FOSTERING LGBTQ ADVOCACY
IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY AS ADULT EDUCATION:
SHAPING ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, AND PERCEIVED CONTROL

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by
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ABSTRACT

School psychologists are adult learners. They support children and youth within the K-12 system who are facing academic, emotional, behavioral, or systematic barriers to education. Among the most vulnerable are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth, and school psychologists need to learn to be LGBTQ competent. The purpose of this mixed method research study was twofold: a) to examine the level of LGBTQ competency and LGBTQ social advocacy work of practicing school psychologists; and b) to explore how active social justice advocates for LGBTQ K-12 students perceive they acquired their skills, knowledge and expertise. The theoretical framework of the study was grounded in both critical perspectives of adult education, and the Theory of Planned Behavior. It is also informed by aspects of queer theory and gay affirmative practice.

An LGBTQ Affirmative Practice and Intent Scale was developed based on the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (Crisp, 2006) and an application of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Two hundred eleven school psychologists, school psychology educators, and retired school psychologists completed the survey. The survey results indicate the respondents overall had affirming beliefs, however there was a wide range in actual LGBTQ advocacy work. The quantitative data also revealed significant differences in scores relative to sexual orientation and current religious/spiritual affiliations. Of those respondents, volunteers were solicited to participate in an in-depth interview, whose survey scores were within the top 15th percentile. The qualitative findings indicate personal characteristics, such as experience as an educator, having LGBTQ friends, or the influence of religion or spirituality may shape attitudes toward LGBTQ social justice advocacy. The findings also indicate the context, such as environmental barriers, job diversity, and cognizance of marginalization may shape normative beliefs. Lastly,
the current findings indicate strategies of advocacy, such as taking action, drawing on LGBTQ resources and continuing to seek out LGBTQ knowledge to close information gaps can shape perceived behavioral control. As a result of the research, the Theory of Planned Behavior, critical perspectives of adult education and LGBTQ affirmative practice are merged to create a proposed integrated model for fostering LGBTQ social justice advocacy in school psychologists.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a foundation of a mixed methods research study that examines knowledge, skills and perceptions of school psychologists, within the K-12 system, on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) competency and social justice advocacy. This chapter includes a background to the issue, a purpose statement, research questions, and theoretical frameworks that guide this research. Additionally, this chapter will provide an overview of the mixed methods research methodology, discuss the significance of this research, discuss the limitations, strengths and assumptions, and provide definitions for terms used in the research.

Background

Many American adults seek mental health support at some point in their lifetime as mental health services continue to be a growing need in the United States. Some do so because of a mental illness, while others do so to seek support at a time of crisis or for personal growth related to identity development issues, perhaps in order to prevent a mental illness. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) (2007) provides powerful information on the status of mental illness in the United States. NAMI (2007) reports that one in four adults will experience mental illness in any given year. For children, the frequency is slightly higher. One in ten children live with a serious mental or emotional disorder. One half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begins by age 14. Still more alarming are the statistics relating to suicide. Suicide is the third-leading cause of death for people ages 10-24 years. More than 90 percent of those who die by suicide have a diagnosable mental disorder. Lastly, the impact of mental illness on youth within the K-12 education system cannot be ignored. Over 50 percent of students with a mental
disorder age 14 and older drop out of high school, which is the highest dropout rate of any disability group. These statistics from NAMI (2007) tell us mental health issues are a reality for a large portion of the adult and child population in the United States, and that we need to tend to mental health issues early, particularly to those who are most vulnerable.

Among the most vulnerable are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth. This vulnerability can be associated with negative societal forces such as being targeted for bullying, harassment, discrimination, unaccepting parents, negative stereotypes, marginalizing curriculum, marginalizing school policy, and pressure to conform to perceived societal norms (Dewitt, 2012). LGBTQ youth are two to three times more likely than their non-LGBTQ peers to have attempted suicide within the last twelve months (Russell & Joyner, 2001). In addition to social-emotional issues, LGBTQ youth are also more likely to have academic difficulties. The Educational Longitudinal Study (2005) also found that LGBTQ students are less likely to attend college, and have a lower overall grade point average. This research indicates that it is imperative for school psychologists, working with youth to have competence in LGBTQ issues.

Receiving quality treatment from qualified mental health professionals, including counselors, psychologists, social workers and therapists is key for those who have a mental illness, or who are seeking mental health support for whatever reason, including sexual identity issues. In order to provide quality treatment, mental health professionals must maintain their licensure or certification through continuing education. Mental health professionals are those who have completed both undergraduate and graduate studies within the fields of psychology, social work, or counseling. Each discipline requires specific amounts of continuing education to maintain licensure. As techniques evolve and research provides new perspectives, therapeutic
approaches for mental health treatment change. Thus, mental health workers, like most professionals must be lifelong adult learners, and participate in continuing education.

Mental health professionals work in many settings including in community service agencies, health care organizations, private practice, and in formal education systems. Some work primarily with adults, others with children and youth. School psychologists work with children and youth within the K-12 system who are facing barriers to education, which include academic, emotional, behavioral, and systemic obstacles. School psychologists are trained to diagnose, treat and support these students who are having difficulty within the K-12 system. They treat people of different cultural groups and sexual orientations, though they may or may not have much education or training in these areas.

**Gay Affirmative Practice**

Among mental health professionals outside of the K-12 system, gay affirmative practice is gaining support. The term “gay affirmative therapy” was first used in an article by Alan Malyon (1981) where he describes a psychodynamic model of affirmative psychotherapy for gay men. This model was expanded to include those who identify as lesbian and bisexual (Browning, 1987). While the expansion of the definition to include those who identify as lesbian and bisexual occurred, the name of the framework remained. Harrison (2000) asserts that the use of the term “gay” denotes “gay, lesbian and bisexual in an endeavor to write concisely, while respecting that these individual identities differ” (p. 37).

In February 2000, the American Psychological Association (APA) adopted *Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients*, which embraced Gay Affirmative Therapy (American Psychological Association, 2002). APA later adopted *The Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients* in February 2011, which
continued to embrace Gay Affirmative Therapy, but expanded original guidelines to provide assistance to psychologists in areas such as religion and spirituality, the differentiation of gender identity and sexual orientation, socioeconomic and workplace issues, and the use and dissemination of research on LGB issues (American Psychological Association, 2012a).

Crisp (2006b) developed an assessment instrument to measure the extent to which mental health practitioners engage in principles consistent with Gay Affirmative Practice. In this study, she found that while attitudes were important to affirmative practice, they are not sufficient to ensure affirmative practice with LGBTQ individuals. She found that education on knowledge, attitudes, and skills in practice are also extremely important to consider for future research.

Crisp and McCave (2007) then went to develop a Gay Affirmative Practice model for youth. This model focuses on affirming youth identity and empowers LGBTQ youth. It supports youth in self-identifying in whatever manner they feel is appropriate. The Gay Affirmative Practice model for youth also supports youth in identifying homophobic forces, which are present in their own lives and considers problems in the context of these homophobic forces. This model was developed to be applied in a variety of LGBTQ youth settings, including schools, residential facilities, and outpatient treatment centers.

The Gay Affirmative Therapy and Gay Affirmative Practice models were developed to work with those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. For the purposes of this research, these models are being expanded to also include those who identify as transgender or queer.

School psychologists participate in ongoing continuing education where learning disabilities, mental illness, community support, cultural and linguistic difference, behavior disorders, diagnostic criteria, and counseling are typical topics. In order to consider the extent to which school psychologists are prepared to deal with LGBTQ issues, in the following discussion
I consider continuing education in general for school psychologists, the issue of their competence in dealing with LGBTQ issues, and how they can become better advocates for their LGBTQ youth.

**Continuing Education for School Psychologists**

Certified school psychologists have approximately 30 credit hours of formal education plus a year internship after earning their master’s degree to obtain certification. Once they receive their certification, each state mandates the number of hours of continuing education needed to maintain their certification.

In 1981, Hynd, Pielstick, and Schakel noted that content standards for continuing education were absent and efforts needed to be made to build and establish continuing education programs for school psychologists through the American Psychological Association (APA) or the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). NASP responded in 1984 by publishing *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice* (Ysseldyke, Reynolds, & Weinberg, 1984). While this was a start to standardize continuing education in school psychology, there were many areas, which needed improvement.

Reschly and Grimes (1991) reported significant gains in school psychologist competencies when training modules were developed based on specific skills, which were necessary in the field of school psychology. These continuing education training modules were created through collaboration between university professors and representatives from the respective state department of education. Also in 1991, Cramer and Epps (1991) found that there were still several areas lacking in continuing education for school psychologists. These areas include a lack of incorporating cultural and ethnic minority issues into curricula, cross discipline collaboration, and interagency collaboration.
In 1997, NASP published *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice II*, to address the changing context in schools due to political, economic, and social forces (Ysseldyke, Dawson, Lehr, Reschly, Reynolds, & Telzrow, 1997). At that time, it was mandated that school psychologists needed to complete a minimum of 75 continuing education hours every three years to maintain national certification as a school psychologist. In this publication, NASP established 10 interrelated domains of training and practice. One of these domains addressed diversity. The publication stated, “school psychologists must be aware of, appreciate, and work with individuals and groups with a variety of strengths and needs from a variety of racial, cultural, ethnic, experiential, and linguistic backgrounds” (Ysseldyke et al., 1997, p. 15).

Subsequently, in 2006, NASP published *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice III* (Ysseldyke, Burns, Dawson, Kelley, Morrison, Ortiz, Rosenfield, & Telzrow, 2006). In this document, the domains of training were reduced to eight slightly broader categories. These “domains of competencies are not seen as individually independent domains to be taught or practiced, but as an integrated set of competencies that will require life-long learning” (Ysseldyke et al., 2006, p. 2).

This third edition also established desired outcomes relating to building the capacities of both systems and individual school psychologist’s skill levels. Again, one of these domains relates to diversity. It states, “school psychologists must be able to recognize when issues of diversity affect the manner and nature of interactions with other people and organizations and must have the ability to modify or adapt their practices in response to those being served” (Ysseldyke et al., 2006, p. 31). While it addresses diversity, it fails to define specific areas of training for school psychologists.
LGBTQ Competence and School Psychologists

Mental health counselors, psychologists and therapists have varied amounts of LGBTQ specific training either during their coursework or once they begin their practice. This may indicate extreme variability in the competency of mental health professionals to be a true support for members of the LGBTQ community. When examining the higher education involved with obtaining licensure and certification, there is no standardization among programs to teach students about the unique needs of the LGBTQ community, or those individuals who identify as LGBTQ.

In a study of gay, lesbian and bisexual training competencies in American Psychological Association accredited graduate programs, Sherry and Whilde (2005) found that only 67.6% of psychology graduate programs require a multicultural course. Of that 67.6%, only 71% of those courses covered gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues. It is therefore clear that mental health professionals’ level of LGBTQ awareness cannot be guaranteed through their graduate programs. While this study has not been replicated, recent studies indicate the continued disconnect between higher education preparation and coursework related to LGBTQ issues (McCabe & Rubinson, 2008; Rogers & O’Bryon, 2008).

Once they are in the field and as noted above, mental health professionals are required to attend ongoing professional development to maintain their licensure or certification. The type of professional development, as a form of adult education, is generally left to his or her own discretion; they may or may not choose continuing education related to LGBTQ concerns.

School Psychology and LGBTQ Competence

School psychologists are expected to be advocates for all students in the K-12 system. Traditionally, the K-12 system has had some difficulty supporting youth who identify as
LGBTQ, for a variety of reasons, including homophobia. Simultaneously, same-sex attracted youth are more likely to report concerns about their sexual orientation, more likely to report drinking alone, score significantly higher on a hostility subscale and report feelings of loneliness (Rivers & Noret, 2008), and as noted earlier they are two to three times more likely than their non-LGBTQ peers to have attempted suicide in the last twelve months (Russell & Joyner, 2001).

School psychologists may or may not be able to competently deal with LGBTQ youth. To further define LGBTQ competence, it is important to consider the fact that such knowledge exists on a continuum with tacit LGBTQ knowledge on one end and LGBTQ social justice advocacy on the other end with gradients of LGBTQ competency in between. This calls to question what school psychologists know about providing Gay Affirmative Practice, which would indicate to students who identify as LGBTQ that they are welcoming and affirming and a safe support.

Without knowledge of providing gay affirmative practice, school psychologists are unable to effectively promote social justice advocacy for LGBTQ youth in schools. The Theory of Planned Behavior posits that to demonstrate a behavior, such as social justice advocacy, one must not only have knowledge on LGBTQ concerns, but they must also believe that LGBTQ youth are marginalized, and finally believe that it is their role to intervene on behalf of LGBTQ youth. Therefore, the first step for school psychologists to become social justice advocates for LGBTQ youth is LGBTQ knowledge.

As it stands now, we know little about their competence in dealing with LGBTQ issues. The structure and guidance around LGBTQ competence for school psychologists is not any more clearly defined than other mental health professional higher education programs, such as clinical psychology, social psychology and counseling psychology. The American Psychological
Association has suggested multicultural education guidelines in place for graduate preparation in these professions, which does not specifically include LGBTQ topics (American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation, 2009). Further, it is important to distinguish general psychology preparation programs from school psychology graduate programs.

School Psychology programs fall under the supervision of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). There is currently no standardization among graduate programs teaching LGBTQ literacy in school psychology certification programs. The NASP (2010b) Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists states the following in reference to standards for diversity in development and learning, which mentions gender identity and sexual orientation:

Psychological and educational principles and research related to diversity factors for children, families, and schools, including factors related to culture, context, and individual and role differences (e.g., age, gender or gender identity, cognitive capabilities, social–emotional skills, developmental level, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual and gender orientation, disability, chronic illness, language, socioeconomic status) (p.15).

Because the NASP standard is vague, higher education institutions training school psychologists have great latitude in how school psychology training programs are designed around the topic of LGBTQ competency. Currently only two higher education institutions, within the United States, purport to focus on social justice advocacy. Of these two, only one of these higher education institutions actively researches and promotes LGBTQ social justice advocacy for their school psychology students.
Therefore, ongoing formal education pertaining to LGBTQ competency for school psychologists generally occurs through their own experience or in continuing education, unless specific university preparation programs choose to add a component to their curriculum. While there are mandates determining a general number of hours of continuing education, neither the K-12 system nor NASP specify the type or scope of continuing education that school psychologists must receive in order to maintain a valid license or certificate. It is very feasible that a school psychologist may receive little, if any, formal education relating to LGBTQ topics throughout his/her career.

It is difficult under the current structures that have been created for the formal education of school psychologists to act on behalf of LGBTQ youth, because their LGBTQ knowledge base is so potentially limited. It is therefore important to examine how adult education can support the process in fostering social justice advocacy for school psychologists with LGBTQ youth.

**School Psychologists, Social Advocacy, and Adult Education**

School psychologists work with students, families, teachers, school administrators and community agencies to identify and resolve academic barriers in the K-12 school system; in that sense they are acting as social advocates for their clients/students. Students with the most barriers tend to come from marginalized groups, such as racial, ethnic and sexual minority groups, students living at or below poverty level, homeless students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities. By the nature of the job, school psychologists act as advocates for students in need.

Traditionally, school psychologists have supported students on an individual basis rather than looking at system failures to advocate for students at the system level. McCabe and
Rubinson (2008) found that despite a commitment to social justice within graduate education programs, school psychologists do not see themselves as change agents for existing norms and successful advocacy, though most do see themselves as social advocates for individuals.

While there has been a great deal been written on education and social justice in discussions in adult education, critical pedagogy and critical multiculturalism (Kaufmann, 2000; Brookfield, 2005; Newman, 2006; Heaney, 2009; Kucukaydin & Cranton, 2012), substantially less has been written on social justice within the field of school psychology. Recently, there has been more literature to encourage practicing school psychologists to become social change agents; however, there are no studies of effective ways to teach school psychologists to become social change agents (Gutter & Naumann, 2005), much less around LGBTQ issues.

From this standpoint, the field of school psychology has something to learn from the field of adult education, where there has been much discussion both about educating for social justice, and about LGBTQ issues. Hill (1995) discusses where adult education occurs that counters homophobia and promotes personal and collective opportunities for LGBTQ growth. Hill (1996) also discusses LGBTQ knowledge as fugitive knowledge since it is constructed outside of the control of mainstream culture. Grace and Hill (2004) discuss the formation and comprehension of queer knowledge in adult education. Misawa (2010b) discusses the adult education implications of homophobia and bullying. Chapman and Gedro (2009) advocate for the inclusion of LGBTQ topics in the workplace.

LGBTQ knowledge in the workplace is essential for all mental health professionals, but especially important for those who work with children. While these discussions are illuminating, they do little to provide structure in designing continuing education programs as related to LGBTQ competency, or how they can act as social justice advocates for their students and
clients. Further, this leads one to wonder how we design continuing education programs to facilitate and measure LGBTQ competency and promote social justice advocacy.

**Purpose and Research Questions**

As indicated earlier, the field of school psychology has difficulty defining and providing specific guidelines related to LGBTQ competency (Bensusan, 2011). This likely results in inadequate training for school psychologists to work with LGBTQ youth across a variety of categories, including counseling, advocating, assessing risk, and consulting with parents of LGBTQ youth, and to difficulty in knowing what school psychologists actually know about these issues. Given the lack of research studies directly related to this topic:

The purpose of this mixed method research is twofold: a) to first examine the level of LGBTQ competency and LGBTQ social justice advocacy work of practicing school psychologists, and b) secondly, to explore how active social justice advocates for LGBTQ K-12 students perceive they acquired their skills, knowledge and expertise.

**Research Questions**

1. What do school psychologists know about LGBTQ issues and how do they deal with it in their practice?

2. How does a school psychologist evolve from tacitly knowledgeable to LGBTQ competent to LGBTQ advocacy?

3. What skills, traits, or life experiences are instrumental in shaping school psychologists in becoming a social change agent for LGBTQ youth?

**Theoretical Framework**

The current study merges two frameworks to undergird the current mixed methods research. These two frameworks include: (1) critical perspectives on adult education, which
includes critical theory, critical pedagogy, critical multicultural education and aspects of queer theory, and (2) the Theory of Planned Behavior.

**Critical Perspectives of Adult Education**

Critical perspectives of adult education critiques previously defined social constructs, the unequal balance of power, and control of resources, which has resulted through the lens of gender, race, class, or sexual orientation. Critical theory posits that a dominant class holds the power in society through economic exploitation of the masses (Brookfield, 2005). Critical pedagogy is a philosophy that unites critical thinking with actual practice in order to eliminate the cultural and educational control of the dominant group, to have students apply critical thinking skills to the real world, and become agents for social change (Sadker, Sadker, & Zittleman, 2008).

Critical multiculturalism is a term that differentiates between types of multicultural education. Multicultural education involves educating learners on different cultures, and critical multicultural education challenges power relations. Critical multiculturalism challenges power relations based on social structures of race or culture, gender, class, etc, and on challenging the ‘isms’ that result from these power relations …” (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 244).

Critical multiculturalism emerged when Grant and Sleeter (1999) classified multiculturalism into five definitions. Three of these five approaches, single-group studies, “multicultural education,” and education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist are now known as critical multicultural approaches, (Tisdell, 2003, 2005). Single group studies concentrate on a single cultural group, with concentration on historical and cultural experiences. Multicultural education approach “examines power relations of multiple groups from a
comparative perspective” (Tisdell, 2003, p. 209). The social reconstructionist approach examines power relations but also emphasizes strategies for social change (Tisdell, 2003). For the purposes of this paper, the social reconstructionist definition will be used interchangeably with critical multiculturalism.

May and Sleeter (2010) suggest critical multiculturalism has several inherent assumptions. The first assumption is that unequal power relationships exist in society. Society relegates some to the margins. A second assumption is that education should actively challenge the “isms.” Educators and learners should challenge racism, sexism, ageism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, etc.

Thirdly, Critical multiculturalism assumes that culture and identity are multilayered, fluid, and complex. Culture and identity are never static. A fourth assumption is that culture and identity encompass multiple social categories. These social categories can be fluid as well. Culture and identity are continually being reconstructed through participation in social situations. A fifth assumption is that institutions often resist critical multicultural approaches. Many times this is out of fear of destabilizing the established structure. Lastly, critical multiculturalism largely focuses on theory rather than practice.

Critical multicultural education mostly focuses on oppressions related to race, ethnicity, and gender. Queer theory focuses on sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity. Queer theory involves examining and deconstructing heteronormativity as an influence and frame of reference (Jagose, 1996). Queer theory attempts to redefine what society considers to be normal, to eradicate the stigma so often associated with being labeled as abnormal. This is done by celebrating and embracing what society considers abnormal, by defiantly proclaiming power in
difference. Social stigma creates unbalanced power relations between groups of people. Similar to other forms of critical thought, the focus is largely on theory rather than practice.

**Theory of Planned Behavior**

The second theoretical framework used in this research is the Theory of Planned Behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior was first defined in 1991 by Icek Ajzen. In this theory, Ajzen posits a person’s behavior is driven by their behavioral intentions. The components of behavioral intention include (1) the person’s attitude toward the behavior, (2) the subjective norm about the performance of the behavior, and (3) the person’s perception of ease at which he/she can perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Originally, the theory was created to attempt to explain human behavior. Recently, this theory has been used as a theoretical base to increase social justice advocacy behavior in adults. Durantini, Albarracín, Mitchell, Earl, and Gillette (2006) used the Theory of Planned Behavior as a lens to examine the effectiveness of training interventionists for HIV prevention. Fox and Stallworth (2009) used this theory to assist with understanding the key variables needed in workplace bullying prevention programs.

McCabe and Rubinson (2008) examined the connection between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control and its impact on behavior intention in pre-service teachers, psychologists and counselors. For the purposes of this study, behavior intention was defined as the participant’s desire and ability to intervene on behalf of a youth who identifies as LGBTQ. The findings indicate that pre-service education is needed in the areas of LGBTQ harassment and ethical values/dilemmas in order to provide quality support to LGBTQ youth. The study also finds that there is a need for experiential learning components to teaching pre-service counselors to negotiate social justice issues.
Methodological Overview

Mixed methods research uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data to interpret meaning. The explanatory sequential design within mixed methods research begins with quantitative data collection. The researcher then uses the results of the quantitative data to formulate the qualitative portion of the research. Once both methods are complete, the researcher completes an overall interpretation.

The participation selection variant is used when “the researcher places priority on the second qualitative phase instead of the initial quantitative phase” (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 86). It is used when a researcher focuses on qualitatively examining a phenomenon, using initial quantitative results to select the best participants. Creswell and Clark (2011) identified three steps to this particular type of mixed methods research design.

Step One of the Current Study

In the first step, I used quantitative measures with licensed or certified school psychologists to understand their level of LGBTQ cultural competency, behavioral beliefs, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and intention to act as a social justice advocate for LGBTQ youth. The quantitative measures are in the form of an online survey. The survey is a combination of a modified Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (Crisp, 2006b) and a questionnaire based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

The Gay Affirmative Practice Scale assesses the cultural competency of mental health practitioners in working with clients who identify as a sexual minority. This scale requires modification, because in its current state, it only identifies gay men and lesbians, omitting those who identify as bisexual, transgender, or queer. Therefore, the scale is modified to be more inclusive.
In addition, a survey based on Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behavior is included. This theory asserts the connection between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control and its impact on behavior intention. For the purposes of this study, behavior intention is defined as the school psychologist’s desire and ability to intervene on behalf of an LGBTQ youth.

**Step Two of the Current Study**

In the second phase, I analyzed the results of the survey to determine which quantitative data require additional exploration with interviews. Certain participants are selected for the interview phase. Invitations to be interviewed are based on the individual survey results. Those participants whose scores indicate the highest level of LGBT competence and the strongest results indicating behavioral intention to advocate for LGBTQ social justice concerns were invited to participate in the interview process.

**Step Three of the Current Study**

In the final step of the current study, I interviewed willing participants using a semi-structured interview process. The interview questions were constructed based on the results of the survey, however certain components were explored regardless of the results of the surveys. Interviewees were asked (1) their longevity in the field of school psychology, (2) their positionality, (3) relevant history and stories related to LGBTQ competence, (4) relevant histories and stories relating to LGBTQ social justice advocacy (5) frequency of using either advocacy skills or LGBTQ knowledge in the regular course of their job, and (6) how and where they obtained their advocacy skills and LGBTQ awareness.

The interviews were transcribed and provided back to the participants for member checks. The interview data was analyzed with coding to determine themes. All data (both
quantitative and qualitative) was analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions to determine how internships and continuing education programs can better foster social justice advocacy for LGBTQ youth in school psychologists.

**Significance**

A closer examination of how social justice advocacy skills are acquired and maintained for school psychologists is both necessary and significant on many levels. This study has important implications for the world, adult education, school psychology, as well as personal significance.

Social justice advocacy, in general has great importance to a society that maintains itself through hegemonic practices, which marginalizes some, and privileges others. Advocating for those who are marginalized benefits everyone because it enable voices that are relegated to silence to be heard, creating a society poised to benefit all. It is also important to meet the needs of all youth, not just the ones in the center. The students, who are at the greatest risk of being bullied, should have the support of qualified, knowledgeable, and competent school psychologists.

This study is important because it examines how as school psychologists we can support youth who identify as LGBTQ. Robinson and Espelage (2011) found that youth who identify as LGBTQ are at greater risk of suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, and unexcused absences from schools. Until our LGBTQ youth stop, either committing suicide or considering suicide as a viable alternative at such alarming rates, we are not meeting their needs adequately.

This study is also important to the theory and practice of adult education. Critical multicultural education acknowledges LGBTQ concerns as a component. In critical multicultural education, LGBTQ concerns often become marginalized to other aspects of culture
likely due to heteronormative practices, which continue unquestioned. This study brings LGBTQ concerns to the forefront of the discussion of critical multicultural education. It also provides practical strategies to use where critical multicultural education can sometimes rely more heavily on theory than on practice. By combining a quantitative component with the stories of adult educators, it open a new lens that may allow us to understand how social justice advocacy may be understood and measured. Adding the quantitative measure may allow other fields, which rely heavily on positivism to begin to embrace how teaching social justice advocacy skills can come to fruition in fields such as psychology and K-12 education, which lean on numbers for justification.

This research also has significant implications for the Theory of Planned Behavior. Recently, the Theory of Planned Behavior has been used to predict social justice advocacy behavior. It has not been used to measure the potential of social justice advocacy in practicing school psychologists. McCabe and Rubinson (2008) used the Theory of Planned Behavior to measure social justice advocacy potential in school psychology graduate students. This expands their research to practicing school psychologists, while adding the qualitative component of hearing the untold stories.

The current research also expands Gay Affirmative Practice by including those who identify as transgender or queer. Previously, Gay Affirmative Practice included only those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. This expansion of definition allows for the inclusion of all who are considered sexual minorities, which eliminates the marginalization of certain identities, which was a previous difficulty with Gay Affirmative Practice.

This study is significant to me personally in several ways. As someone who identifies as a sexual minority, as well as a racial minority, I feel it would be beneficial for all to learn how to
teach K-12 educators to support our youth who identify as a sexual minority. Also, as a practicing school psychologist, I would like to see more in my field recognize injustices, and advocate for our LGBTQ youth in proactive, and supportive ways, instead of being unsure and reticent.

It is also personally significant to hear the stories of those who are current leaders in the field of school psychology who advocate for LGBTQ youth. Hearing empowering stories often allows us to reflect on our own experiences and provide connections, where there were previously none. Also hearing other’s stories allows us to grow, learn, and critically reflect on our own practice. Hearing these stories will provide greater understanding and likely change my perspective. Personal growth is always an objective of mine as a professional and as a lifelong learner.

In general exploring the comonalities of experience, education and background, will foster a better understanding on how LGBTQ competency and advocacy develops in mental health professionals. With a better understanding of how these skills and knowledge develop in school psychologists, we can intentionally create continuing and adult education programs to cultivate this knowledge and expertise to better serve a marginalized community, which is underserved in the K-12 system.

**Limitations and Strengths**

All research has potential strengths and limitations. The potential limitations for this study include:

1. Some participants may not be willing to identify their own positionality due to the conservative climate in K-12 education and NASP.
2. School psychologists may overestimate their knowledge base related to LGBTQ concerns because they have not been formally educated on these concerns, making them unaware of potential knowledge, discrimination, hegemony, marginalization, and their own complicity in it.

3. The subject of LGBTQ awareness may make potential participants uncomfortable, thus unwilling to participate in the survey. This may reduce the sample size or inadvertently recruit participants who are either comfortable with the subject or active in promoting LGBTQ awareness.

4. The field of school psychology is a largely homogeneous group consisting mainly of white females. It may be difficult to recruit participants who identify as racial or ethnic minorities. Curtis, Lopez, Batsche, and Smith (2006) reported 92.55% of school psychologists from NASP identified themselves as “White/Caucasian,” 2.99% as “Hispanic/Latino,” 1.94% as “Black/African American,” 0.94% as “Asian American/Pacific Islander,” and 0.82% as “American Indian/Alaskan Native.”

5. Because I identify as a sexual minority, my own positionality may have an impact on participant’s responses. My positionality may also cause me to make assumptions of shared understandings or lived experiences, which could be harmful in data interpretation (Bettinger, 2010).

While there are potential limitations with this study, there are also considerable strengths. One of these strengths is that this study will add to the body of adult education research. This study will add the voices of adult educators who teach K-12 educators on LGBTQ concerns. These participants are LGBTQ social justice advocates within the K-12 system, a group to date who has been largely unheard in the adult education literature within the United States.
This study will provide both quantitative and qualitative data appealing to a larger set of researchers. The field of psychology tends to be positivist, thus seeking confirmation from quantitative data collection. Additionally, behavioral science and psychology specifically has recently started to see an increase in the acceptance and use of mixed methods research (Lopez-Fernandez & Molina-Azorin, 2011).

The field of K-12 education also tends to focus on quantitative based data collection with the No Child Left Behind initiatives, exit exams, data based decision-making, and standards-based learning. Adult education research tends to rely on a more qualitative or mixed methods data collection approach. Because this study is interdisciplinary, the methodology should appeal to all involved disciplines.

Another strength for this study is its potential to strengthen the connection between theory and practice. By examining the journey of adult educators, who provide LGBTQ awareness training, through the lenses of Gay Affirmative Practice and TPB, we can use these theories to create adult education programming to foster social justice advocacy for LGBTQ youth. To date this connection has not been established.

This study also adds depth to existing theories of critical multicultural education and the Theory of Planned Behavior. In critical multicultural education, the focus is largely on challenging power relations based on social structures related to race, ethnicity, and gender. There is a smaller voice challenging power relations related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. The current study will assist in bringing the LGBTQ voice from the margins of this discussion.

The Theory of Planned Behavior has recently been used as a lens for social justice advocacy (Durantini, Albarracín, Mitchell, Earl, & Gillette, 2006; McCabe & Rubinson, 2008;
Fox & Stallworth, 2009). Pairing this discussion with adult education provides an avenue for the Theory of Planned Behavior to be used as a vehicle for promoting LGBTQ social justice advocacy.

**Assumptions**

As a researcher, it is important to examine and disclose the assumptions that I hold related to the research topic. These assumptions include:

1. Sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are not static. These traits and qualities also merge with other areas of identity such as race, ethnicity, age, cohort, socioeconomic status, ability, etc.

2. School psychologists are educated to support all students in the K-12 school system regardless of their individual traits or needs.

3. Those who identify as a sexual minority have both similar needs as others, but also have needs that are unique to their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

4. Providing LGBTQ knowledge to adult learners is important, but not sufficient to foster social justice advocacy in school psychologists.

5. Institutions typically resist discussions related to critical theory and advocacy approaches because of fear of destabilizing institutional power. Higher education, and K-12 education are institutions, which have been traditionally slow to adopt and integrate these approaches into their curricula. This education may be less resisted outside of the borders of these higher education institutions.

6. Social justice advocacy cannot be fostered without a lasting change on a person’s belief system to be congruent with the need for social change. In order to foster
social justice advocacy in individuals, there should also be corresponding changes in attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions of behavioral control.

7. Both individually and collectively, LGBTQ youth have experienced marginalization within the K-12 education system.

8. Formal education does not uniformly prepare school psychologists with the knowledge to fully support the unique needs of youth who identify as LGBTQ, or create an awareness to see how LGBTQ youth are marginalized within the current system.

9. Adult learning related to LGBTQ awareness typically occurs outside of formal education.

10. Oppression in society is harmful to all people. Oppressing children damages the fiber of society in the future.

**Definition of Terms**

It is essential to define the terms used in this research to facilitate a shared understanding of the background, significance, literature, results, and future implications. The important terms to define are listed below:

1. *Allies* are defined as “people who do not identify as LGBT students, but support this community by standing against the bullying and harassment LGBT youth face in school. Allies can be straight or cis gender identified youth and adults, or LGBT identified adults” (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, 2013, question 2).

2. *Critical multicultural education* teaches learners to challenge power relations based on social structures of race, culture, gender, class, or sexual orientation (May & Sleeter, 2010).
3. *Gay Affirmative Practice (GAP)* is expanded to refer to a philosophy and approach used when mental health professionals support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer identities as a positive and valid human experience. Previous definitions limited the definition only to include those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (Harrison, 2000).

4. *Gender expression* is how one represents/expresses their gender identity to others, which includes a combination of behavior, dress, hairstyles, voice, body characteristics external characteristics and behaviors associated with socially defined categories of masculine, feminine, or with variations combinations and sub categories (Out and Equal, 2011).

5. *Gender identity* is an “internal sense of being male, female, or something in between. Gender is considered a continuum and not strictly binary concept. Since gender identity is internal, one’s gender identity in not necessarily visible to others (Out and Equal, 2011, p. 1).

6. *Heteronormativity* is defined as the dominant unquestioned belief that heterosexual relationships are not only the empirical norm, but they are also superior to same-sex relationships (Brookfield, 2010a).

7. *Heterosexism* exists when institutional policies and interpersonal actions assume heterosexuality is normative and ignores other orientations. It is the belief that heterosexuality is superior to other orientations (Out and Equal, 2011).

8. *Homophobia* is the fear and intolerance of those who identify as LGBTQ and/or of same sex attraction or behavior in the self or others (Out and Equal, 2011).
9. *LGBTQ* is an inclusive way to identify those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. It is also important to note that when speaking of youth, it is possible due to sexual identity development that they have not yet fully identified with a label. In working with youth, sometimes “Q” refers to questioning. This study should include those youth who have not embraced a fully defined sexual identity.

10. *Mental health professional* is a person trained in the behavioral health field who assists people who are dealing with mental health concerns. Mental health professionals include psychologists, therapists, counselors, and social workers.

11. *School psychologists* are trained in both psychology and education to help children and youth to be successful academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They collaborate with teachers, administrators, parents, and other professionals to foster safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community for all students.

12. *Sexual minority* is someone who identifies as LGBTQ or as something other than heterosexual.

13. *Sexual orientation* is the internal experience that determines whether we are physically and emotionally attracted to men, to women, to both, or neither (Out and Equal, 2011).

14. *Social justice advocacy* through a school psychology lens means ensuring the protection of rights and opportunities for all K-12 students by actively evaluating and advocating for inclusive, nondiscriminatory practices and taking personal responsibility for fostering this commitment (Shriberg, Bonner, Sarr, Walker, Hyland & Chester, 2008).
15. *Social change agent* is one who uses social justice advocacy to promote the equal treatment of all.

16. *Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)* posits a person’s behavior is driven by their behavioral intentions. These behavioral intentions are formed by smaller components, which are identified in chapter 2.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research is twofold: a) to examine the level of LGBTQ competency and LGBTQ social advocacy work of practicing school psychologists, and b) secondly, to explore how active social justice advocates for LGBTQ K-12 students perceive they acquired their skills, knowledge and expertise. Congruent with the purpose of this study, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the pertinent literature related to this research. The chapter will begin with a discussion of the literature relating to critical perspectives of adult education, gay affirmative practice, and the Theory of Planned Behavior. Because this project is related not only to the world of adult education, it is also connected to the world of school psychology, and it is important to consider what school psychologists might be taught about LGBTQ issues or what they know about it; hence the next two sections relate to more specifically to the world of psychology. The first of this will explore Gay Affirmative Practice in psychology and the research that therapeutic practice that comes out of psychology, while the second one will be an overview of the empirical literature related to LGBTQ education for mental health professionals. The chapter closes with a discussion on the literature related to queer cultural work in adult education, because ideally school psychologists as adult learners will hopefully learn to become advocates for their LGBTQ youth.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the current study lies in the intersection of two important bodies of literature. Critical perspectives of adult education provide a lens to examine how school psychologists learn to be advocates for their LGBTQ students within the K-12 educational system. The critical perspectives of adult education include critical theory/critical
pedagogy, and critical multicultural education. Aspects of queer theory in the social theory literature as well as in adult education provides a lens for how individual mental health professionals might provide quality services, which are empowering and affirming to LGBTQ youth. The Theory of Planned Behavior provides a lens, which allows us to examine the components of social justice advocacy work, and how these components interact to encourage social justice advocacy behavior as it relates to LGBTQ youth within the K-12 system. Each of these theories will be discussed separately, followed by a discussion on how these theories intersect and merge to inform the current study.

**Critical Perspectives of Adult Education**

Adult education offers a critical lens, which is essential for the current study. The K-12 school system within the United States has an unfortunate history of providing quality education to those in the dominant culture, while marginalizing others, and school psychologists as adult learners need to navigate within this system to try to provide quality services for LGBTQ youth who are at a disadvantage within the current education system (The Educational Longitudinal Study, 2005) and in society (Russell & Joyner, 2001; Rivers & Noret, 2008). There are different critical perspectives of adult education discourses. Each perspective has a different emphasis. Most relevant to our discussion here are the discourses relating to critical theory and critical pedagogy, and critical multicultural education.

**Critical theory and critical pedagogy.** Critical theory and critical pedagogy informs much of the critical adult education and arises from the traditions of those who drew on the work of Karl Marx. Much of what is called critical theory arises from the Frankfurt School of Germany, which developed by scholars writing during and in the aftermath of Nazi Germany in order to challenge the processes of hegemony that allowed the tragedy of the holocaust to happen
There are several generations of critical theorists, though Habermas (1989) is one spokesperson for the expansion of critical theory with the critique of the public sphere, that benefits from excluding the voices of some and privileging the voices of the upper middle class and the elite. Since then, as Brookfield (2005) notes, a number of authors in the field of adult education have drawn on critical theory as a theoretical framework to discuss the problems with society’s tendency to marginalize some while benefiting those with power.

