

**Attributes, Attitudes, and Perceived Self-Efficacy Levels of School Counselors Toward  
Poverty**

by

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## Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between school counselors' attitudes, attributes, and self-efficacy levels while working with individuals living in poverty. The study used quantitative measures and qualitative questions to examine school counselors' attitudes and attributes toward working with individuals in poverty and used regression analyses to assess the relationship between school counselors' self-efficacy levels and attitude and attributes toward individuals living in poverty. Active school counselors were recruited for participation in this study. Results of the study indicated that school counselors held individualistic attitudes toward individuals living in poverty and ascribed the cause of poverty to fatalistic attributions. Additionally, counselors' attitudes were found to be indicative of their self-efficacy levels.

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the four year graduation rate for high school students in the United States ranged from 88 % in Iowa to 62 % in Nevada (United States Department of Education, 2012). Although graduation rates have increased in recent years, many students continue to struggle to meet academic standards (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010; Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). One group of students disproportionately at risk of academic failure is students living in poverty (Borman & Rachuba, 2001). In fact, studies have shown that students living in poverty are ten times more likely to drop out of school than students from higher income families (Hopson & Lee, 2011). Moreover, students who participate in free or reduced lunch programs are more likely to perform poorly in reading and math, receive lower scores on standardized tests, and have a lower overall GPA (Hopson & Lee, 2011). Children living in poverty report higher levels of anxiety and depression, greater incidence of behavioral challenges and lower levels of positive engagement in school (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Black & Krishnakumar, 1998; Caughy, O'Campo, & Muntaner, 2003; Samaan, 2000).

Currently, children represent 24 % of the population and comprise 34 % of all people living in poverty (Addy, Engslhardt, & Skinner, 2013). Forty-five percent of all children under the age of 18 years live in low-income families and approximately 1 in 5 children live in poor families. Moreover, the percentage of children living in low-income families has been increasing; from 40 % in 2006 to 45 % in 2011 (Addy, Engslhardt, & Skinner, 2013). In the United States, statistics suggest that at some point in their lives, “most Americans will have experienced at least minimum situational poverty or, for a lower but significant number, chronic poverty spanning years or generations” (Sturm, 2008, p. 1). These statistics highlight the need

for more understanding and awareness about the influences and factors contributing to the success of individuals living in poverty. By developing a greater understanding and awareness, interventions can be better tailored to help this population.

Although studies have shown that students living in poverty consistently underperform in school and struggle to adjust emotionally, it has been found that the characteristics of the school environment can play a critical role in learning and healthy development of these students (Hopson & Lee, 2011). Although these findings have positive connotations, schools in economically disadvantaged communities continue to struggle to provide interventions and support systems to foster this development (Cappella, Frazier, Atkins, Schoenwald, & Glisson, 2008). In fact, in public schools of low income communities, school facilities and materials are often inadequate. School inadequacies might include deficiencies in space (e.g., overcrowding), environmental quality (e.g., acoustics, electricity, heating), and educational material (e.g., books, supplies) (Cappella et al., 2008; Evans, 2004). Additionally, schools that serve students living in poverty may introduce additional risk factors to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds by failing to provide a supportive school environment, institutionalizing low academic expectations or by providing inadequate educational resources (Borman & Rachuba, 2001). Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are also unlikely to experience consistently high-quality instruction through their elementary school years and are likely to attend schools with high teacher and student turnover which contributes to the experience of educational instability and discontinuity over time (Cappella et al., 2008). Although numerous policies have been implemented to address educational inequalities (e.g., No Child Left Behind), educational injustices still remain in many school systems (Griffin & Steen, 2011).



In order to provide educational access and opportunities to all students, school counselors and other important school stakeholders need to use their unique educational backgrounds and strategic positions within their schools to make meaningful changes for students (Griffin & Steen, 2011). According to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) (2012), “School counselors have the opportunity to be leaders in making education equitable for all students” (p. 93). To achieve this feat and to address the needs of students while working to meet new educational standards, school counseling professionals are working to plan and implement school counseling programs that integrate the Core Curriculum of National Standards (Lapan, Whitcomb, & Aleman, 2012). These standards are aimed at increasing students’ success in academic, personal/social, and career development areas. School counselors engage in direct and indirect student services to help students excel in these three development areas (ASCA, 2012). Implementation of these programs does not signify the end of school counselors’ responsibilities, there is a continued need for school counselors to collaborate with critical stakeholders to reduce barriers to academic success for low-income students (Griffin & Steen, 2011). Challenges school counselors experience when working with students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds include achievement gaps, school climate issues impacting students, resource deficits, cultural gaps between students and families living in poverty and the school, and school personnel’s decision to hold students and parents accountable for lack of adjustment or achievement (Hutchison, 2011).

As a result of a minute amount of literature addressing the issues of school counselors working in schools with low-income students and their families (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007), more research is needed to understand how students’ poverty level impacts the services being provided to them by school counselors. Past research has suggested that many factors

impact the ability of counselors to provide services to people living in poverty, including counselors' belief in a just world for self or for others, political ideology and their family of origin's socioeconomic status (Parikh, Ceballas, & Post, 2013; Parikh, Post, & Flowers, 2011; Sturm, 2008). When working with people living in poverty, a counselor may hold a negative bias toward this population, consequently impacting the counselor's ability to provide objective services to this population (Crumley, 2013). Counselors may also make false assumptions about clients living in poverty when they infer the causes of the clients' problems (Sturm, 2008). Although prior research studies have been conducted to examine the attributions people make toward individuals living in poverty, few studies have examined Americans' attitudes toward individuals living in poverty (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). Because prior research has shown that attitudes are related to behavior (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001), it is important to understand how an individual's attitudes and attributes are impacting the services they are providing to clients living in poverty.

According to Bodenhorn and Skaggs (2005), self-efficacy is a mediating function of behavior and it influences how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act. Albert Bandura (1977) asserted that efficacy expectations determine how long individuals will persist when faced with aversive experiences and how much effort people will expend. Understanding how school counselors' self-efficacy levels are impacted when facing daily obstacles is important for understanding how services are provided to students. According to Larson and Daniels (1998), counselor self-efficacy beliefs are the main factor contributing to effective counseling action. School counselors who are actively engaged in appropriate counseling behaviors can have a positive correlation on students' grades and behavior (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Brigman & Compbell, 2003; Sink & Stroh, 2003). School counselor self-efficacy may be an important

variable in “understanding and improving services and counselor performance” (Sutton & Fall, 1995, p. 335). In 1995, Sutton and Fall asserted that counselor self-efficacy can be a powerful tool in helping school counselors to understand their influence over other people and systems, as well as a powerful tool for understanding themselves. Counselors’ self-efficacy influences their behaviors and decisions to persist in challenging circumstances; and therefore, is an essential component in understanding school counselors’ work with students.

### **Purpose of the Study**

A national goal of the United States is to narrow the achievement gap between lower income and middle class students (Berliner, 2009). Despite this goal, in schools where 25 percent of the schools’ students are poor, the achievement gap continues to prevail (Berliner, 2009). Moreover, students living in poverty have been found to report higher rates of depression, anxiety, and antisocial behaviors (Samaan, 2000). Within these school systems, school counselors are delegated the task of working to increase the academic achievement of all students; however, limited research has been conducted examining school counselors’ attitudes, attributes, and self-efficacy levels when working with students living in poverty and areas of needed improvements when working.

The purpose of this study was to examine attributes, attitudes, and perceived self-efficacy levels of school counselors toward working with individuals living in poverty. The primary goal of the study was to examine how the variables, school counselors’ attitudes toward individuals living in poverty, attributions toward poverty, and school counselor perceived self-efficacy level, impacted school counselors working with this population. Additionally, the study investigated how school counselors’ self-efficacy levels related to the attitudes and attributes of school

counselors working with individuals living in poverty or in lower socioeconomic conditions. Collection of this information was used for a global investigation of school counselors' attitudes toward persons living in poverty.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The academic achievement gap of students living in poverty has been well documented against the achievement levels of middle and upper socioeconomic students (Bemak & Chung, 2005). School counselors are delegated the task of providing academic, career, and personal/social services to these students to enhance their achievement. However, the amount of research on school counselor attitudes and attributes toward working with students in poverty is limited. Understanding how school counselors' attitudes and attributes impact the services they provide to students living in poverty is essential due to the high percentage of students living in poverty. Approximately 21.8 % of children under age 18 have been found to be living at or below the poverty level (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Furthermore, since school counselors' self-efficacy level dictates their motivation to provide comprehensive services, it is important to understand how their self-efficacy is impacted by working with individuals living in poverty.

### **Significance of the Study**

Understanding the factors that hinder services provided to students is important for a variety of reasons. First, understanding these factors assists in designing training and professional development activities for professional school counselors. Although training and professional development opportunities aimed at working with individuals living in poverty are

currently available, understanding school counselors attributes, attitudes, and perceived self-efficacy levels will assist in designing and targeting these programs. Additionally, knowledge obtained from this study can assist in training new school counselors by increasing awareness and knowledge about attitudes towards individuals living in poverty among emerging professionals. New school counselors should work to provide culturally competent counseling to promote student success for all students (ASCA, 2009). Furthermore, research obtained from this study will contribute to ongoing research on attitudes toward individuals living in poverty. Poverty is a global phenomenon and more information is needed about how people's attitudes impact individuals in poverty. Lastly, the study will provide a basic knowledge about the attitudes, attributes, and perceived self-efficacy levels of school counselors. Research obtained from this study may provide some context for examining variables that contribute to attitudes about persons living in poverty; specifically considering how individuals' beliefs about social justice and equality contribute to these attitudes. Knowledge of this information can contribute to the body of research on the culture of poverty.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the nature of the attitudes and attributes toward poverty held by school counselors?
2. What is the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attitudes toward low SES among school counselors?
3. What is the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attributions toward low SES among school counselors?

4. What are challenges experienced by school counselors working with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?
5. What recommendations do school counselors have for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?

### **Definition of Terms**

*Professional School Counselor:* Professional school counselors are individuals with a minimum of a Master's degree in school counseling that work with students to address students' academic, personal/social and career development needs (ASCA, 2012).

*Comprehensive School Counseling Program:* A comprehensive school counseling program focuses on student outcomes, teaching student competencies, and is delivered with identified professional competencies (ASCA, 2008). A comprehensive school counseling program consists of a program's foundation, management, delivery and accountability (ASCA, 2012).

*Counselor self-efficacy:* A counselor's beliefs about their ability to effectively counsel a client in the near future and their beliefs about their ability to perform behaviors to achieve a goal (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Crook, 2010; Larson & Daniels, 1998).

*Poverty:* Refers to the percentage of students participating in the school's free or reduced lunch program. Students qualifying for this program have families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level (Ralston, Newman, Clauson, Guthrie, & Buzby, 2008).

*Low-income:* Following school lunch guidelines, low-income families refer to families with income levels below 185 % of the poverty line for their household size (Crosnoe, 2009).

*Attitudes:* Degree to which the counselor views the client in a positive or negative light (Sturm, 2008).

*Attributes:* The extent to which the counselor believes the client is responsible for her problem and for controlling her solution (Sturm, 2008).

