concerns infused into courses in their graduate counseling training programs than did participants having 15–24 years of

school counseling experience. Participants having 35–39 years of school counseling experience reported the least amount of infusion of LGBTQ concerns into courses in their graduate counseling training programs ($M = 1.00$; $SD = .000$).

Preparation by Coursework to Work With Types of LGBTQ Students

Participants were asked, “To what extent do you believe that your coursework prepared you to work competently with (a) gay male, (b) lesbian, (c) bisexual, (d) transgender students, and (e) students who are questioning their sexual orientation?” Participants were asked to rate the quality of their preparation for each of these groups, indicating how well they felt prepared (1 = Not Very Well; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Well). Table 24 provides a summary of the following narrative. Regarding *gay male students* ($M = 1.73$; $SD = .683$), 40.0% ($n = 48$) of the participants reported *Not Very Well*, 46.7% ($n = 56$) reported *Somewhat*, and 13.3% ($n = 16$) reported *Well*. With regards to *lesbian students* ($M = 1.72$; $SD = .676$), 40.8% ($n = 49$) of the participants reported *Not Very Well*, 46.7% ($n = 56$) reported *Somewhat*, and 12.5% ($n = 15$) reported *Well*. Regarding *biattractional/bisexual students* ($M = 1.63$; $SD = .673$), 47.5% ($n = 57$) of the participants reported *Not Very Well*; 41.7% ($n = 50$) reported *Somewhat*; and 10.8% ($n = 13$) reported *Well*. With regards to *transgender students* ($M = 1.46$; $SD = .607$), 60.0% ($n = 72$) of the participants reported *Not Very Well*; 34.2% ($n = 41$) reported *Somewhat*; and 5.8% ($n = 7$) reported *Well*. With regards to *students who are questioning their attractional/sexual orientation* ($M = 1.63$; $SD = .674$), 48.3% ($n = 58$) reported *Not Very Well*; 40.8% ($n = 49$) reported *somewhat*; and 10.8% ($n = 13$) of the participants reported *Well*.

Table 24

Preparation by Coursework to Work With Types of LGBTQ Students

Student Type	Not Very Well		Somewhat		Well		Cumulative Percent
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Gay male students	48	40.0	56	46.7	16	13.3	100.0
Lesbian students	49	40.8	56	46.7	15	12.5	100.0
Biattractional (bisexual) students	57	47.5	50	41.7	13	10.8	100.0
Transgender students	72	60.0	41	34.2	7	5.8	100.0
Questioning/ Curious students	58	48.3	49	40.8	13	10.8	100.0

The results suggest that, overall, the school counselors in this study believed that their graduate counseling training programs only *somewhat* prepared them to work with the different types of attractional minority students. The data also suggest that the school counselors in this study believed that they were better prepared to competently work with gay male and lesbian students than biattractional/bisexual and questioning/curious students and least prepared to competently work with transgender students.

In summary, this chapter has provided the (a) results of the demographic and professional information provided by the participants, (b) responses to the five research questions and how those responses impacted the research hypotheses, (c) professional development activities pertaining to LGBTQ students and their concerns that the participants in this study are willing to participate in within the next 12 months, (d) continuing education activities that the participants in this study would find most helpful

in assisting them to work with LGBTQ students, and (e) participants' experiences in their graduate counseling training programs. Key findings in each of these areas along with implications of these findings and comparisons with previous research will be further discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate Michigan professional school counselors' preparedness to meet the academic, career, and the personal/social needs of students who identify as lesbian, gay, biattractional, transgender, and students who are questioning their attractional orientation (LGBTQ; also referred to as attractional minority students). This study assessed Michigan school counselors' attitudes, skills/experiences, knowledge, training, and willingness to engage in professional development regarding issues related to attractional orientation and attractional minority students. This study also assessed which continuing education activities school counselors believed to be most helpful in assisting them to work with attractional minority students. In addition, this study addressed general issues related to school counselors' perception of their graduate school counseling preparation to work competently with LGBTQ students. This chapter discusses the results of the data analyses in the order that they were presented in Chapter IV: (a) demographic professional profile information, (b) the research questions, and (c) additional school counselor perspectives. In addition, this chapter presents limitations of the study, implications for future research, and recommendations for graduate counseling training programs and continuing education for school counselors.

Demographics and Professional Profile Information

Demographics and professional profile information were used to describe the sample population of this study. Demographic and profile information was not available from neither the Association of Michigan School Counselors (AMSC) nor the Michigan School Counselor Association (MSCA), from which this sample was drawn, to make any comparisons or assess generalizability of the results to the body of professional school counseling association members in Michigan. That said, the sample for this study seems to reflect the overall makeup of the school counselors in Michigan, in that the profile of the typical participant was female, Euro-American/White, heteroattractual, and with a school counseling endorsement to her teaching certificate.

Age

There were five age group classifications ranging from 20–29 through 60 years above. All age groups were represented in this study with the majority of school counselors reported being in the 50–59 and the 30–39 age groups, respectively. Seventy-eight (65%) of the participants in this study reported being between ages of 40 and 60 and above, which may suggest the possibility that many of the school counselors completed their graduate counseling training during times when issues of adolescent attractiveness/sexuality and same-gender attraction were considered taboo topics and less discussed than today.

Gender

A significant majority of respondents in this study were females (85.8%), with 14.2% males. This is consistent with the sample of American School Counselor Association (ASCA) members who participated in the Price and Telljohann study (1991). The sample of school counselors in the Price and Telljohann study was comprised of 61% females and 39% males. A female majority (75%) also comprised the sample in the Bidell (2005) study, from which the Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS), used in this current study, was generated.

Ethnic Background

The sample respondents in the current study was largely represented by Euro-American/White participants (88.3%) and a total of 19 Non-Whites consisting of African American/Black, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino(a), and Native American/Alaska Native. Statistical significance for the variable *ethnic background* was found with only the Skills/Experiences subscale, only after the ethnic minority participants were collapsed into two categories: Whites and Non-Whites. The White participants in this study reported a higher level of skills/experiences regarding attractional minority issues when compared to Non-White participants. Non-White participants scoring lower on the Skills/Experiences subscale than Whites may be due in part to (a) the religious convictions of some Non-Whites that consider same-gender attraction to be a sin and worthy of denouncing and, as such, are hesitant to lend support to individuals who identify as LGBTQ; and (b) intracultural homophobia that often

takes a “hands off” approach when addressing issues of same-gender attractional orientation (Diamond, 1994; Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1999; Eliason & Schope, 2007; Snider, 1996; Weiler, 2003). The ethnic makeup of the Bidell (2005) study of students, counselor educators, and supervisors was more diverse than the current study. The ethnic/racial breakdown of the Bidell study was: White (61.2%), African American/Black (7.1%), Asian American (10.6%), Latino (13.1%), Bi-racial/Mixed (2.2%), and Native American (1.3%). This should be taken into account when comparisons are made below between results from this current study and the Bidell study.

Attractional/Sexual Orientation

A significant majority (93.3%) of the research participants reported being heteroattractional with only 8 participants reporting being nonheteroattractional (4 lesbian, 2 gay male, 1 biattractional, and 1 participant who was questioning his or her attractional orientation). The Bidell (2005) study was comprised of a slightly more diverse group of participants. Of the participants in the Bidell study, 85.3% reported being heteroattractional, and 12.2% reported being lesbian, gay male, or biattractional.

Statistical significance for the variable *attractional/sexual orientation* was found with two subscales (Skills and Knowledge). This was true for the Knowledge subscale when all the options of this variable were entered into the analysis, and for the collapsed variable of Heteroattractional and Nonheteroattractional. Heteroattractional participants scored lower on knowledge of LGBTQ issues. As the result of one-way ANOVA procedures for the Skills subscale, only the collapsed variable for attractional/sexual orientation indicated statistical significance; the Nonheteroattractional participants

indicating a higher level of counseling skills and experiences regarding LGBTQ issues than the Heteroattractual participants. Such findings are understandable and expected considering that the Nonheteroattractual school counselors have a personal experiential base from which to draw knowledge and skills for counseling attractual minority students. In addition, Nonheteroattractual school counselors may feel a sense of shared experiences with attractual minority students and thus are more willing to take a hands-on approach relative to working with them than Heteroattractual school counselors.

Graduate Counseling Program

The majority of the research participants reported graduating from a CACREP accredited graduate counseling program that was 48 credit hours or more and was completed in Michigan. There are currently 11 universities/colleges in Michigan that offer graduate school counseling programs that are approved by the Michigan Department of Education (B. Harrison, personal communication, December 3, 2009). It is hoped that the findings of this study as discussed in this chapter may inform for the need for education of Michigan school counselors in the areas of adolescent attractuality/sexuality and LGBTQ youth concerns in graduate counseling training programs.