A related discourse, which focuses more specifically on education, is based on the critical pedagogy literature and those who draw on Brazilian adult educator, Paulo Freire (2000), who speaks of the role of education in freeing those in poverty from oppression based on his literacy work in Brazil and in other contexts. bell hooks (1994), drawing on and critiquing some of Freire’s work, speaks of classrooms as a source of constraint and of liberation, where teachers and learners should work together equally to improve the quality of education to benefit all. She speaks of engaged pedagogy as the intersection of race, gender, and class, and calls on educators to create learning environments, which engage students and educators to bring their whole presence into the classroom to benefit all.

Myles Horton, one of the founders of the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee was a prominent figure in social change and empowerment. Originally, the purpose of the Highlander school was to provide education outside of the formal education system for organizing workers. It was later instrumental in the civil rights movement. In *We Make the Road By Walking*, Myles Horton and Paulo Freire discuss the problems faced by educators and activists around the world who are concerned with linking participatory education to the practice of liberation and social change (Horton & Freire, 1990). In this discussion, Horton and Freire agree that liberation is achieved through popular participation by linking participatory education to the practice of
liberation and social change. While the two authors come from very different backgrounds, they agreed that critical pedagogy is the key to liberation.

There is obvious overlap between critical theory, which tends to focus more on society in general, and in critical pedagogy which focuses more specifically on education. Critical theory critiques society and social structures, opposes the wrongs of modern societies, and seeks to change society by critiquing the forms and forces that legitimize those wrongs (European-American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness, 2010). Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) state that critical theory is less about learning than the context in which the learning takes place. Specifically this theory examines the economic, historical, and social context in which the learning takes place.

Critical theory encourages the questioning of previously assimilated worldviews to change oppressive practices. Brookfield (2005) states that in adult learning that there are a number of crucial tasks involved in learning with critical theory. These include (1) learning how to perceive and challenge dominant ideology, (2) unmasking power, (3) contesting hegemony, (4) pursuing liberation, (5) reclaiming reason, (6) practicing democracy, and (7) overcoming alienation.

In challenging ideology, adults must learn to recognize and then confront broadly accepted values, beliefs, and explanations that exist in society. Accepting ideology without critically examining it, allows society to sustain an inequitable and unjust status quo. In sustaining status quo, oppressive power structures are allowed to remain in tact.

In the second task, adults must learn to contest the oppressive power structures that society teaches us to tolerate, accept, and assist in maintaining. The third task involves teaching adults to recognize the ways power is used and abused in their lives. It is also to understand their
own complicity in perpetuating the power structure. In the fourth task, adults are encouraged to recognize that society encourages us to abandon thoughts of who we are to maintain the system that keeps us in place. The purpose of the fifth task is to free creativity to grow individually by temporarily separating from peers to develop ways to challenge dominant structures. In the sixth task, adults are able to “assess evidence, make predictions, judge arguments, recognize causality, and decide on actions where no clear choice is evident …” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 55). The final task is learning how to foster an environment where everyone has equal voice.

There are five distinctive characteristics of critical theory (Brookfield, 2005). First, critical theory is grounded in a solid political analysis and a critique of capitalism. These politics tend to benefit few and unfairly marginalize others. Secondly, critical theory provides the knowledge and tools to free oneself from this oppression. This knowledge allows people to have a framework and lens to view the world.

Thirdly, critical theory breaks down the separation of subject and object of researcher and puts the focus on research, which places the importance on the context. The fourth characteristic is that critical theory condemns current society and envisions a more democratic world. It is through this democracy that everyone is given equal voice. Lastly, it is impossible to verify critical theory until the social vision is realized, making research difficult.

There are several philosophical assumptions associated with critical theory. One of the key thoughts associated with critical theory is that within capitalist society there are many repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination. These myths are uncritically assimilated by the masses, which maintains the hegemony. Hegemony is “the process by which we embrace ideas and practices that keep us enslaved” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 5). We must examine these repressive myths to avoid being confined by them.
Other authors draw on discourses of critical theory and critical pedagogy to address other forms of hegemonic structures (Riggs, 2004; Adams, Bell & Griffin, 2007; Smith, Foley, & Chaney, 2008). These structures include heterosexism, ageism, ableism, and racism, which oppress learning. While learning is oppressed, no one can fully benefit from educational opportunities, but especially those who are in the margins. Thus the cycle of hegemony persists. Critical theory moves away from the individual lens and toward the view of society and its influences on learning.

Brookfield and Preskill (1999) asserts that in order to prevent marginalization in education, the educator must ensure that all learners have an equal voice. Democracy is one of the ways to reduce the margins. Critical theory strives for every voice to be heard and valued equally. Another way to equalize voice in the classroom is that educators and learners should have the shared perception of being equals for learning to occur. Once all learners realize they have not relinquished their voice because they happen to be in the educational setting, then all benefit from hearing the input of the educators and learners, especially learners in the margins.

Critical theory asserts the educator should work in concert with the learners to create a space conducive to learning. Educators should be open to allowing learners to have voice in the structure of the learning environment. For some educators this might be a difficult task because it lessens the predictability of the education process. Allowing learners to have input ultimately benefits the adult learner because they are more invested in learning.

One must bridge theory with practice. It is not sufficient to simply teach equality for all, one must practice it in every day situations and actively call to question when oppression occurs. “Radical teaching is never fixed, never static …” (Brookfield, 2010a, p. 126). Critical theory focuses on radical teaching to show where power and hegemony exists.
Critical theory and critical pedagogy inform the current study in several ways. Critical theory provides a framework to view the educational system. The needs of the students who bring funding into the K-12 system often receive the most attention and support. Schools where athletics are a large component, tend to have the largest expenses relating to upkeep of tracks and stadiums. Districts who want to attract higher socioeconomic families pour money into programs, which prepare students for college, such as SAT preparation or having a winning debate coach. Financial resources are not typically funneled into programs and services, which those in the center want to ignore, such as Gay-Straight Alliances, bullying programs. To attach resources to these supports would indicate a problem in an area that those in power would like to remain invisible.

In preparation for working in the education system, or in continuing education, school psychologists would benefit from critical pedagogy to better illuminate the students who are relegated to the margins. The students who are struggling in the K-12 system are the ones who are supported by school psychologists. School psychologists are charged with the task of supporting all students who are at risk by consulting with teachers, parents, administration, and community agencies. Often the role of the school psychologist is to enlighten those working with at-risk students on ways to support the students while delicately showing educational practices, which have marginalized those students. Critical pedagogy is a way to facilitate these discussions.

**Critical multiculturalism.** Critical theory and critical pedagogy relate to class and the oppressions related to classism. Critical multiculturalism emerged as a way to view oppression as it relates to gender and race, which was later expanded to include sexuality. This is important
to the current study because it provides a lens for supporting LGBTQ youth and a purpose for advocacy work.

Multiculturalism emerged as a term to describe the intersection of ethnicity and/or race and education. The specific meaning of multicultural education tended to vary with the author and evolved over time (Banks, 1993; Sleeter & Grant, 1987). Sleeter and Grant (1987) examined the variety of ways authors were using to define multicultural education. They found five approaches to multicultural education, including teaching the culturally different, human relations approach, single group studies approach, “multicultural education” approach, and education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist. Teaching the culturally different approach emphasizes how educators can assist students who are marginalized to assimilate into the dominant culture (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). The human relations approach focuses on how learners can develop interpersonal communication skills to create a higher level of understanding among all people (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). The single group studies approach examines the educational experience from the perspective of a single marginalized group (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). The “multicultural education” approach attempts to reduce the marginalization of all groups, rather than a specific focus on one group (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). The final approach, which focuses on education, which is multicultural and social reconstructionist, teaches learners to take a social justice stance (Sleeter & Grant, 1987).

Banks (1993) proposed that there are five dimensions of multicultural education, which included content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction and empowering school culture and social structure. Content integration refers to the need for teachers to integrate examples from a variety of cultures to illuminate student learning. Knowledge construction refers to the extent to which teachers help students to understand
cultural assumptions, frames of reference, and biases. Equity pedagogy involves teaching strategies that help students attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to create and perpetuate a democratic society (Banks & Banks, 1995). Prejudice reduction is encouraging learners to develop positive attitudes toward cultures (Banks, 1993). Empowering school culture and social structure is an important dimension to create an environment where all students are empowered (Banks, 1993).

As stated in Chapter One, critical multicultural education emerged from critical theory and multiculturalism. One of the main goals of critical multicultural education is for learners to reflect on their own practice. In order to complete this goal effectively, learners must examine their own practice and thinking as it relates to race, social class, gender, and sexual orientation (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Learners must become aware of how their practice perpetuates inequities in society.

When learners have an opportunity to reflect collectively and collaboratively, it creates opportunities for growth of all learners (Oikonomidoy, 2009). This reflective practice requires time and space, which the educator must plan to provide when creating an environment for critical multicultural education. This reflection provides opportunities for growth to occur by connections made between theory and practice. It also provides the opportunity to teach learners to learn to question (Shoffner, 2008).

Oikonomidoy (2009) warns that there may be a level of learner resistance as learners go through the phases of critical multicultural education. These phases include de-learning, post-learning, and re-learning. De-learning includes the realization that all of the previous learning, which emphasizes the continued marginalization of others. This is learning that must be reversed. Post-learning is learning to question and understand more accurate and less biased
versions of systems that privileges a few. Re-learning is learning how to not assimilate all new information uncritically, but to question and challenge information, which marginalizes groups of people.

Brantmeier, Aragon and Folkestad (2011) found that the most effective way to engage learners in critical multicultural education involves creating threaded discussions using real world examples relating to power, privilege, and oppression as they intersect with gender, race and economics. This allows learners to understand systems inequities with a genuine understanding on how it affects people in society.

Critical multiculturalism critiques how race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality is used in society to marginalize groups of people. Critical multicultural education provides a purpose and a method for advocating for those who are marginalized. While it does not exclusively critique society’s stance on marginalizing those who identify as LGBTQ, it does provide a platform for advocacy work in general.

Critical multiculturalism has relevance for the current study. It has been stated previously that school psychologists are given the task to support all students who are having difficulty being successful in the K-12 setting. Critical multiculturalism provides a lens for school psychologists to examine they ways the educational setting is not meeting the needs for students who identify or are perceived to be LGBTQ. With this lens, school psychologists can provide recommendations for supports specific to the unique needs of these students.

**Aspects of Queer Theory**

While critical theorists and pedagogies focused on social class in their origins, and critical multiculturalism focused more on race and ethnicity in its origins, queer theory has specifically focused on a critical analysis of power relations related to the cultural hegemonic
structures around sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity. The discussion of power relations based on sexual orientation and queer theory has been widely discussed in the social theory literature in general (Jagose, 1996). Such discussions on sexual orientation were originally brought into the field of adult education by Bob Hill (1996) and Andre Grace (2001), who drew, to some extent, on the discourses of queer theory. Queer theory is a critical posture that questions traditional norms of sexuality (Brookfield, 2010b), which emerged from the critical social theory discourses. It provides us with a guide for critically assessing the world by examining the influences of the dominant culture as it relates to sexuality. Because of its critical stance, queer analysis is increasingly being examined in relation to other categories of knowledge involved in the maintenance of unequal power relations (Tollerud & Slabon, 2009).

To begin the discussion on queer theory, it is essential to define the term “queer.” Bettinger (2007) defines queer as a term that has a long history as an anti-gay epitaph, however some lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people use it as a source of pride, which diffuses the ability of the word to stigmatize and affirms the desirability of not being ordinary. Queer then evolves to become an umbrella term that does not fit the gender and sexuality polar binaries created by society (male-female, gay straight). Some extend this term to anyone who feels they do not fit into the molds created by mainstream society, to include queer heterosexuals.

To expand this concept further, queer theory problematizes heteronormativity. Heteronormativity is defined as the dominant unquestioned belief that heterosexual relationships are not only the empirical norm, but they are also superior to same-sex relationships (Brookfield, 2010b). Queer theory attempts to redefine what society considers normal. Social stigma creates unbalanced power relations between groups of people.
Michel Foucault (1998) began the discourse regarding the concern that the Western social sciences had imposed artificial constructions for sexuality and then labeled those constructs, which differed from the dominant culture as deviant. The creation of these constructs gave power to the dominant culture, while placing stigma on the non-dominant culture (Hogan & Hudson, 1998). Foucault (1998) discussed these concerns in his book *The History of Sexuality*, published in several volumes in French between 1976 and 1984, and translated to English between 1978 and 1986 (Hogan & Hudson, 1998). In his writings, he equated knowledge with power, meaning the more one knows, the greater their influence, thus the greater their power. Foucault then argued that when concepts are given a label of deviant, there is more stigmatization thus less exposure, which equates to less power, while continually reinforcing the dominant power. Foucault (1998) wrote that anything outside of heterosexuality within the confines of marriage is not only stigmatized, but it is repressed from consciousness, rendering it unspeakable and unthinkable. In this case, supporting youth who identify as “deviant,” would also be considered deviant.

Several other theorists, rooted in both postmodernism, feminist theory and psychoanalytic theory are also credited with the early thoughts, which helped to launch queer theory. These theorists include Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Jonathan Dollimore, and David Halperin (Clarke, Ellis, Peel & Riggs, 2010; Hogan & Hudson, 1989). Butler (1990) argued that categories of sex, gender, and sexuality are socially constructed and challenged binary nature of these categories and labels. Sedgwick (1985) used the term “homosocial” to reject the rigid categories relating to gay males, such as homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual, to define the bonding between males, which may be accompanied with socialized negative attitudes toward homosexuality.
The term “queer theory” was coined by Teresa de Lauretis in February 1990 when she used the term to name an academic conference (Hogan & Hudson, 1998). Heteronormativity was coined by Michael Warner, a social theorist, in 1991 (Clarke, Ellis, Peel & Riggs, 2010). Today we arrive with the definition of queer theory as “the critique of heteronormative binary models of sex/gender and sexuality that privilege heterosexuality and non-trans genders over all other sexualities and gender” (Clarke, Ellis, Peel & Riggs, 2010, p. 267).

Queer crit theory later evolved from queer theory. Queer crit theory defines learning as critical examinations of race, class, and sexual orientation through the perspectives of gay and lesbian scholarship. In both of these theories, more attention is given to the society and context in which learning takes place. Society is the locus of control. The learner’s success is dependent upon how divisive these hegemonic influences are in the life of the learner.

There are many assumptions related to queer theory. Here, five of the basic assumptions of queer theory are discussed. These assumptions include a critique of centrality of experiential knowledge, heteronormativity, polarization, categorization, and deconstruction, which are discussed individually.

One assumption involves the centrality of experiential knowledge. Misawa (2010a) states that the perspectives gained from experiences shed light on every day realities. He states “life experiences are valid and appropriate for examining and challenging oppression” (p. 193-194). Listening to personal narratives is important because it gives society a greater understanding and greater exposure to traditionally marginalized people. It also allows people who identify as queer to become empowered at the creation of this knowledge. The resulting discourse, which increases knowledge, empowers those who are not in the dominant lifestyle.
Queer theory problematizes the concept of heteronormativity (Brookfield, 2010a). Queer theory rejects the assumption that all lifestyles, which are not characterized by the heterosexual nuclear family, are abnormal or deviant. The reason this is problematic is this assumption labels all lifestyle, choices, and orientations that are not heterosexual as inferior, thus giving more power to the dominant culture. It further stigmatizes non-heterosexual, relationships, or identities as being deviant or negative.

Another assumption of queer theory is related to polarization (Brookfield, 2010a). The dominant culture seeks to label and identify each person in a binary fashion. Gender is male or female, stigmatizing those who consider themselves to be intersex or transgender. Queer theory argues that gender is not binary. Sexuality is defined by society as homosexual or heterosexual, ignoring those who consider themselves bisexual. Families are defined by society as the traditional nuclear family; being lead by a male and female, which discredits households that have same-sex parents or female led households. Sullivan (2003) takes it one step further to expand heteronormativity to also exclude married heterosexual couples without children, since one assumption of heteronormativity is that the purpose of heterosexuality is for procreation.

The fourth queer theory assumption is that sexual categories such as “gay” or “lesbian” are regulating and limiting (Clarke et al, 2010). These identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes. From a queer theory standpoint, power operates through sexual identity categories, because of the ease of labeling these categories as normal or deviant. As a result, the proponents of queer theory prefer the label of queer, which is all encompassing. Using “queer” as an identifier as embraces and celebrates the differences from the dominant culture. Using “queer” then is a source of pride, rather than stigma, which leads into the fifth assumption.
The final assumption of queer theory discussed here is deconstruction (Clarke et al, 2010). Because queer theory argues that the use of discrete sexual categories is a way to remove the power of those who do not fit into the category of heteronormative, the solution involves the deconstruction of these categories. If the use of these individual categories is eliminated, it empowers those who identify as queer. One of the goals of queer theory is the refusal to identify as anything but “queer” to promote meaningful resistance. This means that there are no real membership criteria for “queer,” which also extends membership to heterosexuals who also identify as “queer.”

The basic assumptions for queer theory include heteronormativity, polarization, centrality of experiential knowledge, categorization, and deconstruction. There are strengths and weaknesses associated with these assumptions, which are discussed in the following section.

Some of the strengths of queer theory include that it inspires political action, empowers queer people, and creates discourse. Queer theory is “not simply a new label for old boxes, but the promise of new meanings, ways of thinking and acting politically” (Sullivan 2003, p. 43). Because traditionally marginalized people are given new ways to make meaning, it gives a political voice to those previously silenced.

This political voice also allows for empowerment. This empowerment is both individual and in society. Individual empowerment can occur when a person realizes their voice and loses the internalized stigma, which can be immobilizing. Mobility empowers on the social level because people who identify as queer realize that they are no longer second-class citizens and have the right to demand for equality under the law.
Lastly, queer theory creates discourse. Discourse encourages marginalized people to be heard, recognized, and given elevated positionality. Increased discourse moves marginalized populations toward the center by highlighting their opinions, concerns, and struggles.

While there are positive qualities associated with queer theory, there are also concerns. These concerns include generation alienation, apolitical quietism, inaccessibility, the overly inclusive nature of queer theory, elimination of feminist voice, accusations of race-blindness and positionality (Jagose, 1996).

In speaking to these concerns, Jagose (1996) reflects that queer theory inadvertently causes a generation gap. While “queer” may be acceptable to the younger generations, older generations may not embrace the term because of its history of being pejorative. As a result, it is possible that being referred to as queer may be alienating, for some. Alienating the older generation unexpectedly gives voice the younger members of the LGBT community. Without balance, queer theory may encourage ageism within the queer community.

Apolitical quietism is a term concern addressed by Jagose (1996). Jagose’s (1996) point is that one of the prerequisites of having a political platform is that there is a unified sense of identity. Because there is no universally accepted definition of “queer” it inadvertently quiets the ability for political action because the group membership cannot be clearly defined.

Some argue that the use of the term queer theory is elitist because it is spoken about, almost exclusively, by intellectuals (Jagose, 1996). The concept of queer theory then may be alienating for those who are not actively engaged with the discourse from higher education. If those who are not involved with the discourse created by intellectuals, some argue that QT supports discrimination by classism.
There is also an argument that “queer” is overly inclusive (Jagose, 1996). What is then created, is an umbrella term for dissimilar groups of people. By definition, the term could include pedophiles, pornographers and voyeurs, which would weaken the political stance of those who are proponents of queer theory. It is argued that until there is a clearer definition, which does not include people who commit illegal sexual acts, queer theory cannot gain the respect that it deserves.

Jagose (1996) also points out that some feminists argue that queer theory eliminates the feminist voice. Some accuse queer theorists of having a masculinist agenda (Jagose, 1996). An example that illuminates this examines the issues that are primary concerns for lesbians, such as breast or ovarian cancer, which take a back seat to the AIDS epidemic (Jagose, 1996). Queer theory creates a false assumption that lesbians and gay men share the similar interests.

It is concerning that queer theory does not address the concerns of race. The double marginality dilemma faced by queer people of color is completely unheard with queer theory. Queer theory tends “to privilege the values, desires, and aspirations of particular people and groups, and to overlook and silence those of others” (Sullivan, 2003, p. 48).

Queer theory can be adopted by the majority of the population, because many believe that they are misrepresented and marginalized, for a variety of reasons. Sullivan (2003) writes, “queer is a positionality (rather than an innate identity) that can potentially be taken up by anyone who feels themselves to have been marginalized as a result of their sexual preferences …” (p. 49). While queer theorists believe that they are adopting a new identity, some argue they are actually just taking a position on an issue.
While there are both positive and negative qualities to queer theory, it does provide a framework for adult educators. This framework has many implications for practice. They are outlined in the subsequent section of this paper.

Queer theory has implications for practice for the adult educator, which can be divided into three themes. These themes are beliefs, actions, and environment. The implications involving belief are ways of thinking an educator may adopt to show his/her commitment to queer theory. The implications involving action relate to what the educator who embraces queer theory can do with learners to exemplify the values of queer theory. The implications involving environment involve practical ways an educator can influence or change the learning environment to foster critical thought and dialog surrounding heteronormativity.

Educators who embrace queer theory need to consider and embrace beliefs, which are congruent to the basic assumptions related to queer theory. Two of these beliefs involve desire for inclusion and authenticity. The educator who embraces queer theory will assume that queer learners are present at all times (Toynton, 2006). The educator who assumes queer learners are omnipresent will engage students in a manner that includes those learners who are visible and those learners who are invisible. Adopting this belief will help to create a safe and inclusive environment for all learners.

It is also important for educators who identify as either queer or LGBT to believe that authenticity is not only desirable, but also it is also essential to promote queer knowledge, awareness, and visibility (Toynton, 2006). Adopting this belief can be risky to the educator, but it helps those learners who do not identify as queer to increase their awareness. At the same time, it allows learners who do identify as queer to feel less isolated, whether the learner proudly proclaims their queerness, or choose to remain invisible.
There are also many action steps an educator, who adopts queer theory, should consider. These action steps include ways to support learners, illuminate heteronormativity, redefine “normal,” become educated on queer issues, and adopt a queer theory affirmative stance. Zacko-Smith and Smith (2010) recommend that educators should approach students as assumptionless whenever possible. The example they provide is to never assume that parents consist of one male and one female. Educators should assume that all types of families exist and they can be equally likely as an alternative. Toynton (2006) recommends that educators visibly support learners who openly identify as queer, which will allow those who are not visible, to feel supported in the teaching environment.

The educator should illuminate heteronormativity whenever possible. One way an educator may accomplish this is by making heteronormativity visible and challenging it at every opportunity (Toynton, 2006). Zacko-Smith and Smith (2010) argues “educators must also accept their role as mentors who help define reality for those they are educating, and they must commit to redefining that reality as dictated by demands for social justice and equity” (p. 2).

Educators should consciously strive to redefine previously accepted polarizing, discriminatory and stigmatizing constructs. One example is redefining what is classified as “normal” (Zacko-Smith & Smith, 2010). Another suggestion is to promote sexual orientation as gender as concepts that are flexible and flowing by eliminating labels whenever possible.

Zacko-Smith and Smith (2010) also recommend for educators to become familiar with the current queer issues so they can become familiar with the issues that are part of the queer learner’s every day lives. Zacko-Smith and Smith (2010) also went on to say that the educator should confront homophobia when it occurs because when homophobia is permitted to exist, that teaches intolerance is acceptable.
Frank and Cannon (2010) discuss three ways to teach incorporating queer theory. These are through using discourse, positioning, and deconstruction. They recommend the use of discourse to encourage learners to be aware of the power dynamics in language. They also assert that educators should be aware of how the use of language positions and encourage certain roles in society. Lastly, they believe the educator should deconstruct by disrupting power structures, which breaks down traditional ideas on what is normal.

All educators are responsible at least for co-creating learning environments with learners. Those who adopt a queer theory perspective strive to create safe, inclusive, and accepting environments for all learners by using inclusive language and resources. Toynton (2006) emphasizes that it is an educator’s obligation to provide a safe environment for learners because this enhances both individual learning and self-esteem for all learners. An educator should also make “sure that the language used and the resources (books, videos, workbooks, etc) chosen for classes do not support the sexual orientation and gender identity status quo …” (Zacko-Smith & Smith, 2010, p. 7). Bacon (2007) also recommends the educator to examine all curriculum content across the educational setting.

The educator who makes an effort to adopt and intentionally create an environment that fully embraces and endorses queer theory has benefits for all learners. Achieving this could create real institutional democracy for all learners (Misawa, 2010a).

While not all aspects of queer theory are relevant to this study, there are aspects that inform this study in particular ways. Many youth identify as queer and reject other labels. It is important for school psychologists to be aware of this and use the terminology most comfortable for youth to accept. It is also important for school psychologists to be aware of the power dynamics associated with gender identity and sexual orientation. Queer theory reminds mental
health professionals of the marginalization faced by those who identify as LGBTQ. Queer theory encourages the disruption of power structures, which is necessary in the K-12 system. Lastly, queer theory reminds K-12 professionals the importance of having a safe learning environment for all learners, not just the learners in the center.

Because queer theory encourages the inclusivity of all who consider themselves outside of the norm, it does not allow room for those who embrace different labels to embrace their own identity. Because it is important for mental health professionals to acquire knowledge on all groups, labels and identities, queer theory limits the scope of this knowledge. It is important because there are times that youth are questioning, confused or attempting to fit in to society may embrace many variations of identities. For this reason, aspects of queer theory inform the current study, without limiting the research to a purely queer theory theoretical stance.

Queer theory contributes to this project in that it highlights how one might actively challenge heterosexism, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, and heteronormativity. It provides a theoretical framework for providing an understanding of heterosexism in the system and a vehicle for how one might become advocate or an ally to youth who identify as LGBTQ.

**Theory of Planned Behavior**

The Theory of Planned Behavior provides a framework, which allows for the integration of critical perspectives of adult education, and queer theory and to become the vehicle to encourage social justice advocacy behavior. This discussion of the Theory of Planned Behavior begins with the history of the theory, provides definitions for each of the components of the theory, outlines the assumptions related to the theory, explains the use of the theory with social justice and concludes with a discussion on why the Theory of Planned Behavior is salient for the current study.
History and components of the theory. The Theory of Planned Behavior was first defined in 1991 by Icek Ajzen. In this theory, Ajzen posits a person’s behavior is driven by their behavioral intentions. The components of behavior intention include (1) the person’s attitude toward the behavior, (2) the subjective norm about the performance of the behavior, and (3) the person’s perception of ease at which he/she can perform the behavior (see Appendix A). To add depth to this definition, it is important to define several terms.

Behavior is the manifest, observable response in a given situation. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior model, observations of behavior can be summative across contexts to create a broader conceptualization of behavior (Ajzen, 1991). An example of this would be social justice advocacy behavior, which can be seen as it relates to assisting those affected by homophobia or by those impacted by racism. While it refers to different types of advocacy, it all relates to supporting a marginalized population.

In the Theory of Planned Behavior, behavior occurs when there are compatible intentions and perceptions of behavioral control. Conceptually, perceived behavioral control moderates the effect of intention on behavior. A favorable intention produces the behavior when perceived behavioral control is strong.

Intention is an indication of a person's readiness to perform a behavior. It is considered the immediate antecedent of behavior. The behavior intention is based on attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. The amount of importance for each factor varies with the specific behavior and the person who is exhibiting the behavior.

Attitude toward a behavior is the degree to which performance of the behavior is positively or negatively valued. The attitude toward the behavior is determined by the cumulative set of accessible beliefs about the behavior and the outcome of the behavior.
person may have several beliefs with respect to a behavior. Only a few are readily accessible at a given moment. These subjective behavioral beliefs link the specified behavior to the outcome of performing the behavior. It is the accessible beliefs, in combination with a person’s values that determine one’s attitude toward the behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Subjective norm is the perceived social pressure to engage or not to engage in a behavior. The subjective norm is determined by the total set of accessible normative beliefs concerning the expectations of others that are perceived as significant. Others who are considered important play an important role in how a person envisions the behavior and the outcome of such behavior. Normative beliefs refer to the perceived behavioral expectations of such important referent individuals or groups as the person's spouse, family, and friends. It also could include teachers, doctors, supervisors, and coworkers, depending on the behavior in question. What is it that others around the person would think of the behavior? How important is the behavior in maintaining positive regard for others? These are questions that are part of determining how, if, and when a behavior will become realized. These normative beliefs, in combination with a person's motivation to comply with the different important referent individuals, determine the prevailing subjective norm (Ajzen, 1991).

Perceived behavioral control refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Control beliefs have to do with the perceived presence of factors that facilitate or impede performance of a behavior. The strength of each control belief is weighted by the perceived power of the control factor. The perceived power of each control factor to impede or facilitate performance of the behavior contributes to perceived behavioral control in direct proportion to the person's subjective probability that the control factor is present. Each person makes a decision on how successful they will be in performing the behavior.
Originally, the theory was created to attempt to explain human behavior in making healthy choices, such as exercise and making healthy food choices. Recently this theory has been used as a theoretical base to increase social justice advocacy behavior in adults. Durantini, Albarracín, Mitchell, Earl, and Gillette (2006) used the Theory of Planned Behavior as a lens to examine the effectiveness of training for interventionists for HIV prevention. Fox and Stallworth (2009) used this theory to assist with understanding the key variables needed in workplace bullying prevention programs.

McCabe and Rubinson (2008) examined the connection between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control and its impact on behavior intention in pre-service teachers, psychologists and counselors. For the purposes of this study, behavior intention was defined as the participant’s desire and ability to intervene on behalf of a youth who identifies as LGBTQ. The findings indicate that pre-service education is needed in the areas of LGBTQ harassment and ethical values/dilemmas in order to provide quality support to LGBTQ youth. The study also finds that there is a need for experiential learning components to teaching pre-service counselors to negotiate social justice issues.

**Assumptions of the theory.** Several assumptions are associated with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The first is that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are based on corresponding sets of beliefs. These corresponding sets of beliefs can be changed through education or critical reflection. A second assumption is that behavioral interventions must try to change the beliefs to ultimately guide behavior. Behavior cannot be changed without changing a person’s belief system for lasting change. A third assumption is that only beliefs that are readily accessible in the memory, influence behavior.
The Theory of Planned Behavior assumes that repressed beliefs do not have a strong influence on behavior.

A fourth assumption is that by measuring someone’s beliefs we gain insight into underlying cognitive foundations. When we understand someone’s beliefs, we can better understand how he/she attends to tasks and interact in society. A fifth assumption is that interventions directed at behavioral, normative or control beliefs may succeed in producing corresponding changes in attitudes, subjective norms and perceptions of behavioral control. When a learner encounters education, which the educator directs at belief systems, this will ultimately influence the learner’s behavior.

One last assumption is there is the possibility that an intervention may not be successful if people are unclear on how to carry out the newly formed intentions. The educator must be careful to also teach planning strategies on how, where and when the behavior should be performed.

**Uses of the theory.** Several researchers have used Theory of Planned Behavior to define behavior congruent with the active pursuit of social justice. Skitka, Bauman, and Sargis (2005) tested their hypothesis that attitudes held with strong moral conviction would have different interpersonal consequences when compared to strong but non-moral attitudes. The researchers provided a questionnaire to 91 people encountered at an airport. While participant gender demographics were provided, participant ethnicity was not cited in the article. The results supported this hypothesis. In addition, this research found that when people perceive they are surrounded by others who share their belief system, they are more apt to engage in social justice advocacy.
van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears (2008) studied perceived injustice, efficacy, and identity on collective action. They found that all three variables had medium effects on collective action. In addition, they found that those who identified less with a cause, or “low identifiers,” can be persuaded differently than those classified as “high identifiers.” Those who identify less with a cause were apt to be dissuaded by instrumental barriers, while the high identifiers tended to remain focused on social justice regardless of contextual constraints.

These two studies inform about the perceived context and environment and its effect on a person’s likelihood to engage freely in social justice advocacy work. The context and environment can be defined as other individuals in the immediate environment and the climate within that environment.

Several researchers have used the Theory of Planned Behavior to examine teaching certain social justice behaviors within a specified environment. Three of these studies examined HIV prevention (Durantini, Albarracín, Mitchell, Earl, & Gillette, 2006; Longshore, Stein, & Chin, 2005; Petty, Wagner, Fabrigar, & Leandre, 1997). Other researchers examined social justice behaviors in the workplace.

When examining HIV prevention strategies, Durantini, Albarracín, Mitchell, Earl, and Gillette (2006) found that attitudes and intentions reflect different levels of behavioral commitment. They also found that perceived behavioral control is different from self-efficacy, which would imply that the amount of control one perceives to have over a situation is different than how much power they feel they have in a social justice situation. Longshore, Stein, and Chin (2005) found that people who believe they are constrained from engaging in a behavior are unlikely to form strong intentions to engage in it, even if they are otherwise disposed to do so.
Fox and Stallworth (2009) examined workplace bullying using the Theory of Planned Behavior. The researchers advocated using the Theory of Planned Behavior to design an alternative dispute resolution system and workplace training targeting the reduction of workplace bullying. Marquardt and Hoeger (2008) asked participants to work on a deliberative managerial ethical decision-making task, which they had to decide on one of two options. They then measured moral attitudes towards the two options. The results supported the Theory of Planned Behavior. They found complex and deliberative decision-making processes in the context of business ethics could be affected by implicit social cognitions such as implicit moral attitudes.

The Theory of Planned Behavior has been used to design programs to encourage social justice advocacy work in several environments. The quantitative articles discussed seem to support the Theory of Planned Behavior as a model to explain the components for fostering advocacy behavior.

Some researchers specifically use the Theory of Planned Behavior to support advocacy behavior in mental health professionals. McCabe and Rubinson (2008) examined the connection between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control and its impact on behavior intention in pre-service teachers, psychologists and counselors. For the purposes of this study, behavior intention was defined as the participant’s desire and ability to intervene on behalf of a youth who identifies, or is perceived to identify as LGBTQ. The findings indicate that pre-service education is needed in the areas of LGBTQ harassment and ethical values/dilemmas in order to provide quality support to LGBTQ youth. The study also finds that there is a need for experiential learning components to teaching pre-service counselors to negotiate social justice issues.
Nastasi (2008) discusses the future of school psychology as a profession. In this discussion, she asserts that researchers and practitioners should work together to critically examine their own values, scrutinize and challenge the status quo, build consensus among diverse stakeholders, and engage in actions directed at changing existing norms. One of these methods is by embracing the Theory of Planned Behavior to encourage social justice advocacy.

Seghal, Saules, Young, Grey, Gillem, Nabors, Byrd, & Jefferson (2011) examine how to build multicultural competence in psychologists. In this study, they recruited 155 students and practicing psychologists to respond to vignettes requiring multicultural competence. The results indicated significant differences between endorsement of strategies as multiculturally appropriate and likelihood of actual use of these strategies. This suggests that future training and competence models should incorporate participants’ ability to not only identify multiculturally appropriate strategies but also use these strategies in practice.

The Theory of Planned Behavior has emerged as a theory to examine social justice advocacy behavior in professionals in the workplace. More specifically, the Theory of Planned Behavior has been used as a model to teach social justice advocacy skills in mental health professionals.

The theory’s use in this project. The Theory of Planned Behavior provides a framework that combines LGBTQ competency and components of critical multicultural education to encourage advocacy behavior in school psychologists for LGBTQ youth. When examining the components of the Theory of Planned Behavior model, it is important to be clear how each component corresponds with social justice advocacy behavior for LGBTQ youth in school psychologists. The next portion of this chapter will identify how each component of the Theory of Planned Behavior model is relevant for the current study.
In the Theory of Planned Behavior model, behavior is what is being examined as the manifest, observable response in a given situation (Ajzen, 1991). For the current study, the behavior is defined as social justice advocacy work on behalf of LGBTQ youth. The intended population is school psychologists who are working within the K-12 school system. Behavior intention is an indication of a person's readiness to perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In the current study, it is the intention of school psychologists to perform social justice advocacy work on behalf of LGBTQ youth.

In the Theory of Planned Behavior model, attitude toward the behavior is the degree to which performance of the behavior is positively or negatively valued (Ajzen, 1991). In the current study, it is important to examine how school psychologists feel about LGBTQ youth, advocacy in general and about those who act as advocates within the K-12 system. These factors and possibly other factors may play an important role in how school psychologists view LGBTQ social justice advocacy work.

The Theory of Planned Behavior model defines subjective norm as the perceived social pressure to engage or not to engage in a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). For school psychologists, it may be important to determine how they think they will be perceived by teachers, parents, administrators, and other students, if they engage in social justice advocacy work for LGBTQ students. Will this be viewed as positively or negatively? To what degree will each of these groups dictate the potential behavior of school psychologists? These are all questions, which may be revealed with the current study.

Lastly, perceived behavioral control is defined in the Theory of Planned Behavior model as people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In the current study, it is important to understand what barriers are present that prevent school psychologists
from engaging in social justice advocacy work on behalf of LGBTQ youth. Possible barriers include, but are not limited to whether the school psychologist has tenure, the politics in the specific state, the perceived conservative nature of the K-12 system and not knowing how to be an advocate. Tenure is achieved when the school psychologist has achieved a certain number of years of satisfactory employment. Many rely on tenure as a barometer on when they may be able to risk possible negative attention by being vocal with advocating for a student who has been marginalized by the system. State and federal politics are a real factor in advocacy work, especially if the school psychologist identifies as LGBTQ. Some states and local jurisdictions do not protect against employment discrimination due to sexual or gender identity. Being a vocal advocate for LGBTQ concerns may put a school psychologist who identifies as LGBTQ in a situation that they may face termination of their job. In many school districts, it may be considered to radical to openly advocate for and protect a student who identifies as LGBTQ. This may be perceived as a real barrier within the K-12 school system. Many school psychologists have never learned how to be an effective advocate for LGBTQ youth. Being unsure on how to advocate can be a large barrier in initiating advocacy work within the K-12 school system.

