An Examination of Homophobia and Social Work Practice

Among a Sample of School Social Workers

BY

MILKA RAMIREZ
B.A., Mundelein College, 1992
M.S.W., Chicago State University 2004

DISSERTATION
Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Chicago, 2012

Chicago, Illinois

Defense Committee:
Patricia O’Brien, Chair and Advisor
Fabricio Balcazar, Disability and Human Development
Carol Massat
Mark Mattaini
Cassandra McKay
This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory of my parents, Juan Cleofe Ramírez and Elvira Ramírez Quiñones, who taught me the true meaning of “education for liberation.” I have never stopped feeling their presence in my life and know that they walk alongside me every day.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my partner Maritza Nazario for her endless love and support through this arduous process. Lastly, this dissertation is dedicated in loving memory of Lawrence “Larry” King (January 13, 1993-February 13, 2008) whose short but courageous life inspired this body of work. Thank you for shining your light upon this world and making it a better place.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge and extend my deepest appreciation to my dissertation committee for their support, guidance, and encouragement. My many thanks to Mark Mattaini, who inspired me to never let my passion for social justice die, to Cassandra McKay for agreeing to sit on my committee and opening new paths, to Carol Massat for her invaluable input, to Fabricio Balcazar who I met over 10 years ago and championed me on with “si se puede!” Each joined me on this journey, selflessly giving of their time and unique talents, and for this I am eternally grateful to each of them.

I would also like to acknowledge and extend my deepest gratitude to my dissertation chair, Professora Patricia O’Brien, for her constant support and dedication. Without her mentorship this dissertation would not have been possible. Her commitment to social justice, rigor, scholarship, and teaching is admirable. Please accept my appreciation for your willingness to listen to a thought that turned into an idea that you helped shape into a dissertation.

Professora, thank you for taking me under your wing and giving me the gift of flight.

I would also like to thank the School Social Work Association of America and the American Council for School Social Work, who helped recruit school social workers across the United States to participate in this study. Thank you to the many school social workers who took time from their busy schedules to participate. Thanks to my colleagues and friends at Chicago Public Schools for your help during this process. Thank you to the UIC’s office of Lesbian and Gay affairs for selecting me as the recipient of the 2009 Kellogg Lavender Scholarship and inspiring me to continue with this line of work.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (continued)

A special thanks to my family and close circle of friends for being my beacon of hope and holding me up so I would not falter. I felt myself sustained by your love, every step of the way. I would not have been able to accomplish the daunting task of completing a dissertation without your understanding and presence in my life. I have been blessed with a large family and circle of friends and want to mention several of the people who have been instrumental in my life, because in many ways they have been co-conspirators in this process. To the apple of Maritza and my eyes: Malenis Holloway, Niolani Holloway, and Mattias Alexander Holloway for the gift of family. To my brothers and sisters, for building a wall of support for me, so that their little sister could blaze a trail: José Luis Laboy, Oscar Ramírez, Héctor Juan Ramírez, Carmen Iris Ramírez, Norberto Ramírez, María Teresa Ramírez, Guillermo Ramírez, Edwin Ramírez, and Mayra Ramírez. To my nephews and nieces for passing the baton: Amelia Ortíz, Veronica Ortíz, Luis Ortíz, Luvia Ramírez, and Alexander Benjamin Ramírez. To my extended family: Doña Carmen Nazario, Elba Iris Nazario, Sueheily Natal, and Hobert Holloway. To my family of choice, María Pilar Martinez, Marixa Rojas, Florimar Agostini Lisa Bruner, and Erika Trost, for their steadfastness.

I would also like to thank my fellow UIC doctoral students Priti Abhijit Prabhughate, Nicole Vines, Linda Campos-Moreira, and Gisela Grumbach for low-crawling with me through the trenches. To one of my great mentors, Kimberly Mann, professor at Chicago State University, College of Social Work, for believing in me and cheering me along the way. I have appreciated all of your words of encouragement, all of your advice, and your ability to renew my hope. I would also like to extend a special thanks to Dr. Catherine Crisp for allowing me to use the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale in this study.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (continued)

Her scholarship on social work practice with sexual minority populations has been an inspiration. Thanks to Maryann Krieglstein for championing work about school social work and sexual minorities. To Beverly McPhail who took time to provide me with valuable insights during the infancy of my thought process about homophobia, helping me examine the broader context of history and violence. Thank you to all the researchers who participated in acts of courage and oppositional politics, devoting their scholarship to sexual minority populations, during very unsettling times. Each of you provided me with a foundation to help build my scholarship and practice with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. Each of you paved the way through uncharted waters, making this body of work possible.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Paula Allen-Meares, who one evening responded to an email from me asking for a statement of support to include in my recruitment materials. I thought that given the magnitude of her extraordinary life she would never actually open the email. Yet, much to my surprise the email was not only opened, but a statement of support along with kind and inspiring words accompanied my request in just a matter of days. Thank you, Dr. Allen-Meares, for re-teaching me the importance of taking risks. Thank you for joining hands with allies to help end the interlocking levels of oppression that bind us all, but most of all, thank you for “walking the walk.”

If I said thank you to each of you a million times, it would not come close to expressing the gratitude that I feel for each and every one of you. Through each of you, I have been given a life of abundance. I have been humbled by your faith in me, your inspiration, your time, your patience, and the kindness that each of you have shown me. Gracias.

MR
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Problem Statement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Research Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Background of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Significance and Rationale of the Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Introduction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Historical Perspectives</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Prejudice against LGBT populations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Contemporary perspective</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reconceptualizing violence</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Review of Related Literature</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Overview of same-sex loving</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Homophobia</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Criticism of the term homophobia</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Classification of homophobia</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Introduction: Correlates to Homophobia</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Religiosity</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Education and training about LGBT populations</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Personal contact with LGBT populations</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Introduction: School Climate</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. School climate and social work practice</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Introduction: Consequences of Homophobia</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Emotional distress</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. School violence</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Homophobia and Social Work</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Previous findings</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. School social workers' attitude</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gay affirmative practice</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Summary</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Introduction: Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Social learning theory</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Organizational theory</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Interconnection of theories</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. METHOD</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Introduction: Research Method</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Research Design and Method of Investigation</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Research questions</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Procedures</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

1. Data collection plan .......................................................... 50
2. Sampling plan .................................................................... 51
3. Data analysis plan ............................................................... 53
D. Conceptual Definition and Instrumentation ............................. 56
  1. Independent variable: Homophobia .................................... 56
     a. Conceptual definition .................................................. 56
     b. Measurement ............................................................ 58
  2. Dependent variable: Gay affirmative practice .......................... 58
     a. Conceptual definition .................................................. 58
     b. Measurement ............................................................ 60
  3. Proposed moderator variable: School climate ......................... 63
     a. Conceptual definition .................................................. 63
     b. Measurement ............................................................ 63
  4. Introduction to control variables ............................................ 66
  5. Religiosity ........................................................................ 66
     a. Conceptual definition .................................................. 66
     b. Measure ................................................................. 66
  6. Age ............................................................................. 67
     a. Conceptual definition .................................................. 67
     b. Measure ................................................................. 67
  7. Education and training about LGBT populations ...................... 68
     a. Conceptual definition .................................................. 68
     b. Measurement ............................................................ 68
  8. Personal contact with LGBT individuals ............................... 69
     a. Conceptual definition .................................................. 69
     b. Measure ................................................................. 69
  9. Sexual orientation .............................................................. 69
     a. Conceptual definition .................................................. 69
     b. Measure ................................................................. 69
  10. Qualitative data ............................................................... 70
V. RESEARCH FINDINGS .......................................................... 71
A. Introduction ..................................................................... 71
  1. Sample for current study ................................................... 72
  2. Data collection ................................................................ 73
  3. Current study ................................................................ 73
B. Demographic and Analysis .................................................. 74
  1. SSWAA and ACSSW demographics .................................... 75
C. Sample Description ........................................................... 92
D. Analysis of the sample ....................................................... 95
E. Bivariate Analysis ............................................................ 97
  1. Homophobia and gay affirmative practice ......................... 98
  2. Homophobia/Gay affirmative practice and control variables 98
     a. Personal contact ....................................................... 98
# TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

b. Education and training about LGBT populations ............................................. 99  
c. Religiosity ........................................................................................................... 101  
d. Bivariate summary ............................................................................................. 105  
e. Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 107  
F. Multiple Regression Analysis ............................................................................ 109  
G. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis ...................................................... 114  
H. Qualitative Data .................................................................................................. 117  
   1. Question 8: Administrative support ................................................................. 118  
   2. Question 9: Obstacles ..................................................................................... 120  
   3. Question 31: Social work services with LGBT students ................................ 121  
I. Summary of Findings .......................................................................................... 122  
J. Human Subject Protection ................................................................................... 124  
K Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 125  
LVI. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS ................................................................. 126  
A. Introduction ......................................................................................................... 126  
B. Profile of Participants in the Study ..................................................................... 126  
C. Research Questions ............................................................................................ 126  
D. Method ................................................................................................................ 127  
E. Introduction: Interpretation of results ................................................................. 128  
F. Degree of Homophobia among School Social Workers ..................................... 128  
G. Engagement with Gay Affirmative Practice ....................................................... 134  
H. School Climate ................................................................................................... 138  
I. Qualitative Data .................................................................................................... 142  
J. Strengths and Limitations of the Study ............................................................... 145  
   1. Strengths .......................................................................................................... 145  
   2. Limitations ........................................................................................................ 146  
K. Implications of the Study .................................................................................... 147  
   1. Research .......................................................................................................... 147  
   2. Social work education ..................................................................................... 148  
   3. School social work Practice ............................................................................ 149  
   4. Policy ................................................................................................................ 151  
   5. Theory .............................................................................................................. 152  
   4. Social justice .................................................................................................... 153  
L. Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 154  
CITED LITERATURE .............................................................................................. 157  
APPENDICES .......................................................................................................... 169  
Appendix A ............................................................................................................. 170  
Appendix B ............................................................................................................. 174  
Appendix C ............................................................................................................. 176  
Appendix D ............................................................................................................. 178  
Appendix E ............................................................................................................. 186  
Appendix F ............................................................................................................. 187  
VITA ......................................................................................................................... 188
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA AND AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. CURRENT DEGREE OF HOMOPHOBIA</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ENGAGEMENT WITH GAY AFFIRMATIVE PRACTICE</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SEVEN SCHOOL CLIMATE ITEMS</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. DICHTOMOUS SCHOOL CLIMATE MEASURE</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. SEMESTER HOURS IN CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IN MASTER’S EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON LGBT POPULATIONS</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. PERCENTAGE OF TIME IN CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IN MASTER’S EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON LGBT POPULATIONS</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. SEMESTER HOURS IN CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IN BACHELOR’S EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON LGBT POPULATIONS</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. PERCENTAGE OF TIME IN BACHELOR’S EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON LGBT POPULATIONS</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. CLOCK HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OR JOB TRAINING THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON LGBT INDIVIDUALS IN THE PAST 5 YEARS</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. CLOCK HOURS OF DIRECT SUPERVISION OR CASE CONSULTATION THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON LGBT INDIVIDUALS IN THE PAST 5 YEARS</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII. CLOCK HOURS OF SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING FOCUSED ON LGBT INDIVIDUALS IN THE PAST 5 YEARS</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
XIV. HOW MANY LGBT INDIVIDUALS, IF ANY DO YOU KNOW IN YOUR FAMILY, FRIEND, WORK CIRCLE…………………………………………. 90

XV. WHICH OF THESE RELTIONSHPIS DO YOU CONSIDER THE “CLOSEST”……………………………………………………………….91

XVI. LEVEL OF CLOSENESS……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………91

XVII. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE………………………………………………………………………………….94

XVIII. SPEARMAN’S RHO CORRELATION MATRIX……………………………………………………………………………………………103

XIX. T-TEST OF HOMOPHOBIA AND GAY AFFIRMATIVE PRACTICE BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION………….105

XX. MULTIPLE REGRESSION WITH INTERACTION PREDICTING GAY AFFIRMATIVE PRACTICE…………………………………………………….111

XXI. STATISTICAL STEPWISE REGRESSION………………………………………………………………………………………………………114

XXII. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………118
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Conceptual framework</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACSSW</td>
<td>American Council for School Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATG-S</td>
<td>Attitudes Toward Gay Men Scale-Short Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATL</td>
<td>Attitudes Toward Lesbians Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATLGS</td>
<td>Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSWE</td>
<td>Council on Social Work Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOMA</td>
<td>Defense of Marriage Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLSEN</td>
<td>Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAH</td>
<td>Index of Attitudes Toward Homosexuals Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L &amp; G</td>
<td>Lesbian and gay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASW</td>
<td>National Association of Social Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSW</td>
<td>School social workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSWAA</td>
<td>School Social Work Association of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>Gay affirmative practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY

Scant empirical evidence exists that examines school social workers’ attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals and engagement with gay affirmative practice. In this cross-sectional exploratory study, I conducted an online survey of 283 school social workers across 42 states in the United States. Participants were recruited from the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA), the American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW), and their affiliates. The study aimed at examining the relationship between the degree of homophobia among school social workers and the extent that school social workers engage in gay affirmative practice, as well as how the perceived school climate moderated the relationship between these two variables. The theoretical frameworks used in this study were social learning theory and organizational theory. Univariate, bivariate, and multiple regression statistical techniques, as well as content analysis, were used to analyze the data.

Overall, results indicated that school social workers in this study reported nonhomophobic views and high engagement with gay affirmative practice. In this study, school social workers who reported more contact with LGBT individuals, more percentage time in their master’s education program focused on LGBT populations, more semester hours in their master’s education program focused on LGBT populations, more self-directed learning about LGBT populations in the last 5 years, more professional development training about LGBT populations in the last 5 years, and supervision or consultation in the workplace about LGBT populations in the last 5 years, reported nonhomophobic views and high engagement with gay affirmative practice.
School social workers who reported high scores of religiosity and frequent attendance at religious services reported high homophobic views toward LGBT populations and low engagement with gay affirmative practice.

Further analysis found a statistically significant interaction between school climate and homophobia, suggesting that as nonhomophobic scores increase, the interaction between school climate and homophobia also increases in magnitude. These findings imply that school climate may potentially moderate the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice. However, bivariate analysis did not find a statistically significant correlation among the three variables (homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and school climate). Therefore, school climates’ moderating effect on homophobia and gay affirmative practice ought to be interpreted with caution.

The school climate data also revealed that school social workers reported that their school administrator was supportive in the delivery of social work services for LGBT populations. School climate analysis also revealed that school social workers often hear antigay epithets in their schools and that few schools have a Gay/Straight Alliance or other formal organizations to address incidents of homophobia in their schools. Consequently, the potential interrelatedness of homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and school climate provides a point of entry for school social workers to intervene at macro-levels of practice in order to improve the school climate for LGBT students. Further, analysis revealed that nonhomophobic views, percentage of time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations, and attendance at religious services accounted for the variance found in gay affirmative practice. However, nonhomophobic views best predicted engagement with gay affirmative practice.
SUMMARY (continued)

Content analysis of open-ended questions revealed that school social workers advocate for LGBT populations, tailor curricula in order to address social work services for LGBT populations, and create a safe and affirming space within their schools. Subsequently, empirical evidence supports that school social workers adhere to at least two tenets of gay affirmative practice; intellectual capacity for gay affirmative practice and paying attention to the practice milieu. Content analysis also provided insight into the type of administrative support provided to school social workers in the delivery of social work services for LGBT students and obstacles encountered in this process. Finally, content analysis provided a contextual framework for the quantitative findings reported in this study and helped contextualize findings in this study.
I. INTRODUCTION: PROBLEM STATEMENT

A. Problem Statement

This study addresses school social workers’ attitudes about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youths and school social workers’ use of gay affirmative practice in school settings. This is a cross-sectional exploratory study that surveyed members and affiliates of the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA), the American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW), and their affiliates. The study examined the relationship between the degree of homophobia among a sample of school social workers and the extent to which they engaged in gay affirmative practice, as well as how the perceived school climate potentially moderated the relationship between these two variables. The study examined:

1. The current degree of homophobia among school social workers;
2. Whether the degree of homophobia among school social workers is related to the use of gay affirmative practice and, if so,
3. How the social worker’s degree of homophobia is related to the use of gay affirmative practice, and whether school social worker’s perception of school climate potentially moderates the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice.

B. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to gain further knowledge about homophobia and gay affirmative practice in school settings. In order to do so, this study, using a sample of school social workers, examined the level of homophobia among school social workers, their engagement with gay affirmative practice, and their perception of the school climate. It also examined characteristics of school social workers and explored how other variables such as religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education or
training about LGBT populations influenced homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and school climate. Examining homophobia and gay affirmative practice allows for a better understanding of school social work practice with LGBT youths. Since LGBT youths face numerous challenges in school settings, affecting school safety, school belonging, educational attainment, and social/emotional factors (Kosciw, 2001, 2005, 2007; Kosciw & Diaz, 2005; Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009; Krieglstein, 2002; Morrow 2004; National Coalition of Antigay Violence Programs, 2005; Peters, 2003), this study can contribute to school social work practice with sexual minority youths.

C. Research Questions

The study examined four key research questions:

1. What is the degree of homophobia among school social workers? Does the degree of homophobia vary by variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, or education and training about LGBT populations?

2. To what extent do school social workers engage in gay affirmative practice with LGBT students? Does the use of gay affirmative practice vary by variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, or education and training about LGBT populations?

3. Is there an association between the degree of homophobia among school social workers and their use of gay affirmative practice? Does use of gay affirmative practice vary by variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, or education and training about LGBT populations?
4. Is the potential association between homophobia among school social workers and use of gay affirmative practice potentially moderated by their perceptions of school climate? Does use of gay affirmative practice vary by variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, or education and training about LGBT populations?

D. Background of the Study

In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality as a mental illness from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) (NASW, 1977). In 1975, the National Association of Social Workers’ (NASW) Delegate Assembly passed a resolution supporting the civil rights of sexual minorities. In 1977, the NASW issued its first policy statement on working with LGBT communities, opposing discrimination against sexual minorities. Since 1977 the NASW has revised its policy statement supporting affirmative practice with sexual minority populations. In 1993, the NASW stated the following:

> Social workers are guided by the NASW Code of Ethics which bans discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. . . NASW believes that non-judgmental attitudes toward sexual orientation allow social workers to offer optimal support and services to lesbian and gay people. NASW affirms its commitment to work toward full social and legal acceptance of lesbian and gay people. The profession must also act to eliminate and prevent discriminatory statutes, policies, and actions that diminish the quality of life for lesbian and gay people and that force many to live their lives in the closet (NASW, 1977).

However, it was not until 1991 that the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) required social work education programs to incorporate content on sexual orientation into the curriculum as part of their nondiscriminatory standards. Currently, CSWE requires that social work programs provide a learning context in which respect for all persons, including sexual minorities, is continuously and specifically addressed (NASW, 2009). Social work educational programs that are housed in religious institutions, however, are exempted from
nondiscrimination in hiring and firing LGBT faculty and admitting LGBT students (CSWE, 2011).

Since the removal of homosexuality as a mental illness from the *DSM-IV-TR*, social work has examined its attitudes toward sexual minority populations. In 1984, DeCrescenzo conducted the first study examining homophobia among mental health professionals in the fields of psychology and social work. She found that social workers were more homophobic than psychologists. Research on mental health professionals’ attitudes toward LGBT populations has produced varied and often conflicting findings. Wisniewski and Toomey (1984) found that 31% of social workers were homophobic. Berkmann and Zinberg (1997) found that 11% of social workers were homophobic. The discrepancies in these findings may have resulted from different definitions of homophobia and different samples within the mental health profession, as well as participants’ unwillingness to report their true attitudes. Additional discrepancies in these findings may be attributed to the researchers’ methodology or historical differences, since the studies spanned a 10-year gap. Inconsistent findings about social workers’ attitudes toward sexual minority populations indicate that further research is needed to understand these attitudes, as well as the connection, if any, between attitudes toward sexual minorities and social work practice.

In 2002 Krieglstein examined heterosexism among a sample of school social workers in the state of Illinois. Krieglstein found that, although school social workers did not as a group display high levels of heterosexism, those school social workers who exhibited high levels of heterosexism reported having fewer hours of education and training about sexual minorities, fewer positive contacts with LGBT individuals, and were more likely to hold traditional religious beliefs. Krieglstein’s research with school social workers is pivotal because it explored school
social workers’ attitudes toward LGBT populations (a population largely ignored by social work research). In exploring school social workers’ attitudes toward sexual minority populations, Krieglstein contributed significantly to social work scholarship. Krieglstein, however, did not explore the association between school social workers’ attitudes toward LGBT populations and practice behavior. This study addresses these limitations by examining the relationship between school social workers’ attitudes toward sexual minorities and gay affirmative practice.

E. Significance and Rationale of the Study

Research suggests that LGBT youths are one of the most vulnerable school populations in contemporary society, demonstrating that they face a plethora of challenges in their attempt to navigate a violent and unsupportive educational system. Examining school social workers’ attitudes and beliefs about LGBT individuals and social work practice is crucial because ideological contradictions may exist between the professions’ espoused beliefs and actual practice (Allen-Meares, 1996; Appleby & Anastas, 1998). In this study, homophobia is defined as a broad range of negative attitudes and beliefs toward LGBT individuals that may negatively affect a social worker’s ability to provide appropriate services to them (Appleby & Anastas, 1998). This study used the Gay Affirmative Practice (GAP) Scale developed by Crisp (2002) to examine homophobia and use of gay affirmative practice among school social workers (and affiliates) that held membership with the School Social Work Association of America (SWAA) and The American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW). The SWAA and ACSSW are the only two national organizations dedicated to school social work professionals.
Davies (1996) defines gay affirmative practice as affirming a lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity as an equally positive human experience and expression to heterosexual identity. This study used Davies’ (1996) and Crisp’s (2002) conceptual definition of GAP as it examines the degree of homophobia among school social workers and reported use of gay affirmative practice. The milieu of practice, however, may play a crucial role in influencing practice among school social workers. For instance, research indicates that the climate of an organization influences mental health workers’ ability to provide quality services and service outcomes. Furthermore, the norms, values, expectations, perceptions, and attitudes of an organization affect how services are delivered (Glisson & James, 2002; Glisson & Green, 2006; Glisson, 2009). Allen-Meares (1996, 2010) contends that school social work practice cannot be understood outside of the school climate, yet there has been minimal examination of the perceived influence of school climate on school social workers’ practice behavior with LGBT students. In order to address this gap, this study investigated the climate of the school. In this study, school climate is defined as how supportive and safe school social workers perceive their school to be for LGBT individuals.
I. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A. Introduction

A complete history of society’s prejudicial views toward LGBT populations is beyond the scope of this literature review. Yet when examining homophobia among school social workers and use of gay affirmative practice, it is essential to have a broad understanding of how historical and contemporary perspectives toward sexual minorities shape our understanding of homophobia. This literature review discusses these views toward LGBT populations as the backdrop for understanding negative attitudes and beliefs toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and their communities. It discusses the importance of understanding cultural aspects that perpetuate homophobia, along with correlates such as religiosity, age, training about LGBT individuals, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and sexual orientation with homophobia. Because the consequences of homophobia may lead youths to seek services from school social workers, it also addresses the prevalence of problems associated with homophobia. This literature review provides an examination of school social workers’ attitudes about LGBT populations and explores gaps in our knowledge regarding their attitudes and beliefs about LGBT populations and practice with LGBT communities.

B. Historical Perspectives

1. Prejudice against LGBT populations

McPhail (2000) contends that hate is woven into the very fabric of our society. She asserts that the history of the United States is rooted in war and violence and that violence is culturally entrenched in our everyday lives. When examining society’s prejudicial attitudes and beliefs towards sexual minority populations and their communities, McPhail (2000) frames negative attitudes and beliefs about LGBT communities in the context of historical hate and
violence against sexual minorities. McPhail (2000) contends that hate crimes, sodomy laws, and
gender violence are clear examples of hate and violence directed at sexual minority populations. 
She argues that historical and contemporary examples of oppression and discrimination against 
sexual minorities are deeply rooted in societal structures that perpetuate negative attitudes and 
beliefs toward sexual minorities. Her work informs this historical and contemporary perspective 
of prejudice against sexual minority populations.

During colonial America, sodomy was punishable by castration, torture, and death. 
These laws were specifically enacted to criminalize men-on-men sexual activity, labeling 
homosexuality as deviant and unnatural. Sodomy during this time included any anal penetration 
(including anal penetration between women and men), sex with animals, and heterosexual sex 
acts that were not performed in the traditional “missionary” position. As time passed, however 
sodomy became more narrowly defined as anal penetration, mostly between two men (Boswell, 
1980; D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988, 1997; Miller, 2006; Spencer, 1995). The use of violence to 
carry out sodomy laws illustrates how early influences of prejudice against homosexuality 
perpetuated negative and hateful attitudes and beliefs toward homosexuality. Evidence of these 
views can also be found during the 20th century. Although much is known about the Holocaust 
and many scholars and governmental leaders have condemned the atrocities endured by Jews 
during the time of the Nazi regime in Germany, fewer people know about the history of hate and 
vviolence perpetuated against sexual minorities by the Nazis.

During World War II, as many as 30,000 men and women were arrested for 
homosexuality or suspicion of homosexuality and approximately 15,000 homosexuals or people 
perceived to be homosexual by the Nazi regime in Germany were killed in concentration camps.
Prior to being killed in these camps, they were forced to wear an upside down pink triangle on their clothing as a mark of shame and humiliation for being homosexual or perceived as being homosexual. Historians have stated that some of the reasons that sexual minorities were persecuted by Hitler during the Nazi regime in Germany were because Hitler believed that homosexual men and women were sexually deviant individuals who posed a threat to the German government and its country’s social order (Adam, 1987; Miller, 2004). This example of prejudice toward sexual minorities illustrates the use of war and violence as tools of hatred and oppression directly aimed at sexual minorities.

Limited knowledge of these events further illustrates the silence surrounding violence directed at LGBT individuals and the importance of documenting historical events that have perpetuated prejudicial views against sexual minorities. Another example of hate specifically directed at women that were known or thought to deviate from heterosexuality is the Salem witch trials. According to Barstow (1994) during the Salem witch trials, women who threatened the hegemonic structure of patriarchy were subjected to violence. Among this group of women, were those who were believed to have engaged in sexual acts with one another or to have seduced other women into sexual acts. As a punishment these women were often burned in public. These public executions were often accompanied by public acts of violence, such as spitting on the women, beating them and throwing stones at them while they were being tortured and burned to death. Barstow (1994) argues that that the Salem witch hunts illustrates how cultural violence was often inflicted on women that deviated from cultural norms deemed unacceptable. As brutal as these historical examples of violence toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people may be, contemporary examples of violence and prejudice toward LGBT populations and their communities still persist. Examples of violence toward LGBT individuals
and their communities suggests that homophobia continues to play a significant role in contemporary society.

2. **Contemporary perspective**

Since the Gay and Lesbian movement of the 1960s, increased attention has been given to hate crimes targeted at LGBT individuals or individuals perceived as being LGBT. Hate crimes provide yet another example of society’s contempt for LGBT individuals and communities. Three recent examples of violence directed at LGBT individuals and their communities that received national attention include the murders of Matthew Sheppard, Brandon Teena, and Lawrence King (GLSEN, 2009; Matthew Sheppard Foundation, 2007; *Newsweek*, 2009).

Matthew Sheppard was a college student who was brutally beaten and killed by a group of young men for being gay. His murder resulted in national attention to hate crime legislation protecting lesbian and gay individuals from violence. Brandon Teena’s murder in 1993 brought national attention to the dangers faced by transgender individuals. Brandon Tina was born a biological female, but felt that the biological female body did not match Bandon’s emotional and psychological male identity. After a group of men and women discovered that Bandon was not a biological male, Brandon was raped, beaten, tortured, and killed (GLSEN.org, 2009).

Lawrence King was an eighth grade student in California who self-identified as gay. He was often outspoken about his sexual orientation and was described as being gender nonconforming, often attending school wearing lip gloss, eye liner, and high-heeled women’s shoes. On February 11, 2008, he was shot in the head during computer class by an eighth grade classmate due to his sexual identity and gender expression. On February 13, 2008, he died after being removed from life support (*Newsweek*, 2009). Lawrence King’s murder brought national attention to the issue of school violence directed at LGBT youths. Lawrence’s murder brought
attention to sexual minority youths in the elementary school setting. Unfortunately, these examples are not isolated incidents; they represent contemporary pervasive patterns of hatred and violence that continue to be perpetrated against LGBT communities.

Thousands of episodes of violence against LGBT individuals include intimidation, defamation, harassment, and murder (Anderson, Dyson, & Brooks, 2002; Herek & Berrill, 1992; Wright, 2005). Reports from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) found that of the 7,722 national hate crimes reported, 15% involved sexual minority populations. The FBI, however, states that only 44% of all hate crimes are reported; consequently, this figure is believed to be an underreported number of hate crimes targeted at sexual minorities. It should also be noted that the 1990 federal hate crime law does not protect transgender individuals, and therefore hate crime statistics fail to capture violence directed at all members of the LGBT community (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2005).

