An Examination of the Attitudes, Attributions, and Beliefs Held Towards Poverty and Individuals Living in Poverty

by

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Abstract

This study was conducted in order to examine the relationship between attitudes, attributions, and beliefs held toward poverty and individuals living in poverty (ILP) by undergraduate and graduate students. The study utilized a correlational design and multiple regression analyses in an attempt to explore the possible effects of various demographic variables on an individual's attitudes, attributions, and beliefs toward poverty and individuals living in poverty (ILP). Specifically, attention was given to graduate students enrolled in counselor preparation programs (i.e., counselors in training) when compared against the overall population sample. Results indicated that socioeconomic status, race, and level of education had a significant impact on an individual's beliefs and attributions towards poverty and are likely to influence their identification of more structuralistic, fatalistic/individualistic themes in regards to why poverty exists in the United States.

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List of Abbreviations

ILP   Individuals living in poverty

ATP   Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form

APS   Attributions of Poverty Scale

GBJWS   Global Belief in a Just World Scale

MBJW   Multidimensional Belief in a Just World Scale

PJS   Personal Justice Scale

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

This study explored attitudes, attributions, and beliefs held toward poverty and people living in poverty. Analysis was conducted to examine beliefs held by both undergraduate and graduate students.

"Poverty is the worst form of violence" – Mahatma Gandhi

The number of individuals living in poverty has steadily increased over the last two decades. Between 1997 and 1999 the poverty rate in the United States increased by 1.9 percentage points (roughly 6.3 million individuals). In 2010 the nation's poverty rate rose to 15.1%, the highest since 1993. This percentage represents roughly 46.2 million people considered to be living at or below poverty and is approximately 2.6 million more than was measured in 2009 when the nation's poverty rate was reported as 14.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Counselors in training are prepared during their programs to work with various diverse populations. To what degree that training has on the impact on stereotypes, assumptions, and beliefs is unknown. While research has examined the attitudes and attributions counselor trainees hold toward diverse populations (Shapiro, 2004; Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005), there has been a paucity of research examining poverty within this diversity context. Sturm (2008) has suggested that it is critical that we consider counselor attitudes and beliefs about poverty as they relate to working with persons from diverse backgrounds. This is also emphasized by Ruby Payne (2005) who has suggested that delineations in economic status form distinct social classes within our society. The social class represented by poverty is associated with unique stereotypes, beliefs, and attitudes that are used directly and indirectly to discriminate against primarily those individuals who are considered to be individuals living in poverty (ILP). Imbedded in this issue is a growing awareness that issues related to poverty are central to the preparation of counselors

and educators. The American Counseling Associations' (ACA) Code of Ethics addresses the necessity of considering economic and socio-economic factors when conducting multicultural/diversity counseling. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) mandates that counselor preparation include preparation and training which addressed diversity and knowledge of socio-economic factors which may contribute to oppression and/or stereotyping (CACREP, 2009).

If counselors and educators hold disapproving attitudes toward poverty and/or ILP it can negatively affect their behaviors and delivery of services. Within counseling, issues related to assessment, interventions, and bias may arise. Furthermore, the decisions made by educators regarding access to educational services and their corresponding interactions with students and families impacted by poverty may be influenced by this bias (Sue & Sue, 2008). The importance of exploring these issues is also highlighted by the growing focus within the fields of counseling and education on social justice and advocacy. In counseling there is a growing awareness that a central part of a counselors' responsibility is to serve as an advocate for their clients. This proactive and ongoing advocacy encompasses not only the counseling relationship but goes beyond to include the formation of a professional counselor identity which includes a multiculturally competent understanding of the many diverse factors which contribute to a clients' worldview. ACA recognizes that economic status is a central part of the diversity issues for which counselors need to be aware of as they promote and engage in advocacy. Specifically, ACA has adopted advocacy competencies which explicitly mention the necessity of recognizing the influence of economic factors on human development (Toporek, Lewis, & Crethar, 2009; Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2002).

Individuals living in poverty (ILP) may face negative attributions and beliefs, which blame the individual and assign individual responsibility for their position (Sturm, 2008). These negative attributions may include beliefs that ILP function with loose morals, lack of motivation, or decreased intelligence (Cozzareli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Shapiro, 2004; Whatley, 1993). If counselors in training hold these beliefs – and more importantly maintain these attributions when working with this population – there exists a valid concern that harm to the client can take place. Salzman (1995) stated that "the failure to recognize the validity of a cultural variation, the failure of recognizing overarching human commonalities, and the failure to recognize within group variation all risk the devastating consequences of dehumanizing those who are served" (p. 187).

Rationale

The current study may provide some context for examining the variables that contribute towards individuals living in poverty, with specific consideration of how individual's beliefs about personal and global justice contribute to these attitudes. Further, the study can contribute to the body of knowledge which exists on poverty, and the attributions that contribute towards attitudes toward this population. The call for a more active, useful body of knowledge has been requested by prior research (Harper, 1996). In reaction the lack of current research and the call to action, this study focused on an examination of the attitudes, beliefs, and attributions for poverty and beliefs regarding ILP.

Significance of Study

It is argued that at some point in their life, an American will experience situational poverty (i.e., via temporary unemployment or financial hardship (Sturm, 2008). Rank and Hirschl (1999) state that near one third of Americans will have spent at least one year living

below the poverty line by the age of 35. This rate increases to more than one half of all Americans by the age of 65 and more than two thirds by the age of 85. These statistics highlight the reality that counselors in training are virtually guaranteed to interact with an individual impacted by poverty either in clinical training or professional practice post-degree (Alaimo, Olsen, & Frongillo, Jr., 2001). Research has shown that negative attitudes and stereotypes exist toward poverty and individuals living in poverty (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Shapiro, 2004; Whatley, 1993) and there is concern that these attitudes and beliefs can negatively impact a clinicians' ability to deliver competent service (Salzman, 1995). Despite these facts, there is a dearth of research regarding the attitudes that entry-level professionals hold toward this population. Additionally, there exists a need to determine what variables contribute toward the attitudes held by students towards individuals living in poverty (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2001).

Purpose of Study

Prior studies have shown that negative stereotypes exist in regards to poverty and ILP. Limited research exists on the attitudes, attributions, and beliefs held toward this population by counselors in training. Hence, the purpose of this study was to identify the attitudes, attributions, and beliefs counselors in training hold towards poverty and ILP and discover any relationship between those attitudes, attributions, and beliefs and their perceived belief in a just world. Specifically, exploration was made to determine whether attributions were primarily individualistic, structuralistic, or fatalistic in nature. Lastly, this study determined if the degree to which a student believed the world to be globally or socially just correlated with their attributions toward the cause of poverty.

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Research Questions

In an attempt to explore the relationships between attitudes, attributions, and beliefs, the following questions were investigated:

1. What is the relationship between the demographic variables of gender, race, age, socioeconomic status, and level of education on attitudes toward individuals living in poverty?

2. Which contributes more toward attitudes toward individuals living in poverty: belief in a just world for self, belief in a just world for others, or beliefs surrounding the causes of poverty (i.e., attributions)?

3. What is the relationship between the demographic variables of gender, race, age, socioeconomic status, and level of education on beliefs about the causes of poverty (i.e., attributions)?

Operational Definitions

To facilitate general comprehension, the specific terminology used within this study will be defined. These terms are consistent with generally accepted definitions within the scholarly literature available.

Poverty has been defined in the literature as a lack of necessities based on social definition, past experiences, and a pervading sense of social deprivation (Bradshaw, 2005). For the purpose of this study, poverty was not operationally defined for the participants in order to prevent sample bias.

Belief in a Just World for Self is defined as the extent to which an individual believes he or she gets what is deserved and deserves what he or she has gotten in life (Lipkus, 1991). Research has also defined this as "personal justice" (Begue & Bastounis, 2003, p. 437). Belief in

a just world for self is the individual, rather than global, application of the belief in a just world (Sturm, 2008) and has been associated with an individual's commitment to treat others fairly. For the purpose of this study, belief in a just world for self will be measured by Lipkus's 7-item *Personal Justice Scale*. Scores range from 7 to 49, with higher scores representing a higher belief in a just world for self (See Appendix A).

Belief in a Just World for Others is defined as the degree to which individuals believe they live in a just world – one in which people "get what they deserve and deserve what they get" (Applebaum et al., p. 3) and has been referred to in the literature as "BJW" or "Global BJW" (Begue & Bastounis, 2003, p. 437). Dalbert (1998) argues this conceptualization of justice helps structure individuals' worldviews and provides explanations when adversity is encountered. For the purpose of this study, belief in a just world for others will be measured by the 7-item *Global Belief in A Just World (GBJWS) Scale* (Lipkus, 1991). Scores range from 7 to 49, with higher scores representing a higher belief in a just world (See Appendix A).

Beliefs about the causes of poverty has been defined in the literature as the ways in which an individual explains the cause of or reason for the occurrence of poverty or non-poverty (Tomaskovic-Dewey, 1988). For the purpose of this study, beliefs about the causes of poverty will be measured by responses to the 36-item *Attributions of Poverty Scale* (Bullock et al., 2001) See Appendix B). Responses to this scale are categorized in three ways: individualistic, structuralistic, and fatalistic. Participants will be assigned to a category based on which category they report the highest degree of agreement with.

Attitudes and the ways in which we form them are important predictors of behavior (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). Beliefs and attitudes relate strongly to the formation of stereotypes, or "generalized judgments about an individual, based on his/her membership in a

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particular social group" (Woods, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2005; Ruble, Cohen, & Ruble, 1984). In the current study, the attitudes toward poverty and ILP held by counselors in training were measured using the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form (ATP) Scale developed by Yun and Weaver (2010). The 21-item ATP scale utilizes items that load across three factors: personal deficiency, stigma, and structural perspective. Individual responses are indicative of the degree to which respondents' attitudes favor personal or structural perspectives and/or support stigmatization of ILP (See Appendix C).

Summary

In closing, this study explored the degree to which several demographic characteristics correlate to attitudes, attributions, and beliefs held toward poverty and those individuals who live in poverty (ILP). Participants completed survey packets which included measurements of attitudes, attribution, belief in global justice, and belief in personal justice. Total scores for scales and subscales were calculated and regression analyses were conducted in order to investigate relationships between groups and variables.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the mid-1960s under President Lyndon B. Johnson, the United States embarked on a War on Poverty. Economists and social scientists were enlisted to fight by identifying methods to define and measure poverty, and plan for programs to address poverty (Sawhill, 1998). Despite exponential increases in the discussion of poverty and creation of countless programs that provide assistance to those impacted (e.g., Head Start, Food Stamps, Medicare and Medicaid), poverty persists at significant rates comparable to those that existed when issues regarding Poverty first became a national priority. The most recently available data from the United States Census reports that for 2009 the poverty rate was 14.3 percent – up from 13.2 percent in 2008. This percentage (43.6 million individuals represents the largest number in the 51 years since the current measure was created (U.S. Census, 2009), but does not account for those individuals living near the poverty threshold (e.g., the "working poor").

The U.S. Census Bureau (2011) publishes poverty thresholds which are calculated based on income and updated annually. These thresholds serve as a statistical measurement of the number of individuals living at or below the poverty line. The projected weighted average threshold for a family of four is $22,314. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (2011) provides a related measure of poverty in the form of guidelines. They are to be conceptualized as a simplification of the poverty threshold measure and are most often used for administration purposes (e.g., determining eligibility for federal programs). The 2011 HHS poverty guideline for a family of four was $22,350, very close to the poverty threshold mentioned previously. However, both the threshold and guidelines amount to hourly wages only slightly above that of the Federal Minimum Wage (FMW). For 2011, the FMW was set at $7.25

per hour (before taxes) and was even lower at $2.13 per hour for other jobs where tips are counted (e.g., waiter/waitress) (Labor Law Center, 2011).

In defining the population of those living at or near poverty (e.g., the "poor"), Karon and VandenBoss (1977) noted several difficulties including the fact that the definition "…does not have sharp boundaries, but included the unemployed, partially employed, and the lower income members of the working class." (p. 169). The research has shown that by the age of 35, at least one third of Americans will have lived at least a year in poverty. This number increases with age to more than one half having experienced poverty by age 65 and two thirds by the age of 85 (Rank & Hirschl, 1999; Shipler, 2004). With a number this large it is likely that counselors in training will either interact with or provide service to individuals living in poverty (ILP) either in their training program or post-degree. Despite this fact, there is a paucity of research related to examining the beliefs, attitudes, and corresponding behavior toward stigmatized groups (such as ILP) that entry-level professionals hold toward this population.

One of the central issues facing this population are the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of others about ILP, including causations, attributions, and stigmatization. The World Health Organization (2001) describes poverty as being "…a major contributor to mental illness, stress, suicide, family disintegration, and substance abuse" (p. 1). Research shows that the beliefs held toward ILP tend to place blame on the individual or suggest that the individual is deserving of their position in life due to individual character deficits, lack of motivation, or intellectual shortcomings (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Shapiro, 2004). Concerns have been raised that if clinicians who are working with ILP hold these same types of beliefs and attributions then the competency and efficacy of the treatment received by ILP may be seriously in question (Myers & Gill, 2004; Salzman, 1995).