The components of the Theory of Planned Behavior model appear to be an appropriate model to incorporate critical multicultural education and gay affirmative practice to examine how to teach school psychologists to effectively advocate for LGBTQ youth. The following section talks about how these three distinct schools of thought combine to provide a theoretical framework for the current study.
The Merging of the Theoretical Framework

The current study is informed by elements of critical perspectives on adult education, queer theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior. Each of these schools of thought singularly does not provide an adequate foundation for the current study. Critical perspectives on adult education provide theoretical venues for analyzing power relations that affect adult learning, and the aspects of queer theory focuses more specifically on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and the power of heteronormativity in society and in the education system and ways of challenging heterosexism in particular. The Theory of Planned Behavior provides a quantitative framework, but does not in itself have components of adult education to increase the likelihood of social justice advocacy.

While each of these frameworks individually is not sufficient to adequately inform the current study, important elements from each framework is combined to create a theoretical base for the current study. Critical perspectives on adult education, along with queer theory provides a framework for school psychologists to begin to examine their own belief systems as they relate to LGBTQ youth and the power structures that currently oppress this traditionally marginalized population within the K-12 system.

The Theory of Planned Behavior provides a framework to examine the relation between LGBTQ beliefs, subjective perceptions of the acceptance of LGBTQ advocacy work and the likelihood of actually working as a social change agent for LGBTQ youth in the K-12 school system. This framework may allow researchers to determine the essential training components to adequately train school psychologists to advocate on behalf of LGBTQ youth. With this knowledge, it is possible to create a more effective curriculum for educators to prepare learners to be social justice advocates.
To further illuminate the current study, it is necessary to examine two other bodies of literature. Subsequent sections of this chapter provide an overview of the current literature on Gay Affirmative Practice, and on how mental health professionals are currently educated on LGBTQ concerns within higher education and continuing education programs. Finally, while some of the theoretical section referred to some of the work on sexual orientation in adult education, the chapter ends with an in depth consideration of queer cultural work within adult education.

**Gay Affirmative Practice**

There has clearly been discussion of how to deal with LGBTQ populations in psychology. When this was first discussed in psychological circles the term “gay” was often used as an umbrella term to refer to all sexual minorities, and efforts were developed at “gay affirmative practice” (Malyon, 1981). Gay affirmative practice is a method to bridge a positive therapeutic stance to actual support and affirming work for mental health professionals to provide quality services to those who identify as LGBTQ. Gay affirmative practice provides the structure for mental health professionals to ensure they are keeping current with literature, providing a supportive atmosphere and teach others to adopt an affirming stance. The next section will provide the history of gay affirmative practice, discuss the essential elements of gay affirmative practice, and identify the salient components, which relate to the current study.

**History and Elements of Gay Affirmative Therapy**

The term “gay affirmative therapy” was first used in an article by Alan Malyon (1981) where he describes a psychodynamic model of affirmative psychotherapy for gay men. This model was expanded to include those who identify as lesbian and bisexual (Browning, 1987). While the expansion of the definition to include those who identify as lesbian and bisexual
occurred, the name of the framework remained. Harrison (2000) asserts that the use of the term gay denotes “gay, lesbian and bisexual in an endeavor to write concisely, while respecting that these individual identities differ” (p. 37).

As discussed in the first chapter, Crisp (2006b) developed an assessment instrument to assess the extent to which mental health practitioners engage in principles consistent with gay affirmative practice. In her study, she found that while attitudes were important to affirmative practice, they are not sufficient to ensure affirmative practice with LGBTQ individuals. She found that education on knowledge, attitudes, and skills in practice are also extremely important to consider for future research.

Crisp and McCave (2007) then went to develop a gay affirmative practice model for youth. This model focuses on affirming youth identity and empowers LGBTQ youth. It supports youth in self-identifying in whatever manner they feel is appropriate. The gay affirmative practice model for youth also supports youth in identifying homophobic forces, which are present in their own lives and considers problems in the context of these homophobic forces. This model was developed to be applied in a variety of LGBTQ youth settings, including schools, residential facilities, and outpatient treatment centers.

Gay affirmative therapy and gay affirmative practice models were developed to work with those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. For the purposes of this research, these models are being expanded to also include those who identify as transgender or queer.

Continuing education is important to Gay Affirmative Practice. Several have written articles asserting the necessary components of continuing education to promote affirmative practice, relating to both the nursing professions and the mental health professions.
McCann (2001) asserts that gay affirmative practice training for mental health professionals, while it is essential; it is often inadequate in its focus and delivery. McCann (2001) provides four areas of emphasis for gay affirmative practice continuing education programs. The first essential component of gay affirmative practice continuing education is working with the mental health professional on his or her own level of homophobia and heterosexism. The second component relates to the degree of knowledge of LGBTQ populations, and their issues and concerns. The third essential component is in regard to the knowledge of current study as it relates to the LGBTQ population as a whole and as individual groups. Lastly, McCann (2001) asserts that mental health professionals should have regular contact with people who identify as LGBTQ.

Granello (2004) expands these components to provide an outline for a three hour workshop, which is grounded in gay affirmative practice and intended to assist beginning counselors to become more affirming in their counseling practice. Granello (2004) moves from the conceptual to the practical by providing eight topic areas for the workshop. These topic areas include (1) appropriate terminology, (2) definition and measurement of homosexuality, (3) status of GLB individuals in society, (4) theories of etiology, (5) ethical responsibility of counselors, (6) status of GLB individuals in the counseling profession, (7) gay identity development models, and (8) specific mental health concerns for the GLB population. Additionally, Granello (2004) outlines practices that counselors should embrace to be considered affirming. It is important to note that this article is not inclusive of clients who identify as transgender or queer.

**Studies of Gay Affirmative Practice**

There have been a number of studies that have examined aspects of gay affirmative practice. Chapman, Watkins, Zappia, Nicol, and Shields (2011) surveyed nursing professionals
regarding their attitudes, knowledge and beliefs regarding LGBT parents seeking health care for their children. The results indicated that knowledge and attitudes were significantly associated with race, political voting, religious beliefs and having a friend who identifies as LGBTQ. This article concludes that continuing education is important to address the existence of prejudicial attitudes among health professionals and to prevent discriminatory practice.

It is important to note that these articles differ on their inclusivity of the LGBTQ community. It is also important to note that none of the articles mention the possibility of varying skills and knowledge while relating to LGBTQ subgroups, which may require additional skills for ethnicity, ability and age cohorts within the LGBTQ community.

Pixton (2003) used questionnaires and interviews on lesbian and gay clients who had experienced counseling that they defined as affirming. These questionnaires and interviews identified what lesbian and gay clients perceived to have been helpful. Using a grounded theory approach, Pixton (2003) generated six main categories of affirming components. These components include (1) communicating a non-pathologizing perspective on homosexuality, (2) the counseling relationship, (3) the counseling space, (4) what the counselor brought to the relationship, (5) humanity, and (6) the counselor adopting a holistic approach.

Kilgore, Sideman, Amin, Baca, and Bohanske (2005) surveyed 437 members of the American Psychological Association to understand psychologists’ attitudes and therapeutic approaches toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual clients. The questionnaire consisted of 15 closed-ended items. They found that psychologists are likely to view a gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity as acceptable and non-pathological. They also found that psychologists are likely to support and provide gay-affirmative therapy, and much less likely to support changing sexual orientation
through psychotherapy. Lastly, they found that female psychologists are significantly more likely to provide gay-affirmative therapy when compared with their male counterparts.

Catherine Crisp is a leading researcher in gay affirmative practice. Her 2006 groundbreaking quantitative study assessed 488 social workers and psychologists using the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (Crisp, 2006a). The goal of this study was to develop a rapid assessment instrument to assess the extent to which mental health professionals engage in principles consistent with gay affirmative practice. She designed a 30-item scale to measure gay affirmative practice by merging gay affirmative practice with social work models. She finds that while attitudes are important, they are not sufficient to ensure affirmative practice with LGBTQ clients. She asserts that education on knowledge, attitudes, and skills in practice are essential training components.

In 2007, Crisp continued her study of gay affirmative practice with a quantitative study to examine the relationship between attitudes and practice with gays and lesbians using the recently developed and validated Gay Affirmative Practice Scale. Crisp (2007) validated the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale by finding significant relationships with the gay affirmative practice and two measures of homophobia as well as with measures that assessed feelings about lesbians and gay men, contact with gays and lesbians, attendance at workshops that focused on gay and lesbian issues, relationship status, sexual orientation, political party, and primary area of practice.

In an effort to synthesize all the publications on Gay Affirmative Therapy, Harrison (2000) reviewed the 33 existing journal articles and conference papers between 1982 and 1995 in the United Kingdom and the United States. He found 15 themes related to Gay Affirmative Therapy, which he categorized into three interconnected domains, namely working with individual clients, working within organizations and working within a culture or social
movement. Within each of these domains, there are five dimensions. In the first dimension, the therapist works on developing self-awareness on LGBTQ issues. In this dimension, the mental health professional takes a personal inventory of his/her own values and belief systems. The second dimension involves choosing therapeutic interventions, which draw on a non-pathological view to challenge heterosexism, homophobia, and heteronormativity. The third dimension describes those who are able to use the approach. While only mental health professionals can provide therapy, others can adopt a gay affirmative stance, including family members, organizations, and clients themselves. The fourth dimension outlines the types of issues typically presented by LGBTQ individuals, such as the effects of oppression, difficulty with coming out, and other interpersonal difficulties. The final dimension is related to how mental health professionals assist clients in dealing with the issues in the fourth dimension.

Overall, the literature relating to gay affirmative practice discusses the benefits of affirming practice and the harm in not adopting an affirming practice when working with those who identify as LGBTQ. While there have been several studies measuring the use of gay affirmative practice among mental health professionals, there have been limited studies on the client’s perspective on the use of gay affirmative practice. Most studies agree that there should be continuing efforts to study gay affirmative practice and build a stronger connection between theory and practice.

Limitations of Gay Affirmative Practice

The literature suggests that there are certainly some limitations to gay affirmative practice. Cross (2001) warns that while gay affirmative practice has some positive points, mental health professionals must use it with caution. Cross (2001) states that in an attempt to affirm and validate, a mental health professional may run the risk of stifling the plurality of
sexual meaning making. If a client has constructed an identity different from that of the mental health professional’s characterization, they run the risk of alienating or disenfranchising the client.

Davison (2005) argues that gay affirmative practice is a contradiction from a social constructionist perspective. He argues that in order to take an affirming stance, mental health professionals have to begin in an anti-LGBTQ stance. He argues that it is an inherent contradiction to providing affirming therapy. Davison (2005) also argues that treatment and diagnosis for mental health issues are constructions of the clinician. The client comes to the clinician with symptoms. The clinician then assigns a reason these symptoms exist, in order to diagnose and treat the client. The clinician must therefore pathologize the LGBTQ identity in order to treat it.

Langdridge (2007) also finds fault with gay affirmative practice. Langdridge (2007) asserts one of the risks with affirmative therapies is that it restricts a client’s power to create their own meaning. Gay affirmative practice may prematurely limit the sexual identity work for a client seeking treatment. It would be most beneficial for the mental health professional to challenge a fixed identity.

Johnson (2012) argues there is no real consensus on what constitutes gay affirmative practice because there are no real operational definitions, or outcome measures. This dilemma leaves mental health professionals unsure about how to incorporate it into their practice. Johnson (2012) also asserts that there should be a stronger collaboration between researchers and practicing clinicians to identify how future research should be pursued.

Several concerns are associated with gay affirmative practice, such as limiting meaning making for LGBTQ identified clients, contradictions within the theory and the mental health
professional’s fixed characterization of LGBTQ issues and concerns. These concerns can be addressed in the delivery of gay affirmative practice.

Milton and Coyle (1999) explore issues to consider that are relevant to the thinking of mental health professionals when working with lesbians and gay men (Milton & Coyle, 1999). The authors note therapeutic practices that are harmful with the LGBTQ community. They assert a need for room in continuing education to teach affirming approaches to mental health professionals.

**The Relevance of Gay Affirmative Practice to this Project**

Gay affirmative practice encourages mental health professionals to begin their journey to LGBTQ advocacy with developing a deep understanding of their own homophobia, heterosexism, and ways they inadvertently promote heteronormativity. This level of understanding is crucial to being perceived as a support for the LGBTQ community.

Gay affirmative practice also encourages mental health professionals to continually refresh their knowledge base for working with those who identify as LGBTQ. It is important for mental health professionals to continually refresh their knowledge of the LGBTQ community. Because there are so many facets and multiple layers to identity, even within the LGBTQ community, it is important to keep current on these trends. It is important to know current resources, treatment strategies, trends within the population, and risk factors. All of these facets are continually evolving for the LGBTQ community.

Gay affirmative practice teaches mental health professionals to learn how to advocate for those who identify as LGBTQ. Many may have the desire to support LGBTQ youth, but are unsure of how to be an advocate. Gay affirmative practice provides the tools for mental health professionals to become knowledgeable in how, when and where to be a visible support. It is
also important to know from the LGBTQ perspective, what is actually helpful advocacy, and what is perceived as unsupportive.

Lastly, gay affirmative practice provides mental health professionals how to teach others to be supportive of the LGBTQ community. School psychologists frequently work with teachers, administrators, parents, and staff to build an environment of support for students. This would be the same for a student who identifies as LGBTQ. It is essential for school psychologists to know how to assist in building networks of support for LGBTQ students, who may experience fractures in their support systems due to their sexual or gender identity.

**Empirical Research on Education and Attitude Development for LGBTQ Issues**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) adults are two to three times more likely to seek mental health services related to mood, anxiety or depression (Cochran, Sullivan, & Mays, 2003). Many LGBTQ Americans face discrimination, social stigma, violence, homelessness, decreased family support and increased unemployment, it is imperative for mental health practitioners to be aware of the unique LGBTQ issues in order to be perceived as positive support. Since adults who identify as a sexual minority are more likely to seek mental health support, it is imperative that those providing support are both knowledgeable and competent in serving the needs of this population.

Mental health counselors, psychologists and therapists have varied amounts of training either during their coursework or once they begin their practice, which may indicate extreme variability in the competency of mental health professionals to be a true support for members of the LGBTQ community. When examining the higher education involved with obtaining licensure and certification, there is no standardization among programs when it comes to
teaching practitioners about the unique needs of the LGBTQ community (Sherry & Whilde, 2005; McCabe & Rubinson, 2008; Rogers & O’Bryon, 2008).

For school psychologists, the structure and guidance around LGBTQ competence is no more enlightened. While there are suggested guidelines in place for graduate preparation, there is currently no standardization among graduate programs teaching LGBTQ literacy in school psychology certification programs. Therefore, education pertaining to LGBTQ literacy for school psychologists generally occurs in continuing education, unless specific university preparation programs choose to add a component to their curriculum. While there are mandates determining the number of hours of continuing education, neither the K-12 system nor the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) specify the type or scope of continuing education that school psychologists must receive in order to maintain a valid license or certificate. It is very feasible that a school psychologist may receive little if any specific LGBTQ literacy training throughout their career. There is little literature defining the efficacy of continuing education programs for LGBTQ literacy in general, but even less targeting mental health professionals. It is non-existent for school psychologists.

Furthermore, recent research tells us views on LGBTQ issues and concerns are related to religious and spiritual views (Cotton-Huston & Wait, 2000). More specifically, Wolf (2009) found that religiosity was positively correlated with negative attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. It is therefore important to examine literature regarding spirituality and religion as it relates to mental health professionals’ attitudes toward those who identify as LGBTQ.

A closer examination of the current literature related to LGBTQ competency for mental health professionals is essential for gaining an understanding of where the field is lacking in their efforts for continuing education in the field. Continuing education for mental health practitioners
is offered through a variety of sources including, private professional development agencies, local colleges, workplace training and independent training facilitators. It is vital for all adult educators providing continuing education regarding LGBTQ awareness to understand the fundamental components necessary for facilitating a mental health professional who is competent to assist an LGBTQ client.

**University Level Pre-service Instruction**

As discussed previously, graduate programs for mental health counselors, therapists and psychologists sometimes provide scattered coverage of LGBTQ issues within their curriculum. Bahr, Brish, and Croteau (2000) discuss the training in the field of school psychology in relation to the needs of LGBTQ youth. They propose both school-based workshops for school psychologists and university training for graduate students in school psychology programs.

Sherry and Whilde (2005) found instruction for graduate students on LGBTQ issues is essential for mental health related graduate programs, nevertheless, they also found that this is only a component of less than half of these graduate programs. This section will examine the desirable components, which enhance LGBTQ competency within university graduate programs in the preparation of mental health professionals.

When examining Canadian universities, Alderson (2004) discovered that graduate counselor training programs typically only have three hours of training during the coursework devoted to LGBTQ issues. Because of these findings, Alderson (2004) proposes a curriculum containing five competencies related to LGBTQ competency, including (1) knowledge of LGBTQ issues, (2) advocacy skills, (3) sexual identity development, (4) working alliance with LGBTQ clients, and (5) assessment of LGBTQ clients. Within each of these competencies, Alderson (2004) proposes three sub-competencies, which include (1) insight into one’s own
assumptions, (2) understanding the client’s worldview, and (3) acquiring suitable intervention strategies. While the findings and recommendations are impressive, this quantitative study was based on a small sample of 10 counseling programs in Canada.

When examining the factors leading to self-efficacy in working with LGBTQ clients, Dillon and Worthington (2003) interviewed 336 graduate students enrolled in counselor training programs. They found that students who either identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered or purported to having LGBTQ friends and relatives felt the most prepared to work with LGBTQ clients. The components of their graduate programs which led them to feel the most competent to work with LGBTQ clients included opportunities to apply knowledge of working with LGBTQ clients, performing advocacy skills, maintaining awareness of their own attitudes of sexual identity development, developing a working relationship with an LGBTQ client, and assessing relevant underlying issues and problems of an LGBTQ client. This study highlights the importance of experiential learning through practicum programs at the university level.

Riggs and Fell (2010) examined how participation in a class devoted to the effects of heteronormativity would assist graduate students in gaining essential skills for working with people who identify as LGBTQ. This study used several assessment tools to gauge changes in attitude, LGBTQ competency, and knowledge about homosexuality as pre/post tests to determine effects of the class. The assessment tools included Attitudes Towards Homosexuals (attitudes toward LGBTQ people), Homophobic Behavior of Students Scale (behavioral intent), Sexual Orientation Counsellor Competency Scale (LGBTQ competency), and Knowledge about Homosexuality Questionnaire (factual knowledge about LGBTQ people). The result of this study indicates that training in understanding the effects of heteronormativity has a positive
change on all factors they examined. Riggs and Fell (2010) find that the effects of heteronormativity should be a necessary component of university level training. It is important to note that all participants in this study were female.

McCabe and Rubinson (2008) examined how graduate students are being prepared in school psychology and counseling programs to ensure an equal and safe learning environment for LGBTQ youth. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior as a theoretical base, McCabe and Rubinson (2008) studied the connection between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control and its impact on behavior intention. For the purposes of this study, behavior intention was defined as the subject’s desire and ability to intervene on behalf of an LGBTQ youth. The findings indicate that pre-service education is needed in the areas of LGBTQ harassment and ethical values/dilemmas in order to provide quality support to LGBTQ youth. The study also finds that there is a need for experiential learning components to teaching pre-service counselors to negotiate social justice issues. Mental health practitioners should have both supervised experiences in working with LGBTQ youth, and also a thorough self-examination of personal values before being reasonably equipped to act as social change agents to benefit LGBTQ youth.

The literature reviewed on graduate level course content discusses several essential components for students to facilitate competency in working with LGBTQ clients (Alderson, 2004; Bahr, Brish & Croteau, 2000; Dillon & Worthington, 2003; McCabe & Rubinson, 2008; Riggs & Fell, 2010; Sherry & Whilde, 2005). These components include (1) LGBTQ competency, including knowledge of LGBTQ issues, (2) advocacy skills, (3) sexual identity development, (4) working alliance with LGBTQ clients, (5) assessment of LGBTQ clients, (6) heteronormativity, (7) harassment, and (8) ethical dilemmas. In addition to classroom-based
learning, experiential learning opportunities to apply this knowledge are essential as well (Bahr, Brish & Croteau, 2000).

**Experiential Learning and Continuing Education Programs**

Since university programs are inconsistent when it comes to preparing mental health practitioners to effectively work with LGBTQ clients, ongoing continuing and adult education programs are essential for both filling the gaps created by the inconsistencies in graduate programs and for maintaining competency in LGBTQ issues for practicing mental health professionals. The conceptual pieces reviewed highlighted specific components and theoretical bases for achieving LGBTQ awareness.

Burnes and Singh (2010) discuss the importance of introducing social advocacy into practicum experiences. Kocarek and Pelling (2003) assert that not only is general role play important in honing counselor skills, but it is also important to offer three levels of role play. These levels require increasing complexity, knowledge of LGBTQ issues and observer feedback within a training setting. A critique of this conceptual article is that it is based on the authors’ reaction to an LGBTQ awareness workshop. Based on that one experience, the authors found only one component useful in teaching LGBTQ specific skills, which involved role-play. Moreover, the authors did not disclose their own theoretical base for creating this role-play matrix, which further limits the efficacy of their recommended training model.

Other studies provided a variety of tools useful in continuing education programs for mental health practitioners. Lyons, Bieszke, Dendy, Worthington, & Geogemiller, (2010) provide a variety of tools which, may be useful in continuing education programs, aimed at counselors and other professionals, including how to apply the Ethical Acculturation Model, which was originally proposed by Handelsman, Gottlieb and Knapp (2005), to determine
LGBTQ competence. McGeorge and Carlson (2010) describe a three-step model to assist heterosexual therapists to become more aware of their heteronormative assumptions and their role in the therapeutic process.

Smith, Foley, and Chaney (2008) explore the nexus between oppression and heterosexism and its implications for counselor education and professional continuing education. In this article, counselors are encouraged to explore their own biases and become sensitive to their own privileges and then to apply this knowledge when learning to be fully attentive to the unique needs of their LGBTQ clients. This article also explored the effects of race as an additional factor of oppression, and how it should be considered when working with LGBTQ clients of color.

Some researchers explore specific techniques to use with LGBTQ clients in continuing adult education for mental health professionals. Finkel, Storaasli, Bandele, and Schaefer (2003) found that role-play is an essential component. This study also recommended continued experiential exposure by exploring LGBTQ cultural immersion programs. They recommended that mental health professionals spend time in LGBTQ community centers and clubs to gain a personal understanding in the important issues within the LGBTQ community. Pearson (2003) found the use of popular music was helpful to increase awareness of sexual identity development, stereotypes and counseling interventions for LGBTQ clients. In this study 10 counselors completed pre and post surveys to assess how participation in eight weekly sessions, which included popular music, would improve knowledge, interest and attitudes toward those who identify as LGBTQ. The results indicated that there were significant gains in all areas assessed. One concern about this quantitative study is that there were only 10 participants.
Hays, Dean and Chang (2007) interviewed 16 counselors to explore how well trained they felt in addressing issues of privilege and oppression for LGBTQ clients in counseling sessions. The findings suggest several areas that should be addressed in continuing education. The first suggestion is that educators should assist learners in exploring their own beliefs regarding sexuality, oppression, and privilege. Another suggestion is that the discrepancy of power between counselor and client should be discussed. A third suggestion is the educator should teach how to incorporate privilege and oppression issues into their work with a client. Finally, the educators should teach the counselors how to reinforce a shift in therapy toward a systematic approach with a focus on client advocacy.

Peel (2002) interviewed 15 LGBTQ awareness trainers from the United Kingdom to determine effective strategies to decrease negative attitudes for adult participants in their workshops. The themes that emerged included challenging homophobia, discussing concepts of liberalism, and managing stereotypes.

Continuing education programs specifically targeting LGBTQ awareness have recently emerged. These programs are marketed to corporations and/or educational institutions to provide sensitivity, awareness, and skill building for working with LGBTQ populations.

Evans, Broido, and Wall (2004) examine a variety of components common to continuing education for mental health professionals. They found the “Beyond Tolerance Roadshow” was effective in both developing skills and strategies, and in increasing the likelihood that participants will act as social change agents when they return to their work setting. This workshop is designed to increase participants’ awareness, knowledge, and social justice action on LGBTQ issues. The objectives of the workshop are (1) to help participants access situations, develop strategies, and create action plans to address homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and
heterosexism; and (2) to provide an opportunity to network and build coalitions with other professionals. One critique of this study is that while they assessed the intention of participants to act as social change agents, there was no data gathered following a length of time to determine whether the participants actually had the opportunity to act as social change agents within their respective mental health settings.

Finkel, Storaasli, Bandele, and Schaefer (2003) also examine a packaged continuing education program, which focuses on creating LGBTQ inclusive environments. When they assessed the reaction of 66 graduate students and two administrators, they found “Safe Zone” had a positive impact by creating a more LGBTQ affirming environment in a university located in the southwest of the United States. Participation in “Safe Zone” involves attending a workshop, which includes ideas about how to recognize homophobia and heterosexism, discussion of terminology and campus issues, and tips on how to be an ally. Participants receive a safe zone button and sign to indicate their completion of the workshop. The button and sign are a visual symbol to the college community and students that an individual or entire department has taken the time to learn about the LGBTQ community. The authors made an important distinction that “Safe Zone” should supplement but not replace curriculum within graduate education programs for mental health professionals. Both academic and systemic changes are necessary to foster the growth of students who will become tomorrow’s professional psychologists. The authors assert that consideration should also be given to the inclusion of advanced curricula on the effects of oppression and heterosexism. Student should also be given the opportunity to engage in and receive research training that is LGBT affirmative.
Creating Therapeutic Environments Using LGBTQ Specific Programs and Skills

McCann (2001) proposes there are four ingredients to creating a lesbian and gay affirmative practice. These include understanding one’s own level of homophobia and heterosexism, specialist LGBTQ knowledge and knowledge of current research findings. Perez and Amadio (2004) also discuss the need for affirmative psychology in creating an LGBTQ affirmative practice.

Pope, Barret, Szymanski, Chung, Singaravelu, McLean, & Sanabria, (2004) propose that when delivering career counseling to LGBTQ clients, it is essential for the mental health professional to take a personal inventory of their own biases, understand LGBTQ specific client interventions (such as coming out), share information on existing LGBTQ resources and learn to be an advocate.

Chung (2003) analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the existing literature on providing career counseling specifically for LGBTQ clients. Chung reports that the strengths include theory development, empirical research, and guidelines for practice. One weakness is that lesbians are underrepresented in research. Another weakness is that bisexuals are completely ignored and transgendered research does not exist. The final weakness discussed is that there have been no formalized career assessment tools developed for working with the LGBTQ community.

Harding and Peel (2007) published a research study interviewing 16 university staff trainees who were mental health practitioners. The goal was to understand how to overcome heterosexism at work by affecting a positive change in organizational culture and individual belief systems. The authors describe a two-pronged approach involving legal and educational interventions to facilitate diversity awareness. The trainees’ perspective was that diversity
training provided a space for personal reflection. Trainees also reported that their ideas regarding heterosexism changed for the better because of the training. Finally, most trainees admitted to “slight” homophobia prior to the training, which they were previously unaware.

Harding and Peel (2007) found that legal and educational interventions affect positive changes to the workplace. It is unknown how effective other career counseling and affirmative psychology practices are with LGBTQ clients.

Using the Delphi method, Godfrey, Haddock, Fisher and Lund (2006) interviewed a panel of experts on counseling LGBTQ clients to determine the knowledge, experiences, and values that therapists should possess in order to provide quality therapy services to LGBTQ clients. In the standard Delphi method, experts are given questionnaires in rounds. At the end of each round, the answers are summarized by the facilitator. The experts are then encouraged to re-examine their responses with the goal that the experts will provide a unified expert opinion. This study found that therapists’ values (open minded and open to diversity, awareness of one’s own comfort level values, biases and prejudices about sex, gender and sexual orientation), theoretical orientation (understanding how societal ideologies and practices affect LGBTQ persons, and awareness of the different theories of sexual orientation formation and understanding social constructionism and biological/essentialist perspectives) were both key to providing quality services to LGBTQ clients. While this study provided valuable information regarding qualities necessary to provide LGBTQ affirmative counseling, unfortunately they did not identify the criteria they used to determine the level of expertise of the participants. The article also mentioned that a modified Delphi study was conducted, but there was no justification or rationale provided for this modification.
Other articles also mentioned specific skills, which are helpful in treating clients who identify as LGBTQ. The Dillon and Worthington (2003) study was discussed earlier. This article was comprised of five smaller studies. One of those studies found that counselors who self-identified as LGBTQ affirmative were more likely to keep current with the research relating to the LGBTQ community, which positively influences their self-efficacy in being a support to an LGBTQ client.

Israel, Gorcheva, Walther, Sulzner, & Cohen (2008) asked 14 therapists to identify a broad range of variables that characterize helpful and unhelpful experiences with LGBTQ clients. They found the following to be helpful when treating a client who identifies as LGBTQ: (1) when the client was able to choose from a selection of LGBTQ therapists, (2) when therapists interacted with other LGBTQ competent professionals, and (3) the therapist adhered to a therapeutic approach. Therapists rated LGBTQ clients from impoverished backgrounds as a variable typically present in the unhelpful experiences with LGBTQ clients, indicating the need for further research on providing quality mental health services for LGBTQ individuals who lack financial resources.

The review of the literature tells us that there are a number of LGBTQ specific skills and services which are conducive to competent practice for LGBTQ clients. These are skills and services which should be part of both pre-service training and continuing adult education for practicing mental health professionals. The literature supported the use of affirming psychology practices, LGBTQ advocacy, self examination of personal values, and access to LGBTQ resources creating safe and inclusive environments for clients who identify as a sexual minority.

Graybill, Varjas, Meyers, and Watson (2009) interviewed 22 gay-straight alliance (GSA) advisers in the K-12 school system to understand what strategies are currently being used to
advocate for LGBTQ students and their effectiveness. Advisers reported that they considered several situational variables (such as personalities involved, their own sexual identity) prior to determining how to be an advocate for an LGBTQ student.

The majority of the participants reported that their role in advocacy was primarily reactive instead of proactive. They reported that they did not necessarily intervene unless a student reported difficulty, and then the GSA adviser would act on their behalf. The study also found that one of the roles of the school psychologist is to serve as a school-based resource for both students and teachers. This finding stresses the importance of LGBTQ competency for school psychologists. One of the recommendations was that the GSA advisors and all educators should develop their own competency related to LGBTQ issues. One problem with this study is that there was very little ethnic diversity. The majority of the participants were white (20) with one Jewish and one Latino participant. The Black voice was completely nonexistent.

The research reviewed indicates certain skills should be developed at certain times during the educational process of school psychologists to develop the necessary tools to become competent in serving the LGBTQ population and maintain those skills. Because there are no safeguards in place to ensure this learning is occurring, those who teach upcoming school psychology students, mentor school psychology interns and provide continuing education programs for LGBTQ awareness to school psychologists need to give critical attention to the skills each learner has and what each learner needs. Until specific standardized competencies for the education and continuing education for school psychologists occurs, it is imperative for educators to continually assess skills, encourage critical reflection, and provide remediation where it is necessary.
The literature suggests eight important components for university level instruction. These competencies include (1) LGBTQ cultural competency, including knowledge of LGBTQ issues, (2) advocacy skills, (3) sexual identity development, (4) working alliance with LGBTQ clients, (5) assessment of LGBTQ clients, (6) heteronormativity, (7) harassment, and (8) ethical dilemmas. Because so few colleges comprehensively address LGBTQ awareness in advocacy in their curriculum, the burden to educate school psychologists occurs at either the internship level or the continuing education level. In the internship level, school psychology mentors should assess which components of training were not taught during graduate school and tailor the internship to address those missing elements.

Adult educators who provide continuing education to practicing school psychologists should also assess the level of LGBTQ competence of their learners to mold the training to the specific needs of the participants. Perhaps the use of pre-assessment questionnaires would be appropriate to determine the scope and sequence of the training provided. While providing the background competence, the literature suggests for continuing education trainers to explore topics such as popular culture, music, affirmative psychology, legal interventions, and connecting to LGBTQ resources and advocates.

More specific direction is needed in standards written by the national organizations regarding the pre-service and continuing and adult education for mental health professional regarding LGBTQ competency. These standards should outline specific content so there is some standardization of skills. The standards should also specify the amount of time devoted to teaching these competencies and how frequently it should be repeated for mastery of competency skills for continuing licensure requirements. A competency-based requirement would be ideal.
The Influence of Religion and Spirituality on LGBTQ Competency

It is also important to examine the influence of the mental health professional’s religion and/or spirituality on the ability to support LGBTQ clients. While religion, faith, and spirituality are somewhat different from each other, an often cited empirical study is James Fowler (1981) study of faith that resulted in his study of faith development where he asserts that faith development occurs in six stages. The final stage, which Fowler (1981) called Universalizing, occurred when a person views others as part of a universal community, who should be treated with compassion and with the universal principles of love and justice. These universal principles of love and justice can be related to LGBTQ social justice advocacy work. While several articles have been written about the role of religion, faith, and spirituality on LGBTQ perceptions of spiritual counselors or pastoral counselors (Newman, Danenfelser, & Benishek, 2002; Evans, 2003; Rainey & Trusty, 2007; Rosik, Griffith, & Cruz, 2007), much less has been written about the role of religious views on mental health professionals in the public sector.

Fallon, Dobmeier, Reiner, Casquarelli, Giglia, and Goodwin (2013) wrote a conceptual article about reconciling spiritual values conflicts for counselors and lesbian or gay clients. In this article, the authors suggest using critical theory for teaching spiritual and pastoral counselors to more fully understand their own spiritual viewpoint to assist LGBTQ clients to build dignity, justice, and autonomy in clients. The authors assert that the only way for counselors to fully advocate with and for their LGBTQ clients is by using critical theory.

Vann (2011) investigated how marriage and family therapist graduate training programs respond to the specific diversity conflict between religion and sexual orientation. The author found that incorporating religious and LGBTQ topics both in the classroom and in supervision
were significant predictors of sexual orientation counselor competency and students' effectiveness at managing the conflict between religion and sexual orientation. The results suggest a need for an open forum for students to voice their opinions to faculty. The results also suggest the need for LGBTQ sensitivity training and diversity training throughout the program, rather than an individual class, which does not integrate the concepts from the entire educational program.

Linnemeyer’s (2009) mixed-methods study examined demographic and personal variables proposed to predict social justice advocacy, and conceptualized as social justice advocacy related attitudes and behaviors with psychology graduate students. The quantitative results indicated that political involvement was the strongest predictor of students' social justice advocacy, followed by spirituality and multicultural competency. The findings indicate that the second strongest predictor of social justice advocacy is spirituality, which lends support to spirituality being a motivating factor or source of support in shaping individuals' social justice advocacy attitudes and pursuit of advocacy engagement.

Several studies specifically examined the influence of religion and/or spirituality on school psychologists’ attitudes and perceptions of those who identify as LGBTQ (Thul, 2003; Wolf, 2009; Bensusan, 2011). Thul (2003) examined the attitudes and feelings of school psychologists toward gay male and/or lesbian parents. In this quantitative study, a random sample of 500 school psychologists, who are members of the National Association of School Psychology (NASP) were surveyed using a questionnaire. The results indicated that overall, school psychologists have positive attitudes and feelings toward gay male and/or lesbian parents. Further, the study found that school psychologists who were either male, homosexual/bisexual, had no religious affiliation, or worked in an urban school district were more likely to have
exposure to a gay male and/or lesbian friend, relative, or co-worker, which had a significant impact on having positive attitudes related to LGBTQ issues or concerns.

Wolf (2009) investigated school psychologists and school psychologists in training, to examine how gender, training level, religious affiliation, and previous interpersonal contact with those who identify as LGBTQ might influence attitudes toward LGBTQ people, and thus impact the work with students who identify as LGBTQ. The findings indicate religiosity was a predictor of negative attitudes toward those who identify LGBTQ. It remains unclear how religiosity is defined.

Bensusan (2011) surveyed school psychologists' actual and desired post-certification training for work with LGBTQ youth, their perceptions of their knowledge of LGBTQ issues, and their perceived need for additional training for work with LGBQ youth population. The results of this study indicates that heterosexism, as well as increased difficulty reconciling one's own religious conflict appears to be negatively related to the desire to promote social justice leadership in schools and fulfill the responsibility to knowledgeably and effectively meet the diverse needs of sexual minority students.

The research cited above relating to mental health professionals indicates a strong relationship between religion and spirituality on the ability to support LGBTQ clients using affirming practice and beliefs. Fallon et al (2013) recommend using critical theory to assist mental health professionals to recognize the need for advocacy strategies in therapeutic practice with LGBTQ clients. The dearth of research on this topic warrants further investigation.

In a time where the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act was challenged by the Supreme Court and the recent repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” it is essential that all
practitioners of mental health service to become competent in LGBTQ issues. The field of adult education also provides relevant and essential information for the current study.

**Queer Cultural Work in Adult Education**

School psychologists are adult learners, and ideally, they can learn to be advocates for their LGBTQ students and clients. How one learns to become more responsive is a lifelong process, and the queer cultural work in adult education can offer some direction here. Queer cultural work in adult education gives the foundation for creating affirming knowledge for those who identify as LGBTQ. Several adult educators have given attention to LGBTQ perspectives in adult education. These discourses are essential in building a framework for social justice advocacy for the LGBTQ community. The following section will discuss the literature on creating LGBTQ awareness within adult education settings, adult education LGBTQ advocacy work, and where this adult education is currently taking place.

Queer knowledge can be defined as queer praxis that is built on contextual, relational, and dispositional analysis of multi-layered oppressions (Grace & Hill, 2004). Those who identify as a sexual minority challenge the assumptions of heteronormativity in everyday life. When examining the queer cultural work in adult education, three themes emerged, including creating LGBTQ awareness within adult education settings, LGBTQ advocacy work, and the locale for adult education for LGBTQ advocacy and awareness. For the purposes of this research, LGBTQ advocacy work is defined as supporting the civil rights of those who identify as LGBTQ. Creating adult education curricula includes articles related to important considerations and components for creating programs, which promote LGBTQ advocacy. LGBTQ advocacy includes specific techniques related to LGBTQ advocacy work. The locale
for LGBTQ advocacy includes articles related to where adult education LGBTQ advocacy work is occurring.