Overview of the Study's Significant Findings

Descriptive Statistics

The overall mean score for the SOCCS in this study was 4.64 ($SD = 0.83$; range = 2.44 to 6.31), which indicates that the school counselor participants in this study report

being slightly above the midpoint on the 7-point Likert scale, indicating it is only *Somewhat True* that their graduate counseling programs adequately prepared them to work with LGBTQ students and their concerns. This overall mean score in the current study is remarkably identical to the overall mean score for the SOCCS in the Bidell (2005) study ($M = 4.64$; $SD = 0.89$; range = 2.52 to 6.90) in which the sexual orientation competency among graduate students, counselor educators, and supervisors ($n = 312$) from 13 public and 3 private universities was assessed. Thus, in two separate studies using the SOCCS, the present study assessing only school counselors, and the Bidell study including a combination of counseling graduate students, educators, and supervisors, the samples scored identically on the overall mean score. This suggests that Michigan school counselors are similar to counselors overall in their attitudes, skills, and knowledge of LGBTQ issues, and that participants in both studies report only a moderate level of competency in this area.

Attitude

The school counselor's attitude regarding same-gender attraction plays a major role in the adolescent's attractional identity development (T. G. Russell, 1989). Participants in the current study reported a positively strong and supportive attitude relative to issues of LGBTQ attractional orientation and attractional minority students, evidenced by the mean score of 6.22 on the 7-point scale ($SD = 0.941$; range = 2.7 to 7) for the Attitudes subscale for the entire sample. The Attitudes subscale scores from this study are quite similar to the Attitudes subscale scores in the Bidell (2005) study ($M = 6.49$; $SD = 0.79$; range = 3.1 to 7). Phillips and Fischer's (1998) study also indicated that

participants reported “quite positive attitudes overall, with 94% having total scores on the positive/accepting end of the response scale” (p. 719). None of the groups within the demographic or professional profile variables differed significantly on their scores for this subscale.

The positively strong and supportive attitude towards attractional minority orientation issues and LGBTQ students reported by the participants in this study is in stark contrast to the Sears (1991) study, which surveyed 142 middle and high school counselors and found that nearly two thirds of those surveyed held negative attitudes or feelings about homoattractionality. Also, the positive attitude reported by the participants of this study is also in contrast with the participants in the GLSTN (1994-1996) study, the findings of which indicated that two thirds of the school counselors in the study held negative feelings towards gay and lesbian people. Both the Sears and the GLSTN study occurred approximately 18 and 13 years ago, respectively, a time when the sentiment towards same-gender attractional issues was not as positive as it appears to be at this time. A more recent study better reflects the attitudinal findings of the current study. Monier’s (2000) study of school counselors in Washington State found that the majority of them held “relatively” positive beliefs about attractional minority students.

Skills/Experiences

School counselors, whether aware or unaware, regularly come into contact with self-identified attractional minority students and those who are questioning their attractional orientation (Cooley, 1998). Research participants in this study reported having only a moderate level of counseling skills and experiences relative to attractional

minority students (mean score of 3.78, below the midpoint on the 7-point scale; $SD = 1.51$). Scores ranged from 1.00 to 6.72 (on a scale of 1–7). The scores reported in the current study indicate a moderate level of counseling skills and experiences, slightly higher than the Skills subscale scores in the Bidell (2005) study ($M = 2.94$; $SD = 1.53$; range = 1.0 to 6.9). This moderate level of skills and experiences is also reported in other studies.

The few previous studies (Fontaine, 1998; Monier, 2000; Price & Telljohann, 1991; Sears, 1988) that addressed this area of skills and experience primarily focused on *experiences* with LGBTQ youth. Little has been done to clearly identify the actual *skills* related to competent work with LGBTQ students. In fact, the questions that comprise the Skills subscale of the SOCCS used in this study really are a mix of skills and experiences. For example, one of the questions assigned to the Skills subscale reads, “I check up on LGBTQ counseling skills by monitoring my functioning/competency via consultation, supervisions, and continuing education,” while another question assigned to the Skills subscale reads, “I have experience counseling lesbian students.” The first question seeks to assess skills as it relates to competency, whereas the second question assesses actual clinical experience.

Regarding skills and experiences, it seems that many of the studies that have discussed school counselors and attractional minority students, reported about their clinical experiences with attractional minority students rather than actual techniques and methods that reflect skills competencies. For example, the results of the Price and Telljohann (1991) study indicated that 71% of the middle and high school counselors surveyed reported having counseled at least one attractional minority student during their

careers. Fontaine (1998) reported that of the 101 elementary, junior, and senior high school counselors surveyed in Pennsylvania, 51% of the junior and high school respondents reported working with at least one student who was questioning his or her attractional orientation, and 42% reported having worked directly with at least one self-identified gay or lesbian student. Fontaine also reported that 21% of the elementary school counselors reported awareness of students in their schools who were either self-identified as gay or lesbian or were questioning their attractional orientation. Monier (2000) assessed elementary, middle, high, and alternative high school counselors in Washington State regarding their experiences of counseling attractional minority students in a 2-year time period. Results from Monier's study indicated that 73.3% of the respondents reported having talked with at least one student about attractional orientation issues; 24.1% reported having counseled at least 1 or 2 self-identified attractional minority students; 17.3% reported having counseled 3 or more attractional minority students; and 38.9% and 14.6% reported having counseled 1 or 2 students and 3 or more students, respectively, who were questioning their attractional orientation. Therefore, the Skills subscale of the SOCCS seems to primarily assess the clinical experiences of school counselors relative to attractional minority students similar to the studies previously mentioned.

The moderate level of counseling skills/experiences reported by the participants in this study seems to reflect the previous literature that speaks to school counselors counseling attractional minority students. Future studies would do well to distinguish between skills and experiences, and this will be discussed further below regarding recommendations for further research.

Knowledge

There is an adage that states “knowledge is power.” The mean score for the Knowledge subscale was 3.86 (below the midpoint on the 7-point scale) with scores ranging from 1.00 to 6.62. A mean Knowledge subscale score of 3.86 suggests that Michigan school counselors reported having only a moderate level of knowledge regarding attractional minority issues. The mean score for the Knowledge subscale in the Bidell (2005) study was 4.66 ($SD = 1.05$; range = 1.63 to 6.88) with scores ranging from 1.63 to 6.88. Considering that many of the respondents in the Bidell study were counselor educators and supervisors educated at the Ph.D. level and most school counselors, with some exceptions, are educated at the master’s level, it seemed reasonable that the mean Knowledge subscale score of the Bidell study would be higher than that of the current study. In terms of independent variables in this current study, only the groups within attractional orientation differed significantly on scores on the Knowledge subscale but could not undergo post hoc analysis due to the bisexual and questioning groups having fewer than two participants.

When both the full range of options for attractional orientation and when this variable was collapsed (Heteroattractional and Nonheteroattractional), Nonheteroattractional participants scored higher on the Knowledge subscale than the Heteroattractional participants, which was understandable and expected. Attractional minority participants have a history of discrimination and homophobia, and therefore it is fitting that this group should be more knowledgeable about themselves and those who share a similar history and orientation. In the Sears (1991) study, prospective teachers

were asked “if all or most of the school faculty were knowledgeable about homosexuality” (p. 49). The respondents in the Sears study reported the belief that twice as many teachers were knowledgeable about homosexuality compared to counseling staff. It would be interesting to learn how Michigan school counselors would be rated by middle and high school students as well as teachers regarding same-gender attraction and attractional minority student issues.

Overall Graduate Counseling Program Training

Training in gay and lesbian issues has proven to be effective in reducing heteroattractionalist attitudes in mental health practitioners and thereby increasing their skills to work effectively with gay and lesbian clients (Rudolph, 1989; Satcher & Leggett, 2007). Participants in this study were asked to rate the statement “I believe that my graduate counseling training program prepared me to work effectively and competently with LGBTQ students and their concerns.” On a scale of 1 = Not True at All to 7 = Totally True, the mean score for the entire sample was 2.80 ($SD = 1.813$) indicating that the school counselors in this study believed that their graduate counseling training programs *did not* adequately train them to work with LGBTQ students. This belief of not being adequately trained mirrors other studies. Phillips and Fischer (1998) reported that “most participants reported feeling ill-prepared to counsel gay and lesbian clients, and even more felt poorly prepared to counsel bisexual clients” (p. 719). The school counselor participants in the Sears (1991) study reported not feeling prepared to work with attractional minority students due to the lack of training. The findings in the Phillips and Fischer study indicated that training in LGB issues was inadequate. The current study has

shown that nearly 20 years from the Sears study, school counselors are still reporting feelings of ill-preparedness due to inadequate training or a total lack of training.