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Due to its' sociopolitical nature, the profession of counseling oftentimes reflects the values of the larger society (Katz, 1985; Sue & Sue, 1990). Counselors in training as well as their clients hold worldviews which are impacted by historical and current experiences of racism and oppression within the United States (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). It is imperative that counselors in training serve as advocates for their clients and students. As a part of that process they should address their own beliefs and attitudes. Within academia there has been a strong call to develop multiculturally competent counselors and educators who are prepared to address problems related to the oppression of diverse populations. Whereas a large component of advocating for society's oppressed will take place post-degree, the process must start with an examination of beliefs, attitudes, and associated training which takes place during undergraduate and graduate pre-service education. Counselors and educators who do not undergo this process of becoming aware of the basis of the differences which exist between themselves and their culturally diverse clients are likely to impute negative characteristics onto the client, therefore engaging in cultural oppression, possibly through the use of unethical and harmful practices (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). While multicultural competencies and standards are most often generally applied towards African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Hispanics, and Latinos, they are also relevant when looking at other oppressed groups (e.g., ILP) (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Accrediting groups such as the Council For Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) have set forth standards and multicultural competencies that address diversity in relation to clients who have been impacted by poverty. The American Counseling Association (ACA, 2005) addresses the professional ethics involved in treatment in which socioeconomic factors must be taken into account in addition to a thorough examination of the beliefs and attitudes held toward clients. Combined,

these mandates and ethical standards guide our work as ethically competent counselors and educators.

Defining and Measuring Poverty

When we first begin to conceptualize poverty we must differentiate between the *meaning* of and the m*easurement* of the term. Poverty is understood to be multi-dimensional in that it exists beyond purely economic dimensions (Sumner, 2007). On a global scale, there exists the conceptualization of poverty as being multi-dimensional, yet there is contradiction in the way in which it is measured. Global measures (e.g., the Millennium Development Goals) proposed by the United Nations, the Human Development' Indices and Gender Development Index utilized by the United Nations Development Programme (sic), and the development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) still utilize measurements which rely heavily or solely on economic indicators. Some authors have argued that relying solely on economic indicators (or those based on income) to conceptualize poverty belies poverty's dynamic and transient aspects (Sumner, 2007). For example, some individuals may experience poverty only for brief time spans, whereas others may be conceptualized as being poor in one aspect of their lives but not in others. Sumner discusses the development and transition from the economic conceptualization of "the poor" which took place during the 1960s through the emergence of the human development conceptualization, which began to emerge in the 1990s, and eventually the multi-dimensional conceptualization currently seen, which began to be widely embraced in the 2000s. The gradual transition away from economic conceptualization began in the early 1980s; a primary benchmark was the characterization of poverty as existing beyond income and including issues related to nutrition, education, and health. The concept of poverty being a multi-faceted, global issue was first publicly expressed by the World Bank in their 1980 World Development

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Report (World Bank, 1980). Even though the World Bank acknowledged these issues in 1980, they introduced a measure of poverty in 1990 which was primarily based on income and/or expenditure. This indicator would become the most widely used indicator of poverty (Sumner, 2007). While the move in conceptualization of poverty meaning on the global scale has shifted, the use of poverty measurements has remained relatively unchanged throughout the world.

The way in which the world defines poverty varies depending upon the way in which the information will be used (Myers & Gill, 2004; Payne, 2006; U.S. Census, 2009). Poverty in the United States has been defined for statistical as well as administrative purposes, however, there is no universally accepted definition or identifiers for those living near poverty or in a low-socioeconomic environment (Myers & Gill, 2004). Some factors which have been used in the literature to describe or identity those living in poverty have included indicators related to income level, education, utilization of federal resources (e.g., public assistance), percentage of students on free or reduced lunch, and access to public healthcare services (Myers & Gill, 2004). While the thresholds and guidelines discussed earlier provide a good quantitative perspective of the prevalence of poverty in the United States, there exists several more multidimensionally appropriate definitions that can be examined when working with those affected by the multiple social and economic impacts of poverty (Lewis, 1996; Payne, 1996).

Within the literature there exists several more conceptual definitions of poverty that look at the cultural aspects that ILP experience in daily life. One of the earliest descriptions of this subgroup within the larger society was proposed by Lewis (1996) in which he describes poverty as "a culture in the traditional anthropological sense in that it provides human beings with a design for living, with a ready-made set of solutions for human problems, and so serves a significant adaptive function" (p. 21). Ruby Payne (1996) defines poverty as the "extent to

which an individual does without resources" (p. 7) which she surmises includes financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems, relationships/role models, and knowledge of hidden rules. If poverty functions under rules which are different from that of the governing middle class, it is likely very difficult for ILP to navigate through different cultural systems (e.g., educational and employment settings) (Sturm, 2008). The work of Lewis (1966) and Payne (1996) has led researchers to further investigate the multidimensional aspects of poverty (Glennerster, 2000; Townsend, 1993). While the culture of poverty has generally been described as a lack of resources, Bradshaw (2005) argues that these necessities are in part based on social definitions, past experiences, and social deprivation. Glennerster (2000) describes that certain capabilities are required in order to be able to meet these basic needs. Individuals ill equipped with those capabilities face a lack of involvement in the political system that is responsible for policy change, allocation of resources, and expression of personal power (Sturm, 2008) – thereby perpetuating the poverty culture's ability to persist.

Within the larger group of "Individuals Living in Poverty" there exists various subgroups (e.g., the elderly, women with children, individuals with disabilities). The causes for poverty vary from subgroup to subgroup. The term "poor" denotes a cohesive population even though this is not the case (Blank, 1989). Blank argues that the dominant images about the poor in America and the thinking of the poor are not consistent with the actual demographics of the population(s). While America has placed an emphasis on the idea that the poor should work hard, Blank (1989) points out that that emphasis "…ignores evidence that the vast majority of the poor either cannot participate in the labor market, are already looking for more work and not finding it, or are already working full-time" (p. 160). Negative attitudes toward the poor exist (Sutton & Kessler, 1986). It is very easy, without intervention, for these attitudes to persist in

counselor training (Schnitzer, 1996). Students who hold negative attitudes may be reluctant to treat an individual living in poverty or may be feel underprepared to offer guidance and provide interventions to ILP. Further, Myers & Gill (2004) argue that a lack of preparedness in dealing with individuals living in poverty (i.e., people perceived as poor) can lead to a continued emphasis on evaluation of client problems, resources, and solutions at the cost of a more holistic approach. It is likely that counselors in training who are knowledgeable of these directives set by ACA, CACREP, and other governing bodies - and actively engage in processes which allow exploration of self-awareness as it relates to multicultural competence will be further qualified to address this growing population.

Attitudes and Beliefs

Attitudes and the ways in which we form them are important predictors of behavior (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). Negative attitudes may serve to pave the way to stigma and can impact the ways in which we behave towards a given social group (Allport, 1954). Society has historically held somewhat negative beliefs towards poverty and ILP. In looking at societal beliefs surrounding the causes of poverty, Feagin (1972) found that three themes or categories of beliefs emerged: individualistic, structuralitstic, and fatalistic. *Individualistic* beliefs value the role that an individual holds in the creation of their environment (e.g., ILP are assigned negative characteristics such as low motivation which contribute to their socioeconomic status). These categorical beliefs are closely tied to the Protestant Work Ethic – an idea that all people can better themselves or succeed as a result of hard work (Furnham, 1982). *Structuralistic* beliefs hold that economic, political, and/or societal issues are at the root of poverty (e.g., failure to provide sufficient education, lack of fair employment, prejudice and discrimination). And finally, *fatalistic* beliefs center around the role of bad luck, illness, and

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unforeseen circumstances as being the major contributing factor to poverty (e.g., the world is unjust or unfair).

In the United States, individualistic explanations for poverty tend to be favored over structural and fatalistic attributions (Kleugel & Smith, 1986; Feagin, 1975). Kleugel and Smith (1986) replicated Feagin's landmark study (1972) in order to assess the beliefs and causations held towards poverty. Roughly half of the respondents attributed poverty to individual factors vs. structural ones. In the last two decades, research has gone on to show that while society continues to favor individual factors (Ganz, 1995), there has been an emergence of attitudes that take into account cultural factors (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson & Tagler, 2001) and types of attributions have been shown to differ by class. European Americans, men, and middle-income groups have tended to express individualistic explanations for poverty while traditionally marginalized groups such as African Americans and those receiving welfare (e.g., the poor themselves) express greater support for structural explanations (Bullock, 1999; Hunt, 1996).

Beliefs and attitudes relate strongly to the formation of stereotypes, or "generalized judgments about an individual, based on his/her membership in a particular social group" (Woods, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2005; Ruble , Cohen, & Ruble, 1984). Prevailing negative stereotypes held by society toward ILP can result in many challenges for this social group. Research in the field of personality and social psychology has shown that as individuals, we form and act on stereotypes in an attempt to simplify, structure, and order our environments (Schaller, Boyd, Yohannes, & O'Brien, 1995). When we conceptualize ILP as a social group, we can then begin to explore the stereotypes held toward this group and explore ways in which they may influence the behaviors of those outside of the group. The impact of beliefs on society's attributions and attitudes toward ILP has been researched over the past few decades and only

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recently have researchers begun to explore the impact that these factors have on formation of beliefs held by counselors toward clients (Shapiro, 2004; Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005). As mentioned previously, attributions are how individuals conceptualize the root causes of events or situations (e.g., poverty). Research has suggested that as counselors and individuals, these attributions can help us understand the relationship between individuals and their problems, as well as the ways in which we look to solutions (Heaven, 1989; Salzman, 1995).

Gallo and Matthews (2003) argue that low-socioeconomic environments (such as those surrounding ILP) "…reduce the individual's reserve capacity to manage stress, thereby increasing vulnerability to negative emotions and cognitions" (p. 10). While research has shown that ILP are at a higher risk of issues affecting their mental health such as stress, it has also been suggested that they also are lacking a myriad of types of resources such as financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems, and relationships/role models (Payne, 1996). Research in the 1970s first brought to light that even when ILP were able to access services related to mental health they were likely to be met with clinicians who were either underprepared or reluctant to treat a client from a poor background (Lorian, 1973; 1974).

Recent research has found that a negative bias toward the poor exists among counselors and it is speculated that these negative views may decrease the counselor's ability to fully treat the client's presenting problem or limit the identification of client strengths (Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005). Schnitzer (1996) suggested that these negative beliefs can be reinforced in situations where counselors in training hold beliefs that ILP are irresponsible, never on time, or are likely to terminate treatment prematurely. The cognitive developmental perspective suggests that negative views held towards an individual or group may influence the way that information is processed, encoded, and interpreted. As a result, the beliefs that a counselor holds toward

themselves and their clients may be affected (Bigler & Liben, 1992). For example, a counselor who operates under the belief that poor individuals are characteristically lazy may be more likely than a client operating from a structural perspective to recall instances of a client showing up late to an appointment when the client in question is from a low socioeconomic status than clients from higher socioeconomic statuses, and will be more likely to attribute this to individualistic reasons then situational factors such as a possible lack of reliable transportation. Additionally, research indicates that school personnel (e.g., school counselors, educators, and administrators) may have a tendency to view children, especially those of color who are living in concentrated poverty, from a deficit perspective (Harry, Klinger, & Hart, 2005). As a result, their conversations may contain unchallenged negative assumptions, which contain little understanding of the multiple sociocultural challenges that those living in poverty face (Harry et al.; Nation, 2008).

The social stigmatization of oppressed groups has been linked to low social status, poverty, and poor mental health (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Crocker et al. (1998) proposed that the process of stigmatization occurs when a person possesses (or is believed to possess) "some attribute or characteristic that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context" (p. 505). These attributes and characteristics can become a basis for excluding and/or avoiding members of the stereotyped group (Leary & Schreindorfer, 1998). Some theorize that stigmatization puts a person at risk of experiencing threats to his or her social identity. Individuals who experience stigmatization may face threats to their personal as well as collective self esteem (Crocker et. al, 1998), and may feel unsure as to whether outcomes are due to their own personal identity or their social identity (e.g., the sense of self vs. the sense of identifying as a ILP). Since stigma exists within social contexts and its' effects are likely to unfold in

processes which involve power (Link & Phelan, 2001), it is imperative that the impact of stigmatization of oppressed groups - in this case, ILP - be examined within the context of the traditional counseling relationship.

As this evidence shows, there are several ways in which negative attitudes have been shown to affect the very core of treatment – the counseling relationship (Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005). Sue and Sue (1990) state that the risk of making attribution errors when working with ILP may create misunderstandings between the counselor and client. These misunderstandings may ultimately result in a negative experience for the client. Exploring the characteristics that impact the formation of attitudes and attributions toward the poor can help bridge a gap in the counseling literature that addresses these important issues.