Recent reports indicate that violence against LGBT communities continues to rise. Overall there has been a 13% increase in hate crimes against LGBT communities from 2009-2010. Murders increased 23% from 2009-2012, with LGBT people of color accounting for 70% of all hate crimes, and transgender women accounting for 44%. Non-transgender men accounted for 52% of LGBT hate crime (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2010). In order to fully understand violence perpetuated against LGBT individuals and their communities it is important to view violence against this population through a lens that critically examines societal structures that perpetuate discrimination and oppression of sexual minorities.
3. **Reconceptualizing violence**

In 1995, Van Soest and Bryant published a paper calling for social workers to redefine violence. Van Soest and Bryant (1995) use the examples of street and gang violence to illustrate how unseen violence (i.e., cultural and institutional violence) leads to crime (i.e., seen violence). They argue that violence must be examined within three contextual frameworks that include cultural violence, institutional violence, and individual violence, because unseen violence fosters manifestations of seen violence. They define cultural violence as harmful results that stem from the way society thinks and what society deems normal and acceptable.

Examples they use to illustrate this point are differences between groups along the lines of race, gender, economics, and sexual orientation. When this model is applied to LGBT individuals and their communities, one may argue that cultural violence is inflicted upon sexual minorities by labeling them as “other.” Historical and contemporary examples of prejudice and violence toward LGBT individuals and communities illustrate how sexual minorities have been labeled unnatural and unacceptable. Cultural acts of violence have placed LGBT individuals and communities outside of what society deems acceptable. Violence against sexual minorities has been culturally justified by beliefs that perpetuate the idea that sexual minorities pose a threat to the heterosexual social order.

Van Soest and Bryant (1995) contend that institutional violence is conceptualized as harmful actions within institutions that prevent the development of people’s full potential. Examples of institutional violence toward LGBT individuals and populations may be seen in promoting heterosexual norms that marginalize LGBT relationships. For example, many states deny health care to same-sex partners. Many states deny same-sex couples the right to provide foster care for children in placement or adoption. In addition, federal policies do not legally
protect employees from being terminated because of their sexual orientation or gender expression (New York City Bar, 2011). Thus, many of the rights denied to same sex-couples and or individuals are directly related to federal laws that continue to deny rights to sexual minorities. Van Soest and Bryant (1995) postulate that when cultural and institutional violence work together to deny a minority group equal representation it leads to “seen violence” (e.g., crime).

When this model is applied to LGBT individuals and their communities, one may argue that cultural and institutional violence manifests in various forms of individual violence. Hate crimes, discrimination against LGBT individuals, harassment of LGTB individuals, sexual assault against LGBT individuals, and homophobic school bullying against LGBT youths are just a few examples of “seen violence” directed against LGBT individuals and their communities. These entrenched sets of negative and prejudicial views against LGBT individuals and their communities are examples of how cultural homophobia is perpetuated in our society (Van Soest & Bryant, 1995).

C. Review of Related Literature

1. Overview of Same-Sex Loving

A complete etiological examination of same-sex loving is beyond the scope of this study; however, in order to understand societal views toward sexual minorities it is important to have a historical perspective of same-sex relationships. It is also important to note that concepts such as homosexuality and bisexuality did not exist until the 19th century. Therefore, when these terms are used to describe ancient cultures they are used to provide a contemporary framework by which to understand sexual expression.
D’Emilio and Freedman (1988, 1997) recount that throughout history same-sex loving has been both permitted and punished and viewed differently by different cultures. In some indigenous cultures, for instance, gender roles have had low degrees of gender differentiation, with sexuality being a fluid aspect of human nature. In approximately 113 tribes of North and South America (e.g., Chuckchees, Aleuts, Kamchadal, Thonga, and Melanesian tribes) men or women who believed that they were meant to live in the opposite biological sex were accepted. Men were allowed to dress in women’s clothing and to take on the lifestyle of women without persecution or judgment. In addition, women were allowed to adopt the lifestyle of men, and in both instances, these individuals were regarded as having special gifts and holding a sacred place in society. Sexual expression was seen as a personal choice that did not carry judgment, and sexual expression was not fixed into dichotomous categories of heterosexual or homosexual and male or female roles. There appeared to be an egalitarian acceptance of gender and sexuality.

In ancient Greece men were known to have sexual relationships with other men, and it was common for older men to have sexual relationships with younger men in order to teach them in the matters of sexual intercourse. Additionally, both men and women engaged in same-sex relationships with one another, although they were expected to enter into heterosexual marriage and leave same-sex loving behind once married. According to Spencer (1995), in ancient Egypt bisexuality was readily acceptable, but passive homosexuality (male anal penetrated) made Egyptians feel uneasy. In ancient China there were accounts of male homosexual relationships among athletes and royalty, without any indication that these relationships threatened the place of men in society.

In the United States, however, sexuality has been largely influenced by Judeo-Christian teachings that to a large extent have imposed negative moral judgments on same-sex loving
These negative views on same-sex relationships have been traced to biblical scriptures that served as a way of social control. The biblical scriptures that have been used to condemn homosexual acts have been viewed with caution by historians who point out that the term *homosexuality* was not coined until the 19th century (Boswell, 1980; D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988, 1997; Spencer, 1995). The historical use of the term *sodomy* in the bible does not refer to homosexuality. Sodomy has referred to anal penetration of either sex, sexual positions where women were on top of men and/or copulation with animals (Spencer, 1995). Nevertheless biblical scriptures have often been used to incite antigay sentiment and persecution of LGBT communities, socially condemning homophobia in the name of Judeo/Christian beliefs.

### 2. Homophobia

The word “homophobia” is derived from the Greek word *homós*, meaning one and the same and *phóbos*, meaning fear. It is defined as a fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality or homosexuals or individuals perceived to be homosexual. The term *homophobia* is rooted in Wainright Churchill’s 1967 study of attitudes toward homosexuals, in which "homoerotophobia" was used to describe a pervasive cultural fear of erotic or sexual contact between members of the same sex. In 1971, Kenneth Smith used the word homophobia in the development of a personality profile of individuals who had negative or fearful reactions to homosexuals (as cited in Zemsky, 1998).

It is George Weinberg, however, who is credited for first using homophobia to describe a social problem. In 1972 George Weinberg, in *Society and the Healthy Homosexual*, shifted the focus of society’s prejudice against homosexuality from the deviance of homosexuality to society’s pathological view of homosexuality (Appleby & Anastas, 1998; Weinberg, 1972).
Weinberg postulated that it was the hostility toward homosexuality that posed a threat to the human psyche, rather than homosexuality itself (Herek, 2009).

Weinberg’s use of “phobia” deliberately suggested that homophobia is an irrational, fear-driven, and, at least for some people, a defensive maneuver to ward off something both feared and desired. Before Weinberg’s astute observation, negative attitudes toward homosexuality were not usually seen as a cause of concern. Naming this negative attitude has been an extremely important step in defining it as a social problem. (Appleby & Anastas, 1998, p. 13)

Weinberg’s work on homophobia preceded the American Psychiatric Association’s 1972 decision to remove homosexuality as a mental illness from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual. His work became pivotal in naming prejudice toward sexual minorities and legitimizing the study of homophobia. In addition, Weinberg’s work on homophobia became an advocacy tool for gay rights activists to use as a protective shield against their victimization, naming a social illness that held others accountable for the oppression and marginalization of LGBT communities. Nearly four decades since Weinberg’s work on homophobia, scholars who have studied society’s negative attitudes toward homosexuality have debated the term homophobia.

3. Criticsim of the term homophobia

Scholars argue that the use of the word phobia (in homophobia) fails to communicate the complexity of society’s negative views toward homosexuality. These scholars contend that phobia places emphasis on a mental illness such as fear of open spaces or the sight of blood or spiders, whereas there is no mental disorder classification for homophobia (Richmond & McKenna, 1998). The central principle in this argument appears to be based on disagreement with the medical connotations of the term homophobia. The point of contention centers on the view that negative attitudes toward homosexuality must be attributed to a complex set of beliefs, values, and societal structures that support discrimination toward sexual minorities, rather than an irrational fear that provokes physiological changes (Richmond & McKenna, 1998). This
speaks to the interlocking levels of oppression that must be considered when examining the issue of homophobia. Weinberg’s work on homophobia highlighted the social forces that inspire negativity toward sexual minorities, whereby LGBT individuals are seen as challenging societal norms.

Weinberg (1972) argues,

> Anyone who does not adopt a society’s usual value system runs the risk of being seen as undermining the society. Because the person does not share the interest and goals of the majority, there is suspicion…This remains so, even if the person produces as much as others and works hard over a lifetime. The mere fact of the homosexual’s not striving for marriage, for example, makes it harder to include him or her in appeals made to the populace. (p. 16)

Herek (2009) argues that, rather than the term homophobia, the term *sexual prejudices* should be used when referring to negative attitudes toward LGBT individuals because negative attitudes stem from systematic and deliberate forms of stigma. Yet replacing the examination of homophobia with the term sexual prejudice emphasizes the sexual activity itself. And the emphasis on sexual prejudice ignores the emotional and psychological affection and attraction of same-sex relationships. Subsequently, it seems appropriate to adopt Richmond and McKenna’s (1998) call for the helping profession to expand its definition of homophobia to include perspectives that incite hate, discrimination, and prejudice toward sexual minorities, based upon personal and/or social or cultural beliefs.

4. **Classifications of homophobia**

As the term homophobia has evolved, so too have two major classifications of homophobia that are important to understand because they have often influenced human behavior. Internalized homophobia has been defined as the internal adoption of negative and prejudicial views toward LGBT individuals by members of its community (Appleby & Anastas,
1998). It is believed that societies’ hatred, contempt, and discrimination against LGBT communities may be internalized so completely by some LGBT individuals that they begin to loathe themselves, unable to develop a positive self-identity. Furthermore, internalized homophobia has been linked to minority stress and social distress, as well as psychological and emotional maladjustment by LGBT individuals (Appleby & Anastas, 1998).

Cultural homophobia has been defined as structural and institutional forces that have perpetuated the discrimination of LGBT communities. Examples of cultural homophobia can be seen in religion, law enforcement, and the media (Appleby & Anastas, 1998). For instance, legal restrictions in some states make it difficult for same-sex partners to adopt children, own joint property, and marry, overtly discriminating against LGBT communities. Aspects of cultural homophobia can be seen in the media by its negation of the existence of same-sex relationships whereby television programs, radio, and advertisements rarely depict same-sex relationships in mainstream media outlets. Homophobia has been viewed as the active participation in discrimination of LGBT communities, demonstrating society’s contempt for sexual minorities.

Conversely, heterosexism is viewed as the insidious manifestation of heterosexual privilege. Although the use of the words homophobia and heterosexism has not been uniform, homophobia has typically been used to describe individual antigay attitudes and behaviors, whereas heterosexism usually refers to societal-level ideologies and patterns of institutionalized oppression of nonheterosexual people. Heterosexism is described as a belief system that values heterosexuality as superior to and more natural than homosexuality. Additionally, heterosexism is often be manifested by people who may not be considered homophobic. When LGBT individuals are targeted as victims of violence, discriminated against, denied access to legal
protection, or denied services, the person(s) behind these acts do so out of homophobic attitudes that serve to maintain heterosexual privilege (Appleby & Anastas, 1998; Herek, 1990).

D. Introduction: Correlates to Homophobia

Herek (1984) has pioneered research examining correlates believed to be linked to homophobia. His work has called for the examination of negative attitudes toward LGBT populations to be viewed within multi-dimensional factors that include an individual’s age, sexual orientation, religiosity, education, training about LGBT individuals, and personal contact with LGBT individuals.

Herek’s (1984) work has emphasized the importance of exploring negative attitudes toward LGBT populations from a dynamic process. He asserts that negative attitudes have detrimental effects on LGBT individuals’ lives. He goes on to contend that people who hold negative and prejudicial views about LGBT individuals are more likely to exhibit negative behaviors toward LGBT people. Herek (1984) also contends that individuals who hold negative and prejudicial views toward LGBT people tend to view sexual minorities as less worthy of services and tend to perpetuate practices and policies that negatively affect their well-being.

Social workers are not immune to harboring homophobic attitudes and beliefs about LGBT communities. Studies indicate that when social workers hold homophobic attitudes toward LGBT populations, their attitudes may adversely affect their ability to provide appropriate services. Some of the potential negative effects of homophobia on practice include inferior treatment, minimizing or exaggerating sexual orientation, and poor linkages to services (Anderson & Holiday, 2007; Crisp, 2006; Morrow, 2004).
1. **Religiosity**

Allport (1954) is credited with pioneering work in the area of social psychology, examining the associations between prejudicial views and religion. In his classic work on prejudice he wrote:

The role of religion is paradoxical. It makes and unmakes prejudice. While the creeds of the great religions are universalistic, all stressing brotherhood; the practices of these creeds are frequently divisive and brutal. (p. 444)

Rowatt et al. (2006), state that Allport recognized that most religions encourage the love of neighbors, yet ironically hold prejudicial beliefs that may also encourage people to engage in discriminatory behaviors that are inconsistent with religious teachings of social inclusiveness. As noted earlier, the literal interpretation of biblical scriptures among individuals who adhere to traditional religious beliefs may lead to negative attitudes toward sexual minority populations, and religion may form a powerful foundation for culturally induced discrimination. In the United States, Judeo-Christian traditions tend to value patriarchy, male power and privilege, hierarchical gender roles, and narrowly defined sexual relationships between women and men as approved behavior (D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Spencer, 1995).

In many churches throughout the United States, people have been taught that homosexuality is intrinsically sinful and evil and these systems of beliefs, values, and customs have formed a group worldview that has disenfranchised sexual minority populations (Boswell, 1980, D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988, 1997; Herek, 1984, 1996, 2000; Spencer, 1995). Religion then has become an effective tool for learning love and hate, acceptance and discrimination a paradox indeed. Some traditional religious institutions prescribe rules and procedures for moral living, often emphasizing virtues of a committed marital relationship in which children are conceived. According to Boswell (1980), marriages are by definition heterosexual, where
homosexuality is widely condemned and same-sex relationships and families are not recognized. Inclusion of the religious right in the political landscape of American society (D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988, 1997) has resulted in religious and political ideologies that view homosexuality as pathological and immoral, rather than an integral part of an individual’s identity.

An example may be useful here. The 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) illustrates how the religious right, during the DOMA hearings, inserted themselves into the American polity. During the DOMA hearings, religion was often used to support why marriage should remain a “sacred” institution between a man and a woman. Religious examples were used to support the passing of DOMA, with many religious right organizations lobbying Congress to oppose same-sex marriage. The decision to use religion as a strategy to support the Defense of Marriage Act appeared to be an effective tool that associated same-sex relationships with the dismantling of American, Christian values (Rimmerman & Wilcox, 2007).

This strategy ultimately led to the passage of DOMA, providing the religious right with a victory by which to continue to insert themselves into the political landscape. Yet, the relationship between religiosity and negative views toward sexual minorities is complex, as there are many ways to be religious, and not everyone who is religious is homophobic (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). In order to understand the complexities between religiosity and negative views toward sexual minorities, it is important to understand the relationship between religion and prejudicial views. Herek (1984, 1996, 2000) has conducted various studies examining the relationship between religiosity and homophobia and found that individuals who had frequent attendance at churches that held negative views toward sexual minorities were more likely to hold homophobic views. He also found that individuals who held intrinsic religious orientations held more negative views toward sexual minorities.
Intrinsic religious orientation has been described as the way that one practices religious beliefs. People who hold an intrinsic religious orientation tend to fully internalize their religious creed, adopting it fully. Individuals who attend religious institutions that hold negative beliefs about sexual minorities tend to be homophobic, because they tend to adopt the belief that homosexuality is a sin and morally wrong (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Herek, 1984 2000; Hodge, 1972; Kirkpatrick, 1993; Pew Research Center, 2003; Rowatt et al., 2006). Krieglstein (2002) found that school social workers who held more conservative religious views tended to exhibit high levels of heterosexism. Lefkowitz, Gillen, Shearer, & Boone (2004) found that individuals tend to follow the teachings of their religion when determining their sexual attitudes. They concluded that individuals who attend religious services that hold conservative views tend to hold conservative and traditional views toward sexuality.

Over 50 years of research has asserted that religiosity plays a role in people’s attitudes toward minority populations. Research examining the association of religiosity and homophobia has suggested that religiosity is a multidimensional concept, and that religious denomination, frequency of attendance, and intrinsic orientation should be considered when studying its complexity. In this study, religiosity is conceptually defined as the intrinsic acceptance of traditional, conservative, religious beliefs that are generally endorsed by a traditional, religious institution where members accept its doctrine uncritically (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Herek 1984, 1996, 2000; Krieglstein, 2002). In this study, religiosity was examined as a variable that may influence the degree of homophobia among school social workers.
2. **Education and Training about LGBT populations**

The influence of education on homophobic and heterosexist attitudes toward sexual minorities has been widely studied (Herek, 1984, 1996, 2000). These studies have found mixed results. Some of the studies have found a positive correlation between education and attitudes towards LGBT populations. These research findings indicate that people who have higher levels of education appear to have more favorable views towards LGBT populations. However, these studies have focused on formal education (high school versus college).

Recent studies have begun to explore educational training that is offered to professions in the mental health field in order to examine its influence on attitudes and beliefs about LGBT populations. These studies have found that mental health professionals who have more training on LGBT populations appear to have more favorable views toward those populations. This also holds true for research that has examined the effect of education on college-level participants.

How much training influences attitudes towards LGBT populations is not known. Furthermore, limited information is available regarding the influence of training and education on school social workers’ attitudes about LGBT populations. In order to examine the relationship, if any, between education or training and homophobic views toward sexual minorities, this study included questions related to education and training about LGBT populations.

3. **Personal contact with LGBT populations**

In 1954, Allport developed the Intergroup Contact Theory, stating that under appropriate conditions, interpersonal contact is one way of reducing prejudice between majority and minority group members. Intergroup Contact Theory asserts that personal contact with a minority group may improve relations and conflict. According to Allport (1954), issues of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination are common issues that exist between majority and minority
groups. Allport (1954) asserted that prejudice is a direct result of generalizations and over-
simplifications made about an entire group of people based on incomplete or mistaken
information. The basic rationale is that prejudice toward a category of people may be reduced as
one learns more about members of the minority group. Rothbart and John (1985) conducted a
study on the effectiveness of Intergroup Contact Theory. They concluded that in order for
personal contact to be effective in reducing stereotypes and prejudice, three conditions must be
met:

1. The minority group member’s behavior must not be consistent with their stereotypes;
2. Contact between group members must occur often and in various social contexts;
3. The minority group members must be perceived as typical of their cultural group.

Personal contact has been demonstrated to be an effective variable in improving attitudes
toward sexual minorities. Studies have examined how positive personal contact with an LGBT
individual results in more favorable views toward sexual minorities. In these studies, individuals
who had positive contact with members of the LGBT community, had a close personal friend
who was a member of the LGBT community, or had a family member of the LGBT community,
tended to have more favorable views toward LGBT individuals. Conversely, individuals who did
not have any contact with LGBT people or individuals who had negative experiences with LGBT
people tended to hold more negative views toward LGBT individuals

However, these studies have not determined how much positive contact is needed to
influence an individual’s views toward sexual minorities. In addition, studies have not
determined what type of relationship is more influential in shaping people’s attitudes and beliefs
about LGBT communities. Recently, Herek (2009) found that it is not enough to merely have
contact with LGBT individuals, but talking to LGBT individuals about their life experience as members of LGBT communities appears to predict more favorable attitudes toward sexual minorities. Yet how does one go about measuring the interpersonal communications between people in order to understand which experiences are relevant in shaping attitudes toward LGBT individuals? Thus, questions remain about the influence of personal contact on attitude formation toward LGBT individuals and their communities. For instance, is a close friendship a factor that will influence positive relationships with LGBT individuals or is a close family relationship more influential? Is the determining factor the level of intimacy and self-disclosure within the relationship? More research is needed to further investigate the importance of personal contact on attitude formation toward sexual minorities. Consequently, this study will examine personal contact among school social workers in order to investigate its influence on attitude formation toward LGBT individuals.

E. **Introduction: School Climate**

School climate and school culture are often used interchangeably to describe how environmental factors influence behavior, attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms. Although school climate and school culture are a byproduct of interactive systems and are intrinsically interrelated, they are different concepts. Climate is described as belonging to the individual and linked to the individual’s perceptions of the larger system. Culture is described as belonging to the organization and being tied to an overarching ethos that has been embedded in the organization over long periods of time (Glisson, & James 2002; Glisson & Green, 2006; Saufler, 2005). Saufler (2005) contends that school climate is the values, beliefs, norms, and attitudes that one feels when walking into a school. In addition, he contends that in order to change school culture, one must begin by assessing school climate.
In 1908, Perry first examined school climate and asserted that “the school is subject to the influence of the environmental forces playing upon it from all sides” (Perry, 1908, p. 16). Perry is credited with being the first researcher to pay attention to the importance of school climate and the educational learning process of students. His work centered on the leadership of principals and their role in creating a climate in which parents, teachers, and students worked together to optimize learning experiences. His seminal work linked the possible effects of school climate on learning and discussed the importance of creating a school climate that fosters academic attainment, retention, training, and self-efficacy. He argued that environmental forces such as the characteristics of a building, lighting, teacher/student relationships, parent involvement, and classroom management were important in shaping school climate. Presently, researchers have examined the school climate and its link to creating safe communities.

1. **School climate and social work practice**

   Currently there is no one definition of school climate (Saufler, 2005), but the conceptual definition by Hoy (1990) shares common elements with others that have addressed this topic:

   School climate is the relatively enduring quality of school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perception of behavior in schools. (p. 152)

Hoy goes on to say that examining school climate as a quantitative analysis is useful in identifying perceived behaviors. Various studies have examined school climate, contending that it is a critical dimension influencing school belonging, school attendance, student safety, school violence, student self-efficacy, and school leadership (Erickson, Mattaini, & McGuire, 2004; Meyer-Adams & Connor, 2008; Spera, Wentzel, & Matto, 2009; Thomas, Townsend, & Belgrave, 2003; Thompson & Massat, 2001). These authors have significantly contributed to the understanding of the role that school climate plays in schools across the United States. However,
they did not discuss school climate in relation to homophobia. Yet for sexual minority students across the country, school is often a hostile and unwelcoming place. Various authors have found that a negative school climate for LGBT students has detrimental effects. They contend that for LGBT students a negative school climate contributes to low school attendance, a lower grade point average, lower post-secondary aspirations, and higher emotional distress, as well as higher incidents of physical and/or verbal victimization. Conversely, having a trusted adult in the school to talk to along with the presence of a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) or other type of structural support for LGBT students and school policies to address homophobia improves school climate for LGBT students (Kosciw, 2001, 2005, 2007; Kosciw & Diaz, 2005; Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009; Krieglstein, 2002; Morrow, 2004; National Coalition of Antigay Violence Programs, 2005; Peters, 2003).

Subsequently, existing research has been effective in closing the knowledge gap about school climate and students’ learning. Yet minimal information is known about the effects of work climate on social work practice behavior with LGBT populations. Research examining the association between climate and practice is essential because it may help shed light on how climate affects the delivery of social work services. Glisson and Green (2006) studied the organizational climate of social workers in child welfare settings in order to examine its effect on services. In his study he defined the organizational climate as “the normative beliefs and shared behavioral expectations in an organizational unit” (Glisson & Green, 2006 p. 770). He examined organizational climate in child care workers from 21 offices in Tennessee. Glisson and Green (2006) concluded that the organizational climate affects the quality of services and outcomes, independent of education, training, and work experience.

Glisson and Green (2006) found that the norms and expectations for behavior affected
child care workers’ ability to use resources and ensure that their clients received needed mental health services. He contends that examining how the attitudes and values of an organization become the norms and expectations that prescribe practitioners’ behavior is essential to the delivery of services (Glisson & James, 2002; Glisson & Green, 2006). Krieglstein (2002) found that 30% of school social workers she surveyed perceived their administrations as not being very supportive of the provision of school social work services to gay and lesbian students. In addition, she found that 57% of school social workers perceived their school climate as being unsafe for faculty or staff to be out about their sexual orientation.

Consequently, empirical research suggests that there may be a reciprocal relationship between the climate of an organization and practice behaviors. Social work has embraced perspectives that pay attention to environmental factors in practice, when individuals, families, and communities are viewed within the context of their environments rather than entities that function in isolation. These approaches to practice are based on an understanding of individuals, groups, and communities as dynamic and complex systems that are interrelated with their environmental contexts (Allen-Meares, 1996, 2010; Mattaini, 1999; Pardeck, 1996; Walkowitz, 1999). Although previous studies indicate that school climate for LGBT students is often hostile and unsafe, minimal information is known about school climate and gay affirmative practice in school settings. In order to help close this gap, this study examined school social workers’ perceptions of school climate for LGBT individuals in its relation to homophobia and gay affirmative practice.
F. Introduction: Consequences of Homophobia

The school setting has often been described as a host community where everyday stressors, complex family problems, and complex community problems come to rest at the doorstep of school social workers. Sexual minority youths are a segment of school social workers’ clientele that face a plethora of challenges. The challenges faced by LGBT youths affect their ability to navigate an often hostile and violent school climate; therefore, it is important to understand the powerful effect of homophobia in the lives of LGBT youths.

1. Emotional distress

Research has documented associations between homophobia and emotional distress in the lives of LGBT individuals (Bochenek & Brown, 2001; Bright, 2004; Daley et al., 2007; Morrow, 2004; Rivers & Cowie, 2006; van Wormer, Wells & Boes, 2000). Oppressive factors such as homophobia have served to marginalize and disenfranchise sexual minority youths. Homophobia has affected LGBT youths’ social and emotional health. Studies suggest that LGBT individuals have higher rates of completed suicides than their heterosexual peers. National studies contend that LGBT youths account for 30% of completed suicide attempts and are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. Some of the factors that have been attributed to suicide and suicide attempts include lack of support, lack of resources, and lack of competent mental health services that address the LGBT youths’ coming out process. Additional research also indicates that lack of social support and other protective factors lead to high rates of alcohol and substance abuse among LGBT youths (Wackerfuss, 2007; Walls & Freedenthal, 2008; Welsh, Green & Jenkins, 1999).
2. **School violence**

Since 2001, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) has published results from their National School Climate Surveys (NSCS) documenting the experience of LGBT students in American schools. The results of the NSCS have been published in order to advocate for changes in policies that improve the school climate for LGBT students. Their biannual surveys demonstrate that these students need support in order to progress through school. Yet violence against LGBT students continues to be a growing concern across all American schools, adversely affecting their academic progress.

In 2001, GLSEN released the findings of its first biannual survey, and brought national attention to antigay harassment in American schools. The 2001 National Safe School Climate Survey (NSCS) was the first time that the experiences of LGBT students had been nationally documented. The NSCS found that 91.4% of LGBT students reported hearing derogatory antigay remarks such as “faggot,” “dyke” or “queer,” while 69% reported being verbally harassed due to their sexual orientation and 46.5% reported being sexually harassed due to their sexual orientation (sexual comments made to the students or being inappropriately touched by other students). Furthermore, 27.6% reported being physically assaulted (punched, kicked, injured with a weapon), and over 58.3% of LGBT students reported that they felt unsafe in their schools because of their sexual orientation (Koswick, 2001).

Approximately 81% of LGBT students survey reported that they continue to hear homophobic remarks from other students (Koswic, 2001), versus 91.4% in the 2003 NSCS (Koswick, 2003). However, 18% of LGBT students reported hearing such remarks from school staff, and 17.6% of LGBT students reported that they had been physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation, while 37.7% stated that they had been physically harassed because of
their sexual orientation. Furthermore, for the first time the NSCS found a correlation between LGBT students’ experiences of harassment and bullying and academic achievement and future aspirations. The NSCS found that LGBT students were five times more likely to skip school in the previous month due to feeling unsafe, and students who experienced physical harassment were less likely to make plans to attend college. The grade point average for LGBT students who experienced physical harassment was a half grade lower than LGBT students who experienced less harassment (2.6 vs. 3.1). Consequently, the most recent 2009 findings of the NSCS echo GLSEN’s assertion that LGBT students in American schools face harassment and bullying that negatively affects their sense of safety, school attendance, academic achievement, and future goals (Kosciw et al., 2009).

Rivers and Cowie (2006) use the term *homophobic bullying* when describing the long-term effects of bullying on sexual minority students. Adams et al. (2004, as cited in River & Cowie, 2006) state that these students often suffer systematic, long-term bullying perpetuated by groups of peers. In addition, Adams et al. (2004) contend that homophobic bullying is more severe than general bullying and that homophobic bullying is not always taken seriously by teachers who sometimes view it as a natural reaction stemming from the male ego. According to Snell (2005), the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 defines bullying as the use of verbal and/or physical threats to inflict emotional or physical pain on another individual. In this definition NCLB includes name calling, hitting, and/or teasing. Words like “faggot” and “dyke” or acts such as pushing and hitting constitute bullying.

When this type of bullying is specifically directed at LGBT students (or students perceived to be LGBT), its practices are rooted in homophobia. Therefore it is crucial to use language that conveys the violence that is being inflicted on this group of students.
Emotional and/or physical pain inflicted upon LGBT students must be examined within the lexicon of homophobic bullying. Using this specific language will allow schools to address one of the root causes of violence directed at LGBT students, namely homophobia. Furthermore, by using the term homophobic bullying, more serious attention is given to the violent acts. Consequently, this language will challenge schools to investigate and uncover the multilayered structures that continue to perpetuate the emotional and physical harm inflicted upon these students.

G. Homophobia and Social Work

1. Previous findings

A review of the literature revealed that various studies have examined social workers’ attitudes toward sexual minority populations; however, the majority of these studies have focused on social work students and social work practitioners in private and community-based settings. Krieglstein (2002) has conducted the only study that examined school social workers’ attitudes toward sexual minority populations. This section will review the literature pertaining to social workers’ attitudes toward sexual minorities and examine the gaps in the literature.