## **CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

In 2012, 46.5 million people in the United States were found to be living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Poverty has been described as an economic state that does not allow for families and children to acquire their basic needs, such as adequate food, clothing, and housing (Wood, 2003). In this chapter a literature review about the effects of poverty on children and information on how education and poverty are related are discussed. Additionally, in this chapter, information about how school counselors are impacted by working with students living in poverty are presented. Specifically, information about school counselors' attitudes, attributes, and self-efficacy toward individuals living in poverty were discussed.

### **Children in Poverty**

In the United States, 45 % (32.4 million) of children live in low-income families and 22 % (16.1 million) of children live in poor families (Addy, Engslhardt, & Skinner, 2013). Children are considered to be the poorest age group in the United States (Children's Defense Fund, 2012). Although no significant change in poverty level was found by the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau, historically, childhood poverty is increasing. From 2000 to 2008, the percentage of children living in poverty increased by 21 % (Wight, Chau, & Aratani, 2010). Additionally, the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce found that the number and percentage of children living in poverty increased in 27 states from 2009 to 2010 (Macartney, 2011). It is estimated that childhood poverty costs the United States about \$500 billion per year (Children's Defense Fund, 2012). Given the high percentage of children living in poverty, it is important to understand how poverty impacts children.



Many factors have been associated with children who live in low-income and poor families; these include race/ethnicity, child age, and parent education levels (Addy, Engelhardt, & Skinner, 2013; Children's Defense Fund, 2012; KewalRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007). First, a disproportionately high number of children living in low-income and poverty families come from minority groups (Addy, Engelhardt, & Skinner, 2013; KewalRamani, A., Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007; Macartney, 2011). In the United States, 65 % of Black children, 65 % of Hispanic children, 63 % of American Indian Children, and 32 % of Asian children live in low-income families compared to 31 % of white children (Addy, Engelhardt, & Skinner, 2013). This trend of high representation of minority groups continues to be prevalent in poverty stricken families. Thirty-nine percent of Black children, 34 % of Hispanic children, 36 % of American Indian children, and 13 % of Asian children have been found to live in poverty stricken families compared to 13 % of white children (Addy, Engelhardt, & Skinner, 2013). Moreover, younger children tend to have a higher rate of living in poverty when compared to older children or adults (Children's Defense Fund, 2012; DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2010). It has been found that among children under the age of five, 25.9 % are poor compared to 20.5 % of children over the age of 5 (Children's Defense Fund, 2012). Lastly, parents' education levels have been associated with high levels of childhood poverty (Addy, Engelhardt, & Skinner, 2013; KewalRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007). Eighty-six percent of children who live with parents who have less than a high school degree are likely to live in low-income or poor families compared to 31 % of children who have at least one parent who has some college or more education (Addy, Engelhardt, & Skinner, 2013).

The effects of living in poverty can have extreme implications on child development and has been found to influence aspects of children's lives that are recognized as essential to normal

development (Ozkan, Purutcuoglu, & Hablemitoglu, 2010). The effects of poverty for children today are qualitatively different and worse than for previous generations of children due to the accumulation of multiple risk factors in poor families (Ozkan, Purutcuoglu, & Hablemitoglu, 2010). Children living in poverty are more likely to have poor living conditions, poor health, and behavioral and cognitive difficulties (Children's Defense Fund, 2012; Macartney, 2011).

Children living in poverty are particularly vulnerable because of the environment in which they live (Wood, 2003). Low income can lead families to reside in extremely poor neighborhoods "characterized by social disorganization (crime, many unemployed adults, neighbors not monitoring the behavior of adolescents) and few resources for child development (playgrounds, childcare, health care facilities, parks, after-school programs)" (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997, p.66). The compounding economic, social, and health factors that converge in these neighborhoods result in more severe, continuous poverty and deprivation that impacts the intellectual, emotional, and physical development of children (Wood, 2003). Moreover, it has been found that living in a neighborhood with high poverty rates is associated with a loss of educational attainment that is equivalent to a full year of school among Black children (Children's Defense Fund, 2012).

Poverty has also been shown to have negative influences on childhood health (Aber, Bennett, Conley, & Li, 1997). Studies have shown that children born into poverty are more likely to have been born with a low birth weight and are more likely to die within the first month after birth than children from higher income families (Zorn & Noga, 2004). Moreover, poor children have been found to exhibit higher morbidity rates as a result of the lack of early interventions and increased risk of accidents and illness (Aber, Bennett, Conley, & Li, 1997). According to the National Health Interview Survey conducted in 2010, children that live in poor

families are 5 times more likely to be in fair or poor health than more advantaged children (Bloom, Cohen, & Freeman, 2011). The effects of poverty can also be seen in childhood nutrition. In 2010, one in nine children were reported to be living in households struggling to provide essential nutrients to ensure their children did not go to sleep or school hungry (Children's Defense Fund, 2012). It was also found in 2010 that 7.95 million children in America did not have health insurance (Children's Defense Fund, 2012).

Cognitive and behavioral difficulties have also been linked to the influences of poverty. Children living below the poverty level are 1.3 times more likely to experience learning disabilities and developmental delays than children living in more advantaged families (Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, 1997). According to the National Center on Family Homelessness (2011), children living in extreme poverty and experiencing homelessness are four times more likely to show developmental delays and have twice the rate of learning disabilities. McLeod and Shanahan (1993) found that as the length of time spent in poverty increase, so did children's feelings of unhappiness, anxiety, and dependence. Moreover, adolescents who come from low-socioeconomic families are more likely to engage in deviant behaviors such as teenage pregnancy and school failure (Harding, 2003), in addition to substance abuse (Wadsworth, Raviv, Reinhard, Wolff, Santiago, & Einhorn, 2008).

### **Education and Poverty**

Each school year, 1.3 million children fail to graduate from high school in the United States (Henry, Cavanagh, & Oetting, 2011). Every eight seconds, during the academic school year, a student drops out of high school (Children's Defense Fund, 2012). Due to the high rate of student dropout, it is essential to understand the factors that are contributing to student

dropout. According to Henry, Cavanagh, and Oetting (2011), “one of the most salient predictors of high school dropout is socio-economic status” (p. 1164). Research shows that 22 % of children who have lived in poverty do not graduate from high school, compared to 6 % of those who have not experienced poverty (Poverty Facts and Figures, 2011). Children living in poverty have been shown to have deficits in cognitive and academic abilities, including poor verbal skills, low IQ, grade repetition, and early school dropout (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997).

Some of the factors contributing to academic failure by students living in poverty may be amplified by the child’s school environment. Children living in poverty disproportionately tend to be educated in schools with inadequate resources and poorly skilled teachers (Murnane, 2007). Low income schools are more likely to have leaky roofs, inadequate plumbing and heating, lighting and ventilation problems, and acoustical deficiencies, in addition to overcrowding (Evans, 2004; National Center for Education Statistics, 2000). Moreover, students in low income schools are more likely not to have access to adequate educational materials (e.g., books and supplies) (Cappella, Frazier, Atkins, Schoenwald, & Glisson, 2008; Evans, 2004). Concerns also center on teacher training and teacher detainment. Ingersoll (1999) found that in low income schools, 27 % of high school math teachers received a degree in mathematics in college compared to 43 % of high school math teachers in more affluent schools. Additionally, high-poverty schools have higher rates of teacher turnover than more affluent schools (Ingersoll, 2001), which has been correlated with negative consequences on student learning (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). As a result of attending schools with limited resources and under prepared teachers, economically disadvantaged children often perform poorly on international achievement tests when compared to more advantaged children (Morgan, 2012).

Students in low income schools may also be at risk for school failure due to lack of a supportive school environment and low expectations (Borman & Rachuba, 2001). In 2011, a study by Ready and Wright found that teachers working in lower-socioeconomic contexts underestimate their students' abilities more than teachers working in differing environments. The presence of bias by teachers, who make decisions about grade retention, ability grouping, curricula, and assignment to specialized programs, can increase educational inequality for students living in poverty (Ready & Wright, 2011). Additionally, a study by Sorhagen in 2013 found that first grade teachers' inaccurate expectations of students affected the students' math, reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, and verbal reasoning standardized test scores at age 15. This study suggests how important teacher expectations can be in impacting students' achievement long term. Teacher expectations can have a profound impact on each student's academic achievement and school climate.

Despite the academic challenge of students living in poverty, research has found that a positive school climate can reduce the impact of poverty on student achievement (Hopson & Lee, 2011). Research has shown that the school climate can have profound effects on students' mental and physical health (Thapa, Cohon, Guffy, & Higgins-D'Alessando, 2013). In 2006, Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy found in a study of 96 high schools that those who promote academic optimism (collective efficacy, academic emphasis, and faculty trust) among students greatly impacted student achievement. Similarly, in 2009, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention promoted the importance of creating a school climate in which students feel connected because creating a feeling of connectedness impacts educational outcomes such as school attendance, student retention, and students' grades and test scores.

Students' perceptions of the school climate is defined by their relationships with others at the school, such that student and school personnel feel supported and cared for as individuals (Hopson & Lee, 2011). When a positive school climate is perceived, it can have positive implications on student behavioral and emotional problems (Hopson & Lee, 2011; Kuperminc, Leadheather, & Blatt, 2001; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002). Moreover, "safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school climates tend to foster a greater attachment to school and provide the optimal foundation for social, emotional, and academic learning for middle school and high school students" (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013, p.7). School personnel need to work to foster such an environment within their schools.

### **School Counseling**

School counselors can play an important role in the school climate by assessing their school's unique environment and by providing supportive services to promote hope, optimism, and academic achievement among students (Nassar-McMillan, Karvonen, Perez, & Abrams, 2009). According to the American School Counselors Association (2009), professional school counselors work to address "students' academic, personal/social and career development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success" (Paragraph 1). According to Carrell and Carrell (2006), school counseling programs should work to become an essential component of the school-wide curriculum by providing comprehensive and developmental programs to all students. By emerging as a fundamental component, school counselors can ensure all students are receiving services that promote their personal/social, academic, and career development.

When comprehensive school counseling programs are fully implemented, they can have a profound effect on students and their academic success. In 1997, Lapen, Gysbers, and Sun conducted a study assessing the relationship between statewide implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs and the experiences of high school students. They found that when schools have a fully integrated comprehensive guidance program, students are more likely to report (a) earning higher grades, (b) being better prepared for the future by educational opportunities, (c) better access to career and college information, and (d) a more positive school environment. Positive correlations were also found in a study by Carey, Harrington, and Stevenson (2012) who were assessing the characteristics of school counseling programs that are related to positive outcomes for students. This study found school counseling programs consistent with the ASCA National Model features accounted for:

“a significant amount of variability in a number of student outcomes including percentage of students achieving proficiency in mathematics, percentage of students achieving proficiency in reading, average ACT score, percentage rate of students taking the ACT, graduation rate for students enrolled in Utah Perkins Program of Study, and number of students participating in non-traditional pathways in Perkins Program of Study” (p. 95).

It has also been found that school counseling programs featuring content consistent with the ASCA National Model impacted a number of student outcomes including suspension rates, discipline rates, attendance rates, math proficiency, and reading proficiency (Carey, Harrington, Martin, & Hoffman, 2012).