Mandates for Addressing Poverty

CACREP is the largest accrediting body within the counseling profession. One of eight core curriculum areas that it mandates counselors in training obtain knowledge and experience in is social and cultural diversity (CACREP, 2009). Within the 2009 Standards, CACREP makes specific mention of poverty and states that a competent counselor "understands the implications of concepts such as internalized oppression and institutional racism, as well as the historical and current political climate regarding immigration, poverty, and welfare." (p. 32). As has been discussed previously, overt or covert prejudice toward a population can have an effect on the behaviors toward that population. At the very least, the 2009 CACREP standards should act as a framework that counselor educators utilize to prepare counselors in training in developing their professional identities (Dixon, Tucker, & Clark, 2010). As counselors, we are mandated by ethical code to serve as advocates for our clients. The process of advocating for a client must also include a method of self-reflection or knowledge of one's own beliefs and attitudes so as not

to function out of bias or stereotypes and assumptions. Without such exploration, these biases, stereotypes, and assumptions can become barriers to not only professional growth but more importantly negatively impact the counseling relationship (Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005). Salzman (1995) states that for barriers to be overcome, "it is necessary to acknowledge and understand them". Sturm (2008) addresses the need for further exploration and argues that "without research leading to training, information and recognition of people who are poor as a group, the risk of misunderstandings, assumptions, and negative attitudes among counselors toward people who are poor will continue to exist" (p. 7).

Various ethical standards and codes within the helping professions speak to the importance of identifying the impact that multiple forms of oppression (e.g., classism) and diverse populations (e.g., low socio-economic status) can have on clients served as well as systems. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) ethical code states that school counselors have a responsibility to social justice advocacy which includes increasing awareness of issues related to oppression and impact. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards' state that educators must demonstrate an awareness of, and have training opportunities which allow for interaction with, diverse socioeconomic groups.

Limited research on the inclusion of poverty-related education in diversity and multicultural training for related professions has shown beneficial effects on the attitudes of students held toward this population. Authors have argued that while multicultural training within the helping professions often assumes that a students' multicultural knowledge increases as a result of the training, little research has been done regarding the extent of attitudinal change (Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005). As has been shown by the multidimensional definition of poverty, its effect reaches much farther than simply economic indicators to include many aspects

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of an individuals' life. As such, individuals living in poverty can be thought of as a diverse population for which counselors in training must not only become educated on, but also must confront their own attitudes toward. Research related to classism and discrimination as it relates to psychotherapists in training can be traced as far back as the 1970s, when individuals living in poverty first began to appear in large number in community counseling centers. For example, the conceptualization that poor individuals may view counseling as a "magical cure" was shown to be shared across income or socio-economic levels; therefore, the overemphasis of this misconception by counselors is actually a counselor-related problem. These therapist-related problems do not justify a counselor's decision not to treat! Instead, it is recommended "…they should be considered as training-supervisory problems that can be overcome by recognition and discussion." (Lorian, 1974, pp. 351-352).

Throughout the 1970s there seems to have been a general support for the viewpoint that "when therapists have the skills and awareness needed to understand class-related attitudes and issues, then psychotherapy with the poor patient is no different from good psychotherapy with anyone" (Karon and VandenBos, 1997, p. 169). This viewpoint was held in psychotherapy until the shift to a more medical-based model in the 1980s and a move away from community mental healthcare (Smith, 2005). Poverty, and its relation to nursing education, has been briefly researched (Sword, 2004) and implications for baccalaureate nursing education suggests implementation of service learning and exposure to issues and effects of poverty in relation to healthcare.

The authors in this previous study concluded that thoughtful critique of issues related to poverty paired with interpersonal contact with individuals living in poverty may contribute to positive attitudinal change. Research within the field of social work has also examined social

work students' beliefs and attitudes toward poverty and compared them against their non-social work peers (Sun, 2001; Rosenthal, 1993; Schwartz, 1991). Studies found that social work students generally believed in far more structural causations for poverty (Sun, 2001) but at the same time allotted for far less monetary resources than actually exist (Schawartz, 1991). Sun (2001) did note that White females in the study were more apt to select structural attributions for poverty while males and individuals of other ethnicities were likely to select individualistic ones. This may be accounted for by the sample, however, as the number of females sampled (n = 67.7%) was greater than the number of males (n = 32.3%). Sun (2001) ultimately argued that the inclusion of coursework related to the promotion of social and economic justice might help to influence beliefs. Considering that multicultural training is most often limited to issues related to race and ethnicity, the inclusion of multicultural training as it relates to socioeconomic class and poverty may serve to facilitate students in considering sociopolitical frameworks when working with diverse populations (Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005).

Although some research has been done related to counselor attitudes and their effects on client impression, the majority of the literature in this area surrounds issues related to counselor preference not to treat or provide adequate care to poor clients based on their observed social class (Lorian, 1973; 1974). Sutton and Kessler (1986) found that when measured against other factors, social class significantly impacted the attitudes that counselors held towards clients. There are clear indications that economic status, specifically poverty, corresponds to certain negative attitudes and stereotypes. More importantly, counselors may not be immune to these attitudes or beliefs. This can present a significant dilemma when considering the potential impact on the counseling process. However, there is very limited, mostly dated, research on the beliefs that counselors hold about individuals living in poverty.

Myers and Gill (2004) echoed Schnitzer (1996) in the argument that counselors in training are not adequately prepared to address the multiple needs of the ILP population and expressed concerns that as stereotypes build on one another (e.g., a single mother in poverty faces minority and cultural stereotypes on top of poverty), the effectiveness of the helping relationship is diminished. In response to this concern, they proposed the The Cycle of Poverty and Compromised Wellness model (p. 231), which approaches treatment of the ILP from a wellness, support-system based approach. One additional approach which has been recently highlighted in the literature as an effective approach aimed at conceptualizing effective counseling strategies when working with ILP is the CARE model (Foss, L.L., Generali, M. M., & Kress, V. E., 2011). The CARE model serves to remind clinicians to *c*ultivate relationships, *a*cknowledge realities, *r*emove barriers, and *e*xpand the strengths of poor clients. This research provides a starting point and rationale for considering and addressing these issues through the implementation of humanistic and social justice frameworks. Furthermore, while the field has begun to address ways to treat this marginalized population, we have limited information to consider these beliefs and the contextual issues which surround the attitudes or perceptions which serve as the foundations of these beliefs.

Measurement of Attitudes Toward Poverty

In much the same way that poverty and the experiences related to living in poverty are multifaceted, the measurement of attitudes held toward poverty and ILP is a complex process. One challenge that exists in the process relates to the construction of attitudes toward poverty. Research suggests that the attitudes and beliefs held toward poverty and ILP may be composed of several variables such as perceived socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, age, belief in personal and global justice, and political affiliation. For the purposes of this study, specific

emphasis has been placed on the variables identified in research by Rubin and Peplau (1975), which address an individuals' sense of global and personal justice.

Attitudes and Attributions Toward Poverty

One important aspect of individuals' attitudes toward an event, situation, or social class is attributions. In general, attributions serve to explain the existence of an event and can be impacted positively or negatively by our beliefs. Beliefs and attributions serve to make our world more predictable, understandable, and thereby, more emotionally and cognitively "safe" (Salzman, 1995). Toporek & Pope-Davis (2005) note that the relationship between these beliefs, attributions, and the issues our clients present, can be one in which they serve to make sense out of the diverse issues presented within the therapeutic relationship. As clients often times present issues for which the clinician may have limited personal experience, it is necessary to process beliefs and attributions in order for us to make sense and treat effectively. But, if a counselor holds attitudes, beliefs, or attributions which are not aligned with the presenting issues, or we are misinformed of the cause of the event, we may actually be working with a barrier towards understanding the difference (Salzman, 1995). This barrier may result in a misunderstanding between client and counselor. Salzman (1990) argues that this type of client-counselor barrier is most likely to occur in cross-cultural interactions. As mentioned earlier, some have argued that poverty exists and can be conceptualized within a cultural context (Payne, 1995). As a cultural group that is often stereotyped and degraded, it is appropriate to assume that the types of barriers reported by Salzman (1990) are also likely to occur in client-counselor interactions where the client is a ILP.

Feagin (1972; 1975) conducted one of the first nationwide studies on American attributions of poverty. He found that the majority of individuals sampled believed the poor held

personal responsibility for their economic situation. From this foundational research, three

causational themes emerged: individualistic, structural, and fatalistic. In Feagin's study (1975),

about half of the individuals sampled offered individualistic reasons (e.g., loose morals, lack of

motivation), fewer emphasized structural ones (e.g., exploitation by higher classes, low wages),

and the number of fatalistic reasons (e.g., plain bad luck) varied greatly. Roughly a decade later,

Kleugel and Smith (1986) also surveyed a nationally representative sample and found results

consistent with those of Feagin (1975). In the Kleugel and Smith study (1986), 70% of

individuals responded affirmatively to the statement which read "everyone who works hard can

get ahead" (p. 44) (i.e., the Protestant work ethic), while about 90% perceived their personal

opportunity to get ahead as being the same or better than other Americans. These statements are

individualistic in nature, in that they ultimately place responsibility on the individual wile

offering the belief that an individual could improve their station in life via hard work/motivation.

While a substantial number regarded education as being the most effective way of attaining

economic security and advancement from poverty, a majority reported a failure to believe that

everyone has an equal chance at securing a higher education. The failure to believe that

everyone has an equal chance seems to speak to structural attributions while the belief that

everyone has an equal chance at pursuing higher education is individualistic and often

misguided.

Within the literature, two studies (Shapiro, 2004; Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005) have

been found which examined the relationship between beliefs and attributions about the cause of

poverty in relation to the counselor's attitudes and attributions toward the client. Both studies

utilized small sample sizes of graduate and doctoral students. The current study expands on

these studies and will further explore any possible relationship between attitudes toward the poor and belief in a just world (both personally and globally).

Belief in a Just World

Rubin and Peplau (1975) first introduced the Belief in a Just World Scale and in the roughly four decades since its introduction it has been used to examine individuals sense of justice as well as explanations for misfortune (Shapiro, 2004; Whatley, 1993). Using the original construct of global and multidimensional belief in a just world developed by Rubin and Peplau (1975), Lipkus et al. (1996) conducted two studies in order to examine differences in how individuals view their own sense of personal justice when compared against how they view their sense of overall, or global justice towards others. Their results indicated that belief in a just world could be broken down into three main areas: self, others, and fatalistic – very similar to the three ways in which attributions of poverty have been broken down (i.e., individual, structural, and fatalistic).

In the literature, four studies were found which examined the relationship between a counselors belief in a just world and treatment of clients who are poor or connection to discrimination (Cozzarelli, et. al, 2001; Lipkus & Siegler, 1993; Shapiro, 2004; Sutton, 2003). Only one unpublished dissertation (Sturm, 2008) addresses how belief in a just world for others is related to or separate from global belief in a just world in reference to formation of counselor attitudes and attributions toward people living in poverty. Sturm (2008) surveyed currently practicing counselors so it is still unknown to what degree these relationships exist within pre-service professionals. The current study seeks to address this gap in the research.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

The intention of this study was to empirically investigate attitudes, attributions, and beliefs that counselors in training hold toward poverty and individuals living in poverty (ILP). Additionally, the purpose was to discover any relationships between attitudes and attributions held toward ILP, the degree of belief in a just world, and other demographic factors. The following sections of this chapter detail the research questions which guided this study, participant characteristics, instruments used, procedures, and data analysis.

Research Questions

In an attempt to explore the relationships between attitudes, attributions, and beliefs, the following questions were investigated:

1. What is the relationship between the demographic variables of gender, race, age, socioeconomic status, and level of education on attitudes toward individuals living in poverty?

2. Which contributes more toward attitudes toward individuals living in poverty: belief in a just world for self, belief in a just world for others, or beliefs surrounding the causes of poverty (i.e., attributions)?

3. What is the relationship between the demographic variables of gender, race, age, socioeconomic status, and level of education on beliefs about the causes of poverty (i.e., attributions)?

Design

The present study utilized a correlational design in an attempt to explore the possible effects of various demographic variables on an individuals attitudes, attributions, and beliefs

toward poverty and individuals living in poverty (ILP). Specifically, attention was given to counselors in training when compared against a larger population sample.

Participants

The current study utilized datum that was collected from a larger, previously conducted study. The past study sought to examine similar constructs among a larger population of undergraduate and graduate students. Permission was obtained to use data relevant to the current study's research questions and area of focus. In the study from which previous data will be used, courses from within the Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling (SERC) as well as Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology (EFLT) departments were utilized for sample recruitment. Faculty permission to recruit from these courses was obtained. Courses were selected whose objectives addressed issues related to education, counseling, diverse populations, or counseling related skills. In order to obtain a larger sample of graduate students enrolled in counselor training programs, Universities known to have CACREP-accredited counseling programs were solicited for participation in the study. Approximately three Universities within Alabama responded voluntarily resulting in an additional 30 completed survey packets being included in the overall sample for which analyses were performed.