DeCrescenzo (1984) conducted the very first study examining homophobia in social workers. In her study, she compared the attitudes of social workers to those of psychologists toward sexual minorities. DeCrescenzo (1984) surveyed 140 social workers in the state of California. In the snowball sampling technique that she implemented, 41% of her sample included social workers in direct practice, 25% in supervision and direct practice, 20% were social work interns or graduate students, and 11% were in paraprofessional roles. In her study she concluded that social workers had higher levels of homophobia when compared to
psychologists. DeCrescenzo (1984) pioneered important research investigating the attitudes of homophobia and heterosexism in social workers. This study was conducted during a time when work with sexual minorities had not been fully addressed by the field of social work. However, her research is limited. For instance, her research method lacked a validated scale to measure homophobia, raising questions about the validity and reliability of her findings. The use of an unvalidated scale to measure the central construct in her study calls into question whether her scale really measured the construct that it set out to measure.

Additionally, DeCrescenzo (1984) used a nonrandomized sample, limiting the ability to generalize the findings to the social work profession.

In 1984 Wisnieswski and Toomey studied homophobia in 77 MSW students who were providing clinical social work services to sexual minority populations. They used slightly more rigorous methods. Wisnieswski and Toomey (1984) used the Hudson and Riketts’ 1980 Index of Attitude toward Homosexuality (IAH) scale. The IAH scale is composed of 20 items that have been validated and found to be effective in measuring homophobia. They concluded that the social workers in their study held negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. In addition they also found that participants who had more close contact with sexual minorities held more favorable attitudes toward those minorities. This study, however, used a nonrandom, purposive sampling method. Therefore, generalizability is limited. Nonetheless, their use of a validated measure came closer to producing valid findings regarding social workers’ attitudes toward sexual minorities. More importantly, this study stressed the importance of continuing to explore social workers’ attitudes toward sexual minority populations.
More than 10 years later, and after the explosion of the gay and lesbian rights movement, Cramer (1997) conducted a study examining MSW students’ attitudes toward lesbian and gay men. She found that, in general, students held more negative views toward gay men than toward lesbians. Subsequent to her findings, Cramer (1997) began to call on social work education to include more education and training on sexual minority populations. Berkman and Zingberg (1997) echoed Cramer’s (1997) call arguing that increased education and training was one way to reduce negative attitudes toward LGBT populations. Although Berkman and Zingberg (1997) found that only 10% of their sample held homophobic attitudes, they also found that the overwhelming majority of their sample held heterosexist attitudes. Additionally, Berkman and Zingberg (1997) found that correlates such as education, religion, and contact with lesbian and gay individuals were associated with homophobia and heterosexism. They concluded that participants who had more contact with sexual minorities, and who had more education and training regarding sexual minority populations, held more favorable views. Conversely, participants who held conservative religious beliefs held more negative views toward sexual minority populations.

Nearly twenty years after DeCrecenzo’s (1984) seminal study examining social workers’ attitudes toward sexual minorities, Crisp (2002) surveyed social workers and psychologists to examine their attitudes toward sexual minority populations. In her study she used three validated measures to examine the constructs of homophobia and heterosexism. In addition, she randomly sampled NASW social workers and psychologists registered with the American Psychological Association. Unlike DeCrecenzo (1984), Crisp (2002) found no significant differences between the two groups. Instead Crisp (2002) found that both groups had high levels of positive attitudes toward gay and lesbian populations.
According to Crisp (2002), her study had an overall low response rate, but was still the largest of its kind when validating a new measure that examined social workers’ beliefs and practice with sexual minorities \((N = 488)\). In addition, the participants in her study were representative of the social work population, with 74% female, 49% holding a master’s degree, and 92% Caucasian. However, Crisp (2002) limited her study to social workers who were members of NASW. Crisp’s (2002) decision to exclude social workers outside of NASW membership limited her ability to study practitioners in other settings. For instance, school social workers often hold membership in school social work organizations, but not NASW (personal communication, J. Ruben, 2/2/2009, Executive Director of NASW, Illinois). Therefore, school social workers’ attitudes and beliefs about sexual minority populations may not have been included in the study.

2. **School social workers’ attitudes**

In 2002 Krieglstein conducted a study of Illinois school social workers and found that they did not exhibit high levels of heterosexism. She randomly surveyed school social workers in the state of Illinois. The study yielded a 63% response rate, sampling a total of 409 school social workers. In her study she used one validated measure (Herek’s 1988 Attitudes Toward Lesbian and Gay Men Scale) to examine school social workers’ attitudes toward gay and lesbian clients. She also included her own questions in the survey to examine correlates such as contact with gay and lesbian individuals, religiosity, education received regarding sexual minority populations, and level of educational preparedness or training to work with sexual minority students.

Krieglstein’s (2002) study is the only one known to examine school social workers’
attitudes toward sexual minority youths. Yet school social workers interact with sexual minority youths during their most formative years. Consequently it appears appropriate to examine school social workers’ attitudes toward LGBT youths and their use of gay affirmative social work practice. This is very important because school social workers are in pivotal roles, interacting with students on a daily basis and entrusted to provide affirmative social work practice. Therefore it is critical to examine the degree of homophobia among school social workers and whether it is related to gay affirmative practice.

3. Gay affirmative practice

Payne (2005) places social work in opposition to essentialism, underscoring that knowledge is socially constructed. He argues that knowledge development is not neutral and that it is often constructed through the lens that one chooses to use when examining society and client’s lives. Gay affirmative practice (GAP) is derived from this line of thinking. GAP proponents argue that one must examine the lives of LGBT communities through a lens that recognizes how oppressive institutional structures negatively affect the lives of LGBT individuals. Gay affirmative practice proponents argue that problems faced by LGBT communities stem from systemic oppressive forces (not sexual pathology). The philosophy of gay affirmative practice involves practitioners taking an explicit stance against societal oppressive forces that serve to marginalize LGBT communities (external oppressive forces that have been internalized by LGBT individuals) (Tozer & McClanahan, 1999).

Succeeding Payne’s (2005) assertions of knowledge development, gay affirmative practice is categorized as a framework that allows practitioners to view the lives of sexual minorities from an orientation that acknowledges lived experiences. Gay affirmative practice, although adopted by social work practice nearly a decade ago, is rooted in psychotherapy
(Hunter & Hickerson, 2003). In 1973 the American Psychological Association (APA), in order to meet the need for empathetic, nonbiased services for LGBT communities, adopted guidelines for psychotherapy with LGBT clients. In 1973 the APA called for psychotherapy to adopt an affirmative stance to psychotherapy with LGBT individuals (Hunter & Hickerson, 2004). Clark (1987) proposed specific tasks for practitioners to adopt when practicing from an affirmative stance.

These are summarized as follows:

1. Encourage lesbian and gay clients to establish a support system with other lesbian and gay individuals;
2. Help lesbian and gay individuals become aware of how oppression has affected them;
3. Desensitize the shame and guilt surrounding homosexual thoughts, behaviors, and feelings;
4. Allow clients to express anger in response to being oppressed;
5. Challenge heterosexist practice and attitudes.

In order to provide gay affirmative practice, Clark (1987) contends that practitioners must engage in a process of self-assessment regarding their own feelings and attitudes toward LGBT populations. Two decades after Clark’s (1987) call for self-examination when working with LGBT individuals, it appears that gay affirmative practice has not been fully adopted by service providers. Mohr (2002), along with Pachankis and Goldfried (2004), found that LGBT individuals in mental health services continue to experience heterocentric views and heterocentric language from their practitioners. They also found that when practitioners are aware of the client’s sexual orientation they tend to view client’s problems as stemming from
that orientation. Furthermore, they found that practitioners tend to be reluctant to initiate discussions regarding the client’s sexual orientation.

In order to respond to this new approach, social work (nearly a decade ago) introduced gay affirmative practice into the social work literature. Mallon (1998) discussed the importance of developing a knowledge base when providing social work services to gay and lesbian communities. He argued that social work needed to focus on an acquisition of knowledge. He called for:

1. The adoption of an ecological approach with LGBT communities that placed importance on power differentials;
2. The integration of social work ethics, values, and self-examination when working with LGBT communities;
3. For social work to promote organizational change that challenged homophobia and heterosexism.

In 1998, Ryan and Futterman discussed the importance of understanding the identity formation of sexual minority youths. They proposed a comprehensive approach to mental health services and care for sexual minority youths. Their work with LGBT youths is a seminal body of work because it brought attention to the needs of these youths during a time when they were largely ignored by social work researchers. Ryan and Futterman (1998) outlined a framework for gay affirming practice that considered the unique needs of LGBT youths. In many ways, their work began to move gay affirmative practice toward cultural competency, expanding cultural competency beyond race and ethnicity by examining developmental milestones for LGBT youths.
Their work highlighted the unique characteristics of identity formation central to youths, as well as special considerations needed when practicing from an affirmative stance with sexual minority youths. They discussed the family unit as a point of intervention for LGBT youths, homelessness among LGBT youths, HIV and AIDS prevention, pregnancy prevention, and the importance of resource mapping for this population. Ryan and Futterman (1998) provided social work with a handbook of care that specifically addressed the needs of LGBT youths.

Appleby and Anastas (1998) argued that social work did not need a new model to address the lives of LGBT individuals and communities. They claimed that new and existing social work models addressed diversity and cultural competency and were sufficient to address their needs. According to Appleby and Anastas (1998), social work needed to adopt a framework to enhance practice and the understanding of LGBT communities and environments. They also stated that the field of social work needed to increase practice skills, assessment skills, and intervention skills when working with LGBT communities. Crisp (2005) noted that Appleby and Anastas (1998) contend that, in order to enhance practice with LGBT individuals, gay affirmative practice needs to be adopted by social workers, and that it should include the following six components:

1. Do not assume that a client is heterosexual;
2. Believe that homophobia in the client and society is the problem, rather than sexual orientation;
3. Accept the function of an identity by a gay, lesbian, or bisexual person as a positive outcome of the helping process;
4. Work with clients to decrease internalized homophobia that they may be experiencing so that clients can achieve a positive identity as a gay or lesbian person;
5. Become knowledgeable about different theories of the coming-out process for gay men and lesbians, and
6. Deal with one's own homophobia and heterosexual bias.

Social work has endorsed a gay affirmative practice approach with LGBT populations, promoting the view that LGBT sexual orientation is a healthy part of an individual’s identity. This approach reinforces the naturalness of being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender and calls upon social work to accept the identity of LGBT individuals. This approach has moved social work into a transformative practice stance with sexual minority populations, integrating the person-in-environment, cultural competency, and strengths perspective into the framework of gay affirmative practice. Although there does not exist one specific approach to use with LGBT individuals, gay affirmative practice has been described as providing a holistic approach to social work services that are essential to include when working with LGBT communities (Crisp, 2004, 2006; Hunter & Hickerson, 2003; Van Den Bergh & Crisp, 2004; van Wormer, 2000).

To date, however, Crisp (2006) has been the only social work researcher to examine attitudes toward LGBT populations and gay affirmative practice among a sample of social work practitioners and psychologists. In order to help close the gap in knowledge, the present study examined the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice among a sample of school social workers and whether school climate potentially moderated the relationship between these two variables.

4. **Summary**

In order to examine the attitudes of school social workers about LGBT populations it is important to understand the historical and contemporary perspectives that lead to violence against LGBT individuals and their communities. It is also imperative to understand what
research tells us about the degree of homophobia among helping professionals and how this affects their practice. “Attitudes toward LGBT populations” is a very complex construct that must be examined within multidimensional aspects that considers religiosity, sexual orientation, age, and education or training about LGBT individuals, and personal contact with LGBT individuals. Although previous research has indicated that these factors influence homophobia, limited information is available on school social workers’ attitudes about LGBT populations. In addition, no information is available regarding school social workers’ degree of homophobia as related to the use of gay affirmative practice.

When exploring school social workers’ attitudes about LGBT populations and use of gay affirmative practice, it is also important to examine the perceived school climate because its norms may influence the use of gay affirmative practice with LGBT students. In this study, information about the current degree of homophobia among school social workers is provided, along with the empirical evidence of the relationship between homophobia and use of gay affirmative practice. This study builds social work research knowledge about LGBT youths in schools and contributes to social work practice with LGBT youths. This study used a web-based, self-selected survey for school social work members and affiliates of the School Social Work Association of America (SWAA) and the American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW).
I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A. Introduction: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on attitude formation. This section will focus on two theories applied to the study when examining homophobia among a selected group of school social workers. The two theories that guided the study were social learning theory and organizational theories. Homophobia has been described as holding negative views toward sexual minorities that lead to discrimination against LGBT communities. Homophobia has also been described as a pervasive cultural fear of erotic or sexual contact between same-sex individuals, and as a social problem stemming from society’s prejudice against sexual minorities rooted in society’s deviant and pathological views toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (Appleby & Anastas, 1988; Herek, 1984, 1990, 1996, 2000, 2009; Morrow, 2004; Weinberg, 1972; Zemsky, 1988).

Understanding the underlying factors that form negative attitudes toward sexual minorities is complex and often compounded by macro influences that affect the individual. Presently there is no one central theory that effectively explains attitude formation toward sexual minority populations. To better understand the multidimensional aspects of attitude formation that influence views about LGBT populations, this study drew upon social learning and organizational theories. Applying these theories to the conceptual framework of the study helped interconnect attitude formation toward LGBT individuals and communities with theory.

1. Social learning theory

Social learning theory was conceptualized as early as the 1800s by Gabriel Tarde who discussed the law of imitation in shaping public opinion (Katz, 2006). However, Albert Bandura (1977) is credited with the advances in social learning theory that link the interactions of
personality, behavior, and environment to aspects of cognition and behavior. His work is one of modern society’s most important bodies of work in the field of human behavior, spanning over three decades of scholarship. Several critical aspects of social learning theory (i.e., modeling, symbolic capacity, vicarious learning, and reinforcement) will be discussed in relation to attitude formation toward LGBT populations. These aspects will help clarify the interlocking determinants that explain human thought and behavior. So what is learned in our society about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people?

Bandura (1977) contends that, through observing others, members in society learn which behaviors are acceptable and which behaviors are prohibited. He contends that observing others who pay the consequences associated with engaging in threatening and/or prohibitive behaviors or activities reinforces negativity associated with such behaviors and activities. Pharr (1988) argues that homophobia is the ultimate weapon of sexism. She asserts that sexism is effectively used to perpetuate hegemonic structures that maintain heterosexual dominance. Thus, women and men are publically ridiculed for stepping outside of prescribed gender roles and forced to conform to heterosexual identities. Pharr (1988) postulates that these messages are learned early in life, when members of society learn to behave in ways that conform to heterosexuality.

Scholars critically examine the role of patriarchy as the foundation of the family unit, in which masculinity has been used as its primary authority (Binhammer, 2002; Cruikshank, 2007; Hesford, 2005). Various authors investigate homophobia within a political and social structure that places men in positions of dominance over women, where women are placed in submissive roles that promote traditional male-female gender roles (Butler, 1997; Collins, 2000; Pharr, 1988; Herek, 1984). Because LGBT individuals do not conform to traditional heterosexual gender roles, they threaten the political and social institution of heterosexuality. This hegemonic
structure then forms the basis for negative attitude formation toward LGBT populations. In turn, societal exchanges reinforce messages that categorize homosexuality as deviant and abnormal (Appleby & Anastas, 1998; Herek, 1984).

Hate crimes, discrimination, restrictive policies, and violence directed at LGBT populations serve as societal examples of negative consequences directed at LGBT populations for stepping outside of prescribed gender roles (Canaday, 2003; McPhail, 2000; Van Soest & Bryant, 1995). Although Bandura does not specifically link social learning theory to attitude formation about LGBT populations, conceptually one may argue that through observational learning, symbolic classifications, reinforcement, and modeling, members of society learn that same-sex relationships are undesirable and devalued. Consequently, social learning theory is crucial in understanding how members of society form negative attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations.

2. **Organizational theory**

Organizational theory was developed in the 1900s as a means to study human behavior in the workplace. Early work in this field concentrated on human characteristics, social environment, tasks, physical environment, capacity, speed, durability, and cost, and their interaction with one another. During this time organizational theory focused mainly on removing and/or reducing human variability in order to promote optimal work performance. Today, organizational theory has influenced social psychology, with a growing body of literature that has examined human behavior and human interactions in the workplace. Organizational climate derived from organizational theory, is a broad, complex theory that informs human interaction and social influences in the workplace (Hofstede, 2001).

In order to explore how school climate may act as a potential moderator variable influencing
homophobia and use of gay affirmative practice, aspects related to Hofstede’s (2001) classification schemes for assessing an organization along with aspects related to organizational justice are discussed.

Hofstede (2001) contends that people carry “mental programs” developed early in life and reinforced in schools and organizations. He argues that the values and behaviors expressed in organizations reflect national culture, because organizations function as smaller units of society. He developed classification schemas to assess the climate of an organization that include power distances, individualism, and collectivism. When discussing power distances in an organization he contends that the values of an organization determine who is at the top of the hierarchical structure and who has more value. He asserts that power distances are determined by societal norms that are manifested within the organizational culture itself.

Power exists on various levels: individual, interpersonal, institutional, and societal. In the context of this study, power is important to consider because it influences the social order and hierarchy of an organization, affecting who is valued and how people are viewed (Appleby & Anastas, 1998; Hofstede, 2001). How sexual minorities are viewed within the structure of an organization may affect the “milieu of practice.” An example may be useful here. If heterosexuality is valued and privileged above any other sexual orientation, the power dynamics of the school may disempower LGBT individuals, limiting their voice in the organization as well as their access to resources and services. This type of power dynamic may lead to a school climate that is unsupportive and unsafe for LGBT individuals, affecting school social workers’ ability to deliver appropriate services.

Another factor for assessing the organization that Hofstede (2001) examines is individualism and collectivism. This relates to whether individualistic attributes are more
important (valued) over collective well-being. Hofstede contends that the degree of individualism or collectivism expected from the members of an organization affects the relationship between the person and the organization to which he or she belongs. He goes on to argue that more collective organizations call for greater emotional interdependence. He states that the level of individualism and collectivism affects compliance with organizational requirements. In order to link individualism and collectivism to school climate, it may be useful to discuss concepts related to organizational justice.

In the field of organizational theory, organizational justice has been studied as people’s perception of fairness in organizations (Chory & Kingsley-Westerman, 2009; Gruber, 1998; Kabanoff, Waldersee, & Cohen, 1995; Umphress, Giuseppe, Brass, Kass, & Scholten, 2003). Two concepts related to organizational justice that appear to be useful when discussing school climate are distributive justice and interactional justice. Distributive justice is described as the perception of fairness of outcomes and has mostly been related to equity and equality (Gruber, 1998). Organizations that value individualistic views tend to value equity. Equity is described in terms of tangible rewards, and focus on making sure that one’s individual needs are being met (Törnblom & Vermunt, 2007). Equality is described as the respect for all people as individuals, with a focus on making sure that the organization treats people in just ways. Equality is based on the belief that respect should be the criteria prescribed for behavior. Within this construct, control of one’s voice is important, as well as control over decision making and representation of diversity (Blake & Risse, 2008). Theoretically, schools that value collectivism may be more prone toward promoting equality and encouraging practice behaviors that focus on social equality for marginalized groups.
Interactional justice is related to the perception of fairness and how others are treated. Problems with interactional justice may arise when members of an organization are judged unfairly and denied privacy and/or respect (Kabanoff, Waldersee, & Cohen, 1995; Umphress et al., 2003). Authors examining workplace climate assert that organizations that have proactive leaders tend to have lower levels of harassment, be more assertive in addressing hostility, more likely to implement policies against harassment, and more likely to have resources addressing harassment in the workplace for its membership. These studies suggest that there may be a link between tolerance of harassment and organizational climate. This also suggests that proactive leadership may play a key role in reducing a hostile work climate (DeCremer, VanDijke & Bos, 2007; Hodson, 2004). Leadership is important in a school setting because leaders implement policies that may encourage or discourage respect and dignity for LGBT populations, a factor that may affect school climate.

3. **Interconnection of theories**

Social learning theory and organizational theory can be seen as interconnected in that they help address individuals’ attitude formation toward LGBT populations, considering psychological and environmental factors. These theories are useful because they include internal and external forces that may influence beliefs, attitudes, and practice behaviors with sexual minority populations. “Social learning theory approaches the explanation of human behavior in terms of a continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants” (Bandura, 1977, p. vii). This study provides a multidimensional and reciprocal perspective to the exploration of homophobia and gay affirmative practice, examining how religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact, and training and education may be related to homophobia and gay affirmative practice.
Organizational climate examines the attitudes, experiences, beliefs, and values present in an organization. It has been described as the values and norms that are shared by people and groups in the organization. In the context of organizational climate it is believed that norms are set by the organization, determining in many ways who and what is valued. In turn, it is believed that these norms begin to shape member’s attitudes and beliefs about the people they serve (Glisson & Green, 2006; Glisson & James, 2002). This study explored the link between school climate and homophobia and gay affirmative practice. Figure 1 below illustrates the conceptual framework of the study.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**
IV. METHOD

A. Introduction: Research Method

This study examined the relationship between homophobia and the use of gay affirmative practice and how school climate potentially moderated the relationship between these two variables.

B. Research Design and Method of Investigation

The purpose of this cross-sectional exploratory study was to examine homophobia among school social workers and their use of gay affirmative practice. The study also explored whether religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, or education and training about LGBT populations influenced the degree of homophobia among school social workers. This study also examined whether school climate potentially moderated the degree of homophobia among school social workers and the use of gay affirmative practice. In order to collect data to examine these variables, a Web-based survey was used. The Web-based survey was self-administered to school social work members and affiliates of the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) and the American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW).

1. Research Questions

(1) What is the degree of homophobia among school social workers? Does the degree of homophobia vary by variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education or training about LGBT populations?

(2) To what extent do school social workers engage in gay affirmative practice with LGBT students? Does the engagement with gay affirmative practice vary by variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT
individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations?

(3) Are there associations between the degree of homophobia among school social workers and use of gay affirmative practice? Does the association between homophobia and gay affirmative practice vary by variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations?

(4) Is the potential association between homophobia among school social workers and use of gay affirmative practice potentially moderated by their perceptions of school climate? Does use of gay affirmative practice vary by variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations?

C. Procedures

1. Data collection plan

Participants from the membership and affiliates of the School Social Work Association of America and the American Council for School Social Work were invited to participate in this study. Members of SWAA and ACSSW received a weekly and or biweekly electronic notice to participate in the study (see Appendix D for letter of support). The notices included information about the study (see Appendix C), along with a link to the study. During data collection 24 electronic reminders were sent from March 2010 to April 2011. Survey Monkey was used to link the participants to the study. Survey Monkey is an electronic survey engine that can be tailored to customize survey instruments and allows for the data to be exported into an Excel program. Once the data were imported into an excel program they were exported into SPSS 19.0 statistical software.
The participants self-administered the survey, which included a subject information sheet about their rights as research subjects with waived documentation of consent (as approved by the University of Illinois at Chicago, Institutional Review Board) (see appendix A). The survey instrument included step-by-step instructions on how to complete the survey. Data collected from each participant were completely confidential. In order to increase the response rate for the study, information about the study was also posted on the School Social Work Association of America website. In order to encourage respondents to participate in the study the website included a brief description of the study and a link to the study.

Electronic notices sent to members of the School Social Work Association of America and American Council for School Social work included information about the study and a link to the study. Weekly and/or biweekly reminders were sent to members and affiliates of the School Social Work Association of America requesting them to participate in the study. During the summer vacation months of June 2010 to September 2010, SSWAA suspended electronic correspondence about the study. In order to protect the respondents’ confidentiality and increase the likelihood of participation, none of the surveys were linked to participants.

2. **Sampling plan**

The study used a convenience sample, recruiting members and affiliates from the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) and the American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW). A convenience sample was selected in order to ensure complete confidentiality for research participants and increase sample size.

This is the first known exploratory and descriptive study to examine homophobia and gay affirmative practice among school social workers, thus confidentiality and sample size were two essential components of the study. The SSWAA was founded in 1994 and is the first leading
national organization specifically dedicated to school social work. When the study was initiated, the organization had approximately 2,000 members. The membership included school social workers, school social work administrators, school social work policy makers, school social work educators, and school social work students.

The American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW) was founded in 2009. The ACSSW is a national organization dedicated to the education, training, and research of school social workers. When the study was initiated, ACSSW had about 100 members and various affiliates across the United States. The membership included school social workers, school social work administrators, school social work policy makers, school social work educators, and school social work students. The School Social Work Association of America and the American Council for School Social Work to date are the only two national organizations dedicated to the school social work profession. This sample frame was selected in order to obtain a sample of school social workers across various states in the United States.

A power analysis to determine sample size for the study was conducted, indicating that 341 participants were needed for this study (confidence level of 95%; confidence interval .05). The analysis further determined that in order to secure 341 participants for the study, 700 participants would need to be invited to participate (Macorr, 2009). However, inviting only 700 participants to complete the survey risked a low response rate. Therefore the survey was offered to approximately 2,100 members and affiliates of SSWAA and ACSSW.

Participation in this study was based on two specific inclusion criteria: (a) employment status and (b) length of employment. Participation required that school social workers be employed for 1 year or longer. One school calendar year of social work practice was deemed appropriate to include in the criteria because it provided respondents with adequate experience to
answer questions pertaining to their attitudes about LGBT populations, practice behavior with LGBT students, and perception of school climate. The selection criteria were included in the survey instrument and with each invitation to participate in the study. Participants were asked to respond to the study only if they met the selection criteria. Respondents who did not meet the selection criteria were excluded from the study.

Because the study focused on homophobia and the use of gay affirmative practice among school workers, any respondent who was not employed as a practicing school social worker at the time of the study was excluded. The study yielded 283 responses, 82.9% of the targeted response rate, and yielded responses from 45 states (90%) across the country. A total of 11 cases were eliminated from the study, due to not meeting inclusion criteria outlined by the study.

3. **Data analysis plan**

The quantitative data derived from the survey instrument were analyzed using SPSS 19.0 statistical analysis software. The data were entered into the computer and verified by the researcher. Univariate analysis was computed in order to provide descriptive information about the sample frame and answer research questions 1 and 2, as follows:

1. What is the degree of homophobia among school social workers?

2. To what extent do school social workers engage in gay affirmative practice?

Descriptive analysis is displayed on a frequency table. The mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation were used to analyze research questions 1 and 2. The results are displayed on a measure of central tendency table.

Spearman’s rho and independent t-test bivariate analysis were conducted in order to answer questions about the control variables included in this study as they related to research
questions 1 and 2. Bivariate analysis was also conducted to answer research question 3a and 3b (see below for research questions):

1. Are there associations between homophobia and gay affirmative practice among school social workers? Does the association vary by religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact, or education and training about LGBT populations?

2. To what extent do school social workers engage in gay affirmative practice? Does the association vary by religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact, or education and training about LGBT populations?

3. Are there associations between the degree of homophobia among school social workers and their use of gay affirmative practice? Does the association vary by religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact, or education and training about LGBT populations?

Spearman’s rho correlation was conducted to examine the strength of associations between homophobia and gay affirmative practice and continuous variables included in this study (i.e., religiosity scale, age, personal contact, and education and training). T-tests of independence were conducted to examine whether homophobia and gay affirmative practice differ according to the dichotomous variables included in this study (i.e., sexual orientation and religious affiliation). Correlation analysis is displayed in the Spearman’s rho correlation analysis matrix. Results of the independent t-test are provided in a t-test analysis table.

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to quantify the effect of the potential moderating variable and answer research question 4:

4. Is the possible association between homophobia among school social workers and use of gay affirmative practice potentially moderated by their perceptions of school
climate? Does use of gay affirmative practice vary by religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, or education and training about LGBT populations?

The multiple linear regression model was conducted as follows: The correlation between the predictor variable (homophobia) and outcome variable (gay affirmative practice) was examined. The analyses proceeded by (a) centering homophobia and gay affirmative practice on their mean, (b) entering homophobia as the predictor variable, (c) entering school climate as the moderator variable, and (d) entering the cross product of homophobia and school climate into the model. This examined the effect of school climate (proposed moderator variable) on homophobia and gay affirmative practice (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Cohen et al., 2003).

Statistical stepwise regression analysis was conducted in order to provide information about the correlated variables and their contribution to the variance found in the outcome variable, gay affirmative practice. The stepwise regression analysis was conducted by regressing the gay affirmative practice scores on the selected variables in the study. In the first step, gay affirmative practice was entered in the regression model (as the dependent variable). In the second step, homophobia along with the variables that correlated with the outcome variable gay affirmative practices was entered into the model as the independent variables. The results are displayed on a stepwise regression analysis table. Content analysis was used to examine three open-ended questions included in this study and triangulate the data. The questions asked about (a) starting a GSA/club organization and administrative support for club/organization, (b) obstacles in starting a club/organization, and (c) social work services specifically provided to address the unique needs of LGBT students. Words and phrases were used to examine the recurring themes and associations that emerged from the analysis (Padgett, 1998).
D. Conceptual Definition and Instrumentation

The study included one independent variable, one dependent variable, one potential moderator variable, and various control variables. The independent variable in this study is homophobia. The dependent variable is gay affirmative practice. School climate was examined as a potential moderator variable. The study examined the following control variables: age, sexual orientation, education and training about LGBT individuals, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and religiosity. In order to measure the central variables in this study, questions from four scales were used. In addition, various questions about respondents’ demographic information were also included in the survey. The survey instrument contained seven sections. In addition, the survey instrument also included three open-ended questions (see Appendix D).

