THE EFFECT OF ADOLESCENT-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS ON ADOLESCENT

RELIGIOSITY

A Thesis

by

THOMAS RAY CLANTON

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Chair of Committee,	Corliss W. Outley
Committee Members,	Wm. Alex McIntosh
	Kyle M. Woosnam
Head of Department,	Gary Ellis

December 2013

Major Subject: Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Sciences

ABSTRACT

The relationship between adolescents and their parents has a significant impact on their positive development into adulthood. This study analyzes data from the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) in order to determine if an adolescent's relationship with his or her parents has an impact on the religiosity of adolescents between the ages of 17-24 years old. This study contends that religion can be an important aspect of positive youth development for older adolescents. Utilizing data from the NSYR, two major factors describing adolescent religiosity were discovered: adolescent religious importance and adolescent respect for religion. The adolescent-parent relationship factors of mother-adolescent and father-adolescent relationships were tested against the two factors of adolescent religiosity to determine the effect of adolescent-parent relationships on adolescent religiosity. The study determined that adolescent-parent relationships have only a minimal effect on adolescent religiosity of adolescents 17-24 years old. This is an important finding that provides researchers and practitioners a glimpse into the influences of religion on older adolescents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Outley, and my committee members, Dr. Woosnam, and Dr. McIntosh, for their input and support throughout the course of this research. Without them, I would not have benefited from their expertise on statistics, youth development, and religiosity.

In addition, I would like to give a special thanks to my family and friends. They have encouraged me and supported me throughout my journey to and through high education. Without their support I would not be where I am today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between adolescents and their parents has a significant impact on their positive development into adulthood. Positive adolescent-parent relationships have been correlated with reduced anti-social behavior, decreased substance abuse, decreased delinquency, and a decrease in other negatively defined character traits in adolescents (Hair, Moore, Garrett, Ling, & Cleveland, 2008). The presence of both biological parents in the life of a child is invaluable in the development of an adolescent. When an adolescent feels like their parents understand them and listen to them, they report a much higher level of satisfaction in their lives (Mullis, Graf, & Mullis, 2009). Positive parental relationships are invaluable in the development of an adolescent.

Role of Religion in Adolescent Development

Religiosity can also be an important aspect of positive development in adolescents. The Search Institute has designated religious community as one of their forty essential developmental assets for positive youth development (Search Institute, 2012). Religiosity involves a relationship with a particular institutionalized doctrine about a supernatural power; a relationship that occurs through affiliation with an organized faith and participation in its prescribed rituals (Reich, Oser, & Scarlett, 1999). This is opposed to spirituality which is a more general way of thinking about a higher being or purpose without the affiliation of an organized doctrine or faith.

Influence of Family on Religion Development

Most religions teach family togetherness and that parents are "spiritual leaders" of a household. As such, parents not only utilize the home to teach their children about familial religious norms and values, but continually reinforce these teachings through religious modeling. These teachings are further reinforced through parental guidance that directs children toward particular activities and social environments (Martin, White, & Perlman, 2003). This modeling of religious norms and practices is known as the "channeling hypothesis" and highlights the direct influence that parents have on peer groups, religious institutions, and within the home in relationship to religiosity. It has been show; however, that parents are less involved in a child's religious development than ever before and that religious attendance amongst youth is falling (DeVries, 2004).

Research has shown that there is a link between an adolescent's relationships with their parents and their religious involvement. This link is conveyed through successful and unsuccessful religious transmission of beliefs, norms and values. Parents that are perceived as loving and supportive are more likely to have children that are accepting of their religious behaviors. In addition, parents that have loving intact homes have higher levels of children that are likely to espouse their parent's religion (Myers, 1996). Studies have further revealed that parent-adolescent relationships can also influence religious beliefs. For example, when an adolescent has a good relationship with their mother they will tend to follow her religious practices (Scales, Sesma, Jr., & Bolstrom, 2004). Adolescents also report a "higher level of life satisfaction and have greater skill in solving health related problems when their mothers attended more

religious services" (Varon & Riley, 1999). However, research illustrates that throughout adolescence varying dynamics such as friends, jobs, competing social activities, can compete with religious commitments and a parents influence on religious beliefs due to increasing levels of autonomy (Zulkowski, 2012).

Faith Development Theory

James Fowler first proposed Faith Development Theory in 1981. This framework offers an understanding of how people conceptualize God and how the influence of the divine has an impact on core values, beliefs, and meanings in their personal lives and in their relationships with others (King & Roeser, 2009). This theory explains how people progress from a finite understanding of God, where they solely rely on significant others for their beliefs, to an autonomous state, where they are able to make decisions on their own.

According to the theory, Faith development progresses through the lifespan and the more a person is able to make cognitive, emotional, and moral interpretations on their own (King & Roeser, 2009). As a person progresses towards autonomy, their faith begins to develop and become more of their own. Fowler describes religious faith as an individual's personal way of responding to that of "transcendent value and power as perceived and grasped through the forms of the cumulative tradition" (Fowler, 1981). Fowler then goes on to say that, functionally, religious faith serves to give purpose and goal to one's hopes, strivings, thoughts and action" (Fowler, 1981).

Fowler says as an adolescent's cognitive abilities increase, so does their religious faith. As adolescents begin to think abstractly they begin to think more about their own

stories and their own beliefs about a higher power. At this stage, younger adolescents begin to become aware of what other people think about them. Adolescents at this stage of development begin to develop their identity in a self-reflective way. During this stage, young people commit to beliefs, values, and aspects of identity that link them to significant others in their lives such as, parents or peers (King & Roeser, 2009). Adolescents fall victim to the "tyranny of they" (King & Roeser, 2009) and allow the significant people in their lives to shape their thoughts, ideas, and faith. During this period of self-reflection, adolescents are less autonomous and their conception of God is founded on their relationships. As adolescents grow older and grow more autonomous, they begin to break away from this tyranny and start establishing their identity as their own. They begin to critically reflect on who they are as a person and take the time to assess what they believe and how they conceptualize God.

Research Purpose

Positive adolescent-parent relationships may or may not have a significant impact on the religious lifestyles of adolescent and this study seeks to provide valuable information on this topic. If parents want to foster religiosity in their children, it will be important for them to understand the importance that they play in their child's religious development. If religious youth development workers are interested in increasing youth religious activity within their community it may be important for them to understand the importance parents play in an adolescent's religious development. The research question for this study is: *What is the influence of adolescent-parent relationships on adolescent religiosity?*

Hypotheses

Using the third wave of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) three

hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1:

The scale items measuring adolescent-parent relationship (based on selected items from the NSYR) will be multi-dimensional, yielding numerous factors (that will serve as independent variables for this study).

Hypothesis 2:

The scale items measuring adolescent religiosity (based on selected items from the NSYR) will be multi-dimensional, yielding numerous factors (that will serve as dependent variables for this study).