**Creating LGBTQ Awareness within Adult Education Settings**

Grace and Hill (2004) assert that if adult educators are to engage in teaching–learning interactions in a lived and knowable community that includes queer both in principle and in practice, then they have to unlearn social lessons and cultural practices which are expressions of a politics of complicity that perpetuates heterosexism and homophobia.

Chapman and Gedro (2009) examine human resource development literature to explore the implications of self-disclosure and the benefit of incorporating LGBTQ issues in the curriculum. Self-disclosure can include the instructor’s own sexual orientation or revelation of their own biases and how they have grown from dealing with these biases. They assert self-disclosure, while risky at times, provides an atmosphere of sharing, openness, and growth, which is beneficial to adult learning. An open environment also facilitates effective learning communities. Lastly, Chapman and Gedro (2009) warn adult educators they must create learning environments with overt actions. These actions include stating acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, establishing class policies on acceptance and discourse, and following through on removing barriers to inclusive environments.

Grace and Wells (2006) examine effective components to training teachers in Canada. They discuss the importance of pre-service training, LGBTQ advocacy groups, and continuing professional development within the K-12 setting. Prior to entering the classroom, educators receive coursework with intentional inclusion of LGBTQ awareness in their undergraduate programs. Additionally, a committee was formed as a forum for students, faculty, staff, and community members to take up issues of sex, sexual and gender differences in education, and
culture. This group is instrumental in providing ongoing input for the LGBTQ climate. Once teachers have been in the classroom, they are able to obtain professional development, which is a three-part workshop, which includes building awareness of sexual orientation and gender identity issues, exploring diversity issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, and creating safe and caring learning environments for LGBTQ students.

It is apparent that careful attention should be paid to the educator’s attitude and knowledge. It is clear that prior to embarking on an LGBTQ education program, educators must spend time critically reflecting on both their own views, and the level of self-disclosure in which they are comfortable in the classroom setting. Other considerations include how the adult educator will create an open environment, which is conducive to learning for all.

**LGBTQ Advocacy Work**

Advocacy work is a form of activism. Activism can be defined as “direct action contesting or upholding one side of a controversial issue” (Hill, 2004, p. 85). Advocacy work can include visible support. Visibility can include having equitable classrooms, in which all voices are heard and understood. It can also involve assisting learners to use inclusive language. The learning environment should actively work to confront marginalizing behaviors. Educators should teach learners to recognizing antigay bias, identifying unique needs of LGBTQ students, actively recruit LGBTQ students, and work toward creating resources for the LGBTQ community (Hill, 2004).

Misawa (2010b) proposes that adult educators should become familiar with policies related to LGBTQ safety. This would allow educators to become advocates in creating a learning atmosphere conducive to all learners.
Duhigg, Rostosky, Gray & Wimsatt (2010) examine the influences that contribute to the creation of LGBTQ allies by interviewing 12 allies. They found that there were five qualities, which appeared common in the development of an ally. These include (1) meaningful encounters with LGBT individuals whom they liked and cared about, (2) engaging in critical thinking about privilege, (3) participating in social justice activism, (4) having early role models, and (5) having an appreciation of diversity in general. The implications for fostering LGBTQ advocacy includes creating opportunities for learners to meet and develop meaningful relationships with those who identify as LGBTQ, teaching learners what is important in making a difference for someone who identifies as LGBTQ, and asking learners to make a commitment to some form of social justice work.

When examining recent LGBTQ advocacy work, Walker (2009) explored some of the creative ways that activists have educated others on LGBTQ awareness. Adult educators can use some of these techniques to create opportunities for learners to engage in activist work. One example involved sending letters to the editor, when an injustice is noted. Another example is picketing establishments, which have participated in anti-LGBTQ policies and procedures. Shop-ins were also orchestrated, where LGBTQ shoppers would converge on an establishment and pay for items with money stamped with LGBTQ supportive slogans.

Advocacy work can be incorporated into curriculum to promote LGBTQ activism. Creating opportunities for activism in learners fosters awareness and increases the likelihood of LGBTQ affirmative actions in learners. Adult educators should be creative in developing ways to encourage advocacy work for learners. Additionally, finding ways to bridge meaningful relationships with those who identify as LGBTQ, also fosters activism.
Locale for Adult Education for LGBTQ Advocacy and Awareness

Hill (1996) completed an analysis of knowledge produced by gay and lesbian people in selected periods of history. He defines this knowledge as “fugitive knowledge,” since it is constructed outside of the dominant social discourse and, therefore, escapes the control of privileged spectators. He asserts that popular adult education has been essential to the process of knowledge construction in the LGBTQ communities.

Hill (1995) conducted a review of the literature related to where this popular education occurs. He identified ten locations of popular adult education that counters homophobia and promotes personal and collective opportunities for gay and lesbian adult growth, which include (1) educational institutions, such as colleges and universities, (2) quasi educational, such as cultural organizations or occupational associations, (3) mass media, (4) gay press, (5) service organizations, (6) private non-profit organizations, (7) religious organizations, (8) political organizations (9) social organizations, and 10) occupational organizations. Adult educators can obtain LGBTQ advocacy information from these organizations to supplement their curriculum and promote advocacy within the classroom.

In his literature review researching higher education policies for sexual minorities in the academy, Hill (2003) concluded what types of policies are necessary for higher education institutions to promote an environment that conducive to safe advocacy for the LGBTQ community. One of the most important policies needed is for higher education institutions to develop plans for competency for faculty, administration, and counselors on sexual minority issues. Special attention should be given to counseling services and health care providers on campus to ensure that the LGBTQ is not further marginalized in their attempts to cope with societal stresses that oppress.
The queer cultural research in adult education highlights the importance for adult educators to attend to self-awareness, curriculum, and environment to promote LGBTQ competency in learners. Prior to embarking on a quest to teach LGBTQ advocacy, educators should begin with critically examining their own background, choice of language, ways they convey meaning and how their personal history impacts them. The next step is to examine how this is perceived by others. Educators should understand their biases and decide how appropriate it is to disclose these biases to learners or whether it is important to engage in co-teaching strategies to provide balance. Adult educators are also encouraged to examine their curriculum to determine whether they are providing opportunities for learners to establish meaningful relationships with those who identify as LGBTQ, make a commitment to engage in social advocacy work, and explicitly teaching what is important in making a difference for someone who identifies as LGBTQ.

In the classroom setting, adult educators should ensure that all voices are heard, address marginalizing comments, and actively create equitable learning spaces. While this appears to be a lot to attend to within the adult education classroom, it is here where inclusive knowledge becomes the impetus for advocacy work.

**Summary**

Students who are having difficulty learning, social or behavioral difficulty within the K-12 setting are often referred to the school psychologist. K-12 students who identify as LGBTQ are more likely to have suicidal thoughts, make a suicide attempt, experience truancy, become homeless, have a lower grade point average, be a victim of bullying, and less likely to attend college than their heterosexual peers (Robinson & Espelage, 2011). School psychologists are responsible for providing recommendations at the district, school, and student level. It is
important for school psychologists to be aware of the district level interventions, school level interventions and interventions appropriate to assist each of these students on an individual level.

District level interventions may include designing or arranging for LGBTQ awareness workshops for faculty. Train the trainer workshops for school psychologist may be helpful to bring interventions back to their school district to facilitate district-wide LGBTQ competency. Many times administrators need to become gently reminded through awareness activities to make policy level changes at the district level. Quite often school psychologists are the most trained personnel employed in a school district, making the task of enlightenment for school boards, superintendents, directors, and principals appropriate for school psychologists.

School level interventions may include the creation of a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), assisting in maintaining a GSA, or providing school wide training for teachers and teacher assistants. A GSA is a student-run club at the high school or middle school level that brings together LGBTQ and straight students to support each other, provide a safe place to socialize, and create a platform for activism. Research confirms that GSA’s can play a positive role in how LGBTQ students perceive themselves in relationship to the school. Lee (2002) found that GSA membership had a positive effect on student’s academic performance, enhanced their physical safety, and increased their perceived sense of belonging to the school community. School wide training for faculty will promote acceptance and can potentially foster social justice.

Individual level LGBTQ student support from a school psychologist can appear in many forms. School psychologists should be comfortable confronting any form of harassment directly. School psychologists should also signal ongoing approachability and safety, by displaying stickers, posters, or books, which indicate awareness and sensitivity to LGBTQ issues. Students who are referred for an evaluation who identify as LGBTQ also may need the school
psychologist to advocate on their behalf to recommend supportive changes to the school environment.

The importance of LGBTQ competency in school psychologists continues to become more apparent, yet the licensing and certification regulations for this competency continue to lag behind. As a result, there is no uniformity in skills for advocating and working with LGBTQ youth for school psychologists. The development of LGBTQ competence, advocacy, and social justice programs for school psychologists is imperative. The review of the literature suggests that gay affirmative practice and the Theory of Planned Behavior may be the avenue in which these skills may be developed in school psychologists.

This chapter explored the literature related to the theoretical framework, and relevant adult education themes. Critical perspectives of adult education, gay affirmative practice, and the Theory of Planned Behavior are woven together to provide a theoretical base for the current study. In reviewing the empirical literature related to continuing education for mental health professionals, it is apparent that there is no standardization for LGBTQ competency. The adult education literature on queer cultural work outlines the locale and methods for LGBTQ advocacy work.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is twofold: a) to examine the level of LGBTQ competency and LGBTQ social advocacy work of practicing school psychologists, and b) to explore how active social justice advocates for LGBTQ K-12 students perceive they acquired their skills, knowledge and expertise. The questions that guide this study are: (1) What do school psychologists know about LGBTQ issues and how do they deal with it in their practice? (2) How does a school psychologist evolve from tacitly knowledgeable to LGBTQ competent to LGBTQ advocacy? (3) What skills, traits, or life experiences are instrumental in shaping school psychologists in becoming a social change agent for LGBTQ youth?

In particular, five hypotheses were examined:

H₁: LGBTQ affirmative practice scores will positively correlate with social justice advocacy behavior.

H₂: Perceived norm will be positively correlated with LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior.

H₃: Behavioral control will be positively correlated with LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior.

H₄: Behavior intention will be positively correlated with LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior.

H₅: Perceived norm, behavioral control, behavior intention, and past behavior will predict LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior.
As stated in Chapter One, there is a lack in the current study regarding the process by which some school psychologists become LGBTQ social justice advocates; furthermore, there is a dearth of adult education literature on how to teach LGBTQ social justice advocacy skills.

This study employed a mixed methods research design. This chapter will begin with a brief overview of mixed methods research. The overview will include a discussion of the key assumptions and the relationship of mixed methods research to the current study. Next, I will provide a discussion on my role as a researcher, including research interests and its influence on my positionality. I will then discuss participant selection, data collection, data analysis, verification, and trustworthiness. The chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

**Mixed Methods Research Paradigm**

Current literature acknowledges three general research design types, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative research allows researchers to test “objective theories by examining the relationship among variables” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Typically, this type of research measures observable and quantifiable data, which the researcher then analyzes. Qualitative research allows researchers to explore and understand “the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Researchers gather data with methods including observation, interviewing, and collecting artifacts. The researchers then make meaning from this data through interpretation.

Mixed methods research uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data to interpret meaning. In order to define mixed methods research, here I provide discussion of the history and debates of mixed methods research, the challenges and benefits associated with mixed methods research, examine the use of mixed methods research in the various disciplines that inform this study, examine types of mixed methods research, and discuss the benefits of
using mixed methods research within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) research and the field of school psychology.

**History and Debates of Mixed Methods Research**

Creswell and Clark (2011) discuss five phases in the development of mixed methods research, as we know it today. The first phase, the formative period, occurred between the 1950’s and the 1980’s, when psychology researchers began to use more than one method of study, including observation and testing, which was a precursor to mixed methods research as we know it today. The second phase, the paradigm debate period, occurred during the 1970’s and 1980’s. The debate involved scholars arguing whether or not qualitative and quantitative data could be combined, because qualitative data were linked with certain philosophical assumptions and qualitative data were connected to other philosophical assumptions (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The third phase, known as the procedural development period, began because of the debate during the second period. During this period, there was an emphasis on the development of classification systems for procedures and types of mixed methods research. In the 1990’s, the fourth phase, termed the advocacy and expansion period emerged, when researchers began to advocate and publish manuals on mixed methods research. There was an emphasis on the rationale and purpose of mixed methods research. The last six to eight years could be termed the reflective period. During this current period, there is an emphasis on current assessment, looking to the future of mixed methods research, and constructive criticisms challenging mixed methods research.

Many writers have discussed some of the challenges facing mixed methods research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Castro, Kellison, Boyd, & Kopak, A., 2010; Creswell & Clark, 2011). Five of these debates are discussed here. While many more debates have arisen, these
five are salient to the current discussion. The first debate involves the ongoing flux in the definitions of terms within mixed methods research. There are many fluctuating responses to define mixed methods research. These shifts cause the field of mixed methods research to constantly redefine itself.

A second debate is the questionable use of qualitative and quantitative descriptors. The use of binary descriptors can be distracting in mixed methods research as a whole. The field questions whether the terms qualitative and quantitative are useful in today’s research. Some propose that in essence a “bilingual” language should be developed to describe the hybrid approach to this methodology.

A third debate is whether mixed methods research is actually a new approach. It appears that certain researchers, such as in the field of psychology, have utilized a hybrid approach when research methods were in their infancy. It is clear that some are hesitant to use mixed methods approaches because they are less comfortable with this methodology because the perception is that it is in its infancy, when in reality, certain fields have been using mixed method approaches for over 60 years.

Some mixed methods researchers also debate whether this approach privileges post positivism. These researchers assert that qualitative and interpretive approaches are marginalized, thus relegating these forms of research to a secondary status. The concern is that some researchers feel that the quantitative data legitimizes the qualitative data. Qualitative researchers object to this assumption.

The last debate is over the plethora of design possibilities in mixed methods research. There is a continuing debate over how many types of design possibilities are available in mixed
methods research and which of these is the appropriate fit for research questions. Later in this paper, I will briefly discuss some of these design configurations.

**Challenges and Benefits of Mixed Methods Research**

There are both challenges and benefits to doing mixed methods research. Creswell and Clark (2011) discuss three primary challenges. One is that the researcher needs to be skilled in both qualitative and quantitative research procedures. For some this is not practical because most fields use one method over the other almost exclusively, so it may be difficult for a researcher to develop expertise in both (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Secondly, using mixed methods research can be very time consuming. Essentially the researcher is completing two studies and analyzing the data received from both methods. Many do not have the time to devote to using mixed methods study with funding deadlines. It is also possible that approval process for mixed methods studies can be more complex, which also consumes valuable time (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Finally, using mixed methods research uses many more resources than a study that is purely qualitative or quantitative. Because there are more stages and/or simultaneous data collection, mixed methods research may require more than one researcher. Additionally there is the cost for analyzing both qualitative data (transcription, coding software) and quantitative data (survey costs, and software programs). These are all reasons that mixed methods may be underutilized as a research methodology.

In spite of the challenges, there are also a number of benefits. Mixed methods bring all of the strengths typically associated with qualitative research. Qualitative research provides a greater understanding of the context (Greene, 2007). Qualitative research also allows space for the voices of the participants to be heard directly. Lastly, the researcher is not relegated to the background, but is an active participant in the data collection (Creswell & Clark, 2011).
Mixed methods research also brings the strengths typically associated with quantitative research. Examples of these strengths include quantitative research can provide results that have the ability to be generalizable to specific populations. Quantitative research relies on interpretations that are not solely made by the researcher (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Further, mixed methods research also allows researchers to use all of the available tools for data collection. This methodology allows the researcher to be flexible in designing the study and the tools used to collect data for the research. Mixed methods research also allows the researcher to answer research questions that cannot be fully answered using methods that are solely qualitative or quantitative. For example, mixed methods research can attempt to better explain why certain quantitative results were obtained. The results can be more fully explored (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Mixed methods research also bridges the divide between quantitative researchers and qualitative researchers. At times, this divide can be adversarial. Mixed methods research allows for better collaboration between disciplines and widens opportunities, rather than limiting them (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Greene (2007) advises that mixed methods research allows for greater strength in dependability because it allows the researcher to use triangulation between the qualitative and quantitative data sets.

In addition, multiple worldviews or paradigms are possible using mixed methods studies. The researcher is relegated to certain worldviews when choosing either qualitative or quantitative research methods. It also may help to focus on the pragmatism related to the research rather than other distracters (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Lastly, mixed methods research encourages the use of both numbers and words to solve research questions. Because of this flexibility, it allows researchers to be more practical and, to
use both inductive and/or deductive reasoning when conducting a study (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

**Mixed Methods Research Within Disciplines**

Because my study is grounded in multiple disciplines, it is important to discuss some of the research associated with mixed methods design as it relates to these disciplines. I will discuss mixed methods research in light of behavioral sciences, health psychology, social justice, school psychology and research related to LGBTQ issues.

Lopez-Fernandez and Molina-Azorin (2011) examined behavioral science journals between 2003 and 2008. Overall, they found and reviewed 1,958 articles. Their findings showed an increase in the diversity and design of mixed methods research within the behavioral science field. The results also indicated that mixed methods research increased in popularity and thus acceptance during the identified period of time.

Dures, Rumsey, Morris, and Gleeson (2010) discuss mixed methods research as being particularly well suited for health psychology. The ability for mixed method research to adopt differing research methods to suit the research question is meaningful to the health psychology field. Additionally, mixed methods research allows the researcher to be responsive to practical and ethical issues that can arise when working with clinical populations.

Mertens (2012) discussed the importance of transformative mixed methods design when examining both social justice and cultural competence issues. She further discusses the importance of using a framework to assist with the research. There are four components to this framework. They include axiology, ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Axiology refers to beliefs about the meaning of ethics and moral behavior. Ontology refers to beliefs about the nature of reality. Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge and the relationship between
the knower and that, which would be known. Methodology refers to beliefs about the process of systematic inquiry. These four components are important to keep the researcher grounded in the social justice framework.

Powell, Mihalas, Onwuegbuzie, Suldo, and Daley (2008) examined the trends in school psychology research utilizing mixed methods approaches. They found that mixed methods research is on the rise within the field of school psychology. They theorized that researchers in school psychology are likely using mixed methods research more frequently than the study indicates because it is in the nature of the job of school psychologist to use both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques. In daily practice, school psychologists use tests and measurements, observations, interviews, and medical histories to diagnose, treat and assist with learners’ educational difficulties. It is also federally mandated for school psychologists to rely on a multiple assessment methods to provide a diagnosis and propose treatment alternatives.

Bettinger (2010) proposes mixed methods study is optimal in LGBTQ research. There is a need for more complex and expansive research using histories, qualitative methods paired with quantitative data gathering techniques. While the research related to LGBTQ studies remains marginalized, when it does occur, it should be meaningful.

There seems to be a consensus within the fields of behavioral sciences, health psychology, social justice, school psychology and LGBTQ studies that mixed methods research is both appropriate and becoming more utilized in each of these fields respectively. The gain in popularity and acceptability in each of these fields of study individually, strengthens the argument to use mixed methods research design in the current study. Thus, a mixed methods research design is well suited for a study relating to school psychologists and how they become social justice advocates for LGBTQ youth.
Approaching This Mixed Methods Research Study

Over the years, many researchers have presented a variety of ways to classify mixed methods research (Cook & Reichardt, 1979; Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989; Creswell, 1994; Greene, 2008; Creswell & Clark, 2011). Here I provide a discussion of the approaches to mixed methods research, including convergent parallel design, sequential design, embedded design, transformative design, and multiphase design, to provide background to my own approach.

Approaches to Mixed Methods Research

Creswell and Clark (2011) assert there are five distinct approaches to mixed methods research. Convergent parallel design is also referred to as the convergent design. Convergent parallel design occurs when the researcher conducts both the qualitative and the quantitative portions of the research simultaneously. Both of the portions are prioritized equally, and then the researcher interprets all of the results for an overall understanding (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Sequential design has two distinct sub designs. The explanatory sequential design begins with quantitative data collection. The researcher then uses the results of the quantitative data to formulate the qualitative portion of the research. Once both methods are complete, the researcher completes an overall interpretation. The exploratory sequential design begins with qualitative data collection, which then builds to the quantitative data collection (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Embedded design occurs when the researcher “collects and analyzes both quantitative and qualitative data within a traditional quantitative or qualitative design” and then a supplemental strand is added of the opposite design type to enhance the overall design (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 71). Transformative design uses quantitative data collection and analysis, followed up with qualitative data analysis within a transformative theoretical framework. The researcher
adopts an interactive stance in which he/she identifies and challenges social injustices (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The multiphase design combines both sequential and concurrent strands over a period of time. Most frequently, this design is used in program evaluation to support the development, adaption, and evaluation of a specific program (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Greene (2007) discusses the use of convergence and extension components in mixed methods design. She defines convergence as “the use of two or more different methods to measure the same phenomenon” (Greene, 2007, p. 122). This method is used when a researcher would like to use the quantitative data to confirm the qualitative data and vice versa as in triangulating the data. Extension is used when the researcher uses one form of data to extend the other form of data (Greene, 2007). Either the qualitative data can further explore the quantitative data, or the quantitative data can expand on the qualitative data. Greene (2007) also discusses integrated mixed methods research, which occurs when one method of data collection intentionally interacts with another during the course of the study. The most common integrated mixed methods research involves blending. Blending occurs when the researcher uses two or more different methods to assess various facets of a complex phenomenon (Greene, 2007).

Each of these designs has a specific purpose and usefulness. Later, I will discuss explanatory sequential design and blending in detail, as it is applicable to the design of my study.

This Study as an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Research Design

This study was an explanatory sequential mixed methods research study. I started with a survey of school psychologists, and then proceeded to conduct qualitative interviews with selected participants that fit particular criteria as discussed below. This choice of a mixed methods study is built into the rationale for the study.
Given the frequency of teen suicide related to sexuality, the current study is important to provide adequate support for K-12 students who identify as LGBTQ. School psychologists are on the front line to both advocate directly with students and advocate on the systems level for safer, more accepting and responsive school environments.

I selected quantitative instruments that have established histories for being useful data gathering tools. The Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (Crisp, 2006b) has been used with a variety of mental health practitioners, however practicing school psychologists have not yet been assessed using this scale. The Theory of Planned Behavior has recently been used to assess potential for social justice advocacy (Durantini, Albarracín, Mitchell, Earl, & Gillette, 2006; McCabe & Rubinson, 2008) with promising results. I developed survey questions that draw on the Theory of Planned Behavior based on a guide created by Fishbein and Ajzen (2010), which advises how to develop a survey based on the Theory of Planned Behavior. Both of these tools will be discussed in greater detail at the end of the chapter.

Mixed methods research is recommended for LGBTQ research because of the complexity and multifaceted nature of sexual identity, it has the potential to provide a deeper understanding (Bettinger, 2010). It is also recommended within the field of school psychology (Powell et al, 2008). The inclusion of quantitative research tools may make this study more appealing for researchers in the behavioral sciences field who are slow to accept purely qualitative research. It is also typical in the daily work of a school psychologist. Both qualitative and quantitative measures are used for diagnostic assessment, which also validates this research methodology for the current study.

The benefits of qualitative research allow participants to be open to express their thoughts, feelings, and stories in their own words to create rich detail, which is lacking in studies
using quantitative data alone. Qualitative research also allows the researcher to explore whatever avenue and form the data takes, while quantitative data confines the researcher to the factors and variables originally identified.

Lastly, the mixed-method design used in the study allowed me to explore the results that arose from the quantitative data (as discussed in Chapter Four) in a deeper way by conducting qualitative interviews with selected participants. I was able to not only answer how many school psychologists have the skills and the intention to act as social justice advocates, but also to explore how they became social justice advocates for LGBTQ youth through interviews.

**My Positionality and the Impact on My Research**

My own positionality is also very important to this study. I identify as an African American woman who is a sexual minority, and I am a certified school psychologist by trade. My positionality may have been relevant to participants who were in the interview level of the study. Because building rapport was essential to obtain in-depth stories and qualitative data, I told each interviewee my gender identity, sexual orientation, and racial identity at the start of the interview.

I have been employed as a school psychologist since 1999 within the K-12 environment in Pennsylvania. During that time, I published one article on how to work effectively with youth who identify as LGBTQ (Betts, 2004). My interest in advocacy and competence began much earlier with my master’s theses, a qualitative study on how college officials viewed the importance of diversity, including ethnicity, sexuality, and racial diversity. Diversity issues and advocacy have held my interest for most of my adult life.

The current study represents an emic perspective. The term emic was coined by Kenneth Pike (1954) as a linguistic term to define the subjective understanding and account of meaning in
the sounds of languages. Anthropologists, such as Margaret Mead expanded the use of this term to define research from a perceived insider perspective in research (Onwuegbuzie, Johnson, & Collins, 2011). Bettinger (2010) discusses the LGBTQ implications of research from an emic perspective. He defines emic as when the researcher “represents the viewpoint of the members of a culture being studies or observed” (Bettinger, 2010, p. 52). He explains that there are both positive and negative factors that are involved when the researcher has an inside perspective. As the researcher I have an inside perspective in two ways, as a practicing school psychologist and as a sexual minority.

Being an inside researcher can be positive to establish rapport, generate salient questions, and use context appropriate terminology (Bettinger, 2010). Survey participants were not necessarily aware of my ethnicity or sexual orientation unless they know me personally. Interview participants may be less suspicious and more at ease sharing stories understanding my positionality. The K-12 environment can be very conservative and is not quick to accept those who are open about their sexual minority status. Being an insider assisted me with generating salient questions since I have worked as a school psychologist, advocated for LGBTQ youth, and identify as a sexual minority. Because of my positionality, I am very familiar with school psychology jargon and both clinical and less formal language used by the LGBTQ community. Having to ask less clarifying questions and demonstrating some awareness allowed participants to feel a sense of ease.

On the other hand, Bettinger (2010) warns of the potential disadvantage of having the insider perspective as a researcher. I was cautious about assumptions of shared understandings or lived experiences by taking time to fully explore stories and information to understand if my definitions were the same as the participant’s definitions as they shared their stories.
Lastly, I also understood that sharing my positionality with participants potentially placed me at risk in the conservative K-12 environment, where having known status as a sexual minority can be precarious. Unfortunately, in Pennsylvania, there is no protection from job termination for those who identify and acknowledge being a member of the LGBTQ community. It is also somewhat risky in the public education system to be labeled as being an LGBTQ researcher. While I acknowledge these risks, I feel the potential knowledge that can be gained from this study outweighs the risk.

**Participant Selection**

The current study used survey research methodology and qualitative, in depth interviews. The survey combined the research on assessing affirmative practice by Crisp (2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Crisp, Wayland, & Gordon, 2008) and preparedness to act as a social justice advocate for LGBTQ youth based on the Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen (1991, 2002, 2011; Ajzen, Brown, & Carvajal, 2004). The survey instrument, and the details of its development will be discussed in the Data Collection portion of this chapter; the survey instrument also appears in Appendix B. The interview participants were obtained from a subset of survey participants. The interview portion was built on the survey by providing open-ended questions to obtain qualitative data relating to the milestones which lead the way to becoming a social justice advocate for LGBTQ youth in K-12 schools.

**Survey Participants**

Participants for this study were members of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and/or the American Psychological Association. The American Psychological Association estimates that of the current 25,000 school psychologists in the United States, approximately 21,000 are members of NASP (American Psychological Association,
All members of NASP are school psychology students, practitioners, higher education professionals in school psychology, school psychology researchers, adult educators in school psychology, or those retired from the school psychology field. For the purposes of this study, school psychology students were eliminated unless they have provided training or participated in research relating to the LGBTQ population.

Participants were obtained by posting an invitation to complete the survey on several online community sites. These communities included the NASP Communities website, LinkedIn, and the Trainers of School Psychologists listserv. In addition, I emailed all of the school psychologists known to me to ask them to participate in the survey and to forward the contact information for any other school psychologists, who would be willing participants. Lastly, I contacted several local universities, to ask them to post my email on any listserv they have for school psychology graduates. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four, 207 school psychologists completed the survey.

**Qualitative Interview Participants**

For the interview portion of this research, I asked survey respondents to provide their contact information, if they would be willing to be interviewed. In order to encourage survey respondents to provide their contact information, I allowed all who submitted their contact information to participate in a random drawing for a gift card of $50, which was processed by an independent company contracted by Amazon.com.

The respondents who provided their contact information were arranged by the order of their scores on the quantitative survey, from the highest to lowest. Higher scores, indicate increased level of expertise in LGBTQ issues and social justice advocacy work. The survey consisted of 50 five-point Likert scale type questions. The highest total score possible was 250.
All volunteer participants with a total survey score higher than 225 (the 88th percentile) were contacted by email to request a follow up interview. The first ten volunteers were scheduled and completed an in-depth interview.

**Data Collection**

As stated previously, mixed methods research is gaining in popularity for disciplines relating to school psychology, studies relating to the LGBTQ population, and behavioral health (Powell, Mihalas, Onwuegbuzie, Suldo, & Daley, 2008; Bettinger, 2010; Mertens, 2012). In the current study, the purpose is to understand both the present stance of practicing school psychologists and those school psychologists who are active social justice advocates on behalf of LGBTQ youth. This knowledge will assist adult educators of school psychologists in preparing school psychologists to become social justice advocates for a population of K-12 students who have been historically marginalized.

The study research uses the qualitative interviews to expand and explore findings from the quantitative surveys. This is known as the participation selection variant, which is when “the researcher places priority on the second qualitative phase instead of the initial quantitative phase” (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 86). It is used when a researcher focuses on qualitatively examining a phenomenon, using initial quantitative results to select the best participants. The next portion of this chapter will discuss the survey data collection process, followed by a discussion of the interview process.

**Survey Development**

The quantitative measures with licensed or certified school psychologists are designed to understand their level of LGBTQ competency, behavioral beliefs, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and intention to act as a social justice advocate for LGBTQ concerns. This
information was gleaned by a quantitative survey instrument conducted online. The survey is a combination of a modified Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (Crisp, 2006b) and a questionnaire based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It is a 50-item questionnaire with 30 items from the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale and 20 items based on four areas of the Theory of Planned Behavior. Responses are in a Likert scale format (see Appendix B).

The Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (Crisp, 2006b) assesses the competency of mental health practitioners in working with clients who identify as a sexual minority. The instrument was developed to examine the beliefs and the behaviors associated with demonstrating affirmative practice. This scale was modified because in its previous state, it only identifies gay men and lesbians, omitting those who identify as bisexual, transgender, or queer. Therefore, the instrument was modified to be more inclusive.

In addition, a section of the survey was based on Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior. This theory asserts the connection between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control and its impact on behavior intention. For the purposes of this study, behavior intention is defined as the school psychologist’s desire and ability to intervene on behalf of LGBTQ youth. This portion of the survey is constructed based on the guidelines for constructing a Theory of Planned Behavior questionnaire (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Five questions related to each of the major constructs of the theory (perceived norm, perceived behavioral control, and intention). The attitude construct is measured by the items from the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (Crisp, 2006b). Using the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (Crisp, 2006b) to measure the attitude construct, from the Theory of Planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), is a form of blending, a concept defined by Greene (2007). Five additional questions are designed to obtain information from the participants on their past social justice advocacy behavior. Table 1 is a summary of
each of the construct definitions and the corresponding item numbers, which relate to the hypotheses for this research.

Table 1
*Construct Definitions and Corresponding Survey Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Conceptual Definition</th>
<th>Survey Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ Affirmative Practice</td>
<td>The school psychologist’s beliefs and the behaviors associated with demonstrating LGBTQ affirmative practice.</td>
<td>Items 1 - 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Norm</td>
<td>How school psychologists perceive referent individuals or groups feel about LGBTQ social justice advocacy work within the K-12 school system.</td>
<td>Items 31 - 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Control</td>
<td>The significance of the barriers school psychologists perceive from referent others to engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work.</td>
<td>Items 36 - 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Intention</td>
<td>The school psychologist’s desire and ability to intervene on behalf of LGBTQ youth.</td>
<td>Items 41 - 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past LGBTQ Social Justice Advocacy Behavior</td>
<td>The type of LGBTQ social justice advocacy work completed by the school psychologist within the last year.</td>
<td>Items 46 - 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ Social Justice Advocacy Behavior</td>
<td>The school psychologist’s tendency to engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work based on perceived norm, behavioral control, behavior intention, and past LGBTQ social justice work.</td>
<td>Items 31 - 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ Affirmative Practice and Intent</td>
<td>School psychologists’ engagement with LGBTQ affirmative practice and social justice advocacy work.</td>
<td>Items 1 - 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey was disseminated using Survey Monkey with a custom template to design both the questions and the Likert scale responses. Survey Monkey enables the researcher to use or obtain unlimited questions and responses, random assignment, and Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) integration.
The most recent published research of the number of school psychologists indicates the total number of school psychologists in practice was 37,893 in 2005 (Charvat, 2005). Using the sample size formulas by Fowler (2008), with a confidence level of 95%, a survey sample size of 195 is needed for a confidence interval of 7. The initial goal of 195 was exceeded with 226 survey respondents.

**Qualitative Data**

The primary focus of qualitative data is to understand a particular point of view within a specified context (Merriam, 2002). As such, it is important to understand the point of view of active social justice advocates within the field of school psychology. To do this, it is necessary to interview those active social justice advocates to understand what factors in their lives lead them to their advocacy work.

The results of the surveys were evaluated to determine which quantitative data required additional exploration with interviews. Survey participants were selected to be interviewed based on a selection criteria related to individual survey results. Those participants whose scores indicate the highest level of LGBTQ competence and/or the strongest results indicating behavioral intention to advocate for LGBTQ social justice concerns would be invited to participate in the interview process.

To understand each person’s reality, we must hear his or her story in the language and manner in which they are most comfortable. The semi-structured interviews were based on the interview guide in Appendix C. The interview questions in general were created to obtain qualitative data regarding experiences in the lives of the participants and key factors, which fostered the development of social justice advocacy skills for LGBTQ youth. Nilsson and Schmidt (2005) found that some of the factors, which influenced the development of social
justice advocacy skills in graduate counseling students, include involvement in political or multicultural interests, personal experiences of oppression, and spirituality. Their study also found that social justice skills alone do not indicate an increased likelihood of engaging in social advocacy work. Thus, the interviews for this study were designed to uncover what additional factors must be present to increase the likelihood of engaging in this crucial work. In addition, interviewees were asked about (1) their longevity in the field of school psychology, (2) their positionality, (3) relevant history and stories related to LGBTQ cultural competence, (4) relevant histories and stories relating to LGBTQ social justice advocacy, (5) frequency of using either advocacy skills or LGBTQ knowledge in the regular course of their job, and (6) how and where they obtained their advocacy skills and LGBTQ cultural awareness.

Due to the distance of all of the interviewees, all interviews were conducted over the phone. All interviews were digitally recorded using a device attached to the phone, which allowed the speakers to converse normally through a corded phone, and were transcribed. Additionally, I kept a notebook for observations during the interviews.

**Data Analysis**

Reliability and validity are important considerations in quantitative data analysis. Reliability is whether an instrument can be interpreted consistently across a variety of situations (Field, 2009). Validity is whether an instrument actually measures what it sets out to measure. The survey was developed from a combination of two sources. The first is the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (Crisp, 2006b). The scale was initially analyzed for scale reliability using Cronbach’s alpha test. Cronbach’s alpha test is a statistical test designed to determine if all of the questions in the survey are consistent with each other (Field, 2009). The Cronbach’s alpha for the original Gay Affirmative Practice Scale was .95. The second was using a structured
guide created by Fishbein and Ajzen (2010), which outlines how to develop a questionnaire based on the Theory of Planned Behavior.

The survey results were analyzed using SPSS statistical software to answer the hypotheses. This analysis ran descriptive statistics to examine patterns in the responses including relationships (correlations) with demographic information and specific responses and response patterns.

The interviews were transcribed and the observation notebook was reviewed for additional data, and a way to triangulate the data. Together these were analyzed by the constant comparison method. The constant comparison method is used when the researcher compares one segment of data with another to ascertain similarities and differences (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) outlines this four-step process of analyzing qualitative data. The first step is to construct categories as the interviews are read. Once all the interviews were read and all of the categories were constructed, they were sorted to combine like categories and create subcategories. Once the category possibilities were exhausted, they were named. It was important that the themes met four criteria (Merriam, 2009). The categories must (1) be as sensitive to the data as possible, (2) be exhaustive, (3) be mutually exclusive, and (4) be conceptually congruent. Finally, the categories were organized into a descriptive manner that assists the reader to visualize how the categories work together.

**Verification and Trustworthiness**

Inference transferability is considered important to the validation and trustworthiness of mixed methods research (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This term was created to blend both quantitative (inference) and qualitative (transferability) to define a way to combine both methods of research. Inferences in mixed methods research are conclusions drawn from the quantitative
and qualitative strands of a study (Creswell & Clark, 2011). According to Creswell and Clark (2007) inference quality is enhanced when a subgroup of the survey participants are used for the interview portion of the research.

The overall reliability of the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (Crisp, 2006b) is a reported Cronbach’s alpha score of .95, which exceeds the minimum criteria of at least .70 (Nunnally, 1978). The two domains of the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale (belief and behavior) were validated using the Heterosexual Attitudes Toward Homosexuals Scale (Larson, Reed & Hoffman, 1980) and the Attitudes Toward Lesbian and Gay Men Scale (Herek, 1988). The validity for the Gay Affirmative Practice Scale was calculated using the Pearson \( r \). The Pearson \( r \) correlation between the belief domain and the Heterosexual Attitudes Toward Homosexuals Scale was .624 (\( p = .000 \)). The correlation between the behavior domain and the Attitudes Toward Lesbian and Gay Men Scale was .466 (\( p = .000 \)). Both correlations were significant at the .001 level. The acceptable range is greater than or equal to .40 (Downie & Heath, 1967).

Because the portion of the instrument based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) is based on guidelines for creating an instrument, rather than an actual reproducible instrument, the validity and reliability will have to be constructed based on the results of a field test. The validity of predicting behavior intention in the original study was based on sixteen previously validated instruments, which yielded correlations ranging from .43 to .94, with an average of .71. Internal consistency is not required for the individual composites (attitude, perceived norm, perceived behavioral control, and intention) because these subscales are not designed to be consistent with each other.

