CENTRALITY OF RELIGIOSITY AS A PREDICTOR OF MOTIVATIONAL NEEDS FOR THE GEN Z COHORT

by

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ABSTRACT

Past research has focused exhaustively on the motivational needs of older generational cohorts, while Gen Z receives minimal attention. Simultaneously, no research exists examining Gen Z's centrality of religiosity or how their religiousness might affect motivational needs. This focus by research is crucial because the global number of Gen Z individuals now eclipses the current population of Baby Boomers and Gen X (Ajzen, 2020). This gap in motivational and religious centrality research is arguably due to many studies downplaying Gen Z's motivational needs with claims that their motivations, centrality of religiosity, and behavioral choices are like that of Gen X and Millennials (Ajzen, 2020). Some research states that older generations' behavior is primarily motivated by their religiousness, yet many Gen Z individuals report being religiously unaffiliated (Ajzen, 2020). This quantitative correlational study had two objectives; (1) measure Gen Z's centrality of religiosity, and (2) predict Gen Z's motivational needs based on their centrality of religiosity scores. The current study used two questionnaires to measure Gen Z's centrality of religiosity (the Centrality of Religiosity Scale) and motivational needs (a Needs Assessment Questionnaire). Data results of this study revealed that Gen Z's centrality of religiosity, overall, could not predict their motivational needs. Centrality of religiosity only held a significant statistical relationship with the motivational need for affiliation. Data also showed the Gen Z has high motivational needs for autonomy, affiliation, and competency. The primary implication from the current study includes Gen Z's need for highly autonomous, collaborative, and supportive environments.

Keywords: Gen Z**,** centrality of religiosity, motivational needs

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this doctoral dissertation to my daughter, Soleil Aurora Bermudez Willcockson, and my wife, Dr. Fae Princess Valera Bermudez-Willcockson.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Little research currently exists on the motivational needs of the Gen Z cohort, with no information on whether religious centrality might be affecting these needs for Gen Z. The current study examined if religious centrality could predict Gen Z's motivational needs, as religious centrality has previously predicted older generations' behavioral motivations. Popular research by Ryan and Deci (2000) explained that motivational needs are at the root of individual behavior. By thwarting individuals' motivational needs, behavior, and performance can drastically be reduced (Ryan & Deci, 2000). By supporting individuals' motivational needs, behavior and performance will be greater (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These behavior-motivating needs consist of the need for autonomy, affiliation, and competency. Strong motivational needs for autonomy and competency hold strong positive relationships with overall individual success and performance across various settings and contexts (Ryan & Deci, 1985, 2000, 2020). A strong motivational need for affiliation, but a low need for autonomy or competency, often holds a negative relationship with individual success (Ryan & Deci, 1985, 2000, 2020). It is shown by Ajzen (2020) and others' studies that older generations' motivational needs tend to favor affiliation with peers, requiring valuable external rewards and societal guidance for behavioral motivation (Bohdan & Beata, 2020; Chali et al., 2022). Some studies also reveal that older generations' behavioral motives are greatly influenced by peer approval, family upbringing, and strong religiousness (Ajzen, 2020; Crisan et al., 2022). Strong religious beliefs for these older generations are said to have a central positioning for religious centrality. A central positioning of religiosity means the

individual's behavior motivations and ethical choices are influenced by their faith or religious beliefs. Centrality of religiosity, as a construct, is the strength of religious influence on individual decisions and ethical behaviors (Ganguli et al., 2022).