Hypothesis 3:

Each of the resulting adolescent-parent relationship factors will significantly predict each of the resulting adolescent religiosity factors.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Religion and Adolescents

The literature discussed in this study focuses on how adolescent religiosity impacts the development of youth in America. Religion can be positive and empowering to youth when beliefs are upheld. Religion can also help in coping with anxiety, loneliness, and fear, improve well-being, provide adolescents a spiritual lens through which to look, help break down stereotypes, and result in positive peer engagement (Roehlkepartain, King, Wagener, & Benson, 2006). Using personal religious beliefs to cope with stress revealed positive results such as, improved mental health and lowered anxiety levels in a clinical setting (Lovinger, Miller, & Lovinger, 1999). Youth with high religious 'saliency' report higher resiliency than those with low religious 'saliency' and report higher levels of well-being after family disruptions or separations (Denton, 2012). Families with high religious 'saliency' report seeking divine intervention more often. High religious 'saliency' is when religion becomes the primary focus of an individual or family. Families with high religious saliency are active in their community of faith and make this participation a primary goal in their life. Adolescents with high religious 'saliency' report spending more time in prayer and thinking about the meaning of life more often. Adolescents with high religious 'saliency' make religion a priority in their life. It is the affective aspect of religiosity and signifies a strong emotional connection. Families that reportedly seek divine intervention reported higher levels of coping and family satisfaction (Abbot et al., 1990).

Adolescents who have high religious involvement are more civically-active and volunteer more in the community (Regnerus, 2003). Adolescents who perceive that their parents love them and know what is going on in their lives are more religious than adolescents who have cold or aloof parents (Doorn et al., 2011). High religious 'saliency' helps adolescents establish a strong identity and be more confident in who they are (Glover, 1996). Religion also provides opportunities for youth to interact with other youth who believe the same thing and may practice the positive moralistic teachings of their religion (Abbot, Berry, & Meredith, 1990).

One negative aspect of religion is the concept of sacred loss (Roehlkepartain et al., 2006). Sacred loss refers to the confusion or doubt someone feels when their religious beliefs are dashed (Denton, 2012). A youth may experience sacred loss if they hear any argument about why their religious beliefs are false or when a sacred bond, such as a parent or friend, is taken away. Adolescents can be betrayed by religious leaders and suffer a major stunt in their development (Roehlkepartain et al., 2006). This kind of sacred loss can make it hard for adolescents to trust people and develop a positive personal identity.

Other negative aspects of religion include inadequate supply and failure to appropriate. Some religious communities have an inadequate supply of religious opportunities in which few of the influences needed to provide a positive developmental impact are present (Smith, 2003). Other times adolescents fail to take advantage of the opportunities provided to them. This failure to appropriate has the potential to isolate or marginalize an adolescent (Smith, 2003).

Overall, research has found that increased religiosity in adolescents has a positive effect on their overall well-being and their positive development. Research recognizes the negatives and dangers of organized religion, but most research tends to agree that religious involvement of adolescents is important in their developmental process.

Religion, Family Relationships and Adolescents

The research performed on the importance that parents play in the life of an adolescent is extensive, focusing on the impact of family structure, mother-child and father-child relationships, impact of race and socio-economic status on adolescent-parent relationships, etc. Children report higher life satisfaction when they are in a two-parent home where they perceive both of their parents as caring and knowledgeable about their lives (Hair et al., 2008). Family disruption has been known to increase the likelihood that depression and behavioral disorders will develop within adolescents (Denton, 2012). Positive communication between parents and adolescents has been measured to produce more autonomy in youth (Doorn, Branje, & Meeus, 2011). When parents and youth use positive problem solving techniques they develop a horizontal relationship with each other more quickly (Doorn et al., 2011). A 'horizontal relationship' between parents and adolescents is when parents take both their own opinions and the opinions of their child into consideration when solving conflict (Doorn et.al, 2011). A horizontal relationship is an evolution from a vertical asymmetric relationship to a more symmetric relationship. In this horizontal relationship, parents begin to view their children as autonomous and allow their child increased responsibility and freedom. Adolescents report higher levels

of satisfaction with their parents when parents allow them freedom but still love them and care about what they are doing (Mullis et al., 2009). Positive relationships with parents lead to increased mental health in adolescents and a decrease in delinquent behavior, while adolescents who feel that their parents are "withdrawn" or "cold" struggle with negatively defined traits such as, depression and social isolation (Hair et al., 2008). The literature is consistent in defining that adolescent's emotional relationships with their mothers tend to increase faster than with their fathers (Mullis et al., 2009).

Religion, Family Relationships and Emerging Adults

This current study measures survey responses of participants from ages 17-24 years old. The adolescents in this study are becoming "emerging adults" (Zulkowski, 2012). The transition from adolescences to adulthood does not have distinctly biological markers. Adulthood is distinguished from adolescence by culturally constructed life events such as marriage, family, and entering the workforce (Hogan & Astone, 1986). These transitions are occurring later in the lives of American adolescents (Schwartz, Cote, & Arnett, 2005). Arnett (2000) calls these older adolescents from ages 17-25 "emerging adults". This delay of adulthood extends exploration and identity development (Schwartz, Cote, & Arnett, 2005). These emerging adults begin to spend less time with their parents and more time with friends and mentors. Many of these individuals are now living on their own at college or have moved away from their parents to pursue a career. This newfound autonomy allows for growth and discovery which helps them establish a more individual identity (Zulkowski, 2012). As these

individuals begin to age and distance themselves from the influence of their parents, they begin to develop their ability to think more abstractly more fully (Fowler, 1981).

Autonomy has also been seen as a factor that has a large impact on religious identity development in adolescence, especially as they develop into the emerging adulthood stage. Inhelder and Piaget (1958) found that individuals have an increased capacity for abstract thought as the brain develops. Markovits (1993) suggests that adolescents who are well versed in religious teachings ask questions during this stage of development such as "How can God be considered loving yet allow people to experience pain and suffering?" and "Why doesn't God end evil in the world?" More autonomous individuals are able to think about these abstract concepts on their own and make their own decisions about what they believe. This religious identity formation is still not free from the impact of the emerging adult's parents. Parents establish a form of religion that is comfortable to these individuals and they normally begin to make their own decisions in the framework of the religion with which they were raised (Pearce and Denton, 2011). Also family stability has a large impact on how these emerging adults form their identity with religion (Denton, 2012). Emerging adults from stable families are more likely to be religious in the emerging adulthood stage than those from an unstable family (Myer, 1996).

Religion and Family

Religion and parental influence both have a significant impact on the lives of adolescent individually. This study is interested in seeing if the influences of parents can strongly predict adolescent religiosity for adolescents over 17 years old. Results have

shown that religion can help facilitate healthy family interaction and growth (Abbot, et al., 1990). Churches provide many services, such as daycare and youth group, that help parents with the child-rearing process and give children a place to go when parents may be busy with work or other engagements. Religious organizations normally offer several activities for families in which to participate. These activities give parents opportunities to interact with their children in a social setting outside of the home. Most religions typically teach family-centered messages that give parents resources to instill the importance of family in their children (Glover, 1996). Worship services and church dinners give families a chance to spend time together and to interact with others who share the same beliefs and values.