Dependability strategies are also important in qualitative research. Thus, three primary dependability strategies were used in the qualitative portion of the study. These include member
checks, peer review, and data triangulation. Member checks occurred throughout the process. Participants were asked to review interview transcripts. All participants reviewed the transcript from his or her interview and provided feedback. Each participant was provided a $10 gift card as a token of appreciation for the completion of the interview and the transcript feedback. Each participant’s input was integrated into the final product.

Peer review also occurred in conjunction with the transcription, thematic analysis, data display, and findings. The peer review was in conjunction with a graduate course on quantitative research, and the qualitative data was reviewed with my advisor. Lastly, there were two forms of data triangulation. The researcher notes were reviewed and compared to the thematic analysis and survey results. Any archival data obtained was also be compared to the researcher notes and survey results.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the methodology for the current study. This chapter began with a brief overview of mixed methods research. The overview included a discussion of the key assumptions and the relationship of mixed methods research to the current study. Next, I discussed my role as a researcher, including research interests and its influence on my positionality. Finally, there was a discussion on the participant selection, data collection, data analysis, verification, and trustworthiness.
CHAPTER 4

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The purpose of this research is twofold: a) to examine the level of LGBTQ competency and LGBTQ social advocacy work of practicing school psychologists, and b) to explore how active social justice advocates for LGBTQ K-12 students perceive they acquired their skills, knowledge and expertise. The research questions that guide this study are:

1. What do school psychologists know about LGBTQ issues and how do they deal with it in their practice?
2. How does a school psychologist evolve from tacitly knowledgeable to LGBTQ competent to LGBTQ advocacy?
3. What skills, traits, or life experiences are instrumental in shaping school psychologists in becoming a social change agent for LGBTQ youth?

To investigate these questions, mixed methods research was utilized, in order to gain a thorough knowledge of both the perceptions and behaviors associated with LGBTQ social justice advocacy work by school psychologists within the K-12 school system. It is necessary to understand the level of LGBTQ affirmative practice used by practicing school psychologists. Additionally, it is important to investigate their perceived norms, ability to engage in LGBTQ advocacy work, level of intent to work as an LGBTQ social justice advocate, and past LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the quantitative data obtained from the LGBTQ Affirmative Practice and Intent Scale (LAPIS). The chapter will begin with a review of the construction of the LAPIS. Next, there will be an overview of the demographics of the participants. Thirdly, there will be a discussion of the findings relating to LGBTQ affirmative
practice. The fourth section explores the findings related to advocacy. Finally, there will be a review of the hypothesis testing.

**Review of the Construction of the LAPIS**

The quantitative data were collected by an LGBTQ affirmative practice and advocacy survey administered to school psychologists. As discussed in Chapter Three, the survey was developed based on a modification of the Gay Affirmative Practice (GAP) scale (Crisp, 2006b) and a questionnaire based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

**Survey Purposes**

The modified GAP scale was updated to provide more inclusive language to assess affirmative practice include not only those who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, but to also include those who identify as transgender or queer. The higher the score, the more affirming practice the respondent perceives that they provide. In this case, the more affirming school psychology practice toward LGBTQ youth in the K-12 school system.

The portion of the survey relating to LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior is assessed using the Theory of Planned Behavior. The LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior construct is comprised of four dimensions as recommended by Fishbein and Ajzen (2010). These constructs are (1) perceived norm, (2) behavioral control, (3) intention, and (4) past advocacy behavior. The higher the score on this portion of the LAPIS, the stronger the indication of LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior within the K-12 schools.

The resulting combination of these surveys, the LAPIS, is a measure of LGBTQ affirmative practice and social justice advocacy. The highest overall score is 250, by indicating a score of 5 on each of the Likert scale items. The lowest score is 50, by indicating a score of 1 on each of the Likert scale items.
As discussed in Chapter Three, the survey link was emailed to current practicing school psychologists, school psychology instructors, and those on national school psychology listservs. To provide further clarification for eligibility for participation, the survey was designed with an initial screener question. The initial question asked respondents if they were a school psychologist or if they educate or train school psychologists. A total of 252 respondents opened the survey. Of those, 226 participants responded that they were either a school psychologist or they were school psychology educators. Of the eligible participants, 207 completed all of the survey questions and 211 completed 70% or more of the survey. Some chose to complete all 50 items on the LAPIS, however chose not to respond to some or all of the demographic questions.

**Internal Consistency of the Instrument**

Because the LAPIS is constructed from two separate survey tools, it is important to examine the internal consistency of the instrument. The first 30 questions assess the level of LGBTQ affirmative practice. The remaining 20 questions assess the respondent’s tendency to participate in LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior.

It is important to determine if items are sufficiently interrelated to justify their compilation into an index, measuring a unified construct. Cronbach’s alpha was developed to measure if items on an instrument correlate well with each other to measure a similar construct (Cronbach, 1951). This relationship is called internal consistency. The indices were considered to have acceptable internally reliable if the Cronbach alpha was measured over .70 (George & Mallery, 2003). Cronbach alpha scores of over .9 are considered having excellent internal consistency (Henson, 2001; George & Mallery, 2003). The results indicate that the internal consistency for the LAPIS and its components are excellent. Table 2 summarizes the internal consistency for LAPIS as a whole and the components that construct the overall instrument.
Table 2

*Internal Consistency for the LAPIS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAPIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ affirmative practice (Items 1–30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ advocacy behavior (Items 31–50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demographics**

It was the intent of this study to examine the factors present in the journey of a school psychologist from general LGBTQ knowledge to LGBTQ social justice advocate. As such, it is important to examine the characteristics of the respondents. In addition to the LAPIS items, the participants were asked to provide demographic information, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, location of practice, religion of childhood, current religion, and sexual orientation. The gender, age, and race/ethnicity characteristics are shown in Table 3.
Table 3  
*Characteristics of the Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>82.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 35</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>45.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – 45</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>26.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 – 55</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 – 65</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 – 75</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race and Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>91.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 compares the demographics of the respondents to the demographics of the United States as reported by the 2010 Census (US Census Bureau, 2010a, 2010b) and more specifically, for certified school psychologists in the United States (Curtis, Castillo, & Gelley, 2010).

As noted in Chapter One, the field of school psychology is a largely homogeneous group, when compared to the overall US demographics. The field largely consists of white females, which is similar to the demographics of the LAPIS respondents. While the LAPIS respondents were largely homogeneous, trends in LGBTQ social justice advocacy were explored. The demographic trends explored include age, gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation. Each of those demographics is explored in detail.
Table 4
Comparisons among LAPIS, NASP, and 2010 Census Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>LAPIS</th>
<th>NASP</th>
<th>2010 Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>40.70</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>37.2 (median)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>82.8%</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.3%*</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
<td>.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.3%*</td>
<td>.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.5%</td>
<td>.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *In NASP data, there is one category, which is inclusive of Asian and Pacific Islander.

Age

The LAPIS respondents were between the ages of 25 and 72. The average age was 40.7.

For statistical purposes, the respondents were grouped into five interval categories. Table 5 provides a summary of the age demographic of the LAPIS respondents.

The majority of the respondents were between 25 and 35 years old. A One-way Between ANOVA was performed to determine if LAPIS scores differed with each age interval. The largest average LAPIS scores were within the 66-75 age range, however, this was the smallest age interval. The results indicated the lowest average LAPIS scores fell within 25 – 34 year old respondents. The overall results indicated that these differences were not significant. In fact, the differences in LAPIS scores between any of the age intervals were not found to be significant ($F_{(4,197)} = .304, p = .875$). Therefore, the age of the respondent did not seem to be significant in determining the likelihood to engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior.
Table 5
*Age Differences between LAPIS Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Interval</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>LAPIS M</th>
<th>LAPIS SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 – 35</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>193.18</td>
<td>21.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – 45</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>193.46</td>
<td>23.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 – 55</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>197.90</td>
<td>19.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 – 65</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>195.94</td>
<td>29.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 – 75</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>200.00</td>
<td>23.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender**

There were 169 female and 34 male LAPIS respondents. Table 6 provides a summary of the gender demographic of the LAPIS respondents. The results indicate that the average LAPIS scores for females tended to be slightly lower than males. An Independent T-test was performed to determine if this difference was significant. The difference between LAPIS scores was not found to be significant ($t_{(201)} = -.577, p = .565$). Therefore, gender did not appear to be a significant predictor in LAPIS scores.

Table 6
*Gender Differences between LAPIS Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>LAPIS M</th>
<th>LAPIS SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>193.88</td>
<td>22.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>196.38</td>
<td>24.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Race**

The respondents were asked to identify their race. Table 1 indicates how the respondents identified their race on the LAPIS. All of the identified categories were too small to run statistically sound analysis, with the exception of white. It was therefore necessary to combine
all of the categories identified by respondents as other than white to determine if identifying as a minority member. When examining LAPIS scores, those who identified as white scored slightly lower than those who identified as something other than white. An Independent T-Test was performed to examine whether the difference was significant. This difference was not found to be significant, \((t_{201}) = .504, p=.615\). Therefore, race did not appear to be a significant predictor in LAPIS scores. Table 7 summarizes these scores.

Table 7
Race Differences between LAPIS Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>LAPIS M</th>
<th>LAPIS SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>194.05</td>
<td>22.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-white</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>197.00</td>
<td>23.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religion

Because beliefs are an important predictor of behavior, respondents were asked to identify the religion of their childhood and their current religion. Table 8 provides a summary of how respondents answered these two questions. Percent change over time is defined as how respondents reported religion changed. Overall, there were decreases in the number of respondents who identified as Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim, from how they were raised as children and how they identify religiously as adults. There was no change in the number of respondents who identified as Hindu or Pagan. There were several categories of religions to which no one identified as a child, but currently identified as an adult. These categories included Buddhist, Unitarian Universalist, Wiccan, Atheist, and Humanist. For these categories, it is not possible to calculate a percentage of change over time because the
denominator for the equation is zero (the number of people who identified with that religious category as a child).

Table 8  
Religion of LAPIS Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Childhood Religion</th>
<th>Current Religion</th>
<th>Change over Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-62.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-23.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>NaN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitarian Universalist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>NaN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritualist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>+600%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiccan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>NaN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>NaN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>+600%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NaN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Religion</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>+350%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. For the categories, which no respondents identified as a child, a percentage of change over time cannot be calculated because the denominator is zero. In the table, this is represented by NaN (Not a Number).

Because some of the religious groups had very small numbers of respondents, it was not possible to determine the significance of the individual groups. To compare populations, it was necessary to combine groups into Christian and Non-Christian categories. The Christian group contained the respondents who currently identified as Catholic or Protestant. The average total LAPIS score for those who currently identify as Catholic, was 182.43 ($SD = 17.31$). The average total LAPIS score for those who currently identify as Protestant, was 189.73 ($SD = 23.44$). The average score for those who identified as Catholic was lower than those who identified as
Protestant. An independent T-Test determined this difference was not statistically significant ($t_{(74)} = 2.874, p = .094$).

The Non-Christian group consisted of all other reported religious affiliations. Table 9 provides a summary of the LAPIS scores for these two categories. The Christian subgroup ($M = 187.04$) had lower average LAPIS scores when compared to the Non-Christian subgroup ($M = 199.45$). An Independent T-Test was performed to examine whether the difference was significant. The difference was found to be significant, ($t_{(184)} = 3.722, p < .001$). Therefore, religion does appear to be a significant predictor in LAPIS scores.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>LAPIS $M$</th>
<th>LAPIS SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>199.45</td>
<td>22.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>187.04</td>
<td>21.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sexual Orientation**

LAPIS respondents were asked to identify their sexual orientation. 148 respondents identified as heterosexual, 12 as gay, 20 as lesbian, 19 as bisexual and 2 as queer. Because some of the sexual orientation labels had very small numbers of respondents, it was not possible to determine the significance of these individual categories. To compare populations, it was necessary to combine categories into heterosexual and LGBTQ. The heterosexual category contained the respondents who identified as heterosexual or straight. Table 10 provides a summary of the LAPIS scores for these two categories.

The heterosexual category had lower average LAPIS scores when compared to the LGBTQ category. An Independent T-Test was performed to examine whether the difference
was significant. The difference was found to be significant, \( t_{199} = 2.733, p < .01 \). Therefore, sexual orientation does appear to be a significant predictor in LAPIS scores. Those who identify as queer were more likely to report LGBTQ affirmative practice and social justice advocacy work.

Table 10  
*Sexual Orientation Differences between LAPIS Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>LAPIS M</th>
<th>LAPIS SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>201.49</td>
<td>23.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>191.55</td>
<td>22.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In light of the significant findings in current religion of respondents, further analysis was completed on LGBTQ respondents to determine if there were trends related to the current religion and LAPIS scores. Two categories were omitted because there was only one respondent in each category who indicated his/her current affiliation as Atheist or Unitarian Universalist, therefore descriptive statistics cannot be calculated. The highest scores were among those LGBTQ respondents who listed their current religious affiliation as Spiritualist \( (M = 214.50) \). The lowest scores were among those who listed their current religious affiliation as Jewish \( (M = 190.00) \). The difference between those who currently identified as Catholic \( (M = 196.33) \) appears to be lower than those LGBTQ respondents who identified as Protestant \( (M = 210.00) \), which is in contrast to the previous findings. Table 11 summarizes these findings. Because the LGBTQ sample size is small, statistical significance among these differences could not be calculated. Future research may assist in determining significance of religiosity among LGBTQ school psychologist’s social justice advocacy beliefs and practices.
Table 11

*Differences in LAPIS Scores for LGBTQ Respondents among Current Religious Affiliations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritualist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>214.50</td>
<td>20.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>211.75</td>
<td>22.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>211.33</td>
<td>8.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>210.00</td>
<td>21.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>206.20</td>
<td>22.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>196.33</td>
<td>16.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Religion</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>195.64</td>
<td>26.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>190.00</td>
<td>32.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LGBTQ Affirmative Practice**

The first 30 questions on the LAPIS are a modified version of the GAP scale (Crisp, 2006b). The original GAP scale was designed with two separate constructs, affirming beliefs and affirming behaviors. Affirming beliefs are related to the positive, supportive belief systems as associated with those who identify as being a sexual minority. Items 1 through 15 of the LAPIS assess LGBTQ affirming beliefs for school psychologists. These items ask respondents to assess what they believe are important actions and thoughts as a school psychologist to support LGBTQ youth. More specifically, this section of the LAPIS explores the belief that school psychologists should support and have willingness to learn about diversity in student’s families, and within the LGBTQ community. Other beliefs explored include an openness to acquire knowledge specific to development in the lives of LGBTQ youth, and to acquire skills for effective practice with LGBTQ youth.

The average scores on these questions ranged from 4.58 to 4.85, which would indicate that the majority of the respondents believed school psychologists at least agree or strongly agree to have supportive and affirming thoughts regarding effectively working with LGBTQ youth.
The affirming beliefs question with the lowest average score related to the belief that school psychologist should encourage LGBTQ youth to create support networks ($M=4.58$). The highest average score on the affirming beliefs questions involved the belief that school psychologists should support the diverse make up of their students’ families ($M=4.85$).

Affirming behaviors are related to actions as a practitioner, which contribute to providing a positive and supportive clinical environment for those who identify as a sexual minority. Items 16 through 30 of the LAPIS assess LGBTQ affirming behaviors for school psychologists. More specifically, the affirming behaviors section of the LAPIS assesses the actions the respondent has engaged in to support LGBTQ youth in practice, including, acknowledging the impact of living within a homophobic society, actively working to reduce negative feelings associated with a student’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, seeking out education to improve LGBTQ awareness, and creating a climate that allows for voluntary self-identification for LGBTQ youth.

The average scores in the LGBTQ affirming behaviors section range from 3.32 to 4.42, which would indicate the majority of the respondents range from neutrality to strongly agree their actions display LGBTQ affirming behaviors. The affirming behaviors question with the lowest average score related to assisting students to identify their own internalized homophobia ($M=3.32$). Two questions received the highest average score on the affirming behaviors. The first question related to verbalizing support for LGBTQ students ($M=4.42$). The second question involved tailoring assessments, treatments, and recommendations for LGBTQ students ($M=4.42$).

In general, the results of the LAPIS indicate that LGBTQ affirming behaviors are slightly lower than LGBTQ affirming beliefs. Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior may assist
in explaining why this may be the case. The following section of the LAPIS is developed to facilitate an understanding of the components of LGBTQ advocacy behavior in school psychologists. Table 10 summarizes LAPIS affirmative practice findings.

**LGBTQ Advocacy**

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) posits a person’s behavior is driven by their behavioral intentions. The components of behavioral intention include (1) the person’s attitude toward the behavior, (2) the subjective norm about the performance of the behavior, and (3) the person’s perception of ease at which he/she can perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In applying TPB to the current study, LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior is defined by (1) what school psychologists believe about LGBTQ social justice advocacy, (2) how school psychologist perceive that others see their role as LGBTQ social justice advocates, and (3) how easily the school psychologist believes he or she is able to perform LGBTQ advocacy work.

Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) recommend several components for surveys to determine the likelihood that a person will engage in a specified behavior. The components are (1) perceived norm, (2) behavioral control, (3) intention, and (4) past advocacy behavior. Each of those components will be discussed individually.

**Perceived Norm**

Ajzen (1991) defines perceived norm is the perceived social pressure to display or refrain from displaying a specific behavior. The subjective norm is determined by the total set of accessible normative beliefs concerning the expectations of others that are perceived as significant. The perception of how others view this behavior is important. Perceived behavioral expectations of important referent individuals or groups are also important. Referent individuals or groups can be defined as the person's spouse, family, friends, supervisors, and coworkers.
For the current study, referent individuals or groups are defined as teachers, students, other school psychologists, students’ families, and school district administrators. Questions 31 through 35 address the perceived norm of the specified referent individuals and groups. The average scores on these questions range from 3.04 to 4.19 on a 5-point Likert scale. The perceived norm question with the lowest average score related to how approving students’ families are for school psychologists to engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy ($M=3.04$). The perceived norm question with the highest average score related to how approving other school psychologists are toward social justice advocacy work ($M=4.19$).

In general, the majority of the responses indicate that the LAPIS respondents tend to feel neutral to positive about how referent individuals or groups feel about LGBTQ social justice advocacy work within the K-12 school system. The results indicate that the perception is that students’ families would be the least receptive to school psychologists working as an LGBTQ social justice advocate.

**Behavioral Control**

Ajzen (1991) defines perceived behavioral control as people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behavior. Control beliefs have to do with the perceived presence of factors that facilitate or impede performance of a behavior. The strength of each control belief is weighted by the perceived power of the control factor. The perceived power of each control factor to impede or facilitate performance of the behavior contributes to perceived behavioral control in direct proportion to the person's subjective probability that the control factor is present. Each person makes a decision on how successful they will be in performing the behavior.

In the current study, behavior control refers to the significance of the perceived barriers school psychologists perceive from referent others, defined previously as teachers, students,
other school psychologists, students’ families, and school district administrators. Questions 36 through 40 address behavior control. The average scores on these questions range from 3.11 to 4.28 on a 5-point Likert scale. The behavior control question with the lowest average score related to large of an obstacle they perceive students’ families are for school psychologists to engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy ($M=3.11$). This would be an indication that school psychologists perceive students’ families to be largest impediment in acting as an LGBTQ social justice advocate. The behavior control question with the highest average score related to how approving other school psychologists are toward social justice advocacy work ($M=4.19$). These results indicate that the least of the perceived barriers, in acting as an LGBTQ social justice advocate, would be fellow school psychologists.

In general, the majority of the responses indicate that the LAPIS respondents tend to feel neutral to positive about the perceived barriers to engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work within the K-12 school system.

**Intention**

Ajzen (1991) defines intention is an indication of a person's readiness to perform a behavior; which is considered the immediate antecedent of behavior. The behavior intention is based on several components, including attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. The amount of importance for each factor varies with the specific behavior and the person who is exhibiting the behavior.

In the current study, behavior intention is defined as the school psychologist’s readiness to engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work in the K-12 system. Questions 41 through 45 address intention. The average scores on these questions range from 2.84 to 3.79 on a five-point Likert scale. The intention question with the lowest average score related to planning to assist
with the creation or maintenance of a Gay-Straight Alliance club within the next year ($M=2.84$). This would be an indication that the LAPIS respondents generally do not plan to assist with a Gay-Straight Alliance club over the next year. The intention question with the highest average score related to the intention of displaying welcoming and affirming signs for LGBTQ youth over the next year ($M=3.79$). These results indicate that some LAPIS respondents intend to display welcoming and affirming signs, but not a clear majority.

In general, the majority of the responses indicate that the LAPIS respondents tend to feel neutral to positive about their intention to engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work within the K-12 school system over the next year. While behavior intention is important, it is also important to examine past LGBTQ social justice advocacy work.

**Past Advocacy Behavior**

The final component of the Theory of Planned Behavior is past advocacy behavior. Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) discuss the importance of including past behavior in assessing the likelihood for future behavior. According to their theory, if a person has engaged in a behavior in the past, it increases the probability that they will engage in the behavior in the future.

In the current study, past LGBTQ advocacy work may increase the likelihood of future advocacy work. Questions 46 through 50 address intention. The average scores on these questions range from 2.35 to 3.44 on a five-point Likert scale. The past advocacy behavior question with the lowest average score related to facilitating a workshop to increase the knowledge of LGBTQ youth concerns for teachers and staff ($M=2.35$). This would be an indication that the LAPIS respondents generally have not facilitated faculty workshops relating to LGBTQ youth topics over the last year. The past advocacy behavior question with the highest average score related to displaying welcoming and affirming signs for LGBTQ youth over the
previous year ($M=3.44$). These results indicate that some LAPIS respondents displayed welcoming and affirming signs, but not a clear majority.

In general, the majority of the responses indicate that the LAPIS respondents tended not engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work within the K-12 school system over the previous year. Table 12 summarizes LAPIS advocacy findings.

Table 12
*Summary of LAPIS Components*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affirming Beliefs</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirming Behaviors</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Norm</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Control</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Advocacy Behavior</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.855</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis Testing**

The LAPIS was designed to gather quantitative information regarding school psychologists and LGBTQ social justice advocacy work. It is important to examine how well the internal constructs correlate with each other to provide insight on the components of social justice advocacy. In this section, the five hypotheses will be examined regarding LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior in school psychologists.

**$H_1$**

The first hypothesis is: LGBTQ affirmative practice scores will positively correlate with social justice advocacy behavior. To examine this hypothesis, it is necessary to determine if the questions on the LAPIS relating to affirmative practice are positively correlated with the questions relating to the social justice advocacy behavior as defined by the Theory of Planned
Behavior. Essentially, are questions 1 through 30 positively correlated with questions 31 through 50?

To determine if this hypothesis is supported, a Pearson correlation was used. The results indicate that as LGBTQ affirmative practice scores rise, there is a large significant correlation with social justice advocacy behavior \((r = .657, p < .01)\). For the LAPIS respondents, the higher their reported LGBTQ affirmative practice, the higher their LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior, thus \(H_1\) was supported. Table 13 summarizes these findings.

\(H_2\)

The second hypothesis is: perceived norm will be positively correlated with LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior. To examine this hypothesis, it is necessary to determine if the questions on the LAPIS relating to perceived norm are positively correlated with the questions relating to the social justice advocacy behavior as defined by the Theory of Planned Behavior. Essentially, are questions 31 through 35 positively correlated with questions 36 through 50?

To determine if this hypothesis is supported, a Pearson correlation was used. The results indicate that as perceived norms scores rise, there is a large significant correlation with social justice advocacy behavior \((r = .798, p < .01)\). For the LAPIS respondents, the higher the perceived the support from referent friends or groups, the higher their LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior, thus \(H_2\) was supported. Table 13 summarizes these findings.

\(H_3\)

The third hypothesis is: behavioral control will be positively correlated with LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior. To examine this hypothesis, it is necessary to determine if the questions on the LAPIS relating to behavioral control are positively correlated with the questions relating to the social justice advocacy behavior as defined by the Theory of Planned Behavior.
Essentially, are questions 36 through 40 positively correlated with questions 31 through 35, and 40 through 50?

To determine if this hypothesis is supported, a Pearson correlation was used. The results indicate that as behavior control scores rise, there is a large significant correlation with social justice advocacy behavior ($r = .697, p < .01$). For the LAPIS respondents, the higher the perceived support, and the lower the potential barriers to advocacy work, the higher their LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior, thus $H_3$ was supported. Table 13 summarizes these findings.

$H_4$

The fourth hypothesis is: behavior intention will be positively correlated with LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior. To examine this hypothesis, it is necessary to determine if the questions on the LAPIS relating to behavior intention are positively correlated with the questions relating to the social justice advocacy behavior as defined by the Theory of Planned Behavior. Essentially, are questions 41 through 45 positively correlated with questions 31 through 40, and 46 through 50?

To determine if this hypothesis is supported, a Pearson correlation was used. The results indicate that as behavior intention scores rise, there is a large significant correlation with social justice advocacy behavior ($r = .796, p < .01$). For the LAPIS respondents, the higher their reported intention to engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work, the higher their LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior, thus $H_4$ was supported. Table 13 summarizes these findings.
Table 13  
*Correlation Results for H₁ through H₄*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>Sig (p value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H₁ Affirmative Practice Advocacy Behavior</td>
<td>129.70</td>
<td>13.20</td>
<td>.657</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂ Perceived Norms Advocacy Behavior</td>
<td>17.68</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₃ Behavioral Control Advocacy Behavior (without Behavioral Control)</td>
<td>17.87</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.697</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₄ Behavior Intention Advocacy Behavior (without Behavior Intention)</td>
<td>15.75</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.796</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level or better

**H₅**

The final hypothesis is: perceived norm, behavioral control, behavior intention, and past behavior will predict LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior. To examine this hypothesis, it is necessary to determine which sections of the LAPIS relating to LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior are the best predictors of this behavior. To determine if this hypothesis is supported, a Stepwise Multiple Regression was performed.

Results indicated that all three factors investigated significantly predicted LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior. These two factors were perceived norm and behavior intention. A Stepwise Multiple Regression was performed in order to examine all variables, which may affect LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior. Results indicated significant effects for behavior intention ($F_{(1,203)} = 356.435$, $p<.01$). The results indicate that LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior rises as perceived norm, behavior intention and to a lesser degree, behavioral control
increases. When combined, this contributes to 95.0% of the LGBTQ social justice advocacy model. Therefore, H5 was supported. Table 14 summarizes these results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>.637</td>
<td>.637</td>
<td>356.435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm and Intention</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.961</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>1226.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm, Intention, and Control</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.975</td>
<td>.950</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>1289.423</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. p < .01

The result of the LAPIS indicates that the best predictors of LGBTQ social justice advocacy work in school psychologists are the way they perceive referent others view the role of social justice advocacy work, whether they intend to engage in social justice advocacy work and to a lesser degree when they perceive the barriers to performing LGBTQ social justice advocacy work are surmountable. These results have implications for queer cultural work in adult education, the Theory of Planned Behavior, critical multicultural education.

**Summary**

The demographics of the LAPIS are similar to the demographics of NASP (Curtis, Castillo, & Gelley, 2010). This would imply that the current sample is representative of school psychologists in the United States. The LAPIS and its components yielded Cronbach’s alpha scores within the excellent range, indicating the instrument formed a unified construct. The results of the LAPIS indicate that age, gender, and race are not predictors of LGBTQ affirmative
practice and intent in school psychologists. The two significant predictors of LGBTQ affirmative action and intent were religion and sexual orientation.

Those respondents who indicated their current religion as Christian (Catholic or Protestant) had significantly lower LAPIS scores than those who indicated some other current religious affiliation. In addition those who identified as heterosexual or straight scored significantly lower on the LAPIS than their counterparts who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

When examining the correlation between overall LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior and its components of behavior intention, behavior control, perceived norm, and past advocacy work, the lowest correlation was past advocacy work. Within the construct of past advocacy work, the least popular was the activity that required the most time commitment, providing a faculty workshop to increase LGBTQ awareness. The most popular activity was the activity, which required the least amount of time commitment, displaying welcoming and affirming signs. It is difficult to say whether this is because the role and time constraints of practicing school psychologists does not allow for more time consuming activities.

Finally, the results of the LAPIS indicated that the biggest predictors of LGBTQ social justice advocacy work in school psychologists were perceived norm and behavior intention. To a lesser degree, behavior control was also a predictor. Qualitative interviews were then used to explore these findings in greater depth. The goal of the qualitative interviews to gain a greater understanding of perceived positionality, history and stories of LGBTQ social justice advocacy work and LGBTQ competency, the frequency and type of LGBTQ social justice advocacy work completed and the details surrounding their acquired LGBTQ social justice advocacy skills and LGBTQ awareness.
CHAPTER 5
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The purpose of this research is twofold: a) to examine the level of LGBTQ competency and LGBTQ social advocacy work of practicing school psychologists, and b) to explore how active social justice advocates for LGBTQ K-12 students perceive they acquired their skills, knowledge and expertise. The research questions that guide this study are:

1. What do school psychologists know about LGBTQ issues and how do they deal with it in their practice?

2. How does a school psychologist evolve from tacitly knowledgeable to LGBTQ competent to LGBTQ advocacy?

3. What skills, traits or life experiences are instrumental in shaping school psychologists in becoming a social change agent for LGBTQ youth?

To investigate these questions, an explanatory mixed methods research was utilized, in order to gain a thorough knowledge of both the perceptions and behaviors associated with LGBTQ social justice advocacy work by school psychologists within the K-12 school system. It is necessary to understand the level of LGBTQ affirmative practice used by practicing school psychologists. Additionally, it is important to investigate their perceived norms, ability to engage in LGBTQ advocacy work, level of intent to work as an LGBTQ social justice advocate, and past LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior. The last chapter explored the survey findings. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the qualitative data obtained from selected participant interviews. The chapter begins briefly explaining the methodology of the qualitative participant selection process, and provides profiles of the participants, and specific demographic information. Analysis of the interviews yielded three themes of findings, including individual
characteristics, context, and tools. Each of these themes is discussed. Finally, there will be a summary of the qualitative findings.

**Qualitative Participants and Data Display**

The interview selection process for the qualitative participants was based on the LAPIS scores, which were based on reported LGBTQ affirmative practice and advocacy work. LGBTQ affirmative practice was based on Crisp (2006a) work on gay affirmative practice. LGBTQ advocacy work was based on the Ajzen (1991) model of the Theory of Planned Behavior. The higher the score, the higher the indication of participant use of LGBTQ affirmative practice and advocacy work. All LAPIS participants were asked if they would be interested in participating in a follow up interview. All volunteer participants with a total LAPIS score higher than 225 (the 88th percentile) were contacted by email to request a follow up interview. Chapter Four discussed the importance of sexual orientation and religion on the overall LAPIS scores. Other demographics, such as age, gender, years of experience, race/ethnicity did not seem to significantly influence the overall LAPIS scores. It was therefore important to select volunteers reflecting a variety of sexual orientations and religions.

**Participant Profiles**

As noted in Chapter Three, there were a total of 10 interview participants in the study that participated in digitally recorded telephone interviews, which were conducted and later transcribed. Brief profiles of the participants are included here.

**Crystal.** Crystal is a 63-year-old white woman who identifies as heterosexual. She works in an urban school district in the western United States, as a school psychologist. Prior to becoming a school psychologist, she worked in the corporate world, then as a K-12 teacher. As a
child, she recalls that her mother had many gay friends. Most of her LGBTQ knowledge is self-taught through relationships with others who identify as LGBTQ and academic research.

**Claire.** Claire is a 41-year-old white woman who identifies as heterosexual. With 15 to 20 years of experience as a school psychologist, in a suburban school district in the southwest United States, she prides herself in being a founding advisor for the GSA in her school district. She has been instrumental in local policy change related to LGBTQ youth in schools. As a Jewish woman, she has experienced marginalization herself, which helps her to frame her advocacy work.

**Rochelle.** Rochelle is a 33-year-old white woman who identifies as queer. She has been a school psychologist in the northeastern area of the United States for five to ten years. Rochelle worked as a teacher prior to becoming a school psychologist. She found that as a school psychologist, she was better able to meet the individual needs of students who were struggling academically. Rochelle has many friends who are activists, which provide her with models to structure her own advocacy work.

**Roseanne.** Roseanne is a 62-year-old white woman who identifies as heterosexual. Roseanne, who was initially a teacher, has over 25 years of experience as a school psychologist in the northeastern portion of the United States. She has LGBTQ family members and friends who provide her the incentive to advocate for LGBTQ youth. She was selected as a regional trainer for LGBTQ concerns over ten years ago. While the emphasis for that work has waned over time, her work in the local GSA and policy work continues.

**Peggy.** Peggy is a 72-year-old white woman who identifies as heterosexual. She has over 25 years of experience as a school psychologist in a suburban district in the Mid-Atlantic section of the United States. Peggy considers herself a pioneer in LGBTQ advocacy work. She
was recruited as a “safe ally” by several friends and coworkers, since she identifies as heterosexual. There was less risk for her in the 1970’s when she began her advocacy work. While she is retired, she continues to act as a long-term sub for school psychologists in local districts.

Daniel. Daniel is a 39-year-old white male who identifies as heterosexual. Daniel works as both a K-12 teacher and a graduate professor in sexuality and equality concerns in the Mid-Atlantic portion of the United States. Daniel is also a published author on topics relating to LGBTQ and bullying. Daniel is considered a respected regional resource for LGBTQ issues and concerns in the K-12 school system.

Robert. Robert is a 44-year-old Latino male who identifies as gay. Robert works as a school psychologist in an urban district in the western part of the United States. Robert has spent portions of his childhood and adulthood outside of the U.S. in Spanish-speaking countries. He began his career as a teacher, and then became a school psychologist ten to fifteen years ago. In his role as a school psychologist, he has worked with GSA’s, lead support groups for LGBTQ youth, and has been instrumental in policy change relating to LGBTQ youth.

Kassie. Kassie is a 60-year-old woman who identifies as heterosexual. Kassie distinguishes that she considers herself Italian rather than white. Kassie has over 25 years of experience as a school psychologist in the western portion of the U.S. Kassie has an educational background in business and in administration, both of which she credits to providing her with advocacy skills. She has several close family members who identify as LGBTQ. She has experience in both professional and community advocacy work for the LGBTQ community.

Lisa. Lisa is a 40-year-old white woman who identifies as heterosexual. Lisa is a graduate professor of school psychology in an urban university in the Mid-Atlantic portion of the
United States. She has close friends who identify as LGBTQ and a strong interest in bullying in the K-12 schools, which provide her the motivation to advocate for LGBTQ youth. As a trainer for school psychologists, she sees the importance of providing a solid foundation for advocacy work, but is realistic about the constraints of the academy.

**Corinne.** Corinne is a 32-year-old white woman who identifies as heterosexual. She has five to ten years of experience as a school psychologist in the northwest portion of the U.S. As an undergraduate student, she began to have a strong interest in social justice advocacy. Corinne had the highest LAPIS score out of all 252 respondents. She is active in the GSA and bullying clubs in her school. She uses student voice to enlighten other professionals on the need for LGBTQ advocacy.

**Summary of Participants Demographics**

Of the ten interviewees, two were male and eight were female. There were eight interviewees who identified as heterosexual, one as gay, and one as queer. The interview participants were between 32 and 72 years of age. Eight interviewees identified as white, and one as Latino. One interviewee identified as white on the LAPIS, but in the interview indicated that she preferred to be referred to as Italian, rather than white.

Eight of the ten interviewees are currently practicing school psychologists. Two of the interviewees are graduate instructors of school psychologists. One of the practicing school psychologists is also an adjunct graduate professor of school psychology. Two of the interviewees indicated that they worked in multiple settings either due to multiple jobs or more than one work location at their place of employment. The majority of the interviewees had 15 – 20 years of experience as a school psychologist or educator. Table 15 summarizes the demographics of the interview participants.
### Table 15
*Interviewee Demographic Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alias</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Current Religion</th>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Work Locale</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crystal</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>No Religion</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>15 – 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>15 – 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochelle</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>5 – 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosanne</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Unitarian Universalist</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>25+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peggy</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>25+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>15 – 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>No Religion</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>10 – 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kassie</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Humanist</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White (Italian)</td>
<td>Rural, Urban, University</td>
<td>25+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>No Religion</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Urban, College</td>
<td>15 – 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrine</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>5 – 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Analysis Summary and Data Display

Analysis procedures were described in Chapter Three, but the analysis of the interviews was conducted in light of the research questions and theoretical framework, and the discussion of the data are organized in light of the individual characteristics of school psychologists, their context, and their strategies of advocacy. Each of these has several corresponding sub-themes. Table 16 outlines the themes and sub-themes, which emerged from the interviews. Each of the
themes is then discussed. Based on these qualitative findings, the research questions are discussed, followed by a summary of the chapter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal History</td>
<td></td>
<td>Experience as an educator</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LGBTQ friends</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Activist connections</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Limitations in LGBTQ formal education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Influence of Volunteerism + Religion in family of origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Personal Qualities that Lead to</td>
<td></td>
<td>Part of their innate composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quest for personal knowledge</td>
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<td>Quest for social justice</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Self-agency</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comfortable with self</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Experiences and Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Legal knowledge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consultation skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Activity in other organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Context: Shaping Normative Beliefs</td>
<td>Growing and Multiple Reasons for Interest</td>
<td>LGBTQ friends</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Desire equal rights and spirituality</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elevated suicide risk for LGBTQ youth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cognizant of marginalization</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Safe to advocate as a heterosexual ally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dealing with Environmental Barriers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Struggles with administration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Struggles with students’ parents and families</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Embedded in a conservative community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Role</td>
<td></td>
<td>Becoming the resource for others</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love for job diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Job demands cause advocacy to wane</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reinforcement from LGBTQ family members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategies of Advocacy:</td>
<td>Taking Action</td>
<td>Displaying cues of LGBTQ advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaping Perceived Behavioral Control</td>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitating workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advocate with administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Active in state/local professional organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work within GSA’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drawing on LGBTQ Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local LGBTQ youth resources</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>National LGBTQ youth resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Online resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continually Seeking Out Information to</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mental health resources for LGBTQ youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close LGBTQ Knowledge Gaps</td>
<td></td>
<td>Information on LGBTQ and bullying</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Information on LGBTQ academic outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information on race and LGBTQ</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information on transgender youth</td>
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Personal Characteristics: Shaping Attitude

The first theme, which emerged from the interviews, was individual characteristics of the interviewees. In Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, one of the components of behavior intention is the attitude toward the behavior. As stated previously, the attitude toward the behavior is the degree to which performance of the behavior is positively or negatively valued (Ajzen, 1991). In the current study, the attitude toward the behavior is the attitude toward social justice advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ youth. The interviews provided insight on the characteristics, which shape the attitudes of school psychologists who are active LGBTQ social justice advocates. These shared characteristics included personal history, perceived personal qualities and shared experience and knowledge. Each of these examples is discussed in detail.