1. Independent variable: Homophobia

   a. Conceptual definition

   In this study homophobia is conceptually defined as the broad range of negative attitudes and beliefs about LGBT populations that may lead to a reduction of effective mental health services for LGBT individuals (Appleby & Anastas, 1998; Crisp 2002, 2006; Herek, 1984). Butler (1997 critically examines how society places value on heterosexuality as the norm for forming relationships centered on procreation. She asserts that heterosexuality is constructed as a natural, unquestioned fact in our society. Sexual minorities therefore fall outside of society’s construct of normality because of their same-sex love and attraction. Because sexual minorities fall outside of these normative roles, they are seen as abnormal and pathological and are held in contempt by members of society that value heterosexuality as the preferred normative role.
Zempsky (1998) contends that xenophobia, erotophobia, and sex-role stereotypes contribute to individual and societal negative views toward LGBT populations. She states that xenophobic qualities are related to homophobia because it (xenophobia) is related to deep-seated fears of people who are perceived as different from the dominant culture. She asserts that sexual minorities (or people perceived as such) are viewed as nonnormative people who fail to adhere to traditional prescribed gender roles. In turn, the violation of gender roles gives rise to prejudicial views toward LGBT populations, viewing sexual minorities as the “other.” She goes on to say that fear of excessive sexuality (erotophobia) is also tied to homophobia because it reinforces stereotypes of LGBT populations as hypersexual predators.

Zempsky (1998) contends that erotophobia contributes to the aversion of sexual minorities because people who adhere to dominant views about LGBT populations categorize LGBT individuals as unable to control their sexual impulses. She contends that this poses a threat to heterosexual hegemony. She also asserts that the dominant culture has stereotyped “gay men” as effeminate and weak and “lesbians” as masculine, supplanting traditional male/female roles. Therefore, men and women who are perceived as behaving outside of traditional gender roles, regardless of their sexual orientation, are often identified as gay or lesbian.

In this study, homophobia is defined as "fear, disgust, anger, discomfort and aversion that individuals experience in dealing with gay people" (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980, p. 358 ) or "any belief system which supports negative myths and stereotypes about homosexual people" (Maher, 2008; Morin & Garfinkle, 1978, p. 30). Homophobia was measured using Crisp’s (2006) gay affirmative practice scale (GAP), questions 1–15. The GAP scale has been correlated with Larson and Hoffmans’s 1980 Heterosexual Attitudes Toward Homosexuality (HATH) scale to measure homophobia.
b. **Measurement**

The degree of homophobia among school social workers was measured using Crisp’s (2002) Gay Affirmative Practice Scale, “belief” about treatment with gay and lesbian clients’ domain (items 1–15). The Gay Affirmative Practice Scales is a 30-item, 5-point Likert scale (1= *strongly agree* to 5 = *strongly disagree*), designed to measure clinicians’ homophobic “beliefs” about treatment with gay and lesbian clients (items 1–15) and their behaviors in clinical settings with these clients (items 16–30). In this study, respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement (see Appendix D, part V, questions 1–15). Homophobia was measured at the interval level of measurement. (More information about the scale is provided below.)

2. **Dependent variable: Gay affirmative practice**

a. **Conceptual definition**

The dependent variable is gay affirmative practice (GAP). GAP is defined as affirming a lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity as equally positive human experiences and expressions as heterosexual identity (Davis, 1996). GAP has recently been introduced into the social work literature as a culturally sensitive model for working with sexual minority populations. This model is consistent with social work approaches that call for viewing clients from a strengths perspective (Saleebey, 2006) that honors an individual’s self-determination, promotes health, and works toward consciousness raising. This model integrates person-in-environment approaches to social work practice, emphasizing the importance of examining the lives of LGBT individuals within the context of their environment (Crisp, 2002, 2006).
Davies (1996) describes gay affirmative practice as a model that promotes cultural competence by underlining the importance of practitioners’ abilities to examine their attitudes toward LGBT populations, increase their knowledge of LGBT populations, and use effective skills when working with LGBT individuals. Gay affirmative practice includes:

1. **Emotional competency:** Be aware of attitudes and feelings about LGBT persons. Continue to examine personal bias and deal with one’s own homophobia and heterosexism. Become knowledgeable about different theories of the coming-out process and identity formation for sexual minority populations.

2. **Intellectual competency:** Attain accurate and scientifically sound information, education, and training about LGBT populations. Attain accurate and scientifically sound information that addresses the multidimensional lives of LGBT individuals and communities.

3. **Create an affirming practice environment:** The environment should include positive written acknowledgments, such as nondiscriminatory policies and forms that include other categories than single, married, or divorced. Include written pamphlets and resources addressing the needs and concerns of LGBT communities, and visible logos that indicate that the environment is a welcoming and safe place for LGBT communities. Encourage lesbian and gay clients to establish a support system with other lesbian and gay individuals. Challenge heterosexist practice and attitudes.

4. **Respectful language:** Do not assume that the client is heterosexual; use inclusive and gender-neutral language. Examples include using terms such as sexual activity versus sexual intercourse, relationship status versus marital status, partner status versus spouse.
5. Open-ended questions: In your practice, use questions like, who is important to you? And not are you married, widowed, or divorced? What can you tell me about the persons who are significant in your life? What can you tell me about your relationships? Do not ask about causes of sexual orientation. Help lesbian and gay individuals become aware of how oppression has affected them. Desensitize the shame and guilt surrounding homosexual thoughts, behaviors, and feelings. Allow clients to express anger in response to being oppressed (Appleby & Anastas, 1998; Clark, 1987; Crisp, 2002 2006; Hunter & Hickerson, 2004; Morrow, 2004; van Wormer, 2000).

b. Measurement

Gay affirmative practice was measured using Crisp’s (2002) Gay Affirmative Practice Scale, practice “behavior” with lesbian and gay client’s domain (items 16–30). Respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement (see Appendix D, questions 16–30). Gay affirmative practice was measured at the interval level of measurement.

Crisp’s (2002) Gay Affirmative Practice scale (GAP) was selected for this study because it is the only known scale that measures homophobia and the use of gay affirmative practice. The scale was developed in 2002 and is a 30-item interval-level questionnaire that measures two dimensions: (a) the degree to which practitioners engage in homophobic beliefs about gay and lesbian clients and (b) gay affirmative practice.

When developing this scale, Crisp (2002) used three specific methodological strategies to construct her measure: (a) review of the literature (b) expert review panel, and (c) administration of scale to clinicians.
The literature review conducted by Crisp (2002) resulted in 543 initial items. After eliminating the duplicate items, 372 items were selected. This review indicated that two domains were needed for the scale. According to Crisp (2002), the literature review called for one domain measuring (a) practitioners’ beliefs about sexual minorities and (b) another measuring practice behavior. This phase included 167 items in the behavior domain and 205 in the belief domain. The expert review included nine experts on gay affirmative practice that evaluated the 372 items and rated them on relevance to gay affirmative practice. The expert review panel used a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = non relevant, 2 = somewhat relevant, 3 = quite relevant, 4 = very relevant). Items with the highest mean score were retained, resulting in 80 items across the two domains.

The 80 items were administered to clinicians in the field of social work and psychology. During this step in the validation process, 3,000 practitioners were randomly selected from each membership (1,500 from NASW and 1,500 from APA). A total of 488 respondents returned the survey. The demographics of the respondents appear to match the characteristics of social work practitioners. The majority of the respondents were female (74%), married (69%), heterosexual (86%), Democrats (69%), Caucasian (92%). The Gay Affirmative Practice Scale’s Cronbach’s alpha is 0.95. The scale’s standard error of measure for the beliefs’ domain is 1.91, while the standard error of measure for the practice behavior domain is 2.7. These scores indicate that the GAP is a reliable measure of homophobic beliefs and practice behavior. As a result of this validation process, the GAP scale with 30 items emerged.

The scale is composed of two domains, one measuring homophobia and the other measuring gay affirmative practice (Crisp, 2002).
Further analysis found that convergent construct validity for each item loaded on its intended domain 0.60 or higher, indicating that the scale had factor validity. In order to test the GAP’s convergent construct validity, Crisp (2002) conducted a Pearson’s r correlation between the practice domain of the GAP scale and Larson, Reed, and Hoffman’s (1980) Heterosexual Attitudes Toward Homosexuality (HATH) scale. The correlation between the two scales was 0.64 ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating that the GAP scale had construct validity in the beliefs toward sexual minority domain. Crisp (2002) further tested convergent construct validity by conducting a Pearson’s r correlation between the behavior domain and Herek’s (1988) Attitudes Toward Lesbian and Gay men (ATLG) scale. The correlation between the two scales was $0.466$ ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the GAP scale had construct validity in the behavior toward sexual minority domain. Crisp (2002) measured discriminate construct validity for 30 items included in the scale in order to determine whether the scale measured social desirability. Results indicated that the GAP scale does not measure social desirability for the entire 30 items on the scale, (0.021), $p = 0.691$. The scale is reported to have very excellent reliability. For items 1–15 the Cronbach’s alpha is .9307. The standard error of measurement is 1.91. In addition, for items 16–30 the Cronbach’s alpha is .9375, and the standard error of measurement is 1.91.

The validity for items 1–15 is as follows: The Pearson’s R is $.624$ ($p = .000$) when compared with the Heterosexual Attitudes toward Homosexuals. In addition for items 16–30, the Pearson’s R is $-0.466$ ($p = .000$) when compared to the Attitudes Toward Lesbian and Gays. Items 1–30, $0.021$ ($p = .691$), SDS (M-C 1[10])$^3$ The factor validity analysis revealed that all items load on their intended domain ≥ .60 (Crisp, 2002). In this study the GAP was used as an interval level of measurement for the homophobia and gay affirmative domains.
3. **Proposed moderator variable: School climate**

School climate was identified as the proposed moderator variable in this study. Moderator variables may have a direct or indirect influence on the main variables included in a study. Moderation occurs when the relationship between two variables depends on a third variable. The third variable is referred to as the moderator variable. This effect is characterized statistically as an interaction that affects the direction and/or strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (i.e., it affects the zero-order correlation between two variables) (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In this study, school climate was examined to determine its relationship to and effect on the central variables in this study.

a. **Conceptual definition**

The conceptual definition of school climate is school social workers’ perception of the school climate for LGBT individuals. Theoretically, if the climate of the school (i.e., attitudes and values) becomes the norm and expectations for the school, and the school climate is perceived as unsafe and unsupportive for LGBT individuals, then gay affirmative practice may be affected.

b. **Measurement**

As noted previously in this dissertation there is no one standardized measure for school climate. In addition, there is no standardized school climate measure especially developed to examine school social worker’s perception of school climate in relation to homophobia. Consequently, I constructed the school climate measure used in this study. The items included in the school climate measure were derived from school climate research that specifically examined factors related to LGBT populations in school settings. These studies concluded that a GSA or formal organizational to support LGBT students, safe school policies to protect LGBT faculty
and staff when being open about their sexuality, and having services that addressed LGBT concerns created a safe school climate for LGBT students. Conversely, frequent antigay epithets and a lack of services for LGBT students negatively affected a safe school climate for LGBT students (Goodenow, Szalzcha, & Westheimer, 2006; Kosciw, 2001, 2005, 2007; Kosciw & Diaz, 2005; Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009; Krieglstein, 2002; Morrow, 2004; National Coalition of Antigay Violence Programs, 2005; Peters, 2003).

Thus, based on the literature review on school climate, six questions were specifically used for the school climate measure. Questions 1 and 2 used a 5-point Likert-type scale, and was measured at the continuous level of measurement (1 = not very supportive, 2 = somewhat supportive, 3 = neutral, 4 = supportive and 5 = very supportive). Questions 1 and 2 asked questions about administrative support for the delivery of social services for LGBT students and perceived safety for LGBT faculty and staff to be open about their sexual orientation. Questions 3 and 4 used a 4-point Likert-type scale, and was measured at the continuous level of measurement (1 = frequently/daily, 2 = sometimes/weekly, 3 = rarely/monthly and four = never). Questions 3 and 4 asked questions about the frequency of hearing “antigay” epithets, such as “that’s so gay,” “faggot,” or “dyke” in the school setting. Questions 5 and 6 asked about safe school policy and GSA/club or organization to address homophobia in the school setting. Questions 5 and 6 were measured at the categorical level of measurement (1 = yes, 2 = no, 3 = don’t know) (see Appendix D, part II, questions 1–6). In order to examine the reliability of the school climate measure, Cronbach’s alpha was conducted on the six questions included in the school climate measure. The analysis revealed an alpha of .645, indicating that the scale had questionable reliability (George & Mallery, 2003).

In order to strengthen the school climate measure, the scale was re-coded into
dichotomous variables. This provided statistical consistency, allowing the school climate measure to be analyzed on one level of measurement, rather than three different levels of measurement. For instance, as constructed in its original form, the school climate measure had three different scales of measurements, affecting the scales’ reliability (i.e., questions 1 and 2, 5-point scale; questions 3 and 4, 4-point scale; questions 5 and 6, categorical scale). Subsequently, questions 1–6 of the school climate measure were re-coded as dichotomous variables (yes, no, and neutral or don’t know responses were eliminated from the analysis). For instance, question 1, which asked about administrative support for the delivery of social work services to LGBT students, was originally coded as 1 = not supportive and 2 = somewhat supportive, 4 = supportive and 5 = very supportive and re-coded as 1 and 2 = no; and 4 and 5 = yes. Question 2, which asked how safe school was perceived for LGBT faculty and staff to be open about their sexual orientation, was originally coded as 1 = not safe at all and 2 = somewhat safe, to 4 = safe and 5 = very safe and recoded as 1 and 2 = no, and 4 and 5 = yes. (As noted above, neutral responses were eliminated from the analysis).

Questions 3 and 4, which asked about the frequency of hearing “antigay” epithets such as “that’s so gay,” “faggot,” or “dyke” in school settings was re-coded from 1 = frequently/daily, 2 = sometimes/weekly, 3 = rarely/monthly, 4 = never to 1 and 2 = yes and 3 and 4 = no. Questions 5 and 6, which asked about the existence of a safe school policy for faculty and staff to protect them from incidents of homophobia and the existence of a GSA/club/organization to create a positive school climate for LGBT individuals, was re-coded to 1 = no, 2 = yes. (As noted above, don’t know responses were eliminated from the analysis). In order to examine the reliability of the dichotomous school climate measure, Cronbach’s alpha analysis was
conducted. The results revealed a Cronbach’s alpha of .856, indicating that the scale had good reliability (George & Mallery, 2003).

4. **Introduction: Control variables**

In addition to the independent and dependent variables, and proposed moderator variable, an additional group of control variables was included in this study. As noted, negative attitudes and beliefs about LGBT populations have been described as multifaceted processes that must be examined within the context of numerous factors. The following identified variables in this study explored social workers’ attitudes and beliefs about LGBT populations from various perspectives. Each selected variable is described below.

5. **Religiosity**

   a. **Conceptual definition**

   For the purposes of this study, religiosity is conceptually defined as the intrinsic acceptance of traditional, conservative, religious beliefs, values, practices, and standards that support negative attitudes toward sexual minority populations.

   b. **Measure**

   As previously noted, researchers have found a relationship between religiosity and attitudes toward sexual minority populations. This research has traditionally used religious affiliation and frequency of attendance at religious services to examine such relationships. In this study, one question asked about religious affiliation; the question was measured at the categorical level of measurement. One question asked about frequency of attendance at religious services. This question was measured at the ratio level of measurements (see Appendix D).

   However, in order to examine religiosity from a multifaceted perspective, this study also included Hodge’s (1972) 10-item standardized Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale (IRMS), as
well as two questions that specifically asked about religion and gay affirmative practice. The IRMS is a 10-item scale, on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale is .84 (Hodge, 1972). The IRMS is designed to measure different ways of being religious. Although the IRMS was developed and tested in the Christian tradition, the items are said to measure a wide range of religious groups. Only two of the items make a specific reference to God and none of the items makes a specific reference to Christianity. On one end of the dimension are seven intrinsic items, and at the other end are three extrinsic items (Bassett, 1999). Two questions that specifically asked about religion and gay affirmative practice were added to Hodge’s (1972) IRMS standardized scale. Respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they disagree or agree with each statement; questions were measured at the interval level of measurement (see Appendix D, part IV, questions 1–18). As noted above, two additional questions asking about gay affirmative practice and religion were added to Hodge’s (1972) IRMS scale. Therefore, Cronbach’s alpha analysis was conducted to examine the reliability of the scale. The results revealed an alpha of .762, indicating that the scale had acceptable reliability (George & Mallery, 2003).

6. **Age**

   a. **Conceptual definition**

      Age was defined as respondent’s self-reported chronological age (in years) at the time of the study. Age was measured at the ratio level of measurement.

   b. **Measure**

      1. Respondents were asked to provide their current age at the time of the study. (see Appendix D, part I, question 2.)
7. **Education and training about LGBT populations**

   a. **Conceptual definition**

   Education and training about LGBT populations is conceptually defined as respondents’ formal educational attainment that prepared them to work with LGBT populations as well as educational and training experiences that provided information about LGBT populations.

   b. **Measurement**

   Two questions asked respondents about their formal education attained. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they held a bachelor’s degree (BA), master’s degree (MA) or other. These questions were measured at the ordinal level of measurement; a master’s degree was considered a higher level of educational attainment than a bachelor’s degree. In addition, seven questions asked about education and training about LGBT populations. Respondents were asked to provide information about classroom instruction and the percentage of time in bachelor’s and master’s education programs focused on LGBT populations. Respondents were also asked to provide information about clock hours of professional development or job-related training focused on LGBT individuals in the past 5 years. Additionally, respondents were asked to provide information about clock hours of direct supervision or case consultation focused on LGBT individuals in the past 5 years and clock hours of self-directed learning focused on LGBT individuals in the past 5 years. These questions were measured at the ratio level of measurement. One question asked respondents to indicate how they felt about the statement “I feel prepared to provide social work services to LGBT populations.” This question was measured as a Likert-type item (1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree). This question was measured at the continuous level of measurement (see Appendix D, part VI, questions 1–8).
8. **Personal contact with LGBT individuals**

   a. **Conceptual definition**

   Personal contact is conceptually defined as the respondents’ self-reported number of contacts and type of association with individuals whom respondents consider to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender.

   b. **Measure**

   One question asked respondents to indicate the number of LGBT contacts that they have in their family or friend and work circles. This question was measured at the ratio level of measurement. One question asked respondents to indicate which of their LGBT contacts they consider “closest.” This question was measured at the categorical level of measurement. One question asked respondents to rate the level of “closeness that they had with the LGBT person(s) that they identified in their family, friend, work circle.” This question was measured at the ordinal level of measurement (see Appendix D, part VII, questions 1–3).

9. **Sexual Orientation**

   a. **Conceptual definition**

   Sexual orientation is defined as respondents’ self-reported emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to another person.

   b. **Measure**

   Respondents were asked to indicate whether their sexual orientation was heterosexual, gay male, lesbian, bisexual. This question was measured at the categorical level of measurement (see Appendix D, part I, question 2).
10. Qualitative data

The questionnaire included three open-ended questions where respondents could provide information about their school and social work services for LGBT students. One question asked respondents to provide information about administrative support for starting a club/organization to address school climate. One question asked respondents to provide information about any obstacles in starting such an organization. One question asked respondents to provide information about any services that they are providing to specifically meet the needs of LGBT students (see Appendix D, part II, questions 8 and 9 and part V, question 31). Content analysis was used to analyze the data.
V. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Introduction

Extant research demonstrates that social work is nearly homogenous in several dimensions, including race, gender, and education. In 2003 the National Association of Social Workers conducted a demographic study of their membership and found that social work was predominately practiced by Caucasian (87%) women (70%) who held a master’s degree in social work (91%). The average practice experience was 16 years and over half (55%) of the social workers surveyed reported using professional publications to guide their practice (Kelly et al., 2009).

In 2008, the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) conducted a national survey of school social workers. SSWAA found that the characteristics for school social workers have remained stable for nearly a decade and a half. The study found that school social work is dominated by Caucasian (79%) women (89%) who hold a master’s degree in social work (87%). In addition, over half (55.4%) of the school social workers surveyed reported practicing for an average of 11 years. The study also found that school social workers practice predominantly in public elementary school settings (44%) with approximately one third practicing in four schools or more. They found that school social workers inform their practice through peer consultation and workshops, rather than evidence-based practice or online research journals (Kelly et al., 2009). Based on the studies conducted by the National Association of Social Workers and the School Social Work Association of America, it appears that social workers and school social workers are similar in characteristics.
1. **Sample for current study**

A nonrandomized, self-selected sample was recruited from the School Social Work Association of America and American Council for School Social Work and their affiliates. As noted in this dissertation, SSWAA was founded nearly 17 years ago as the first national organization dedicated to the school social work profession. The organization has a large member base (2,000 at time of study) across the United States, with ties to international school social work organizations. SSWAA is dedicated to the professional development of school social workers and enhancing the educational experience of students and families (SSWAA.org).

The American Council for School Social Work was founded 3 years ago. It is a younger organization with membership across the country and international ties to school social work organizations as well. The organization has a smaller member base (100 at time of study) across the United States. ACSSW is also dedicated to the professional development of school social workers and enhancement of the educational experience of students and families, but appears to have a larger focus on school social work research (American Council for School Social Work, 2010). There are approximately 12,000–150,000 school social workers practicing in schools in the United States (Kelly et al., 2009) and SSWAA and ACSSW serve as the two leading national organizations for school social workers. Both organizations have a focus on providing training and professional development to school social workers, advocating for the profession of school social work and social workers on local and national levels. Both organizations provide information about best practice, social work research, and policy development affecting the profession of school social work.
Participants from SSWAA, ACSSW, and their affiliates self-selected to take the electronic, online survey. Weekly and biweekly electronic notices advertising the study were sent to members and affiliates of SSWAA and ACSSW. Data collection was completed on April 30, 2011. Eighty-five percent (283) of the number targeted for this study participated in the survey. Eleven cases were eliminated from the analysis because they did not meet the criteria of 1 year of school social work employment required to participate (the final number for the study totaled 272). In addition, 85% (N = 42) of states in the country are represented in this study. No identifying information for participants was included in the study.

2. Data collection

Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to collect data from the School Social Work Association of America was received on April 20, 2010. Approval from the IRB at UIC to collect data from the American Council for School Social Work was received on October 12, 2010. The organizations were selected to assist with data collection because they represented the only two national organizations in the United States dedicated to the profession of school social work.

3. Current study

The current study was an exploratory descriptive study examining homophobia and social work practice among a sample of school social workers. This chapter presents the results of this study using the methods described in chapter IV. The chapter provides demographic characteristics of the sample as well as descriptive statistics that answer questions 1 and 2: What is the degree of homophobia among school social workers? To what extent do school social workers engage in gay affirmative practice with LGBT students? In addition, this chapter presents the outcomes of Spearman’s rho correlation analysis that address the continuous
variables included in questions 1 and 2 (i.e., religiosity scale, age, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training). (1). What is the degree of homophobia among school social workers? Does it vary by religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations? (2). To what extent do school social workers engage in gay affirmative practice with LGBT students? Does it vary by religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations?

The outcomes of Spearman’s rho correlation analyses that address question 3 are also presented. Are there associations between the degree of homophobia among school social workers and use of gay affirmative practice? Does it vary by religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations? The outcomes of multiple regression analyses that address question 4 are also presented. If there is an association between the degree of homophobia among school social workers and use of gay affirmative practice, is it potentially moderated by school climate? Does it vary by selected variables including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals and/or education and training about LGBT populations? Lastly, the chapter reports the results from the open-ended questions.

B. Demographic Analysis

The following section provides descriptive statistics and other characteristics of the sample. This section will provide analysis of findings for questions 1 and 2.
1. **SSWAA and ACSSW demographics**

Table 1 offers side-by-side analysis of demographic variables describing the sample from the School Social Work Association of America and the American Council for School Social Work. The data collected for this study analyzed the two organizations as one sample. However, in order to provide information about each organization, the table provides a side-by-side comparison between the two groups. Overall, the characteristics between the two groups appear similar, although some differences are noted. ACSSW appears to have a younger demographic with more diversity in race/ethnicity and sexual orientation. In addition, they tend to practice in an urban setting. Respondents from SSWAA have more years of school social work experience and more education beyond a bachelor’s degree.

### TABLE I
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA AND AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>SSWAA ((n = 135))</th>
<th>ACSSW ((n = 137))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–30</td>
<td>20 (14.8%)</td>
<td>22 (16.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–40</td>
<td>34 (25.2%)</td>
<td>51 (37.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–50</td>
<td>29 (21.5%)</td>
<td>29 (21.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51–60</td>
<td>38 (28.1%)</td>
<td>29 (21.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61–70</td>
<td>14 (10.4%)</td>
<td>6 (4.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>111 (82.2%)</td>
<td>118 (86.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22 (16.3%)</td>
<td>17 (12.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2 (1.5%)</td>
<td>2 (1.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>SSWAA (n = 135)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RACE/ETHNICITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a/Hispanic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Indian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree only</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE I (continued)

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:
SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
AND AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>SSWAA (n = 135)</th>
<th>ACSSW (n = 137)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERVED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK EXPERIENCE (in years)(^a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPAREDNESS TO PROVIDE LGBT SERVICES</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately disagree</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) School social work experience was measured at ratio level of measurement, but displayed in categories on present table.

In order to examine the difference between the Social Work Association of America and the American Council for School Social work, an independent sample \(t\)-test was conducted. Table 2 presents the results of the independent sample \(t\)-tests that examined mean difference between the two groups.
The independent t-tests revealed no significant statistical difference between SSWAA and ACSSW (SSWAA, \( M = 2128.73, SD = 95.01 \): ACSSW, \( M = 2253.80, SD = 63.98 \)).

**TABLE II**

**INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSWAA</td>
<td>2128.73</td>
<td>95.01</td>
<td>-2.556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACSSW</td>
<td>2253.80</td>
<td>63.98</td>
<td>-2.249</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III presents the current degree of homophobia found in the sample and answers research question 1: What is the current degree of homophobia among school social workers? Because of the skew in the data (1.39, \( SE = .15 \)), skewness and kurtosis (2.80, \( SE = .31 \)) scores are reported; when there is a large deviation from 0, this provides a more accurate picture of the data. However, the mean and median are close in value, thus the distribution is symmetric and will tend to be normal as the sample is large. There are no missing data in the analysis because 36 cases were eliminated from the analysis (nine outliers and 27 cases with missing data). This was deemed necessary in order to have a valid homophobia score with all 15 items accurately represented in the analysis. Measures of central tendency are reported.

The degree of homophobia was measured using the homophobia domain (items 1–15) of the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (Crisp, 2006). A score of 75 is considered nonhomophobic. The range possible for items on this scale is 1 (*strongly agree*, score = 5) to 5 (*strongly disagree*, score = 1). The higher the score, the less homophobic the answer is considered. Overall, the analysis indicated that this sample did not display high levels of homophobia (Median = 69.00).
TABLE III
CURRENT DEGREE OF HOMOPHOBIA\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66.86</td>
<td>69.00</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8.44</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}n = 247

Table IV presents school social workers’ engagement with gay affirmative practice and answers question 2: To what extent do school social workers engage in gay affirmative practice with LGBT students? Engagement with gay affirmative practice was measured using the Gay Affirmative Practice scale (domain items 15–30) (Crisp, 2006). A score of 75 is considered high gay affirmative practice. The possible range for items on this scale is 1 (\textit{strongly agree}) (given a score = 5) to 5 (\textit{strongly disagree}) (given a score =1). The higher the score, the more engagement with gay affirmative practice the answer is considered to have. Overall, analysis indicated that school social workers engage in high gay affirmative practice (Median = 61.00). As noted previously, the level of skewness does not deviate significantly from the normal curve to make a substantive difference in the analysis. Measures of central tendency are reported, and skew (-.661, $SE$ = .15) and skewness and kurtosis (.448, $SE$ = .31) scores are reported. Also, as previously noted, 36 cases (that included outliers and incomplete data) were eliminated from this analysis. Measures of central tendency are reported.
Table IV presents univariate analysis of school social workers’ responses to seven school climate items. In order to provide accurate analysis of the responses about school climate, 28 cases with incomplete survey items were eliminated from the analysis. One approach to the missing data could have been to drop the variable associated with the missing data (Cohen et al., 2003). However this was not deemed an appropriate analytical choice because school climate practice is a central variable of interest to this study. In addition, the number of cases eliminated from the final analysis is minimal and did not affect the overall analysis of the data.

Less than twenty (17%) of the respondents in this study reported that school administration is very supportive of social work services for LGBT students. Nearly one third (32%) reported that their school administration was supportive of such services, and yet less than ten percent (7%) reported that their school administration was not supportive of them. Nearly twenty (16%) of the respondents in this study reported that their school administration is somewhat supportive of social work services for LGBT students, and over twenty (27%) reported that their school administration was neutral in their support for LGBT services. Less than ten (8%) of respondents reported that their schools were very safe for gay and lesbian faculty/staff to be open about their sexual orientation, while over a quarter (27%) reported that their schools were safe for that openness and nearly thirty percent (29%) reported that their schools were somewhat safe for faculty/staff to do so. Nearly fifteen percent (14%) reported that their schools were not safe at all for faculty/staff to be open about their sexual orientation, and
approximately twenty-percent (21%) reported that their schools were neutral about such openness.