According to the American Counseling Association (ACA), an effective school counseling program is important to the school climate and essential for improving student achievement (ACA, 2007). Today, professional school counselors work to maintain the ethical

and professional standards established by ASCA and other applicable professional counseling associations (ASCA, 2009). They also work to promote the development of school counseling programs with their school systems based on the foundation, delivery, management, and accountability procedures established by the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2009).

Additionally, professional school counselors' work within comprehensive school counseling programs to provide school-wide strategies focused on student achievement (Lapan, Whitcomb, & Aleman, 2012).

Despite many school counselors' efforts to implement comprehensive school counseling programs, large implementation gaps exist between differing schools systems (Lapan, 2012). When students are not engaged in fully implemented school counseling programs, they may miss academic, personal/social, and career activities provided by school counselors that could positively impact them. School counselors are often assigned non-counseling duties including administrative tasks, discipline issues, scheduling, testing, lunch duty, attendance monitoring, and substitute teaching (Johnson, Rocking, & Ott, 2010). When school counselors are delegated non-counseling tasks within their work environment, the counseling services that could be provided to students suffer (Astramovich & Holden, 2002). In addition, school counselors often struggle finding the time necessary to effectively implement direct counseling and guidance services to students when assigned non-counseling duties (Astramovich & Holden, 2002). Nevertheless, when school counselors are engaged in appropriate duties, students' grades and behavior have positive correlations (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Brigman & Compbell, 2003; Sink & Stroh, 2003). Students are precluded from counseling services that can help promote their academic, personal and career development when school counselors are engaged in non-



counseling duties; therefore, it is essential that non-counseling duties of school counselors are limited.

Research has shown that comprehensive school counseling services may be most beneficial for students living in poverty (Lapan, 2012). This could be due to the myriad of obstacles that this population is facing. Despite the numerous obstacles, many school counselors are pushing for equal access to education for all students. In 2012, the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center found that 9 out of 10 counselors believe a school's mission should be equal access to high-quality education for all students; however, only 56 % of all counselors and 49 % of counselors in high poverty schools see this occurring within their schools.

David Berliner (2009) asserted that because America's schools are highly segregated by income, race, and ethnicity, in disadvantaged communities, poverty related problems occur simultaneously and more frequently. Therefore, these schools often face significantly greater challenges than schools serving wealthier children and have limited resources to meet these challenges (Berliner, 2009). Compounding problems and limited resources result in additional challenges to success for students living in poverty despite school counselors' work to help students achieve within their academic, career and personal/social endeavors (ASCA, 2012). In 2007, Amatea and West-Olatunji found that children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to have a high school failure rate, developmental difficulties and delays, lower standardized test scores and graduation rates, and higher rates of school tardiness, absenteeism, and school dropout than wealthier children. Given the challenges facing students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, it is important to investigate how poverty affects services provided by school counselors and the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs.

In a study in 2012, researchers looked at the relationship between school support services and their relationship to school effectiveness (Gibbs, 2012). Specifically, one of the variables in the study examined if providing support services to students relates to school effectiveness in schools with more than 50 % free or reduced lunch rates. Results of the study found that support services, specifically school counselors, do have a positive relationship with high school graduation rates, except in schools with 50 % or more free and reduced-priced lunch rates (Gibbs, 2012). Moreover, a study in 2012 looked at school counselors' commitment to ensuring that a student's family background and circumstances does not affect their chances for success. Results of the study found that 88 % of school counselors reported that making sure students from low-income, disadvantaged and immigrant backgrounds get the extra attention and support they need to be as successful as their peers is extremely important to them (College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, 2012). In fact, a study conducted in 2011 by Brain Hutchison found that school counselors rated students they perceive as poor as more attractive counseling participants.

Because school counselors play a unique role within the school, adapting their counseling programs to meet the needs of specific populations (Paolini, 2012), it is important to understand how school counselors' biases influence their decisions. Counselors who fail to examine their own biases may reduce the quality of mental health care they can provide to specific populations (Myers & Gill, 2004). School counselors should work to provide counseling and guidance services to all students, but they may be challenged when working with students who are culturally different (Whiteledge, 1994). When working with culturally different clients, school counselors should treat each client as unique and treat them without bias; should be aware of their own cultural biases and assumptions; should work with clients using their own language;

and should be a student advocate (Whiteledge, 1994). Because counselors often enter the helping profession to help others, they may find it hard to believe they are committing microaggressions and may be unhelpful or even contributing to the oppression of other groups (Sue & Sue, 2013). Counselors that are unaware of their own biases toward other populations may not be able to work with differing populations effectively (Whiteledge, 1994). As such, counselors need to strive to assess their biases toward students living in poverty and work toward becoming a multicultural counselor.

### **Attitudes and Attributes**

One of the most fundamental assumptions about attitude is the belief that attitudes in some way guide, influence, direct, shape or predict a person's behavior (Kraus, 1995). In fact, in 1995, Kraus conducted a meta-analysis of 88 attitude-behavior studies and found that attitudes do significantly predict future behavior. Moreover, research has found that attitudes are more highly correlated with future behavior when they are easy to recall and stable over time (Glasman & Albarracin, 2006). Although attitudes have been found to affect behavior, little research has been conducted on attitudes that Americans hold toward poor individuals (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). This type of research is needed because it helps explain individuals' actions toward individuals living in poverty. The limited research that has been conducted shows negative attitudes towards individuals living in poverty. In 2001, a study by Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, and Tagler found that attitudes toward poor individuals were significantly more negative than attitudes toward middle class individuals and that poor individuals were most likely to be blamed for their poverty status. Moreover, a study by Auwarter and Aruguete (2008) found that counselors perceive students from low socioeconomic

backgrounds as having less promising futures and lower math abilities. These studies illustrate some of the negative attitudes held about individuals living in poverty and help to explain the impact of poverty on individuals.

Despite the lack of research on attitudes toward individuals living in poverty, previous research has focused on the attributions that people make about why individuals are poor (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Davids & Gouws, 2013; Merolla, Hunt, & Serpe, 2011). Attributions are ways that people explain why individuals are poor (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). People often look for ways of explaining behaviors by attributing motives to those who perform them in order to make the world predictable, understandable, and safer (Salzman, 1995). People typically explain the cause of poverty through individualistic and structural perspectives (Davidson, 2009). According to Davidson (2009), individualistic explanations find fault to be the responsibility of the poor person; whereas, structural explanations find fault of poverty to be caused by society and not the poor person. Additionally, Crumley (2013) found that more individualistic attributions are used to explain the prevalence of poverty within the United States and that individuals hold personally deficient attitudes towards individuals living in poverty. This belief focused on the idea that individuals are responsible for their own environment.

When making attributions about differing populations, it is important to consider all points of view. Because failure to examine all perspectives can lead to attributional bias, this is especially important for counselors to consider. Bias in the attributional process can impact the counseling relationship by contributing to the oppressive experiences of the culturally diverse client (Sue & Sue, 2013). Sources of attributional bias in cross-cultural interactions have been attributed to residing in perceptual (how the behavior is viewed), self-esteem maintenance (self-

serving bias), and linguistic factors (miscommunication) (Salzman, 1995). When working with a client, it is important to understand how counselors' attitudes and attributes impact their counseling relationships to ensure that clients are receiving effective services. If counselors blame students for their environment, it may negatively impact counselors' behaviors and delivery of services (Crumley, 2013). Counselors need to continually engage in professional development activities to ensure they are staying abreast to topical issues (American Counseling Association, 2005). A study by Toporek and Pope-Davis (2005) found that a counselor's multicultural training may increase a counselor's awareness of structural forces (e.g., race and class oppression) in the lives of clients experiencing poverty versus focusing on individual characteristics. This is important because it allows the counselor to look outside of the client for societal influences.

The American School Counselor Association National Model proclaims school counselors must become advocates for all students within their school (ASCA, 2012). Social justice advocacy has become an increasingly important component of the school counseling profession. According to Ratts, DeKruyf, and Chen-Hayes (2007), social justice advocacy is necessary within schools to right injustices, increase access, and improve educational outcomes for students. This movement of social justice is especially important for students living in poverty (Bemak & Chung, 2005). School counselors have the ability to help students living in poverty by advocating for their rights to highly trained teachers, quality educational materials, and high expectations (Ratts, DeKruyf, & Chen-Hayes, 2007). School counselors advocating for student rights can make a positive change within their school system.

## **Self-Efficacy**

General self-efficacy is defined as judgments of how well a person can maintain a course of action required to deal with a prospective situation (Bandura, 1982). Judgments about self-efficacy influence an individual's choice of activities and environmental setting (Bandura, 1982). People are more likely to avoid activities they believe to be beyond their competence level and engage in activities they believe they are capable of managing (Bandura, 1977). In accordance with the social learning theory, self-efficacy judgments are based on four principal sources of information (Bandura, 1982). These sources of information include performance attainments (past mastery of experience); vicarious experiences of observing performances of others (seeing others perform the task successfully); verbal persuasion and allied types of social influences that one possesses certain capabilities; and physiological states from which people partly judge their capabilities, strengths, and vulnerabilities.

School counselor self-efficacy is defined as a school counselor's perceived ability to carry out school counseling related tasks (Holcomb-McCoy, Gonzalez, & Johnston, 2009). Self-efficacy is a mechanism through which counselors integrate and apply their current cognitive, behavioral, and social skills towards counseling tasks (Larson, 1998). School counselors' self-efficacy levels influence their abilities to motivate students, promote learning, utilize counseling interventions, and collaborate effectively with other stakeholders (Paolini, 2012). Given the influences of counselors' self-efficacy level, it is important to understand what factors impact school counselors' confidence in their ability to provide effective services.

A study by Sutton and Fall (1995) found that self-efficacy was influenced by the school climate in which counselors worked. Results from the research found that counselors' roles, school environment, staff relationships, outcome expectancies, gender, age, and grade level all

impacted school counselors self-efficacy level. In fact, results showed colleague support to be the strongest predictor of efficacy and outcome expectancy. Additionally in 2012, Gunduz found that counselors' self-efficacy beliefs predicted counselors' level of personal accomplishments (28%) and depersonalization (7%) dimension of burnout among counselors. These results show the need to understand how counselors' self-efficacy levels contribute to developing and improving school counseling services (Crook, 2010).

In today's educational system, there is an increased push for accountability among educators. Within this accountability movement, school counselors are being required to document the effectiveness of their work (Barnes, Scofield, Hof, & Vrbka, 2005). A study by Bodenhorn, Wolfe, and Airen (2010) found that school counselors with higher self-efficacy levels were more aware of the student achievement gap data. They also found that counselors who followed a counseling model and had higher levels of self-efficacy were more likely to report narrowing the achievement gap and having students with higher grade point averages (Bodenhorn, Wolfe, & Airen, 2010). Moreover, a study in 2009 examined the impact of school counselor's self-efficacy on using data driven practices within guidance programs (Holcomb-McCoy, Gonzalez, & Johnston, 2009). Results of the study found a positive correlation among school counselor self-efficacy and data usage. Data usage is an important factor in school counseling today because it helps promote accountability among counselors. According to Holcomb-McCoy, Gonzalez, and Johnston (2009), school counselors who use data are influenced by their general beliefs of their ability to cope with difficult demands and their beliefs of their ability to handle difficult demands related to their profession. Although school counselors may be knowledgeable of data usage, their dispositions of self-efficacy could influence their use of data to drive school counseling programs. According to the ASCA

National Model (2012), “School Counselors implement data-driven comprehensive school counseling programs using accountability strategies to monitor student achievement, to continually evaluate and improve their school counseling program and to demonstrate the impact their program is having on students” (p. 99).