The evidence was presented in Chapter II of this study that LGBTQ students are at-risk for many social ills including truancy, academic failure, dropping out of school, substance abuse, running away from home, sexual exploitation, and suicide, to name a few. School counselors, who are in a strategic position to be able to advocate for these students, should be competently assisting them. How can school counselors assist a population of students with their unique set of issues and concerns if they have not been trained to do so? To try to provide service outside of one's scope of practice or area(s) of expertise or training could do harm to the recipient of one's service and could rightfully border on unethical practice. The need for adequate and specific training regarding LGBTQ student issues and concerns will be further highlighted as we discuss professional development for school counselors. It should also be noted that participants in this study were not asked if they had completed continuing education in the area of attractional minority orientations after the completion of their graduate degree.

Professional Development

Participants in this study indicated that they would be willing to engage in professional development regarding issues pertaining to attractional minority students during the next 12 months. Professional development in terms of reading professional articles on LGBTQ issues received the highest *willingness to do* responses (80%), followed by attending in-service training at school (75%), and, third, attending conferences and workshops (65%). The top three ranked activities that participants in the

current study reported to be most helpful were (1) taking a specific course on adolescent attractionality/LGBTQ adolescence, (2) in-service training, and (c) reading professional LGBTQ literature.

The willingness to participate in professional development was also indicated in the Price and Telljohann (1991) study in which 89% of the respondents indicated interest in obtaining additional training in matters of counseling and attractional orientation. Price and Telljohann's study of 289 middle and high school counselors discovered that the majority of the respondents reported obtaining information about same-gender attraction from professional journals, mass media, gay/lesbian friendships, workshops and professional conferences and textbooks, with only 2% reporting obtaining information from in-service training. The results of the Satcher and Leggett (2007) study found the lowest measure of homonegativity among professional school counselors who had a gay or lesbian friend or personal acquaintance and/or had participated in training regarding gay and lesbian issues.

In Monier's (2000) study, in which training with regards to attractional orientation among the school counselors in the State of Washington was assessed, the two most common sources of information were (a) self-education through the reading of books and journal articles (72.1%), and (b) interacting and communicating with attractional minority friends or family members (66%). In addition, Monier also found that the participants in the study enhanced their competence to work with attractional minority issues by attending seminars/workshops, lectures or presentations in graduate classes, obtaining information from mass media, taking a formal class that was part of their graduate training, and/or attending a school in-service training.

An unfortunate commentary on the lack of training of school counselors in the area of same-gender attractional issues is stated in the Sears (1991) study when speaking of school counselors and attractional minority students: “Few [school counselors] felt prepared to work with this at-risk population. Despite their inadequate preparation . . . less than one fifth of these counselors indicated that they had participated in programs to expand their knowledge about homosexuality” (p. 71). This researcher’s sentiment regarding the inadequate training and/or lack of training of school counselors as it pertains to LGBTQ students is expressed by Robert Earl Powell (1987), whose statement spoken over 20 years ago regarding homoattractional behavior and the school counselor yet remains true today:

Counselors, therefore need to try to overcome the results of a “benign neglect” in counselor education and teacher education programs: an inadequate preparation of professionals for this challenging task. They should be aware of the need for their own continuing education and for continuous involvement with the issues of adolescent homosexuality. (p. 207)

Additional School Counselors’ Perspectives

Role of School Counselor

School counselor participants in this study were asked what they believed to be an appropriate role(s) for school counselors in helping with students with LGBTQ issues and concerns. Participants believed that school counselors should primarily assist LGBTQ students with finding support (96.7%), assist them with their relationships with friends/peers (92.5%), and assist students with their relationships with family members (87.5%). Fewer participants believed school counselors should assist students with

exploring their attractional/sexual identity or assist students with accepting an LGBTQ orientation. One participant believed that the role of the school counselor should be to assist the student with changing his or her attractional orientation, and 4 participants believed that it was not the role of the school counselor to assist a student with LGBTQ concerns. Therefore, the majority of the respondents see themselves in a supportive role, helping the student with their personal and relational concerns rather than assisting the student with the actual attractional orientation issues.

The supportive role that seems to be favored by school counselors in this study is corroborated by the Monier (2000) study, which found that the majority of the school counselors in the study were more likely to perform covert or private acts of assistance to LGBTQ students (e.g., individual counseling) and less willing to engage in overt gay affirming behaviors (e.g., advocate for attractional minority students in staff meetings). Only one participant in the current study expressed the willingness to provide “hands-on” assistance, but that assistance was in the form of assisting students with changing their attractional/sexual orientation (e.g., conversion therapy, reparative therapy). Studies have indicated the harm that conversion and reparative therapies can do to LGBTQ persons by the practitioner who is attempting to change a client’s attractional orientation from homoattractional to heteroattractional (Blackwell, 2008; Shidlo & Schroeder, 2002).

According to the American School Counselor Association’s (ASCA) Ethical Standards (2004) and The Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (2005), the role of every professional school counselor is to assist students in discovering their authentic selves and help them develop strong positive social, ethnic, cultural, and attractional identities that will contribute to them becoming successful and productive

citizens in society (Pope, 2003). It is this researcher's belief that if school counselors are not assisting *all students* in discovering their authentic selves (which may be same-gender attracted), then they are not practicing in concert with the Ethical Standards of the school counseling profession.

Experiences With LGBTQ Issues in Graduate Counseling Programs

Participants in this study were asked to retrospectively reflect upon their graduate counseling training program experiences with regards to LGBTQ issues and concerns. Several dimensions were assessed, including (a) experiencing openly LGBTQ faculty members, (b) experiencing faculty whose expertise includes LGBTQ issues, (c) exploring biases and heteroattractionalism, (d) clinical training and LGBTQ client/students, (e) course solely devoted to LGBTQ issues and concerns, (f) LGBTQ concerns infused into courses, and (g) preparation by graduate counseling training program,. The following is a narrative of their experiences.

Openly LGBT faculty members. Nearly three fourths of the participants in this study (72.5%) reported that there were *no* openly LGBT faculty members in their graduate counseling programs. Phillips and Fischer (1998) reported that approximately one third of the student participants reported having at least one faculty member who was out as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. The ability of an attractional minority individual to live open speaks volumes about the climate of that setting. Studies assessing school counselors' perceptions regarding the prevalence of attractional minority students in their schools has indicated that some school counselors did not believe that their schools had any attractional minority students. Did those schools indeed have no attractional minority

students or could the school climate in those schools have been such that to live openly would have been met with hostility and danger? The same question begs to be asked regarding those graduate counseling training programs where participants reportedly had no openly gay faculty members. Were there indeed no gay faculty members in those graduate counseling training programs or could the climate in those departments have been nonaffirming to the degree that attractional minority faculty members chose to live in hiding rather than live openly?

Faculty expertise LGBTQ issues. Eighty-two participants (68.3%) reported that their graduate counseling training program *did not* have a faculty member whose area of expertise included LGBTQ issues. Phillips and Fischer (1998) found similar results, as approximately one third of their participants reported having at least one faculty member who had expertise in LGB issues, and about one quarter of the participants reported having worked with a practicum supervisor who had expertise in LGB issues.

Topics that society considers taboo are often avoided or quietly discussed. One of the reasons given for the lack of discussion among school administrators, faculty, and staff regarding issues pertaining to same-gender attraction is that many do not want to be identified with a topic that is stigmatized and taboo. Though the discussion on the topic of same-gender attractional orientation has increased as evidenced in the growth of the body of literature on this topic yet, the conversation on same-gender attraction is approached very cautiously, especially when the discussion involves school-aged children. It is this researcher's position that every phenomenon that affects the quality of life for individuals or groups of people must have a platform for discussion in higher education and those discussions are best facilitated by those who are well informed

through research, lived experiences, and/or personal experiences with those who have the lived experiences. It is the responsibility of academics to, at the most, encourage the pursuit of expertise in areas of research that are considered taboo and, at the least, confront any degree of stigmatization that would discourage faculty who are seeking expertise in an area that carries societal stigma.

Explore biases and heteroattractiveness. Over half of the participants in this study (58.3%) believed they were encouraged to explore possible biases and heteroattractiveness with regard to LGBTQ students during their graduate counseling training programs. The results of this study are similar to the Phillips and Fischer (1998) study which also reported that “about half of the participants reported being encouraged to explore their personal heterosexist biases in both their doctoral programs and in their practicum” (p. 719).