Less than twenty percent (17%) of the respondents in this study reported that on a daily basis they hear words like “that’s so gay” used in derogatory/negative ways in their schools on a daily basis. Over one third (40%) of respondents in this study reported that on a weekly basis they hear words like “that’s so gay” used in derogatory/negative ways. Approximately thirty percent (31%) of the respondents reported that on a monthly basis they hear words like “that’s so gay” used in derogatory/negative ways in their schools, while a little over ten percent (12%) reported that they never hear these comments in their schools. Less than ten-percent (7%) of the respondents reported that on a daily basis they hear words like “faggot” or “dyke” used in derogatory or negative ways in their schools, while approximately twenty-percent (22%) reported hearing these comments on a weekly basis. Over one third (43%) of the respondents in this study reported that on a monthly basis they hear words like “faggot” or “dyke” used in derogatory or negative ways in their schools, while nearly thirty-percent (29%) reported that they never hear these comments in their schools.

Over one third (37%) reported that their school had a safe policy for faculty/staff to address incidents of homophobia, while over one third (44%) reported that they did not know if such a policy existed in their schools, and nearly twenty percent (19%) reported that their school did not have a safe school policy for faculty/staff. Over two thirds of the respondents (76%) reported that their schools did not have a GSA/club/organization to address safe school climate for LGBT individuals, while slightly over twenty-percent (22%) reported that their school did have a GSA/club/organization. A few respondents (2%) stated that they did not know.
Furthermore, over one third (43%) of the respondents reported that no one had attempted to form a GSA/club/organization in their school. Less than ten-percent (7%) reported that someone had attempted to form a GSA/club/organization in their school, almost half of the respondents (49%) reported that they did not know whether some had made such an attempt in their school. (See Appendix D for the exact questions asked about school climate).

| TABLE V |
|---------|---------|
| **SEVEN SCHOOL CLIMATE ITEMS (n = 255)** | |
| Survey question | \( f \) | % |
| ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT FOR LGBT SERVICES | | |
| Not supportive | 19 | 7.4% |
| Somewhat supportive | 42 | 16.5% |
| Neutral | 68 | 27.0% |
| Supportive | 82 | 32.2% |
| Very supportive | 44 | 17.3% |
| HOW SAFE IS THE SCHOOL FOR G & L FACULTY/STAFF | | |
| Not very safe at all | 37 | 14.5% |
| Somewhat safe | 75 | 29.4% |
| Neutral | 53 | 21.0% |
| Safe | 68 | 27.0% |
| Very safe | 22 | 8.6% |
| HOW OFTEN “THAT’S SO GAY” IS HEARD IN SCHOOL | | |
| Frequently/Daily | 44 | 17.3% |
| Sometimes/Weekly | 101 | 40.0% |
| Rarely/Monthly | 80 | 31.4% |
| Never | 30 | 12.0% |
| HOW OFTEN “FAGGOT” “DYKE” IS HEARD IN SCHOOL | | |
| Frequently/Daily | 18 | 7.0% |
| Sometimes/Weekly | 56 | 22.0% |
| Rarely/Monthly | 109 | 43.0% |
| Never | 72 | 29.4% |
| SAFE SCHOOL POLICY TO PROTECT STAFF/FACULTY | | |
| Yes | 95 | 37.3% |
| No | 49 | 19.2% |
| Don’t know | 111 | 44.0% |
| GSA/CLUB ORGANIZATION IN SCHOOL | | |
| Yes | 55 | 22.0% |
| No | 193 | 76.0% |
| Don’t know | 7 | 2.7% |
Table V presents univariate analysis of the dichotomous school climate measure. As noted in chapter IV (Method), the school climate measure consists of questions 1 to 6 (recorded as dichotomous variables) (See appendix D, Part II, for original items). In this study, over two thirds (68%) of school social workers reported that that their school administration was supportive in the provision of social work services to LGBT students, while nearly one third (32%) reported that their school administration was not supportive. In addition, over half (55%) of the school social workers reported that their schools were not safe for LGBT faculty/staff to be open about their sexual orientation, while over one third (45%) reported that their schools were safe. Over half (57%) of school social workers reported that they often hear words like “that’s so gay” used in derogatory or negative ways in their schools, while over one third (43%) reported that they do not often hear these comments in their schools. In addition, over two thirds (71%) of school social workers reported that they do not often hear words like “faggot” or “dyke” used in derogatory or negative ways in their schools, while nearly thirty-percent (29%) reported that they often hear these comments in their schools. In this study, over two thirds (66%) of the respondents reported that their schools had a safe school policy to provide protection for faculty/staff from incidents of homophobia, while approximately one third (34%) reported that their schools did not have such a policy. Also, in this study, over two thirds (78%) of the respondents reported that their schools did not have a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey question</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATTEMPT TO START GSA/CLUB/ORGANIZATION IN SCHOOL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VI presents univariate analysis of the dichotomous school climate measure. As noted in chapter IV (Method), the school climate measure consists of questions 1 to 6 (recorded as dichotomous variables) (See appendix D, Part II, for original items). In this study, over two thirds (68%) of school social workers reported that that their school administration was supportive in the provision of social work services to LGBT students, while nearly one third (32%) reported that their school administration was not supportive. In addition, over half (55%) of the school social workers reported that their schools were not safe for LGBT faculty/staff to be open about their sexual orientation, while over one third (45%) reported that their schools were safe. Over half (57%) of school social workers reported that they often hear words like “that’s so gay” used in derogatory or negative ways in their schools, while over one third (43%) reported that they do not often hear these comments in their schools. In addition, over two thirds (71%) of school social workers reported that they do not often hear words like “faggot” or “dyke” used in derogatory or negative ways in their schools, while nearly thirty-percent (29%) reported that they often hear these comments in their schools. In this study, over two thirds (66%) of the respondents reported that their schools had a safe school policy to provide protection for faculty/staff from incidents of homophobia, while approximately one third (34%) reported that their schools did not have such a policy. Also, in this study, over two thirds (78%) of the respondents reported that their schools did not have a
GSA/club/organization to address homophobia to create a positive school climate for LGBT individuals, while approximately twenty-percent (22%) reported that their schools did have a GSA/club/organization.

### Table VI

**DICHOTOMOUS SCHOOL CLIMATE MEASURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dichotomous recoding of survey question</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT FOR LGBT SERVICES ( n = 187 )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>68.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>32.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL SAFE FOR G &amp; L FACULTY/STAFF ( n = 202 )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>45.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>55.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“THAT’S SO GAY” OFTEN HEARD IN SCHOOL ( n = 255 )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>57.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>43.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“FAGGOT” “DYKE” OFTEN HEARD IN SCHOOL ( n = 255 )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>29.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>71.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL HAS POLICY TO PROTECT STAFF/FACULTY ( n = 144 )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>66.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>34.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL HAS GSA/CLUB ORGANIZATION ( n = 248 )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>22.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>78.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VII presents information about school social workers’ semester hours in classroom instruction in master’s education program that specifically focused on LGBT populations. In this study, the average semester hours reported was approximately 3; however, due to the skewness of the sample (skewness 4.4, Kurtosis 25) the median of 1 is a more accurate representation of scores. The median of 1 indicates that few respondents reported more than 1 hour of classroom instruction in their master’s education program specifically focused on LGBT populations. Furthermore, school social workers in this study reported up to 50 semester hours in classroom instruction and as little as 0 semester hours in classroom instruction in their master’s education program specifically focused on LGBT populations.
The mode reported by school social workers was 0 classroom instruction in their master’s education program that specifically focused on LGBT populations.

This indicates that in general, school social workers in this study reported minimal hours in classroom instruction in their master’s education program related to LGBT populations. However, respondents who received their degrees prior to CSWE’s mandating LGBT content in social work programs may not have been exposed to instruction that focused on LGBT populations, and that may explain these results.

### TABLE VII

**SEMESTER HOURS IN CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IN MASTER’S EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON LGBT POPULATIONS**  
\(n = 168\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VIII presents information about school social workers’ percentage of time in a master’s education program that specifically focused on LGBT populations. The average percentage of time reported by school social workers in this study was approximately 5%; however, the median of 2 is a more accurate representation of the scores (skewness 3.7, Kurtosis 18.4). The median of 2 indicates that more than half of the sample reported that in their master’s education program, 2% of their time focused specifically on LGBT populations, while less than half reported less than 2%. Furthermore, in this study some school social workers reported that in their master’s education program up to 70% of time specifically focused on LGBT populations and some as little as 0 percent of time focused on LGBT
populations. Again, this indicates that for school social workers in this study, a minimal percent of time in their master’s education program specifically focused on LGBT populations.

TABLE VIII
PERCENTAGE OF TIME IN MASTER’S EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON LGBT POPULATIONS (n = 163)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IX presents information about school social worker’s reported semester hours in classroom instruction in bachelor’s education programs that specifically focused on LGBT populations. The average time reported by school social workers in this study was approximately one-and-a-half semester hours of classroom instruction. The median, 0, however, best represents the sample (skewness 5.8, Kurtosis 40). This indicates that very few hours of classroom instruction on LGBT populations were reported by the respondents in this study. Additionally, school social workers reported that in their bachelor’s education programs they received up to 50 semester hours of classroom instruction specifically focused on LGBT populations to as little as 0 classroom instruction. Again, this indicates that school social workers in this study received minimal semester hours of classroom instruction in their bachelor’s education program on LGBT populations.

TABLE IX
SEMESTER HOURS IN CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IN BACHELOR’S EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON LGBT POPULATIONS (n = 215)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table X presents information about school social workers’ reported percentage of time in bachelor’s education program that specifically focused on LGBT populations. The average percentage of time reported by school social workers in this study was almost 3%. The median of 0, however best represents the sample (skewness 4.0, Kurtosis 40). Once more, the median of 0 indicates that minimal percentage of time in bachelor’s education programs focused on LGBT populations. In addition, school social workers reported that up to 50% of their bachelor’s education program specifically focused on LGBT populations to as little as 0 percent of time. This continues to support the trend that school social workers in this study received minimal formal education focused on LGBT populations. As previously noted, it is important to note that this may be indicative of the time that school social workers in this study received their bachelor’s and/or master’s education program because CSWE did not require school social work programs to include LGBT content in their social work education programs until the mid-1990s. Therefore, if school social workers in this study received their formal education in social work prior to 1992, they may not have received instruction specifically focused on LGBT populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE X</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF TIME IN BACHELOR’S EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON LGBT POPULATIONS (n = 215)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Median</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XI presents information about school social workers’ participation in professional development or job training about LGBT individuals in the past 5 years. School social workers in this study reported participating in up to 150 clock hours of professional development about LGBT populations in the last 5 years, and as little as 0 training. The average time of training
reported by participants in this study was approximately 9 clock hours. The median of 5, however, best represents the sample (skewness 5.4, Kurtosis 41) and indicates that more than half of the sample reported 5 hours of training, while less than half reported 5 hours of training. Overall, this indicates that in the workplace minimal hours of job professional development or job training specifically focused on LGBT populations is received by school social workers in this sample.

### TABLE XI
CLOCK HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OR JOB TRAINING THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON LGBT INDIVIDUALS IN THE PAST 5 YEARS
(n = 257)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XII presents information about school social workers’ reported hours of direct supervision or case consultation that specifically focused on LGBT individuals in the past 5 years. The average amount of hours reported by participants in this study was approximately 6 clock hours of direct supervision or case consultation focused on LGBT individuals. Again, the median of 1 best represents the sample (skewness, 4.1, Kurtosis, 20) and indicates that more than half of the sample reported 1 hour or more of direct supervision or case consultation focused on LGBT populations, while less than half reported less than 1 hour. In addition, school social workers reported up to 100 hours of direct supervision or case consultation focused on LGBT individuals to as little as 0 hours. Overall, this indicates that in the school workplace social workers in this study received minimal direct supervision or case consultation focused on LGBT individuals.
Table XII presents information about school social workers’ clock hours of self-directed learning about LGBT populations in the past 5 years. School social workers in this study reported participating in up to 300 hours of self-directed learning about LGBT populations in the last 5 years and as little as 0 clock hours of self-directed learning. The average school social worker in this study reporting approximately 23 hours of self-directed learning; however, the median of 10 best represents the sample (skewness 5.9, Kurtosis 46). The median of 10 indicates that more than half of the sample reported 10 hours or more of self-directed training, while less than half reported less than 10 hours of self-directed learning. The median of 10 hours of self-directed learning about LGBT individuals is higher than that reported in bachelor’s and master’s education programs, professional development or job training, and direct supervision or case consultation, indicating that school social workers in this study participated in more self-directed learning opportunities about LGBT populations.

Table XIII presents information about school social workers’ clock hours of self-directed learning about LGBT populations in the past 5 years. School social workers in this study reported participating in up to 300 hours of self-directed learning about LGBT populations in the last 5 years and as little as 0 clock hours of self-directed learning. The average school social worker in this study reporting approximately 23 hours of self-directed learning; however, the median of 10 best represents the sample (skewness 5.9, Kurtosis 46). The median of 10 indicates that more than half of the sample reported 10 hours or more of self-directed training, while less than half reported less than 10 hours of self-directed learning. The median of 10 hours of self-directed learning about LGBT individuals is higher than that reported in bachelor’s and master’s education programs, professional development or job training, and direct supervision or case consultation, indicating that school social workers in this study participated in more self-directed learning opportunities about LGBT populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XIII presents information about school social workers’ clock hours of self-directed learning about LGBT populations in the past 5 years. School social workers in this study reported participating in up to 300 hours of self-directed learning about LGBT populations in the last 5 years and as little as 0 clock hours of self-directed learning. The average school social worker in this study reporting approximately 23 hours of self-directed learning; however, the median of 10 best represents the sample (skewness 5.9, Kurtosis 46). The median of 10 indicates that more than half of the sample reported 10 hours or more of self-directed training, while less than half reported less than 10 hours of self-directed learning. The median of 10 hours of self-directed learning about LGBT individuals is higher than that reported in bachelor’s and master’s education programs, professional development or job training, and direct supervision or case consultation, indicating that school social workers in this study participated in more self-directed learning opportunities about LGBT populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Clock hours of self-directed learning (e.g., reading, journal, articles, discussion groups or other learning activities) specifically focused on LGBT individuals in the past 5 years*. 
Table XIV provides analysis of school social workers’ personal contact with LGBT individuals. In this study over two thirds (65%) of school social workers reported knowing 1 to 10 LGBT individuals, while less than twenty percent (17%) indicated that they knew 11 to 20 LGBT individuals. Furthermore, less than ten percent (7%) reported that they knew 21 to 30 LGBT individuals, while a little over five percent (6%) reported that they knew more than 30 LGBT individuals. Overall, more than 50% of the school social workers surveyed reported that they were aware of having some type of personal contact with LGBT individuals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE XIV</th>
<th>HOW MANY LGBT INDIVIDUALS, IF ANY, DO YOU KNOW IN YOUR FAMILY FRIEND, WORK CIRCLE (n = 229)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–10</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–20</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–30</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XV represents analysis of the type of LGBT relationship participants considered closest. In this study, over fifty percent (55%) of the school social workers reported that they considered their LGBT friends the closest. This was followed by a little over twenty percent (23%) who indicated that they consider their relationship with a family member the closest. In addition, a little less than twenty percent (17%) of school social workers, in this study, reported a close relationship with a LGBT coworker. Less than five percent (3%) indicated “other” type of relationship(s) as closest. Overall, more than half of the school social workers in this study reported that their closest relationship with a LGBT individual was a friend.
TABLE XV
WHICH ONE OF THESE RELATIONSHIPS DO YOU CONSIDER THE “CLOSEST” TO YOU<sup>a</sup> (<i>n = 222</i>)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>&lt;i&gt;f&lt;/i&gt;</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-worker</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Based on the number of LGBT individual(s) that you know in your family, friend, work circle, which one of these relationships do you consider the “closest” to you? Please check one.

Table XVI represents analysis of the level of closeness that school social workers report with an LGBT friend. In this study, almost thirty-percent (26%) of school social workers reported that their relationship with their LGBT friend was very close and over two thirds (45%) reported that the relationship was somewhat close. Fewer than ten percent (9%) indicated that they had a close relationship with their LGBT friend, and a little over five percent (6%) reported that the level of closeness with their LGBT friend was not close at all. About fifteen percent (16%) reported that they had a neutral level of closeness with their LGBT friend. Overall, analysis from this data revealed that in general, school social workers in this study appear to have affable relationships with their LGBT friend(s).

TABLE XVI
LEVEL OF CLOSENESS<sup>a</sup> (<i>n = 197</i>)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Closeness</th>
<th>&lt;i&gt;f&lt;/i&gt;</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very close</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat close</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not close at all</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “very close” and 5 being “not close at all” please rate the level of closeness that you have to the person that you identified in question 2.
C. Sample Description

Table XVII presents characteristics about the sample in this study. The number of school social workers included in the analysis was 272 across 42 states in the United States. The respondent’s age is displayed in interval scales (on tables I and II). However, the variable was analyzed as at the ratio level of measurement. The variable age is included in the descriptive information of the sample. The mean age of the respondents was 43 (SD = 11.6), the youngest respondent was 21 and the oldest was 69. The median age was 42, indicating that half the sample was older than 42 and half the sample younger. The mode was 40. The majority of respondents provided information about their age.

The majority of the respondents in the study were White (74%) and female (84%). The male respondents composed 14% of the sample, which is slightly higher than national percentages for male school social workers. No respondents self-reported as transgender. Four respondents did not provide information about their gender. A little more than ten percent (11%) identified as Hispanic/Latino, and less than ten percent (8%) of respondents identified as African American/Black. Few respondents (2%) identified as “other race or ethnicity,” and few respondents (1%) identified as Asian American or Native American Indian (1%). All respondents provided information about their race/ethnicity.

The majority of the respondents identified as heterosexual (85%), while less than fifteen percent (13%) identified as a member of the sexual minority population. Less than ten percent (8%) identified themselves as lesbian, gay male (2%), or bisexual (4%). This figure is fairly close to the overall ten-percent estimate expected for sexual minority populations. One respondent did not provide information about sexual orientation.
Over half of the sample identified as Catholic (52%), and less than a quarter of the sample identified as Protestant (23%). Fifteen percent (15%) of the respondents listed “other” as their religious affiliation. Five percent of the sample identified as Jewish (5) and less than five percent (4%) identified with no religious affiliation or Muslim (3%). All respondents provided information about their religious affiliation.

The majority of respondents (81%) reported having a master’s degree, while less than twenty percent (17) reported holding a bachelor’s degree only. Very few (1%) respondents reported holding a Ph.D. More than one third (44%) reported having 1–10 years of school social work experience, while slightly more than one third of the sample (35%) reported having 11–20 years experience. Nearly fifteen percent (12%) reported having 21–30 years of experience. Less than five percent (3%) reported having 31–40 years of experience. Four percent of the respondents did not provide information about years of school social work experience.

Over one third of the sample (44%) reported that they served in urban school settings; slightly less than a quarter (24%) reported that they served in suburban settings, and nearly twenty percents (19%) reported that they served in a rural setting. Less than fifteen percent of respondents (13%) did not provide information about the geographic setting that they served. Nearly all of the respondents (99%) resided in the United States at the time of the study, while three respondents (1%) resided in foreign countries.

Over one third (47%) of the sample moderately agree that they feel prepared to provide social work services to LGBT students. About fifteen percent strongly agree (15%) and moderately disagree (15%) that they feel prepared. In addition, a little over five percent (6%) reported that they strongly disagree with the statement that they feel prepared to provide social work services to LGBT students. The mean school social work experience reported by the
sample was 11.99 years ($SD = 8.8$). The median was 11, indicating that half had 11 years or more of school social work experience and half had less. The mode for school social work experience was 12. Overall, the sample of respondents appeared to be very experienced in the field of school social work.

### TABLE XVII
**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE ($n = 272$)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE (in years)</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–30</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–40</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–50</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51–60</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61–70</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENDER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RACE/ETHNICITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African/American</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a/Hispanic</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE XVII (continued)
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE (n = 272)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree only</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (PhD)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERVED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPAREDNESS TO WORK WITH LGBT INDIVIDUALS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately disagree</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately agree</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK EXPERIENCE (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–10</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–20</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–69</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* age was measured at the ratio level of measurement and displayed in intervals on this table.

*b* school social work experience was measured at the ratio level of measurement and displayed in intervals on this table.

D. **Analysis of the sample**

The description of the sample indicates that the average respondent resided in the United States and identified as a White/Caucasian, Catholic, heterosexual female. In addition, further analysis indicates that the respondent, on average, was approximately 43 years old and held a master’s degree. The average respondent reported having nonhomophobic views and engaging in high levels of gay affirmative practice. In addition, more than half of the
respondents in this study reported that they had personal contact with 1–10 LGBT individuals. More than half of the respondents identified a friend as their source of contact with LGBT individuals, and nearly thirty percent (26%) indicated that they were very close with this individual. Moreover, the average respondent reported having 11 years of school social work experience and feeling prepared to provide social work services to LGBT students.

Respondents in this survey also reported having administrative support to provide social work services to LGBT students.

The average respondent also reported that their schools were not safe for faculty/staff to be open about their sexual orientation, although their schools had a policy to protect faculty/staff from incidents of homophobia. Respondents reported that they commonly hear comments like “that’s so gay” “faggot” and “dyke” used in negative or derogatory ways in the school setting. Overall, respondents reported that their schools did not have a GSA/club/organization in place to address school climate and that no one had attempted to form one. The average respondent in this survey also indicated that they received minimal education and training about LGBT populations in their bachelor and master’s education programs and workplace. Additionally, school social workers also reported that they received minimal direct supervision or case consultation in their workplace focused on LGBT populations.

NASW demographic studies indicate that the average social worker is White (89%), with a median age of 50 and 16 years of work experience (NASW, 2003). In addition, the majority of NASW social workers hold a master’s degree (91%), while few (3%) hold only a bachelor’s degree, and 5% a doctorate degree (NASW, 2004. Overall, demographic information provided by the respondents in this study appear consistent with characteristics of national school social work samples and other social workers (Kelly et al., 2009; NASW, 2004). Consequently, results
from this study may be valuable in providing empirical information about homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and school climate among school social workers.

E. Bivariate Analysis

This section presents an analysis of research question 3: Are there associations between the degree of homophobia among school social workers and use of gay affirmative practice? Does it vary by religiosity, age, and sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations?

Prior to conducting the analysis, cases that had missing data were eliminated from the final analysis. Table XVIII provides the exact number of cases included in the analysis for each selected variable. Spearman’s rho correlation analysis investigating the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable as well as continuous variables included in this study (i.e., religiosity scale, age, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations) revealed a number of statistical results. T-tests of independence conducted in order to examine homophobia and gay affirmative practice differed according to the dichotomous variables (i.e., religious affiliation and sexual orientation) did not reveal statistically significant results. Findings from the bivariate analysis conducted are discussed in the following section.

Spearman’s rho correlation analysis examined the potential magnitude of possible problems associated with multicollinearity between homophobia and gay affirmative practice. The results indicated that the level of association was acceptable. The variance inflation factor (VIF) value was 1.0. This VIF is acceptable as it falls far below the cut-off VIF value of 10, suggesting no problems with multicollinearity. This indicates that the independent and dependent
variable are not highly correlated with one another and that the independent variable makes an independent contribution to the dependent variable (Cohen et al., 2003).

1. Homophobia and gay affirmative practice

Table XVIII provides findings from the Spearman’s rho correlation analysis that revealed results of the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice as well as continuous variables mentioned above. As noted, a Spearman’s rho correlation was computed to describe the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. A two-tailed test of significance was used in the analysis, because the questions in this study were nondirectional. However, a one-tailed test of significance is provided, where applicable. Spearman’s rho bivariate analysis indicated a significant positive correlation between homophobia and gay affirmative practice ($r = .80; p < .01$), thus, school social workers who reported nonhomophobic scores were more likely to report high scores of gay affirmative practice. In addition, Spearman’s rho correlation was computed between the independent variable (homophobia) and dependent variable (gay affirmative practice) and each continuous variable on a pair-by-pair basis. This examined the correlation between the independent variable and the dependent variable with control variables (religiosity scale, age, personal contact, and education and training about LGBT populations).

1. Homophobia/Gay affirmative practice and control variables

a. Personal contact

The analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between homophobia and number of personal contacts with LGBT individuals ($r = .37; p < .05$) as well as gay affirmative practice and number of contacts with LGBT individuals ($r = .41*; p < .01$), suggestive of a positive relationship between homophobia and number of contact with LGBT individuals as well
as gay affirmative practice and number of contact with LGBT individuals. Thus, in this study, school social workers who reported nonhomophobic scores had more personal contact with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. Moreover, school social workers who reported high scores of gay affirmative practice also had more personal contact with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. Lastly, a statistically significant positive relationship was found between personal contact and professional development training ($r = 29^{**}, p < .01$).

Subsequently, in this study, school social workers who reported more personal contact with LGBT individuals also reported attending more professional development about LGBT populations in the last 5 years.

b. **Education and training about LGBT populations**

In this study, analysis also revealed a statistically significant relationship between homophobia and self-directed learning ($r = 33^{**}; p < .01$), as well as gay affirmative practice and self-directed learning ($r = 38^{**}; p < .01$). Thus, school social workers who reported nonhomophobic scores reported more hours of self-directed training about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. Also, school social workers who reported high scores of gay affirmative practice reported more hours of self-directed training about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. Results also revealed a positive relationship between gay affirmative practice and percentage of time in master’s education program ($r = 16; p < .05$) focused on LGBT populations and semester hours of class instruction time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations ($r = 16; p < .05$). Subsequently, in this study, school social workers who reported more percentage hours in their master’s education program and more classroom instruction time in their master’s education program focused on LGBT populations also reported higher gay affirmative practice.
Further analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between gay affirmative practice and professional development training \((r = 0.25**; p < 0.01)\). Thus, in this study, school social workers who reported more professional development training in the last 5 years focused on LGBT populations also reported higher engagement with gay affirmative practice. Additionally, analysis also revealed a statistically significant relationship between gay affirmative practice and supervision/consultation received about LGBT populations \((r = 0.21*; p < 0.05)\). Consequently, school social workers who reported receiving more supervision/consultation at work about LGBT populations reported higher engagement with gay affirmative practice.

In addition, a significantly positive correlation was also found between percentage of time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations and semester of classroom hours in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations \((r = 0.38**; p < 0.01)\). This indicates that, in this study, school social workers who reported more percentage of time in their master’s education program focused on LGBT populations also reported more semester hours in their master’s education program focused on LGBT populations. A statistically significant positive correlation was also found between percentage of time in master’s education program and personal contact with LGBT individuals \((r = 0.16**; p < 0.01)\). This indicates that, in this study, school social workers who reported more percentage of time in their master’s education program focused on LGBT populations also reported more contact with LGBT individuals. Moreover, a statistically significant positive relationship was found among supervision/consultation and self-directed learning \((r = 0.38**; p < 0.01)\), personal contact \((r = 0.32**; p < 0.01)\), and professional development \((r = 0.42**; p < 0.01)\). Thus, in this study, school social workers who reported more clock hours or supervision or case consultation that
specifically focused on LGBT individuals in the past 5 years also reported attending more clock hours of self-directed learning about LGBT populations in the last 5 years and professional development training about LGBT populations in the past 5 years.

c. **Religiosity**

Additional analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between homophobia and the religiosity scale ($r = -0.13**; p < .01$) and gay affirmative practice and the religiosity scale ($r = -0.16**; p < .01$). The analysis indicated an inverse relationship between homophobia and the religiosity scale and gay affirmative practice and the religiosity scale. Although the statistical relationship between the religiosity scale, homophobia, and gay affirmative practice was not strong, in this study, school social workers who reported less favorable views toward LGBT populations reported higher scores on the religiosity scale. In addition, in this study, school social workers who reported high scores of gay affirmative practice reported lower scores on the religiosity scale. Conversely, school social workers who reported less favorable views toward LGBT individuals reported higher scores on the religiosity scale and school social workers who reported higher gay affirmative practice reported lower scores on the religiosity scale.

Furthermore, a significantly inverse relationship was found between homophobia and attendance of religious services ($r = -0.24**; p < .01$) and gay affirmative practice and attendance of religious services ($r = -0.27**; p < .01$). In this study, school social workers who reported more frequent attendance of religious services also reported less favorable views toward sexual minority populations and less engagement with gay affirmative practice. Conversely, school social workers who reported less frequent attendance of religious services reported nonhomophobic views and higher engagement with gay affirmative practice. Further analysis of the Spearman’s rho correlation revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between
the religiosity scale and attendance of religious services \((r = 57**, p < .01)\). This indicates that, in this study, school social workers who reported high religiosity scores also reported more frequent attendance of religious services.

The Spearman’s rho correlation revealed no statistically significant relationships between homophobia and other selected variables such as age \((r = .04; p > .01)\) bachelor’s education \((r = .00; p > .01)\) or master’s education \((r = .16; p > .01)\), as well as percentage of time in bachelor’s education program focused on LGBT populations \((r = -.00; p > .01)\), percentage of time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations \((r = .12; p > .01)\), semester classroom hours in bachelor education program focused on LGBT populations \((r = .11; p > .01)\), or master’s education program focused on LGBT populations \((r = .12; p > .01)\).

Furthermore, the Spearman’s rho correlation revealed no statistically significant relationships between gay affirmative practice and other selected variables such as age \((r = .05; p > .01)\), bachelor’s education \((r = .06; p > .04)\), master’s education \((r = .09; p > .05)\), percentage of time in bachelor’s education program focused on LGBT population \((r = .10; p > .01)\), or semester classroom hours in bachelor’s education program focused on LGBT populations \((r = .04; p > .01)\).