These studies show that school counselor self-efficacy may be an important variable in understanding and improving services, as well as counselor performance. Sutton and Fall (1995) asserted that counselors self-efficacy could be a powerful construct in helping school counselors understand their influences over people and systems, as well as to understand themselves. When working with students in poverty, it is important to understand school counselors’ leadership roles and how these can be used to provide comprehensive services to this population.

Research shows that students living in poverty experience extreme obstacles in their development process. These obstacles can negatively impact their access to education (Ametea & West-Olatunji, 2007). School counselors have a unique ability within high poverty schools to expand their leadership roles by “(a) serving as a cultural bridge among students, their families, and school staff; (b) partnering with staff to design more culturally responsive instruction; and (c) developing a more family-centric school environment” (Ametea & West-Olatunji, 2007, para. 1). By providing these services, school counselors are working to establish a productive working environment in which poor students can be successful. Additionally, a literature review by Griffin and Steen (2011) identified ten action strategies for school counselors to become social change agents within their school to mitigate barriers to academic success for low income students. These strategies included items like staying politically engaged, educating and empowering parents and families, and maintaining persistency; however, the overall theme of the article was that school counselors need to work in conjunction with other critical stakeholders to



initiate change within their schools for students living in poverty. Keys, Bemak, Carpenter, and King-Sear (1998) echo these recommendations that counselors should collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure students are receiving the services they need by using a collaborative consultation model. The collaborative consultation model is a five stage model that begins with all stakeholders coming together about a common issue, defining a shared vision and goal, developing a strategic plan, putting the plan in action, and then monitoring the plan and make changes if necessary (Keys, Bemak, Carpenter, & King-Sear, 1998). Regardless of the model used, school counselors need to continually push for equitable access to education for all students.

### **Conclusion**

Childhood poverty has been linked to negative impacts on child development and educational attainment (Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, 1997; Children's Defense Fund, 2012; Ozkan, Purutcuoglu, & Hablemitoglu, 2010). Schools serving poor families need to put measures in place to address the needs of this population. School counselors can be a vital component of these measures by providing comprehensive school counseling services. School counselors have the ability to assess the school environment and design programs to meet the needs of differing student populations (ASCA, 2012). School counselors' attitudes, attributes, and self-efficacy may contribute to their implementation of such programs.

### **Chapter III. Research Methodology**

In this study, the attitudes and attributes of school counselors toward working with students living in poverty was examined. Additionally, the self-efficacy levels of school counselors working with students living in poverty was examined. This included how these variables relate to each other, with specific consideration of school counselor self-efficacy as it related to attributions and attitudes towards persons living in poverty. In addition, data about respondents' ages, school setting, years of experience and current working grade level were collected. Lastly, respondents' challenges and recommendations for working with individuals in poverty were assessed. In this chapter a review of the research questions, description of the participants, description the survey instruments, description the data collection procedures, and review the methods for data analysis are provided.

#### **Research Questions**

1. What is the nature of the attitudes and attributes toward poverty held by school counselors?
2. What is the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attitudes toward low SES among school counselors?
3. What is the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attributions toward low SES among school counselors?
4. What are challenges experienced by school counselors working with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?

5. What recommendations do school counselors have for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?

### **Participants**

Participants for this study included professional school counselors who were working in public schools with students in grades K-12 in the southeastern United States. Specifically, surveys were sent to active members of the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) who opted to include their email address in the membership information list. ASCA members who have opted to put their name and contact information on the membership list have consented to disclose their contact information for other ASCA members to contact them about participation in research opportunities, training, educational services and workshops. School counselors who have listed their contact information on the membership list received emails through Qualtrics, an online data collection system, requesting their participation with a study aimed at assessing school counselors' attitudes and attributes towards working with students living in poverty in addition to their perceived self-efficacy level. Contact information was provided in the email for respondents who had questions or concerns about the study. Appendix 1 shows the consent form used in the study.

### **Measures**

For this study, school counselor attitudes and attributes toward working with students living in poverty were assessed, in addition to, school counselor's perceived self-efficacy level. To measure school counselors' attitudes and attributes toward working with students living in poverty, the *Attribution of Poverty Scale* and *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale* were utilized.

Additionally, to measure school counselors' self-efficacy level, the *School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale* was employed. Lastly, participants were given a brief demographic questionnaire.

### *Demographic Measures*

The demographic questionnaire assessed participants' gender, age, and race/ethnicity. Additionally, the questionnaire assessed whether the participant were working as a school counselor, the number of years the participants had worked as a school counselor, what grade levels participants were working with, and the percentage of students that participated in the school's free or reduced lunch program where the respondent was working. Lastly, the demographic questionnaire asked participants two open ended questions about their perceptions of poverty. The two open ended questions used were:

1. What are the challenges you have experienced as a school counselor working with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?
2. What are your recommendations for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?

Demographic questions were presented after completion of the survey questions. Appendix 6 shows the demographic questionnaire.

### *Attribution of Poverty Scale*

The *Attributes for Poverty Scale* contained 45-items designed to assess a broad range of explanations for poverty including individualistic, structural, and fatalistic attributions (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2001). In the current study, beliefs about the attributes of poverty were assessed using a shortened form of the *Attributes for Poverty Scale*. The shortened form

contained a 36-item questionnaire with the highest factor loadings in each of the three categories: individualistic, structuralistic, and fatalistic (Strum, 2008). Using this questionnaire, participants rated their perceptions of the causes of poverty on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 indicating “not at all important as a cause of poverty” and 5 indicating “extremely important as a cause of poverty.” The scale items were designed to assess for a broad range of causes of poverty including individualistic, structuralistic, and fatalistic attributions. The alpha coefficients for the three constructs in this scale were reported as 0.91 (individualistic), 0.91 (structuralistic), and 0.72 (fatalistic). See Appendix 3 for the modified 36-item *Attributions of Poverty Scale*.

#### *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale*

The *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale* was first developed by Atherton and Gemmel (1993) to measure attitudes toward poverty and the poor population. The original *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale* assembled 100 statements that reflected both positive and negative attitudes toward the poor (Atherton & Gemmel, 1993). A short form of this scale was formed in 2010 by Yun and Weaver that consisted of 21 scale items. The shortened form of the *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale* was used in this study. Using this scale, participants rated their agreement with the provided statements on a 5-point Likert scale with SA (1) indicating “Strong Agreement” and SD (5) indicating “Strong Disagreement.” Higher scores on the *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale* indicate more favorable attitudes toward the poor. The alpha coefficient for the total 21 items was 0.87. Three subscales of individualistic, fatalistic, and structuralistic attitudes were used in this measure. The alpha coefficients of the subscales ranged from 0.50 to 0.70. Appendix 4 shows the *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale*.

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

The *School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale* (SCSE) was developed by Nancy Bodenhorn and Gary Skagg (2005) to link personal attributes with school counselor career performance. The SCSE was designed to help track the adoption of professional transition, increase literature about school counseling and career self-efficacy theory, assess the effectiveness of the education process in school counseling programs, and provide insight into the success of practicing school counselors (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). Multiple studies were conducted to develop and revise the SCSE item questions and to test the reliability and validity of the measure.

The SCSE consists of 43 scale items. Using a Likert Scale, respondents rated their confidence performing school counseling tasks. A rating of 1 indicated “not confident” and a rating of 5 indicated “highly confident.” The coefficient alpha for the scale score was found to be 0.95 (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). Subscale of the measure included 5 domains of Personal and Social Development (12 items); Leadership and Assessment (9 items); Career and Academic Development (7 items); Collaboration and Consultation (11 items); and Cultural Acceptance (4 items). Correlations of the subscale ranged from 0.27 to 0.43. Appendix 5 shows the *School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale*.

### **Procedures**

Previously collected data was used for completion of this study. The data was collected as part of a larger research study approved by the Auburn University Institutional Review Board. School counselors were recruited for participation in the study through the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) membership list, which was accessible to current ASCA members. ASCA members who opted to include their contact information in the membership

list agreed upon enrollment to be contacted by other ASCA members about participation in research opportunities, training, educational services and workshops. Emails were sent to ASCA members in the Southeastern United States asking them to participate in a study assessing their attitudes and attributes toward working with students living in poverty and their self-efficacy level. Specifically, states targeted for the study included Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. Participants were informed that participation in the study would take approximately 15 minutes. Additionally, participants were informed that there were no known risks associated with the survey and that their responses would remain confidential. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that if they did not wish to participate in the study, they could delete the email. Within the email, school counselors were provided a link to the survey items. The information sheet emailed to participants instructed them to proceed with the survey only if they gave consent for their responses to be included in the study. The survey email included the information email, demographic measures, *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale Short Form*, *Attributions of Poverty Scale*, and *School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale*. After collection of surveys, all data was analyzed.

After data collection was completed, school counselors' reports of the percentage of students participating in their school's free or reduced lunch were categorized based on a study conducted by the United States Department of Education (Aud, Wilkinson-Flicker, Kristapovich, Rathbun, Wang, & Zhang, 2013). Four categories were identified. These included low poverty, mid-low poverty, mid-high poverty, and high poverty. Low poverty was classified as a school where 25 % or fewer students were eligible for free or reduced lunch; mid-low poverty was classified as where 26 to 50 % of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch; mid-high

poverty was classified as where 51 to 75 % of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch; and high poverty was classified as 76 to 100 % of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

### **Analysis**

Upon completion of data collection, surveys were examined to assess for surveys that need to be excluded; reasons for exclusion included failure to complete the survey or obvious pattern answering. Next, surveys from participants who did not indicate they were currently a school counselor were excluded from the analysis. For the purpose of this study, no active school counselors' surveys were eliminated.

Data collected in this study was used to assess the perceptions of school counselor's attitudes and attributes toward working with students living in poverty. The study also aimed to examine the self-efficacy levels of school counselors working with students living in poverty. Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical analyses system. A correlation analysis was used to assess school counselors' attitudes, attributes and self-efficacy levels toward working with students living in poverty. Additionally, a backwards elimination regression was used to assess the relationship between school counselors' self-efficacy levels and attitudes and attributes toward poverty. Quantitative findings were organized and displayed in charts and graphs.

Additionally, qualitative questions asked during the demographic questionnaire were analyzed using a narrative analysis. Qualitative questions were used to provide a deeper understanding of the experiences, values and beliefs of school counselors (Altum & Baker, 2010). Narrative analysis allows for investigation into the complex work environment and lives



of school counselors which could only be obtained through allowing the respondent to tell their story (Creswell, 2012). A second researcher was recruited to assist in identification of themes within the narrative responses. Themes were identified and agreed upon by both researchers before proceeding with the analysis. Qualitative findings were summarized.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the research study, focusing on participants, measures, procedures, and data analysis. Previously collected data was used for this study. These respondents were obtained through emailed surveys distributed to members of the American School Counselors Association. Surveys distributed consisted of demographic questions and instruments designed to assess the participant's attitudes and attributes toward working with individuals living in poverty. Instruments used consisted of the *Attribution of Poverty Scale*, the *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale Short Form*, and the *School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale*. Procedures for data analysis were also detailed in the chapter.