The Role of Mothers

What the mother establishes to be important has a strong impact on what is important in the lives of an adolescent. Greater religious importance and attendance in mothers was associated with greater religious importance and attendance in adolescents (Laird, Marks, and Marrero, 2011). Adolescents whose mothers express high levels of religiosity report higher emotional relationships with their mothers are more likely to practice their own private religion (Varon & Riley, 1999). Adolescents who are in stable homes report less stress and high life satisfaction (Laird, Marks, and Marrero, 2011). Mothers who had a high participant rate in religious services were more likely to live with her child's father and reported higher family stability. Mothers who are religious can also help resolve conflict in their children's life and therefore help decrease mental illness in their families. Religion normally teaches family values and the effect of these

teachings on mothers has a positive effect on their children (Varon & Riley, 1999).

Mothers who report high religious importance also report higher levels of resiliency and

ability to cope for both them and their adolescent children (Bert, 2011). However,

adolescents and mothers placing different levels of importance on religion this causes

greater conflict in mother-adolescent relationships than those relationships that place the

same importance on religion (Pearce & Axinn, 1998). Mothers and adolescents who are

more religious report lower levels of delinquency (Pearce & Haynie, 2004). Religion

provides a pathway for mothers to impart positive values along to their children (Varon

& Riley, 1999).

The Role of Fathers

Fathers are encouraged by most religions to be involved in the household and be

part of their children's lives (Devries, 2004). Religion gives fathers an informal network

to talk about how to raise their children. This network gives fathers a chance to talk to

other men with the same belief and values in a non-threatening and non-stressful

environment. Fathers who are religiously active report eating more dinners with their

families and participating in more youth activities, such as cub scouts and youth sports,

than fathers who were not religiously active (Wilcox, 2002). Religion has been seen to

increase involvement with their children in both married and divorced fathers. If religion

is important to the father are motivated to share their faith with their children and this

leads to fathers spending time with their children (King, 2003). Fathers see eating dinner

with their family and participating in their adolescent's activities as a chance to live out

their religion and make an impact on their children's lives.

Faith Development Theory

Fowler's Faith Development Theory is one of the most respected and established theories of how people conceptualize faith throughout their lifetime. This theory is rooted in genetic structuralism and describes development that leads from the particular to the universal and from heteronomy to autonomy (King & Roeser, 2009).

Fowler proposes six levels of faith development in his faith development theory. His first stage covers the first seven or eight years of life where he says that there is limited capacity for thinking and a limited ability to rationally order experiences. The second stage is the stage of 'Mythic-Literal Faith' where thinking skills increase and enable the ordering of experiences. The third stage is the stage of 'Synthetic-Conventional Faith'. The desire for conformity is strong in this stage and meaning is derived from relationships and significant others. The fourth stage is the stage of 'Individuative-Reflective Faith'. Individuality emerges in this stage and beliefs become less about relationships (Hughes, 1997). The fifth stage is the 'Inclusive Faith' stage. In this stage the arrogance of the fourth stage begins to fade and a person begins to have a new openness to others and an ability to keep in tension the paradoxes and polarities of faith and life (Fowler, 1981). The six and final stage 'Universalizing Faith' stage, this stage is rare, occurring only in later life if at all. There is a relinquishing or abandoning of the self. This is motivated by a burning desire to love everyone, help others, and give one's self even through self-sacrifice (Fowler, 1981).

The third stage of this theory gives the best view of religious lifestyles of adolescents. In the synthetic-conventional stage adolescents begin to start to think for

themselves and begin the process of abstract thinking (Fowler, 1981). Adolescents in this stage are able to construct ways that others think of them. However, this new development makes adolescents sensitive to what others think about them. Adolescents begin to look to significant others in their lives to confirm their identity. In this dependence upon significant others for confirmation and clarity about its identity and meaning, the self does not yet have a transcendental perspective from which it can see and evaluate self-other relations(Fowler, 2000).This conformity to what others think is called the 'tyranny of they'(King & Roser,2009). This tyranny traps adolescents in the cycle of sensitivity towards what others think and needing their approval for formation of their identity. Adolescents are not able to break free from this tyranny until they begin to progress towards the fourth stage of faith development (Fowler, 1981). The closer they move towards the 'Individuative-Reflective Faith' stage the more they begin to take autonomy their thinking and begin to think about faith in an individual way rather than based solely on relationships that they have. In the third stage adolescents are aware of their belief systems and values but they fail to examine these personally until they develop further. Adolescents in the fourth stage begin to conceptualize God in purely abstract ways where those in the third stage still have their construct of God placed in the concrete thoughts of their relationships with others (Fowler, 1981). Most adolescents are between stages three and four and it is not until later in life that a person truly transitions into the fourth stage (Fowler, 2000).

Summary

The influences of parental-relationships and religiosity can have a positive impact on the development of an adolescent. Both of these influences can help improve the well-being of adolescents. They both can help improve adolescents' ability to cope with tragedy and discover who they are as a person. The religiosity of both the mother and the father has an impact on how they view their children and how they raise them. These influences effect the rate at which an adolescent gains autonomy and develops their faith on their own. As an adolescent grows they begin to think more abstractly and allow their relationships to define their views less and less. However, this development occurs at different rates for each individual based on a myriad of factors. This current study seeks to understand the level of influence that parents have on the faith development of adolescents 17-24 years old.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The study was designed to examine adolescent-parent relationships and its influence on the religiosity of adolescents 17-24 years old. Data used for this study were taken from the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR), a longitudinal study completed by researchers over the past twelve years and designed to gather data about the religious lives of American youth.

Secondary Data Source

The NSYR is a research project directed by Dr. Christian Smith in the Department of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame and Dr. Lisa Pearce in the Department of Sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The project received support from the Lilly Endowment Inc., from August 2001 to December 2013. The purpose of the NYSR study is to "research the shape and influence of religion and spirituality in the lives of American youth; to identify effective practices in the religious, moral, and social formation of the lives of youth; to describe the extent and perceived effectiveness of the programs and opportunities that religious communities are offering to their youth; and to foster an informed national discussion about the influence of religion in youth's lives, in order to encourage sustained reflection about and rethinking of our cultural and institutional practices with regard to youth and religion." (National Study of Youth and Religion, 2013).

This NSYR study desires to provide a detailed and nationally representative mapping of religious and spiritual practices and beliefs in the lives of American

adolescents. The researchers wanted to provide resources for practitioners and parents to utilize in order to be able to better understand today's adolescents and their religious behaviors. The overall study project also sought to foster discussion about adolescent's and their development and highlight the importance of adolescents in today's society through the utilization of both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The NSYR is a longitudinal study that is conducted in three separate waves. During the first wave, the researchers conducted their first telephone survey in 2002 and used a random digit dial telephone survey method with in-house randomization, in order to collect nationally represented data. This method ensured that equal representation of household telephone numbers regardless of being listed or unlisted. Eligible houses included at least one teenager between the ages of 13 and 17 years old living in the household for at least six months. A total of 3,290 U.S. teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17, and of one of their parents were included in the study's first wave. In order to identify minority religious populations, a Jewish oversample was intentionally selected. The NSYR included 80 oversampled Jewish households, bringing the total number of completed NSYR cases to 3,370. Participants (parents and adolescents) were offered a financial incentive to participate in the study. The telephone survey was 40 minutes long and was available in Spanish and English (National Study of Youth and Religion, 2013).