The responsibility of “higher” education is to challenge everything that one has been taught through “general” education. We are all a product of our ecological environments and who we are and how we think is the sum of our socialization that have been influenced through family, culture, schools, peers, religion/spirituality, communities, etc. Our general education is the result of all of the previously mentioned influences. Once again, it is the responsibility of higher education to “shake the tree” of general education and that shaking of the tree should challenge those who come to higher education to explore biases, prejudices, and “isms” (e.g., sexism, racism, ageism, ableism, heteroattractiveness). It is this researcher’s position that when higher education no longer challenges individuals to explore biases and prejudices, then higher education ceases to educate individuals but merely trains them. Training maintains the status quo,

but education brings revelation, revelation brings revolution, and revolution leads to evolution. Higher education should encourage a higher way of thinking and behaving.

Clinical training and LGBTQ clients/students. Nearly three fourths of the school counselors in this study completed graduate counseling training programs without having a clinical training experience working with open LGBTQ clients. Phillips and Fischer (1998) reported that training in LGB issues was less than adequate with a mode of zero.

After graduate counseling training programs encourage trainees to explore possible biases and heteroattractionalism, then experiential learning with LGBTQ persons is necessary and in order. Often, we fear who and what we do not understand; face-to-face communication with those who we do not understand assists in fostering understanding. School counselor education programs must be intentional with identifying sources that would be willing to supply LGBTQ clients/students for experiential learning.

Course solely devoted to LGBTQ issues and concerns. A significant majority of the participants in this study (86.7%) reported that there was not a course offered in their graduate program that was solely devoted to LGBTQ issues. Findings in the Phillips and Fischer's (1998) study were similar, indicating that 15% of the participants' programs "had available courses specifically focused on LGB issues . . ." (p. 719). When participants in this current study were asked to choose what they believed to be the top three activities they would find most helpful in working with LGBTQ students, the top choice was *taking a specific course on adolescent attractionality/sexuality/LGBTQ adolescents*. Thus, while school counselors report they would find a course in this area useful, few are available.

According to Phillips and Fischer (1998) (the study from which many of the questions assessing training in the current study were derived), an LGBTQ-specific course is preferred over a “generalist” (multicultural and diversity) course in graduate counseling training. Phillips and Fischer contends that an LGBTQ-specific course would encourage self-exploration—exploration of biases and prejudices that could lead to competent and sensitive practice as opposed to a generalist approach to attractional orientation that is generally grounded in a heteroattractional/heterosexist worldview. Therefore, LGBTQ-specific training is highly suggested.

LGBTQ concerns infused into courses. Participants in this study reported that LGBTQ issues were *less than somewhat* infused into courses. Results from the Phillips and Fischer (1998) study indicated that students reported gay and lesbian issues being integrated into some courses (median for each = 3 courses; mode for each = 2) and bisexual issues being integrated into fewer courses (mean = 1, mode = 0). The current study did not assess the number of courses in which LGBTQ issues were infused. Just as issues pertaining to ethnicity, multiculturalism, and diversity need to be infused throughout higher education curricula, LGBTQ issues need to be infused into graduate counseling education courses. Therefore, in addition to a course solely devoted to LGBTQ issues, issues and concerns related to LGBTQ students should be appropriately infused into courses.

Preparation by graduate training program. Given the graduate counseling training programs experiences as reported above by the majority of the participants, it is understandable why the participants in this study scored relatively low on the Skills/Experiences and the Knowledge subscales, and why participants believed that their

graduate counseling training programs inadequately trained them to meet the needs of attractional minority students. The lack of openly gay faculty members, lack of faculty whose area of expertise included LGBTQ issues, with only slightly over a half of the participants being encouraged to explore possible biases and heteroattractionalism, the lack of clinical training with LGBTQ clients/students, and the lack of a course solely devoted to LGBTQ issues and concerns are all possible reasons why the participants in this study reported only being somewhat prepared to work with attractional minority students. Positive changes in the above listed areas will most likely result in future school counselors who are better prepared to effectively and competently work with LGBTQ students and their concerns.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations of this study are acknowledged. First, both professional school counseling associations agreed to an initial and a follow-up electronic distribution of the survey via e-mail. The Michigan School Counselor Association (MSCA) sent both an initial and a follow-up e-mail to its membership, whereas the Association of Michigan School Counselors (AMSC) sent only one e-mail notification of the study that was embedded with four other items of information. As a result, the majority of the online participants were members of MSCA and the online response rate for a combined AMSC and MSCA membership was relatively low (7.3%). Second, another limitation lies in the possibility of a sampling bias in that school counselors who were more supportive of sexual minority students might have been more inclined to complete their surveys compared to school counselors who were not supportive of sexual minority students

(Fontaine, 1998). It is possible that those who completed the survey may already be advocates or affirming of LGBTQ students. Those potential participants, who are possibly antigay or have strong religious convictions which condemn same-gender attractional orientation, may have simply refused to respond to the invitation to participate in the study. Therefore, this sample may be skewed. In addition, the school counselors who participated in the current study are members of professional school counseling associations in Michigan, making them a specialized group of all school counselors who are participating in the school counseling profession beyond their work settings. This reality can also contribute to the sample being skewed.

Another limitation of this study is that the data gathered in this study rely on self-report measures and participants may not always provide accurate information. When individuals self-report, it is possible that many will want to present themselves in the best possible light, in spite of being assured that the information on the survey is confidential and personal identification will not be shared with others. Fourth, another limitation of this study is the generalizability of the findings. Professional school counselors serving only in schools in the state of Michigan were surveyed; therefore, there is limited generalizability.

Fifth, demographic and professional profile information were not provided by the professional school counseling associations from which this sample was drawn, making it difficult to draw comparisons with the professional school counseling association membership at-large and to determine if the results can be generalized to all professional school counselors in Michigan who are association members. Therefore, it is recommended that if demographic information of association members is not currently

being collected, then perhaps it should be collected for research purposes. Further, perhaps the Michigan Department of Education could collect and make available demographic information for the purpose of research. Sixth, this study is being conducted in one state in the Midwest United States, which limits the generalizability of the findings to school counselors in other Midwest states as well as other geographic areas nationwide. Therefore, additional research in other geographic locations is recommended to determine if the findings of this study are representative of school counselors in other regions.

Finally, this survey asked participants to retrospectively reflect upon their graduate training programs to assess their training relative to LGBTQ issues. However, this study failed to assess possible continuing education activities (e.g., conferences, workshops, in-service training) since completion of their graduate counseling programs. In spite of the limitations, the results of this study are supported by the findings of other studies.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study sought participation from Michigan school counselors who were members of Michigan school counseling associations. Future research might seek the participation of *all* school counselors in the state of Michigan, irrespective of professional school counseling association membership, which could reduce sampling bias. In such instance, a paper-and-pencil procedure for data collection would be recommended in order to have a greater degree of control over the distribution of the survey. This study obtained only the perspective of school counselors regarding issues of attractional

orientation and attractional minority students. Future research might seek to obtain the perspectives of both LGBTQ students and heteroattractional students regarding their beliefs about school counselors' ability to meet the needs of attractional minority students. It might also be interesting to ascertain what teachers think about school counselors' competence to work with LGBTQ students.

School administrators have a major influence on setting the climate for a discussion or nondiscussion on issues related to attractionality and same-gender attraction. Future research could replicate this study with school administrators and school principals as the target populations to be surveyed. The norms and mores of a community and a culture greatly influence what is allowed to be taught and discussed in K-12 classrooms. Future research should therefore seek the perspectives of the parents of LGBTQ students with regards to the roles and competence of school counselors working with LGBTQ students and their concerns. Finally, participants in this study were not asked about their continuing education activities since completing their graduate counseling training programs with regards to same-gender attraction issues and attractional minority student concerns. Future research might focus on the continuing education activities of school counselors as those activities relate to increasing their levels of competency with regards to working with attractional minority students and their concerns.

The Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS) (Bidell, 2005) has proven to be a valuable instrument used for the purpose of this study. However, this researcher found that the label given to the Skills subscale seems to warrant some discussion. The questions pertaining to the Skills subscale appear to be a group of

questions assessing: (a) *training* (“I have been to in-services, conference sessions, or workshops, which focused on LGBTQ student issues in school counseling”); (b) *counseling experiences* (“I have experience counseling gay male students,” “lesbian students,”); and (c) *skills* (“I feel competent to assess in a school setting, the mental health/developmental needs of a student who is LGBTQ”). Therefore, it appears that the questions assigned to the Skills subscale encompass at least three different domains of (school) counseling practice: training, skills, and experience. Future measures or a modification of Bidell’s SOCCS are encouraged to distinguish between *skills* and *experience* in particular, and to develop a core set of skills that are involved with clinical competency relative to working with LGBTQ students and their concerns.