For the purpose of the current study, data were intentionally gathered among pre-service counselors in training. Due to the legal age of consent for the state of Alabama, participants were screened to only include those who are age 19 years of age or older. An additional reason for including students age 19 years of age and older is that these students are likely to have defined their majors by this age and may be operating with more defined ideas related to culture (Sue & Sue, 2008) and poverty. Participants received a survey package which included the measures described below.

<center>**Instrumentation**</center>

The survey packets included the informational letter, a demographic measure, and four survey measures:

Demographic Measure

The demographic measure (See Appendix D) was developed for the current study and measures gender, age, race/ethnicity, and current academic major and rank. In addition, it gauges perceived socioeconomic status of family of origin.

Attributions of Poverty

Feagin (1972; 1975) first developed an 11-item Likert-type scale that addressed three dimensions of attributions held toward poverty: *individualistic* explanations*, structural* explanations, and *fatalistic* explanations. These three dimensions have been used throughout the literature in similar studies. Bullock, Williams, and Limbert (2001) constructed a 45-item scale designed to assess a broad range of explanations for poverty across individualistic (e.g., "lack of motivation and laziness", "lack of drive and perseverance", "lack of effort among the poor to improve themselves"), structural (e.g., "prejudice and discrimination in the hiring process", "an economic system that fosters competition over cooperation", "a federal government which is insensitive to the plight of the poor"), and fatalistic (e.g., "just plain bad luck", "being born into poverty", "unfortunate circumstances") attributions. The current study utilized a modified, 36-item version of the Attributions of Poverty scale (See Appendix B). Participants in the current study were asked to rate the importance of 36 items as causes of poverty on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*not at all important as a cause of poverty*) to 5 (*extremely important as a cause of poverty)*. Although the third factor, "fatalism", can be conceptualized as a separate construct, prior studies (Bullock, 1999) show that the emergence of a third factor containing both structural

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and fatalistic causes exists. The tendency of traditionally fatalistic causes (e.g., "unfortunate circumstances") to load with structural items (e.g., "lack of transportation") may reflect the multifaceted nature of some causal explanations toward poverty (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2001). To reflect the complex nature of this emerging factor, the authors labeled the construct as "fatalistic/structural". Bullock, Williams, and Limbert (2001) identified three constructs for which mean scores were calculated: structural (SAP), individualistic/culture of poverty (IAP), and fatalistic/structural (FSAP). The alpha coefficients for the three constructs were reported as .91, .91, and .72, respectively. The current study used these three constructs to assign mean scores for each individual. A higher number of responses in SAP, IAP, and/or FSAP factors indicate a tendency to attribute these factors as contributing more towards the prevalence of poverty in the United States.

Counselor Attitudes Toward Poverty

Atherton and Gemmel (1993) developed the Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale in order to assess attitudes toward poverty and individuals viewed as poor. In the development of the original Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale, an initial 50-item instrument was administered to 98 undergraduate students enrolled in a sociology course composed of social work and non-social work majors. Items with an item-to-total correlation of .30 and a discriminant power (DP) of .8 and above were kept which resulted in 37 items being used to compose the original scale. Scoring of the Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale is such that the higher the score, the more favorable the respondents' attitude toward the poor (Atherton & Gemmel, 1993). Cronbach's coefficient of reliability demonstrated a high degree of internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$) for the 37-item version with a split-half reliability of .87. When compared to a sample of business students, the same scale demonstrates a similarly high coefficient of reliability ($\alpha = .89$), confirming an

acceptable internal consistency for the instrument. Even though Atherton and Gremmell found ten factors for the scale when using eigenvalue-greater-than-one criteria, it was ultimately concluded that the instrument represented a single-factor scale (Yun & Weaver, 2010). In a similar vein, Whalen (2005) identified thirteen factors, yet concluded the Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale to be one-dimensional. Yet another study by Rehner, Ishee, Salloum, and Velasques (1997) determined the items of the Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale to contain ten factors: *irresponsibility; determinism; no-fault circumstances; deficiency; complacency; unworthiness; identification; paternalism; denigration;* and *lost rights*.

In response to the contradictory findings regarding the dimensionality of the ATP, Yun and Weaver (2010) sought to clarify both the dimensionality and shorten the number of items used in the scale. Using multiple factor retention procedures (i.e., the eigenvalue-greater-than-one rule, Cattell's scree test, and Velicer's minimum average partial method), Yun and Weaver identified 21 items which load across three factors intended to measure a range of diverse attitudes toward poverty and poor people: personal deficiency (7 items); stigma (8 items); and structural perspective (6 items). The resulting Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form is composed of 21 items that load across the above-mentioned three factors: personal deficiency (e.g., "Poor people are dishonest"), stigma (e.g., "Welfare mothers have babies to get more money"), and structural perspective (e.g., "I would support a program that resulted in higher taxes to support social programs for poor people"). Respondents express agreement or disagreement with each statement by using a five point Likert-type scale (SA = strongly agree (1), A = agree (2), N = neutral (3), D = disagree (4), SD = strongly disagree (5). Scoring of the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form is similar to the original Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale, such that the higher the score, the more favorable the respondents' attitude toward the poor. Due

to the relatively recent development of the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form, little data regarding the instruments' validity and reliability is available. Yun and Weaver (2010) report that psychometric analyses of the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form showed internal consistency of the total scale to be established with a Cronbach's α of .87. The subscales of the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form exceeded minimum acceptable levels for internal consistency with alpha coefficients between .50 and .7. Additionally, the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form was shown to have convergent validity when compared against the original 37-item Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale used by Atheron & Gremmell (1993).

For the purposes of the current study, the Attitude Toward Poverty Short Form was included and distributed in the survey packets (See Appendix C). Due to its reduced number of items and established multidimensionality it was believed that the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form would allow a much more comprehensive and accurate manner of measurement of attitude than the original scale (Yun & Weaver, 2010).

Belief in a Just World

The tendency to blame individuals for their misfortune has been documented in social science research (Lerner & Miller, 1978). The belief in a just world theory proposed by Lerner (1970, 1980) describes an attributional process whereby individuals get what they deserve and deserve what they get in life. While research has relied heavily on the original scale developed by Rubin and Peplau (1975) to measure belief in a just world, there have been several studies that question the unidimensionality of the scale. As a result of this need for revision, two scales were developed which were used in the current study – the Global Belief in a Just World Scale (GBJWS) (Lipkus, 1991) (See Appendix A) and the personal efficacy subscale from the

Multidimensional Belief in a Just World Scale (MBJWS) (Furnham & Proctor, 1988) (See

Appendix D). The scales are described in further detail below.

Global Belief in a Just World

The 7-item GBJWS aims to measure the general belief that people get what they deserve

and deserve what they get in life (Lipkus, 1991). Respondents indicate their level of agreement

on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). Scores on the GBJWS

range from 7 to 49, with higher scores indicating a greater belief in a globally just world.

Multidimensional Belief in a Just World

The 30-item MBJWS is based off of Paulhus' (1983) three spheres of control: personal

efficacy, interpersonal, and socio-political. The current study uses 7 items that formed the

personal efficacy subscale of the original 30-item scale. Respondents indicated their level of

agreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). Scores on the

MBJWS range from 7 to 49, with higher scores indicating a greater belief in interpersonal justice

(e.g., the level of control an individual has over their environment pertaining primarily to their

achievements).

Procedures

The data collected for this research study was facilitated through the use of archival

datum. Permission to conduct the study from which archival datum was utilized was obtained

from the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects of Auburn University (See Appendix

E). Courses in both the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling

(SERC), and the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology (EFLT)

were identified whose stated objectives addressed issues related to education, counseling, diverse

populations, and/or counseling related skills. Consent to recruit participants from these courses was obtained prior to recruitment. During recruitment the investigator instructed potential participants that they were being asked to participate in a study, that participation would take approximately 15-20 minutes, and that participation would be voluntary and not linked to their current class. The instructor of the participating course was asked to leave the room during data collection so as not to create coercion. Survey packets were disseminated and potential participants were asked to review the informational letter (See Appendix G). If individuals chose to participate they were instructed to complete the enclosed surveys and return them in the provided envelope. Those choosing not to participate were instructed to return the surveys, not completed, in the provided envelope. At this point, the investigator would leave the room and return once a volunteer notified the investigator and the instructor that all individuals wishing to complete the survey packet had completed the surveys and placed them in the front of the room. All responses received were anonymous, as identifiable information was not collected during this study.

Data Analysis

Generally, the scope of this study was to collect information on the attitudes, attributions, and beliefs that individuals hold toward poverty and individuals living in poverty (ILP). More specifically, counselors in training were specifically targeted within the current sample. This study also aimed to explore possible relationships between attitudes, attributions, and beliefs as they relate to demographic factors as well as belief in a just world for self and others.

The data collected for this research study was facilitated through the use of archival datum. During preliminary analyses, participants who identified as graduate students enrolled in a counseling-in-training program (i.e., counselors in training) were separated from the overall

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sample. Analysis of this group (hereinafter referred to as 'group 2') was performed and then compared against the overall sample population (hereinafter referred to as the 'group 1'). Further details, including descriptive statistics for group 1 and group 2, will be provided separately in the Results section of this study.

The data analysis for this study was conducted using the Statistical Product for Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical analyses system version 20. Using this software, Cronbach's alpha was conducted to determine the internal validity of each measurement scale as well as corresponding subscales when possible. Pearson's R Correlation analysis was recorded to determine the relationship between the variables studied. Linear regression enter method was conducted to determine differences in the predictive potential of the variables studied as well. In order to address research questions 1, 2, and 3, descriptive statistics as well as multiple linear regression analyses were conducted. For research questions 1 and 3, the independent variables of "gender", "race", "age", "SES", and "academic rank" were used to predict the dependent variables of attitudes toward poverty and attributions of poverty, respectively. For research question 2, the independent variables of "belief in a just world for self", "belief in a just world for others", and "attributions of poverty" were used to predict the dependent variable of attitudes toward poverty.

Summary

In this chapter, an overview of the research study was provided with a focus on participant recruitment, instrument selection, assessment distribution practices, and data analysis procedures. In summary, students who were enrolled in courses whose objectives addressed issues related to education, counseling, diverse populations, or counseling related skills were encouraged to participate; specific recruitment of students enrolled in counselor training

programs took place. The instruments utilized for this study included the Attributions of Poverty

Scale (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2001), the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form (Yun &

Weaver, 2010), the Belief in a Just World Scale (Lipkus, 1991), and the Personal Justice Scale

(Lipkus, 1991). Also included in survey packets was a demographic form (see Appendix E)

developed by Dr. Jamie Carney. Statistics concerning their reliability and validity were also

outlined in this chapter.

IV. Results

This chapter will present the results of the data analysis for this study. It includes assessment of the participants' demographic information and the results of the statistical analysis as well as descriptive statistics for each scale used in the current study. The purpose of this study was to research and explore the attitudes, attributions, and beliefs held towards poverty and individuals living in poverty (ILP). Graduate students enrolled in a counselor preparation program (i.e., counselors in training) were specifically targeted within the overall sample.

Assessment of Measure Reliability

Each of the measures used in this study were evaluated for their reliability or internal consistency. Initial evaluation of the measures for normality revealed that each of the scales met the requirements of linearity. The Chronbach Alpha was determined for each measure and compared against established reliabilities for each scale and corresponding subscale. Reliability estimates for measure ranged from .674 to .890 with a median of .824. All scales, aside from the Personal Justice Scale, showed relatively high reliability (see Table 1). The Personal Justice Scale showed low reliability ($\alpha = .324$) and as a result was not included in further analyses.

Description of Participants

The data collected for this research study was facilitated through the use of archival data; these data were collected as part of a larger research study that was approved by the Auburn University Institutional Review Committee. During preliminary analyses, participants who identified as graduate students enrolled in a counselor preparation program (i.e., counselors in training) were separated from the overall sample. Analysis of counselors in training was performed in order for comparison against the overall sample population where results from preliminary analyses indicated significant results.