## **Chapter IV. Results**

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes, attributes, and self-efficacy levels of school counselors working with individuals living in poverty. Previously collected data was used for analyses in this study. This data included information about school counselors from the Southeastern United States who opted to include their contact information in the online ASCA membership list. These respondents were petitioned for participation in the study. This chapter documents the results of the data analyses. Information on the participants' demographics and results of the statistical analysis with descriptive statistics for each scale used will be presented.

### **Participants**

Previously collected data was used for analysis in this study; the data was collected as part of a larger research study approved by the Auburn University Institutional Review Board. For this study, active school counselors' data was separated from the overall sample and used in this analysis.

Four hundred and twenty eight (428) respondents submitted survey packets. Of that number, two hundred and seventy one (271) respondents indicated that they were currently school counselors, one hundred and six (106) respondents indicated that they were not currently school counselors, and sixty one (61) respondents failed to answer the survey question. Of these respondents, the following data analysis was derived from the 271 respondents who indicated being active school counselors.

The number of active school counselor respondents by race/ethnicity included African American (n=36, 13.3%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (n=1, 0.4 %), Asian (n=1, 0.4%),

Hispanic/Latino (n=12, 4.4%), White/Caucasian (n=217, 80.1%), and other (n=4, 1.5%). The number of respondents by gender included female (n=241, 88.9 %), male (n=29, 10.7 %), and unknown (n=1, 0.4 %). The number of respondents by grade level included elementary (K-5) (n=135, 43%), middle (6-8) (n=93, 30%), and high (9-12) (n=84, 27%). Respondents were allowed to select multiple categories when describing the grade levels of their school.

Additionally, by the school socioeconomic category respondents indicated inclusion in low poverty (n=38, 14%), mid-low poverty (n=58, 21.4%), mid-high poverty (n=77, 28.4%), high poverty (n=89, 32.8%), and unknown (n=9, 3.3%) categorized. The average age of respondents was 40.7 years. The average time of service respondents worked was 7.5 years. Descriptive measures of participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants*

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
(N=271)		
Female	241	89
Male	29	11
Unknown	1	<1
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
(N=271)		
White	217	80
Black or African American	36	13
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	<1
Asian	1	<1
Hispanic or Latino	12	4
Other	4	2
<i>School SES Category</i>		
(N=271)		
Low Poverty	38	14
Mid-Low Poverty	58	21
Mid-High Poverty	77	28
High Poverty	89	33
Unknown	9	3
<i>Grade Level *</i>		
(N=271)		
K – 5 <sup>th</sup>	135	43
6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	93	30
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup>	84	27

\* Participants were able to select multiple grade level categories to describe their work setting

### **Assessment of Measure Reliability**

Reliability and internal consistency of measures used in this study were evaluated. The Chronbach Alpha was calculated for all measures and compared against established reliabilities for each scale and subscale. Results showed the reliability estimates for subscale measures ranged from 0.757 to 0.907 with a mean of 0.843. In addition, the overall reliability estimates for measures ranged from 0.702 to 0.962 with a mean of 0.832. Reliability and internal consistency of measures for all scales and subscales are shown in Table 2. These results are comparable to the reliabilities scores from the original measures. The subscale scores for these measures ranged from 0.67 to 0.95 with a mean of 0.803. The overall reliability scores of the original measures ranged from 0.87 to 0.96 with a mean of 0.913.

### **Research Question 1: What is the nature of the attitudes and attributes toward poverty held by school counselors?**

All participants were successful in completing the survey packets. Below is the descriptive statistics for the *Attributions of Poverty Scale*, *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale*, and *School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale*. Descriptive statistics for all scales are shown in Table 2.

The *Attributions of Poverty Scale* used a 5-point Likert scale with 1 indicating “not at all important as a cause of poverty” and 5 indicating “extremely important as a cause of poverty.” A higher self-reported score was indicative of the respondent’s personal attributions toward the causes of poverty in the United States. Results showed that on the *Attributions of Poverty Scale*, active school counselors rated fatalistic causes higher for explaining why individuals live in poverty (M=3.3141, SD=0.662). The mean scores of the other subscales were 3.24

(Individualistic) and 2.99 (Structural). Subscale difference were examined using a Within Subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA),  $F(1.353, 365.401)=13.807, p < 0.05$ ). A significant difference was found between the means Results of the analysis found significant differences between structural and individualistic subscales as well as structural and fatalistic subscales. However, the analysis showed no significant difference between individualistic and fatalistic subscales.

On the *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale*, participants rated their agreement with the provided statements on a 5-point Likert scale. Using this scale, a rating of SA (1) indicated “Strong Agreement” and a rating of SD (5) indicated “Strong Disagreement.” Higher ratings on the *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale* by the respondents indicated a more favorable attitude toward the poor. On the *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale*, active school counselors rated personal deficiencies higher regarding their attitudes toward individuals living in poverty ( $M=4.016, SD=0.595$ ). The mean scores of the other subscales were 3.06 (Stigma) and 2.64 (Structural). Subscale difference were examined using a Within Subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Results of the analysis found significant differences between all subscales of personal deficiency, stigma, and structural domains,  $F(1.299, 350.777)=194.579, p < 0.05$ ).

Lastly, on the *School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale*, active school counselors rated collaboration as the task they felt most confident performing ( $M=4.369, SD=0.600$ ). Overall, the descriptive statistics for the *School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale* indicated that active school counselors rated themselves as “generally confident” ( $M=4.22, SD=0.491$ ) in their confidence to perform tasks and activities related to school counseling. The mean scores of the other subscales were 4.34 (Personal & Social), 4.25 (Cultural Acceptance), 4.15 (Career & Academic), and 3.92 (Leadership & Assessment).

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Scales*

<i>Scale</i>	<i># of items</i>	<i>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></i>	<i>Mean(SD)</i>	<i>F-Test</i>	<i>Post-hoc results</i>
<b>Attitudes Toward Poverty</b>				194.58*	PD > Stigma
<i>Personal Deficiency (PD)</i>	7	.796	4.016 (0.595)		
<i>Stigma</i>	8	.889	3.062(0.944)		
<i>Structural</i>	6	.777	2.641(0.725)		
<b>Attributions of Poverty</b>				13.807*	F > S
<i>Fatalistic (F)</i>	8	.799	3.314 (0.662)		
<i>Individualistic (I)</i>	15	.891	3.246(0.787)		
<i>Structural (S)</i>	13	.907	2.993(0.810)		
<b>School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale</b>					
<i>Personal &amp; Social</i>	12	.898	4.341 (0.497)		
<i>Leadership &amp; Assessment</i>	9	.903	3.921(0.676)		
<i>Career &amp; Academic</i>	7	.867	4.157(0.622)		
<i>Collaboration</i>	11	.843	4.370 (0.480)		
<i>Cultural Acceptance</i>	4	.757	4.257(0.600)		

\*p&lt; .001

**Research Question 2: What is the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attitudes toward low SES among school counselors?**

A backwards elimination regression was performed to assess the best predictor of active school counselors' self-efficacy levels when correlated with school counselors' attitudes toward

individuals living in poverty. Using three subscales, an overall  $R^2$  of 0.042 was obtained. Results of the backwards elimination regression showed a higher correlation using one subscale. The final restricted model contained the *Personal Deficiency Scale* and achieved a  $R^2$  of 0.040 ( $F=11.288$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). The  $R^2$  difference of 0.002 between these models was not statistically significant ( $F = 0.270$ ,  $p >0.05$ ). Therefore, no significant difference was found between the models. The original model containing all three subscales accounted for 4.2 % of the variance of attitudes about poverty ( $R^2 = 0.042$ ). This indicated that there is not a significant relationship between self-efficacy and attitudes about poverty; therefore, the restricted model with one variable is retained. A summary of the regression analysis can be seen in Table 3.



Table 3

*Regression Findings – Attitudes & Self-Efficacy*

Factor	R <sup>2</sup>	S.E	Estimate		
			r	Semi-partial	Beta
<b>Full Model</b>	.042 <sup>a</sup>	.483			
Personal Deficiency			.201	.187	.221
Stigma Attitudes			.084	-.044	-.067
Structural Attitudes			-.070	-.036	-.049
<b>Restricted Model</b>	.040 <sup>c</sup>	.482			
Personal Deficiency			.201	.201	.201

\*p&lt;.05

<sup>a</sup> F(3, 270) = 3.921, p = 0.009<sup>c</sup> F(1, 270) = 11.285, p = 0.001

**Research Question 3: What is the relationship between the level of perceived school counseling self-efficacy and attributions toward low SES among school counselors?**

A backwards elimination regression analysis was performed to assess the relationship between active school counselors' attributes toward individuals living in poverty and their self-efficacy level. Using three subscales, an overall R<sup>2</sup> of 0.011 was found (F = 0.998, p = 0.394). Analysis of the backwards elimination regression shows that removal of contributing variables did not contribute to the overall prediction of school counselors' self-efficacy levels. The attribution scales did not significantly correlate with self-efficacy. No variables could be

removed from the full model to increase the prediction accuracy of the model. The original model containing all three subscale accounted for 1.1 % of the variance of attributes about poverty ( $R^2 = 0.011$ ). This indicated that there is not a significant relationship between self-efficacy and attributes about poverty. A summary of the regression analysis can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4

*Regression Findings – Attributes & Self-Efficacy*

Factor	$R^2$	S.E	Estimate		
			r	Semi-partial	Beta
<b>Full Model</b>	.011 <sup>a</sup>	.491			
Individualistic			-.037	.005	.005
Fatalistic			.030	-.042	-.054
Structuralistic			.097	.096	.133

\* $p < .05$

<sup>a</sup>  $F(3, 270) = 0.988, p = 0.394$

**Research Question 4: What are challenges experienced by school counselors working with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?**

A narrative analysis was conducted to assess the challenges faced by school counselors when working with students impacted by poverty and to assess school counselors' recommendations for preparing a school counselor to work with individuals impacted by

poverty. A second researcher was recruited to assist in identification of themes within the narrative responses. Themes were identified and agreed upon by both researchers before proceeding with the analysis.

School counselors were asked in the demographic section of the survey, “What are the challenges you have experienced as a school counselor working with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?” For this question, 237 respondents provided narrative responses and 34 respondents failed to answer the question. Four themes were identified and agreed upon by both researchers. The four themes identified were: “Parental or Student Involvement,” “Limited Resources or Services,” “Inadequate Services,” and “Lack of Training and Preparation.” These themes varied in response rate. Thirty seven school counselors failed to answer the question or it was not applicable to their school setting.

Approximately 60 % of school counselors cited “Parental or Student Involvement” as a challenge encountered when working with children and adolescents. Example quotes by respondents of this theme are, “Encouraging and motivating them to care about their performance (albeit behavior or academic) at school;” “One of the biggest challenges is the lack of importance placed on education by the families of students;” and, “Getting parents to accept responsibility and support their children with academics.”