The population targeted for this study was Michigan school counselors; therefore, the information gathered from this study is specific to the state of Michigan. Given that policies and standards about such issues are made at the state level, it is suggested that this study be replicated in other states to inform graduate school counseling programs and continuing education for school counselors in various geographic locations. Furthermore, it is recommended that this study be replicated on a national level, perhaps by surveying members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA).

This study asked participants to retrospectively reflect upon the graduate counseling training experiences but did not seek information regarding continuing education activities *since* completing graduate education. Future studies in this area may wish to assess postgraduate continuing education activities for school counselors regarding LGBTQ issues and concerns. What continuing education activities school counselors have found to be most helpful would also be useful to explore.

As this researcher searched through the literature on counseling and school counseling of LGBTQ youth, it became apparent that a very small portion of the literature regarding LGBTQ students is actual quantitative or qualitative research. Much of the literature written on counseling and LGBTQ youth appears to be conceptual and based upon personal opinion, but not actual rigorous research. It is recommended that the body of literature regarding counseling and particularly school counseling and attractional minority students continue to develop with well-designed quantitative and qualitative research. A follow-up to this current quantitative study could be an investigation of the lived experiences of school counselors relative to counseling attractional minority students using a qualitative research design. An additional qualitative study could involve interviewing faculty advisors of Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) with the purpose of gaining their perspectives on the school experiences of attractional minority students and what impact that GSAs might have on those experiences. Also, a qualitative study might investigate the lived experiences of attractional minority students who participate in GSAs vis-à-vis those attractional minority students who do not participate in GSAs.

Ethnic minority and attractional minority school counselors were underrepresented in the current study. Therefore, it is recommended that future research involve obtaining the perspectives of both ethnic and attractional minority school counselors relative to LGBTQ student issues and concerns. It is also recommended that future research involves an inquiry into the lived experiences of LGBTQ ethnic minority students relative to school counselors.

Implications for Graduate School Counselor Education

The participants in this study clearly indicated the top three continuing education activities that they consider the most helpful: (1) taking a specific course on adolescent attractionality/sexuality, (2) in-service training, and (3) reading professional literature on LGBTQ topics. Therefore, it is recommended that graduate (school) counselor education programs in Michigan develop and offer a course on adolescent attractionality and LGBTQ adolescent issues and concerns. This course could also be offered to teachers and school administrators-in-training, as well as those who are practicing in the field. This course could be offered as a required course, elective course, or a special topics course.

Based on the findings of this study that showed a lack of opportunity to work with LGBTQ clients in practica and internships, it is recommended that faculty and managers of university counseling training centers act intentionally and purposefully toward identifying, locating, and obtaining LGBTQ clients/students for practica and internship training experiences. This might also include assuring that university training clinics are LGBTQ-friendly and welcoming.

This study confirms what previous research has shown, that school counselors do not feel well prepared to work competently with LGBTQ students. School counselors particularly do not believe that their graduate school counseling programs have adequately prepared them. These findings have persisted for over two decades. Perhaps it is time for change at higher professional organizational levels to promote greater competence of school counselors to work effectively with this population. The American

School Counselor Association Ethical Standards (2004) and the Transforming School Counseling/Education Trust initiative will be considered next.

The second tenet of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) Ethical Standards (2004) states in part that “special care be given to students who have historically not received adequate educational services: students of color, low socioeconomic students, students with disabilities and students with non-dominant language background” (Appendix L1). This second tenet, however, does not identify or mention attractional minority youth as students who, historically, have not received adequate services in spite of the fact that the literature presented in Chapter II of this study strongly suggests that attractional minority students have historically been and currently are grossly underserved (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005; Marinoble, 1998; Reed, 1992; Savin-Williams, 1994; Savin-Williams & Cohen, 2007; Tharinger & Wells, 2000; Uribe, 1994). Therefore, it is highly recommended that attractional minority students be added to the list of students who have historically been underserved by the educational system, thus encouraging additional training of school personnel and interventions for attractional minority students.

The primary goal of The Education Trust is to bring attention to the achievement and opportunity gap between low socioeconomic students and students of color compared to other students in order to “improve the education of all students, and particularly those students whom the system has traditionally left behind” (p. 1). The National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) was established by the Education Trust and the MetLife Foundation based on the premise that “school counselors are ideally positioned to serve as advocates for students and create opportunities for *all students*

[italics added] to reach these new high academic goals” (The Education Trust, 2003, p. 1). It should be noted that although research has identified poor, ethnic minority, and attractional minority students as being “underserved,” yet attractional minority students are not mentioned by The Education Trust or the NCTSC as a target population for interventions. Therefore, it is recommended that the Education Trust and NCTSC or similar group include attractional minority students as a population to be targeted, so that indeed all students are being adequately served and to ensure that no student is left behind. Perhaps by bringing attention to the issues and concerns of attractional minority students on a national platform through national associations such as ASCA and The Education Trust, academic programs and local school districts and schools will follow the lead.

Finally, this study found that only slightly more than half of the participants in the study reported being encouraged to explore personal biases and heteroattractionalism. It is highly recommended that graduate school counseling programs be intentional with regards to encouraging, on a routine basis, self-exploration and self-awareness so as to discover and confront possible biases, prejudices, and heteroattractionalism.

Implications for Professional Development and Continuing Education

Regarding professional development and continuing education, the school counselor participants in this study have clearly indicated that they are willing to participate in professional development activities. Furthermore, they have indicated they are willing to read professional literature pertaining to LGBTQ issues, attend in-service training at school, and attend conferences and workshops addressing LGBTQ adolescent

concerns. Therefore, it is recommended that graduate school counseling programs provide school counselor trainees with literature that is accurate, informative, and affirming of LGBTQ students. Further, it is recommended that school counselor educators or experts in this area develop a 2-hour training module at the minimum that solely addresses LGBTQ students and their issues and concerns for the in-service training of school counselors.

The continuing education activity that was chosen by participants in this study as being most helpful in assisting them with working with LGBTQ students was *taking a specific course on adolescent sexuality/LGBTQ adolescents*. It is strongly recommended that a course be developed that specifically addresses LGBTQ adolescents' issues and concerns (e.g., attractional identity development, stigmatization, peer comparison, coming out). This course could be advertised and marketed to school counselors and through teacher education programs.

The continuing education activity that was chosen slightly below the first choice was *in-service training*. It is recommended that professionals who have expertise in the area of LGBTQ issues develop a training module that is specific to educational personnel and specifically addresses the concerns of LGBTQ adolescents in school settings. This training module should be marketed to school personnel, namely administrators, counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and bus drivers who transport students to school (to address bullying issues on school buses). This in-service training could also be marketed to juvenile facilities and other agencies that work with youth.

The third activity chosen as most helpful in assisting with working with LGBTQ students was reading professional LGBTQ literature. Literature regarding attractional

minority issues can be gathered from various sources that provide current and accurate information (e.g. GLSEN, PFLAG, LGBT Resource Center). This literature can be provided to school administrators, school counselors, and teachers in order to assist them with working with this student population. School counselor associations are also encouraged to inform their members about current thinking and new resources in this area. Accurate information is one of the keys to successful practice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Telljohann and Price (1993) conducted a qualitative study examining adolescent homoattractuals' life experiences. They asked a final question to the homoattractual adolescents: "Is there anything else you would like to share with us concerning this issue?" One adolescent gay male stated, "I feel being gay is good, we need more programs dealing with gay youth, *teachers and counselors should be more educated on the topic* [italics added] . . ." (p. 50). Implementing the recommendations stated above and pursuing the research agenda offered here will assist graduate school counselor education programs to fulfill the request of the students who desired that teachers and counselors be more educated on and competent to work with issues pertaining to attractual minority students. This would enable them to become the most effective and competent teachers and school counselors to work with some of the most unique and promising students.

Appendix A

Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Letters of Approval

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Date: February 24, 2009

To: Gary Bischof, Principal Investigator
Frederick Bland, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Amy Naugle", written over the printed name.

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 09-02-31

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Assessing Michigan School Counselors' Preparedness to Meet the Needs of Sexual/Attractional Minority Students" has been **approved** under the **exempt** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: February 24, 2010

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Date: April 22, 2009

To: Gary Bischof, Principal Investigator
Frederick Bland, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair *Amy Naugle*

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 09-02-31

This letter will serve as confirmation that the change to your research project titled "Assessing Michigan School Counselors' Preparedness to Meet the Needs of Sexual/Attractional Minority Students" requested in your memo dated April 22, 2009 (recruitment strategy and paper survey added; consent document for anonymous paper survey; drawing for \$50 gas cards) has been approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board.