All randomly-generated telephone numbers were dialed a minimum of 20 times. These calls were placed during varying hours during week days, week nights, and weekends and over a minimum of five months per telephone number. This study was quite persistent in the pursuit of the survey participants calling some participants at least

99 times (National Study of Youth and Religion, 2013). The calling design included two telephone-based attempts to convert refusals. The households that refused to cooperate with the telephone survey but established by initial screening to include children ages 13 to 17 in residence were matched to mailing addresses and sent, by mail, information about the survey, contact information for researchers, and a request to cooperate and complete the survey. Final attempts for inclusion included calling back again after the mail outs for possible refusal conversions. The first wave targeted 13-17 year old adolescents and the same adolescents were targeted in waves two and three as they aged into young adulthood.

Wave two was designed to be a re-interview via telephone interviews all wave one youth survey respondents. Respondents during this time period were between the ages of 16 – 21 years old. Parents were not re-interviewed during this wave and all telephone interviews were conducted in English. The telephone survey covered many of the same topics in the wave one questionnaire. The differences included questions related to behaviors occurring during the transition to adulthood, such as non-marital cohabitation, educational and career aspirations, pregnancy and marriage. Successful tracking methods yielded 2,581 respondents (77.9% retention rate) from the original wave one respondents (National Study of Youth and Religion, 2013).

Wave three included many of the same questions from Wave one and two; however, changes to better capture the respondents lives were included. These survey questions focused less on parental monitoring and more on post-high school educational aspirations. The duration of the third wave was from September 24, 2007 through April

21, 2008. Information was collected from 2,532 youth ages 17-24 via phone surveys and in-depth interviews. This sample was collected by recalling every English speaking participant who participated in the second wave survey (National Study of Youth and Religion, 2013).

Advantages of the NYSR Data Set

This data set has many advantages and provides a unique opportunity to examine religion among adolescents. First, the NSYR was designed to focus on understanding the religious lives of teenagers. The study measures include a large variety of religion measures not particularly found in other nationally representative surveys of adolescents (i.e., National Household Education Survey and National Youth Risk Behavior Survey). As such, the data set is able to move beyond single indicators of religion to utilize complex concepts that allows for the construction of religious measures along dimensions. Second, the data set includes measures on the religious lives of both parents and teenagers and the relationship between parents and adolescents. This enables this study to examine adolescent religious characteristics and the role of relationship between parent and adolescents.

Adolescent-Parent Relationships

To measure parent-adolescent relationships, two sets of questions were taken from the NYSR third wave data set. These measures included questions regarding mother-adolescent relationships and father-adolescent relationships. These measures served as independent variables in analysis.

The adolescent-parent relationship was measured by examining the twelve items in Table 1; frequency of technology based communication with parents, frequency of face-to-face interaction closeness to parents, relationship quality, frequency of personal/private communication, and perceptions of understanding. These twelve indicators included the following questions:

Table 1. Adolescent-Parent Relationship Measures

1.	During the past month, about how often have you talked on the phone, emailed, or messaged with [MOTHER 1]?	1 = Almost every day, 2 = Once or twice a week, 3 = Once or twice during the month, or 4 = Not at all during the past month?
2.	Over the past month, would you say you have seen [MOTHER 1]	1 = Almost every day, 2 = Once or twice a week, 3 = Once or twice during the month, or 4 = Not at all during the past month?
3.	How close or not close do you feel to [MOTHER 1]?	1 = Extremely close, 2 = Very, 3 = Fairly, 4 = Somewhat, 5 = Not very, or 6 = Not close at all
4.	Generally, how well do you and [MOTHER 1] get along?	1 = Extremely well, 2 = Very well, 3 = Fairly well, 4 = Not so well, 5 = Poorly,
	How often do you talk with [MOTHER 1] about personal subjects?	1 = Very often, 2 = Fairly often, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Rarely, or 5 = Never
5.	How much does [MOTHER 1] understand you?	1 = Very much, 2 = Somewhat, 3 = Not very much, or 4 = Not at all
6.	During the past month, about how often have you talked on the phone, emailed, or messaged with [FATHER 1]?	1 = Almost every day, 2 = Once or twice a week, 3 = Once or twice during the month, or 4 = Not at all during the past month?
7.	Over the past month, would you say you have seen [FATHER 1]	1 = Almost every day, 2 = Once or twice a week, 3 = Once or twice during the month, or 4 = Not at all during the past month?
8.	How close or not close do you feel to [FATHER 1]?	1 = Extremely close, 2 = Very, 3 = Fairly, 4 = Somewhat, 5 =Not close

Table 1. Continued

9.	Generally, how well do you and [FATHER 1] get along?	1 = Extremely well, 2 = Very well, 3 = Fairly well, 4 = Not so well, 5 = Pretty Poorly, or 6 = Very badly
10.	How often do you talk with [FATHER 1] about personal subjects?	1 = Very often, 2 = Fairly often, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Rarely, or 5 = Never
11.	How much does [FATHER 1] understand you	1 = Very much, 2 = Somewhat, 3 = Not very much, or 4 = Not at all

Adolescent Religiosity

Adolescent religiosity was measured by the twelve items in Table 2; belief in

God, religious truth, importance of faith in your daily life, closeness to God, frequency

of prayer, frequency of scripture reading, respect for religion in America, general respect

for religion, turn-off of religion, religious attendance, irrelevance of religion, and

Sunday school attendance. These questions serve as the dependent variables in the

analysis. Each of these indicators are measured by the following questions:

Table 2. Adolescent Religiosity Measures

1.	Which of the following statements comes closest to your own views about religion?	1=Only one religion is true, or 2=Many religions may be true, or 3=There is very little truth in any religion
2.	How important or unimportant is religious faith in shaping how you live you daily life?	1 = Extremely Important, 2 = Very, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = Not Very, 5= Or Not Important At All?
3.	How distant or close do you feel to god most of the time	1 = Extremely Distant, 2 = Very Distant, 3 = Somewhat Distant, 4 = Somewhat Close, 5 = Very Close, Or 6= Extremely Close?
4.	How often, if ever, do you pray by yourself alone?	1 = Never, 2 = Less than once a month, 3 = One to two times a month, 4 = About once a week, 5 = A few times a week, 6 = About once a day, or 7 = Many times a day