“Limited Resources or Services” themes emerged in approximately 15 % of school counselor responses. Example quotes of the this theme included, “Lack of resources that would help the student be a more effective learner, e.g., access to computers, tutoring, transportation and money;” “Not enough community resources available;” and, “My challenges in working with students impacted by poverty are that we don't have access to appropriate resources, district

formulas for distributing resources and/or determining the number of student support services staff are inequitable or do not take into consideration the F&RL percentage.”

“Inadequate Services” themed responses were prevalent in approximately 15 % of school counselors’ responses. Example quotes of this theme included, “Children who are hungry cannot learn anything effectively;” “Lack of mental health resources in the community and lack of low skill jobs in the community;” and “Students coming to school hungry or dirty because they did not have food or running water.”

Approximately 10 % of school counselors cited “Lack of Training and Preparation” as a challenge school counselors faced when working with students in poverty. Example quotes of this theme included, “How to connect to them while showing empathy but not feeling sorry for them;” “Lack of awareness on the part of school staff;” and “Unintended bias by educators who prefer to advise lowest academic course work to LSES student as a means of assuring students’ on-time progression through school.”

### **Research Question 5: What recommendations do school counselors have for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?**

School counselors were further asked in the demographic section of the survey, “What are your recommendations for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?” For this question, 229 respondents provided narrative responses and 42 respondents failed to answer the question. Three themes were identified and agreed upon by both researchers. The three themes identified were “Advocacy and Experiential Preparation,” “Multicultural Training,” and “Collaboration.” These themes varied in response rate. Forty-four school counselors failed to answer the question or it was not applicable to their school setting.

Approximately 65 % of school counselors cited “Advocacy and Experiential Preparation” as recommendations for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents. Example quotes of this theme included, “Part of the preparation program should include an internship in a high needs, high poverty/low income school;” “Have school counselors volunteer in food banks, shelters, low income schools/churches to expose them to situations they may encounter;” and, “One recommendation is to always be prepared to focus on the students' strengths when counseling, and be part of culture change (if necessary) when it comes to identifying students' strengths.”

“Multicultural Training” themed recommendations were cited by approximately 15 % of school counselors. Examples of this theme were, “Help counselors to know what these families lives are like on a daily basis; what their priorities are;” “They need to be able to separate their middle-class mindset from the atypical poverty mindset and then be able to work with children and families who are poor;” and, “Therefore all children should be treated equally and with respect for their heritage regardless how different it may be from what the educator knows.”

The last themed identified within school counselors recommendation was “Collaboration.” Approximately 20 % of school counselors responded in ways consistent with this theme. Examples of this theme included, “Collaborate with other community agencies to support the children's needs;” “Information on services to provide to students, parents, and the community to help students get where they need to be;” and, “Collaborations with community resources is crucial.”

## Summary

This study was designed to explore school counselors' attitudes, attributes, and self-efficacy levels toward students living in poverty. To assess these domains, *the Attributions of Poverty Scales, Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form, and School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale* were utilized. Results of the analysis indicated that school counselors attribute more fatalistic causes as reasons for explaining why individuals live in poverty and rate personal deficiencies higher regarding their attitudes toward individuals living in poverty. Additionally, the analysis showed school counselors are most confident in their ability to collaborate with others.

## CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

This study was designed to examine attributes, attitudes, and perceived self-efficacy levels of school counselors toward working with individuals living in poverty. Additionally, this study explored how school counselors' self-efficacy levels related to the attitudes and attributes of school counselors working with individuals living in poverty. Additionally, two narrative questions were used to assess challenges school counselors experienced when working with students impacted by poverty and to assess recommendations school counselors had for preparing future school counselors to work with students impacted by poverty.

Participants in the study completed online survey packets that included the *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale*, *Attributions of Poverty Scale*, *School Counselors Self-Efficacy Scale*, and a demographic questionnaire. Regression analyses were used to examine the relationship between school counselor self-efficacy levels and attitudes and attributes. In this chapter, results of the data analyses were discussed. Additionally, limitations of the current research study were addressed and recommendations for future studies were made based on the results. Lastly, a summary of the results was presented.

### Discussion

The attitudes of active school counselors toward individuals living in poverty were assessed by examining respondents' answers on the *Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale*. A review of the descriptive statistics showed that school counselors use personal deficient attitudes to explain poverty. When a person exhibits a personal deficient attitude, they are emphasizing a person's individual deficit as the primary cause of poverty (Yun & Weaver, 2010). Examples of

a personal deficient attitude were contributing negative attitudes toward individuals living in poverty such as “lower intelligence” and “dishonesty” (Yun & Weaver, 2010). Results of the study showed that the subscale of stigma attitudes received a neutral rating by school counselors for explaining poverty. Examples of stigma attitudes were that “poor people think they deserve to be supported” and that “welfare mothers have babies to get money” (Yun & Weaver, 2010). Structural attitudes were also rated lower than personal deficient attitudes for explaining poverty. Examples of structural attitudes included that “poor people are discriminated against” and that “people are poor due to circumstances beyond their control” (Yun & Weaver, 2010). These results suggested that overall, school counselors may hold individuals personally responsible for their poverty status.

School counselors’ attributions toward individuals living in poverty were assessed using the *Attributions of Poverty Scale*. Results of the analyses showed that school counselors attributed fatalistic and individualistic attributions as important reasons why people live in poverty. Examples of fatalistic attributions were attributing poverty to “unfortunate circumstances” or “bad luck” (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2001). Examples of individualistic attributions were attributing poverty to “lack of motivation and laziness” or “lack of intelligence” (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2001). Structural attributions of poverty were rated lower as a reason why some people live in poverty. Examples of structural attributions were “discrimination against minorities and the poor” and “high taxes that take money away from the poor” (Bullock, Williams, & Limbert, 2001).

Finding of individualistic explanations are consistent with previous studies that have found individuals ascribed individualistic attributes and attitudes toward individuals living in poverty (Bullock, 1999; Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Crumley, 2013; Davidson,



2009). A high score on the individualism subscale indicated that respondents assigned causal responsibility for a person's poverty to individual structures opposed to system, society, or social structures (Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005). Moreover, these findings suggested that school counselors will look toward individualistic reasons for explaining why individuals live in poverty. It is important to understand school counselor attributes and attitudes when working with individuals living in poverty because these beliefs may impact their interactions with students and could negatively impact the services provided to students.

School counselors' self-efficacy beliefs are a main factor contributing to effective counselor action (Larson & Daniels, 1998). Self-efficacy is a mediation function of behavior and influences how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act (Bandura, 1977). Understanding school counselors' self-efficacy levels can help in understanding and improving services to students (Sutton & Fall, 1995). School counselors should work to implement a comprehensive school counseling program that strives to promote all students' success (ASCA, 2009). Despite school counselors' efforts to implement such programs, each year, students continue to drop out of school (United States Department of Education, 2012). Students living in poverty are one identified group that is increasingly at risk of academic failure (Borman & Rachuba, 2001; Hopson & Lee, 2011).

Analysis of respondents' answers to the *School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale* showed that respondents were generally confident in their ability to perform personal and social, career and academic, collaboration, and cultural acceptance activities. These activities were identified as core counseling areas by the American School Counselor Association National Model (ASCA, 2012). Despite this identification, respondents showed only being moderately confident in their ability to perform leadership and assessment activities. Examples of leadership and

assessment activities included, “helping teachers improve their effectiveness with students” and “leading school-wide initiatives which focus on ensuring a positive learning environment” (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). Lower scores on this subscale may be due to the recent push in today’s education system for increased accountability measures, where school counselors are being required to document the effectiveness of their work (Barnes, Scofield, Hof, & Vrbka, 2005). The confidence level of school counselors in this subscale may increase as they become more familiar with accountability measures.

Results of the study indicated that attitudes of school counselors toward individuals in poverty are better predictors of school counselors’ self-efficacy levels than school counselors’ attributions about reasons people live in poverty. In fact, in this study, attributions failed to effectively predict school counselors’ self-efficacy levels. Attributes in this study measured counselors general beliefs about why a client is living in poverty, whereas, attitudes measured the degree to which the counselor viewed the client in a positive or negative light. The correlation between self-efficacy and attitudes is consistent with past studies which have shown that both attitudes and self-efficacy levels are related to behavior (Banduta, 1977; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). Attributions help shape attitudes toward the poor (Davidson, 2009), but may have less of an impact/correlation on behavior.

Four themes were identified as challenges school counselors faced when working with children and adolescents impacted by poverty. These themes were, “Parental or Student Involvement,” “Limited Resources or Services,” “Inadequate Services,” and “Lack of Training and Preparation.” “Parental or Student Involvement” was found to be the most occurring theme. Example quotes by respondents of this theme were, “Encouraging and motivating them to care about their performance (albeit behavior or academic) at school;” “One of the biggest challenges

is the lack of importance placed on education by the families of students;" and, "Getting parents to accept responsibility and support their children with academics." Responses that identified within the "Limited Resources or Services" theme were cited by school counselors as the second highest challenge they have encountered while working with students impacted by poverty. Examples of the "Limited Resources or Services" theme included, "Lack of resources that would help the student be a more effective learner, e.g., access to computers, tutoring, transportation and money;" "Not enough community resources available;" and, "My challenges in working with students impacted by poverty are that we don't have access to appropriate resources, district formulas for distributing resources and/or determining the number of student support services staff are inequitable or do not take into consideration the F&RL percentage." The "Inadequate Services" theme was found to be the third highest challenge that school counselors faced when working with students in poverty. Examples of this theme included, "Children who are hungry cannot learn anything effectively;" "Lack of mental health resources in the community and lack of low skill jobs in the community;" and, "Students coming to school hungry or dirty because they did not have food or running water." Lastly, "Lack of Training and Preparation" was a theme identified as a challenge school counselors faced when working with students in poverty. Examples of this theme included, "How to connect to them while showing empathy but not feeling sorry for them;" "Lack of awareness on the part of school staff;" and, "Unintended bias by educators who prefer to advise lowest academic course work to LSES student as a means of assuring students' on-time progression through school."

The high reporting of parent and student involvement is consistent with many educational incentives aimed at increasing parental involvement in school systems. Past research has found that parental involvement in the school system increases students' academic achievement

(Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Jeynes, 2007). According to the American School Counselor Association National Model, school counselors should provide proactive leadership that ensures student success by coordinating strategies with key stakeholders, including parents (ASCA, 2012). Examples of proactive leadership among school counselors working with parents includes coordinating advocacy initiatives with parents, collaborating with parents on student success teams, or working with parents to collect data for accountability measures (ASCA, 2012).