**TABLE XVIII**  
**SPEARMAN’S RHO CORRELATION MATRIX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GAP</th>
<th>Homophobia</th>
<th>Religiousity</th>
<th>% Classroom</th>
<th>Supervision</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Self-learning</th>
<th>Religious attendance</th>
<th>PC</th>
<th>PD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.80**</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiousity</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Classroom</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-directed learning</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious attendance</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal contact</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p. <.01:**p. <.05

*aGay affirmative practice (n = 241); bHomophobia (n = 241); cReligiosity scale (n = 236); dPercentage of time in master's education program that specifically focused on LGBT populations (n = 163); eClock hours of direct supervision or case consultation that specifically focused on LGBT individuals in the past 5 years (n = 262); fSemester hours in master's education program that specifically focused on LGBT populations (n = 168); gSelf-directed learning reported in the last 5 years about LGBT populations (n = 259); hFrequency of weekly attendance at religious services (n = 149); iNumber of personal contact with LGBT individuals reported in circle of family, friends, and work (n = 229); jProfessional development training attended in the last 5 years about LGBT populations (n = 257).
Table XIX presents the results of the independent $t$-test of homophobia and gay affirmative practice by the dichotomous variables of religious affiliation and sexual orientation. The religious affiliation of Muslim ($n = 1$) was eliminated from the analysis because one observation was not sufficient to conduct that $t$-test analysis. Results from the independent $t$-test analysis revealed no statistically significant difference between homophobia and school social workers who identified as Catholic ($t = 2.18; p > .05$), Jewish ($t = 5.39; p > .05$), Protestant ($t = 5.37; p > .05$), or no religious affiliation ($t = 3.18; p > .05$). In addition, no statistically significant difference was found between homophobia and school social workers who identified as heterosexual ($t = 1.88; p > .05$), gay male ($t = 2.04; p > .05$), lesbian ($t = 2.25; p > .05$), or bisexual ($t = .581; p > .05$). Furthermore, analysis revealed no statistically significant difference between gay affirmative practice and school social workers who identified as Catholic ($t = 4.10; p > .05$), Jewish ($t = 7.37; p > .05$), Protestant ($t = 7.13; p > .05$), or no religious affiliation ($t = 7.13; p > .05$). In addition, no statistically significant difference was found between homophobia and school social workers who identified as heterosexual ($t = 6.20; p > .05$), gay male ($t = 4.15; p > .05$), lesbian ($t = 4.73; p > .05$), or bisexual ($t = .038; p > .05$).
TABLE XIX  
T-TEST OF HOMOPHOBIA AND GAY AFFIRMATIVE PRACTICE  
BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Affiliation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>65.44</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68.27</td>
<td>12.61</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>64.53</td>
<td>9.71</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No religious affiliation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70.46</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>10.33</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>71.67</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>69.67</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>64.67</td>
<td>15.18</td>
<td>0.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Affirmative Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>59.39</td>
<td>10.70</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68.20</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>7.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>59.23</td>
<td>10.40</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No religious affiliation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>61.62</td>
<td>9.87</td>
<td>7.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>65.55</td>
<td>12.02</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>69.67</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>66.44</td>
<td>10.37</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61.00</td>
<td>16.70</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**d. Bivariate summary**

The bivariate analysis in this study provided information about research question number 3. Question number 3 examined the relationship between the central variables in this study and whether selected variables varied in relationship to the independent and dependent variables. Spearman's rho correlation analysis, which tested the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice, indicated that there was a strong
positive relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice. Thus, school social workers who participated in this study and reported nonhomophobic views also reported high engagement with gay affirmative practice. This would indicate that school social workers who have more favorable attitudes toward LGBT individuals tend to engage in higher levels of gay affirmative practice, which is consistent with research that examines attitudes toward sexual minority populations and delivery of services to LGBT populations (Crisp, 2006; Herek, 1996).

Additionally, Spearman’s rho analysis also revealed statistically significant correlations between homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and other continuous variables included in this study. For instance, school social workers who reported nonhomophobic views and high engagement with gay affirmative practice also reported more contact with LGBT individuals. Additionally, various aspects of education and training about LGBT populations were found to have a positive correlation with nonhomophobia and gay affirmative practice. In this study, school social workers who reported nonhomophobic views and high engagement with gay affirmative practice also reported more hours of self-directed learning about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender populations, as well as receiving more percentage of time and classroom instruction in their master’s education program focused on LGBT populations. School social workers in this study who reported nonhomophobic views and high engagement with gay affirmative practice also reported receiving more professional development training at work about LGBT populations as well as more supervision and consultation about LGBT populations.

This is indicative of a relationship between personal contact, education and training about LGBT individuals, and favorable views about sexual minority populations. Additionally, findings from this study are supported by empirical research indicating that people who have more personal contact and education about LGBT individuals tend to hold more
favorable views toward LGTB populations (Herek, 1990, 1996, 2000; Krieglstein, 2002). However, minimal empirical support exists about homophobia and engagement in gay affirmative practice. Therefore, findings in this study help close the knowledge gap between attitudes, and beliefs about LGBT populations and practice.

Spearman’s rho analysis revealed an inverse relationship between homophobia, gay affirmative practice, religiosity, and attendance at religious services. Consequently, in this study, school social workers who reported high religiosity and high frequency of attendance at religious services held less favorable views toward LGBT populations and reported less engagement with gay affirmative practice. Findings from this study suggest that high religiosity and frequent attendance of religious services may affect school social workers’ attitudes and beliefs about LGBT individuals and social work practice with LGBT individuals.

The independent t-test analysis did not reveal a statistically significant difference among homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and school social workers who identified as Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, or with no religious affiliation. In addition, the Spearman’s correlation analysis did not reveal a statistically significant relationship between homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and selected variables such as age, sexual orientation, formal education (i.e., bachelor/master’s education) or percentage of time and semester hours in bachelor’s education program focused on LGBT populations.

e. **Conclusion**

The Spearman’s rho correlation analysis and independent t-test analysis conducted in this study provides support for a statistically significant positive relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice, as well as other variables that contribute to the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice. In addition, this analysis
provides helpful information that allows for greater understanding about the correlation of specific variables included in this study and the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice. Furthermore, because distinct variables play a discrete role in understanding the complexity of school social workers’ attitudes toward LGBT populations and social work practice, the Spearman’s rho correlation analysis underscores the importance of examining homophobia and gay affirmative practice using a multidimensional approach. Bivariate analysis indicates a connection between observation, modeling, and imitation, the central concepts of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), one of the theories that help provide the conceptual framework for this study.

For instance, the majority of school social workers in this study reported having favorable relationships with LGBT individuals, and a strong correlation was found between nonhomophobia and gay affirmative practice. Thus, school social workers who reported nonhomophoblic views reported more engagement with gay affirmative practice. In addition, a positive correlation was found among various educational aspects related to LGBT individuals, nonhomophobia, and gay affirmative practice. This indicates that through observed learning with LGBT individuals, school social workers have had nonhomophobic views modeled for them, and in turn they have imitated affirming attitudes toward LGBT individuals by engaging in gay affirmative practice. Furthermore, the positive correlation among learning about LGBT populations, nonhomophobia, and gay affirmative practice indicate that in educational settings, school social workers also had nonhomophobic views and gay affirmative practice modeled for them. Subsequently, the school social workers in this study imitated the modeled behavior by adopting nonhomophobic views and high engaging with gay affirmative practice.
Bivariate analysis, however, does not provide information about the potential interactive effect of school climate on homophobia and gay affirmative practice. Additionally, it is limited in providing statistical support about variables that may yield the best prediction for the examination of homophobia and gay affirmative practice. In order to provide information about these factors, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results are presented below.

**F. Multiple Regression Analyses**

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted in order to answer research question 4: Is the potential association between homophobia among school social workers and use of gay affirmative practice potentially moderated by their perceptions of school climate? Does use of gay affirmative practice vary by religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, or education and training about LGBT populations?

Prior to conducting the multiple regression analysis, a Spearman’s rho correlation among the variables homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and school climate was conducted. The analysis revealed a significantly positive correlation between homophobia and gay affirmative practice ($r = .80; p < .01$), but not school climate and homophobia ($r = .00; p > .01$), or school climate and gay affirmative practice ($r = .05; p > .01$) (see correlation matrix in appendix F).

Data were examined to check if the assumptions of linear regression were met. Nine outlier cases were greater than 2.5 studentized residual values and were excluded from the analysis. After removing the outliers, none of the cases had excessive leverage; the maximum Cook’s D value was 0.18. Collinearity of independent variable was not a problem as none of the VIF values was greater than 5. In order to eliminate multicollinearity in the data, prior to
conducting the multiple regressions analysis to examine the interaction effect of school climate on homophobia and gay affirmative practice, the continuous variables (homophobia and gay affirmative practice) were centered at the mean.

In order to examine the interaction effect of school climate on homophobia and gay affirmative practice, the following steps were taken: In step 1, gay affirmative practice (centered) was entered into the regression analysis as the dependent variable. Homophobia (centered) was then entered into the model as the independent variable, followed by the moderator variable, school climate, as the second independent variable. In the next step, homophobia (centered) was entered into the model as the independent variable, followed by the independent variable school climate (proposed moderator variable), followed by the cross-product of homophobia (centered) and school climate.

Table XX summarizes the results of the multiple regression with interaction. The multiple regression with interaction analysis revealed a statistically significant interaction between homophobia (centered) and school climate, $t(2.126), p < .05, (b = 0.02)$ and $95\%$ confidence limits from .00 to .01. The analysis revealed that as nonhomophobic scores increase, the interaction between school climate and homophobia also increases in magnitude. Thus, when holding homophobia constant, a one-unit increase in school climate is associated with a 0.76 increase in gay affirmative practice. The analysis revealed that school climate may have a positive and significant relationship with gay affirmative practice, and the relationship is more positive as nonhomophobic scores increase. Although statistical analysis supported the proposed model of the study, suggesting that school climate moderates the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice, the Spearman’s rho analysis did not reveal a statistically significant correlation among the variables homophobia, gay affirmative practice,
and school climate. Consequently, there is a potential moderating effect of school climate on school social workers’ attitudes and beliefs about LGBT populations as well as their engagement with gay affirmative practice. The results indicative of a potential moderating effect of school climate between homophobia and gay affirmative practice, however is not definitive and must be interpreted with caution.

**TABLE XX**
MULTIPLE REGRESSION WITH INTERACTION PREDICTING GAY AFFIRMATIVE PRACTICE (n = 221)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE b</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>61.503</td>
<td>.451</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td>.758</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.670***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Climate</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Climate x Homophobia</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.110*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F for change in $R^2$</td>
<td>4.521*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Gay affirmative practice and Homophobia were centered at their means (***p < .000) (*p < .05)*

In order to broaden the understanding of homophobia and gay affirmative practice, a statistical stepwise regression analysis was conducted. The variables that revealed a statistically significant correlation with the outcome variable gay affirmative practice in the Spearman’s rho correlation analysis were entered into the statistical stepwise regression model. The variables included in this analysis were (a) homophobia, (b) religiosity scale, (c) attendance of religious services, (d) professional development, (e) self-directed learning, (f) percentage of time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations, (g) classroom instruction time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations, (h) supervision/consultation specifically focused on LGBT individuals, and (i) personal contact.
The statistical stepwise regression analysis was deemed appropriate because of the exploratory nature of the research design. According to Cohen et al. (2003), statistical stepwise regression analysis is appropriate for exploratory research, because it helps inform new hypotheses to examine in future research. The stepwise regression analysis was conducted by regressing the gay affirmative practice scores on the selected variables (see above) in the study. The outcome variable gay affirmative practice was entered into the regression model as the dependent variable. Thereafter, the variables homophobia, religiosity scale, personal contact, self-directed learning, professional development, supervision and case consultation, percentage of time in master’s level education program focused on LGBT populations, and semester hours in master’s level education program focused on LGBT populations were entered into the regression model as independent variables.

Table XXI summarizes the results of the statistical stepwise regression analysis. The final model revealed homophobia scores as statistically significant, \( t (10.226), p < .000 \), with \( R^2 \) at .51 and 95% confidence limits from .60 to .85. The adjusted \( R^2 \) value of .50 indicates that more than half of the variability in gay affirmative practice is predicted by homophobia scores. In addition, the final model revealed percentage of time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations as statistically significant, \( t (2.865), p < .05 \), with \( R^2 \) at .53 and 95% confidence limits from .06 to .32. The adjusted \( R^2 \) value of .53, which indicates that when holding homophobia scores constant, over half of the variability in gay affirmative practice is predicted by percentage of time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations. Further analysis revealed attendance of religious services as statistically significant, \( t (-2.527), p < .05 \) with \( R^2 \) at .55 and 95% confidence limits from -3.30 to -.40, which indicates that when holding homophobia and percentage of time in master’s education program
focused on LGBT populations constant, attendance of religious services accounted for over half of the variability in gay affirmative practice.

The statistical analysis also revealed that homophobia best predicted gay affirmative practice. Therefore, in this study, school social workers who reported nonhomophobic scores were more likely to engage in gay affirmative practice. Thus, a one unit increase in nonhomophobic scores is associated with a .71 increase in gay affirmative practice scores. Conversely, the statistical stepwise analysis indicated that religiosity scale $t (\cdot .134), p > .05$, self-directed learning $t (1.866), p > .05$, semester hours of classroom instruction in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations, $t (.722), p > .05$, personal contact, $t (.028), p > .05$, supervision, $t (.287), p > .05$, and professional development, $t (.954), p > .05$, did not make a statistically significant contribution to gay affirmative practice.
TABLE XXI
STATISTICAL STEPWISE REGRESSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE b</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model one</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>10.445</td>
<td>4.491</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.713***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model two</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>10.257</td>
<td>4.498</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td>.758</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.703***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of time in master’s program</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.154*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model three</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>14.919</td>
<td>4.772</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.655***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of time in master’s program</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.177*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance of religious services</td>
<td>-1.855</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>-.163*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .51; \Delta R^2 = .50 (** *p < .000)$ Model 1: $R^2 = .53; \Delta R^2 = .53(* p < .05)$ Model 2: $R^2 = .56; \Delta R^2 = .55 (* p < .05)$ Model 3 apercentage of time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations

G. **Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis**

The multiple regression with interaction analysis examined whether school climate revealed a statistically significant interaction between homophobia and gay affirmative practice, and whether school climate moderated the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice. The statistical stepwise regression analysis examined the influence of the variables that correlated with the outcome variable gay affirmative practice, in order to examine which variables accounted for the variability found in gay affirmative practice. The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed a statistically significant interaction between homophobia and school climate. Subsequently, there is evidence that school climate may potentially moderate the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice.
This is an important finding that helps support one of the guiding theoretical frameworks of this study, organizational theory. Recall Hofstede’s (2001) organizational theory of power schemes, asserting that power schemes are determined by societal norms manifested in the climate of an organization. Hosted (2001) contends that power schemes influence who is valued in an organization and how people are viewed in its hierarchical structure. Thus, evidence that school climate may potentially moderate the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice indicates that when the school climate is safe (i.e., organizational climate), then sexual minority individuals are valued (i.e., nonhomophobic views), and provided appropriate services (i.e., gay affirmative practice). Furthermore, concepts of organizational justice in organizational theory are also supported by the finding in this study, specifically, concepts related to individualism (meeting the needs of individuals) and collectiveness (treating others with respect). For instance, results indicating that school climate may potentially moderate the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice suggest that, in this study, the organizational climate, when safe, creates a milieu where LGBT individuals are provided services through gay affirmative practice principles and treated with respect and dignity (i.e., in nonhomophobic ways). More importantly, however, these findings provide school social workers with empirical evidence to intervene in the school climate structure in order to improve the school climate for LGBT students, attitudes toward LGBT students, and services for LGBT students.

In order to extend our knowledge about the outcome variable gay affirmative practice, stepwise statistical regression analysis was conducted. In this analysis, the variables that statistically correlated with the dependent variable gay affirmative practice were entered in the regression analysis in order to examine their unique contribution to that outcome variable. This
analysis revealed that homophobia, percentage of time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations, and attendances of religious services were statistically significant variables that best explain the variability accounted for in gay affirmative practice.

These findings help support social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), the other guiding theoretical framework for this study. Recall Bandura’s (1977) assertion that individuals form their attitudes toward other members through observation, modeling, and imitation. Thus, results from the statistical stepwise regression analysis provide a model for understanding how attitude formation affects gay affirmative practice. For instance, results in this study indicate that school social workers’ personal beliefs and attitudes toward LGBT individuals, the percentage of classroom instruction focused on LGBT populations, and attendance of religious services best predicted gay affirmative practice. However, nonhomophobic scores best predicted engagement with gay affirmative practice, accounting for over half of the variability in gay affirmative practice, when controlling for percentage of classroom time focused on LGBT population and attendance of religious services.

This indicates that internal positive views toward sexual minority populations predicted positive engagement with gay affirmative practice. Recall that in this study, most school social workers reported having affable relationships with LGBT individuals. This suggests that through these relationships, school social workers observed, modeled, and imitated nonhomophobic attitudes toward sexual minority populations. Also, results indicative of percentage of master’s education program focused on LGBT populations predicating high engagement with gay affirmative practice indicates that respondents in this study observed the importance of valuing services to LGBT populations, had this modeled in the classroom, and imitated it in the workplace through engagement with gay affirmative practice. Lastly, recall that
an inverse relationship was found between attendance of religious services and GAP. Consequently, the regression results revealing that frequent attendance of religious services predicted low engagement with gay affirmative practice indicate that unfavorable attitudes toward LGBT individuals observed in religious institutions is modeled by school social workers, in this study. Subsequently, religious attitudes observed in religious institutions are imitated in the workplace through low engagement with gay affirmative practice.

H. Qualitative Data

This section reports on the open-ended questions included in the study. School social workers who responded to open-ended questions provided information about administrative support to start a GSA/club/organization in their school as well as obstacles to this process. In addition, responses to open-ended questions provided information about social work services provided to LGBT students. The survey sections where respondents could provide responses to open-ended questions were part II (questions 8 and 9) and part V (question 31).

Table XXII lists the specific open-ended questions included in the survey and an analysis of them. Content analysis was used to examine the responses to the open-ended questions. This method was used in order to make inferences about the text provided by school social workers in this study and focus on the intentionality of their implications. Line-by-line coding was used to detect words and phrases that were most often used by school social workers. The words and phrases were examined in order to reflect the importance of the text provided by the school social workers. The words and phrases were examined to find connections between the concepts and themes that emerged from the analysis (Padgett, 1998).

The themes were then systematically correlated to the survey questions. The following section includes an analysis of the responses.
TABLE XXII
OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you answered yes to either question(s) six or seven, did those who</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>yes = 30</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tried to start the club/organization get any help from school administration? Please describe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no = 19</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you answered yes to either question(s) six or seven, Did those who</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>yes = 28</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tried to start the club/organization meet any obstacles? Please describe.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no = 19</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please list and describe any social work services, if any, that you</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>52=</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide to specifically meet the unique needs of LGBT students (e.g.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>provide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>groups, resources, clubs etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13= no</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aN = 187
b,c,d Sample of descriptions included in analysis

1. **Question 8: Administrative support**

More than one third (34.2%) of respondents provided information about administrative support for starting a GSA/club/organization to address homophobia/school climate. Nearly half (46.8%) of the school social workers reported that their school administration was supportive. In order to provide contextual meaning to these figures, samples of some responses are included in this section. These responses were selected because they provided a clear example of the type of administrative support that was provided to school personnel. In addition, they also present clear examples of the kind of support offered by the school administration. Furthermore, they illustrated how the school administration handled opposition.
For instance, respondents stated:

“I believe administration is supportive. For the first time this year, staff were invited to the afterschool LGBT Alliance group. It was attended by one of our assistant principals, as well as the dean of students, and other teachers. At the end, the students in the LGBT alliance gave the teachers and staff that came a certificate that we could post in our office so that students and staff feel safe.”

“We have an office of prevention that address school climate and school safety issues. Many of our schools have GSA’s. All of these programs have support from administration.”

“Yes. Administration was supportive and sought legal help when parents challenged the GSA. School Board also voted full support.”

“GSA is fully supported by administration even when events like “Day of Silence” cause picketing protesters.”

Conversely, nearly one third (29.6%) of school social workers who responded about administrative support indicated that their school administration was not supportive. Most of the respondents who reported that the administration was not supportive simply responded by stating “no support” or “administration not supportive.” The few respondents who did elaborate about no support made some of the following comments:

“Administration is not supportive. Don’t like to face change in society,” and “The principal was unwilling to have the students organize” or “school budget cuts and lower participation discontinued the program” and, “I’m trying to get a GSA started now. This is new and I’m moving very slowly. In response to an email I got an “I’ll get back to you.”

A couple of respondents commented on the decline of support once administration in the school changed. This particular comment appears to capture this sentiment:

“Yes, but when the administration changed, the support and motivation to keep the club running waned.” A few respondents reported a sense of hesitant support offered by administration, stating, “Yes, but they stopped promoting it so it just went away, “and “They were supportive as
As long as we did not portray ourselves as trying to promote some sort of ‘agenda.’ As long as we did not draw too much attention.”

2. **Question 9: Obstacles**

Nearly half (48.2%) of respondents indicated that those who tried to start a GSA/club/organization encountered obstacles. The responses selected in this section were chosen because they represented reoccurring themes of obstacles presented by parents, administration, and personal frustrations. This is what respondents said: “Yes, the administration was concerned about the reaction of parents,” or “minimal questions/concerns from parents,” and “parents had some opposition and still do possibly; no information available.” The respondents who faced obstacles from administration simply stated “no support from administration.” In addition, some school social workers shared barriers associated with feelings of frustration in starting and maintaining the GSA/club/organization. This is what they said:

“Just the frustration of trying to help change popular (too often unhealthy) attitudes about sexuality and sexual preference. Our union has taken a very advanced stand about these issues.”

“Yes, there were barriers to the group forming at one school. The athletic director designated the club as requiring additional paperwork and forms completed, and required student dues, when this was not required of other non-sports clubs.”

“Only obstacle was waiting for students to come forward to initiate the group and maintaining student leadership after graduation, etc.”
3. **Question 31: Social work services with LGBT students**

The majority (80%) of school social workers responded that they provided social worker services to meet the needs of LGBT students in their schools. The recurring themes presented in this section were referral to services, individual social work services, creating an open and affirming space, advocacy, training to staff, and adopting curriculum. Most respondents stated that they refer students to services outside of the school, followed by school social workers who reported that they provided individual social work services to LGBT students. The responses highlighted in this section were chosen in order to provide examples of creative ways that school social workers are providing services to LGBT students.

Here is a sampling of some of the comments made by school social workers: “I provide staff development for educators,” and “character education including respect for peers/staff who are of a different orientation among other principles,” and “I provide lessons on bullying and always address differences including LGBT but in a less forward way due to the developmental needs of my population.” Some respondents talked about advocacy services, stating:

“My office and bag are decorated as “safe zones” and declare “unity in diversity” in flag colors. I advocate for this population in small chunks, if you will, as the school community is reluctant to even acknowledge that LGBTQ individuals exist in our schools.”

“I also challenge kids when they use statements “that is gay” or other derogatory things that could be interpreted as offensive by students who may be in the beginning stages of understanding their sexuality.”

Some school social workers talked about creating an environment that was welcoming to sexual minorities. They stated:

“I work with the admin of the school to support discipline in cases of harassment or inappropriate behavior toward the LGBT community.”
“I have LGBT literature available in my office and other open displays of support. I wear a rainbow on my ID tag that I wear daily. I support the Day of Silence.”

Twenty-percent (20%) of school social workers who responded to the open-ended question about social work services with LGBT students stated that they did not provide any services to LGBT students; some simply stated that the “issue” had not come up. Others elaborated on their responses and stated, “Because I am in an elementary school, I have not had to respond to students who identify as LGBT,” and “Because I work with elementary school students, few of them have firm sexual orientation.”

I. Summary of findings

Over two thirds (68%) of the school social workers who met the eligibility criteria to participate in this study responded to the three open-ended questions about administrative support for GSA/club/organization, obstacles in the process, and social work services for LGBT students. In order to provide a narrative for some of the quantitative data collected in this study, three open-ended questions were included in the study. Content analysis was used to analyze the open-ended questions, offering inferences about the text provided by school social workers. Content analysis also offered the researcher the opportunity to focus on the intentionality of the implications of the text. Content analysis was conducted by analyzing the text, line by line, in search of reoccurring words and phrases. Words and phrases that were repeated in the text were highlighted and memos were added in the margin of the text. The memos were analyzed in order to examine a pattern that was later categorized to communicate its meaning.
Overall, content analyses of the open-ended questions appear to be consistent with some of the quantitative findings in this study. Nearly half (46%) of respondents who responded to the open-ended questions reported administrative support to start a GSA/club/organization in their schools. In addition, over two thirds (65.2%) of school social workers who responded to the quantitative questions reported that they had administrative support to provide social work services to LGBT students. These findings help support the concept of interactional justice in the organizational climate, which addresses leaders being proactive in addressing hostility in the climate of the organization and implementation of policies and resources (DeCremer, VanDijke & Bos, 2007; Kabanoff et al., 1995; Hodson, 2004; Umphress et al., 2003). Furthermore, nearly one third (29%) of respondents to the open-ended questions reported that they had no administrative support for GSA/club/organizations in their schools. Additionally, over twenty percent (23%) in the quantitative responses reported that their administration was not supportive/somewhat supportive for the provision of social work services to LGBT students. In the open-ended responses, the majority (80%) of school social workers reported that they provided services to meet the unique needs of LGBT students. In the quantitative responses, over half (63%) of school social workers reported that they moderately/strongly agree that they feel prepared to provide social work services to LGBT students. In the quantitative responses slightly over twenty percent (21%) of school social workers strongly disagree/moderately disagree that they feel prepared to provide social work services to LGBT students, whereas 20% of the school social workers who responded to open-ended questions stated that they do not provide social work services to LGBT students.
J. Human Subjects Protection

The potential risks to participants in this study were relatively minimal. A waiver of documentation of informed consent was granted by University of Illinois at Chicago Institutional Review Board. The survey collected demographic information about participants without identifying information.

In order to ensure informed consent, participants were provided with a subject information sheet available for them to print and keep for their own private records. The subject information sheet described the purpose of the study and informed participants that:

1. their participation in the study was completely voluntary and their identity was anonymous;
2. their participation in the study had minimal risk associated with emotional distress;
3. they could skip any question(s) that made them feel uncomfortable;
4. there were no direct benefits to participating in the study, but that participation in the study contributed to building social work scholarship and knowledge;
5. by completing the Web-based survey instrument they were agreeing to participate in the study (see appendix D).

In order to maintain confidentiality of the data, electronic survey instruments were accessed only by the researcher and were password protected. For the purposes of statistical analyses, the data from the electronic survey instruments were downloaded on a laptop computer with password protection and firewall protection, accessible only to the researcher. The laptop containing the data for the research was kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s home.
K. Conclusion

This chapter summarized the results of this study that answered the four research questions. The results included a description of a sample of school social workers and their characteristics. In addition, Spearman’s rho correlation analysis of the homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and control variables in this study were also provided. In addition, multiple regression analysis and statistical stepwise regression analysis of homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and school climate were presented in this chapter along with content analysis of open-ended questions.
VI. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

A. **Introduction**

This final chapter presents the interpretation of the results outlined in chapter V. It includes a summary of the sample profile of participants in this study, reiteration of the research questions, and a brief overview of the methods. The discussion section of this chapter offers an interpretation of the results of the study related to homophobia, gay affirmative practice, school climate, and open-ended questions in the study. In addition, the conclusion provides an outline of the study’s strengths and limitations and ends with the implications for research, social work education, policy, and social justice.

B. **Profile Summary of Participants in the Study**

Demographic analysis of the study of 272 school social workers indicates that the average participant in the study was a 43-year-old, White, female school social worker with a master’s degree. In addition, the average participant in the study reported practicing in an urban school setting, having 11 years of school social work experience, and residing in the United States. This demographic profile has been reported in the national study of school social workers by the School Social Work Association of America (Kelly et al., 2009).

C. **Research Questions**

The study examined four key research questions:

1. What is the degree of homophobia among school social workers? Does the degree of homophobia vary by demographic variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations?
2. To what extent do school social workers engage in gay affirmative practice with LGBT students? Does use of gay affirmative practice vary by demographic variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations?

3. Are there associations between the degree of homophobia among school social workers and their use of gay affirmative practice? Does it vary by demographic variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations?

4. Is the possible association between homophobia among school social workers and use of gay affirmative practice potentially moderated by their perceptions of school climate? Does the association between homophobia and gay affirmative practice vary by demographic variables, including religiosity, age, sexual orientation, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and education and training about LGBT populations?

D. Method

This study used a cross-sectional, descriptive, exploratory design. The data were collected using Survey Monkey, a software program that allows its users to create and administer a survey. The responses can be exported for analysis in SPSS. Data were collected from March 2010 to April 2011. The School Social Work Association of America, American Council for School Social Work, and their affiliates assisted in recruiting a sample of 283 respondents from 42 states in the United States.

Univariate statistical analysis was conducted to provide demographic information and characteristics about the school social workers who participated in this study. Spearman’s rho correlation and t-test bivariate analysis were conducted in order to examine the correlation
between homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and selected variables included in this study. Multiple linear regressions were conducted in order to examine the interaction between school climate, homophobia, and the outcome variable gay affirmative practice. In addition, statistical stepwise regression analysis was conducted in order to examine the control variables and analyze the variance accounted for in the outcome variable gay affirmative practice. Content analysis was conducted to examine the responses to the open-ended questions in this study.

