

## Research Proposal

Although religion is usually associated with good mental health, many religious individuals report experiencing *divine struggle*: conflict in one's relationship with God or perceived stance with God. A large number of religious individuals report experiencing psychological distress, such as depression, as a result of divine struggle. The research aims to examine the proposed link between divine struggle and depression; investigating the possibility that divine struggle leads to faulty, negative views of God, which in turn lead to the onset of depression. The two mediating, negative God views used in the research were the view of God as cruel and the view of God as distant. These views are common among religious people who experience life trauma, whom as a result often blame God. The occurrence of divine struggles can influence individuals to view God as cruel, due to a conflict in reconciling their concept of God with their current emotional state. The view of God as cruel is likely to lead to the subsequent view of God as distant. A conditional process analysis was generated to assess the serial mediation. A sample of 532 participants were recruited and data was collected online using Mechanical Turk over a period of three days, with each participant completing a total of four scales. To be eligible for the study, each participant had to indicate that he or she was religious. As predicted, the indirect effect of divine struggles on depression through the proposed mediators was statistically significant; however the direct effect was still stronger. The research highlights the need for future research concerning the link between divine struggles and subsequent depression. Future research should test for alternative negative God concepts as mediators, in addition to accounting for negative religious coping as a possible moderator.