Emerging research by Crisan et al. (2022) discussed past findings for generational differences in motivational needs. Explicit differences in motivational need are noted as external and internal influences. Baby Boomer and Gen X cohorts were found to be motivated by external factors and a strong motivational need for affiliation (Crisan et al., 2022). Affiliation often holds a positive relationship with a preference for interaction with others and adherence to societal standards for behavior, especially in religious contexts (Ajzen, 2020; Crisan et al., 2022). Millennials and Gen Z were found to be highly motivated by internal factors and a strong motivational need for autonomy and competency (Crisan et al., 2022). Autonomy and competency hold a negative relationship with the need for affiliation (Crisan et al., 2022). However, individuals with a strong need for affiliation often report following societal standards for behavior whether religious or not (Ajzen, 2020; Crisan et al., 2022). This negative relationship between autonomy and competency, and affiliation is an example of marginal or subordinate centralities of religiosity. Marginal centrality means that religious centrality has no influence whatsoever over individual behavioral choices, whereas a subordinate position means there is some influence (Ganguli et al., 2022). A subordinate position of religious centrality is commonly found in younger Gen X individuals and Millennials (Ganguli et al., 2022). Gen X and Millennials who label themselves as religious claim adherence to behavioral standards but also hold a strong motivational need for autonomy (Crisan et al.,

2022; Ganguli et al., 2022). While no research currently exists directly linking religious centrality with motivational needs, it was this study's goal to uncover a relationship.

Crisan et al. (2022) expand on generational differences for motivational need stating that most current research overlooks the individual's motivational needs as affected by religious belief systems. The biggest differences that motivational research has focused on for Gen Z are basic psychological and physiological needs, and observable behaviors (Prutskova, 2021). Studies were not located that were interested in the motivational needs of Gen Z mention religion or centrality of religiosity as a factor for behavioral motivation (Ajzen, 2020; Crisan et al., 2022; Ganguli et al., 2022). The consensus by motivational researchers claims that religion will not measurably influence Gen Z's motivational needs compared to older generations (Ganguli et al., 2022). However, it is claimed that Gen Z most likely holds a marginal or subordinate position of centrality (Ganguli et al., 2022). A marginal position of centrality would mean that Gen Z individuals are not at all behaviorally influenced by their religiousness (Ganguli et al., 2022). Whereas a subordinate position would mean that Gen Z is somewhat behaviorally influenced by their faith (Ganguli et al., 2022).

Crisan et al. (2022) and Ganguli et al. (2022) say centrality of religiosity should not be ruled out as an influence for Gen Z's motivational needs or behavioral choices in any setting. Crisan et al. (2022) and Ganguli et al. (2022) also say that motivational themes found between generations include the influence of societal norms, money and rewards, and self-fulfillment, describing a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic behavioral motivations shared between cohorts. Other research by Ajzen (2020) claims that Gen Z will be motivationally unique. From a quantitative study, Gen Z's most

popular theme of behavioral motivation is self-fulfillment (i.e., the opportunity for self-discovery and self-determined behaviors (Ajzen, 2020). Self-determinate behaviors hold a positive relationship with achievement of self-set goals and overall success in school and work settings (Ajzen, 2020). Further, self-determination and goal setting are closely related to the motivational needs of autonomy and competency (Deci & Ryan, 2000; 2021). Autonomy and competency do not appear to hold a positive or negative relationship with individuals who follow societal behavioral standards (Ajzen, 2020; Crisan et al., 2022). The current study initially proposed that the Gen Z cohort would have a marginal or subordinate religious centrality with a primary motivational need for autonomy and competency. It is possible that autonomy and competency hold a positive relationship with marginal or subordinate positions of religious centrality, and a negative relationship with central positionings.

Background

This study discusses generational differences in motivational need and how centrality of religiosity has historically affected older generations' behavior. In past studies it was concluded that religious centrality can have a robust motivational effect on individual behavior for Baby Boomers and the Gen X cohort (Ajzen, 2020; Crisan et al., 2022). However, there is little to no research about this same motivational effect for Gen Z, nor how Gen Z's religious centrality might be affecting their behavior. Further, no research exists connecting religious centrality with motivational needs for any generational cohort. Research views motivational needs as critical for understanding behavior and predicting success, while religious centrality does not receive the same attention by researchers (Ajzen, 2020; Crisan et al., 2022). Motivational needs have been

a peer reviewed source since the 1970's for predicting an individual's future success across various settings or environments, whereas centrality of religiosity research is less than fifteen years old (Crisan et al., 2022). Prominent motivational needs that are predictors of academic and workplace success are autonomy competency (Ajzen, 2020; Deci & Ryan, 2021).