E. Introduction: Interpretation of results

This is the first known study to examine the degree of homophobia among a sample of school social workers, thus direct comparison to other studies is limited. However, demographic studies of school social workers and other social worker samples indicate that the two groups appear homogenous (Kelly, et al., 2009; NASW, 2004). Although heterosexism is not the focus of this study, it does discuss the literature examining heterosexism in school social workers. This is necessary because the studies examining heterosexism in social workers have played a central role in social work’s discourse about attitude formation toward LGBT populations. Therefore, eliminating these studies from the discussion on homophobia would limit the critical examination of present research findings.

F. Degree of Homophobia among School Social Workers

Descriptive analysis indicates that overall, school social workers in this study reported nonhomophobic views. Furthermore, the independent t-test analysis did not find a statistically significant difference between homophobia, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation or gay affirmative practice, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation. The Spearman’s rho correlation analysis, however, did reveal a positive correlation among nonhomophobic views, gay affirmative practice, percentage of time in master’s education
program focused on LGBT populations, semester hours of classroom instruction focused on LGBT populations, clock hours of professional development training focused on LGBT populations in the last 5 years, clock hours of supervision or consultation that specifically focused on LGBT individuals in the past 5 years, and personal contact with LGBT individuals. Thus, in this study, school social workers that reported higher nonhomophobic views were more likely to engage in higher gay affirmative practice, have more percentage of time in their master’s education program focused on LGBT populations, more semester hours of classroom instruction focused on LGBT populations, more clock hours of professional development training focused on LGBT populations in the past 5 years, more clock hours of supervision or consultation specifically focused on LGBT individuals in the past 5 years and more personal contact with LGBT individuals.

Conversely, an inverse relationship was found among homophobic views, gay affirmative practice, religiosity scale, and attendance of religious services. Thus, in this study social workers who reported more homophobic views reported less engagement with gay affirmative practice. School social workers that reported less favorable views toward LGBT individuals, reported higher religiosity and more frequent attendance of religious services (Discussion about homophobia and gay affirmative practice is included in section G below.) As previously discussed in this dissertation, past studies examining social workers’ attitudes and beliefs about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations have yielded different results. Pioneering research conducted in the 1980s examining social workers’ attitudes and beliefs about homosexuality concluded that social workers had high levels of homophobia (DeCrescenzo, 1984) and that one third of social workers sampled displayed some level of homophobia (Wisniewski & Toomey, 1984).
A possible explanation as to why the present study found different results is the passage of time. DeCrescenzo (1984) and Wisniewski and Toomey (1984) conducted their studies nearly three decades ago and approximately 11 to 14 years after the removal of homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*. In addition, they conducted their study during a time when the American society experienced extreme fear of homosexuality because of the AIDS’ epidemic (Yang, 1997). Nearly four decades have passed since the removal of homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* and nearly three decades since the beginning the AIDS epidemic. Consequently, school social workers in this study entered the social work profession indoctrinated in a belief system that challenged the pathology of homosexuality. Furthermore, they entered the profession more educated about AIDS and less likely to fear sexual minority populations due to the transmission of the HIV virus.

Between 1973 and 1991, approximately 70% of Americans did not approve of same-sex relationships. After 1991, however, a trend began toward more favorable views toward these relationships (Yang, 1997), and findings from social work researchers supported the trend (Cramer, 1997; Berkman & Zinberg, 1997). In addition, the Pew Research Center (2011) recently found that 63% of Americans younger than 50 reported that homosexuality should be accepted. In this study, the average age of respondents was 43 years. The participants reflect society’s changing views about sexual minority populations and support a trend toward more favorable views toward sexual minority populations, which appears to be reflected in the social work profession.

Krieglstein (2002) conducted a study examining heterosexism in a random sample of 409 school social workers who held membership in the Illinois Association of School Social Work. Similar to the present findings on homophobia, Krieglstein (2001) found that few
school social workers (4%) reported high levels of heterosexism. Crisp (2002) conducted a study similar to DeCrescenzo’s (1984) study, in which she examined homophobia between social workers and psychologists. She implemented a random sample technique and used a standardized measure. She concluded that social workers and psychologists displayed low levels of homophobia. The present study used the same measure as Crisp (2002) and concluded that overall, school social workers hold nonhomophobic views.

Unlike the present study, past studies support the relationship between formal education and homophobia, indicating that more formal education is related to more favorable views about LGBT populations. However, past studies examining the relationship between formal education and homophobia have tended to survey samples that had more variance in their educational attainment (Hereck 1984, 1988, 2000). In the present study, “formal” education (i.e., BA degree and MA degree) did not reveal a significant correlation with homophobia. However, the majority (80%) of respondents in this study reported having a master’s degree, and the high educational attainment of the school social workers in this sample may account for no significant findings between “formal” education and homophobia.

In this study, education and training with LGBT populations included various questions (see Appendix D). One question used for the construct of education and training was self-directed learning about LGBT populations. The results revealed a significant correlation between homophobia and education in the form of self-directed learning about LGBT populations, suggesting that school social workers who reported more clock hours of self-directed learning about LGBT populations also reported nonhomophobic views. These results may be explained by school social workers with more favorable views seeking self-directed learning opportunities about sexual minority populations.
In addition, school social workers who held more favorable views toward LGBT populations may have sought more information about LGBT populations. Another explanation for these results may also point to a gap in “formal training” opportunities about LGBT populations. In the Krieglstein (2002) study, school social workers who reported more education about gay and lesbian populations reported lower levels of heterosexism. Similar to the present study, they reported more self-directed learning about lesbian and gay populations. This indicates that school social workers continue to be proactive in seeking education and training to inform their practice with LGBT youth.

Bennett (2002), when discussing homophobia and heterosexism, discusses intersubjective forms of learning. She argues that this form of learning promotes self-exploration and critical thinking. She goes on to say that intersubjective forms of learning provide individuals with the opportunity to seek knowledge and understanding outside of formal classroom settings. She postulates that this is effective in reducing heterosexism and homophobia because it stretches thinking beyond commonly held assumptions associated with sexual minority populations.

Correspondingly, Foreman and Quinlan (2008) discuss the importance of learning that addresses awareness of homophobia and heterosexism. They present a module that increases the learning focused on critical thinking, small group discussion, and homework assignments in order to encourage self-awareness of attitudes toward sexual minority populations. In an attempt to reduce homophobia of social work students and prepare them for practice with lesbian and gay clients, the CSWE’s Curriculum Policy Statement requires accredited schools of social work to include curriculum content on lesbians and gay men (CSWE, 1997). Subsequently, findings suggestive of a correlation between homophobia and
education and training specially related to self-directed learning about LGBT populations may help augment social work education’s charge of reducing homophobia by promoting an educational experience that fosters learning as a tool of purposeful consciousness raising about LGBT populations.

Further analysis in this study found that school social workers who reported more contact with LGBT individuals also reported nonhomophobic views, while school social workers who reported high scores of religiosity and frequent attendance of religious services reported more-homophobic views. Similar to the present study, Berkman and Zinberg (1997) found a positive relationship between homophobia and social contact. In addition, Krieglstein (2002) and others (Allport, 1954 Berkman & Zingberg, 1997; Herek, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1996) support an association between attitudes toward sexual minorities and contact with LGBT individuals. Their research suggests that people who have more relationships with LGBT individuals or more social contact with LGBT individuals tend to have more favorable views toward them.

Other studies have also found a connection between religiosity and homophobia. In 2002, Krieglstein found a positive correlation between heterosexism and religiosity. In her study, school social workers who reported higher frequency of religious attendance and attending religious conservative institutions reported higher levels of heterosexism. Other findings support a relationship between attitudes toward sexual minorities and frequency of religious attendance, indicating that religiosity is associated with negative views toward LGBT populations (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Cramer, 1997; DeCrescenzo, 1984; Herek, 1984, 1988, 1996; Herek & Capitanio, 1995). Subsequently, past studies support current findings that indicate that less favorable views toward sexual minority populations is associated
with religiosity. However, it is important to interpret current findings from this study with caution because (a) this sample did not use random selection, (b) the limited number of respondents for attendance of religious services \( n = 149 \) could account for the present findings, and (c) this is the first time that Hodge’s (1972) religiosity scale was used to examine homophobia. Therefore, one should not conclude that all school social workers with high scores of religiosity and/or who frequently attend religious services hold negative views toward LGBT populations. However, present findings appear consistent with studies conducted within the last decade suggesting that in general, social workers’ views toward LGBT populations have become more favorable with the passage of time (Crisp, 2002; Krieglstein, 2002).

G. Engagement with Gay Affirmative Practice

In this study, the majority of school social workers reported nonhomophobic views and high engagement with gay affirmative practice. School social workers who reported high scores of gay affirmative practice also reported nonhomophobic views. Empirical findings also revealed a positive relationship between gay affirmative practice and nonhomophobic views (and vice versa). In addition, a positive relationship was found among gay affirmative practice, self-directed learning reported in the last 5 years about LGBT populations, percentage of time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations, semester hours in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations, clock hours of supervision or case consultation that specifically focused on LGBT individuals in the past 5 years, personal contact with LGBT individuals, and professional development training attended in the last 5 years about LGBT populations. However, a negative relationship was found between gay affirmative practice, the religiosity scale, and frequent attendance of religious services.
School social workers who reported high scores on gay affirmative practice also reported more self-directed learning about LGBT populations, more semester hours and percentage of time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations, supervision or case consultation focused on LGBT individuals, more personal contact with LGBT individuals, and attending more professional development training about LGBT populations. Conversely, school social workers who reported low engagement with gay affirmative practice also reported high religiosity and more frequent attendance of religious services.

As previously noted in this dissertation, this is the first study to examine the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice among school social workers; therefore, direct comparisons with other studies are limited. Consequently, it may be beneficial to set the present findings within a broader context. In 1973 the American Psychosocial Association called upon psychotherapy to provide affirming psychological practice to LGBT populations, but it was not until two decades later that social work scholars began to address gay affirmative practice. During this time, scholars called upon social work to develop a knowledge base to address practice with LGBT populations, address the unique need of LGBT youths, and increase social work practice skills with LGBT populations (Appleby & Anastas, 1998; Ryan & Futterman, 1998; Mallon, 1998). The increased focus on gay affirmative practice was largely due to the assertion that homophobia resulted in the reduction of effective mental health services for LGBT populations (Brown, 1996; Casa, Brandy, & Ponteroteo, 1983; McHenry & Johnson, 1993; Rudolph, 1989). Yet minimal empirical research supported the relationship between social workers’ attitudes and practice with LGBT populations (Crisp, 2002, 2007).
In order to bring attention to the association between social workers’ attitudes and beliefs about LGBT populations and practice behavior, Crisp developed and validated a measure to assess homophobia and gay affirmative practice. She argued that it was time for social work to move away from an “assumed relationship between homophobia and practice to one that is empirically tested” (Crisp, 2002, p. 123). The present study is the first social work study to provide such empirical knowledge, suggesting a correlation between school social workers’ attitudes toward LGBT population and social work practice behaviors. Although these findings are limited to the participants in this study, the results move social work scholarship away from an assumed relationship between attitudes toward LGBT populations and closer to an empirically supported relationship.

In addition, similar to the bivariate results on homophobia and education, findings did not reveal a statistically significant relationship between “formal” education and gay affirmative practice. As noted, this may be due to a highly educated sample of school social workers and limited variance in the sample. Results did reveal a significant relationship between gay affirmative practice, self-directed learning about LGBT populations, and percentage of time in master’s education program focused on LGBT populations. Respondents who reported high scores on gay affirmative practice also reported more clock hours of self-directed learning and a higher percentage of time in their master’s education program focused on LGBT populations. Since gay affirmative practice is relatively new to social work, scant empirical research between gay affirmative practice and education exists.

However, to provide a broader context for the correlation between gay affirmative practice and education, findings will be discussed within the framework of cultural competency and practice with LGBT populations. In 1996, NASW’s policy statement expanded
cultural competency standards on diverse populations to include sexual orientation. To accomplish this, CSWE’s Education Policy on Accreditation Standards 2.1.4 (EPAS) required the infusion of cultural competency in social work education (CSWE, 2008). Drawing on social work literature about culturally competent practice with LGBT populations, VanDenBergh and Crisp (2004) urged social work to adopt competency standards with LGBT populations that include attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Briefly, the attitude competency incorporates a multifaceted approach to self-examination about LGBT populations. Some of the components in knowledge competency include knowledge of community resources, knowledge of policy, and advocacy. Some of the components related to the skills competency include establishing a safe treatment milieu, challenging oppression, and referrals to appropriate services.

May (2010) conducted an exploratory study to investigate whether social work instructors in state schools taught attitudes, knowledge, and skills as cultural competency standards with LGBT populations. He found that social work instructors reported that they were teaching the standards, but were not systematically measuring student’s acquisition of skills. The present study suggest that school social workers who are engaging in gay affirmative practice are providing a safe treatment milieu, referring youths to LGBT community services, and advocating on their behalf. Subsequently, the findings from this study provide some context for evaluating culturally competent social work services with LGBT populations.

Additional results from this study found an inverse relationship between gay affirmative practice and the religiosity scale. Thus, school social workers who reported high scores on the religiosity scale and reported more frequent attendance of religious services reported low scores on the gay affirmative practice domain. Until now no study has examined the relationship between gay affirmative practice and religiosity, and there is therefore no history of
empirical support available to support these findings. As noted above, however, studies that have examined attitude formation with LGBT populations indicate that religiosity is associated with more negative views about LGBT populations.

Findings from this study indicate that religiosity and frequent attendance of religious services may influence school social workers’ ability to engage in gay affirmative practice, affecting practice behavior with LGBT students. These findings are crucial because NASW’s (1999) code of ethics mandates that social workers provide gay affirmative practice. Consequently, the results from this study raise questions about social workers’ espoused beliefs and actual practice behavior with LGBT populations. Additional results indicate that school social workers who reported more contact with LGBT individuals, more knowledge about LGBT populations, and supervision or case consultation in the workplace also reported high engagement with gay affirmative practice. Though limited empirical information is available to support these findings, these results support previous research, indicating that the combination of personal relationships and learning and/or exposure about LGBT populations may be crucial factors in influencing attitudes and beliefs about LGBT populations and social work practice. In addition, results from this study underscore the importance of examining factors related to homophobia and gay affirmative practice from a multidimensional perspective.

**H. School Climate**

Scant research is available about homophobia and school social workers’ perception of school climate. Consequently, the potential support for school climate’s moderating effect on homophobia and gay affirmative practice point to the bigger picture of the interconnectedness of school climate on school social workers’ attitudes and beliefs about LGBT individuals and their practice with LGBT students. A school climate’s potential moderating
effect on homophobia and gay affirmative practice implies that the school’s climate may drive not only attitudes toward LGBT individuals, but service outcomes as well. This is similar to previous finding that suggest that organizational climate affects the delivery of social work practice for clients in child welfare (Glisson & James, 2002; Glisson & Green, 2006).

The findings from this study highlight the interrelatedness of school climate, homophobia, and gay affirmative practice, as well as its association to positive and/or negative influences. More importantly, however, the results from this study indicate that school climate, homophobia, and gay affirmative practice may not occur in isolation from one another. A strong positive school climate may act in many ways as a buffer between homophobia and gay affirmative practice.

Therefore, in order for school social workers to create and implement effective systems interventions, the interrelatedness of school climate, homophobia, and gay affirmative practice must be recognized and addressed.

Krieglstein (2002) included a brief examination of school climate in her study examining heterosexism in school social workers who held membership in the Illinois School Social Work Association. She found that about one third of school social workers reported that their administration was “very supportive” or “somewhat supportive” of the provision of social work services for LGBT youths. The present study found that nearly 50% of school social workers reported that their school administrator was supportive of the provision of social work services for LGBT youths. Krieglstein (2002) also found that over half (57%) of the school social workers in her study indicated that their schools were “not safe at all” or “somewhat safe” for faculty/staff to be out about their sexual orientation. This is contrasted by current findings indicating that less than half (43%) of school social workers reported that their
schools were not safe for faculty/staff to be out about their sexual orientation. These findings indicate that compared to almost one decade ago, administrative support for the provision of school social work services and safety for faculty/staff has improved considerably.

Krieglstein’s (2002) study found that 62% of social workers reported that their schools were “not at all safe” or “somewhat unsafe” for LGBT students to be out about their sexual orientation. My study did not explicitly ask the respondents to rate how safe their schools were for LGBT students to be out about their sexual orientation; however, questions were asked about antigay epithets (as well as other aspects related to school climate). In the present study, more than half (86%) of school social workers reported hearing antigay epithets in their schools on a “daily” or “weekly basis.” Because of the different sample size and frame, along with different conceptual frameworks and methodology, direct comparisons between Krieglstein’s (2002) and my study cannot be made. Nonetheless, these findings are supported by extensive empirical research contending that schools are often hostile and unwelcoming places for LGBT youths (Kosciw, 2001, 2005, 2007; Kosciw & Diaz, 2005; Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009; Krieglstein, 2002; Morrow, 2004; National Coalition of Antigay Violence Programs, 2005; Peters, 2003).

However, Kosciw et al., 2009 provides empirical support for the effectiveness of comprehensive bullying/harassment policies and laws, as well as GSAs to improve the school climate for LGBT students. In the recent National School Climate Survey conducted by GLSEN, Kosciw et al, 2009, found that students that attended schools with comprehensive bullying/harassment policies and laws that specifically addressed sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression reported hearing lower homophobic remarks. Students that attended schools with comprehensive bullying/harassment policies heard
homophobic remarks in their school 65.7% of the time, compared to 73.7% for students that
attended schools that had generic bullying/harassment policies and laws or none at all. In
addition, students that attended schools with comprehensive bullying/harassment policies
reported that school staff intervened in homophobic bullying 26.6% of the time compared to
15.9% of the time in schools with no policies and laws or generic policies and laws.
Furthermore, students that attended schools with a GSA reported hearing fewer homophobic
epithets and reported that school personnel were more likely to intervene in incidents of
homophobic bulling. Students that attended schools with a GSA also reported feeling safer,
66.5% vs. 54.3%, having more support among the school personnel population, and feeling more
connected to school and school personnel.

Hopson and Lawson (2011) argue that school social workers are in a
unique position to assess and address school climate because they are trained to pay attention to
ecological factors that influence the individual. Hopson and Lawson (2011) conducted a study on
school climate in order to investigate how social workers in schools can use their leadership
skills to improve school climate. They concluded that social workers can use those skills to
promote caring school climates, increase collaboration, and improve positive interactions in
school settings. The findings from my study indicate that administrative support exists for the
provision of school social work services for LGBT youths; however, results also indicate that
school social workers reported often hearing recurring incidents of antigay epithets on a regular
basis.

The findings in this study present school social workers with an
opportunity to collaborate with school administration in order to address school climate for
LGBT youths. Results from my study indicate that school social workers reported that their
schools had a safe school policy to protect staff and faculty from incidents of homophobia, yet over half (76%) of school social workers reported that their schools did not have a gay/straight alliance/club/organization in their schools to improve school climate for LGBT individuals. These results suggest that progress has been made to protect faculty and staff in schools from incidents of homophobia, while less progress has been made to address the school climate for students. This may be indicative of not enough collaboration between students, faculty, and staff to address school climate, and the invisibility of LGBT students in school systems. My study highlights the potential strength and untapped resources that exist in school administrative support for the provision of school social work services for LGBT students. Additionally, my study brings to light opportunities for school social workers to collaborate with school administrators in order to address policy development that may improve school climate for LGBT students.

I. **Qualitative Data**

This chapter began with the presentation of quantitative analysis that provided respondents’ opinions regarding homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and school climate. The interpretation of open-ended questions helps to place quantitative findings in context. The quantitative analysis revealed that school social workers perceived their school administrators as supportive in the provision of social work services for LGBT students. Further analysis also indicated that about 20% of school social workers perceived their school administrators as not supportive in the provision of school social workers for LGBT students. Analysis of open-ended questions revealed that nearly half of the respondents reported having administrative support for starting a GSA/club/organization to improve school climate. In addition, school administrators who were supportive were described
as very involved in school climate issues. Findings indicate that school administrators were instrumental in making sure that a space was available for LGBT students to meet and helped promote the GSA/club/organization. Furthermore, school administrators maintained their support even in the face of concerns from parents and protestors. Administrators also demonstrated their support by implementing policies that supported GSAs/clubs/organizations and sought legal assistance in order to support a safe school climate for LGBT students. These findings echo the opportunities presented for school social workers to collaborate with their school administration to organize a formal structure to address school climate for LGBT populations.

Open-ended questions also provided information describing the perceived lack of support or hesitant administrative support in promoting a safe school climate for LGBT populations. This information revealed that when administrators were not supportive, funding was not available for GSA’s/clubs/organizations. In addition, when administrative support was not available and leadership for the GSA/club/organization changed, strong efforts to ensure the continuation of the GSA/club were not present. Furthermore, administrators limited their support by restricting the amount of exposure given to GSA’s/clubs/organizations.

Responses about the identified barriers in forming a GSA/club/organization to address homophobia and improve school climate revealed concerns about administrative support, parents, and personal frustrations in starting and maintaining the GSA/club/organization. These barriers could partially explain why a majority of respondents reported that their schools did not have a GSA/club/organization to address issues of homophobia and school climate. This is extremely important, since over 80% of respondents reported hearing recurring antigay epithets in their schools.
Responses to the open-ended questions also revealed some patterns about social work practice with LGBT students. The data about school social work practice are rich in detail and text. Patterns revealed that school social workers indicated that they engaged in at least two of the tenets of school social work practice: (a) they pay attention to their practice setting by ensuring that they have welcoming signs, posters, and literature available to address LGBT individuals, and (b) they exhibited intellectual competency by adapting curriculum for LGBT inclusiveness. Crisp (2006) indicates that within the framework of gay affirmative practice, particular attention to the practice setting is central to providing an open and affirming therapeutic environment. Patterns also revealed that respondents reported that they provided staff development training in order to address factors pertaining to LGBT populations. This suggests that some school social workers felt competent enough about factors relevant to LGBT communities to train other staff.

Analysis of open-ended responses also revealed patterns in deficits about school social workers’ knowledge of developmental factors affecting LGBT youths. For example, school social workers reported that in the elementary school setting, sexual orientation was not an issue. This appears to reflect a belief that issues pertaining to sexual orientation are not relevant for students in kindergarten through eighth grades, suggesting that some school social workers are unaware that sexual orientation is relevant across the entire lifespan. Some respondents also stated that they refer students out to local resources to address individual counseling, support, and mentoring needs, rather than providing social work services. While this indicates that respondents have knowledge about community resources available to LGBT students, it may also indicate that some school social workers do not feel prepared to provide social work services to LBGT students. This pattern is supported by quantitative analysis, which
revealed that just above 20% “strongly disagreed” or “moderately agreed” that they felt prepared to provide social work services to LGBT populations. However, this is a small number compared to the majority of school social workers who reported that they felt prepared to provide social work services to LGBT students.

J. **Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

1. **Strengths**

   The first strength of this study is that it is the first known study to present empirical research studying homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and school social workers’ perception of school climate. In addition, this is the first known study to find empirical support for school climate’s moderating effect on homophobia and gay affirmative practice. Therefore, valuable data about school social workers’ perception of school climate are presented in order to provide opportunities for collaboration with administration. In addition, information about administrative obstacles in providing school social work services to LGBT youth is also presented. The data provide pertinent information about social workers’ current attitudes toward LGBT populations and practice behaviors.

   This makes the data particularly germane to contemporary research questions, in light of the research gap that exists in understanding homophobia and social work practice behaviors. This study makes a unique contribution to the limited body of research that exists about homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and school climate in school settings. An additional strength is the sample size. This study secured 82% of the targeted response rate and 82% (42) of the states in the United States providing data across various geographic areas. Furthermore, the large sample size allowed for various statistical analyses and an array of variables. Qualitative analysis describing administrative support and obstacles as well as school
social work practice with LGBT youths offered a narrative that complemented the quantitative findings. Finally, qualitative analysis helped triangulate the data and further supported the research findings.

2. **Limitations**

Limitations in this study included the self-selected nature of the survey, limiting the ability to validate and generalize the results beyond the sample. Furthermore, using a nonrandomized sample limited research findings because participants in the study may have been predisposed to holding positive views about LGBT populations. The retrospective nature of the survey may have contributed to participants’ errors in recall. Another limitation arises in the gay affirmative practice scale (Crisp, 2002). Although it is reported to have good validity and reliability, it is a new scale that must be repeatedly validated over time. In addition, although the school climate scale revealed a Cronbach’s alpha of .856, which indicated good reliability, the scale must also be validated over time. However, as previously noted in this dissertation, this is the first attempt to use a school climate measure in order to examine school social workers’ perception of homophobia in school settings, so improvements to the scale may be beneficial for future research. Finally, although the sample was drawn from two national organizations across various states, geographic locale may have influenced responses, because people in certain geographic locations may hold particular views toward sexual minority populations. Therefore, it is important to exercise caution when interpreting the findings.
L. **Implications of the Study**

There are potential implications from the results in this study for future research, social work education, school social work practice, policy development, theory, and social justice. This section will discuss each of these areas as it relates to the findings of this study.

1. **Research**

A number of implications for future research stem from the findings of this study. Although empirical studies have examined homophobia in social workers (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Cramer, 1997; Crisp, 2002; DeCrescenzo, 1984; Kriegstein, 2002; Wisniewski & Toomey, 1984), none of these studies has specially examined homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and school climate among school social workers. Therefore, implications for further social work research include:

1. A comparative study using the same research survey and procedures by geographic locations to explore the associations between homophobia and gay affirmative practice in school settings, with a particular focus on youth;

2. A national study using the same research survey and procedures to explore variables such as religiosity, personal contact, and education as they relate to homophobia and gay affirmative practice in order to address social work research gaps about practitioners’ attitudes toward LGBT populations and social work practice;

3. A national study to help explore the relationship between religiosity and the NASW’s code of ethics requiring gay affirmative practice;
(4) A specific focus on development of a standardized measure for school climate examining school climate, homophobia, and gay affirmative practice in order to help explore school social workers’ perception of the practice milieu;

(5) A more specific focus on cultural competency standards with LGBT youths;

(6) Identification of educational curriculum that school social workers can implement in the school setting to address school climate for LGBT youths;

(7) Identification of where school social workers obtain their knowledge and practice information about LGBT youths.

The qualitative analysis revealed that some school social workers reported that workers reported that LGBT issues were not present in elementary school settings. Yet research indicates that factors related to gender identity and sexual orientations begin early in life (Morrow, 2004; Ryan & Futterman, 1998). Subsequently, other research implications include a focus on developmental issues pertaining specifically to LGBT youths.

2. **Social work education**

There are also potential implications for social work education and training. Due to the limited information about homophobia and gay affirmative practice, social work curricula may focus on the best methods for reducing homophobia and increasing competency with LGBT populations. Although social work researchers have examined the role of education in reducing homophobia (Cramer, 1997; Glenn & Russell, 1986; Herek, 1984; Krieglstein, 2002), few have begun to explore practice-specific behaviors (Crisp, 2004). Yet many point to the need to improve social work services for LGBT populations (Appleby, 1998; Cramer, 1997; Crisp, 2002, 2004; Mallon, 1998; Morrow, 1993). This is especially relevant to CSWE’s standard requiring that social work education programs address content on LGBT
populations. However, CSWE may consider these findings in order to call for an infusion of LGBT content in social work programs, similar to their call for infusion of cultural competency and diversity in social work curricula.

Lastly, because there are no known studies that have specifically focused on homophobia and gay affirmative practice among social workers in school settings, this study may facilitate a curriculum that focuses on self-awareness and practice with LGBT youths in school settings. The development of such curricula may help address the specific developmental factors related to LGBT youths in school settings. This is especially relevant given the National Association of Social Workers’ and the Council on Social Work Education’s policy statement regarding social work practice, ethics, and advocacy for the inclusion of LGBT populations (CSWE, 1997; NASW, 1996 ab).

3. **School social work practice**

The present study has implication for school social work practice. Although the National Association of Social Workers calls for social workers to adopt gay affirmative practice with LGBT populations (NASW, 1996), this is the first study to examine the relationship between homophobia and gay affirmative practice. The majority of the school social workers in this study reported nonhomophobic views and high engagement with gay affirmative practice. Practice implications regarding nonhomophobic views and high engagement with gay affirmative practice indicate that school social workers respond to LGBT youths by using best practice and ethical social work practice principles. Practice implications include school social workers’ use of gay affirmative intellectual competency by attaining self-directed learning about LGBT populations, providing professional development in their schools about LGBT
populations, referring LGBT students to community-based services, adapting curriculum in order to include factors related to sexual orientation, and creating an affirming practice environment.

Findings from this study also point to the need for school social workers to include macro-level social work practice skills in order to lead the effort in establishing Gay Straight Alliances (GSA) (or other formal structures) in schools to address homophobia. This is especially relevant in the face of current findings that indicate that more than half (78%) of school social workers reported that their schools did not have a GSA (or other formal structure) in place to address homophobia, and over two thirds (42%) reported that no one had attempted to start a GSA (or other formal structure).

Findings from this study indicate that school social workers have the opportunity to play a role in influencing administrative decisions about the organizational structure of the school. Over fifty percent (68%) reported that school administrators supported social work services for LGBT students. School social workers’ systems training presents them with the opportunity to implement ecological interventions that expand services for LGBT youths beyond micro-level social work practice. Subsequently adopting macro-level school social work practice to improve the school climate for LGBT youths and create structural change that can improve the delivery of social work services for LGBT populations.