The conditions and the duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University.

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: February 24, 2010

Appendix B

E-mail and Letter Granting Permission to Use Instruments

07/28/08

14:55

U. OF AKRON/CTCC + 912693873903

NO. 622 001



July 28, 2008

Frederick Bland
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI

Dear Mr. Bland,

As we discussed in our telephone conversation, I am pleased to give you permission to use the Survey of Training Experiences (STE) as one of five instruments in your dissertation research. Feel free to modify the STE as you deem necessary, of course making note of any such modifications in your document or any subsequent published articles. I look forward to hearing about the results of your study in the near future.

Best regards,


Julia C. Phillips, Ph.D.
Associate Director - Training

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs
Counseling, Testing and Career Center
Akron, OH 44325-4303
330-972-7082 • 330-972-8679 Fax

The University of Akron is an Equal Education and Employment Institution

Appendix C

Text of E-mail for Recruitment of Participants

Text of E-mail for Recruitment of Participants

Dear AMSC Member,

You are invited to participate in a research study which involves assessing the attitudes, knowledge, and training of Michigan school counselors regarding the needs of students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and those students who are questioning their sexual orientation. This study has been approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board of Western Michigan University and AMSC has agreed to send this e-mail to inform you of this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Should you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an anonymous electronic survey that will take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete. Those completing the survey will also have the option to enter a drawing for one of four \$50 gas cards.

A possible benefit of participating in this study is the knowledge that you are contributing to an area of research that can potentially assist all students in reaching their fullest potential as well as bringing attention and focus to an important area of school counselor training.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact either of the investigators below.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

To view the consent form and complete the survey, please click on the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=2ehJvqacEi3UyqWjULEf_2bg_3d_3d

If you are not connected automatically, then you can copy-and-paste the link into the address box on your web browser and then press the enter key.

Frederick Bland, MA, NCC, BCPC
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education and Supervision,
Western Michigan University
frederick.bland@wmich.edu
269.387.7206

Gary H. Bischof, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Dept. of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology, WMU
gary.bischof@wmich.edu
269.387.5100

Text of E-mail for Recruitment of Participants

Dear MSCA Member,

You are invited to participate in a research study which involves assessing the attitudes, knowledge, and training of Michigan school counselors to meet the needs of students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and those students who are questioning their sexual orientation. This study has been approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board of Western Michigan University and MSCA has agreed to send this e-mail to inform you of this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Should you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an anonymous electronic survey that will take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete. Those completing the survey will also have the option to enter a drawing for one of four \$50 gas cards.

A possible benefit of participating in this study is the knowledge that you are contributing to an area of research that can potentially assist all students in reaching their fullest potential as well as bringing attention and focus to an important area of school counselor training.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact either of the investigators below.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

To view the consent form and complete the survey, please click on the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=2ehJvqacEi3UyqWjULEf_2bg_3d_3d

If you are not connected automatically, then you can copy-and-paste the link into the address box on your web browser and then press the enter key.

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gary.bischof@wmich.edu
269.387.5100

Appendix D
Informed Consent

***Assessing Michigan School Counselors' Preparedness to Meet the Needs of
Sexual/Attractational Minority Students***

**Principal Investigator: Gary H. Bischof, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: J. Frederick Bland, M.A., NCC
Western Michigan University Dept of Counselor Education & Counseling
Psychology**

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: Students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and students who are questioning their sexual orientation (LGBTQ), could possibly be one of the most underserved groups among the student populations in school. You are being invited to participate in a study with the purpose of assessing Michigan school counselors' attitudes, knowledge, training, and overall preparedness to work with LGBTQ students.

DURATION OF THE STUDY: This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) on February 24, 2009. Do not participate in this study after February 24, 2010.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO: You will be asked to complete a 55-question online survey that has been created for the ease of completion and should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. If you receive this survey multiple times as a result of being a member of more than one professional school counseling association, then PLEASE RESPOND ONLY ONCE TO THIS SURVEY.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: No physical or psychological harm is expected to come to you as a result of your participation in this study. It is possible however, that some participants might experience some mild discomfort as they respond to some of the questions. Anyone experiencing any significant discomfort is encouraged to contact the student or principal investigators who are both licensed mental health professionals. The student and principal investigators' contact information is provided below. A possible benefit of participating in this study is the knowledge that you are contributing to an area of research that can potentially assist all students in reaching their fullest potential as well as bringing attention and focus to an area in school counseling training that may need to be highlighted. Participants will also have the opportunity to register for a drawing of one of four \$50.00 gas cards.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate and withdraw at any time, or refuse to answer any questions without prejudice, penalty, or any risk of loss. The Michigan School Counselor Association and the Association of Michigan School Counselors have agreed to have information about this study sent to its members. Participants will be asked for their consent to participate in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The survey for this study will be distributed via an email blast by the administrators of the AMSC and the MSCA and no identifying information will be collected on the survey. All documents related to the study will be secured in a locked file at the office of the student or principal investigator. The electronic survey and data will be collected and stored on a password-protected web-based site (SurveyMonkey.com) for one year where no one will have access to the log-in or password except the student and principal investigators. After that time, the electronic survey data will be stored on a flash drive and secured in a locked cabinet of the student or principal investigator. Personal information gathered for the purpose of the gas cards drawing will not be associated with one's survey and will be stored in a locked cabinet in the student or principal investigator's office and shredded at the conclusion of the drawing.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY, PLEASE CONTACT:

- J. Frederick Bland, M.A., NCC, Doctoral Candidate
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University
3102 Sangren Hall, Kalamazoo, MI 49008
E-mail: frederick.bland@wmich.edu Phone: 269.387.7206 Cell: 517.879.9484
- Gary H. Bischof, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University
3102 Sangren Hall, Kalamazoo, MI 49008
E-mail: gary.bischof@wmich.edu Phone: 269.387.5108

IF QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS ARISE DURING THE COURSE OF THE STUDY, YOU MAY ALSO CONTACT THE:

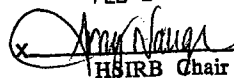
- Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, Western Michigan University
Phone: 269.387.8293
or the
- Vice President of Research, Western Michigan University
Phone: 269.387.8298

Please click below if you wish to complete the survey.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=2ehJvqacEi3UyqWjULEf_2bg_3d_3d

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
H. S. I. R. B.
Approved for use for one year from this date:

FEB 24 2009


HSIRB Chair

*Assessing Michigan School Counselors' Preparedness to Meet the Needs of
Sexual/Attractational Minority Students*

Principal Investigator: Gary H. Bischof, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: J. Frederick Bland, M.A., NCC

Western Michigan University Dept of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology

Anonymous Survey Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a research study with the purpose of assessing Michigan school counselors' attitudes, knowledge, training, and overall preparedness to work with students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and students who are questioning their sexual/attractational orientation (LGBTQ). This research is being conducted as part of the dissertation requirements for J. Frederick Bland. If you receive this survey multiple times (for example, you might receive an email about this study) as a result of being a member of one of the Michigan school counseling associations, then PLEASE RESPOND ONLY ONCE TO THIS SURVEY.

This survey is comprised of 55 questions and should take 10-15 minutes or less to complete. Your replies will be completely anonymous, so do not put your name anywhere on the form. You may choose to not answer any question and simply leave it blank. If you choose to not participate in this survey, you may either return the blank survey or you may discard it in the box provided. Completing the survey indicates your consent to participate in the study and to use the answers you supply. If you have any questions, you may contact Gary H. Bischof at 269.387.5100, J. Frederick Bland at 269.387.7206 or 517.879.9484, the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (269-387-8293), or the vice president for research (269-387-8298).

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. You should not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

Appendix E
Online Survey

Informed Consent

Principal Investigator: Gary H. Bischof, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: J. Frederick Bland, M.A., NCC

Western Michigan University Dept of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology

PURPOSE: Students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and students who are questioning their sexual orientation (LGBTQ), could possibly be one of the most underserved groups among the student populations in school. You are being invited to participate in a study with the purpose of assessing Michigan school counselors' attitudes, knowledge, training, and overall preparedness to work with LGBTQ students.

DURATION: This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB). Do not participate in this study after February 24, 2010.

YOU WILL BE ASKED TO: Complete a 55-question online survey that should take 10-15 minutes to complete. If you receive this survey multiple times as a result of being a member of more than one professional school counseling association, then PLEASE RESPOND ONLY ONCE TO THIS SURVEY.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: No physical or psychological harm is expected to come to you as a result of your participation in this study. It is possible however, that some participants might experience some mild discomfort as they respond to some of the questions. Anyone experiencing any significant discomfort is encouraged to contact the student or principal investigators who are both licensed mental health professionals.