Three themes were identified as recommendations school counselors would make for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents impacted by poverty. These themes were, “Advocacy and Experiential Preparation,” “Multicultural Training,” and “Collaboration.” “Advocacy and Experiential Preparation” emerged as the highest ranked theme in respondents’ answers. Examples of this theme included, “Part of the preparation program should include an internship in a high needs, high poverty/low income school;” “Have school counselors volunteer in food banks, shelters, low income schools/churches to expose them to situations they may encounter;” and, “One recommendation is to always be prepared to focus on the students' strengths when counseling, and be part of culture change (if necessary) when it comes to identifying students' strengths.” The next prevalent theme that emerged was “Multicultural Training.” Examples of this theme were, “Help counselors to know what these families lives are like on a daily basis; what their priorities are;” “They need to be able to separate their middle-class mindset from the atypical poverty mindset and then be able to work with children and families who are poor;” and, “Therefore all children should be treated equally and with respect for their heritage regardless how different it may be from what the educator knows.” The last theme identified was “Collaboration.” Examples of this theme included,

“Collaborate with other community agencies to support the children's needs;” “Information on services to provide to students, parents, and the community to help students get where they need to be;” and “Collaborations with community resources is crucial.”

School counselors in this study consistently recommended advocacy and experiential preparation for preparing school counselors to work with individuals in poverty. This may be due to the lack of training school counselors are provided in their counselor education programs. By receiving more advocacy and experiential experience, school counselors may feel more prepared to work with this high risk population (Thomas & Quinlan, 2014). Increased knowledge is important for providing services to students living in poverty.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Although measures were taken to reduce confounding variables, the methodological design of this study may impact the validity of the results. The first limitation of this design is embedded in recruitment of respondents. Only school counselors who lived in the Southeastern United States and were active members of the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) who opted to include their contact information on the membership information list were contacted for inclusion in this study. This form of solicitation failed to contact school counselors in other regions of the United States and school counselors who are not members of the American School Counselors Association. The major focus of this study was to investigate school counselors' experiences working with students living in poverty; however, school counselors who are working in high poverty schools may have not been included in this study because they have less funding available to maintain membership in national organizations such as ASCA.

The subjective nature of measuring individuals' attitudes, attributes, and self-efficacy levels was also a limitation of this study. Respondents were asked to self-report their perceptions on three premade Likert scales. Participants may have misunderstood or misread questions on the measures. Additionally, participants may have tried to answer questions in socially acceptable ways, even though they were assured anonymity.

### **Recommendations**

This study sought to increase literature on school counselors' attitudes and attributes toward individuals living in poverty. Results from the study may help understand how school counselors provide services to individuals living in poverty and how they view students who live in poverty. Because prior research is lacking on school counselors' attitudes and attributes toward individuals living in poverty, this study may need replication to ensure its external validity across school counseling populations.

Results from this study showed that school counselors hold negative ideologies about individuals living in poverty. This information can be used to design training and professional development activities for active and pre-service school counselors. Students who are living in poverty are at higher risks of academic failure; therefore, it is important that school counselors feel equipped to work with this critical population. Training and professional development activities should be designed not only to increase school counselor skills when working with individuals in poverty, but should also facilitate self-reflections among school counselors about any bias they may hold.

On a broader perspective, this study contributes to the overall research on the culture of poverty. Understanding individuals' attitudes and attributes toward individuals in poverty can

assist helping professionals address the unique needs of this population. Additionally, this knowledge can help in the design of programs aimed at assisting this population in overcoming negative stereotypes.

### **Summary**

This study was designed to examine the attitudes, attributes, and perceived self-efficacy levels of school counselors toward individuals living in poverty. Active school counselors in the Southeastern United States who were members of the American School Counselors Association were solicited for participation in this study. Results of the study showed that school counselors tend to hold individuals personally responsible for their poverty status (Personally Deficient Attitudes), but attribute the cause to bad luck, illness, or unfortunate circumstances (Fatalistic Attributions). Additionally, it was found that the attitudes of school counselors could be used to predict self-efficacy levels of school counselors. Results of this study may be used as a literary reference to design training and professional development activities for active and pre-service school counselors.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE EMAIL**

**You are invited to participate in a research study** to examine attitudes and attributions as they relate to working with students dealing with poverty. This research can contribute to our understanding of the challenges school counselors face in addressing the issues of poverty and education. The study is being conducted by Dr. Jamie Carney - Professor and Lacy Ricks-Doctoral Candidate, in the Auburn University Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation and Counseling. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a School Counselor.

**What will be involved if you participate?** Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in this research study you are asked to select the link (NEXT) included at the bottom of this page. You will then be asked to complete a series of surveys related to demographics, attitudes and attributions toward poverty and perceived self-efficacy as a school counselor. **This should only take 10 - 15 minutes to complete.**

**Are there any risks or discomforts?** There are no risks associated with participation in the study and your responses will remain confidential.

**Are there any benefits to yourself or others?** There may be no direct benefits related to your participation in this study but results from this study may be used to help better prepare or inform school counselors about working with children or adolescents dealing with poverty.

**If you change your mind about participating,** you can withdraw at any time during the study by closing out of the survey. If you choose to withdraw your data cannot be withdrawn because it is anonymous. Your decision to participate in this study will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University.

**Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous.** No identifying data will be collected as part of this study. Your email address is not linked to nor collected as part of your participation in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Jamie Carney by email at [carnejs@auburn.edu](mailto:carnejs@auburn.edu) . **If you have questions about your rights as a research participant,** you may contact Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Research Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or email at [hsubjec@auburn.edu](mailto:hsubjec@auburn.edu) or [IRBchair@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBchair@auburn.edu) .

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE PLEASE CLICK ON THE "NEXT" BUTTON BELOW.

YOU MAY PRINT A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO KEEP

This document has been approved by the Auburn University Institutional Review Board from January 25, 2014 to January 24, 2017. Protocol #14-014 EX 1401."

**APPENDIX 2**

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER**

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS  
RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM**

For Information or help contact THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE, 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University  
Phone: 334-844-5966 e-mail: [hsrj@auburn.edu](mailto:hsrj@auburn.edu) Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/>

Revised 03.26.11 – DO NOT STAPLE, CLIP TOGETHER ONLY.

Save a Copy

1. PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY: Jan 20, 2014

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

2. PROJECT TITLE: Self-Efficacy as it Related to Attributes and Attitudes Toward Poverty Among School Counselors

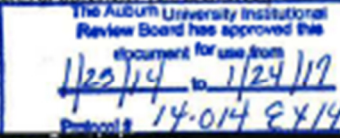

3. Jamie Carney Professor SERC 334-844-2885 camejs@auburn.edu  
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR TITLE DEPT PHONE AU E-MAIL

2084 Haley Center 334-844-2885  
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
<p>Names of key personnel who have completed CITI:</p> <p>Jamie Carney <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacey Ricks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>CITI group completed for this study: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Behavioral <input type="checkbox"/> Biomedical</p> <p align="center"><b>PLEASE ATTACH TO HARD COPY ALL CITI CERTIFICATES FOR EACH KEY PERSONNEL</b></p>	<p>Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology.</p> <p>Data Source(s): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Data <input type="checkbox"/> Existing Data Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Data collection will involve the use of: <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview / Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surveys / Questionnaires <input type="checkbox"/> Internet / Electronic <input type="checkbox"/> Audio / Video / Photos <input type="checkbox"/> Private records or files</p> <p align="right">  </p>
6C. Participant Information	6D. Risks to Participants
<p>Please check all descriptors that apply to the participant population.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Males <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Females <input type="checkbox"/> AU students Vulnerable Populations <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women/Totuses <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners <input type="checkbox"/> Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL)</p> <p>Persons with: <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Disadvantages <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Disadvantages <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Disabilities</p> <p>Do you plan to compensate your participants? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Breach of Confidentiality* <input type="checkbox"/> Coercion <input type="checkbox"/> Deception <input type="checkbox"/> Physical <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological <input type="checkbox"/> Social <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p align="right">  </p> <p><small>*Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.</small></p>
<p>Do you need IBC Approval for this study? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - BUA # _____ Expiration date _____</p>	

**FOR OHSR OFFICE USE ONLY**

DATE RECEIVED IN OHSR: 1/15/14 by BR	PROTOCOL # 14-014
DATE OF IRB REVIEW: _____ by _____	APPROVAL CATEGORY: _____
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: _____ by _____	INTERVAL FOR CONTINUING REVIEW: _____
COMMENTS:	



**7. PROJECT ASSURANCES**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Self-Efficacy as it Related to Attributes and Attitudes Toward Poverty Among School Counselors

**A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCES**

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 of the 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.

Jamie Carney

Printed name of Principal Investigator

Principal Investigator's Signature  
(SIGN IN BLUE INK ONLY)

1/13/2014

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 (SIGN IN BLUE INK ONLY)

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.

Everett Martin

Printed name of Department Head

Signature (SIGN IN BLUE INK ONLY)

1/13/2014

Date

**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 concepts that are leading to this research proposal  
(Cite appropriate references in 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.) Poverty is a growing epidemic in the United States. Currently there are 46.2 million people living in poverty in America (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2012). Children make up 24 percent of the total population and represent 34 percent of all individuals living in poverty (Addy & Wright, 2012). At the beginning of the century, more than 12 million American children lived in poverty, as of 2010 this number has increased to 16.7 million (Kuczmarski, 2011). These numbers serve to highlight the reality that many educators, counselors and other professionals will be working with students and families dealing with poverty (Hanson, Olson & Langille, Jr., 2001). However, there is a paucity of research examining these attitudes among school counselors. This is the initial research in the counseling literature that addresses the issue of working with low-income students and families, there is a need to gain further information on the issue of social class.

II.) The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes, attributions and self-efficacy of school counselors' attitudes toward persons living in poverty. This will include how these variables relate to each other, with specific consideration of school counselor self-efficacy as it relates to attitudes and attributions toward persons living in poverty. This study proposes to include school counselors working with students/grades K-12. The methodology will include using survey measures to measure the identified variables. Group comparisons will include comparisons across the demographic variables of gender, age, and employment site.

III.) This study may provide some context for examining the variables that contribute to attitudes 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 school counselors and how school counselor self-efficacy related to beliefs about individuals living in poverty.

IV.) This research has the potential of contributing to the growing body of research on attitudes 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 school counseling programs, possibly increasing awareness and knowledge about attitudes toward persons living in poverty among 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 of school counselors toward persons living in poverty. The primary goal is to determine how the variables of attitudes toward persons living in poverty (lower socioeconomic status), attributions toward poverty, and school counselor self-efficacy related to each other. This will include examination of how school counselor self-efficacy relates to attitudes and attributions toward persons living in poverty or lower socioeconomic status.

This will allow for a global investigation of attitudes toward persons living in poverty with specific comparisons of comparisons across demographic data (i.e., gender, age, employment site).

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

The results from this study may be disseminated through presentations and publications as well as a component of dissertation research.

10a. KEY PERSONNEL. Describe responsibilities. Include information on research training or certifications 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.

Principle Investigator: Jamie Carney Title: Professor E-mail address: carneys@auburn.edu  
Dept / Affiliation: SERC

Roles / Responsibilities:  
Supervision of the study, data collection and data analysis

Individual: Lacey Ricks Title: CED Grad Student E-mail address: lar0019@tigermail.auburn.edu  
Dept / Affiliation: SERC

Roles / Responsibilities:  
Assistance with data collection and analysis

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/ethics/consent.html>)

School counselors will be recruited from public and private schools within the United States using emailed surveys on Qualtrics.

Specifically potential participants will be contacted via email. Email addresses will be obtained from publicly posted addresses (American School Counseling Association membership emails - members consent to have their emails published or not published).

12. PARTICIPANTS.

a. Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project.