Table 2. Continued

5.	How often, if ever, do you read from [Scriptures C] to yourself alone?	1 = Never, 2 = Less than once a month, 3 = One to two times a month, 4 = About once a week, 5 = A few times a week, 6 = About once a day, or 7 = Many times a day?
6.	Generally, how positively or negatively do you feel about religion in this country?	1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree 3=Don't Know, 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree
7.	I have a lot of respect for religion in this county.	1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree 3=Don't Know, 4=Agree, or 5=Strongly Agree
8.	Do you believe in God, or not, or are you unsure?	1=Yes, 2= No, 3= Unsure
9.	In the last year, how often, if at all, have you attended a religious Sunday school or other religious education class?	1 = Never, 2 = Less than once a month, 3 = One to two times a month, 4 = About once a week, 5 = A few times a week, 6 = About once a day, or 7 = Many times a day?
10.	About how often do you usually attend religious services there? Is it:	1= a few times a year, 2= many times a year, 3= once a month, 4= 2-3 times a month, 5= once a week, 6= or more than once a week?
11.	Most mainstream religion is irrelevant to the needs and concerns of most people my age.	1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Undecided, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree
12.	Organized religion is usually a big turn-off for me	1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Undecided, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

Analytic Methods

The secondary data analysis of the NYSR was examined and included a total sample of 2532 participants. These analyses were conducted using Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 22.0). The data set was downloaded from the NSYR website (2013). The data was provided as a raw data spreadsheet and screened for

missing data and accuracy. Respondents with missing measures were eliminated. The data set was imported into SPSS for analysis.

The first analytic methods performed were descriptive statistics to explore the NYSR data set. This was completed to better understand the demographic characteristics of the study participants. Further exploratory analyses were conducted to determine any patterns with missing data among the sample.

The researchers had to adjust the data from the NSYR data set. All missing data was removed and all items were recoded into a low to high continuum. Maximum likelihood exploratory factor analyses were then run on the 12 items measuring adolescent-parent relationships and on the 12 items measuring adolescent religiosity.

After running the factor analyses, index scores of each factor were calculated by taking the averages of each response scores for each survey responder on the particular questions measured in each factor.

Once these index scores were calculated, multiple regressions were run on all the adolescent-parent factors against the factors measuring adolescent religiosity. These regressions were run to discover a correlation between adolescent-parent relationships and adolescent religiosity of adolescents 17-24 years old.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to identify the effect that parental relationship had on the religious lives of adolescents 17 to 24 years old. This is an important topic to help start the process of untangling the complicated religious lifestyles of adolescents. Youth religious practitioners and parents can benefit from the results of this study by getting a stronger idea of what does and does not have a major influence on adolescent religiosity.

Study Sample Description

A total of 2532 participants (75.1% of the NSYR dataset) were included in this particular study because they participated in the third wave of this longitudinal study. The mean age of the participants was 20.02 years ($SD = 1.437$), with 48.7% ($N = 1232$) as males and 51.3% ($N = 1300$) as females. In regards to participants' religious affiliation: 16.3% ($N= 412$) of participants were Catholic, 48.3% ($N= 1222$) of participants were another type of Christian or Protestant, 3.4% ($N= 85$) participants were Jewish, .2% ($N=4$) of the participants were Muslim, 2.3% ($N= 59$) of participants were another religion, .2% ($N=4$) of the participants were half one religion half another, 5.8% ($N= 146$) of the participants were not religious. .4% ($N=11$) of participants did not know what religion they were. .2% ($N= 5$) of the participants refused to answer, and 23.1% ($N= 584$) of participants legitimately skipped the question. For participants living situations, 42.5% ($N=1076$) lived in their parent's home, 7% ($N=177$) lived in another person's home, 34.6% ($N= 876$) lived in their own place, 15.8% ($N=400$) lived in group quarters, like a dormitory, .1% ($N=2$) were homeless, and <.001% ($N=1$) refused to

answer the question. Table 3 provides summaries of the descriptive characteristics of the

sample.

Table 3. Descriptive Characteristics of Participants

Variable	N	Percent
Sex		
Male	1232	48.7
Female	1300	51.5
Age		
17 or 18 years	492	19.4
19 years	501	19.8
20 years	542	21.4
21 years	517	20.4
22 years	416	16.4
23 or 24 years	64	2.6
Religion		
Catholic	412	16.3
Christian/Another kind of Christian/Protestant	1222	48.3
Jewish	85	3.4
Muslim/Islamic	4	.2
Another religion	59	2.3
More than one religion	4	.1
Non-religious	146	5.8
Don't know	11	.4
Refused	5	.1
Legitimate skip	584	23.1
Residency		
Your parent's home	1076	42.5
Another person's home	177	7.0
Your own place	876	34.6
Group quarters, like a dorm, sorority, or fraternity house	400	15.8
Homeless	2	.1
Refused	1	.0

Results of Hypothesis 1

In order to address hypothesis 1, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was run

for the 12 items of adolescent-parent relationships. The dimensionality of the 12 items

measuring adolescent-parent relationships addressing the first hypothesis was analyzed

using maximum likelihood factor analysis. The KMO for the factor analysis was .797

and the Cronbach's alphas for the factors were .859, .878, and .900 for mother-

adolescent relationships, father-adolescent relationships, and parental visitation

respectively. The criteria used to determine the number of factors to rotate was the

interpretability of the factor solution, retaining factors with eigenvalues greater than 1,

and examining the scree plot. Based on the factor solution, three factors were rotated

using a Varimax rotation procedure. The rotated solutions, as shown in Table 4, yielded

three interpretable factors: mother-adolescent relationships, father-adolescent

relationships, and parental visitation.

Father-adolescent relationships accounted for 38.70% of the variance, mother-

adolescent relationships accounted for 19.91% of the variance, and parental visitation

accounted for 14.46% of the variance. Overall, 73.07% of the variance in adolescent-

parent relationships was explained by the three factors. It should be noted that two items

were considered cross-loaders, however they were retained due to their complex nature

(Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Those two items were: "during the past month, about how

often have you talked on the phone, emailed, or messaged with [Mother 1]…" and

"during the past month, about how often talked on the phone, emailed, or messaged with

[Father 1]…" Each of these items cross-loaded onto the parental visitation which makes

sense given the items speak to visitation.

Table 4. Factor Loadings for Each Parent Child Relationship
Item

Item Description	Factors		
	Father-Adolescent Relationships	Mother-Adolescent Relationships	Parental Visitation
During the past month, about how often have you talked on the phone, emailed, or messaged with [MOTHER 1]? Would you say that it has been since you moved away from [MOTHER 1]	.004	.601	.412
How close or not close do you feel to [MOTHER 1]?	.144	.892	.088
Generally, how well do you and [MOTHER 1] get along?	.107	.860	-.003
How often do you talk with [MOTHER 1] about personal subjects?	.166	.829	.087
How much does [MOTHER 1] understand you?	.184	.796	-.063
During the past month, about how often have you talked on the phone, emailed, or messaged with [FATHER 1]? Would you say that it has been since you moved away from [FATHER 1].	.628	-.028	.478
How close or not close do you feel to [FATHER 1]?	.908	.119	.099
Generally, how well do you and [FATHER 1] get along?	.842	.158	.018
How often do you talk with [FATHER 1] about personal subjects?	.835	.185	.051
How much does [FATHER 1] understand you?	.855	.162	-.038
Over the past month, would you say you have seen [MOTHER 1] since you moved away from [MOTHER 1]	-.035	.156	.910

Table 4. Continued.