Two hundred and fifty six respondents submitted survey packets. Of that number, thirty-seven packets contained missing or incomplete datum. One respondent did not to complete the Personal Justice Scale, seven did not complete the Belief in a Just World Scale, nineteen did not complete the Attributions of Poverty Scale, and ten did not complete the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form. Results demonstrate that individuals from both groups tended to identify more individualistic themes when rating the importance of reasons for explaining why some people are poor in the United States and others are not (e.g., "An unwillingness to work at a competitive level that is necessary to make it in the world"). When asked to rate their level of agreement with statements regarding their attitudes toward individuals living in poverty (ILP), results show that counselors in training hold slightly more favorable attitudes than the overall sample towards ILP and agreed more strongly with structural themes (e.g., "People who are poor should not be blamed for their misfortune"). Descriptive statistics for all measures are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Scales

Scale	# of items	Cronbach's α	Overall Sample			Counselors in Training		
			n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Belief in Just World	7	.824	249	26.85	6.9	79	25.39	6.29
Personal Justice Scale	7	.324*						
Attitudes Toward Poverty	21	.890	246	69.52	11.53	79	71.43	11.45
Personal Deficiency	7	.789		26.79	4.43		27.84	4.21
Stigma	8	.857		22.24	6.18		22.67	6.69
Structural	6	.674		20.48	3.12		40.6	9.0
Attributions of Poverty	36**	.816	237	-	-	75	-	-
Structural	13	.874		40.39	8.80		40.8	9.00
Individualistic	14	.859		49.37	9.14		47.74	8.78
Fatalistic/Structural	8	.678		25.42	4.52		25.24	4.51

*Note: The low reliability score led to the measure not being included in additional analyses.
**Note: modification with the 36 items from the original 45 items that loaded highest (item 15 did not load; see Sturm, 2008)

Demographic data collected included gender, age, and race/ethnicity. Nearly 76 percent of the total number of participants were female (*n*=194), while the remaining 24 percent of participants were male (*n*=57). When graduate counseling students were selected from the larger sample in order for comparison (counselors in training), similar gender differences existed (75 percent of participants (*n*=61) female; 24.7 percent (*n*=20) male). The participants reported ages ranged from 19 to 63, with a mean of 23.7 for the overall sample. Mean ages for counselors in training and the overall sample were 23.7 and 29.4 respectively. Five participants elected not to report gender and seven participants elected not to state their age.

More than 72 percent (*n*=188) of participants in the overall sample identified their race or ethnicity as White, followed by 18 percent (*n*=46) as Black or African American, 2.7 percent (*n*=7) as Asian, .4 percent (*n*=1) as Hispanic or Latino, and 2.0 percent (*n*=5) indicating Other race or Ethnicity. Of those responses, demographic analyses for counselors in trianing showed similar results with more than 66 percent (*n*=54) identifying their race or ethnicity as White, followed by 21 percent (*n*=17) as Black or African American, 4.9 percent (*n*=4) as Asian, 1.2 percent (*n*=1) as Hispanic or Latino, and 4.9 percent (*n*=4) indicating Other race or ethnicity.

Additionally, data were collected examining participants' family of origin socioeconomic status. Of the 251 participants in the overall sample who responded to this question, nearly half (*n*=121) reported being having been raised in the middle class. Five participants elected not to state their family of origin socioeconomic status. When compared to the larger sample, counselors in training showed similar results with over 50 percent (*n*=43) reporting their family of origin socioeconomic status to be in the middle class.

During initial data analysis, the breakdown of participants was found to warrant a dichotomy for analysis. The independent categorical variables of *race* and *family of origin*

socioeconomic status were collapsed in order to aid in further analysis. The variable of race was

collapsed in '*White/Nonwhite*' and the variable of family of origin SES was recoded into '*below*

middle class/at or above middle class'. Descriptive frequencies for these two recoded variables

are included below in Table 2.

Table 2
Collapsed Categorical Variables of Race and SES Descriptive Statistics

	Overall Sample	Counselors in Training*
	Frequency(Percentage)	Frequency(Percentage)
Race		
White	188(75.8)	54(66.7)
Nonwhite	60(26)	24.2(32.1)
SES		
at or above middle class	207(60)	80.9(74.1)
below middle class	44(21)	17.2(25.9)

*Note: One participant did not report race/ethnicity

Preliminary Analyses

A Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to assess the relationship between

an individuals' score on the Attitude Toward Poverty Short Form (and its corresponding

subscales) and their score on the Attributions of Poverty Scale (and its corresponding subscales).

Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality and

multicolinearity. There was an extremely weak correlation between total score on the Attitude

Toward Poverty Short Form and total score on the Attributions of Poverty Scale, $r = .006$.

Results support the tendency of traditionally fatalistic responses (e.g., "unfortunate

circumstances") to correlate strongly with structural responses (e.g., "lack of transportation"), $r = $

.571. – an occurrence first reported by Bullock, Williams, & Limbert (2001). When the subscales

for each measure are closely examined, the results of the Pearson product-moment correlation

show the strongest correlations exist for subscales that measure similar constructs or factors.

Results of the Pearson product-moment correlations between measures of attributions of poverty

and attitudes about poverty are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Pearson Correlations for Measures of Attribution (APS) and Attitude (ATP)

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. APS Structural	-	-.220**	.571**	.683**	.153*	.471**	.552**	.462**
2. APS Individualistic		-	-.037	.512**	-.382**	-.557**	-.494**	-.579**
3. APS Fatalistic			-	.671**	.049	.338**	.302**	.283**
4. APS Total				-	-.140*	.045	.127	.006
5. ATP Personal deficiency					-	.525**	.387**	.772**
6. ATP Stigma						-	.663**	.918**
7. ATP Structural							-	.776**
8. ATP Total								-

Note:
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between the demographic variables of gender, race, age, family of origin socioeconomic status, and level of education on attitudes about individuals living in poverty?

In the current study, the attitudes held toward individuals living in poverty were

measured using the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form (ATP). The ATP is composed of 21

items that load across the three factors: personal deficiency (e.g., "Poor people are dishonest"),

stigma (e.g., "Welfare mothers have babies to get more money"), and structural perspective (e.g.,

"I would support a program that resulted in higher taxes to support social programs for poor

people"). Respondents express agreement or disagreement with each statement by using a five

point Likert-type scale (SA = strongly agree (1), A = agree (2), N = neutral (3), D = disagree (4),

SD = strongly disagree (5). Scoring of the ATP is similar to the original Attitudes Toward

Poverty Scale, such that the higher the score, the more favorable the respondents' attitude toward the poor. Yun & Weaver (2010) reported internal consistency of the total scale to be established with a Cronbach's α of .87. Results of the current study demonstrated similar levels of internal consistency with a Cronbach's α of .89. The subscales of the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form exceeded minimum acceptable levels for internal consistency with alpha coefficients between .67 and .85.

Two multiple regression analyses were conducted using a backward elimination method. For the overall sample, SES again added statistically significantly to the prediction as well as an emerging variable, age, which statistically predicted total score on the ATP, $F(4, 226) = 12.370$, $p < .05$. For counselors in training, SES decreased slightly in its significance as a predictive indicator of ATP total score, $F(2, 73) = 4.474$, $p < .05$. Standardized regression coefficients and Betas can be found below in Table 4.

Table 4
Summary of Multiple Regression for RQ1

Variable	Overall Sample				Counselors in Training			
	Full Model		Restricted Model		Full Model		Restricted Model	
	R^2	β	R^2	β	R^2	β	R^2	β
Intercept	.180	-	.180	-	.132		.109	
Gender		0.256		0.255		0.217		.200
Race		-0.271*		-0.274		-0.301*		-.291*
Age		0.111		0.133*		0.132		-
SES		-0.149*		-.151*		-0.053		-
Academic Rank		0.036		-		-		-

*Note: $p < .05$; β = standardized coefficient

Research Question 2: Which contributes more toward attitudes toward individuals living in poverty: belief in a just world for self, belief in a just world for others, or beliefs surrounding the causes of poverty (i.e., attributions)?

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As discussed earlier, the low reliability scores on the personal justice scale resulted in it being excluded from further data analysis. As a result, multiple regression analysis was conducted in order to determine if total scores on the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form (ATP) could be predicted from a respondents' total score(s) on the Belief in a Just World Scale (MBJWS) and/or the subscales for the Attributions of Poverty Scale (APS) (the independent variables).

The current study measures belief in a just world using total score on the Global Belief in a Just World Scale (GBJWS). The 7-item GBJWS aims to measure the general belief that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get in life (Lipkus, 1991). Respondents indicate their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). Scores on the GBJWS range from 7 to 49, with higher scores indicating a greater belief in a globally just world.

In order to measure attributions of poverty, participants in the current study were asked to rate the importance of 36 items as causes of poverty on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*not at all important as a cause of poverty*) to 5 (*extremely important as a cause of poverty)*. Bullock, Williams, and Limbert (2001) identified three constructs for which mean scores were calculated: structural (SAP), individualistic/culture of poverty (IAP), and fatalistic/structural (FSAP). The current study used these three constructs to assign mean scores for each individual. A higher number of responses in SAP, IAP, and/or FSAP factors indicate a tendency to attribute these factors as contributing more towards the prevalence of poverty in the United States.

A multiple regression was conducted to predict ATP total score from total scores on GBJWS and subscales for Attributions of Poverty. The assumptions of linearity, independence of errors, homscedasticity, unusual points and normality of residuals were met. For the overall

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sample, the total score on GBJWS as well as the score on the Individualistic subscale of the ATP were shown to significantly predict total score on the ATP $F(4, 220) = 50.643$, $p < .0005$, adj. R^2 = .47. Upon examination of counselors in training, the variables of total score on the GBJWS and score on the Individualistic subscale of the ATP were shown to significantly predict total score on the ATP $F(4, 67) = 21.034$, $p < .05$. Standardized regression coefficients (Betas) are found in Table 5.

Table 5
Summary of Multiple regression for RQ2

	Overall Sample		Counselors in Training	
Variable	R^2	β	R^2	β
Intercept	.47		.557	
GBJWS		-0.148*		-0.194*
ATP Structural		0.267		.177
ATP Individualistic		-0.472*		-0.569*
ATP Fatalistic		0.074		0.003

*Note: $p < .05$; β = standardized coefficient

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between the demographics of gender, race, age, socioeconomic status, and level of education on beliefs about the causes of poverty (i.e., attributions)?

In the current study, the beliefs about the causes of poverty (i.e., attributions) were measured using the Attributions of Poverty Scale (APS). Bullock, Williams, and Limbert (2001) constructed the 45-item scale in order to assess a broad range of explanations for poverty across individualistic (e.g., "lack of motivation and laziness", "lack of drive and perseverance", "lack of effort among the poor to improve themselves"), structural (e.g., "prejudice and discrimination in the hiring process", "an economic system that fosters competition over cooperation", "a federal government which is insensitive to the plight of the poor"), and fatalistic (e.g., "just plain bad luck", "being born into poverty", "unfortunate circumstances") attributions. The current study

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utilized a modified, 36-item version of the APS. Participants in the current study were asked to rate the importance of 36 items as causes of poverty on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*not at all important as a cause of poverty*) to 5 (*extremely important as a cause of poverty)*. Although the third factor, "fatalism", can be conceptualized as a separate construct, prior studies (Bullock, 1999) show that the emergence of a third factor containing both structural and fatalistic causes exists. The tendency of traditionally fatalistic causes (e.g., "unfortunate circumstances") to load with structural items (e.g., "lack of transportation") may reflect the multifaceted nature of some causal explanations toward poverty (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2001). To reflect the complex nature of this emerging factor, the authors labeled the construct as "fatalistic/structural".

Three multiple regressions were conducted to predict a participant's total score on each of the three subscales of the Attributions of Poverty Scale from gender, race, age, family of origin socioeconomic status, and level of education. Independence of residuals was shown for each subscale as indicated by Durbin-Watson statistics between 1.806 and 2.265. The assumptions of linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, usual points and normality of residuals were met for each subscale. For the overall sample, the demographic variables statistically predicted total score on the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form when using the structural subscale, $F(5, 215) = 7.527$, $p < .0005$ and the fatalistic subscale, $F(5, 215) = 1.959$, $p > .0005$, but did not statistically predict total score on the individualistic subscale, $F(5, 215) = 1.920$, $p > .0005$. The variables of gender added statistically significantly to the prediction of scores on both the structural and fatalistic subscales of the ATP, $p < .05$. The variable of race contributed significantly to the prediction of scores on the structural subscale and an individuals' socioeconomic status contributed significantly to their tendency to select more fatalistic responses, $p < .05$.

For counselors in training, the demographic variables statistically predicted total score on the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form when using the structural subscale, $F(4, 68) = 2.762$, $p < .0005$ and the fatalistic subscale, $F(4, 68) = 1.823$, $p > .0005$, but in line with the overall sample, did not statistically predict total score on the individualistic subscale, $F(4, 68) = .058$, $p > .0005$. A summary of multiple regression analysis can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6
Summary of Multiple Regression for RQ3

Variable	Overall Sample		Counselors in Training	
	R^2	β	R^2	β
ATP Structural	.149		.140	
Gender		.198*		.237*
Race		-.308*		-.308*
Age		.050		.004
SES		-.126		-.137
Academic Rank		-.033		-
ATP Individualistic	.043		.003	
Gender		-.092		.027
Race		.105		-.031
Age		-.008		.047
SES		.059		.014
Academic Rank				-
ATP Fatalistic	.044		.097	
Gender		.161*		.250*
Race		-.002		.005
Age		.034		.008
SES		-.147*		-.245*
Academic Rank		.018		-

*Note: $p < .05$

Summary

The purpose of this study was to research and explore graduate counseling students' attitudes, attributions, and beliefs towards poverty and individuals living in poverty (ILP). The study utilized the Personal Justice Scale, Global Belief in a Just World Scale, Attributions of Poverty Scale, and Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form to measure belief, attribution, and attitudes. During preliminary analyses, the Personal Justice Scale was shown to have low

reliability and as a result was excluded from further analyses. Results indicated that respondents assigned more individualistic attributions toward the poor (e.g., individuals living in poverty are in poverty due to a series of personal choices or poor character).