A possible benefit of participating in this study is the knowledge that you are contributing to an area of research that can potentially assist all students in reaching their fullest potential as well as bringing attention and focus to an area in school counseling training that may need to be highlighted. Participants will also have the opportunity to register for a drawing of one of four \$50.00 gas cards.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate and withdraw at any time, or refuse to answer any questions without prejudice, penalty, or any risk of loss. The Michigan School Counselor Association and the Association of Michigan School Counselors have agreed to have information about this study sent to its members.

CONFIDENTIALITY: No identifying information will be collected on the survey. All documents related to the study will be secured in a locked file at the office of the student or principal investigator. The electronic survey and data will be collected and stored on a password-protected web-based site (SurveyMonkey.com) for one year where only the student and principal investigators will have access to the log-in or password. After that time, the electronic survey data will be stored on a flash drive and secured in a locked cabinet of the student or principal investigator. Personal information gathered for the purpose of the gas cards drawing will not be associated with one's survey and will be stored in a locked cabinet in the student or principal investigator's office and shredded at the conclusion of the drawing.

DIRECT QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY TO:

• J. Frederick Bland, M.A., NCC, Doctoral Candidate
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University
3102 Sangren Hall, Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Email: frederick.bland@wmich.edu Phone: 269.387.7206 Cell: 517.879.9484

• Gary H. Bischof, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University
3102 Sangren Hall, Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Phone: 269.387.5108
Email: gary.bischof@wmich.edu

IF QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS ARISE DURING THE COURSE OF THE STUDY, YOU MAY ALSO CONTACT THE:

- Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, Western Michigan University
Phone: 269.387.8293
or the
- Vice President of Research, Western Michigan University
Phone: 269.387.829

Do you wish to participate in this survey?

☐ I wish to participate in this survey

☐ I do not wish to participate in this survey

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory**Exit Page**

You have decided not to participate in this survey. Please click "Exit this survey" at the top right corner of this page. Thank You.

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory

Graduate Training in LGBTQ Issues

1. Did your graduate counseling training program offer a course solely devoted to counseling issues with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students (LGBTQ)?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, it was optional and I took the course
- ☐ Yes, it was required and I took the course
- ☐ Yes, it was optional and I did not take the course
- ☐ Yes, it was required and I did not take the course

2. To what extent do you believe that your coursework prepared you to work competently with gay male, lesbian, bisexual, transgender students and students who are questioning their sexual orientation?

	Not Very Well	Somewhat	Well
Gay Male	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bisexual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transgender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Questioning/Curious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Were there any faculty members in your graduate counseling program whose areas of expertise included lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning issues?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. Were any faculty members in your graduate counseling program openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. Were you encouraged to explore possible personal biases and heterosexism with regard to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students during your graduate counseling program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory

6. Did you have the opportunity to work with openly LGBTQ clients/students in your graduate counseling program's clinical training (i.e., practicum or internship)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. What is the role of a school counselor in helping a student with a LGBTQ orientation? (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ assist them in relationships with family members
☐ assist them in relationships with friends/peers
☐ assist them in finding support
☐ help change their sexual orientation to heterosexuality
☐ help them accept their LGBT orientation
☐ assist them with their sexual identity exploration
☐ it is not the role of the school counselor to assist a student with LGBTQ concerns

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory

Attitudes, Knowledge, Experience, and Training Regarding LGBTQ Issues:

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

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

8. I have received adequate clinical training and supervision to counsel lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender students, and students who are questioning their sexual orientation (LGBTQ).

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

9. The lifestyle of a LGBTQ student is unnatural or immoral.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

10. I check up on LGBTQ counseling skills by monitoring my functioning/competency via consultation, supervision, and continuing education.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

11. I have experience counseling gay male students.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

12. LGBTQ students receive "less preferred" forms of guidance counseling than heterosexual students.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

13. At this point in my professional development, I feel competent, skilled, and qualified to counsel LGBTQ students.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

14. I have experience counseling LGBTQ students regarding romantic relationships.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

15. I have experience counseling lesbian students.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory

16. I am aware that some research indicates that LGBTQ students are more likely to be diagnosed with mental illnesses than heterosexual students.

☐ 1☐ 2☐ 3☐ 4☐ 5☐ 6☐ 7

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory

Attitudes, Knowledge, Experience, and Training Regarding LGBTQ Issues:

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

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

17. 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.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

18. I believe that being highly discreet about their sexual orientation is a trait that LGBTQ students should work toward.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

19. I have been to in-services, conference sessions, or workshops which focused on LGBTQ student issues in school counseling.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

20. Heterosexist and prejudicial concepts have permeated the school counseling profession.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

21. I feel competent to assess in a school counseling setting, the mental health/developmental needs of a student who is LGBTQ.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

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

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

23. There are different psychological/social issues impacting gay male students versus lesbian students.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

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

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory

25. I have experienced counseling bisexual (male or female) students.

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

26. I am aware of institutional barriers that may inhibit LGBTQ students from using school counseling services.

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

27. I am aware that school counselors frequently impose their values concerning sexuality upon LGBTQ students.

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory

Attitudes, Knowledge, Experience, and Training Regarding LGBTQ Issues

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

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

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

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

29. Currently, I do not have the skills or training to do a case presentation or seek consultation if I had LGBTQ students on my caseload.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

30. I believe that LGBTQ students will benefit most from counseling with a heterosexual school counselor who endorses conventional values and norms.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

31. Being born a heterosexual person in this society carries with it certain advantages.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

32. I believe that sexual orientation differences between counselor and student may serve as an initial barrier to effective counseling of LGBTQ students.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

33. I have done a counseling role-play as either student or counselor involving a LGBTQ issue.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

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

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

35. I believe that all LGBTQ students must be discreet about their sexual orientation around other students.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory

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

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

37. LGBTQ concerns were infused into courses in my graduate counseling training program?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

38. I believe that my graduate counseling training program prepared me to work effectively and competently with LGBTQ students and their concerns

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory

Professional Development During The Next 12 Months

39. Would you be willing to participate in the following activities for professional development regarding issues pertaining to LGBTQ students during the next 12 months? (Please check one answer for each activity):

	Yes	No	Possibly	Unsure
Attend conferences and workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read professional articles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attend in-service training at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. Please indicate the top three activities by rank that you would find most helpful in assisting you in working with LGBTQ students?

In-service training	<input type="text"/>
Reading professional literature on LGBTQ topics	<input type="text"/>
Attending an LGBTQ resource center	<input type="text"/>
Consulting with LGBT persons who are living open	<input type="text"/>
Taking a specific course on adolescent sexuality/LGBTQ adolescents	<input type="text"/>
Reading personal accounts of LGBT persons	<input type="text"/>

41. What percent of students in your school do you think are LGBTQ?

- ☐ none (0%)
☐ 1% - 5%
☐ 6% - 10%
☐ 11% - 19%
☐ 20% and above

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory

Demographics

42. Age:

- ☐ 20-29
 ☐ 30-39
 ☐ 40-49
 ☐ 50-59
 ☐ 60 and above

43. Gender:

- ☐ Male
 ☐ Female
 ☐ Transgender
 ☐ Intersex

44. Ethnic Background:

- ☐ African American/Black
 ☐ Asian American/Pacific Islander
 ☐ Euro American/White
 ☐ Hispanic/Latino/a
 ☐ Middle Eastern
 ☐ Multiracial
 ☐ Native American/Alaska Native

45. Sexual Orientation:

- ☐ Gay Male
 ☐ Lesbian
 ☐ Heterosexual
 ☐ Bisexual
 ☐ Transgender
 ☐ Questioning

46a. Your Graduate Counseling Program:

- ☐ was CACREP Accredited
☐ was not CACREP Accredited
☐ don't know if CACREP Accredited

46b. Your Graduate Counseling Program's Required Credit Hours:

- ☐ were less than 48 credit hours
☐ were 48 credit hours or more

46c. Your Graduate Counseling Program Was Completed:

- ☐ in Michigan
☐ out-of-state

47. School Counselor Credential:

- ☐ Endorsement to my teaching certificate
 ☐ School Counseling License (SCL)
 ☐ None

48. Professional School Counseling Association Membership (Please check all that apply):

- ☐ AMSC (Assoc of Mich School Counselors)
 ☐ MSCA (Mich School Counselor Assoc)
 ☐ ASCA (American School Counselor Assoc)

49. Years of School Counseling Experience (please indicate):

- ☐ 0-4
 ☐ 5-9
 ☐ 10-14
 ☐ 15-19
 ☐ 20-24
 ☐ 25-29
 ☐ 30-34
 ☐ 35-39
 ☐ Above 40

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory

50. Years of Counseling Experience Outside of School Setting:

- ☐ 0-4
 ☐ 5-9
 ☐ 10-14
 ☐ 15-19
 ☐ 20-24
 ☐ 25-29
 ☐ 30-34
 ☐ 35-39
 ☐ Above 40

51. Type of School:

- ☐ Public
 ☐ Private
 ☐ Religious/Faith Affiliated

52. Current School Level(s) Where You Serve as a School Counselor (Please check all that apply):

- ☐ Elementary School
☐ Middle School/Junior High
☐ High School
☐ Alternative High School
☐ None

53. School Locale:

- ☐ Urban
 ☐ Suburban
 ☐ Small Town or Rural

54. County of School:

55. Does your school have an active Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Do Not Know
☐ Unsure of what a GSA is

Attractional Orientation School Counselor Preparedness Inventory**Thank You**

Thank you for completing this survey.