Over the past month, would you say you have seen [FATHER 1] since you moved away from [FATHER 1]	.168	.004	.899

Results of Hypothesis 2

In order to address hypothesis 2, three exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were run on the 12 items used to measure adolescent religiosity that addressed the second hypothesis. These three analyses were run in order to maximize the efficiency of the data by only utilizing the pertinent data. In the first EFA, three factors were determined by using a principal components factor analysis; however, two items were removed because of low loading and cross loading. The item Irrelevant was removed for low loading (factor 1: -.215, factor 2: -.362, factor 3: .153). The item god_w3 was removed for cross loading (factor 1: .557, factor 2: .435, factor 3: .039). The second EFA still showed three factors but one factor only had one item, sschl_w3, so that item was removed. Two items, were low loaded in the second analysis and were removed, attend_w3 (factor 1: -.556, Factor 2:-.285, Factor 3:-.055) and Turnoff (factor1: -.227, factor2: -.800, factor3: .037).

The third and final EFA analyzed the remaining 7 items measuring adolescent religiosity using maximum likelihood factor analysis. The KMO for this EFA was .837, Cronbach's alpha for adolescent religious importance was .818, and Cronbach's alpha for adolescent respect for religion was .772. The criteria used to determine the number of factors to rotate was the interpretability of the factor solution. Based on the factor

solution, two factors were rotated using a Varimax rotation procedure. The rotated

solutions, as shown in Table 5, yielded two interpretable factors: adolescent religious

importance and adolescent respect for religion. Adolescent religious importance

accounted for 46.68% of the variance, and adolescent respect for religion accounted for

15.61% of the variance. Overall, 62.29% of the variance in adolescent religiosity was

explained by the two factors.

Table 5. Factor Loadings for Each Adolescent Religiosity Item

Item Description	Factors	
	Religious Importance	Respect for Religion
Of the following statements which one comes closest to your own views about religion?	.665	.166
How distant or close do you feel to God most of the time?	.689	.383
How important or unimportant is religious faith in shaping how you live your daily life?	.793	.337
How often, if ever, do you read from [SCRIPTURES C] to yourself alone?	.815	-.061
How often, if ever, do you pray by yourself alone?	.808	.187
Generally, how positive or negative do you feel about religion in this country?	.148	.867
I have a lot of respect for organized religion in this country	.177	.851

Results of Hypothesis 3 (Adolescent Religious Importance)

In order to address hypothesis three, multiple regression analysis was conducted

to evaluate how well the adolescent-parent relationships measures predicted adolescent

religious importance. The predictors were the three adolescent-parent factors, while the

criterion variable was the adolescent religious importance index. The linear combination of adolescent-parent relationships was significantly related to the religious importance index, $F(3,409) = 10.460$, $p < .001$. The R^2 was .071, indicating that 7.1% of the religious importance index in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of adolescent-parent relationship measures.

Table 6. Regression of Adolescent-Parent Relationships on Adolescent Religious Importance

Variable of concern	Predictors	Beta	Standard Beta	P value	T value	R^2 (*n*)	tol
	Mother-Adolescent Relationships	.214	.145	.004	2.859	.071 (n=412)	.880
Adolescent Religious Importance	Father-Adolescent Relationships	.226	.185	<.001	3.654	.071	.888
	Parental Visitation	-.009	-.006	.898	-.129	.071	.943

Indices are presented in Table 6 to indicate the relative strength of individual predictors. Each of the bivariate correlations between the adolescent-parent relationships measures and the religious importance index were positive, as expected, and two of the three indices were statistically significant ($p < .05$). The partial correlations between father-adolescent relationships and mother-adolescent relationships and the religious importance index were significant. On the basis of these correlational analyses, father-

adolescent relationships and mother-adolescent relationships are marginally effective of

adolescent religious importance.

Results of Hypothesis 3 (Adolescent Respect For Religion)

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well the

adolescent-parent relationships measures predicted adolescent respect for religion. The

predictors were the three adolescent-parent factors, while the criterion variable was the

adolescent respect for religion index. The linear combination of adolescent-parent

relationships was significantly related to the respect for religion index, $F (3,324) =$

$5.700, p <.001$. The R^2 for this sample was .050, Indicating that 5.0% of the respect for

religion index in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of

adolescent-parent relationship measures.

Table 7. Regression of Adolescent-Parent Relationships on
Adolescent Respect for Religion

Variable of concern	Predictors	Beta	Standard Beta	P value	T value	R^2 (*n*)	tol
	Mother-Adolescent Relationships	.152	.121	.037	2.093	.050 (n=327)	.883
Adolescent Respect for Religion	Father-Adolescent Relationships	.176	.162	.005	2.851	.050	.909
	Parental Visitation	-.043	-.038	.498	-.679	.050	.950

Indices are presented in Table 7 to indicate the relative strength of the individual

predictors. All the bivariate correlations between the adolescent-parent relationships

measures and the respect for religion index were positive, as expected, and two of the three indices were statistically significant (p< .05). The partial correlations between father-adolescent relationships and mother-adolescent relationships and the respect for religion index were significant. On the basis of these correlational analyses, father-adolescent relationships and mother-adolescent relationships are marginally effective of adolescent religious importance.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between adolescents'

relationships with their parents and an adolescent's religious lifestyles. Using data from

the third wave of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) the researcher

discovered through analysis of the data, that two prevalent aspects of an adolescent's

religious lifestyle - religious importance and respect for religion were significant.

Learning how parent-adolescent relationships influences this religiosity is an essential

piece of the puzzle in beginning to understand the complex way that adolescents interact

with religion. Adolescent religiosity and adolescent-parent relationships were both

multidimensional scales both yielding unique factors. Using exploratory factor analysis

three factors were discovered for the independent variable, adolescent-parent

relationships, and two factors for the dependent variable, adolescent religiosity. To

measure the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable the

researchers used multiple regression analysis to predict the relationship between the

three factors of adolescent-parent relationships -- mother-adolescent relationships,

father-adolescent relationships, and parental visitation, and the two factors of adolescent

religiosity- adolescent religious importance and respect for religion in adolescents aging

from 17-24 years.

Parent relationships were hypothesized to have a significant effect on adolescent

religiosity of adolescents 17-24 years old. The study results indicated that two factors of

adolescent-parent relationships, mother-adolescent and father adolescent relationships,

had a significant impact on adolescent religious importance and respect for religion whereas parental visitation did not have a significant effect. However, Adolescent-Parent relationships only explained 7.1% of the variance for religious importance and 5.0% of respect for religion. This is not what was intended and was a surprising result. In addition, every time one unit of religious importance increases mother-adolescent relationships only increase .214 times and every time increase one unit of respect for religion increases mother-adolescent relationships only increase .152 times. As research suggests (see Varon and Riley, 1999), results from this study support the fact that mothers have a positive impact on the lives of adolescents. Adolescents attend more religious services with their mothers and experience more religious teachings from their mothers (Varon and Riley, 1999). This still has an influence on the cognitive processing of these emerging adults (Pearce and Denton, 2011) and the more an adolescent of this age is in contact with his/her mother, that influence, though small, is still there.