V. Discussion

This study explored the degree to which several demographic characteristics correlate to attitudes, attributions, and beliefs held toward poverty and those individuals who live in poverty (ILP). More specifically, counselors in training were specifically targeted within the current sample. Participants completed survey packets which included measurements of attitudes, attribution, belief in global justice, and belief in personal justice. Total scores for scales and subscales were calculated and regression analyses were conducted in order to investigate relationships between groups and variables. In this chapter, the results will be discussed as related to the obtained data. Limitations of the current study will also be addressed, as will recommendations for future study based on the results.

Overview

The number of individuals living in poverty has steadily increased over the last two decades. Between 1997 and 1999 the poverty rate in the United States increased by 1.9 percentage points (roughly 6.3 million individuals). In 2010 the nation's poverty rate rose to 15.1%, the highest since 1993. This percentage represents roughly 46.2 million people considered to be living at or below poverty and is approximately 2.6 million more than was measured in 2009 when the nation's poverty rate was reported as 14.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Counselors in training are prepared during their programs to work with various diverse populations. To what degree that training has on the impact on stereotypes, assumptions, and beliefs is unknown. The American Counseling Associations' (ACA, 2005) Code of Ethics addresses the necessity of considering economic and socio-economic factors when conducting multicultural/diversity counseling. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) mandates that counseling programs include preparation and

training which addressed diversity and knowledge of socio-economic factors which may contribute to oppression and/or stereotyping (CACREP, 2009). While research has examined the attitudes and attributions counselor trainees hold toward diverse populations (Shapiro, 2004; Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005), there has been a paucity of research examining poverty within this diversity context.

The current study focused on addressing these issues in relation to attitudes, attributions, and beliefs that individuals hold toward poverty and individuals living in poverty (ILP). This included consideration of a general student population and more specifically, counselors in training. This study also aimed to explore possible relationships between attitudes, attributions, and beliefs as they relate to demographic factors as well as belief in a just world for self and others.

Discussion of Results

In order to examine attitudes about individuals living in poverty, responses to the Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale were examined. Upon review of the data, it appears that participants tended to ascribe to more individualistic attributions in explaining the prevalence of poverty in the United States (e.g., individuals living in poverty are in poverty due to a series of personal choices or poor character) and held more personally deficient attitudes towards individuals living in poverty (ILP). Personally deficient attitudes value the role that an individual holds in the creation of their environment (Feagin, 1972). For example, these attitudes are more likely to assign negative characteristics such as low motivation to the cause or contributing variables of one's socioeconomic status. This parallels the individualistic attributional process, which places value on the role(s) that an individual holds in the creation of their environment (e.g., ILP are assigned negative characteristics such as low motivation which

contribute to their socioeconomic status (Feagin, 1975). These categorical beliefs are closely

tied to the *Protestant Work Ethic* – an idea that all people can better themselves or succeed as a

result of hard work (Furnham, 1982).

These beliefs often mirror a conceptualization of poverty that focuses on the individual as

being the primary contributor to their poverty status. Furthermore, the results are in line with

research that indicates society in general holds personally deficient attitudes towards ILP and

rely on more individualistic explanations for the existence and persistence of poverty in the

United States (Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005; Sutton & Kessler, 1986; Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, &

Tagler, 2001). These attitudes and attributions heavily focus on the concept that all causes of

poverty are related to individual choices and behavior (Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005).

When considering counselors'-in-training attitudes toward poverty there were differences

when compared to the general student population. Specifically, the counselors in training scored

higher on the structural subscale of the Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form. This seems to

suggest that students from counselor training programs may be more likely to consider

structuralistic influences as they conceptualize problems and solutions related to the

socioeconomic status of their clients when compared to students from separate majors.

Structuralistic responses are more likely to conceptualize the causes of poverty to be rooted in

economic, political, and/or social issues (e.g., a failure to provide sufficient education, lack of

fair employment, prejudice and discrimination) (Feagin, 1975). This is in contrast to more

individualistic and deficit attitudes and attributions which are more likely to perceive the

individual to be in greater control of the creation of their environment (e.g., ILP are assigned

negative characteristics such as low motivation which contribute to their lower socioeconomic

status).

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The findings from this study also demonstrated that demographic variables might relate to differences in attitudes and attributions of poverty. Specifically, in the current study a negative correlation for race and SES on attitudes toward ILP suggested that White individuals who were raised in the middle-class or higher SES were also more likely to hold less favorable attitudes towards the individuals living in poverty than their peers from other ethnic and racial groups as well as those from lower SES groups. This parallels the results discussed earlier in regards to individualistic attributional processes which assign value to the role(s) that an individual holds in the creation of their environment (Feagin, 1975). Results were consistent even when looking at counselors in training compared to other college students. Findings also suggest that SES and race may have an influence on attitudes held toward ILP even among counselors in training. For instance, a White counselor in training who has been raised in the middle class or higher may hold more negative attitudes toward ILP and ascribe more negative personal characteristics towards ILP. In general, the results of the current study indicate that White individuals who report having been raised in middle-class or higher SES are more likely to hold less favorable attitudes toward the poor *and* believe that the individual living in poverty is in more personal control over their current socioeconomic environment than might be the actual case.

Research regarding an individuals' belief in a just world has been used in prior studies to examine the degree to which individuals sense the world as globally just, as well as provide explanations for misfortune (Rubin & Peplau 1975; Shapiro, 2004; Whatley, 1993). The belief in a just world theory proposed by Lerner (1970, 1980) describes an attributional process whereby individuals get what they deserve and deserve what they get in life. As belief in a globally just world increases, personal explanations for misfortune (e.g., the level of control an

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individual has over their environment pertaining primarily to their achievements) tend to increase (Paulhaus, 1983). When considering the relationship between belief in a just world for others and/or beliefs surrounding the causes of poverty (i.e., attributions) the findings of the current study suggest that as an individual's belief in a just world for others increases, their attitude toward ILP becomes less favorable.

In this instance, it is possible that individuals who hold a higher sense of belief in a just world (e.g., those who feels that rewards and punishments are fairly given in life) also hold ideas and beliefs that conceptualize that poverty is a result of not engaging in hard work and is the result of the individual's behavior versus societal barriers and challenges. This would parallel results discussed earlier, in that negative attitudes and attributions toward ILP are usually associated with individuals who conceptualize poverty as being caused by individualistic characteristics versus structural (e.g., societal) characteristics. What was surprising was that among counselors in training, who as reported earlier, were more likely to hold structuralistic attitudes toward poverty, is that they did not differ from the rest of the sample on this aspect. Specifically, while the counselors in training were more likely to have attitudes toward poverty that highlighted the causes of poverty to be a result of structuralistic variables (e.g., failure to provide sufficient education, lack of fair employment, prejudice and discrimination), this positive attitude toward ILP did not correspond to their beliefs related to a just world. For instance, while the results of the current study indicated that counselors in training recognize more structuralistic causes for poverty (and place less value and/or blame on the individual related to their socioeconomic status), their belief in a just world showed no significant difference when compared to students who were not engaged in a course whose objectives addressed issues related to education, counseling, diverse populations, or counseling related skills. These findings

suggest possible conflict between the beliefs held regarding the causes of poverty and the

conceptualization of how an individual senses the world as globally just, as well as provides

explanations for misfortune.

The findings from this study further demonstrated that demographic variables might

relate to differences in attributions of poverty. Specifically, in the current study a positive

correlation for gender and negative correlation for SES on attributions toward poverty suggested

that females who were raised in the middle-class or higher SES were more likely to consider

fatalistic/structural themes when conceptualizing the causes of poverty than their male peers

from other ethnic and racial groups as well as those from lower SES groups. Results were

consistent when looking at counselors in training compared to other college students. Results

suggest that while females may be more likely to consider fatalistic/structural themes when

conceptualizing the causes of poverty, gender, SES, and race may have an influence on attitudes

held toward ILP even among counselors in training.

Overall, two variables were shown to have the greatest impact on the attitudes that

individuals hold towards poverty and ILP. For the overall sample, the total score on GBJWS as

well as the score on the Individualistic subscale of the ATP were shown to significantly predict

total score on the ATP. As scores on the GBJWS increased (indicative of the belief that the

world is a just place where people get what they deserve and deserve what they get in life),

scores on the ATP tended to decrease and more individualistic responses were scored higher

(meaning that overall attitudes toward ILP were less favorable and more value was placed on the

role of the individual in the creation of their environment). While the score on the Individualistic

subscale of the ATP was not shown to significantly predict total score for counselors in training,

score on the GBJWS did significantly predict total score – in the same way as it did for the

overall sample. It is possibly that these two variables (i.e., total score on the GBJWS and total score on the Individualistic subscale of the ATP) may serve as the best predictor of an individual's attitude toward poverty and ILP.

Implications for Counselor Education

When compared to the general population, counselors in training tended to report more structuralistic/fatalistic responses in regards to both attitudes toward the poor and attributions toward poverty. While these results are promising, the results were not so significantly different so as to not advocate for a curriculum that continues to incorporate more significant training in advocacy for underserved populations (e.g., ILP) and highlight the role that socioeconomic status may play in appropriate treatment planning with our clients. Currently, the majority of multicultural training in the field of Counselor Education consists of issues related to race and ethnicity; the inclusion of training which relates to socioeconomic class and poverty may serve to further facilitate the consideration of these structuralistic/fatalistic themes into their multicultural conceptualizations (Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005).

Although some research has been done related to counselor attitudes and their effects on client impression, the majority of the literature in this area surrounds issues related to counselor preference not to treat or provide adequate care to poor clients based on their observed social class (Lorian, 1973; 1974). Sutton and Kessler (1986) found that when measured against other factors, social class significantly impacted the attitudes that counselors held towards clients. There are clear indications that economic status, specifically poverty, corresponds to certain negative attitudes and stereotypes. The current study supports the argument that counselors in training are not immune to these negative attitudes and stereotypes. This can present a significant

dilemma when considering the potential impact on the counseling process as students engage in training, specifically practicum and internship experiences.

Within the literature two specific models have been mentioned which may serve to address this area of concern. Myers and Gill (2004) argue that counselors in training are not adequately prepared to address the multiple needs of the ILP population and expressed concerns that as stereotypes build on one another (e.g., a single mother in poverty faces minority and cultural stereotypes on top of poverty), the effectiveness of the helping relationship is diminished. In response to this concern, they proposed the The Cycle of Poverty and Compromised Wellness model (p. 231), which approaches treatment of the ILP from a wellness, support-system based approach. One additional approach which has been recently highlighted in the literature as an effective approach aimed at conceptualizing effective counseling strategies when working with ILP is the CARE model (Foss, L.L., Generali, M. M., & Kress, V. E., 2011). The CARE model serves to remind clinicians to *c*ultivate relationships, *a*cknowledge realities, *r*emove barriers, and *e*xpand the strengths of poor clients. The results of the current study and their implications for the field of Counselor Education provide a starting point and rationale for considering and addressing these issues through the implementation of humanistic and social justice frameworks.

Limitations

The findings of this study may have been impacted by one or more methodological weaknesses that served as threats to the validity of the results. One of the first limitations to be considered in this study is the possibility that differences may exist between graduate level counselors in training and counselors who have begun to work in the field. Responses of the current study were limited to students enrolled in counselor preparation programs and whether or

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not the student had any prior experience within the counseling or service professions was not

assessed. Results cannot be generalized to counselors in practice or individuals in other areas of

the helping profession.

A second limitation to this study concerns the demographic distribution, particularly with

regard to race and gender. Given the overall sample, nearly 76 percent of participants identified

as female and 75 percent of participants identified themselves as White. In the counselor-in-

training sample, gender and race were similarly distributed. While this does reflect the

demographic distribution of the counseling profession overall and Auburn University, a more

diverse group may shed light on group differences. Inclusion of a larger, more diverse group of

respondents may assist in the identification of group differences.

A third limitation relates to belief in a just world for others being negatively correlated to

attitudes and race. Hunt (2000) suggests that responses to the GBJWS "may reflect a White

experience given the lower percentage of other raced and ethnicities in prior BJW research" (p.

339). This is another area in which the inclusion of a larger, more diverse sample may help to

address this specific limitation.

Recommendations

The current study suggests that both undergraduate and graduate students tend to hold

more negative attitudes towards the poor, this corresponded to their holding and identify

individualistic themes in their conceptualization of attributions regarding the existence of

poverty in the United States. While these types of negative attitudes have been documented

since the existence of poverty, little research has been conducted which attempts to examine how

to best prepare a future generation of helping professionals to address this specific population in

their respective fields. As the number of individuals living in poverty continues to rise, future

research must continue to explore the attitudes, attributions, and beliefs that individuals in helping professions hold towards the populations they serve.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to explore the attitudes, attributions, and beliefs that individuals hold towards poverty and individuals living in poverty. Undergraduate students as well as graduate students who were enrolled in counselor preparation programs were surveyed in order to explore these areas. Of the variables studied, a significant finding indicated that both groups tended to hold negative attitudes toward the poor and make generally individualistic attributions when responding to what they felt was the cause of poverty in the United States. While these results are not novel given society's overall propensity to view the poor in a negative light, it is one of few studies which attempt to explore the influence of demographic variables such as socioeconomic status, race, and academic rank on the dependent variables of attitudes, attributions, and beliefs. It is believed that results of the current study may assist in building a needed research base for training in working with the growing population of individuals living in poverty.