Personal History

The interviewees shared information regarding their life story. When interviewees were asked about what drew them to the school psychology field, many discussed important antecedents from childhood and early adulthood. Commonalities among the interviewees included experience as an educator, LGBTQ friends, connections with activists, limited formal education on LGBTQ concerns, and having volunteerism as value within the family of origin.

Experiences as teachers or educators. Many of the interviewees reported either past or current experience as a teacher. While some began their career as a teacher, others became teachers after working as a school psychologist. Teaching others is a piece of advocacy work. Several interviewees mentioned that using these skills, as a way to advocate for the rights of others is a calling. Rochelle equated education is the essence of social justice, stating:

That’s consistent with what I’ve done, no matter what issue I’m working on in a school.

Because I do feel like education is social justice and finding the right people to work on
whatever things you see are lacking in particular is the first step. So, that is what I would say first and foremost.

**Having LGBT friends.** Many of the participants discussed the importance of having friends who identify as LGBTQ. It is helpful to put a real face on the concept of social justice for LGBTQ individuals. Seeing the real struggles for those close to them caused them to seek social justice for LGBTQ youth. Roseanne stated that a major source of her LGBTQ knowledge comes from the interaction with her friends. She also stated that her son’s friend, who identifies as LGBTQ, inspired her to become more active in LGBTQ advocacy in the K-12 school system. Roseanne credits this relationship as the catalyst, which started her involvement with starting the first GSA in her school district, stating, “There was a student who was actually good friends with my son, and he wanted to start [a GSA] as a junior at the high school. I helped him do that.”

Crystal discussed knowing LGBTQ people as a child and as an adult and how that experience assisted her in understanding some of the stigma and negative societal pressure on those who identify as LGBTQ.

Basically, my best friend in college was gay, but at the time that we were friends. It was a different time. He was in a traditional marriage for a long time. He came out of the closet to me some years later. I think that I’ve always been an ally because of the fact that my Mom moved from Pennsylvania to the Hollywood area; and she had a lot of gay friends. I understood early on the kind of social stigma of being a sexual minority person in our society.

Peggy became a school psychologist because her first dream of theater and dance were shattered when she learned of her diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis in her early adulthood. Being
involved with the theater, she had many friends who identified as LGBTQ. She discussed how those early interactions shaped her desire to be an LGBTQ activist. She said:

Because of my interest in the theater, I had a lot of gay friends. I “dated” gay guys for a period of time in my young adulthood because I adored them, and they were safe. I didn’t want to get romantically involved with anybody. I was kind of like one of these people that they could hang on their arm, and go out, and be okay with. I had that experience of just loving my gay and lesbian friends and feeling very comfortable with them.

Lisa also discussed having a friend in college who inspired her to want to learn more about sexual identity development:

“I actually started becoming interested in LGBT children and just LGBT people in general when I was in college. My best friend was coming out during college. He got me very interested in learning about the process about how development of your sexual identity really happens, because I don’t think I thought of that very much until I was a little older.”

**Having activist connections.** More than half of the participants discussed relationships with others who were in activist roles. Having friendships and relationships with those who are activists for both LGBTQ issues and other issues has taught them how to positively influence change with confidence. Crystal mentioned her long involvement with one of the school psychology professional organizations. During that time, she became friends with their lobbyist, learning a great deal about advocacy. In addition, her husband is a marriage equality activist, who has taught her skills she has been able to use as a school psychologist in advocating for LGBTQ students.
Rochelle also talks about her friendships with advocates being instrumental:

You know, just personally, I have a lot of friendships with people who work as LGBTQ activists, whether it be for GLAD in Massachusetts, or people who work for the Department of Education, who are LGBTQ activists in different ways. I feel like I have a lot of support and that I have access to many resources that I can utilize.

Peggy shared that her church friendships were a large part of her social circle. She indicated that as a church, they discussed and sought to change the composition of the congregation to include those who identify as LGBTQ.

I can tell you another very influential part of this was I belong to a Methodist church down in Georgetown which, and I don’t know if you know religions, but Methodism is highly socially active and liberal. I mean not the big umbrella church of the sky, but basically, individual churches. This church is a particularly liberal social action church. Back when I had little bitty kids, a group of us decided that what we wanted to do was, to study whether or not we wanted to be a Reconciling Congregation. A Reconciling Congregation is a congregation that not just accepts gays and questioning and whatever. It’s a congregation that manifests that we are lesser people if we don’t include all human beings in our lives. That we are missing out. It’s not just we’re going to be gracious to include, but we make a commitment to ourselves and to our faith community that this something that we believe and we want.

Corrine discusses her work with a widely respected LGBTQ advocate at a neighboring urban school district:
We had phone conference with the LGBTQ coordinator in Seattle, who has kind of started this conversation for our district and she kind of gave some pointers about where to start. Our goal is really to sit down and put some policies in place.

**Limitations in LGBTQ formal education.** Several participants mentioned their concern with the lack of attention in their formal education process for LGBTQ awareness. Rochelle, who identified as “queer,” was the only participant who stated that she had some formal education in LGBTQ concerns. Her LGBTQ formal education was mainly as an undergraduate, with one graduate course with a brief focus on LGBTQ concerns. She states:

I went to an all-women’s school with a pretty supportive environment in terms of LBT community. I took a lot of different classes around queer studies. I had a queer identity class, and a lesbian identity class. Neither was about youth in particular, but it was part of my own personal identity development at that point. In graduate school, I had multicultural counseling. The only thing I do remember about that class is that I ended up presenting the LGBT unit as the only LGBT person in the class. I wouldn’t call the professor of the class particularly adept at understanding LGBT issues. It was not that he wasn’t supportive; he just didn’t have a lot of knowledge.

Similarly, two participants mentioned that there was a mention of LGBTQ issues in a graduate multicultural counseling course, however it was not very informative. Approaching this from a formal education perspective, Lisa, a professor currently working in a school psychology graduate program, expressed an interest in providing an LGBTQ course. Unfortunately, other mandates for curriculum requirements have pushed that concept to the margins. She states:

I think probably I would love to be able to offer some coursework in LGBTQ issues. I think the other faculty would be interested in that as well. We struggle how to
incorporate that with all of the required courses that we have to fulfill for students. I would love to be able to offer something like that, that would be wonderful.

Claire stated that she never had any formal education on sexual orientation or gender expression. She stated, “When I was in graduate school, it would have been the mid-90s. Our diversity really was just based on ethnic and racial diversity. That [LGBTQ awareness] wasn't something that came up, that I can recall.”

**Influence of Volunteerism and Religion in family of origin.** The last commonality among personal history relates to a shared family culture of religion, volunteerism, and social justice advocacy. Five of the participants mentioned that they were raised in families who focused on volunteer work or social justice issues. Kassie also speaks about growing up in a family where helping others was expected. She says:

I lived in an environment where my parents were very accepting of people of other races, other identified groups of various kinds; my parents had a more cosmopolitan view of things. They accepted everyone. Everyone was their friend. I just grew up in that kind of a setting. My father modeled a lot of this behavior because he was constantly involved with different foster youth groups and in a lot of community-type groups where he did things to support kids, kids without fathers, kids with various needs, he was always involved and so I grew up with that mentality of being an advocate for kids and trying to do that whatever I could.

Claire credited her spiritual upbringing for her desire to advocate for LGBTQ youth:

I'm Jewish. I'm from New York ... My parents, my mom at least, was very open-minded, very much just standing up for what is right and feeling passionate about that the majority doesn't get to decide about the rights of the minority. It's just not right. There has to be
some kind of justice for the right thing to do. I've always been that way and it applies to
everything. I think that even though I'm not gay myself, I think that because of how I
was raised and my perspective, I see that as being something that I can do to contribute to
the betterment of mankind and the betterment of people.

Peggy spoke at length about her spiritual beliefs and her religious background. She
credits it for shaping her advocacy skills:

Actually, my granddad was a Methodist Minister in southern Illinois. I remember, and
maybe this is where some of the artistic stuff comes from, he was one of those preachers
who didn’t read from papers. He would step out behind the pulpit and have dialogue
sermons with his congregation and speak extemporaneously. He spent an hour every day
studying the Bible in the original Greek or the whatever it was. Now, my Dad and Mom
were Methodists, I think, by default because that’s what Grandpa expected so they were.
I have always appreciated the social outreach of the Methodist Church. They spend a lot
of time and lot of their money and their offerings that they collect on doing good things
in the community.

All of the participants discussed ways their past influenced their present endeavors for
LGBTQ social justice advocacy work. Seemingly, experience as a teacher, having LGBTQ
and/or activist friends, and being raised in a family culture of spirituality and sensitivity to the
needs of society all seem to have powerful consequences on the lives of those school
psychologists who currently advocate for LGBTQ youth.

**Perceived Personal Qualities That Lead to Advocacy**

Throughout the interviews, participants made spontaneous reflections of themselves as
LGBTQ social justice advocates. While this was never a direct question asked of the
interviewees, all felt compelled to share personal observations of them. Five subthemes emerged as perceived qualities relating to school psychologists who engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work. These five qualities include (1) an innate desire to help others, (2) an ongoing quest for personal knowledge enrichment, (3) an ongoing quest for social justice, (4) self-agency, and (5) solid self-image, unaffected by other’s perceptions of them.

Part of their innate composition. Several of the participants related their social justice advocacy drive as something that was intuitive for them. They felt that they were always an advocate, and did not acquire their skills from any learning process. Claire states, “I've always had that kind of streak in me where they're not going to have me do anything that's unethical or that's not right.” Kassie states that she struggles with whether social justice advocacy is innate or learned. She says:

I've noticed that people who probably show the most commitment are those who do that in other ways, other things, other areas, other issues too, and they are not only committed to LGBT advocacy. Two of my daughters are vegetarians and are very definitely animal rights people. I’m an animal rescuer and I couldn't tell you how many dogs I have kept in my home … various ones that my three daughters have rescued and I have kept. I think once you have that attitude and belief system, then I think it carries over into more things. I think it’s hard to believe in equality and equal rights for everyone and not practice that in other issues, too. I don’t know. I used to believe in the power of environmental influences, but boy I will tell you, the more I work with the type of population that I’m involved with now, the older I get, the more I think you are probably born with some basic qualities.
Crystal also believes that her drive for social justice advocacy is intuitive. She said, “I think it’s something that you intuitively learn. I see there’s injustice in this certain area, or there are needs for more public awareness, so you just start doing it on your own.”

**Quest for personal knowledge.** Another sub-theme involves the quest for personal knowledge and growth. Several participants indicated they were interested in LGBTQ advocacy so they sought out the information on their own. Roseanne states that she researched on the internet for website that would assist her with her knowledge base in this area. Crystal also talks about satisfying her quest for knowledge on her own, saying, “It was all self-taught and being in a graduate program beyond the masters level and doing my own research. I didn’t get anything in my grad program on it.”

As stated previously in this chapter, Peggy decided, with the support of her church friends to study how to change her church into a Reconciling Congregation to become more open to accepting those who identify as LGBTQ in their congregation. This quest had positive outcomes for her church:

- We took a year and a half to study all the issues and we had many, many people come in and work with us. Some were parents, some were singles, but it was the entire congregation. We voted as a congregation to become a reconciling congregation about 26 years ago. This was a very important piece of my life. At the time, I had young kids. What I wanted for this change to do was to include their church life Sunday School Program as part of the sex education program. That came as an offshoot.

**Quest for social justice.** The third sub-theme is participants indicated their personal quest for social justice. Several participants discussed a strong desire for social justice, equal
rights, or civil rights. Lisa states that this quest has grown over the years, as she became more comfortable and confident. She states:

Getting older and being more confident in my belief system about that everyone deserves the same protections, the same rights, I think that has resulted in me being a stronger advocate than when I was maybe just right out of graduate school.

Kassie discussed her quest for social justice, “I think it’s hard to believe in equality and equal rights for everyone and not practice that in other issues, too.” She also talks about her ongoing quest for social justice, which even manifests itself in the workplace:

One school district that I worked for many years was an upper SES district and they prided themselves on having a certain type of demographic of folks primarily Caucasian, WASPs. It was a particular type of demographic, and there would be situations where … I would say not more than a handful of probably LGBT youth. It’s hard to know whether they were out or identified themselves as such, but I would come across certain situations like, for example, victimization or bullying occurring out in the playground and name calling, and I would jump on that as professionally as I could, but basically tell the adults out there that, “That was not to be tolerated and you needed to stop it.” I would probably view myself as more of the mother tiger variety of interaction, trying to be professional, and trying to do whatever I needed to do to have cooperation and buy-in from the adults. But also making it clear that this type of behavior cannot be tolerated and trying to educate them along the way.

Self-Agency. Many of the interviewees discussed a quality that they referred to as courage, self-agency, or assertiveness, which gives them the confidence to advocate for LGBTQ
youth. Kassie states, “That's me. I’m fairly assertive.” Daniel says advocacy work is much more than just knowledge. You also have to be strong:

I think it takes a certain level of courage. I think the courage is overstated, but I think it has got to be there. I think the person needs to be a leader. There are plenty of people who are fine on LGBT issues; but they're never going to lead anyone. They're usually lousy advocates. They're wonderful people and nice colleagues, but they're usually lousy advocates.

Claire discussed ways in which knowledge helps to foster her appearance of a fearless advocate:

“Know what your rights are in protecting [students] and then don't back down. Be comfortable. For example, I've had people say something like, "That's so great that your schools allowing you to have the GSA." I said to them "No, no. They're not allowing me to do anything. This is the student's rights and if you have any other club then you have to be able to have this club." I never feel like I'm at the mercy of the administration on any kind of level. I would just say take whatever attitude you have as a school psychologist, follow your ethical guidelines as a school psychologist, and apply those in that realm, too ... having that same attitude about it.

**Comfortable with self.** Lastly, to be an effective LGBTQ advocate, several participants indicate that it is necessary to be comfortable in your own skin. True advocates have to understand that some are going to make assumptions about them, including their sexuality. They have to expect that, and take it in stride. Daniel reports that he deals not only with colleagues assuming that he is gay, but also worries when LGBTQ students learn that he is heterosexual. He when asked about some of the challenges with being a LGBTQ advocate, he says:
Being involved in the gay community ... people assuming I'm gay, and me trying to figure out if I should come out as heterosexual. Allies have to be comfortable with people assuming they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. We don't want them to be like, "What? That's not me. Are you kidding me?"

Daniel also talked about how LGBTQ advocacy is different from other social advocacy:
That's a little different in other kinds of diversity advocacy. I'm white and when I advocate for people of color, no one assumes I'm a person of color. LGBT-inclusive is different in that regard. It's harder to show. You have to be able to handle set backs ... and there's a lot. We often don't get anything close to what we want to have with our agenda.

Crystal discussed her experience with leading LGBTQ awareness workshops with K-12 staff. While many expressed fear, she tells others they need to be strong and address the concerns to combat homophobia:
That’s what I’m trying to build with when I do presentations because a lot of when I do presentations a lot of people say, “I don’t know what to do” or they’re in small district where they can’t talk about these things. They could be fired, because that still exists, so I really think that we need to address it. It’s so important because doing all of these presentations makes me realize there’s still a lot of homophobia.

All of the participants discussed the qualities they believe are important for an LGBTQ social justice advocate in the K-12 system. Some believed that this is an innate trait. Most interviewees listed specific traits such as drives or quests to increase personal knowledge and/or champion civil rights. Most agreed that assertiveness, courage, or self-agency is mandatory with being an effective advocate.
Experience and Knowledge Facilitating Advocacy

There were four areas of expertise, which emerged from the interviews. These are areas that the participants felt were instrumental in building effective advocacy platforms. These include (1) administration, (2) law, (3) resources, and (4) activity in professional organizations.

**K-12 administration skills.** Within the K-12 school system, to become a supervisor or administrator, most states require an additional certification. This additional certification enables certificate holders to hold positions such as principal, supervisor, and superintendent. Crystal says, “I also have an administrative credential so of course you learn a lot about policy.”

Kassie stated that her knowledge of administrative practices and procedures has assisted her in knowing the most appropriate way to approach a situation that required her to advocate for the needs of LGBTQ students. Kassie told a story of when her knowledge of administrative practices saved a student whose parents identified as lesbians. In this case, the parents were told by staff that their child’s difficulties were caused by the lifestyle choice of the parents. When Kassie received the information, she was able to intervene and assist that student, while providing an education to a staff member.

Robert talks about how his close work with administration has taught him to work more effectively with them:

I have worked with many administrators. They use a similar language and similar techniques. Once you learn this language and technique, it helps to anticipate their reactions better. I have much less difficulty when working with them around sensitive issues, once I took notice of that.

**Legal knowledge.** Legal knowledge was an area of expertise discussed by four interviewees. As a school psychologist, it is not only sufficient to be aware of education laws,
but one should also have knowledge about civil rights, and the intersection of civil rights and legal mandates for the K-12 school system. When confronting homophobia and heteronormativity within the school system, Kassie uses her legal knowledge to help educate others. She says:

People will do the typical BS responses. Like I said, I don’t have a lot of patience with it and I'll do it with a smile on my face, but basically I usually try to point out legal issues, legalities, or legislation. The kind of legislation and the anti-bullying legislation that California has is a good thing.

Claire finds herself having to remind administrators about the legal ramifications of decisions. She has learned that she has to be able to know the laws well enough to remind administrators when they may be working outside of the law. She states:

The best thing I would advise would be to learn about the rights that LGBTQ students have in school, in terms of the equal access clause and in terms of the rights to privacy and then use that. As a school psychologist, I've been in lots of buildings and I've worked with lots of principals, but I've always known that that person isn't my boss. The principal is not my boss. I'm usually responsible to a Special Education Director and ultimately; I'm responsible for enforcing the state and the federal regulations in doing right by everybody, just in terms of following the procedures and honoring, ultimately the rights of students and their families.

Robert feels that state laws vary, and depending on the state, the school psychologist may have an easier time. He says:

I think that in terms of existing legislation and in terms of existing laws, it’s been a very supportive state. It’s very inclusive; it’s very a very protective state. In terms of the state
and I think that trickles down to the school system, like I said in (my school district) we follow state guidelines. They have to be encouraged to follow the law, which is unfortunate.

**Consultation skills.** Another useful skill set mentioned by several participants involves consultation skills. NASP (2010a) published National Association of School Psychologists Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services. In this article, consultation is defined as one of the primary job responsibilities for school psychologists. NASP defines consultation as:

> School psychologists have knowledge of varied models and strategies of consultation, collaboration, and communication applicable to individuals, families, groups, and systems and methods to promote effective implementation of services. As part of a systematic and comprehensive process of effective decision making and problem solving that permeates all aspects of service delivery, school psychologists demonstrate skills to consult, collaborate, and communicate effectively with others (p. 4).

There are many examples of ways in which school psychologists provide consultative services. One example of consultation is using a problem solving process as a vehicle for planning, implementing, and evaluating academic and mental health services. Another example would be that school psychologists must effectively communicate information to parents, teachers and other school personnel, policy makers, community leaders, and others. NASP (2010a) also states school psychologists function as change agents, using their skills in communication, collaboration, and consultation to promote necessary change at the individual student, classroom, building, district, state, and federal levels.
In the current study, two school psychologists listed consultation skills as a necessary component in their role as a LGBTQ social justice advocate. Crystal states that she had a graduate class on consultation, which taught her advocacy skills. Corinne talked about working with others and recruiting them for social justice activities:

Find other staff members who are passionate about social justice and team with them.

Even if it's super informal, just meet with them and say, “Hey! What are you interested in? What can we do on a systems level to support our students, to train our staff, support our staff around this?”

Other participants discussed how their consultation skills assisted them with their LGBTQ advocacy work. Rochelle talks about how her consultation skills have helped in the past:

What I’ve tried to do ... and it’s not always easy because I think that you say to an administrator or anyone really that we need to have a school wide initiative, or awareness campaign. We need to have an opportunity for kids to have a group or something. Then it becomes, “Whoa we’re not there yet. This is just one issue, one student.” That can be a tricky conversation to have because it’s a big shift to pursue that initiative instead of just dealing with this one student. But that’s not really the issue. It is much bigger.

Robert discusses using consultation skills in supporting a young student who was displaying fluid gender expression:

One of the things that I did here specifically is a second grader who is ... I know this is a very fluid continuum in terms of the ramification ... but as a second grader, this is a male student who is starting to identify as female. In that process, the teacher came to me to consult and was very concerned about it. She was like, “I don’t know what to do.” She
came to me from the perspective of being open and wanting to support. It was a very positive experience; there wasn’t [sic] any negative undertones. Her first caution was safety and to make sure that she wasn’t going to be bullied, and just how to help him in this adjustment. I said, “Well we have to let him decide if he’s he or he’s her, and we want to let him express whatever pronoun he wants to use.” The thing is the kid is in class announcing he’s a girl. I said, “That’s okay and just be very accepting.”

**Activity in other organizations.** Lastly, several participants discussed the importance of being active in professional and state organizations. It is typical for each state to have school psychology organizations. Some larger metropolitan areas also have professional organizations. Los Angeles is one of the metropolitan areas to have a local school psychology organization. Several of the participants felt that they had learned to advocate through their participation in these professional organizations. Robert served as an officer in both the state and a local school psychology organization. In these roles, he was able to recruit speakers to keep discussions of LGBTQ concerns in the center of the discussions. Roseanne is very active in NASP. She received training through NASP for advocacy. She says, “I am a NASP delegate. They talk about advocacy all the time, they do in-service on advocacy, and I went to the Public Policy Institute, which is specific to advocacy. We did the whole thing around the GSA.”

The individual characteristics which emerged as themes for those school psychologists who are LGBTQ social justice advocates include shared personal history, perceived personal qualities related to advocacy, and specific professional experience and knowledge. All participants indicated that advocacy skills are a unique skill set. This skill set seems to be nurtured by a LGBTQ knowledge base, real experiences which enlightened them, and a quest for social justice.
Context: Shaping Normative Beliefs

The second theme, which emerged from the interviews, was the context relating to LGBTQ social justice advocacy work for school psychologists. In Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, a second component of behavior intention is the normative beliefs. As stated previously, normative beliefs refer to the perceived behavioral expectations of important referent individuals and groups (Ajzen, 1991). In the current study, normative beliefs are shaped by their context as a school psychologist. Participants discussed several characteristics of their own context that reinforces their desire to engage in LGBTQ advocacy work. These characteristics include the reasons for their interest in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work, the environment, which enables or prevents these efforts in their current role, and how it relates to their advocacy efforts.

Growing and Multiple Reasons for Interest

Interviewees gave many reasons for their interest in LGBTQ advocacy work. The five most frequently cited reasons are discussed. These reasons include (1) having LGBTQ friends, (2) wanting equal rights, (3) elevated suicide risk for LGBTQ youth, (4) being aware of the marginalization of LGBTQ students, and (5) aspects of positionality that made advocacy safer.

LGBTQ friends. As discussed previously, the majority of the participants who identified as heterosexual indicated having close friends who are LGBTQ. Roseanne talked about a friend of her son’s who wanted to start a GSA. She helped them despite having substantial opposition:

There is a large Mormon population in my community, and so there was backlash in terms of having a GSA and calling it a Gay Straight Alliance from the first day. There was a student who was actually good friends with my son. He wanted to start it as a
junior, at the time, at the high school. I helped him do that. In the beginning, we got the Stonewall speakers here, and I got a lot of backlash.

Lisa also says, “I actually think knowing someone who is gay really helped me to be interested in advocacy.”

**Spirituality and the desire for equal rights.** Several interviewees expressed a sincere desire for equal rights in society and within the school system rooted in their spiritual belief system. This spiritual belief system is the lens through which they view the world and influences how they connect with the world. Peggy discussed equal rights being a family value and teaching her children:

I have two children. They’re both girls. Both of my girls are very well schooled in a lot of the basic tenets around homophobia, homosexuality, lesbianism, questioning, and bisexualism. They are perplexed when they run across people who don’t understand. I mean it’s like they’re people. Excuse me ... we’re talking about human beings. You scratch us we all bleed the same color.

Crystal expressed concern about anyone who does not have a desire for equality:

It’s who you are ... and that’s why my significant other does so much work for marriage equality. It’s sad a person can’t live their life as never being discriminated against. Even if you’re kind of a little bit more conservative, how can you say if people can’t have rights?

Daniel discussed the history of his desire for equality and how it has manifested itself over the years:

I think my political awakening began in my human sexuality class in 1990 when I learned about LGBT people. That's when I understood oppression. I understood that damage
that's inflicted in the world. I didn't know what to do with that knowledge because no one was out back then. I was able to join what today we would call a gay-straight alliance. We didn't call them that back then. That's not to say I didn't learn things about right and wrong and standing up for people growing up and all those sorts of things I did. I didn't apply those to sexual minorities until I was 16, which I think was remarkably young and I did it because of a teacher. Then my skill-set to facilitate ... I used when I advocated for the homeless in college and later when I advocated for survivors of domestic violence.

**Concern for increased suicide risk.** Several participants also expressed their desire to be LGBTQ advocates because of the increased risk of suicide among LGBTQ youth. Peggy discussed her interest starting in the 1970’s when she noticed so many LGBTQ youth attempting suicide:

> I was probably one of the very, very first psychologist advocates. Of course, then it was just lesbians and gays we didn’t go into the bisexual or whatever’s. Back in the seventies, I had experience in death and dying, through my church. I was involved in some post suicide management, and first responder stuff. I felt strongly that we were getting kids who were committing suicide because they were closet gays or closet lesbians.

Crystal shared her concern with the lack of LGBTQ knowledge and its relationship to suicide, saying, “It’s really important because, of course, any disenfranchised minority group has to overcome the societal barriers really … it’s really important to learn about that to deal with elevated suicide risks.”
Lisa, a college professor of school psychology, discussed recent research connections between bullying and suicide:

We have research groups. My research group is the one working on bullying of LGBTQ youths. One of the students that I supervise just did her dissertation on examining cyber bullying of LGBTQ youth and suicidal behavior. Suicide in this population is a huge concern.

**Cognizant of marginalization.** Some spoke about the clear marginalization they saw when it came to topics related to LGBTQ. At times, this marginalization was a result of administration scrutinizing activities, which were related to LGBTQ students or school wide activities. Rochelle talked about experiencing this scrutiny, which appeared to be a way to stall approval of certain activities:

I felt like a lot of that, if we did a school wide day of silence or national coming out day.

I needed to get a lot of approval for different kinds of things. Maybe there was more scrutiny of a poster that we’d be putting up or a t-shirt that we’d be making. I felt that I need to get sort of administrative approval each time during different steps, particularly school wide events.

**Aspects of positionality that made it safer.** Most of the participants were heterosexual, and several interviewees reported that the reason for their interest was that others encouraged them to be active in LGBTQ advocacy because it was safer for them to do so since they identified as being heterosexual. This was true for Peggy, who reports:

When I came on the job, I met some gay psychologists. I knew they were. They weren’t coming out, but they said to me, “Look you’re married. You have kids. You have got to
do this for us, we can't. We can't advocate ourselves because if we do we’re going to be ‘outed’ and they’ll fire us.”

Peggy goes on to say that she recognizes that LGBTQ advocacy work was easier for her:

I think it was easier for me. It was very easy for me because I was clearly married. I had kids. I got married while I was working in Montgomery County and I had my kids while I was working, so I'm clearly a heterosexual to all the administration.

Crystal also commented on being able to support the LGBTQ community because she does not identify as LGBTQ, saying, “I’ve had to do a lot advocacy maybe to kind of work with them on this issue. You’re protected class, unless you would be with any other protected class.”

Robert feels fortunate that he is in a district that he has never felt the need to hide his sexual orientation:

Recently I heard something in the news, about a high school in some little desert community. There was an out teacher that they were trying to get rid off because he had a conversation about his family and he said, “Yes, my husband and I.” The kids went home and told their parents, and the parents freaked out. So I think it depends, and I think in that case the individual wasn’t supported by his district. But I know that within [my district], I’ve always felt comfortable being out at work, but it’s not like I go around announcing it.

While there were many reasons given for their interest in LGBTQ social justice advocacy, reasons relating to having LGBTQ friends, desire for equal rights, which is intertwined with their spirituality, uneasiness related to LGBTQ marginalization, and being an advocate because they were a part of the dominant culture since they identified as heterosexual.
In addition, many of the participants discussed the K-12 environmental barriers for LGBTQ social justice advocacy.

**Dealing with Environmental Barriers**

Barriers in the K-12 environment are abundant for LGBTQ advocacy. Participants provided three sub-themes related to the environment. These environmental barriers include difficulties with administration, difficulties with parents or families, and conservative outside community.

**Struggles with administration.** Several participants mentioned their struggles dealing with administrators surrounding LGBTQ concerns. Roseanne explains some difficulty that she had with the school district superintendent over the formation of a GSA:

I got a lot of backlash. I had the superintendent call me. There were articles in the paper, for quite a while, it hesitated, although it was pretty strong right in the beginning because of the interest in it. Then it was never put in the club booklet because they didn’t want to put Gay Straight Alliance in there, I guess. They wanted to change the name of it to Culture Club or something, anyway and we didn’t want to do that.

Daniel talked about a school board member who wanted him to show a video on aversion therapy as a “treatment” for homosexuality:

I had a school board member who wanted me to show a video about aversion therapy, which I certainly wasn't going to show. He copied all the school board members, the assistant superintendent, my principal, and I. I just simply said, "When the gay-straight alliance started, I was asked by the assistant superintendent if kids were confused that we encouraged them to be gay." I said I would not. I said it would be just as unethical of me to encourage kids to be straight.
Lisa discussed her problems with administration in conducting research on LGBTQ bullying within school districts:

It’s interesting, because most of the school districts in our region are, I would say, leery of having any bullying research being done in their districts. I don’t know if they think that by talking about it, then it’s a real problem, or if they will cause a problem by talking about it. What we’ve done is … we’re trying to circumvent the school district in a way.

Claire shared that sometimes the resistance from administration is contained to specific administrators, rather than administration as a whole:

It depends on the administration. When I started the club, there was a principal who's no longer here. When I went to him and said, "I have an application and we're going to be starting a Gay-Straight Alliance." His response to me was "That's great. It's about time." Then he left at the end of that year, and then the next principal that came in was more of your stereotypical coaching kind of principal. I have to say, I don't know if it was a strategy or if he was just apathetic, but he didn't care. Sometimes when I'd advocate for something, it seemed to annoy him.

**Struggles with students’ parents and families.** Several participants also spoke of difficulties with parents and family members of students. Rochelle discussed that she had several times when parents became upset over when she advocated for a student who identified as being LGBTQ:

I had different reactions from different parents about gender identities or if bullying incidents came up that had to do with sexual identity or gender identity. You know, it wasn’t necessarily related to being a GSA supervisor or supporter. It was more just my
interactions with parents. It just depended on personal biases and things that parents might have when different issues came up.

Daniel discussed a situation where a student wanted to do a presentation against gay marriage from the perspective of a hate group. In the presentation, it was clear that the student was in admiration of the hate group and some of its tactics. When this presentation was disallowed, the parents of the students rallied a school board member, and other parents to champion the student’s freedom of speech. Luckily, the superintendent and the building principal stood firm that this type of hate would not be allowed.

Crystal expressed concern regarding parents who have abandoned their child because they identified as LGBTQ, which is a cause for homelessness for LGBTQ youth:

The barriers I think that I’ve found are with parents. Sometimes and I work with foster youth and so I’ve worked with kids that have been kicked out of their house because they were LGBT and possibly Q, and that’s can be challenging.

**Embedded in a conservative community.** The last environmental context theme involved the conservative community. Kassie talked about the role of religion in the lack of acceptance in the community.

We still have our battles to fight in this particular area of California because it's very heavily religious, largely Hispanic, but that wouldn’t necessarily mean conservative, but largely Catholic or other religious groups that use their religion in not such a good way.

Claire discussed how conservative the state in general was on most issues, including LGBTQ concerns:

It's very conservative as a state. For example, there's all this talk about the IRS targeting people. The Arizona legislature actually developed a series of bills just to make Planned
Parent not have tax-exempt status and not be able to have all those tax implications bluntly. In terms of every issue from gun control, to abortion, to sex education ... they're very conservative. Everything in terms of LGBT falls into line with that conservative stance.

The conservative community appears to be a factor for most of the participants, no matter the state or demographics. It appears that successful LGBTQ advocates deal with this by gathering support from allies, and laying that groundwork first.

Roseanne discussed some of the community backlash when the GSA was initiated. Despite this backlash, Roseanne was able to successfully start a GSA:

I think the most important [barrier] was beginning the GSA at my high school. There is a large Mormon population in my community, and so there was backlash in terms of having a GSA and calling it a Gay Straight Alliance from the first day ... There were articles in the paper, and so for quite a while, it hesitated ... although it was pretty strong right in the beginning because of the interest in it ... I think just the fact that we are viable club that gets a picture in the yearbook is a good thing, so that was one of the things that for me was an important advocacy issue.

Corinne agreed that while there are barriers present, including a conservative community, this does not hinder her in her LGBTQ advocacy:

I personally think there are some more systemic barriers, like at the district level and the community itself is a little more conservative. In theory, I’ve heard about people creating barriers, but they are not barriers to me personally if that makes sense.
Managing Advocacy in their Current Role

The participants also discussed their current role and how that impacts their ability to advocate. Specifically, participants discussed becoming the local LGBTQ resource for the district, how the demands of their job limit their ability to fully advocate, their love of the amount of job diversity, and that their own LGBTQ family members reinforce the need for advocacy in the school system.

**Becoming the resource for others.** Most of the participants discussed how their role changed into being the local resource for LGBTQ concerns. Claire discusses the transition to becoming the local resource:

That's my official role. That started because several students came out to me and I became known on campus as a friendly, gay-friendly person to talk to, nonjudgmental, and a good advocate for students. Then it became official when I was the advisor of Gay-Straight Alliance. So now I'm the “go to” person on campus in terms of if the issue comes up and a teacher has a student that they think I should talk to or students will refer their friends. Another role that I appreciate doing is I've become the legal expert on what staff can and cannot do in terms of dealing with students where those kinds of issues come up.

Along with the role of being the local LGBTQ resource, there is an unexpected power. Daniel expresses his discomfort with having that unintended power:

You have to remember that you are a role model. If you laugh at certain jokes and you're a high-profile advocate. That sends a message to everyone that that kind of joke is okay to laugh at. The story I always give about the power of allies is one time a teacher saw me and she says, "Daniel, I have a question for you." She said, "Is it okay to use the word
gay in a derogatory way?" I said, "No." She said, "I have (student name ... a kid that I also have), he said it, and I corrected him. (The student) said, 'I have Dr. Daniel and Dr. Daniel says it's okay now to use the word that way.'" She says, "I'm going to see Dr. Daniel and I'm going to ask him." I said it's actually not okay. She's said, "Okay, I'll take care of it." I said, "One second ...what would you have said if I said it was okay?" She goes, "Then it would be okay, you would know." I'm like, "What? I have the power to make it okay to use the word gay?" The kid knows if he cites me that the teacher is going to back off?

Robert talked about being the local resource for LGBTQ concerns, despite the district having a small department dedicated to LGBTQ youth. As a gay man, he is approached very frequently:

In other cases, I have also provided consultations with colleagues. People will call because everybody knows I’m an openly gay man and they all know if there’s a LGBTQ question they all call me, “Oh he’s gay he’s our expert.” By default people call me and say, “Robert, what I’m I supposed to do for this, I have a kid in counseling just came out to me.” I give them resources. I give them links to The Trevor Project. I’ll give them the resources I have. I’ll tell them, “Hey we have a really well defined and developed program here in the district.” I point them in the direction of our LGBTQ office, which for whatever reason, a lot of people just don’t even know about. It’s interesting because I know that they try. They’re out there. It’s a small staff, but they are out there and they try to put the word out, so I try to disseminate that as much as possible.

**Love for job diversity.** Several of the participants enjoyed the job diversity in the role of a school psychologist. As a school psychologist, there are many responsibilities. NASP
(2010c) describes the role of the school psychologist. They are assigned the task to “help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community for all students.”

There are many ways this goal can be accomplished, giving diversity in job responsibility. Peggy talked about the flexibility in the role of a school psychologist, saying, “I've decided that this is the best job in the world. It’s what I call a kitchen sink job. I get to see everything and you never know what’s coming up.” Kassie agrees, saying, “I love it because it is never boring, I love the kids, I love the parents, I have always just thoroughly enjoyed the job.”

Claire explained the reason the school psychology field attracted her, is because of the diverse responsibilities and skills required for the job:

School psychology, when I found out about it, is kind of a hidden gem. It’s not really highlighted at undergrad programs. It incorporated positive psychology, reading, and learning issues, which were interesting to me ... crisis management, and applied behavioral analysis ... which are also areas of interest for me. School psychology seemed like a good combination of all the things that I had been doing, and enjoyed doing, and was good at as well.

**Job demands cause advocacy to wane.** While the job responsibilities are diverse, some interviewees felt that they were not able to advocate as much as they would like because of all of the other responsibilities in their jobs. Rochelle explains that a recent change in her placement changed how much LGBTQ advocacy work in which she can participate:
I’ve actually changed jobs and been at a different job the last three years and I’ve done a little bit less of support for LGTBQ, but not because it’s not something I don’t want to do. It’s just the opportunity just kind of hasn’t arisen. The student interest hasn’t been there.

Kassie talks about her frustration with not having time to do as much advocacy work:

Unfortunately, it has been piecemeal. It's been done as I have had the opportunity. Time to actually do any staff development, actually participate in doing (advocacy work) is typically few and far between. I feel like we were just all being seen as little testing units and just cranking out the evaluations as quickly as we could.