Conversely, every time one unit of religious important increases father-adolescent relationships only increase .226 times and every time one unit of respect for religion increases father-adolescent relationships only increase .176 times. The data suggests that fathers had some influence on their children's religiosity. Wilcox (2002) says that religious fathers eat more meals with their family and are more involved in doing service projects with their children. This gives fathers more of a chance to have an influence on the lives of their children throughout their development and just like with the mother these influences in younger adolescents still have an impact on the way the older adolescents perceive religion (King & Roeser, 2009), even if the influence is small.

Considering that the third wave of the National Study of Youth and Religion gained responses from 17 to 24 year olds, parental influence is bound to have a lesser effect on the lives of adolescents as they development through the lifespan. Doorn et al. (2011) discusses how good parenting produces autonomy in adolescents and the goal of parenting should be to help their children develop a more horizontal relationship with the parents as children age. Autonomy becomes more prevalent in adolescents as they mature and age. Adolescents all develop three types of autonomy behavioral, value, and emotional autonomy in some aspect throughout their development (Russel and Bakken, 2002). Autonomy is an adolescent's growing ability to think, feel, make decisions, and act on her or his own (Russell & Bakken, 2002). According to this definition if adolescents are developing this level of autonomy they will naturally rely less on their parents and make more decisions on their own. As an adolescents grow so do their abilities to think in an abstract manner (King & Roeser, 2009). This ability to think independently allows these adolescents the ability to make their own thoughts about religion and how important it is in their lives.

Religion helps adolescents establish a strong identity (Glover, 1996) this allows them to become more independent and make more choices on their own. 57.5% of survey participants reported living outside of their parent's home. As adolescents move outside the sphere of influence of their parent's home they have more freedom to make choices for themselves. (Mullis, et al., 2009). Faith development theory states that as adolescents grow they develop the ability to think abstractly (Fowler, 1981). This abstract thinking allows adolescents to conceptualize God in their own way and make

their own decision about the abstract concepts of religion (King & Roeser, 2009). Parents may have the influential power to effect religiosity of younger adolescents because their children are less mature and looking for guidance from those whom they sense to have an authoritative relationship with (Hair, et al. 2008). Younger adolescents have fewer freedoms than those adolescents 17 and over, such as the ability to drive and pay for their own needs and are more reliant on their parents on a day to day basis. This data does not suggest that the parents of the survey participants never had an influence on their religious importance or respect for religion but it seems after an adolescent reaches 17 years old other factors are more important in determining the religious lifestyles of adolescents.

As Pearce and Denton (2011) discussed, these emerging adults still are comfortable with the religion they were raised in and are affected by the stability of their home. The conceptualization of God as a significant other, like a parent, is still present in the mind of these emerging adults (King & Roeser, 2009). Faith development theory says that as adolescents grow they move away from the 'tyranny of they', where they allow their thoughts and opinion to be dictate by what others think, and begin to make autonomous decision themselves (Fowler,1981). Adolescents from ages 17-24 years old are transition from the 'Synthetic-Conventional Faith' stage of development towards the 'Individuative-Reflective Faith' stage of faith development. During this transition adolescents allow relationships to have less of an impact on how they conceptualize their faith. Although the impact of adolescent-parent relationships is not as great on adolescent religiosity for adolescents 17-24 years, there is still an impact from the

adolescent's parents on their religious lifestyles. Although adolescents are developing the ability to think abstractly and independently they do not fully transition into full independent thought until later in life (Zulkowski, 2012). The opinions of parents, peers, and mentors are still present in the mind of an adolescent; however, the more they develop the less influence these outside sources have (King & Roser, 2009).

Limitations

Like most studies, limitations of the research exist. The first research limitation was that the data was collected from a third party source and the coding on some of the questions had to be reversed in order to analyze the data properly. Some questions were coded low to high scale and vice versa. The researchers recoded the data so that all items were on a low to high response format. Second, religiosity is a complex concept; it is difficult to measure with just one or two variables. The variables used in this study gave a good overview of the religious lifestyles of adolescents but a larger set of variables measuring a more diverse set of topics would have been helpful. It has been suggested by Storm (2009) and Smith and Denton (2005) that Latent Class Analysis (LCA) is an effective way to measure latent variables of religiosity. Using this method could have given the researchers a deeper understanding of adolescent religiosity. Denton (2012) used LCA to sort adolescents into five latent classes. Running multiple regressions on these five classes and the data from adolescent-parent relationships could have produced more details in the results of the study. Finally, there was a high Christian population in the data set and may have skewed the understanding of "religion" on the whole. In order to get a true sample size of the religious lives of American youth it is important to

understand all of the major religions practiced in the country not just Christianity. While Christians may behave a certain way, Muslims or Hindus may act in a complete different way. The fact that almost the entire sample size was comprised of Christian responses prevents the NSYR from truly exploring the diversity that religion has to offer.

Research Recommendations

This research sheds interesting light on the religious lives of adolescents 17 years and older. By examining how their religiosity is affected by their parental relationships researchers and practitioners are able to gain a greater understanding of the influences on adolescents of this age group. However, this study does not adequately tell the entire story of what influences adolescent religiosity.

1. Future research could be undertaken to examine the influence that peers have on adolescents of that age group. Examining this data with Latent Class Analysis (Pearce and Denton, 2011) may produce different results from the NSYR data by being able to measure the complex variable of religiosity from another vantage point.

2. Parents do have a huge impact on the lives of adolescents. In the area of adolescent religiosity, research suggests that parents have an impact on adolescents when they are younger but as adolescents grow up they gain autonomy and the ability to make decisions on their own. Researchers must look into other avenues of influence for adolescents over 17 years old. Other sources of influences in the family (ex: siblings and grandparents), other caring adults, and schools are important to consider in the religious development of youth.

3. Changes in parent-adolescent relationships can impact religiosity later in life. The influences they have at that age are vital to their continued religious development and it is important to understand what those influences are and how to best utilize them. More data, specifically longitudinal, collected to examine patterns of change in parental styles and religious socialization practices may be particularly helpful.

4. Complexity of religiosity need to be explored further. These results show the need to take into consideration the multi-dimensional understanding of religiosity and how this complexity can affect the development of a nonreligious identity.

5. Research needs to look beyond Christian-based religious affiliations. The majority of the sample participants indicated Christianity as their religious affiliation. Due to this sample limitation, analysis to examine the development of religiosity among adolescents affiliated with other organized religions is limited. Empirical examination to determine the impact of parent-child relationships across varying religions may be very insightful.