If you wish to be entered into the drawing for one of four \$50 gas cards, then please enter your name and email address below. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION FOR THE DRAWING WILL NOT BE ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR SURVEY RESPONSES.

Contact information:

Name

Email address

Appendix F
Paper-and-Pencil Survey

ATTRACTIONAL/SEXUAL ORIENTATION SCHOOL COUNSELOR PREPAREDNESS INVENTORY

Graduate Training in GLBTQ Issues:

1. Did your graduate counseling training program offer a course solely devoted to counseling issues with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students (LGBTQ)?

☐ No
☐ Yes, it was optional and I took the course
☐ Yes, it was required and I took the course
☐ Yes, it was optional and I did not take the course
☐ Yes, it was required and I did not take the course

2. To what extent do you believe that your coursework prepared you to work competently with gay male, lesbian, bisexual, transgender students, and students who are questioning their sexual orientation?

<u>Gay Male</u>	<u>Lesbian</u>	<u>Bisexual</u>	<u>Transgender</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Not very well	<input type="checkbox"/> Not very well	<input type="checkbox"/> Not very well	<input type="checkbox"/> Not very well
<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
<input type="checkbox"/> Well	<input type="checkbox"/> Well	<input type="checkbox"/> Well	<input type="checkbox"/> Well

Questioning/Curious

☐ Not very well
☐ Somewhat
☐ Well

3. Were there any faculty members in your graduate counseling program whose areas of expertise included lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning issues?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Were any faculty members in your graduate counseling program openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Were you encouraged to explore possible personal biases and heterosexism with regard to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students during your graduate counseling program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

(OVER)

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

<u>Not at all True</u>		<u>Somewhat True</u>			<u>Totally True</u>	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I have experience counseling gay male students.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. LGBTQ students receive "less preferred" forms of guidance counseling than heterosexual students.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. At this point in my professional development, I feel competent, skilled, and qualified to counsel LGBTQ students.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I have experience counseling LGBTQ students regarding romantic relationships.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I have experience counseling lesbian students.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I am aware some research indicates that LGBTQ students are more likely to be diagnosed with mental illnesses than heterosexual students.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. 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.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(OVER)

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

<u>Not at all True</u>		<u>Somewhat True</u>			<u>Totally True</u>	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I believe that being highly discreet about their sexual orientation is a trait that LGBTQ students should work toward.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I have been to in-services, conference sessions, or workshops, which focused on LGBTQ student issues in school counseling.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Heterosexist and prejudicial concepts have permeated the school counseling profession.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. I feel competent to assess in a school counseling setting, the <i>mental health/developmental</i> needs of a student who is LGBTQ.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I believe that LGBT couples don't need special rights (domestic partner benefits, or the right to marry) because that would undermine normal and traditional family values.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. There are different psychological/social issues impacting gay male students versus lesbian students.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. It would be best if my clients/students viewed a heterosexual lifestyle as ideal.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(NEXT PAGE)

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

<u>Not at all True</u>		<u>Somewhat True</u>			<u>Totally True</u>	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. I have experienced counseling bisexual (male or female) students.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I am aware of institutional barriers that may inhibit LGBTQ students from using school counseling services.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I am aware that school counselors frequently impose their values concerning sexuality upon LGBTQ students.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. I think that my clients/students should accept some degree of conformity to traditional sexual values.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Currently, I do not have the skills or training to do a case presentation or seek consultation if I had LGBTQ students on my caseload.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. I believe that LGBTQ students will benefit most from counseling with a heterosexual school counselor who endorses conventional values and norms.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Being born a heterosexual person in this society carries with it certain advantages.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(OVER)

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

Not at all True **Somewhat True** **Totally True**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

32. I feel that sexual orientation differences between counselor and student may serve as an initial barrier to effective counseling of LGBTQ students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

33. I have done a counseling role-play as either student or counselor involving a LGBTQ issue.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

35. I believe that all LGBTQ students must be discreet about their sexual orientation around other students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

37. LGBTQ concerns were infused into courses in my graduate counseling training

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

38. I believe that my graduate counseling training program prepared me to work effectively and competently with LGBTQ students and their concerns.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(NEXT PAGE)

Professional Development During the Next 12 Months

39. Would you be willing to participate in the following activities for professional development regarding issues pertaining to LGBTQ students during the next 12 months? (Please check one answer for each activity):

Attend conferences and workshops? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Possibly ☐ Unsure
 Read professional articles? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Possibly ☐ Unsure
 Attend in-service training at school? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Possibly ☐ Unsure

40. Please indicate the top three activities by rank that you would find most helpful in assisting you in working with LGBTQ students?

☐ In-service training
☐ Reading professional literature on LGBTQ topics
☐ Attending an LGBTQ resource center
☐ Consulting with LGBT persons who are living open
☐ Taking a specific course on adolescent sexuality/LGBTQ adolescents
☐ Reading personal accounts of LGBT persons

41. What percent of adolescent students in your school do you think are LGBTQ?

☐ None (0%)
☐ 1% - 5%
☐ 6% - 10%
☐ 11% - 19%
☐ 20% and above

DEMOGRAPHICS

42. Age: ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60 and above

43. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender ☐ Intersex

44. Ethnic Background: ☐ African American./Black ☐ Asian American/Pacific Islander
☐ Euro American/White ☐ Hispanic/Latino/a ☐ Middle Eastern ☐ Multiracial
☐ Native American/Alaska Native

45. Sexual Orientation: ☐ Gay Male ☐ Lesbian ☐ Heterosexual ☐ Bisexual
☐ Transgender ☐ Questioning

- 46a. Your Graduate Counseling Program:

☐ was CACREP Accredited
☐ was not CACREP Accredited
☐ don't know if CACREP Accredited

(OVER)

46b. Your Graduate Counseling Program's Required Credit Hours:

- ☐ were less than 48 credit hours
☐ were 48 credit hours or more

46c. Your Graduate Counseling Program Was Completed:

☐ in Michigan? ☐ out-of-state?

47. School Counselor Credential:

- ☐ Endorsement to my teaching certificate ☐ School Counseling License (SCL)
☐ None

48. Professional School Counseling Association Membership (Please check all that apply):

- ☐ AMSC (Assoc. of Mich. School Counselors)
☐ MSCA (Mich. School Counselor Association)
☐ ASCA (American School Counseling Assoc.)

49. Years of School Counseling Experience (please indicate):

☐ 0-4 ☐ 5-9 ☐ 10-14 ☐ 15-19 ☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-29 ☐ 30-34 ☐ 35-39 ☐ Above 40

50. Years of Counseling Experience Outside of School Setting:

☐ 0-4 ☐ 5-9 ☐ 10-14 ☐ 15-19 ☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-29 ☐ 30-34 ☐ 35-39 ☐ Above 40

51. Type of School: ☐ Public ☐ Private ☐ Religious/Faith Affiliated**52. Current School Level(s) Where You Serve as a School Counselor (Please check all that apply):**

- ☐ Elementary School ☐ Middle School/Junior High
☐ High School ☐ Alternative High School ☐ None

53. School Locale: ☐ Urban ☐ Suburban ☐ Small Town or Rural**54. County of School:** _____**55. Does your school have an active Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA)?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Do Not Know ☐ Unsure of what a GSA is

(NEXT PAGE)

Thank you for completing this survey.

If you wish to be entered into the drawing for one of four \$50.00 gas cards, then please enter your name and e-mail address below. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION FOR THE DRAWING WILL IMMEDIATELY BE SEPARATED FROM THE SURVEY AND WILL NOT BE ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR SURVEY RESPONSES.

Contact information (Please print):

Name: _____

E-mail Address: _____

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