Two participants discussed how having a family member, who identifies as LGBTQ, is a reinforcer and a motivator to continue to do advocacy work. Kassie stated that she sees the injustice that affects her two daughters who are lesbians. She hopes that in the future society will be more accepting. Rosanne discussed having a brother who identifies as gay inspires her to continue to gain more knowledge and act as an advocate.

Overall, context plays an important role for those who identify as LGBTQ social justice advocates. The themes relating to context included the reason for their interest, the environment, and their current role. These three themes provide the reason and justification for their work.

Strategies of Advocacy: Shaping Perceived Behavioral Control

The final theme is the strategies of advocacy of the school psychologists who act as an LGBTQ social justice advocate. In Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, the third component of behavior intention is perceived behavioral control. As stated previously, perceived behavioral control refers to the person’s perception of his or her own ability to perform a given behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In the current study, perceived behavioral control is how easily a school
psychologist would be able to perform LGBTQ social justice advocacy work. Participants discussed several themes, which related to the performance of social justice advocacy work. These themes include taking action, drawing on LGBTQ resources, and continually seeking new information to continue close LGBTQ knowledge gaps.

**Taking Action**

All participants discussed ways in which they advocate for LGBTQ students. In Chapter Four, the LAPIS data indicated that most frequently the advocacy took the form of displaying welcoming signs to allow students to know safe staff to discuss sexuality and gender concerns. In addition to displaying safe signs and posters, the participants also conducted workshops, advocated with administration, completed advocacy work within outside professional organizations, and worked with GSA’s.

**Displaying cues of LGBTQ advocacy.** Most of the participants discussed the importance of displaying welcoming signs, pamphlets, information, or provide other cues that they were open and a safe person to discuss sexuality. Peggy talked about providing cues to LGBTQ students in her annual interview with the school paper. She would include affirming statements:

> In the high school where I worked for 30 years, each Fall I would be interviewed by the little newspaper staff. I would throw in some comments and some asides, like, “You can come see me for any reason. I don’t care if it’s an ingrown toenail or because you kind of are wondering about sexuality.” I wouldn’t ever say sexual identity. It’s interesting because I got kids from neighboring high schools that would call up and want to come in and see me and I saw them.

Corrine also talked about posters and word of mouth as being very helpful:
The GSA on their own has done a lot of work in terms of posters last year, so they are either advertising their club and the club's activities, but they are also promoting messages like, “Hey! It's not okay to say, “That's so gay!”” I think that the poster is such a good way to just have that visual contact. I think also, it’s kind of word of mouth with especially, for high school ... it’s word of mouth for students. Usually what happens is, I talked to one student and then they dragged in one of their friends and they say, “So and so needs that too.”

**Facilitating workshops.** The results of the LAPIS in Chapter Four indicated that school psychologists were least likely to provide a workshop, which may be related to not having adequate time to provide workshops. Roseanne talked about being trained through the American Psychological Association to provide workshops at the local level to increase LGBTQ awareness, however this initiative faded over time:

I also participated, in an APA, American Psychological Association, train the trainers. They had a curriculum regarding gay … and I can never get the whole title gay, straight, bisexual, transsexual, whatever that acronym is ... to help educators understand what the issues are, so I did that training as well. We were supposed to do workshops, but sort of petered out as well.

Some interviewees also stated they had provided workshops to enlighten K-12 staff on LGBTQ concerns. Robert facilitated a workshop with a guest speaker on LGBTQ and bullying:

I facilitated a workshop through our last members and I recruited one of our community psychologists, who is a Ph.D. clinical psychologist. He came out and did a workshop on it. The focus was more on bullying but it was on bullying in an LGBTQ context and how to provide support.
**Advocating with Administration.** As stated previously, some school psychologists provide advocacy by continually communicating with administration to ensure the support of the rights for LGBTQ youth. Corinne talks about having to continually educate district policy makers on LGBTQ concerns:

> We’ve looked at the language used in HR policy language. It's kind of stating that sexual orientation or gender identity. I had to tell them that this is not the same thing. The fact that they don't know that and our Title IX guy thinks it's same thing ... it’s hilarious and also sad. I said you cannot put sexual orientation and gender identity and make it look like it's the same thing. You need to put aside sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression ... and you need to make it clear that those are all three separate distinct categories in ways people identify.

Kassie described a time when she had to provide a copy of the law to an administrator. During the course of an evaluation and the subsequent recommendations, this reinforcement was needed to ensure an LGBTQ student would be given equal supports and accommodations as a recommendation for the evaluation.

**Activity in state and local professional organizations.** As stated previously, many of the participants are active in state and local professional organizations. It is through this platform, many see the avenue for systemic change. Roseanne is an active regional representative for NASP. In that role, she says, “They talk about advocacy all the time, they do in-service on advocacy, and I went to the Public Policy Institute, which is specific towards advocacy.” Crystal discussed the focus of the state school psychological association and its recent emphasis on LGBTQ concerns:
I’m president elect. I’ll take office in July but the current president really felt that we were neglecting LGBTQ issues and so he purposely decided that our Cultural/Linguistic Diversity Committee would address it. I came on and we bonded a little bit because they have to that usually the president kind of picks someone that they would like to run for the office so we’ve really connected on that basis. He’s done a lot to promote [LGBTQ concerns] in our organization.

Robert stated, “I served on the board of our [local] association for four years and I’m still an active member.” In his work with the local and state associations, he has served committees for LGBTQ youth initiatives.

**Work within Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA’s).** The majority of the interviewees discussed their work in the GSA within their school district. Six of the participants indicated that they either currently or in the recent past have been the advisor for the GSA. Roseanne talks about starting the GSA for the first time in her district, as stated earlier it was difficult in the beginning because she perceived there was a large conservative Mormon population within the boundaries of the school district. Corinne seems to speak with pride about the GSA she works with. It is the longest running GSA in the district and it is co-facilitated by a transgender woman:

We have the longest running GSA in the district. I don’t even know how well functioning the other programs are or how new they are because, the GSA here … this is my seventh year here and it is such a great high school and the GSA has been in existence since the beginning. We’re really lucky that the current advisor is transgender; she's been the advisor and is such an amazing advocate for kids. We’ve been able to work together on various projects. I’m also the advisor of an anti bullying club.
Rochelle began working with GSA’s before she obtained her certification as a school psychologist, “So when I was in training to be a school psychologist, I helped to run a Gay-Straight Alliance. Then my first three years as a school psychologist I ran the Gay-Straight Alliance in a public high school.”

While the method for LGBTQ advocacy varied with each participant, there was one constant. All participants discussed their reliance on outside resources because resources within the K-12 system tended to be inadequate.

**Drawing on LGBTQ Resources**

All participants discussed the importance of using LGBTQ resources. These outside resources assist in providing resources where school districts are either unwilling or unable to support LGBTQ youth. These resources include local, national, and online resources.

**Local LGBTQ resources.** Most of the participants named local resources to support LGBTQ youth and bolter their own advocacy work. These local resources included LGBTQ youth centers, social groups, pride groups and general safe spaces for LGBTQ youth. Claire discussed the recent creation of an online high school for LGBTQ students who were not comfortable with attending the public high school:

It's called Q-High. It's like a high school, an online high school for kids who are gay who feel uncomfortable in their regular school that just started this past year. There are resources and support groups stuff just in Phoenix and then some other school districts like Tempe School District which is a big, it's where ASU is and it's a suburban area still, but it's not too far. They've had a prom every year and they've invited all the students from GSA's to come. I think that in terms of community ... there's a Pride Parade some
of the kids go to. It's only 20 minutes away and when they can't drive it's hard, but at least they seem to know it's out there.

Roseanne discussed going to visit certain programs, both inside and outside of the K-12 system to model similar programs within her schools to support LGBTQ youth. Most of the participants agreed that the closer the community is to urban areas, the more abundant the community resources are for LGBTQ youth.

**National LGBTQ resources.** Additionally, participants mentioned national resources such as the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) and the Trevor Project. GLSEN has local offices throughout the United States, which provide local support and national resources. Rochelle discussed the abundance of resources available through GLSEN:

They’re very active nationally, but I think particularly Massachusetts. They have a yearly conference and they provide a lot of support to GSA’s, with the day of silence and national coming out day. It is a larger organization, that I felt like I could go to a lot of the time if I had questions or thoughts about how to run the GSA, or how to do school wide events and awareness. So, that’s been great.

The reviews for using NASP as a resource were mixed among the participants. While some viewed NASP as a viable resource for LGBTQ youth advocacy, others did not. As stated previously, Roseanne is a NASP delegate who strongly believes in the resources available through NASP. She speaks specifically about learning her general advocacy skills through her work with NASP. She applied her LGBTQ knowledge with her learned advocacy skills to use them within the school district for LGBTQ youth.
The two participants who identify as LGBTQ, both indicated their disappointment with the resources available through NASP. Rochelle spoke about her doubt with NASP’s ability to create a meaningful learning community around LGBTQ issues:

I would say that NASP ... I really have some mixed feelings about NASP’s feasibility to create core support in cultural competence in whether it be LGBTQ issues or other issues around ethnicity and race. I have not been as connected to NASP because of those reasons.

Robert expressed that his concern over the lack of emphasis on LGBTQ concerns from NASP caused him to terminate his membership:

I think that NASP could do more, they are the national organization I think that they need to be more vocal, I think that they need to be … not just have it as a trend, not just have it like a little thing you click on their website look for one little resource. They need to go a lot further in terms of support. I don’t think that LGBTQ issues are addressed with as much vigor as they could, especially considering the climate that we’re in right now in terms of the national debate on American equality. I let my NASP affiliation go. It’s because I thought NASP wasn’t giving me enough.

Overall, all of the interviewees were very knowledgeable about outside resources for LGBTQ youth. Because of the scarcity of resources within school districts, it is essential to become familiar with those resources outside of the school district. The one exception was the Los Angeles Unified School District, who has their Human Relations, Diversity, and Equity Office. Their purpose is to ensure equal access to education for all students. The have ongoing LGBTQ youth initiatives.
Continually Seeking Out Information to Close LGBTQ Knowledge Gaps

The last sub-theme relates to the information gaps related to LGBTQ youth. All participants expressed at least one topic, which requires additional research to continue proactive and supportive advocacy work on behalf of LGBTQ youth. These topics include mental health resources for LGBTQ youth, academic outcomes information for LGBTQ youth, the intersection of race and LGBTQ, bullying and LGBTQ youth, and information on transgender youth.

**Mental health resources for LGBTQ youth.** Claire discusses her concern that many of the difficulties related to how society treats LGBTQ youth may lead to erroneous mental health diagnoses:

I always wonder what effect it has on someone's mental health when their primary family is not accepting of them as who they are. Any kind of subsequent psychiatric diagnosis or any issues, now every other person seems to be identified with a bipolar disorder, kids, it's ridiculous. I always wonder when your family doesn't accept you at your core? Of course it's going to lead to mental health issues. I always think about that because the kids that we get. These kids, they have a lot of problems and I always think, Of course they have problems. Their mom doesn't accept them for who they are and that's terrible. Their mom's sitting there telling them that they're ridiculous for thinking that they should have been born a boy.

Peggy described a situation where she had a student who identified as gay, who was having some emotional issues. She had to refer him to a program with more specialized knowledge of mental health issues since the school she worked was not able to support him.

I did an assessment on him. He really had some significant emotional problems. He really did. It was not the gender identity issue, so it was not being gay [sic]. I did
recommend him for a high school that had what we called a “cluster program” in it. It was within a regular high school, but the classes are smaller. The teachers are trained. They know their mental health stuff. There are functional behavior assessments if they need them. They have their own psychologist and their own social worker. So, I did work him up and recommend him for that program. In fact, I think his parents were relieved that he would be a little bit more protected in there. I was concerned that he was suicidal. He never acknowledged it to me, but given his behavior, I think it was bordering on some self-destructive stuff because I really did believe he was prostituting.

**Information on the impact of bullying on LGBTQ youth.** Lisa is currently partnering with a community mental health organization to gather data on bullying as it relates to LGBTQ youth. She has found school districts largely unsupportive because the districts fear published data on LGBTQ bullying will have a negative effect on their public relations. Bullying is a topic that five of the interviewees expressed the desire for more information. Because of recent events in schools around the nation, there is a large focus on bullying prevention. Daniel has paired with a local college to offer a grad certificate in bullying for K-12 educators. He has done research in the area of bullying:

> The problem is, it’s gay and Muslim kids that are twice as likely to be bullied as everyone else. They’re still twice as likely to be bullied as everyone else. It’s great that it's occurring half as much, but we have to look at equity.

Lisa’s interest in bullying led her to her LGBTQ advocacy work, saying, “I started to do research in the area of bullying. That’s my primary research area, and it fit really nicely with my interest in LGBTQ youth, because they’re one of the populations that are very vulnerable to being bullied.”
Daniel stated recently implemented bullying prevention program (Olweus) has had an overall impact on reducing bullying at his school. The problem is that when bullying does occur, it is still occurring disproportionately, which continues to impact those who identify as LGBTQ, or are perceived as LGBTQ.

The Olweus stuff has done well to cut bullying in half over three years, which is fantastic. The problem is, it's gay and Muslim kids are twice as likely to be bullied as everyone else. They're still twice as likely to be bullied as everyone else. It's great that it's occurring half as much, but it's still ... this is where we can't look at equality; we have to look at equity. If we raise everyone equally, we still have the same problems in many ways.

**Information on LGBTQ academic outcomes.** Academic outcomes is another area where there is a dearth of research. Daniel is concerned that there is not much published data on academic outcomes for LGBTQ youth. He states that because LGBTQ youth are an invisible minority, there has been little attention paid to their academic success rate. He said:

The schools aren’t doing as much as they need to. When they are, it is often missing the component of diversity. If it includes diversity, it only includes groups that are measured on standardized tests because that affects school funding, which has some benefits, but it leaves out LGBT kids.

**Information on race and LGBTQ.** Several participants were also concerned about the lack of information on the intersection of race and LGBTQ youth. Crystal discusses some of the influence of culture on LGBTQ youth:

There’s still a lot of homophobia and especially in my district dealing with Latino or African-American or different cultures. My significant other goes into south L.A. to talk
about marriage equality and he can get a lot of cultural barriers. I’ve even had in my workshop, people say, “You know my culture that’s taboo.”

Rochelle also talks about this as an area where she feels less competent, stating, “That’s also really important for more research on the intersection of teen, race, ethnicity and LGBTQ identity. I just feel like that’s incredibly lacking in supporting youth of color who are also identified as LGBTQ.”

**Information on transgender youth.** The final area, which generated a large discussion, was the support of students who identify as transgender. Most of the interviewees expressed that lack of awareness and resources around supporting transgender youth. Four interviewees chose to tell a story relating to the lack of transgender awareness in the K-12 schools. It appears that discussions on how to support transgender students, has been called to question. Claire relates the following story, which highlights how difficult the school environment was for a transgender student despite the best efforts to offer support:

The only thing that hasn't come up that I would add would be my experiences with transgendered students. We had a student who was transitioning from eighth grade to ninth grade. The student was born female, but identified as male. The student was going to be going to another school, but because some people at that school knew me and knew my work here, I helped them have a meeting with all the teachers before the student started to make sure that they called the student the male name that he had chosen. I helped them to make arrangements for the restroom and use those guidelines to facilitate that student having a good high school experience. It didn't work out for that student and he ended up stopping school and going to an online school.
The participants were very interested in sharing some of the strategies and tools they used for their LGBTQ advocacy work. While the majority of the interviewees emphasized the importance of using visual cues to indicate they were open to positively support LGBTQ youth, others had alternative ways to advocate. Overall, participants talked about keeping LGBTQ youth in the center of discussions through workshops and interactions with administration.

Summary

This chapter first provided summaries of the qualitative participants that were a part of the study, and then discussed the themes of findings of the qualitative data. Three themes emerged from the rich data from the interviews of LGBTQ social justice advocates who are school psychologists. In light of the theoretical framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior that emphasizes the components, which influence a person’s ability and desire to act as an LGBTQ social justice advocate several themes emerged. These themes include personal characteristics that shape their attitudes, the context that shapes their normative beliefs, and strategies of advocacy that relate to or shape their perceived behavioral control. These themes were instrumental in answering the three research questions. In the final chapter, the qualitative and quantitative findings will be merged to discuss implications for further research and theoretical implications.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this mixed method research study was twofold: a) to examine the level of LGBTQ competency and LGBTQ social advocacy work of practicing school psychologists, and b) to explore how active social justice advocates for LGBTQ K-12 students perceive they acquired their skills, knowledge and expertise. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What do school psychologists know about LGBTQ issues and how do they deal with it in their practice?
2. How does a school psychologist evolve from tacitly knowledgeable to LGBTQ competent to LGBTQ advocacy?
3. What skills, traits, or life experiences are instrumental in shaping school psychologists in becoming a social change agent for LGBTQ youth?

To investigate these questions, an explanatory mixed methods research was utilized, in order to gain a thorough knowledge of both the perceptions and behaviors associated with LGBTQ social justice advocacy work by school psychologists within the K-12 school system.

The purpose of this chapter is to integrate the quantitative and qualitative findings and explore the implications of these findings. The chapter will begin with a discussion of the integration of the qualitative and quantitative findings in light of the research questions. Next will be a discussion of some of the findings in light of the literature and the theoretical framework of the study. Third will be a consideration of the implications for theory including a proposed model. Fourth is a consideration for disciplines, and practice. The chapter will end with a brief consideration of the limitations, suggestions for further research, and conclusions.
Integration of the Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

in Light of the Research Questions

The original purpose of the research was to answer three research questions. While the quantitative findings were discussed in Chapter Four and the qualitative findings were discussed in chapter Five, here I integrate and discuss more specifically how an integrated look at the findings answer the research questions. Hence, the discussion here is divided in light of the three questions, namely, (1) LGBTQ knowledge and application, (2) journey to becoming an LGBTQ social justice advocate, and (3) prevalent skills, traits and life experiences.

LGBTQ Knowledge and Application

The first research question was: What do school psychologists know about LGBTQ issues and how do they deal with it in their practice? School psychologists who advocate for LGBTQ youth understand that this is a population at risk. The results of the LBGTQ Affirmative Practice and Intent Scale (LAPIS) indicate the average total score was 194.45, out of 250, given five points for each of the 50 questions on the Likert-type responses. The range of total responses was between 134 and 245, indicating a wide girth of LGBTQ knowledge and advocacy practice.

As reported in Chapter Three, when asked about their affirming beliefs, the average scores ranged from 4.58 to 4.85, indicating that the majority of the respondents believed school psychologists at least agree or strongly agree to have supportive and affirming thoughts regarding effectively working with LGBTQ youth. The average scores in the LGBTQ affirming behaviors section range from 3.32 to 4.42, indicating the majority of the respondents range from neutrality to strongly agree their actions display LGBTQ affirming behaviors. The average scores in the LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior range between 2.35 to 4.28, indicating the widest variance range between disagree and agree with engaging in LGBTQ advocacy work.
These results tell us that the respondents overall had affirming beliefs, however there was a wide range in actual LGBTQ advocacy work.

Interviewees expressed concern for increased suicide rates, bullying, and general support from K-12 staff. Because of this understanding of a population at risk, school psychologist advocates are taking the time to ensure LGBTQ youth are supported. They are providing this support by provide visual cues that they are affirming, they are facilitating workshops, advocating to K-12 administrators, and generally keeping the topic of LGBTQ rights in the center of discussions. They are also staying active in state and local civic and professional organizations. An active voice in professional organizations helps to promote policy development and movement within the profession. Most importantly, they are helping with GSA’s to provide a support network for students and their peers.

School psychologists who are social justice advocates recognize they need to act as a local resource for students, teachers, administrators, and families. They have to possess the knowledge to act as a referral source for mental health needs and community support. While this is not in their job description, they make time for LGBTQ advocacy work because they seek equal rights and equal access to education for students who identify as LGBTQ. Most wish they had more time to be able to provide more support, but in reality, this is only a portion of their job.

When integrating the qualitative and quantitative data, a picture emerges of school psychologists, who generally hold affirming beliefs regarding LGBTQ youth, with concern of recent trends related to LGBTQ youth being at risk. Additionally, the majority display affirming behaviors within their individual practice. The variance occurs largely with actual LGBTQ advocacy work. This variance can be accounted for with varying degrees of skills required for
successful advocacy work, such as legal knowledge or K-12 administration skills. Those who engage in LGBTQ advocacy work typically engage in advocacy work, which involves the least amount of time commitment, possibly due to the diverse job responsibilities.

**Journey to Becoming an LGBTQ Social Justice Advocate**

The second research question is: *How does a school psychologist evolve from tacitly knowledgeable to LGBTQ competent to LGBTQ advocacy?* The journey to becoming a social justice advocate appears to begin with a self-initiated drive for increased knowledge relating to LGBTQ youth. The results of the LAPIS tell us, as indicated previously in the current chapter, that school psychologists may hold affirming thoughts and behaviors, however the likelihood of engaging in LGBTQ advocacy work varies widely. The qualitative interviews tell us more about why this variance may occur.

LGBTQ knowledge in itself does not create an advocate. Skills and knowledge in the areas of administration, law, and advocacy skills create an avenue for successful LGBTQ advocacy skills. Most commonly, the advocate either identifies as LGBTQ themselves, or they have had meaningful relationships with someone else, either friend or family, who identifies as LGBTQ. Because of these interactions, they are keenly aware of the effects of marginalization within society in general and specifically the K-12 school system. This knowledge provides them a first-hand reason to take the risk to advocate for LGBTQ youth.

These advocates view their job as a calling, taking their charge to ensure equity very seriously. They have the inner strength, described as courage, self-agency, or assertiveness, to confidently fight for the rights of others. They are comfortable with themselves that they don’t let the assumptions of others deter them from their mission. This strength allows them to adeptly
overcome the barriers present in advocating for LGBTQ youth, such as conservative communities, difficulty with students’ parents and families, and roadblocks from administration. Lastly, they are experts in the external resources that are available for LGBTQ youth. They begin to be seen as the local resource on LGBTQ issues. Others have confidence in their knowledge and freely begin to refer to their expertise.

**Prevalent Skills, Traits, and Life Experiences**

The final research question is: *What skills, traits, or life experiences are instrumental in shaping school psychologists in becoming a social change agent for LGBTQ youth?* To examine the skills, traits, or life experiences, which are instrumental in shaping a school psychologist in becoming an LGBTQ advocate, we begin with the demographic information from the LAPIS. When examining the demographics of the respondents with the highest LAPIS scores (above the 88th percentile), Chapter Four reports age, gender identity, and race/ethnicity, are not significant factors in overall LAPIS scores. Sexual orientation and religion are predictors of higher affirming belief, affirming behaviors, and advocacy work. Those who identified as LGBTQ tended to have higher LAPIS scores. In addition, those respondents who identified with current religious affiliations other than Christian tended to have higher LAPIS scores.

When examining the environment of the respondents from the 88th percentile or higher, it is clear that the half of these respondents work in suburban settings (50.0%). Additionally 30.8% of these respondents work in urban settings, 26.9% in rural settings, and 15.4 in college or university settings. It is interesting to note that while most of the interviewees reported that the LGBTQ youth support resources are primarily within urban settings, there is a slight difference in the successful LGBTQ youth advocates who work in suburban settings.
To examine other instrumental traits, skills, and life experiences, it is necessary to examine the data from the qualitative interviews. Some of these traits are discussed in the previous research question, such as self-agency, possessing specific knowledge, which is helpful in removing the barriers to LGBTQ advocacy work, having friends or family who identify as LGBTQ, and having a desire to facilitate equity in the education for all students.

Additionally many of the participants discussed their family of origin. Many participants had parents who were educators. Many also discussed growing up in a family culture of volunteerism and social justice work. They recounted growing up in families who adhered to practices where they were held accountable to look out for the well being of others. This family culture seemed to develop skills to recognize hegemony and the gift to see alternate ways around barriers that are preventing social justice from occurring.

The Findings in Light of the Literature and Theory

Chapter Four provides a comprehensive review of the quantitative findings. Chapter Five provides a comprehensive review of the qualitative findings. It is important to merge these findings to provide a complete picture of the significance of this data. To discuss this integration of the findings, the discussion will be organized in light of the topics of religion, sexual orientation, and context.

Religion and Spirituality

Religious affiliation and spirituality appear to be prominent in both the quantitative data and the qualitative data. The results of the LAPIS indicated the majority of the participants had significant changes in their religious affiliations between childhood and the current time. While not all who reported religious affiliations had lower LAPIS scores, the overall results indicated significant differences in both knowledge and affirming practice of school psychologists whether
they identified as Christian or non-Christian. As stated in Chapter Four, the Christian subgroup had significantly lower average LAPIS scores when compared to the Non-Christian subgroup. Wolf (2009) had similar findings. Specifically, Wolf (2009) found that school psychologists reported religiosity was a predictor of negative attitudes toward LGB-people. Similarly, Winter (2011) found that attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals were negatively correlated with religiosity in West Virginia school psychologists. Neither of these studies delved into specific religious affiliations, rather the reported influence of religion. While the Wolf (2009) and Winter (2011) findings may indicate that current level of religiosity in school psychologists, may impact the level of LGBTQ affirming beliefs, for those who are LGBTQ social justice advocates religious affiliation and spirituality also plays an important role in their practice. Given that it is unclear here exactly what is meant by religiosity in these studies, it is important not to make the assumption that people who identify as religious or Christian in society are necessarily prejudiced against LGBTQ people; indeed numerous Christian denominations ordain and are affirming of openly LGBTQ clergy (Goodstein, 2011), such as the Episcopal Church, Lutheran Church of America, the Presbyterian Church, United Church of Christ, and of course the Metropolitan Community Church to name a few. They also perform LGBTQ weddings and have LGBTQ affirming policies. Nevertheless, in my study there was a statistically significant difference the group who identified as Christian had statistically significant lower LAPIS scores than those who identified as non-Christian.

Further, it is also interesting to note that these statistically significant differences were not replicated in the LAPIS subsample when examining the current religious affiliation of respondents who identified as LGBTQ. As stated in Chapter Four, the highest scores were among those LGBTQ respondents who listed their current religious affiliation as Spiritualist.
The lowest scores were among those who listed their current religious affiliation as Jewish. The difference between those who currently identified as Catholic appears to be lower than those LGBTQ respondents who identified as Protestant, which is in contrast to the previous findings. While this sub-sample was too small to run parametric statistical analyses, it would appear that the range of LAPIS scores for LGBTQ respondents was much narrower.

The qualitative interviews supported the importance of being raised in a religious background that emphasized compassion and sense of spirituality on the level of LGBTQ affirmative practice and advocacy work in two ways. Firstly, interviewees indicated that religion and a culture of compassion for humanity in their family of origin was important. Most of the interviewees seemed to intertwine their views of spirituality and religious affiliation (or background), rather than making a distinction between the two. Those interviewees discussed early influences of volunteerism and social justice advocacy as an important component of the religious belief system of their family of origin, fostering LGBTQ advocacy work in adulthood. This early value carried through adulthood to provide them the insight to discern when others are experiencing marginalization, and the knowledge and skill to provide assistance through advocacy.

Secondly, the qualitative interviewees who reported maintaining the same religious affiliation between childhood and adulthood, discussed how the belief systems in that religious organization transformed over time to accept those who identify as LGBTQ. Conversely, those who reported changing religious affiliations, discussed how they experienced confinement in the religions of their childhood and sought alternatives, which were more open to their developing belief system which embraces diversity in humanity and seeks to advocate for those who are marginalized by society.
The results of this study indicate the importance of past and current religious affiliations on the likelihood for LGBTQ affirmative practice and advocacy work for school psychologists. These findings support the previous research relating to the importance of spiritual and religious development on LGBTQ affirmative practice (Bensusan, 2011; Linnemeyer, 2009; Vann, 2011). The central value of equality of humankind, which manifests as a desire to facilitate this value into action, resulting in social justice advocacy appears to be a guiding principle. While religion and spirituality were not a focus of the current study, these results do support the need for further research.

**LGBTQ and Sexual Orientation**

A second theme, which emerges from the qualitative and quantitative data relates to sexual orientation of school psychologists. Sexual orientation is relevant to LGBTQ social justice advocacy work in three ways, including: (1) those who identify as LGBTQ had higher LAPIS scores, (2) the number of school psychologists who engage in LGBTQ advocacy work tend to identify as heterosexual and, (3) those school psychologists who identify as LGBTQ are most likely to see NASP resources as inadequate.

Chapter Four reported that those who identify as LGBTQ tended to have higher LAPIS scores. While those who identify as LGBTQ, scored higher, the number of school psychologists who identify as heterosexual is greater. Essentially, there are more heterosexual school psychology advocates, but the LGBTQ school psychologists who also advocate, tend to have higher affirming beliefs, practice and advocacy work. While this was the case for the respondents, many participants who identified as LGBTQ did not choose to participate in the interview portion of the research. Perhaps this is because the continued perceived stigma in the field silences those who identify as LGBTQ. It is therefore important for those who identify as
allies, to be willing to be visible, knowledgeable, and supportive to LGBTQ youth. It is also important to note that the voice of school psychologists of color who engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work is largely silent. Aside from the principal researcher, the African American voice is completely absent from the qualitative interviews. The school psychology field is much less diverse than society in general. Is it possible that being a minority in a field limits the freedom to advocate for other marginalized groups? This is a question, which should be explored, in future research.

While those who identify as strongest in LGBTQ knowledge and advocacy work tend to identify as LGBTQ based on the survey, the number of school psychologists who engage in advocacy work (and identify as heterosexual) is higher. The need for support is more pervasive, making it imperative for heterosexual allies to engage in substantive LGBTQ social justice advocacy work. In order for this to occur, the resources available to school psychologists, through NASP, must be adequate. Both interviewees who identify as LGBTQ found the NASP resources to be less than helpful. Others interviewees viewed the NASP resources as extensive and helpful. It is concerning that those who identify as LGBTQ, do not find the resources available as particularly useful for advocacy work. It may be necessary for those school psychologists who identify as LGBTQ to provide more input on the LGBTQ content accessible through NASP.

Context

The context of a school psychologist’s job also seems to play an important role in advocacy work. Those school psychologists who engage in advocacy work have learned to successfully navigate the perceived obstacles, which prevent others from engaging in LGBTQ advocacy work. Ajzen (1991) calls this behavior control. Ajzen (1991) defines perceived
behavioral control as people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behavior. Control beliefs have to do with the perceived presence of factors that facilitate or impede performance of a behavior. The strength of each control belief is weighted by the perceived power of the control factor.

When examining the qualitative and quantitative data it is clear that those school psychologists who are successful LGBTQ advocates have learned to navigate the advocacy barriers in two essential ways. They have learned to expect difficulty from administration and from the conservative community. Secondly, they have learned to navigate the diverse demands of the school psychology responsibilities to carve out time for advocacy work.

Successful LGBTQ advocates have learned to increase their skills in areas, which support advocacy work. These areas include K-12 administration and legal knowledge. Once one learns to navigate administration, they learn to speak the same language as K-12 administrators. They learn to anticipate adverse reactions and plan for them. This may serve for two purposes, to win the respect of administrators, but also to create a thorough understanding of the strategies used by administrators to deny, stall, and marginalize programs and activities, which support and affirm LGBTQ youth.

Additionally, successful LGBTQ advocates have learned what the laws actually say to arm themselves with the truth around the creation of LGBTQ supports. With this legal knowledge, LGBTQ advocates can express with certainty the ways in which civil rights may be violated.

School psychology work can be demanding. Many see the role of the school psychologist as simply evaluating students for special education eligibility and making recommendations for those services. The skill set and knowledge base for school psychologists
encompass so much more. Successful LGBTQ advocates who are school psychologists have learned to create a more thorough and comprehensive understanding of their role. They have learned to shift the mindset of administrators, teachers, parents, and students to allow them to engage in advocacy work. There are three ways they accomplish this, including using affirming signs, knowing important LGBTQ resources, and being comfortable becoming the local resource.

Using affirming signs, they have learned to allow students to come to them as a safe ally or advocate. When a student approaches a school psychologist for assistance, there is a name for the cause. It allows the school psychologist to advocate for a specific purpose and a specific student. It provides a purpose and makes the advocacy real. Without a real face, the intent and purpose of the advocacy work can become lost. It also allows other students to then see the school psychologist as a safe person. Many of the participants discussed the power of the word of mouth, which even allows students from other schools to reach out for support.

All of the interview participants were able to discuss the local and national resources available to support LGBTQ youth. Having a thorough knowledge of the resources available assist school psychologists with making recommendations for the creation of resources within the school district. It also helps them to support LGBTQ students who attend schools with sparse or nonexistent services for LGBTQ youth.

Lastly, successful LGBTQ advocates are those who are comfortable with becoming the authority for LGBTQ youth issues and concerns. Becoming the local resource means taking time away from other responsibilities, such as legally mandated time lines for evaluations to provide support and technical assistance to students, teachers, administrators and parents.
Insights for Theory and Practice

The results of this research also have important implications for the theory building in regard to the theoretical frameworks, which guided this study. This research may allow us to view some of the components for the Theory of Planned Behavior differently for LGBTQ advocacy work. It also may allow room for critical perspectives of adult education to play a more significant role in the formal education process for school psychologists. Lastly, the current study adds to the body of research relating to affirmtive practice.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior posits a person’s behavior is driven by their behavioral intentions. Thus far, the theory has not been applied to any great degree to dealing with LGBTQ advocacy or awareness. The components of behavioral intention include (1) the person’s attitude toward the behavior, (2) the subjective norm about the performance of the behavior, and (3) the person’s perception of ease at which he/she can perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In applying the Theory of Planned Behavior to the current study, LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior is defined by (1) what school psychologists believe about LGBTQ social justice advocacy, (2) how school psychologist perceive that others see their role as LGBTQ social justice advocates, and (3) how easily the school psychologist believes he or she is able to perform LGBTQ advocacy work.

Previous research using the Theory of Planned Behavior as a model for fostering social justice advocacy has given useful information about the components of social justice advocacy behavior (e.g. Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005; McCabe and Rubinson, 2008; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Skitka, Bauman, and Sargis (2005) found that when people perceive they are surrounded by others who share their belief system they are more apt to engage in social
justice advocacy. The current study indicates that successful LGBTQ advocates engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work despite perceiving referent others feel neutral to positive about LGBTQ social justice.

van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears’ (2008) findings may uncover why successful LGBTQ advocates engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work despite perceiving referent others may not feel as passionate about the needs of LGBTQ youth. van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears (2008) found that those who identified less with a cause, or “low identifiers,” can be persuaded differently than those classified as “high identifiers.” Those who identify less with a cause were apt to be dissuaded by instrumental barriers, while the high identifiers tended to remain focused on social justice regardless of contextual constraints. The current study supports these findings. High identifiers would be those who had high LAPIS scores, such as the interviewees. Interviewees clearly persisted in their advocacy work despite instrumental barriers, such as conservative communities, difficulties with administration, and struggles with parents.

McCabe and Rubinson (2008) examined the connection between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control and its impact on behavior intention in pre-service teachers, psychologists and counselors. Their findings suggest that pre-service education is needed in the areas of LGBTQ harassment and ethical values/dilemmas in order to provide quality support to LGBTQ youth. The current study suggests that legal knowledge, consultation skills, K-12 administration knowledge, and activity in professional organizations are also helpful for practicing school psychologists to engage in LGBTQ social justice advocacy work.

The current study tells us school psychologists, who are successful LGBTQ advocates hold a core belief in equality in education for all students, with a special interest in those students
who identify as LGBTQ. While they understand that this belief may lead to opposition from conservative administrators and community members, they view their role as a social justice advocate for LGBTQ youth as more important than the obstacles, which persist in maintaining hegemony.

The results of the LAPIS tell us that those who are successful LGBTQ advocates view the obstacles as less obtrusive and more manageable. This may be a key for teaching others to become LGBTQ social justice advocates. When they cease to view obstacles as insurmountable and work to obtain knowledge and skills in areas such as administration and law, this seems to foster the development of social justice advocacy. This new knowledge may lend itself to redesigning formal education and continuing education programs to lead to greater potential for advocacy work. Education programs for school psychologists should foster the knowledge of critical perspectives, which allow them to see marginalization of LGBTQ youth, and then provide more information on education laws relating to civil rights and administration.

The last component of the Theory of Planned Behavior, which is important for fostering LGBTQ social justice advocacy skills, is behavior intention. The results of the LAPIS indicate that while intent is strong, for performing LGBTQ advocacy work, but other job responsibilities often get in the way of seeing this intent to fruition. It seems to be essential to create incentive for continuing forward in the advocacy work, even though it is not a primary job responsibility for school psychologists. Perhaps continuing education programs should design a component that allows for a check in process to create a pathway to foster follow through with behavior intentions.

While the Theory of Planned Behavior informs the current study, there are important areas of the current study that cannot be sufficiently explained using only the Theory of Planned
Behavior. First, the Theory of Planned Behavior does not specifically deal with LGBTQ issues, however it assists in explaining how someone may evolve into an LGBTQ social justice advocate. As Chapter Two explains, one of the assumptions for the Theory of Planned Behavior is that only beliefs that are readily available in one’s memory influence behavior. Therefore, the Theory of Planned Behavior negates the influence of repressed memories. The current study uncovers the strong influence of early spiritual and religious influences on LGBTQ advocacy behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior also does not explain the level of influence of factors related to attitudes, normative beliefs, and perceived behavior control. Simply put, it does not explain how these factors interrelate to influence overall LGBTQ social justice advocacy behavior.

Critical Perspectives of Adult Education

While TPB provides a framework for the components of social justice advocacy work, critical perspectives provides a necessary mindset which allows school psychologists to see the need for LGBTQ social justice advocacy work. Critical perspectives of adult education critiques previously defined social constructs and the disproportion of power, which has resulted through the lens of gender, race, class, or sexual orientation. Critical pedagogy is a philosophy that unites the theory of critical thinking with actual practice in order to eliminate the cultural and educational control of the dominant group, to have students apply critical thinking skills to the real world, and become agents for social change (Sadker, Sadker, & Zittleman, 2008). Sadker, Sadker, and Zittleman’s work (2008) was strongly influence by Freire’s (2000) work with adult literacy in Brazil and numerous authors have discussed this in myriad ways since.