6. Positive youth development promotes the idea that young people are scaffolded and intricately linked to supports, opportunities, programs and services for youth. Further investigations into the role of people, social settings and opportunities that nurture forms of religiosity and positive development are warranted.

Youth Development Practice Recommendations

This research should create a sense of urgency for youth development organizations, particularly churches and campus outreach programs, attempting to

develop the religious lives of adolescents from ages 17-24. These types of organization can use the results of this study to help begin developing strategies for reaching these adolescents. Given that the role of religion and spirituality are important to focus on to promote thriving in young people. Since adolescent-parent relationships do not have a huge impact on adolescent religiosity, then these organizations can begin to divert their resources to other influences in the lives of adolescents that may have a larger impact on their religiosity. Some of these influences in the lives of "emerging adults" could be the peer groups they belong to or the educational institutions they attend. As adolescents mature and gain more autonomy, they move away from parental control and spend more time with peer groups. Scholars state that adolescents are more likely not to regularly attend church services if their friends' attendance rates are low (Zulkowski,2012).The schools that emerging adults attend could influence the way they think and help develop their independent abstract thinking (Zulkowski,2012). This improved abstract thinking helps adolescents conceptualize religion in a more complete fashion (Fowler, 1981).

Conclusion

Parents do have a huge impact on the lives of adolescents. However, other areas of influence should not be ignored. In the area of adolescent religiosity, research suggests that parents have an impact on adolescents when they are younger but as adolescents grow up they gain autonomy and the ability to make decisions on their own. Researchers must look into other avenues of influence for adolescents over 17 years old. The influences they have at that age are vital to their continued religious development and it is important to understand what those influences are and how to best utilize them.

REFERENCES

Abbot, D., Berry, M., & Meredith, W. (1990). Religious belief and practice: A potential asset in helping families. *Family Relations, 39*(4), 443-448.

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist 55*(5), 469-80. 2004.

Bert, S. C. (2011). The influence of religiosity and spirituality on adolescent mothers and their teenage children. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 40*(1), 72-84.

Denton, M. (2012). Family structure, family disruption, and profiles of adolescent religiosity. *Journal of Scientific Study of Religion, 51*(1), 42-64.

DeVries, M. (2004). *Family-based youth ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Doorn, M. D., Branje, S. J., & Meeus, W. H. (2011). Developmental changes in conflict resolution styles in parent-adolescent relationships: A four-wave longitudinal study. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *40*(1), 97-107.

Fowler, J. (2000). *Becoming adult, becoming christian: adult development & christian faith*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Fowler , J. (1981). *Stages of faith: The psychological quest for human meaning*. San Francisco: HarperCollins Publisher.

Glover, R. (1996). Religiosity in adolescence and young adulthood: Implications for identity formation. *Psychological Reports*, *78*, 427-431.

Hair, E., Moore, K., Garrett, S., Ling, T., & Cleveland, K. (2008). The continued importance of quality parent–adolescent relationships during late adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *18*(1), 187-200.

Hogan, D. P. & Astone, N. M. (1986). The transition to adulthood. *Annual Review of Sociology 12*: 109-30.

Hughes, F. (1997). James Fowler's Concept of Faith Development- An Evangelical Perspective. *Whitefield Briefing*.

Inhelder, B., Piaget, J., Parsons A., & Milgram, S. (1958). *The growth of logical thinking: From childhood to adolescence*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

King, V. (2003). The influence of religion on father's relationships with their children. *The Journal of Family and Marriage*, *65*(2), 382-96.

King, P. E., & Roeser, R. W. (2009). Religion and Spirituality in Adolescent Development. In R. Laird, R., Marks, L., & Marrero, M. (2011). Religiosity, self-control, and antisocial behavior: Religiosity as a promotive and protective factor. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 78-85.

Lovinger, S. L., Miller, L., & Lovinger, R. J. (1999). Some clinical applications of religious development in adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence Research*, *22*, 269-277.

Martin, T. F., White, J. M., & Perlman, D. (2003). Religious socialization: A test of the channeling hypothesis of parental influence on adolescent faith maturity. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *18*, 169-187.

Mullis, R. L., Graf, S. C., & Mullis, A. K. (2009). Parental relationships, autonomy, and identity processes of high school students. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology: Research and Theory on Human Development*, *170*(4).

Myers, S. M. (1996). An interactive model of religiosity inheritance: The importance of family context. *American Sociological Review 61*(5): 858-66.

National Study of Youth and Religion. (2013, October 1). Methodological Design and Procedures for the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) Longitudinal Telephone Survey (Waves 1, 2, & 3). Retrieved from http://www.youthandreligion.org/sites/youthandreligion.org/files/imported/research/docs/master_just_methods_11_12_2008.pdf

Pearce, L. D. & Denton, M. L. (2011). *A faith of their own: Stability and change in the religiosity of America's adolescents*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Pearce, L. & Axinn, W. (1998). The impact of family religious life on the quality of mother-child relations. *American Sociological Review*, *63(6)*: 810-828.

Pearce, L. & Haynie, D. (2004). Intergenerational Religious Dynamics and Adolescent Delinquency. *Social Forces, 82*: 1553-1572.

Reich, K. H., Oser, F. K., & Scarlett, W. G. (1999). Spiritual and religious development: Transcendence and transformations of the self. In K. H. Reich, F. K. Oser, & W. G. Scarlett (Eds.), *Being human: The case of religion, Vol. 2. Psychological studies on spiritual and religious development* (pp.7–24). Lengerich, Germany: Pabst Scientific Publishers.

Regnerus, M. (2003). Religion and positive adolescent outcomes: A review of research and theory. *Review of Religious Research*, *44*(4), 394-413.

Roehlkepartain, E., King, P., Wagener , L., & Benson, P. (2005). *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Russell, S., & Bakken, R. J. (2002). *Development of Autonomy in Adolescent.* Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Scales, P. C., Sesma, A., & Bolstrom, B. (2004). *Coming into their own: How developmental assets promote positive growth in middle childhood*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Schwartz, S. J., Côté, J. E., and Arnett, J. J. (2005). Identity and agency in emerging adulthood: Two developmental routes in the individualization process. *Youth Society, 37*(2), 201-29.

Search Institute. (2012). *40 developmental assets for adolescents*. Retrieved from http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18.

Smith, C. & Denton, M. L. (2005). *Soul searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Storm, I. (2009). Halfway to Heaven: Four Types of Fuzzy Fidelity in Europe. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *48*(4), 702-718.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2013). *Using Multivariate Statistics* (6th ed.).

Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Varon, R. S., & Riley, W. A. (1999). Relationship between maternal church attendance

and adolescent mental health and social functioning. *Psychiatric Services*, *50*(6), 799-

805.

Wilcox, W. (2002). Religion, convention, and paternal involvement. *Journal of*

Marriage and Family, 64, 780-792.

Zulkowski, S. E. (2012). *Losing Religion: Adolescence and the Nonreligious Identity*.

(Unpublished master's thesis). University of Delaware, Newark, DE.