Findings from this study also point to the need for school social workers to engage in emotional tenets of gay affirmative practice that call for reflective social work practice with LGBT populations. This is crucial in face of present findings that indicate that school social workers who attend frequent religious services and report high scores of religiosity also report homophobic views and lower engagement with gay affirmative practice. Consequently, findings
from this study call into question the role of religiosity in social work’s mandate to do no harm to a vulnerable and marginalized segment of the school population, LGBT youths.

4. Policy

The present study also has implications for social work policy. One implication is related to re-examining the contradiction between CSWE’s policy statement regarding the inclusion of LGBT content in social work education programs, and the ability of school social work programs housed in religious institutions to discriminate in the hiring, firing, and admissions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender faculty and students (CSWE, 2011). This is especially relevant given research that suggest that religiosity may negatively affect the provision of social work services for LGBT populations, and that religiosity is associated with more homophobic and heterosexist views (Cramer, 1997; Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Krieglstein 2002).

Findings from this study also contribute to a better understanding of school climate and social work practice in school settings. Therefore, policy development and implementation of procedures to create a safe school setting for LGBT students, faculty, and staff may be informed by this study. This is especially relevant given school social workers’ new role in the “response to intervention” process in which school social workers are moving toward the implementation of universal interventions that call for ecological approaches, rather than micro-level interventions in school settings (Usaj, Shine & Mandlawitz, 2009). Consequently, findings from this study provide new opportunities for school social workers to take leadership and advocacy roles in their schools and intervene at the school-wide level.
5. **Theory**

The present study has implications for social work theory, specifically related to the interconnectedness between organizational culture and organizational climate. Societal values influence communities (Bandura, 1977), and community values influence an organization (Hofstede, 2001), thus the organizational culture of a school is directly influenced by external forces (Spera & Matto, 2009). Organizational culture has been described as the overarching policies, procedures, rules, and regulations that influence the organizational climate (Spera & Matto, 2009) and how members of an organization act on a day-to-day basis, as well as what is valued by members of an organization (Glisson & James, 2002; Glisson and Green, 2006). Theoretical implications include the influence that organizational culture has on school climate, ultimately affecting school social workers’ attitudes and beliefs about LGBT populations and engagement with gay affirmative practice.

This presents school social workers with an opportunity to advocate for changes in policies and procedures that influence the organizational culture of a school, ultimately improving the school climate for LGBT populations. For instance, findings from the multiple regression analysis suggest that as nonhomophobic scores increase, the interaction between school climate and homophobia also increase in magnitude. Findings also indicate that the relationship is more positive as nonhomophobic scores increase. Subsequently, theoretical implications suggest that making changes in the organizational culture of a school system will influence the school climate and improve not only beliefs and attitudes toward LGBT populations, but also the delivery of services for LGBT populations as well.
6. **Social justice**

The present study has implications for social justice. As previously noted, it is the first study to examine homophobia and gay affirmative practice among a sample of school social workers. Findings from this study indicate that overall, school social workers hold nonhomophobic views toward LGBT individuals and engage in high levels of gay affirmative practice. This suggests that school social workers do not view sexual minority populations as pathological and are actively engaged in providing gay affirmative practice to LGBT youths in school settings. This study helps increase advocacy for gay affirmative practice in school settings as a social justice issue.

This study identified strengths and gaps in school social workers’ practice with LGBT youths. The findings contribute to a better understanding of culturally competent services with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations and underscore scholars’ call for providing social work practice with LGBT populations that address skills, knowledge, self-awareness, and advocacy (Crisp, 2002; Crisp & McCave, 2007; VanDen Bergh & Crisp, 2004; Langdridge, 2007; May, 2011). Although the social work profession calls upon social workers to practice from an affirmative stance with LGBT individuals, limited information is available about their practice behaviors with LGBT populations. This study begins to close this gap and demonstrates school social workers’ engagement with gay affirmative practice as a tool to address issues of marginalization with sexual minority youths in school settings.

This research contributes to social justice with vulnerable populations by highlighting the importance of advocacy, policy development, and structural change needed to address the needs of LGBT youths across all schools in the United States. This research study also underscores the importance of practicing school social work from a perspective that works
toward eliminating injustice for a very vulnerable segment of the U.S. population, a cornerstone that the social work profession is founded upon (NASW, 1996ab; VanSoest, 1995). This study promotes NASW’s call for social justice in school settings with LGBT youths, reminding practitioners that this stance will necessitate a paradigm shift that emphasizes the importance of practice theory as a reflective process by which to organize critical thinking and analyze the context of power, history, and opportunities for change. This study underscores that “power is not ultimately in the strong arm of the state, but rather it is a productive force exercised through relations between people” (Focucalt, 1977, 1978, 1998 as cited in Finn & Jacobson, 2003, p.68).

**L. Conclusion**

More than four decades have passed since the beginning of the gay and lesbian civil rights movement in the United States. It has been noted that this movement has been met with an increased recognition of rights for sexual minority populations as well as an increase in incidents of hatred and violence. In those last four decades, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality as a pathology from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*. The NASW issued its first policy statement affirming social work practice with LGBT populations, and CSWE required social work education to include LGBT content in their curriculum.

The Council on Social Work Education’s policy also presents a dilemma for accrediting schools of social work programs housed in religious institutions that discriminate in the hiring and firing of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender social work faculty, and the admission of gay and lesbian social work students. Subsequently, CSWE’s policy creates a dilemma that continues to be met with unsettling contradictions.
Additionally, empirical findings examining social workers’ attitudes toward LGBT populations indicate that they have not been immune to society’s views about sexual minority populations. Major findings from this study indicate that school social workers report nonhomophobic views toward LGBT populations and high engagement with gay affirmative practice. Results from this study indicate that school social workers in master’s education programs who reported more percentage of time learning about LGBT populations or semester classrooms hours learning about LGBT populations reported nonhomophobic views, and highly engaged in more gay affirmative practice. In addition, results from this study also indicate that more contact with LGBT individuals, more self-directed learning, more professional development, and more supervision or case consultation about LGBT populations were associated with nonhomophobic views and high engagement with gay affirmative practice. Results from this study suggest that personal relationships with LGBT individuals, education, and workplace training may have a positive effect on attitudes and beliefs about LGBT populations and social work practice.

Further analysis found that school social workers who reported more religiosity and more attendance of religious services also reported homophobic views and lower engagement with gay affirmative practice. Factors pertaining to religiosity must continue to be addressed in the social work profession because they question social workers espoused beliefs, and challenge whether social workers can separate their personal beliefs from their practice behaviors.

Quantitative and qualitative findings underscore the importance of school climate in the delivery of social work services to LGBT youths. These findings underline the importance of school climate, homophobia, gay affirmative practice, and its interrelatedness,
positive or negative, for LGBT students in the school setting. This is extremely relevant given strong empirical evidence that indicates that schools are often a hostile and unwelcoming place for sexual minority youths, despite research that indicates that harassment and bullying directed at lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youths can have devastating consequences. The empirical findings from this study provide school social workers with valuable entry points toward the identification of individual and structural changes needed to adequately address school climate so that all students may benefit from a safe and affirming educational environment. Moreover, findings from this study provide empirical evidence for school social workers to adopt gay affirmative practice principles as a social justice stance for a vulnerable and marginalized segment of students in school settings across the United States of America.
CITED LITERATURE


*Curriculum policy statement for baccalaureate and master’s degree programs in social work education*. Alexandria, VA: Author.


APPENDIX A

IRB FORMS

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS)
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (MC 672)
203 Administrative Office Building
1737 West Polk Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612-7227

Approval Notice
Initial Review (Response To Modifications)

April 30, 2010

Milka Ramirez
Jane Addams School of Social Work, m/c 309
1040 W. Harrison

RE: Protocol # 2010-0294
“An Examination of Homophobia and Social Work Practice among a Sample of School Social Workers”

Dear Ms. Ramirez:

Your Initial Review (Response To Modifications) was reviewed and approved by the Expedited review process on April 21, 2010. You may now begin your research

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: April 21, 2010 - April 20, 2011
Approved Subject Enrollment #: 341
Additional Determinations for Research Involving Minors: These determinations have not been made for this study since it has not been approved for enrollment of minors.
Performance Sites: UIC
Sponsor: None
PAF#: Not Applicable
Research Protocol(s):
 a) Research Protocol: An Examination of Homophobia and Social Work Practice Among a Sample of School Social Workers; Version 1; 03/17/2010
Recruitment Material(s):
 a) Internet Advertisement; Version 1
Informed Consent(s):
 a) Subject Information Sheet; Version 2; 04/12/2010
 b) Waiver of Signed Consent Document granted under 45 CFR 46.117 for the online survey

Your research meets the criteria for expedited review as defined in 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) under the following specific category:
APPENDIX A (continued)

IRB FORMS

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Please note the Review History of this submission:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipt Date</th>
<th>Submission Type</th>
<th>Review Process</th>
<th>Review Date</th>
<th>Review Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03/18/2010</td>
<td>Initial Review</td>
<td>Expedited</td>
<td>04/02/2010</td>
<td>Modifications Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/19/2010</td>
<td>Response To</td>
<td>Expedited</td>
<td>04/21/2010</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modifications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please remember to:

➔ Use your research protocol number (2010-0294) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

➔ Review and comply with all requirements on the enclosure, "UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects"

Please note that the UIC IRB has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Please be aware that if the scope of work in the grant/project changes, the protocol must be amended and approved by the UIC IRB before the initiation of the change.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact OPRS at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 996-9299. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,
Marissa Benni-Weis, M.S.
IRB Coordinator, IRB # 2
Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

Enclosure(s):

1. UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects
2. Informed Consent Document(s):
   a) Subject Information Sheet; Version 2; 04/12/2010
3. Recruiting Material(s):
   a) Internet Advertisement; Version 1

cc: Creasie Finney Hairston, Jane Addams School of Social Work, M/C 309
    Patricia O'Brien, Jane Addams School of Social Work, M/C 309
APPENDIX A (continued)

IRB FORMS

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS)
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (MC 672)
203 Administrative Office Building
1737 West Polk Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612-7227

Approval Notice
Continuing Review (Response To Modifications)

April 13, 2011

Milka Ramirez
Jane Addams School of Social Work, m/c 309
1040 W. Harrison

RE: Protocol # 2010-0294
“An Examination of Homophobia and Social Work Practice among a Sample of School Social Workers”

Please note that training credits for Patricia O’Brien, Faculty expire on May 23, 2011. All UIC investigators and key research personnel involved in human subject research must complete a minimum of two hours of continuing education in human subject protection every two years. For further information, please see the OPRS website:
http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/ovcr/research/protocolreview/irb/education/2-2-2/ce_requirements.shtml

Dear Ms. Ramirez:

Your Continuing Review (Response To Modifications) was reviewed and approved by the Expedited review process on April 8, 2011. You may now continue your research.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: April 21, 2011 - April 19, 2012
Approved Subject Enrollment #: 341 (221 subjects enrolled to date)
Additional Determinations for Research Involving Minors: These determinations have not been made for this study since it has not been approved for enrollment of minors.
Performance Sites: UIC, American Council of School Social Work (ACSSW)
Sponsor: None
APPENDIX A (Continued)

IRB FORMS

Recruitment Material:
 b) Internet Advertisement; Version 1

Informed Consents:
 c) Subject Information Sheet; Version 2; 04/12/2010
 d) Waiver of Signed Consent Document granted under 45 CFR 46.117 for the online survey

Your research meets the criteria for expedited review as defined in 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) under the following specific category:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Please note the Review History of this submission:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipt Date</th>
<th>Submission Type</th>
<th>Review Process</th>
<th>Review Date</th>
<th>Review Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04/06/2011</td>
<td>Response To Modifications</td>
<td>Expedited</td>
<td>04/08/2011</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please remember to:

→ Use your research protocol number (2010-0294) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.
→ Review and comply with all requirements on the enclosure.

"UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects"

Please note that the UIC IRB has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Please be aware that if the scope of work in the grant/project changes, the protocol must be amended and approved by the UIC IRB before the initiation of the change.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact OPRS at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 355-1609. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,
Rahab Gandy, B.S.
IRB Coordinator, IRB # 2
Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

Enclosures:

4. UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects
5. Informed Consent Document:
   (a) Subject Information Sheet; Version 2; 04/12/2010
6. Recruiting Material:
   (a) Internet Advertisement; Version 1

cc: Creasie Finney Hairston, Jane Addams School of Social Work, M/C 309
    M. Patricia O'Brien, Jane Addams School of Social Work, M/C 309
APPENDIX B

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letter of Support
March 1, 2010
This is a letter in support of a research project that will review the attitudes of School Social Workers in the area of LGBT students and affirmative social work practice by School Social Workers within school settings. Milka Ramirez has outlined her research proposal in detail and the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) is prepare to fully support her in this research endeavor.

SSWAA will post Milka’s survey in our weekly electronic newsletter, the e-bell, which is sent to our members. This post can be a regular feature for up to 4 weeks. The SSWAA newsletter editor will encourage members to complete the survey and transmit their raw data to Milka for her analysis. At some point in the future, SSWAA would welcome a conference workshop proposal from her that if accepted, would be offered at our Annual Conference.

We have been very impressed with the organization and follow through we have seen thus far from Ms. Ramirez and look forward to her paper upon the completion of her study.

Sincerely,

Frederick Streeck MSW ACSW
Executive Director, SSWAA
contact @sswaa.org
APPENDIX B: (continued)

October 18, 2010

Re: Research Proposal, Milka Ramirez

This letter is to support the research project of Ms. Ramirez as outlined in her research proposal. The proposal includes examining the attitudes of school social workers practicing in schools and looks at the area of LGBT students and affirmative social work. The American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW) is pleased to support this work.

ACSSW will promote and post Ms. Ramirez's survey in our electronic newsletter, School Social Work Now, which is sent to our members. Members will be encouraged to participate in the survey to help ensure that Ms. Ramirez has sufficient raw data to analyze and from which to draw conclusions.

Additionally, we would welcome a proposal for our annual School Social Work Research Summit to be held in late June 2011 in Chicago. Since this Summit is about bringing practice and research together, to better integrate it for many reasons, her project would fit nicely into the program in whatever stage of activity it is at that point.

With permission, we would be honored to post her study on our website www.acssw.org when it is completed as another way to disseminate the work.

Yours truly,

Judith Kullas Shine, MSW, LCSW
President
262.930.7185
www.schoolsocialworkNOW.org
APPENDIX C

SUBJECT INFORMATION SHEET
University of Illinois at Chicago
Subject Information Sheet

“An Examination of Homophobia and Social Work Practice
Among a Sample of School Social Workers”

I write today to support the dissertation research by Milka Ramirez, MSW at the
University of Illinois at Chicago, Jane Addams College of Social Work. The study is being
conducted in collaboration with the School Social Workers of America Association. By
participating in the study you will help your colleague fulfill part of the requirements needed to
complete her doctoral studies. Most importantly, your participation will contribute to the
valuable understanding of school social work practice with sexual minority populations. Thank
you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Paula Allen-Meares, M.S.W.
Chancellor
University of Illinois at Chicago

Why am I being asked?

Dear Colleague:

My name is Milka Ramirez as a fellow school social worker, I am asking for your
assistance. By taking approximately thirty minutes of your time to complete the web based
survey at http:// www. ______ you will be helping me fulfill part of my doctoral work at the
University Of Illinois at Chicago, Jane Addams College Of Social Work. In order to participate
in this study you must (1) be working as a school social worker in a school setting and (2) have
been working as a school social worker in a school setting of one year or more. Please read this
subject information sheet, prior to completing the study and print a copy for your personal
records.

Why is this research being conducted?

This study focuses on the beliefs of school social workers about lesbian, gay, bisexual,
transgender populations (LGBT) and practice. It is hoped that the information gathered in this
study will help describe school social workers views and practice behavior with this population.
A very high response rate will more accurately identify the different views of school social
workers across various states and lend value to this study. Please understand that your
participation is completely voluntary and that your answers are completely anonymous. No
questionnaire can be linked to any specific respondent and you may skip any questions that you
feel uncomfortable answering.

(Subject Information Sheet version#1: 03/17/2010)
APPENDIX C: (continued)

What are the risks and/or benefits involved?

Although there are no immediate direct benefits to you in completing this questionnaire, there are potential indirect benefits in helping contribute to the knowledge of social work practice and research. For instance, results from this study may be published in journal articles or presented at the School Social Workers of American Association’s national conference. There is minimal risk associated with participation in the study. For instance you may experience some emotional distress associated with answering some of the questions in the survey. If this occurs, please skip any questions that may cause you emotional distress. If you need further assistance to address your distress, you may contact the National Association for Social Workers registry of clinical social workers at http://www.socialworkers.org/resources/default.asp or call 202-408-8600.

What procedures are involved?

Please take time to participate in this study. By clicking on the link at http://www_______ you are agreeing to participate in the anonymous study. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

If you have any questions feel free to contact me at the address or e-mail listed below. You may also contact the chairperson of my dissertation committee, Patricia O’Brien, PhD, listed below. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participants you may call the Office of Protection of Research Subjects at 312-996-1711. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Respectfully,

Milka Ramírez, MSW
Principal Investigator
University of Illinois Chicago
Jane Addams College of Social Work
1040 W. Harrison
Chicago IL. 60607-7106
773-909-4326
mramir24@uic.edu

Patricia O’Brien, PhD, MSW
Chair, Doctoral Committee
University of Illinois Chicago
Jane Addams College of Social Work
1040 W. Harrison
Chicago IL. 60607-7106
312-996-2203
pob@uic.edu

(Subject Information Sheet version#1: 03/17/2010)
APPENDIX D

ON-LINE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO
JANE ADDAMS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I . YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL: In this study it is important to gather as much information about you and your school. Please note that all the information provided is completely anonymous and cannot be traced back to any individual responses. A completed questionnaire is important for this study, however you may skip any questions that you don’t want to answer.

1. Gender: Male ____ Female _____ Transgender ____
2. Age: ______ (in years)
3. Sexual Orientation:
   Heterosexual ___ Gay Male __ Lesbian __ Bisexual __
   With what race/ethnicity do you most closely identify yourself?
   a. African American/Black _____  b. Hispanic/Latino/a _____
   c. Native American Indian _____  d. Asian American _____
   e. White _______  f. Other _______
4. Level of educational attainment?
   Bachelor Degree ________________ (major)
   Master Degree ________________ (concentration)
   Other: ____________________ (please explain)
5. Years of School Social Work Experience: ___(years employed as a school social worker)
6. What grade level do you serve? Please check all that apply
   Elementary school  (K-5) ___
   Middle School  (6-8) ___
   High School  (9-12) ___
7. What geographic area is served by your school?
   Urban _____ Suburban ___ Rural ___
8. What state do you serve? __________________
APPENDIX D: (continued)

PART II. SCHOOL CLIMATE: Studies indicate that the perception of the climate of a school has an important impact on those who work and study in the school. In order to get a better understanding of your perception of the climate of your school with regards to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) individuals, please answer the following questions, based on your perception of the school.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not very supportive and 5 being very supportive, please rank your perception of school administration’s supportiveness of social workers providing services to LGBT students. Please indicate which response best describes how you perceive your school.
   _1 (not supportive) _ 2(somewhat supportive)_ 3(neutral)_4(supportive)_5 (very supportive)

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all safe and 5 being very safe, how safe do you perceive your school to be for LGBT faculty and staff to be open about their sexual orientation? Please indicate which response best describes how you perceive your school safety.
   ___1 (not safe at all) ___2 (somewhat safe) ___3 (neutral) ___4 (safe) ___5 (very safe)

3. On a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being frequently and 4 being never, please rank “how often you hear the expression “that’s so gay” used in a derogatory or negative way in your school?”
   ___1 (frequently/daily) ___2 (sometimes/weekly) ___3 (rarely/monthly) ___4 (never)

4. On a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being frequently and 4 being never, please rank “how often do you hear other remarks such as “faggot” or “dyke”? ”
   ___1 (frequently/daily) ___2 (sometimes/weekly) ___3 (rarely/monthly) ___4 (never)

5. Does your school have a safe school policy that provides protection for any staff and/or faculty members from incidents of homophobia?
   _____ Yes  _____ No  _____ Don’t know

6. Does your school have a Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) or another type of club/organization that addresses homophobia to create a positive school climate for LGBT individuals?
   _____ Yes  _____ No  _____ Don’t know

7. If not, has anyone tried to form a GSA or other type of club/organization in your school in order to create a positive school climate for LGBT individuals?
   _____ Yes  _____ No  _____ Don’t know

8. If you answered yes to either question 6 or 7, did those who tried to start the club/organization get any help from school administration? Please describe.
APPENDIX D: (continued)

9. If you answered yes to question 6 or 7, did those who tried to start the club/organization face any obstacles trying to start the club? Please describe.

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

PART III. EXPERIENCE WITH LGBT STUDENTS: In this study it is important to understand your experience with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) students. To the best of your knowledge, in your capacity as a school social worker please answer the questions listed below.

1. In your capacity as a school social worker, how many students would you say that you have worked with? ________
2. In your capacity as a school social worker, how many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students would you say that you have worked with? ________
3. In your capacity as a school social worker, how many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students would you say are enrolled in your school? ________
4. How many non-lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students have you worked with? ________

PART IV. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS: Please indicate, by a check, which religious denomination/group, if any, you belong to

1. ___ I do not belong to any religious denomination/group
2. ___ Protestant Please indicate specific denomination ________
3. ___ Catholic
4. ___ Jewish Please indicate specific branch ________
5. ___ Muslim
6. ___ Other Please specify ____________________
7. During the week, how often do you attend religious services ________

Please answer the following questions in regard to your own religious beliefs: Indicate the level of agreement or disagreement for each question.

1. My faith involves all of my life
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)

2. One should seek God’s guidance when making every important decision
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)
APPENDIX D: (continued)

3. In my life I experience the presence of the Divine.
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)

4. My faith sometimes restricts my actions.
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)

5. Nothing is as important to me as serving God as best I know how.
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)

6. I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)

7. My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)

8. It doesn’t matter so much what I believe as long as I lead a moral life.
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)

9. Although I am a religious person, I refuse to let religious considerations influence my everyday affairs.
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)

10. Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many more important things in life.
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)

11. My religious beliefs prevent me from embracing gay affirmative practice
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)

12. My religious beliefs prevent me from providing gay affirmative practice
1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)
APPENDIX D: (continued)

PART V. OPINIONS & PRACTICE CONCERNING LGBT POPULATIONS: For this study it is very important to understand the candid views of school social workers regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender populations and their practice behavior in clinical settings with these clients. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer every question as honestly as possible. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement about treatment with gay and lesbian clients.

1. In their practice with gay/lesbian clients, practitioners should support the diverse makeup of their families.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

2. Practitioners should verbalize respect for the lifestyles of gay/lesbian clients.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

3. Practitioners should make an effort to learn about diversity within the gay/lesbian community.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

4. Practitioners should be knowledgeable about gay/lesbian resources.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

5. Practitioners should educate themselves about gay/lesbian lifestyles.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

6. Practitioners should help gay/lesbian clients develop positive identities as gay/lesbian individuals.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

7. Practitioners should challenge misinformation about gay/lesbian clients.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

8. Practitioners should use professional development opportunities to improve their practice with gay/lesbian clients.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

9. Practitioners should encourage gay/lesbian clients to create networks that support them as gay/lesbian individuals.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

10. Practitioners should be knowledgeable about issues unique to gay/lesbian couples.
    1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)
APPENDIX D: (continued)

11. Practitioners should acquire knowledge necessary for effective practice with gay/lesbian clients.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

12. Practitioners should work to develop skills necessary for effective practice with gay/lesbian clients.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

13. Practitioners should work to develop attitudes necessary for effective practice with gay/lesbian clients.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

14. Practitioners should help clients reduce shame about homosexual feelings.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

15. Discrimination creates problems that gay/lesbian clients may need to address in treatment.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

16. I help clients reduce shame about homosexual feelings.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

17. I help gay/lesbian clients address problems created by societal prejudice.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

18. I inform clients about gay affirmative resources in the community.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

19. I acknowledge to clients the impact of living in a homophobic society.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

20. I respond to a client’s sexual orientation when it is relevant to treatment.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

21. I help gay/lesbian clients overcome religious oppression they have experienced based on their sexual orientation.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

22. I provide interventions that facilitate the safety of gay/lesbian clients.
1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)
APPENDIX D: (continued)

23. I verbalize that a gay/lesbian orientation is as healthy as a heterosexual orientation.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

24. I demonstrate comfort about gay/lesbian issues to gay/lesbian clients.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

25. I help clients identify their internalized homophobia.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

26. I educate myself about gay/lesbian concerns.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

27. I am open-minded when tailoring treatment for gay/lesbian clients.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

28. I create a climate that allows for voluntary self-identification by gay/lesbian clients.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

29. I discuss sexual orientation in a non-threatening manner with clients.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

30. I facilitate appropriate expression of anger by gay/lesbian clients about oppression they have experienced.
   1 (Strongly agree) 2 (Agree) 3 (Neither agree nor disagree) 4 (Disagree) 5 (Strongly disagree)

   a. Please list and describe any social work services that you provide to specifically meet the unique needs of LGBT students (e.g. groups, resources, clubs etc.)

PART VI. EDUCATION AND TRAINING WITH LGBT POPULATIONS: Please think about and estimate, to the best of your ability, the number of hours of education or training, if any that you have received about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) populations. If you have had no training of specific educational instruction about LGBT populations, please respond with “0.”

   ___1. Semester hours in classroom instruction in MSW education program that specifically focused on LGBT populations.
   ___2. percentage of time in MSW education program that focused on LGBT populations.
   ___3. Semester hours in classroom instruction in Bachelor education program that specifically focused on LGBT populations.
   ___4. percentage of time in Bachelor education program that focused on LGBT populations.
APPENDIX D: (continued)

___5. Clock hours of professional development or job related training that specifically focused on LGBT individuals in the past five years.

___6. Clock hours of supervision or case consultation that focused on LGBT individuals in the past five years.

___7. Clock hours of self-directed learning (e.g. reading, journal articles, discussion groups or other learning activities) that focused on LGBT individuals in the past five years.

8. Please indicate your answer by checking the most appropriate response
   I feel prepared to provide social work services to LGBT populations?
   1 (strongly disagree) 2 (moderately disagree) 3 (moderately agree) 4 (strongly agree)

PART VII. PERSONAL CONTACT: Please estimate the type and number of contacts that you have with LGBT individuals.

1. In your family, friend, work circle, how many LGBT individuals do you know? ___
2. Based on the number of LGBT individual(s) that you know in your family, friend, work circle, which one of these relationships do you consider the “closest” to you? Please check one.
   ___Friend    ___Co-Worker    ___ Family Member    ___ None ___
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “very close” and 5 being “not close at all” please rate the level of closeness that you have to the person that you identified in question number two.
   1 (very close) 2 (somewhat close) 3 (neutral) 4 (close) 5 (not close at all)
**APPENDIX E**

**CRONBACH’S ALPHA FOR SCHOOL CLIMATE MEASURE**

School Climate Measure: Item-Analysis from SPSS Output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Means</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Max/Min</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.606</td>
<td>1.183</td>
<td>2.517</td>
<td>1.333</td>
<td>2.127</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item Variances</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>.627</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>4.117</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Item</td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.350</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlations</td>
<td>.571</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>.931</td>
<td>.574</td>
<td>2.608</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Total Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX F

**SPEARMAN’S RHO CORRELATION MATRIX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Homophobia</th>
<th>Gay Affirmative Practice</th>
<th>School Climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.80***</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Affirmative</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p. <.01 (2-tail)***
NAME: Milka Ramirez


2010 Graduate Concentration in Gender and Women’s Studies, Gender and Women’s Study Program, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago Illinois

2006 Post MSW, School Social Work Certificate, Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois

2004 Master of Social Work, Practice Concentration, Chicago State University, Chicago Illinois

1992 Bachelor of Science, Psychology, Mundelein College, Chicago, Illinois

TEACHING: Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago Illinois
Assistant Professor, Social Work Program, Practice I, Research I 2011-Present

Chicago State University, Chicago Illinois

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Board President & Co-founder of En Las Tablas Performing Arts Community Center, Chicago Illinois, 2006 to present

Member of the Cultural Competency & Diversity Committee for the Illinois NASW Chicago Chapter, 2000-Present

Chicago Board Representative for the Illinois NSSW, Chicago Chapter, 2006-2008

Volunteered as program committee & Chair for the International Latino/Hispanics Mental Health Conference, Chicago Illinois, 2004-2006
APPENDIX D: (continued)

VITA (continued)

EXPERIENCE:
- School Social Worker, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, IL., 2006-Present
- Program Manager, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago IL., 2004 to 2006
- Vocational Coordinator, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, IL., 2000 to 2004
- Emergency Room Medical Social Worker, Intern, Stroger Hospital of Cook County, Chicago IL., 2003 to 2004
- Clinical Therapists, Intern, Resurrection Behavioral Health, Chicago IL., 2002 to 2003

PUBLICATION:

PRESENTATIONS:
- Ramirez, M. “An Examination of Homophobia and Social Work Practice Among a Sample of School Social Workers” 12 annual School Social Work Association of America Conference. South Carolina, March 31

LICENSE:
- State of Illinois, Type 73, School Social Work Certificate, 2006

AWARDS AND FUNDING:
- Kellogg Scholarship recipient, 2009
- Illinois General Assembly Community Service Scholarship recipient, 2006

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP:
- Member of the School Social Work Association of America
- Member of the American Council for School Social Work
- Member of the Illinois National Association of Social Workers