Check here if there is existing data; describe the population from whom data was collected & include the # of data files.  
Professional school counselors working in public and private institutions serving students in grades K-12. These school counselors consist of members of the American School Counseling Association who have consented to have their email addresses published.

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 and attributions towards persons living in poverty among professional school counselors working in k-12 schools in the United States. A secondary goal is to examine these attitudes and attributions as they relate to self-efficacy.

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.suokum.edu/uteresearch/ajournals/Sample.htm>)

Recruitment for this study will be obtained through the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) membership information. Members in ASCA can opt to be omitted from this list or have contact information omitted from this list. In consenting to disclose their contact information ASCA members are informed that their information may lead to contacts from ASCA members for participation in research opportunities, training, educational services and workshops. Surveys and participation invitations will be emailed to members of ASCA using qualtrics. The email invitation will tell potential participants that they are being asked to participate in a study, that participation will take 15-20 minutes, participation is not linked to their current school, and participation is voluntary. Potential participants will be asked to review the informational letter (Appendix B) at the beginning of the survey and if they choose to participate they can complete the provided survey. Those choosing not participate can delete the email.

Minimum # of participants? 75  
Limit on # you will recruit? 1000  
Limit on # you will include? 500

What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study? 75

Is there a limit on the number of participants you will recruit?  No  Yes - the number is 1000

Is there a limit on the number of participants you will include in the study?  No  Yes - the number is 500

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:

### 13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.

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

1. School counselor will be recruited through their involvement in the American School Counselors Association (ASCA). Members of ASCA have access to a public list of ASCA members. Members in ASCA can opt to be omitted from this list or have contact information omitted from this list. In consenting to disclose their contact information ASCA members are informed that their information may lead to contacts from ASCA members for participation in research opportunities, training, educational services and workshops. An email will be sent to potential participants asking them to participate in the study if they are certified school counselors.  
2. During recruitment an emailed letter linked to the survey will tell potential participants that they are being asked to participate in a study, that participation will take about 15-20 minutes, and that participation is not linked to their school and is completely voluntary.  
3. The emailed letter will ask potential participants to review the informational letter and if they choose to participate they can complete the provided surveys by clicking on the attached link. Those choosing not to participate can simply delete the email.  
4. The survey information will include the informational letter, a demographic measure, and three survey measures: Attitudes toward Poverty (Yun & Weaver, 2010), Attributions of Poverty Scale (Bullock, Williams, & Lambert, 2001), and School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (Bondenhorn & Scoggin, 2006). Survey measures will be randomly ordered so not to create a presentation bias.  
5. All data will be analyzed in an aggregate manner. A follow-up survey request will be sent 2 weeks after initial request.

- b. Describe the procedures you will use in order to address your purpose. Provide a **step-by-step** description 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. School counselor will be recruited through their involvement in the American School Counselors Association (ASCA). Members in ASCA can opt to be omitted from this list or have contact information omitted from this list. In consenting to disclose their contact information ASCA members are informed that their information may lead to contacts from ASCA members for participation in research opportunities, training, educational services and workshops. An email will be sent to potential participants asking them to participate in the study if they are certified school counselors.  
2. During recruitment the investigators will tell potential participants that they are being asked to participate in a study, that participation will take about 15-20 minutes, and that participation is not linked to their current school and is voluntary.  
3. School counselors will be provided the informational letter and link to the survey measures. School counselors choosing to complete the survey after reviewing the informational consent letter will be provided a link to the survey measures.  
4. The survey email will include the informational letter, a demographic measure, and three survey measures: Attitudes toward Poverty (Yun & Weaver, 2010), Attributions of Poverty Scale (Bullock, Williams, & Lambert, 2001), and School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (Bondenhorn & Scoggin, 2006). Survey measures will be randomly ordered so not to create a presentation bias.

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 with open ended questions: This measure developed by the investigators simply present questions pertaining to age, percentage of students in participant's school's participating in the free or reduced lunch program, years of experience, gender, and race/cultural identity. There are also two open-ended reflection questions about poverty.

2. Attributions of Poverty Scale (Bullock, Williams, & Liebert, 2001): This 30-item scale measures attributions and beliefs about poverty and parents with 3 items for each of the 10 statements.

3. Attitudes toward Poverty (Tan & Weaver, 2000): This 20-item measures degree of agreement with statements about poverty and parents who residing in poverty.

4. School Counselor Self-Efficacy (Goodman & Suggs, 2000): This 40-item measures the school counselor's confidence to perform activities in a school setting.

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 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 #10 on page 1.)

There will be no risks or discomforts to the research participants.

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.**  
*(Do not include list of the server's address)*

The results of the survey will be anonymous; responses and identifying information will be requested. Questions, the survey heading section, original responses and will not enable anyone to see responses on your computer's hard drive. Responses will be combined with other responses and reported in a group format. In addition, when participants choose to complete the survey packet the link they are directed to does not collect or maintain their email addresses so results will not be able to be linked to an individual's email address.

**16. BENEFITS.**

- a. **List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.**  
*(Do not include "compensation" listed in #12b) Check here if there are no direct benefits 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 attitudes among school educators. In addition, the study may expand our understanding of these attitudes among professionals in counseling, thus potentially contributing to pedagogical and practice history.

17. PROTECTION OF DATA.

- a. Will data be collected as anonymous?  Yes  No *If "YES", skip to part "g".*  
*(“Anonymous” means that you will not collect any identifiable data.)*
- b. Will data be collected as confidential?  Yes  No  
*(“Confidential” means that you will 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.  
*All data (hardcopy and electronic) must remain in the custody, storage and/or possession of the investigator or the Principal Investigator (PI) at Hickey 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.)*  
The two researchers attached to this proposal will have access to the data, however, none of the data allows for identification of the participants.

i. When is the latest date that confidential data will be retained? (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained. ✓)

j. How will the confidential data be destroyed? (NOTE: Data recorded and analyzed as “anonymous” may be retained indefinitely.)



## PROTOCOL REVIEW CHECKLIST

All protocols must include the following items:

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

(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.

**FOR FULL BOARD REVIEW, NUMBER ALL PAGES, INCLUDING APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX 3**

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

### **ATTITUDES TOWARD POVERTY SCALE**

**Attitude Toward Poverty Scale**  
(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 5**

**SCHOOL COUNSELOR SELF-EFFICACY SCALE**

**School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale**  
Nancy Bodenhorn, 2004

Below is a list of activities representing many school counselor responsibilities. Indicate your confidence in your current ability to perform each activity by circling the appropriate answer next to each item according to the scale defined below. Please answer each item based on one current school, and based on how you feel now, not on your anticipated (or previous) ability or school(s). Remember, this is not a test and there are no right answers.

Use the following scale:

- 1 = not confident,
- 2 = slightly confident,
- 3 = moderately confident,
- 4 = generally confident,
- 5 = highly confident.

Please circle the number that best represents your response for each item.

1. Advocate for integration of student academic, career, and personal development into the mission of my school. (4)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Recognize situations that impact (both negatively and positively) student learning and achievement. (4)	1	2	3	4	5
3. Analyze data to identify patterns of achievement and behavior that contribute to school success. (2)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Advocate for myself as a professional school counselor and articulate the purposes and goals of school counseling. (4)	1	2	3	4	5
5. Develop measurable outcomes for a school counseling program which would demonstrate accountability. (2)	1	2	3	4	5
6. Consult and collaborate with teachers, staff, administrators and parents to promote student success. (4)	1	2	3	4	5
7. Establish rapport with a student for individual counseling. (4)	1	2	3	4	5
8. Function successfully as a small group leader. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
9. Effectively deliver suitable parts of the school counseling program through large group meetings such as in classrooms. (4)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Conduct interventions with parents, guardians and families in order to	1	2	3	4	5

resolve problems that impact students' effectiveness and success. (4)					
11. Teach students how to apply time and task management skills. (3)	1	2	3	4	5
12. Foster understanding of the relationship between learning and work. (3)	1	2	3	4	5
13. Offer appropriate explanations to students, parents and teachers of how learning styles affect school performance. (3)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Deliver age-appropriate programs through which students acquire the skills needed to investigate the world of work. (3)	1	2	3	4	5
15. Implement a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions. (3)	1	2	3	4	5
16. Teach students to apply problem-solving skills toward their academic, personal and career success. (3)	1	2	3	4	5
17. Evaluate commercially prepared material designed for school counseling to establish their relevance to my school population. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
18. Model and teach conflict resolution skills. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
19. Ensure a safe environment for all students in my school. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
20. Change situations in which an individual or group treats others in a disrespectful or harassing manner. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
21. Teach students to use effective communication skills with peers, faculty, employers, family, etc. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
22. Follow ethical and legal obligations designed for school counselors. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
23. Guide students in techniques to cope with peer pressure. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
24. Adjust my communication style appropriately to the age and developmental levels of various students. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
25. Incorporate students' developmental stages in establishing and conducting the school counseling program. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
26. I can find some way of connecting and communicating with any student in my school. (5)	1	2	3	4	5
27. Teach, develop and/or support students' coping mechanisms for dealing with crises in their lives – e.g., peer suicide, parent's death, abuse, etc. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
28. Counsel effectively with students and families from different social/economic statuses. (5)	1	2	3	4	5

29. Understand the viewpoints and experiences of students and parents who are from a different cultural background than myself. (5)	1	2	3	4	5
30. Help teachers improve their effectiveness with students. (2)	1	2	3	4	5
31. Discuss issues of sexuality and sexual orientation in an age appropriate manner with students. (5)	1	2	3	4	5
32. Speak in front of large groups such as faculty or parent meetings. (4)	1	2	3	4	5
33. Use technology designed to support student successes and progress through the educational process. (3)	1	2	3	4	5
34. Communicate in writing with staff, parents, and the external community. (4)	1	2	3	4	5
35. Help students identify and attain attitudes, behaviors, and skills which lead to successful learning. (1)	1	2	3	4	5
36. Select and implement applicable strategies to assess school-wide issues. (2)	1	2	3	4	5
37. Promote the use of counseling and guidance activities by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate. (2)	1	2	3	4	5
38. Develop school improvement plans based on interpreting school-wide assessment results. (2)	1	2	3	4	5
39. Identify aptitude, achievement, interest, values, and personality appraisal resources appropriate for specified situations and populations. (2)	1	2	3	4	5
40. Implement a preventive approach to student problems. (2)	1	2	3	4	5
41. Lead school-wide initiatives which focus on ensuring a positive learning environment. (2)	1	2	3	4	5
42. Consult with external community agencies that provide support services for our students. (4)	1	2	3	4	5
43. Provide resources and guidance to school population in times of crisis. (4)	1	2	3	4	5

**APPENDIX 6**

**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

## DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

### **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
4. Are you currently a School Counselor?  Yes  No
5. How many years have you worked as a school counselor? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What grade levels do you currently work with? \_\_\_\_\_ K-5th \_\_\_\_\_ 6th-8th \_\_\_\_\_ 9th-12th
7. What is the percentage of students within your school that participate in the free or reduced lunch program? \_\_\_\_\_

### **For the following please respond to the open-ended questions**

1. What are the challenges you have experienced as a school counselor working with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are your recommendations for preparing school counselors to work with children and adolescents impacted by poverty?