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APPENDIX A

PERSONAL JUSTICE SCALE

Personal Justice Scale
(Lipkus, 1991)

Please mark the item that best reflects your personal views and experiences of justice and fairness using the following scale:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. I think that I deserve the reputation I have among the people who know me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. When I get lucky breaks it is usually because I have earned them. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. When I take examinations I rarely seem to get the grade I deserve. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. As a child I was often punished for things I had not done. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I am less likely to get hurt in traffic accidents if I drive with caution. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I have found that people who work the hardest at their jobs
are not always the ones who get promoted. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. If I watch what I eat, I will live longer. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

APPENDIX B

BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD SCALE

Belief in a Just World Scale
(Lipkus, 1991)

Please mark the item that best reflects your personal views and experiences of justice
and fairness using the following scale:

Strongly disagree Disagree   Slightly disagree   Neutral   Slightly agree   Agree   Strongly agree
    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

1. I feel that people get what they are entitled to have.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. I feel that a person's efforts are noticed and rewarded.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I feel that people earn the rewards and punishments
   they get.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. I feel that people who meet with misfortune have
   brought it on themselves.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I feel that people get what they deserve.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I feel that rewards and punishments are fairly given.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I basically feel the world is a fair place.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

APPENDIX C

ATTRIBUTIONS OF POVERTY SCALE

Attributions of Poverty Scale
(Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2001)

Please rate how important each of these reasons are for explaining why some people
are poor in the United States and others are not. Please use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all important				Extremely important
as a cause of poverty.				as a cause of poverty.

1. Structuralistic inequalities that don't give all people equal choices 1 2 3 4 5

2. Negative attitudes and anti-work mentality among the poor 1 2 3 4 5

3. Unfortunate circumstances...1 2 3 4 5

4. A capitalistic society in which the wealth of some is contingent
   upon the poverty of others 1 2 3 4 5

5. An unwillingness to work at a competitive level that is necessary
   to make it in the world 1 2 3 4 5

6. Sickness and disability...1 2 3 4 5

7. Discrimination against minorities and the poor 1 2 3 4 5

8. A lack of motivation that results from being on public assistance 1 2 3 4 5

9. Not having the right contacts to find jobs...1 2 3 4 5

10. An economic system that fosters competition over cooperation 1 2 3 4 5

11. Loose morals 1 2 3 4 5

12. Not inheriting money or property from relatives..1 2 3 4 5

13. Being taken advantage of by the rich..1 2 3 4 5

14. Lack of drive and perseverance 1 2 3 4 5

15. Being born into poverty 1 2 3 4 5

16. Corporate downsizing and U.S. companies relocating to foreign
countries that can pay lower wages 1 2 3 4 5

17. Lack of motivation and laziness 1 2 3 4 5

18. Lack of money 1 2 3 4 5

19. The failure of society to provide good schools. 1 2 3 4 5

20. Being too picky and refusing to take lower paying jobs...........................1 2 3 4 5

21. Just plain bad luck...1 2 3 4 5

22. Low paying jobs with no benefits..1 2 3 4 5

23. Lack of intelligence...1 2 3 4 5

24. Lack of transportation. 1 2 3 4 5

25. A federal government which is insensitive to the plight of the poor 1 2 3 4 5

26. Lack of effort among the poor to improve themselves 1 2 3 4 5

27. Being from a family without the resources to financially help at
    critical points in one's life..1 2 3 4 5

28. A vicious cycle that perpetuates poor work habits, welfare
    dependency, laziness, and low self-esteem...1 2 3 4 5

29. High taxes that take money away from the poor 1 2 3 4 5

30. Not having positive role models to teach children about adult
    drive and ambition 1 2 3 4 5

31. Prejudice and discrimination in the hiring process 1 2 3 4 5

32. A weak safety net that doesn't help people get back on their feet
    financially (i.e. low welfare benefits) 1 2 3 4 5

33. Lack of childcare..1 2 3 4 5

34. The ability to save, spend, and manage money wisely 1 2 3 4 5

35. The break-up with families (e.g. increased divorce rate)..........................1 2 3 4 5

36. Not receiving a high school diploma 1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX D

ATTITUDES ABOUT POVERTY SHORT FORM

Attitudes about Poverty (Yun & Weaver, 2010)

Please select your level of agreement to the following statements using the following scale:

If you strongly agree, please circle SA.
If you agree, please circle A.
If you are neutral on the item, please circle N.
If you disagree, please circle D.
If you strongly disagree, please circle SD.

1. Welfare makes people lazy. SA A N D SD

2. An able-bodied person using food stamps
    is ripping off the system. SA A N D SD

3. Poor people are dishonest. SA A N D SD

4. People are poor due to circumstances beyond their control. SA A N D SD

5. Society has the responsibility to help poor people. SA A N D SD

6. Unemployed poor people could find jobs if they tried harder. SA A N D SD

7. Poor people are different from the rest of society. SA A N D SD

8. Poor people think they deserve to be supported. SA A N D SD

9. Welfare mothers have babies to get more money. SA A N D SD

10. Children raised on welfare will never amount to anything. SA A N D SD

11. Poor people act differently. SA A N D SD

12. Poor people are discriminated against. SA A N D SD

13. Most poor people are dirty. SA A N D SD

14. People who are poor should not
    be blamed for their misfortune. SA A N D SD

15. If I were poor, I would accept welfare benefits. SA A N D SD

16. Some "poor" people live better than I do,
    considering all their benefits. SA A N D SD

17. There is a lot of fraud among welfare recipients. SA A N D SD

18. Benefits for poor people consume a major
    part of the federal budget.   SA A N D SD

19. Poor people generally have lower intelligence
    than nonpoor people.   SA A N D SD

20. I believe poor people have a different set
    of values than do other people.   SA A N D SD

21. I would support a program that resulted in
    higher taxes to support social programs for poor people   SA A N D SD

APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Please select the appropriate option for the following questions

1. What is your gender?
____ Female   ____ Male

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is your race/ethnicity?
____ White
____ Black or African American
____ American Indian or Alaskan Native
____ Asian
____ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
____ Hispanic or Latino
____ Other Race

5. What is your current major? _____

6. What is your academic rank?
_____Undergraduate   _____Graduate

4. What is the socio-economic status of your family of origin? In other words,
   in which of the following SES do you consider yourself to have been raised?
____ Poverty level or below.
____ Just above the poverty level.
____ Lower middle class.
____ Middle class.
____ Upper middle class.
____ Upper class.

For the following please respond to the open-ended questions

   1.   Discuss the factors that you believe contribute to poverty?

   2.   Discuss what you believe can be done to address poverty?

APPENDIX F

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
R E S E A R C H   P R O T O C O L   R E V I E W   F O R M

For Information or help contact **THE OFFICE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH**, 307 Samford Hall, Auburn University
Phone: 334-844-5966   **e-mail:** hsubjec@auburn.edu   **Web Address:** http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/

*Complete this form using Adobe Acrobat Writer **(versions 5.0 and greater)**. Hand written copies not accepted.*

1. PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY: 3/10/2011

(?) PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one): ☐ FULL BOARD   ☑ EXPEDITED   ☐ EXEMPT

2. PROJECT TITLE: Understanding the attributions and attitudes towards poverty

3. Jamie Carney | Professor | SERC | 844-2885 | carnejs@auburn.edu
   PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR | **TITLE** | **DEPT** | **PHONE** | **AU E-MAIL**
   2084 Haley Center | | | 844-7677 |
   MAILING ADDRESS | | | **FAX** | **ALTERNATE E-MAIL**

4. SOURCE OF FUNDING SUPPORT: ☑ Not Applicable ☐ Internal ☐ External Agency:_____ ☐ Pending ☐ Received

5. LIST ANY CONTRACTORS, SUB-CONTRACTORS, OTHER ENTITIES OR IRBs ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROJECT:

(?) 6. GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

6A. Mandatory CITI Training	**6B. Research Methodology**
Names of key personnel who have completed CITI: Jamie Carney	Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology. Data Source(s): ☑ New Data ☐ Existing Data Will data be recorded so that participants can be directly or indirectly identified? ☐ Yes ☑ No Data collection will involve the use of:
CITI group completed for this study: ☑ Social/Behavioral ☐ Biomedical Protocol-Specific modules completed: ☐ Genetic ☐ Vet.'s Administration ☐ International ☐ Prisoner Research ☐ Public School Students ☐ Pregnant Women/Fetuses Other _____	☐ Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.) ☐ Interview / Observation ☑ Surveys / Questionnaires ☐ Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E.) ☐ Internet / electronic ☐ Audio / Video / Photos ☐ Private records or files

6C. Participant Information	**6D. Risks to Participants**
Please check all descriptors that apply to the participant population. ☑ Males ☑ Females ☑ AU students **Vulnerable Populations** ☐ Pregnant Women/Fetuses ☐ Children and/or Adolescents ☐ Prisoners (under age 19 in AL) Persons with: ☐ Economic Disadvantages ☐ Physical Disabilities ☐ Educational Disadvantages ☐ Intellectual Disabilities Do you plan to compensate your participants? ☐ Yes ☑ No	Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research. ☐ Breach of Confidentiality* ☐ Coercion ☐ Deception ☐ Physical ☐ Psychological ☐ Social ☑ None ☐ Other _____ *Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

6E. Institutional Biosafety Approval
Do you need IBC Approval for this study? ☑ No ☐ Yes - BUA #_____ Expiration date _____

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7. PROJECT ASSURANCES

PROJECT TITLE: Understanding the attributions and attitudes towards poverty

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSSURANCES

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
   a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
   b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Human Subjects Research
   c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
   d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Human Subjects Research in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise OHSR, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Human Subjects Research before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Printed name of Principal Investigator	Principal Investigator's Signature	Date

B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES

1. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
2. I certify that the project will be performed by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol using conventional or experimental methodology.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress.
4. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
5. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant adverse events and/or effects to the OHSR in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
6. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the OHSR by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.
7. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology

Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor	Signature	Date

C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSURANCE

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

Printed name of Department Head	Signature	Date

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8. **PROJECT OVERVIEW: Prepare an abstract that includes:**
   (400 word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study):

   I.) A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal, *(Cite sources; include a "Reference List" as Appendix A.)*
   II.) A brief description of the methodology,
   III.) Expected and/or possible outcomes, and,
   IV.) A statement regarding the potential significance of this research project.

I. The number of individuals in poverty increased in 2008 to 13.2%, equaling 39.8 million people in the US. The poverty rate for children and adolescents is higher with as many as 19% of persons under the age of 18 living in poverty (US Census Bureau, 2009). These numbers serve to highlight the reality that many educators, counselors and other professionals will be working with students and families dealing with poverty (Alaimo, Olsen & Frongillo, Jr., 2001). However, there is a paucity of research examining these attitudes among entry-level professionals (Smith, 2009). Moreover there is a significant need to determine the characteristics and variables that contribute to attitudes toward persons living in poverty (Bullock, Williams & Limbert, 2001; Strum, 2008). Research has stressed, that understanding these dynamics can help contribute to training programs that prepare professionals who work with those living in poverty (Smith, 2009).

II. The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes and attributions of undergraduate and graduate students' attitudes toward persons living in poverty. This will include consideration of attributions for poverty (Bullock, Williams & Limbert, 2001), just world beliefs (Lipkus, 1991; Lucas, 2007), and attitudes toward poverty (Yun & Weaver, 2010), and how these variables relate to each other. This study proposes to include undergraduates, undergraduates in education, and graduate students in counseling and education programs. The methodology will include using survey measures to measure the identified variables. Group comparisons will include comparisons of graduate to undergraduate, and education graduate students to counseling graduate students (counselors-in-training), and comparisons across the demographic variables of gender and age.

III. This study may provide some context for examining the variables that contribute to attitudes and attributions concerning persons living in poverty, with specific consideration of how individual's beliefs about social justice and equality contribute to these attitudes. This can contribute to the body of knowledge on the culture of poverty. In addition, the study will provide some base knowledge about the attitudes of pre-service professionals in education and counseling.

IV. This research has the potential of contributing to the growing body of research on attitudes and attributions toward persons living in poverty. This includes consideration of the variables that contribute to these attitudes and the maintenance of these attitudes. This research also has the potential of contributing to programs that prepare professionals, primarily education and counseling programs, potentially increasing awareness and knowledge about attitudes toward persons living in poverty among pre-service professionals in these areas.