School psychologists who have established a path for LGBTQ advocacy have learned to link participatory education to the practice of liberation and social change, which was discussed
by Horton and Freire (1990). They have learned to lead the way for social change within the education system by teaching administrators, teachers, parents how to provide the much needed support for LGBTQ students.

In providing continuing education for school psychologists, it may be helpful to encourage the questioning of previously assimilated worldviews to change oppressive practices. Brookfield’s notions of the power of critical theory (2005) can assist with the creation of education programs, which inspire critical stances, which is a necessary first step to advocacy work. He states that in critical adult learning it is important to aid learners in (1) learning how to perceive and challenge dominant ideology, (2) unmasking power, (3) contesting hegemony, (4) pursuing liberation, (5) reclaiming reason, (6) practicing democracy, and (7) overcoming alienation.

Specific to fostering LGBTQ advocacy work in school psychologists, this takes on a very specific shape, which is not familiar to most school psychology formal education programs. In challenging ideology, school psychologists must learn to recognize and then confront broadly accepted values, beliefs, and explanations that exist in sustaining hegemony for LGBTQ students. Accepting ideology without critically examining it, allows school systems to sustain status quo. In sustaining status quo, oppressive power structures are allowed to remain in tact, which continue to marginalize LGBTQ students.

In the second task, school psychologists must learn to contest the oppressive power structures that society teaches us to tolerate, accept, and assist in maintaining. This provides a path for school psychologists to examine the established K-12 structures and question the existence of past practices that are harmful to LGBTQ students.
The third task involves teaching school psychologists to recognize the ways power is used and abused in the educational system against LGBTQ students. In the fourth task, school psychologists are encouraged to recognize that the school system encourages them to abandon thoughts of LGBTQ advocacy work to maintain the system that keeps it in place. The purpose of the fifth task is to free creativity to grow individually by temporarily separating from peers to develop ways to challenge dominant structures. For school psychologists this may mean stepping outside of their comfort zone to embrace the role of LGBTQ advocate.

In the sixth task, school psychologists are able to assess situations as they present themselves, predict outcomes, assess arguments, and decide on the appropriate LGBTQ advocacy avenue. The final task is learning how to foster an environment where LGBTQ youth have equal voice.

Aspects of critical multicultural education also inform the current study. Nieto and Bode (2008) discuss the importance of learners reflecting on their own practice as it relates to race, social class, gender, and sexual orientation. Successful LGBTQ social justice advocates seem to have learned to continually reflect on the LGBTQ youth experience within the K-12 environment in order to understand when and where their support is needed. As Shoffner (2008) writes, it is important to use this reflection as a mechanism to learn to question. Successful LGBTQ advocates have learned when to question and when to act.

Finally, aspects of queer theory also inform the current study. Queer theory encourages the disruption of power structures, which is necessary in the K-12 system. Successful LGBTQ social justice advocates in the current study learned how to speak the language of administrators in order to make positive changes for LGBTQ youth. They learned how to use applicable laws to guarantee the right to form Gay-Straight Alliances in schools. Toynton (2006) emphasizes
that it is an educator’s obligation to provide a safe environment for students because this enhances both individual learning and self-esteem for all learners. The interviewees in the current study expressed that providing a safe learning environment for LGBTQ youth is a primary goal.

While critical perspectives of adult education informs the current study, there are important areas of the current study that cannot be sufficiently explained using only critical perspectives of adult education. Brookfield’s ideas of the power of critical theory (2005) does not address the important findings around context in the current study, such as the influence of having LGBTQ friends, spirituality and the current role of the school psychologist. Critical multicultural education suggests how to create an environment to teach LGBTQ social justice advocacy skills, however it does not explain how the interviewees in the current study learned the skills they have obtained. Lastly, certain aspects of queer theory may not be helpful in learning LGBTQ social justice advocacy skills. Queer theory involves the defiant rejection of the influences of the heteronormative society, which may be detrimental to the longevity of a school psychologist’s practice. In addition, with the rejection of all labels, it becomes problematic in supporting LGBTQ youth who embrace those labels.

**LGBTQ Affirmative Practice**

Gay Affirmative Therapy (Malyon, 1981) was expanded to include those who identify as lesbian and bisexual (Browning, 1987). Crisp (2007) developed a Gay Affirmative Practice model for youth. This model focuses on affirming youth identity and empowers LGBTQ youth. It supports youth in self-identifying in whatever manner they feel is appropriate. The Gay Affirmative Practice model for youth also supports youth in identifying homophobic forces, which are present in their own lives and considers problems in the context of these homophobic
forces. The current study seeks to expand the definition further to include those who identify as transgender or queer.

Harrison (2000) found 15 themes related to Gay Affirmative Therapy, which he categorized into three interconnected domains, namely working with individual clients, working within organizations and working within a culture or social movement. Within each of these domains, there are five dimensions. This can be expanded for specific use for school psychologists. In the first dimension, the school psychologist works on developing self-awareness on LGBTQ issues. In this dimension, the school psychologist takes a personal inventory of his/her own values and belief systems. The second dimension involves choosing therapeutic interventions, which draw on a non-pathological view to challenge heterosexism, homophobia, and heteronormativity. In the school system, this may embrace expanding curriculum to include history relating to the LGBTQ community, starting a GSA, or facilitating a workshop for teachers and administrators. The third dimension describes those who are able to use the approach. While only school psychologists can provide therapy, others can adopt an LGBTQ affirmative stance, including family members, organizations, and students themselves. The fourth dimension outlines the types of issues typically presented by LGBTQ individuals, such as the effects of oppression, difficulty with coming out, and other interpersonal difficulties. In the school system, this would include bullying, increasing educational outcomes and providing support for LGBTQ youth.

The final dimension is related to how mental health professionals assist clients in dealing with the issues in the fourth dimension. For school psychologists this may mean taking an inventory of how school psychology services are provided to students who identify as LGBTQ. A specific example is that often school psychologists use tests and assessments to assist with
For those who identify as transgender, it may be necessary to look at norms for both males and females or to determine that certain assessment tools may not be applicable or appropriate to use the LGBTQ population. Because of the dearth of published information on this topic, it requires flexibility in thinking.

While Gay Affirmative Practice informs the current study, there are important areas of the current study that cannot be sufficiently explained using only Gay Affirmative Practice. It is important to expand the scope of affirmative practice to all those who identify as a sexual minority. When examining the self-identified label of the participants in the LAPIS, one can see how limiting the name “Gay Affirmative Practice” can be. Participants identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and “dyke”. To support youth who identify as a sexual minority, it is necessary to be open to many labels, and not narrow the scope of advocacy to only those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

**Proposed Integrated Model for LGBTQ Social Justice Advocacy**

The Theory of Planned Behavior, critical perspectives of adult education and LGBTQ affirmative practice can be merged to create a proposed integrated model for fostering LGBTQ social justice advocacy in school psychologists. Figure 1 illustrates this proposed integrated conceptual model. This conceptual model shows how the three components of behavioral intention, behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs can be used as a guide for educators to foster LGBTQ advocacy skills for practicing school psychologists. Each component is discussed separately.
Figure 1

*Integrated Conceptual Model*

**Behavioral Beliefs**
- Identification & reappraisal of inhibitions
- Construct/deconstruct own experiences
- Affirming beliefs & practice
  
  Task: Learning the positive outcome of advocacy

**Normative Beliefs**
- Critical Pedagogy and theory
- Critical Multicultural Education
  
  Tasks: Understand (1) How hegemony impacts the K-12 education system (2) LGBTQ issues and concerns

**Control Beliefs**
- Critical Pedagogy
- Brookfield (2005) 7 Steps
- Enhance knowledge (law, admin)
  
  Task: Learning to recognize and contest hegemony to foster a more democratic K-12 education system.

**Intention**
- Fostering intention for school psychologists to advocate for LGBTQ students within the K-12 system

**Behavior**
- Acting as a social justice advocate for LGBTQ students within the K-12 setting
**Behavioral beliefs.** Behavioral beliefs, for the proposed conceptual model is what school psychologists believe to be their role in LGBTQ social justice advocacy. These behavioral beliefs are impacted by their attitude toward LGBTQ social justice advocacy work. Attitude toward a behavior is the degree to which performance of the behavior is positively or negatively valued. The attitude toward the behavior is determined by the cumulative set of accessible beliefs about the behavior and the outcome of the behavior.

In the current proposed conceptual model, the learning task of this component becomes learning the positive outcome of LGBTQ advocacy work. Educators then can use critical perspectives of adult education and LGBTQ affirmative practice to provide a platform for learning to view advocacy as both essential and positive for LGBTQ students.

Within critical perspectives of adult education, Brookfield (2005) discusses the need for learners to identify and reappraise their inhibitions. This is essential in uncovering any reservations and deep-seated reticence regarding supporting LGBTQ students. It is also essential to construct and deconstruct their experiences related to LGBTQ issues, which is another concept discussed by Brookfield (2005), though he does not discuss LGBTQ or sexual orientation issues in particular. Lastly, the concepts of LGBTQ affirmative practice should be introduced and discussed with learners to bolster positive regard for an affirmative stance.

**Normative beliefs.** Normative beliefs, for the proposed conceptual model is what school psychologists believe others see their role in LGBTQ social justice advocacy. These normative beliefs are impacted by the subjective norm. The subjective norm is the perceived social pressure to engage or not to engage in a behavior. The subjective norm is determined by the total set of accessible normative beliefs concerning the expectations of others that are perceived as significant. Others who are considered important play an important role in how a person...
envisions the behavior and the outcome of such behavior. Normative beliefs refer to the perceived behavioral expectations of such important referent individuals or groups as the person's spouse, family, and friends. For the current conceptual model, this would also include teachers, parents, community members, administrators, and students.

The learning tasks of this component include understanding how hegemony impacts the K-12 school system and a thorough understanding of LGBTQ issues and concerns. Educators then can use critical perspectives of adult education to provide a lens to view the school context and lives of LGBTQ students.

Within critical perspectives of adult education, critical pedagogy and critical multicultural education provide the necessary lens for advocacy work. Horton and Freire (1990) discuss how liberation is achieved by linking participatory education to the practice of liberation and social change. Educators should provide meaningful ways for learners to connect to the LGBTQ community, by providing learning opportunities that facilitate meaningful connections. Critical multicultural education teaches learners to examine the power relationships, which have emerged in relationship to LGBTQ youth in the K-12 school system.

**Control beliefs.** Control beliefs, for the proposed conceptual model, are what school psychologists believe about their own ability to act as an LGBTQ social justice advocate. These control beliefs are impacted by perceived behavioral control. As stated in Chapter 2, perceived behavioral control refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Control beliefs have to do with the perceived presence of factors that facilitate or impede performance of a behavior. The strength of each control belief is weighted by the perceived power of the control factor. The perceived power of each control factor to impede or facilitate performance of the behavior contributes to perceived behavioral control in direct
proportion to the person's subjective probability that the control factor is present. Each school psychologist makes a decision on how successful they will be in performing LGBTQ social justice advocacy work.

The learning task of this component is learning to recognize and contest hegemony to foster a more democratic K-12 education system. Educators can accomplish this learning task by assisting learners to question of previously assimilated worldviews to change oppressive practices. As stated previously in this chapter, Brookfield (2005) proposes seven crucial tasks, which include (1) learning how to perceive and challenge dominant ideology, (2) unmasking power, (3) contesting hegemony, (4) pursuing liberation, (5) reclaiming reason, (6) practicing democracy, and (7) overcoming alienation. Additionally, bolstering knowledge in areas such as administration practices and laws related to civil right in education will allow learners to approach administration with confidence.

In this model, the three components of behavior intention, or in this case fostering the intent for school psychologists to take an active role in LGBTQ social justice advocacy, are used to build a base for adult education. The results of the current study tell us that successful LGBTQ social justice advocates who work as school psychologists have successfully navigated these learning tasks. Additionally, the current study has significance for several disciplines.

**Implications for Disciplines and Practice**

The current study spans several disciplines, adult education, school psychology, and K-12 education. The primary focus of this study was to examine the intersection of adult education and school psychology. The following section of this chapter will discuss the implication of this research for adult education and school psychology.
Adult Education

The current study has implications for several aspects of adult education, including continuing education, critical multicultural education, and critical perspectives of adult education. As stated previously, in order to maintain licensure and/or certification, school psychologists are required to complete continuing education courses. The topics of continuing education courses are not mandated, but based on the personal interest each school psychologist and the availability of the coursework. While it would be preferable to offer additional specialty certification in sub-fields of school psychology such as LGBTQ youth, this does not currently exist.

The results of the LAPIS suggest that continuing education programs related to advocacy should consider that intended advocacy work does not equal accomplished advocacy work. With the best intentions, sometimes barriers occur, which prevent the continuation of this advocacy work. It is therefore important that adult education advocacy programs consider having a component that allows learners time to revisit their progress. This check in process would allow learners to come together to discuss the barriers and brainstorm possible solutions to these barriers. One of the components of TPB is behavior control. That is how does one view the roadblocks to advocacy work. The results of this study indicate that those who are successful LGBTQ advocates recognize the barriers, but have fruitfully bypassed these hurdles, which effectively nullify the potential obstacle.

As discussed in Chapter Two, one of the main goals of critical multicultural education is for learners to reflect on their own practice. Nieto and Bode (2008) discuss the importance of learners examining their own practice as it relates to race, social class, gender, and sexual orientation. The findings clearly have implications for adult education practice. The adult
educator must plan for opportunities for growth and the time and space for this critical reflection to occur. The current study suggests that having a meaningful relationship with someone who identifies as LGBTQ may be one of the catalysts for this critical reflection to occur. Those adult educators who identify as LGBTQ should consider having candid meaningful dialog with learners about the experience of marginalization and the contrast of those personal educational experiences, which were empowering. Adult educators who do not identify as LGBTQ should provide opportunities for this to occur through guest speakers, readings, videos, and assignments, which involve attendance in LGBTQ activities.

If the purpose of K-12 education is to teach our children in an environment created to enhance their knowledge and foster positive development, then K-12 educators must learn to critique components of the environment. This must occur through continuous critical reflection. It is therefore essential that formal education processes should include critical perspectives in the curriculum; which will foster continuous critical reflection and encourage K-12 educators to understand the need for advocacy.

As stated previously in this chapter, merging continuing education for school psychologists with critical perspectives of adult education provides an avenue for bringing theory into practice. Applying critical perspectives allows school psychologists to have a more meaningful connection with the education system as a whole. It provides the lens to which the need for advocacy work may be realized.

**School Psychology**

The field of school psychology has basic guidelines around formal education programs in school psychology, created by the National Association for School Psychologists (NASP). While these guidelines exist, each individual institution creates their own curriculum, which may
or may not meet the criteria set forth by NASP. This allows a wide girth for variation among formal education programs in school psychology. The current study suggests that changes in the education process for school psychologists may create the space for more school psychologists to see the need for advocacy work within the K-12 system to support marginalized students.

It may be prudent to offer specialization continuing education programs for sub-disciplines within the field of school psychology. This would assist in establishing best practices for sub-disciplines such as LGBTQ youth advocacy. The current study suggests that certain components are essential in creating successful LGBTQ social justice advocates. These components include critical perspectives of adult education, advocacy, LGBTQ issues, education laws relating to equal access, K-12 administration, and LGBTQ resources.

The relevant components of critical perspectives of adult education were discussed previously in this chapter. They include Brookfield’s (2005) seven crucial tasks involved in learning with critical theory. In addition, it would be helpful to have a component specifically related to teaching how to advocate. While pieces of advocacy work are taught in classes on consultation, the topic of is not routinely taught. Advocacy in general is central to the school psychology role. Teaching the skills required to competently execute advocacy work would seem ideal.

LGBTQ topics related to school psychology are not routinely discussed. On occasion LGBTQ topics are discussed in multicultural courses, however this is not standard practice. Because LGBTQ youth are in having difficulties within the K-12 system, which recently has taught us that bullying and suicide have been probable outcomes, school psychologist should be taught how to support these students. Perry (2010) conducted research on school psychologist attitudes regarding bullying and homosexuality. She found only two factors had significantly
influenced school psychologist’s attitudes for the positive. These two factors included LGBTQ education/training received and the presence of a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) in the workplace of the school psychologist.

School psychologists are typically very knowledgeable about education laws as they relate to special education. It is less clear about the level of competence regarding state and federal laws pertaining to equal access and civil rights outside of special education. The interviewees discussed the importance of gaining a solid knowledge base on the laws relating to equal access. Knowledge of these laws assisted school psychologist LGBTQ social justice advocates in convincing both administration and conservative community members of the importance of supporting LGBTQ students.

Furthering knowledge in K-12 administration assists LGBTQ advocates to speak the same language and anticipate adverse reactions to better support LGBTQ youth. Speaking the same language facilitates better communication. It allows processes to continue rather than stagnate because administrators and advocates are unclear of each other’s perspective. Anticipating adverse administrative reactions allows advocates to become proactive in their discussions.

The current study highlights the importance of heterosexual allies supporting LGBTQ youth. There is still hesitation by those who identify as LGBTQ who are working in the K-12 to become involved with issues, which may make their sexuality more closely scrutinized. Many states and municipalities do not offer protection from employment termination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Because of these realities, while LGBTQ school psychologists may have higher affirming practice, safety concerns may limit their voice where LGBTQ youth
advocacy is needed. It is therefore essential for heterosexual allies to champion LGBTQ youth advocacy.

Lastly, the creation of more comprehensive resource tools for LGBTQ youth would be essential for those who will be acting in an advocacy role. The current study suggests familiarity with local and national tools is a necessity when providing support for LGBTQ youth. School psychology programs should encourage the creation and upkeep of LGBTQ resource portfolios through continuing education.

The current study suggests several implications for both adult education and school psychology. In addition, there are implications for further research, to continue to expand the knowledge base for LGBTQ social justice advocacy for school psychologists.

Limitations, Implications for Further Research, and Conclusion

The results of the LAPIS and the qualitative interviews provide a wealth of new information regarding how school psychologists become successful social justice advocates for LGBTQ youth. But there are limitations to the study and some implications for further research.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

One of the main limitations of the study overall is the lack of racial and ethnic diversity of the research participants. As stated in Chapter One, the field of school psychology is largely homogeneous in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender, which contributes to the lack of racial and ethnic voice in the current study.

Another limitation is that while the current study’s sample size is statistically sound and the sample appears to be representative of the population of certified and licensed school psychologists as a whole, it was too small to certain statistical analyses. Specifically, the sample of participants who identified as LGBTQ was too small to determine significant differences.
Also, due to the sample size, a factor analysis was not appropriate to determine the interaction of factors on LGBTQ social justice advocacy, such as religion and gender or sexual orientation and age.

The limitations of the study have implications for further research, which also will accomplish two goals. The first is that it will continue to add to the body of knowledge regarding LGBTQ advocacy in the K-12 system. Secondly, it will keep the discussion regarding LGBTQ youth in the center, making it more difficult to continue to marginalize this population.

The current study suggests five areas on which to concentrate for further research. These areas include the intersection of LGBTQ youth and race/ethnicity, transgender youth, academic outcomes for LGBTQ youth, the impact of bullying on LGBTQ youth, and the lack of voice for people of color who engage in LGBTQ advocacy work.

Several of the interviewees acknowledge their limited knowledge on how race and ethnicity impacts the lives of LGBTQ youth. Those who acknowledged their lack of knowledge were aware that race and ethnicity does add a layer of complexity to the treatment and support of LGBTQ youth. They expressed their concern that they have not provided the most helpful support to youth who identify as LGBTQ and identify as a racial or sexual minority group. There are limited resources that address this intersection for adults and even less for youth.

The journey for transgender youth is largely unknown through research. Previously, this topic was not one that was discussed. Now children are expressing their gender orientation and subsequent gender expression at younger ages. This has met with mixed reviews in the school system to support these children in the best ways. Research should continue, to provide a healthy and unified approach for these students, so each school is not reinventing the wheel when attempting to support a student who identifies as transgender.
Academic outcomes are largely unknown for LGBTQ youth. The Educational Longitudinal Study (2005) began to examine some of these trends, however this was largely preliminary. This study found that LGBTQ students are less likely to attend college and have a lower overall grade point average. We need to continue to uncover academic trends for two reasons. The first reason is that increased knowledge out academic outcomes will allow us to examine how to support LGBTQ youth better within the school system. Secondly, the recent focus for K-12 education has been high stakes testing to establish consistency in adequately preparing youth. Currently LGBTQ youth are an invisible minority. In K-12 education, special programs and initiatives tend to get funding and grants when there is data to support the need. Until we have ample evidence to show diminished academic outcomes, it cannot be expected that LGBTQ youth programs will receive the attention they deserve.

Bullying has received national attention recently with some of the school tragedies, which suggested bullying was to blame. The interviews in the current study indicated that bullying is a large concern of LGBTQ social justice advocates. When interviewed, Lisa expressed her concern about the lack of research in this area and is currently researching the connection between bullying and LGBTQ youth. To support LGBTQ youth, we need to have a better understanding of bullying and LGBTQ youth.

Lastly, the lack of voice for school psychologists who advocate for LGBTQ youth is apparent through this research. The field of school psychology is largely dominated by white women, as discussed in the statistics in Chapter Four. Is being an ethnic or racial minority in the field of school psychology somehow silencing those in being supportive of LGBTQ youth? Further research should explore this to understand why there is the apparent lack of LGBTQ social justice advocates of color. What message does this send to LGBTQ youth?
While the current study has some limitations and implications for future research, the current study has made strides in adding to the depth of knowledge. This study continues the conversation of how school psychologists can support LGBTQ youth. The findings provide a scaffold to create continuing adult education for school psychologists using the Theory of Planned Behavior, critical perspective of adult education, and LGBTQ affirmative practice to understand how to foster advocacy skills.

The findings indicate how personal characteristics such as experience as an educator, having LGBTQ friends, or the influence of religion or spirituality may shape attitudes toward LGBTQ social justice advocacy. The findings also indicate how the context, such as environmental barriers, job diversity, and cognizance of marginalization may shape normative beliefs. Lastly, the current findings indicate how strategies of advocacy, such as taking action, drawing on LGBTQ resources and continuing to seek out LGBTQ knowledge to close information gaps can shape perceived behavioral control.

Conclusions

The current study continues the discussion on LGBTQ social justice advocacy. While the current study provides useful information, it also magnifies the problems caused by lack of diversity in the field of school psychology and thus hegemony. The major limitation of the study is a major limitation of the field. NASP is aware of the disproportion in the racial and ethnic demographics of school psychologists. To address this issue NASP has set up a task force to concentrate on these concerns, which have boasted moderate success (Franco & Green, 2004). Despite these efforts, the lack of diversity continues.

Because of this lack of diversity, school psychologists of color may experience a sense of vulnerability, which may not be experienced by those in the majority. This vulnerability may
result in the lack of voice for advocacy concerns related to LGBTQ youth, which may draw criticism and heighten this sense vulnerability. However, there may be an exception to this sense of vulnerability experienced by school psychologists, who identify as a racial or ethnic minority.

Bilingual school psychologists are highly sought in order to provide standardized psychoeducational evaluations in the student’s primary language. As a result, bilingual school psychologists who provide contracted services can expect to be paid at a much higher rate, which may provide a sense of security. Other ethnic and racial minority school psychologists, who are not bilingual, may not experience this phenomenon of being a necessary commodity. In the current study, the lone voice of color of the interviews is that of a bilingual school psychologist who identifies as Latino.

It is my hope that in future studies this gap is explored to ascertain the true reasons for the lack of school psychologists of color who identify as LGBTQ social justice advocates. It is important for LGBTQ youth of color to see diversity among those who are safe advocates in the K-12 school system.

The results of the current study are clear that there are several traits, which are shared by successful LGBTQ social justice advocates in the K-12 system. These traits include (1) identifying as LGBTQ themselves, (2) having a close personal relationship with someone who identifies as LGBTQ, (3) holding religious beliefs which are accepting of those who identify as LGBTQ, (4) having knowledge of administrative practices and/or civil education laws, (5) having a background in social justice, teaching, or volunteer work, (6) thorough knowledge of national, state, and local LGBTQ resources, and (7) being comfortable in the role of a LGBTQ social justice advocate.
Having this knowledge can assist in designing continuing education for school psychologists. While some of these traits, such as religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and childhood background cannot be changed through continuing education, four of the traits can be addressed through continuing education. To encourage LGBTQ social justice advocacy, continuing education programs for school psychologists should provide opportunities to create connections with the LGBTQ community, provide knowledge of administrative practices and/or civil education laws, and national, state, and local LGBTQ resources. Lastly, continuing education programs should teach and prepare school psychologists how to make room in their role to be an LGBTQ social justice advocate.

The current study has valuable lessons for both the adult education and school psychology field, but it also inspired personal growth. In reflecting on my own practice, I realize the dearth of LGBTQ advocacy tools available for school psychologists in my local region. It is my intention to create a web page specifically designed for school psychologists to provide information on state, local, and national resources, which would be useful for LGBTQ youth advocacy. This web page would also provide information on current research, sexual identity development, and available learning tools to foster LGBTQ competency and advocacy.

This research has also helped me to gain perspective in being more visible as an African American school psychologist who identifies as a sexual minority. Visibility as a sexual minority of color is important to both other school psychologists and for the students we serve. I now understand that having a personal connection with someone who identifies as LGBTQ may increase the likelihood of a school psychologist being open to support LGBTQ youth. This puts the relative risk in perspective. While students who identify as LGBTQ continue to experience marginalization, my work as a school psychologist and our work as educators is not complete.
Final Thoughts

As a lifelong learner, I approached this doctoral program with both enthusiasm and trepidation. When entering the program, I had a genuine desire to learn more about adult education. Little did I know that I would learn as much about myself as I did about the principles of adult education. I finally had the academic language to frame my own lens as an African American woman who identifies as a sexual minority. Critical perspectives were discussed in my family of origin, but never in my formal education. Critical perspectives were something to be discussed behind closed doors, but never openly as to cause a ripple in the establishment. I now understand that silencing my voice is a mechanism of hegemony, which maintains the status quo.

The current study in particular has taught me the importance of being more open about my sexual orientation. Seeing the data in this study about how many LGBTQ social justice advocates reported having a close relationship with someone who identifies as LGBTQ cemented this for me. I am hoping that the discussion on LGBTQ youth advocacy will continue as there are many unanswered questions regarding how we can support these students. I am hopeful that recent events, such as the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell and the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) will continue to keep the LGBTQ youth discussions in the forefront. I believe that keeping these discussions on the forefront is necessary in supporting LGBTQ youth whose needs have been marginalized in the K-12 system. Advocating for LGBTQ youth is intense, difficult, and sometimes lonely work. While I applaud the efforts of those who engage in these efforts, I aspire to assist more to learn how to advocate for LGBTQ youth through critical perspectives of adult education, affirmative practice, and the Theory of Planned Behavior.
Appendix A

**Conceptual Model of the Theory of Planned Behavior**

*Note.* Theory of Planned Behavior schematic representation: According to the theory, human behavior is guided by three kinds of considerations: beliefs about the likely consequences of the behavior (behavioral beliefs), beliefs about the normative expectations of others (normative beliefs), and beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behavior (control beliefs). In their respective aggregates, behavioral beliefs produce a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the behavior; normative beliefs result in perceived social pressure or subjective norm; and control beliefs give rise to perceived behavioral control. In combination, attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perception of behavioral control lead to the formation of a behavioral intention. From http://people.umass.edu/aizen/tpb.diag.html. Copyright 2006 by Icek Ajzen. Reprinted with permission.
Appendix B

**LGBTQ Affirmative Practice and Intent Scale (LAPIS)**

**Background and Consent Information**

The following questionnaire is part of a nationwide study of school psychologists, or those who teach school psychologists. You are invited to participate in this study from lists compiled from school psychology listservs, educational institutions and national organizations.

The study is being conducted by Elana Betts, a doctoral candidate from The Pennsylvania State University, under the supervision of Dr. Elizabeth J. Tisdell. We are asking you to complete a web-based questionnaire, which will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. By choosing to participate, you will help expand the knowledge about the level of competence and social justice advocacy for lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) youth by school psychologists. The purpose is to understand the current knowledge base and social justice advocacy practices used by school psychologists in order to add to the current body of research relating to continuing education in school psychology.

You must be 21 years of age or older to participate in this research. Your decision to participate is strictly voluntary, and there are no risks to survey participants. You are free to answer all, some, or none of the questions on the questionnaire. You may withdraw from participating at any time. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty to you.

You will be given the option at the end of this online survey to participate in a follow-up one-on-one interview via phone for a more in-depth interview of advocacy work related to LGBTQ youth. If you would like to participate in a follow-up interview, you will be asked for your name, telephone number, and email address. If you choose to provide your name and contact information, you will be entered into a drawing for an Amazon gift card of $50. Once the follow-up interview process is complete, your name, telephone number, and email address will be removed from the dataset. Once this information is removed, it will no longer be linked with your survey responses. If this research is published, no information that would identify you will be included, since your name will not be linked to your responses.

Only project investigators will have access to study data. Data will be stored on a secure server and on researchers’ computers, which are accessible only by password. Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used. Although reasonable efforts are made to protect responses, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. Completion of this web survey implies your consent to participate in this research. Please print a copy of the informed consent form for your records.

You can ask questions about the research by contacting Elana Betts (evb5102@psu.edu) or her dissertation supervisor Dr. Elizabeth J. Tisdell, Penn State University Harrisburg (ajt11@psu.edu).

1. **Are you a school psychologist or do you educate or train school psychologists?**

   - Yes
   - No

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement based on the following scale between 1 and 5. Please remember LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. One (1) indicates strong disagreement and five (5) indicates strong agreement; more specifically:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree
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<tr>
<td>2. In their practice with LGBTQ youth, school psychologists should support the diverse make up of their students' families.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
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<td>3. School psychologists should verbalize respect for the rights of LGBTQ youth.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. School psychologists should make an effort to learn about the diversity within the LGBTQ community.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
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<td>5. School psychologists should be knowledgeable about LGBTQ resources.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>6. School psychologists should educate themselves about LGBTQ communities.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>7. School psychologists should help LGBTQ youth develop positive identities.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>8. School psychologists should challenge misinformation about LGBTQ youth.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>9. School psychologists should use professional development opportunities to improve their practice with youth who identify as LGBTQ.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
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<td>10. School psychologists should encourage LGBTQ youth to create support networks.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>11. School psychologists should be knowledgeable about issues unique to LGBTQ youth.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td><strong>12. School psychologists should acquire knowledge necessary for effective practice with LGBTQ youth.</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td><strong>13. School psychologists should work to develop skills necessary for effective practice with LGBTQ youth.</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td><strong>14. School psychologists should work to develop attitudes necessary for effective practice with LGBTQ youth.</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td><strong>15. School psychologists should help students reduce negative feelings associated with their sexual orientation and/or gender expression.</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td><strong>16. Discrimination creates problems that LGBTQ youth may need to address in counseling.</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td><strong>17. I assist students to reduce negative feelings associated with their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td><strong>18. I assist students who identify as LGBTQ to address problems created by societal prejudice.</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td><strong>19. I inform students about LGBTQ affirming resources in the community.</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td><strong>20. I acknowledge to students who identify as LGBTQ the impact of living in a homophobic society.</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>21. I respond to a student's sexual orientation/gender identity/gender expression when it is relevant for assessment and/or treatment.</td>
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<td>22. I assist youth who identify as LGBTQ to overcome religious oppression they have experienced based on their identity.</td>
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<td>23. I provide interventions that facilitate the safety of youth who identify as LGBTQ.</td>
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<td>24. I verbalize my support for students who identify as LGBTQ.</td>
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<td>25. I demonstrate comfort with working on LGBTQ issues in schools.</td>
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<td>26. I assist students to identify their internalized homophobia.</td>
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<td>27. I educate myself about LGBTQ concerns.</td>
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<td>28. I am open-minded when tailoring assessments, treatments and recommendations for LGBTQ youth.</td>
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<td>29. I create a climate that allows for voluntary self-identification as LGBTQ youth.</td>
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<td>30. I discuss sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in a non-threatening manner to students.</td>
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### LGBTQ Affirmative Practice and Intent Scale (LAPIS)

31. I facilitate appropriate expression of anger by LGBTQ youth about the oppression they have experienced.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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32. Most school district administrators, who are important to me, approve of school psychologists acting as social justice advocates for LGBTQ youth.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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33. Most teachers, who are important to me, approve of school psychologists acting as social justice advocates for LGBTQ youth.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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34. Most students approve of school psychologists acting as social justice advocates for LGBTQ youth.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
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35. Most parents approve of school psychologists acting as social justice advocates for LGBTQ youth.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
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36. Most school psychologists, who are important to me, approve of school psychologists acting as social justice advocates for LGBTQ youth.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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37. I am confident that other school psychologists would support me if I were to advocate for LGBTQ youth.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
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38. I am confident that school district administrators would support me if I were to advocate for LGBTQ youth.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
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39. I am confident that parents would support me if I were to advocate for LGBTQ youth.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
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### LGBTQ Affirmative Practice and Intent Scale (LAPIS)

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>I am confident that teachers and staff would support me if I were to advocate for LGBTQ youth.</td>
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<td>I am confident that human resources or union officials would support me if I were to advocate for LGBTQ youth.</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>I intend to assist with the creation or maintenance of a Gay-Straight Alliance within the next year.</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>I intend to advocate for policy change or policy development to assert LGBTQ rights in schools within the next year.</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I intend to display welcoming and affirming signs for LGBTQ youth within the next year.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I intend to assist with a support group for LGBTQ youth or family members within the next year.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I intend to facilitate a workshop to increase the knowledge of LGBTQ youth concerns for teachers and staff within the next year.</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within the past year, I have assisted with the creation or maintenance of a Gay-Straight Alliance.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LGBTQ Affirmative Practice and Intent Scale (LAPIS)**

48. Within the past year, I have advocated for policy change or policy development to assert LGBTQ rights in schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

49. Within the past year, I have displayed welcoming and affirming signs for LGBTQ youth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

50. Within the past year, I have assisted with a support group for LGBTQ youth or family members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

51. Within the past year, I have facilitated a workshop to increase the knowledge of LGBTQ youth concerns for teachers and staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Demographic information**

Please complete the demographic information. Those who complete all of the demographic information will be entered into a drawing for an Amazon gift card worth $50. Also indicate if you would be willing to be contacted for a follow up interview lasting approximately 45 minutes. Thank you so much for participating in this survey.

52. What is your age?

Age: 

53. What is your gender?

[ ]

Other (please specify)

54. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

55. Please identify your race/ethnicity.

[ ] White

[ ] Black or African American

[ ] American Indian or Alaska Native

[ ] Asian

[ ] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

[ ] Other

[ ] Two or more races
**LGBTQ Affirmative Practice and Intent Scale (LAPIS)**

61. Would you be willing to participate in a follow up interview? The interview can be over the phone and scheduled at a time convenient to you. The interview will last no more than 60 minutes. Those who complete the interview process will receive a token of appreciation for their time.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

**Interview Contact Information**

62. Please provide your name

63. What is your email address?

64. Please provide a phone number where you can be reached.
Appendix C

Interview Guide

Purpose: The purpose of this research is twofold: a) to examine the level of LGBTQ competency and LGBTQ social advocacy work of practicing school psychologists, and b) to explore how active K-12 social justice advocates for LGBTQ youth perceive they acquired their skills, knowledge and expertise. As stated in Chapter One, there is a lack in the current research regarding how school psychologists become LGBTQ social justice advocates; therefore, there is a dearth of adult education literature on how to teach LGBTQ social justice advocacy skills.

Interview Questions:

1. What lead you to become a school psychologist?

2. What lead you to researching/providing trainings to support LGBTQ youth?

3. What areas of LGBTQ youth advocacy most interest you? How did this develop into an interest?

4. How do you use these advocacy skills in the course of your daily job?

5. What are some of the personal barriers you have encountered in your advocacy work or research?

6. If you were to advise others to become social justice advocates for LGBTQ youth, what advice would you give them?

7. How did you learn to be an advocate?

8. How would you describe yourself meaning who you are, the labels you chose, etc?

9. How do you perceive the climate LGBTQ youth advocacy in (a) NASP (b) K-12 education?

10. What areas of LGBTQ social justice advocacy research do you feel need to be more developed to better address some of the barriers in K-12 Education or NASP?
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The Pennsylvania State University, Middletown, Pennsylvania
Dissertation (Chair Elizabeth Tisdell)
“Fostering LGBTQ Advocacy in School Psychology as Adult Education: Shaping Attitudes, Beliefs, and Perceived Control”

School Psychology Certification, 2001
Eastern University, Saint Davids, Pennsylvania

Master of Arts, 1989
Rowan University, Glassboro, New Jersey

Bachelor of Arts, 1985
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:
School Psychologist:
- Chester County Intermediate Unit, Downingtown, PA 3/03 - Present
- Delaware County Intermediate Unit, Media, PA 8/01 - 3/03
- School District of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA 1/01 - 8/01

Higher Education and Teaching Experience:
- Adjunct Instructor (University of the Arts) 6/13 – Present
- Student Success Coach (Drexel University Online) 7/12 – 7/13
- School Psychology Intern Supervisor (Chester County Intermediate Unit) 9/03 – Present
- Workshop Presenter (Chester County Intermediate Unit) 3/03 – Present
- Co-Instructor (Cabrini College) 5/09 – 6/09
- New Employee Orientation Instructor (Northwestern Human Services) 6/92 – 3/96
- Pre-Service Training (Domestic Violence Center of Chester County) 4/94 – 3/96

Counseling and Therapy Experience:
- EAP Counselor (Carebridge Corporation) 6/04 - 6/05
- Consultant and Behavior Specialist (Self-employed) 6/99 - 6/05
- Shelter Intake Counselor (Domestic Violence Center of Chester County) 4/94 - 3/96
- Supported Employment Specialist (Independent Lifesprings) 5/89 - 8/89
- Residential Services Aide (ARC) 10/88 - 5/89

Supervisory and Administrative Experience:
- Director of MR Services (NHS of Chester County) 3/96 - 3/99
- Residential Program Coordinator (NHS of Chester County) 6/92 - 3/96
- Day Program Specialist (NHS of Chester County) 9/91 - 6/92
- Residence Hall Director (Rowan University) 8/89 - 5/91

AWARDS:
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Penn State Black Scholars Grant Recipient (1985 – 1989)