9. **PURPOSE.**
   a. **Clearly state all of the objectives, goals, or aims of this project.**

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes and attributions of undergraduate and graduate students' attitudes toward persons living in poverty. A primary goal is to determine how the variables of:
1. Attributions for poverty (Bullock, Williams & Limbert, 2001), just world beliefs (Lipkus, 1991; Lucas, 2007), and attitudes toward poverty (Yun & Weaver, 2010) relate to one an another. Specifically, the relationship between these variables. This will include how the factors identified in the attributions for poverty scale (i.e., individualistic, structuralistic, and fatalistic), just world beliefs (self and others) and attitudes toward poverty.

2. An additional goal of this study is to examine the attitudes of undergraduate and graduate students towards persons living in poverty. This study will consist of students 19 years and older. The study will include undergraduates not in education and undergraduates who have declared their major in education. In addition, the study will include graduate students in education and counseling programs (i.e., Masters and Doctoral). This will allow for a global investigation of attitudes toward persons living in poverty among college students with specific comparisons of:

   b. **How will the results of this project be used? (e.g., Presentation? Publication? Thesis? Dissertation?)**

Results will be summarized and presented at professional meetings and used to prepare manuscripts for publication.

3

10a. KEY PERSONNEL. Describe responsibilities. Include information on research <u>training or certifications</u> related to this project. **CITI is required. Be as specific as possible.** (Attach extra page if needed.) *All non AU-affiliated key personnel must attach* **CITI certificates of completion.**

Jamie Carney   Professor   carnejs@auburn.edu

Principle Investigator _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: SERC _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Dr. Carney will supervise data collection and the analysis of data

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

11. LOCATION OF RESEARCH. List all locations where data collection will take place. (School systems, organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) **Be as specific as possible. Attach permission letters in Appendix E.** *(See sample letters at http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm)*

Data will be collected in classes at Auburn University, consent has been given by instructors whose courses will be used for recruitment (EFLT, SERC Depts).

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12. PARTICIPANTS.
   a. Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project.
       (If data are existing, check here ☑ and describe the population from whom data were collected.)

   The participant population used for recruitment in this study will be gathered from undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in courses in the Special Education, Rehabilitation, Counseling/School Psychology Department and the Educational Foundation, Leadership and Technology Department in the College of Education at Auburn University. Faculty permission to recruit from courses has been obtained. This will include only participants who are 19 yrs. or older.

   b. Describe why is this participant population is appropriate for inclusion in this research project. (Include criteria for selection.)

   This study proposes to examine attitudes towards persons living in poverty among graduate and undergraduate students. A secondary goal is to examine education and counseling students to examine what the attitudes are among these pre-service professionals and how these may differ. This has lead to the inclusion of students enrolled in courses for counseling and education majors, as well as courses that have undergraduates from across differing majors. The study focuses on students 19 yrs. and above because more students will have defined their majors after this date and based on developmental theory may have more defined ideas about culture (Sue & Sue, 2008) and poverty.

   c. Describe, step-by-step, all procedures you will use to recruit participants. *Include in Appendix B a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate. (See sample documents at http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm.)*

   Students will be recruited from courses in the Special Education, Rehabilitation, Counseling/School Psychology Department and the Educational Foundation, Leadership and Technology Department in the College of Education at Auburn University. Consent from faculty members teaching identified courses has been obtained. The identified courses address issues related to education, counseling, diversity or training on counseling related skills. Faculty who have provided consent to participate have identified that the focus of this study is related to their course and course content. The Principal Investigator teaches in the SERC department and will not be collecting data in any course for which she is serving as an instructor or supervising students (e.g., internship).
        Students will be recruited from courses in the Special Education, Rehabilitation, Counseling/School Psychology Department and the Educational Foundation, Leadership and Technology Department in the College of Education at Auburn University. Consent from faculty members teaching identified courses has been obtained. The identified courses address issues related to education, counseling, diversity or training on counseling related skills. Faculty who have provided consent to participate have identified that the focus of this study is relat

   What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study? 70_____

   Is there a limit on the number of participants you will recruit?   ☑ No   ☐ Yes – the number is _____

   Is there a limit on the number of participants you will include in the study?   ☑ No   ☐ Yes – the number is _____

   d. Describe the type, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants.
       (If no compensation will be given, check here ☑)

       Select the type of compensation: ☐ Monetary   ☐ Incentives
                                                       ☐ Raffle or Drawing incentive (Include the chances of winning.)
                                                       ☐ Extra Credit (State the value)
                                                       ☐ Other

       Description:

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13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.

    a. Describe, <u>step-by-step</u>, all procedures and methods that will be used to <u>consent</u> participants.
    (☐ Check here if this is "not applicable"; you are using existing data.)

All participants will be provided an informational consent document (Appendix B) that will specify that participation is voluntary and is not linked to their current course or status in their program. Participants will be told that they can choose to participate by returning the surveys (in the survey packet) completed in the provided envelope. Students will also be told that if they choose not to participate they can simply return the survey forms, not completed, in the provided envelope. Course instructors will be asked to leave the room during data collection to not create coercion to participate.

    b. Describe the procedures you will use in order to address your purpose. Provide a <u>step-by-step description</u> of how you will carry out this research project. Include specific information about the participants' time and effort commitment. (*NOTE: Use language that would be understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Without a complete description of all procedures, the Auburn University IRB will not be able to review this protocol. If additional space is needed for this section, save the information as a .PDF file and insert after page 6 of this form.*)

1. Students from the identified courses in EFLT and SERC will be recruited during the end of their course sessions (last 25 minutes). Consent from faculty instructing these courses has been obtained.

2. During recruitment the investigators will provide tell potential participants that they are being asked to participate in a study, that participation will take about 15-20 minutes, that participation is not linked to their current class and is voluntary. The Instructor of the participating course will be asked to leave the room during data collection to not create coercion.

3. Survey packets will be disseminated and potential participants will be asked to review the informational letter (Appendix B) and if they choose to participate they can complete the provided surveys and return the surveys in the provided envelope. Those choosing not participate can return the surveys, not completed, in the provided envelope.

4. The survey packets will include the informational letter, a demographic measure, and four survey measures: Attributions of Poverty Scale (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2001), Global Beliefs in a Just World (Lipkus, 1991), Procedural and Distributive Just World Measure (Lucas, 2007), and Beliefs about Inequality Scale (Kleugel & Smith, 1986). Survey measures will be randomly ordered so not to create a presentation bias.

5. Potential participants will be able to return the surveys (completed or not completed) in a provided envelope. A box will be provided to allow the potential participants to return their surveys in the provided box.

6. All data will be analyzed in an aggregate manner.

13c. List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in Appendix C.
  (e.g., surveys and questionnaires in the format that will be presented to participants, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview
    questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)

1. Demographic Questionnaire: This measure developed by the investigators simply present questions pertaining to age, major, gender, family socioeconomic background, and race/cultural identity. There are also two open-ended reflection questions about poverty.
2. Attributions of Poverty Scale (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2001): This 36-item scale measures attributions and beliefs about poverty and presents with 3 factors; individualistic, structuralistic, and fatalistic.

3. Global Belief in a Just World (Lipkus, 1991): This 14 item scale measures degree of agreement with 14 items/statements relating to perceptions of just world. The scale has two components, 7 item personal beliefs and 7 item belief about others scale.

4. Attitudes toward Poverty (Yun & Weaver, 2010): This 21 item measures degree of agreement with statements about poverty and persons who are living in poverty.

d. Data analysis: Explain how the data will be analyzed.
All data will be entered and analyzed in an aggregate manner. Multiple regression will be used to assess the relationship across variables. While comparisons will be made across majors, undergraduate-graduate, and demographic data the data will not be collected nor analyzed in a manner that would allow for the identification of individual participants.

14. RISKS & DISCOMFORTS: List and describe all of the risks that participants might encounter in this research. *If you are using deception in this study, please justify the use of deception and be sure to attach a copy of the debriefing form you plan to use in Appendix D.* (Examples of possible risks are in section #6D on page 1.)
There are no foreseeable risks to participants.

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15. **PRECAUTIONS.** Identify and describe all precautions you have taken to eliminate or reduce risks as listed in #14. If the participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, please describe additional safeguards that you will use to assure the ethical treatment of these individuals. ***Provide a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D.***

If using the Internet to collect data, what confidentiality or security precautions are in place to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during both the collection and transfer of data.
(These are likely listed on the server's website.)

16. **BENEFITS.**
   a. **List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.**
      (Do not include "compensation" listed in #12e.)   Check here if there are no direct benefits to participants. ☐
      There may be no direct benefit to participants.

   b. **List all realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.**
   This study potentially can contribute to a greater understanding of attitudes toward persons living in poverty. This can include understanding the variables that contribute to these attitudes and the status of these attitudes and attributions among college students (undergraduates and graduates). In addition, the study may expand our understanding of these attitudes among pre-service professionals in counseling and education, thus potentially contributing to pedagogical and practice training.

17. PROTECTION OF DATA.

    a.   Will data be collected as anonymous?   ☑ Yes   ☐ No *If "YES", skip to part "g".*
          ("Anonymous" means that you will <u>not</u> collect any identifiable data.)

    b.   Will data be collected as confidential?   ☐ Yes   ☑ No
          ("Confidential" means that you <u>will</u> collect and protect identifiable data.)

    c.   If data are collected as confidential, will the participants' data be coded or linked to identifying information?
          ☐ Yes (If so, describe how linked.)   No ☑

    d.   Justify your need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.

    e.   Where will code lists be stored? (Building, room number?)

    f.   Will data collected as "confidential" be recorded and analyzed as "anonymous"?   ☑ Yes   ☐ No
          (If you will maintain identifiable data, protections should have been described in #15.)

    g.   Describe how and where the data will be stored (e.g., hard copy, audio cassette, electronic data, etc.), and how the location where data is stored will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security. If applicable, state specifically where any IRB-approved and participant-signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.

Data will be stored as hard copy and as electronic data on the hard drive of a password-protected computer in 2084 Haley Center.. All data will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the evaluator's office (2084 Haley Center).

    h.   Who will have access to participants' data?
          (The faculty advisor should have full access and be able to produce the data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.)

All three of the researchers on this study will have access to the data, however, none of the data allows for identification of participants or individual's responses

    i.   When is the latest date that <u>confidential</u> data will be retained? (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained. ☑)

    j.   How will the <u>confidential</u> data be destroyed? *(NOTE: Data recorded and analyzed as "anonymous" may be retained indefinitely.)*

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PROTOCOL REVIEW CHECKLIST

All protocols must include the following items:

1. ☑ Research Protocol Review Form (All signatures included and all sections completed)

FROM THIS SECTION ON, FOR FULL BOARD REVIEW,
PLEASE NUMBER YOUR APPENDICES CONSEQUETIVELY FROM THIS PAGE ON, BEGINNING WITH PAGE 11.

(Examples of appended documents are found on the OHSR website: http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm)

2. ☐ **Consent Form or Information Letter** and any Releases (audio, video or photo) that the participant will sign.

3. ☐ **Appendix A**, "Reference List"

4. ☐ **Appendix B** if e-mails, flyers, advertisements, generalized announcements or scripts, etc., are used to recruit participants.

5. ☑ **Appendix C** if data collection sheets, surveys, tests, other recording instruments, interview scripts, etc. will be used for data collection. Be sure to attach them in the order in which they are listed in # 13c.

6. ☐ **Appendix D** if you will be using a debriefing form or include emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists (A referral list may be attached to the consent document).

7. ☐ **Appendix E** if research is being conducted at sites other than Auburn University or in cooperation with other entities. A **permission letter** from the site / program director must be included indicating their cooperation or involvement in the project. NOTE: If the proposed research is a multi-site project, involving investigators or participants at other academic institutions, hospitals or private research organizations, a letter of **IRB approval** from each entity is required prior to initiating the project.

8. ☐ **Appendix F** - Written evidence of acceptance by the host country if research is conducted outside the United States.

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation,
Counseling/School Psychology

**(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL
STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)**

INFORMATION LETTER
for a Research Study entitled
Attitudes and Attributions of Poverty

You are invited to participate in a research study to examine attitudes and beliefs about poverty. The study is being conducted by Dr. Jamie Carney in the Auburn University Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a graduate or undergraduate student and are age 19 or older.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a series of surveys and demographic measure. Your total time commitment will be approximately 20 minutes. There are no risks associated with participation in this study.

Your participation in this study is totally voluntary. If you choose to participate you will be asked to complete the measures provided in the survey packet. After completing the measures you are asked to return them in the provided envelope. If you choose not to participate simply return the uncompleted survey measures in the provided envelope. Once survey packets have been returned you will be unable to withdraw from the study because survey results are not individually identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, and the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling.

If you have questions about this study, *please ask them now* or contact Dr. Jamie Carney at 334-844-2885 or at carnejs@auburn.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at psrsjec@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO. THIS LETTER IS YOURS TO KEEP.

_____   March 29, 2011
Investigator's signature   Date

Jamie Carney
Print Name