It is not enough though for research to know Gen Z's motivational needs, but also what extrinsic and intrinsic influencers, such as religious centrality might affect or predict this generation's needs. Both internal and external factors can influence an individual's motivational needs (Ajzen, 2020; Crisan et al., 2022). Religious centrality itself is considered both an extrinsic and intrinsic factor for influencing behavior due to varying aspects of religiousness (Ajzen, 2020; Crisan et al., 2022). However, the current study focused primarily on religious centrality as an internal factor for influencing Gen Z's motivational needs. Religious centrality as an internal factor included the perception of ability to have control over one's behavior, self-set goals, autonomy to make ethical decisions, the effects of religious centrality on behavior, and self-exploration (i.e., self-determination; Ajzen, 2011; 2020, 2021; Crisan et al., 2022; Deci and Ryan; 1975).

Centrality of religiosity is defined by five measurable dimensions of religiousness, and how an individual's religious beliefs guide self-exploration, ethical choices, and behavior (Chali et al., 2022; Huber & Huber, 2012). The five dimensions of religious centrality include ideology, intellect, public practice, private practice, and the experience of receiving God's forgiveness (Chali et al., 2022; Huber & Huber, 2012). These five dimensions are also external and internal factors for influencing individuals' behavior, and could affect motivational needs (Chali et al., 2022; Huber & Huber, 2012).

Gen Z's Motivational Needs

Gen Z is a generational cohort marked by a specific range of birth years. Researchers commonly categorize this cohort as born between 1995 and 2009 (Ajzen, 2011). Since Gen Z is such a new cohort there has been little study about their motivational needs. This is in part due to 60% of the Gen Z population not yet being completed with their high school education (Ajzen, 2020). By 2027, the Gen Z population will account for almost 30% of the global population (Ajzen, 2020). Researchers have only begun to question Gen Z's motivational needs and influences across various settings and contexts. So far, Aziz et al. (2021) say that Gen Z high school and college students share many of the same behavioral motivators as past generations. However, research by Crisan et al. (2022) claimed that Gen Z is unlike older generations, requiring less external and more internal motivations for their behavior. From Crisan et al.s' research, Gen Z is showing a strong preference for motivational needs that include autonomy and affiliation but not competency. This is exemplified by Gen Z's qualitative survey requests for positive affiliations with their peers, but also autonomy support from their teachers, parents, friends, flexible daily schedules, and the opportunity for self-fulfillment (Aziz et al., 2021). Another study focusing on Gen Z high school students discussed how self-satisfaction with one's academic performance can be predicted based on the individual's internal behavior motivations (Bryngelson & Cole, 2021). Two prominent internal motivation examples for predicting Gen Z's self-satisfaction are autonomous intention to perform well at school and the competency to self-set goals (Bryngelson & Cole, 2021). This finding by Bryngelson and Cole gives insight to the current study about how Gen Z's motivational needs could be affected by internal aspects

of religious centrality. Autonomy is Gen Z's most desirable motivational need based on themes from a qualitative study (Bryngelson & Cole, 2021). The Gen Z cohort does not appear to allow external influences such as societal standards for behavior to motivate their academic success (Chali et al., 2022). Instead, Gen Z's desire for autonomy is positively related to their intrinsic viewpoints about what they comprehend as ethical, successful, and standard for behavior (Bryngelson & Cole, 2021). Therefore, Gen Z's strong motivational need for autonomy was thought to be positively linked to a marginal, or subordinate centrality of religiosity.

Religiosity and Motivation

Some studies for older generations found that religious centrality does motivate or influence individuals to behave differently than others with dissimilar or no religious beliefs (Bryngelson & Cole, 2021; Jacobsen, 2020). There are also differences in behaviors amongst religious individuals due to varying environmental settings, including academics, interactions with family members, and even the workplace (Bryngelson & Cole, 2021; Jacobsen, 2020). It is believed by researchers that because religiosity can affect behavioral motivation throughout various environments, religious centrality may hold a significant relationship with motivational needs (Crisan et al., 2022; Jacobsen, 2020). Research by Jacobsen (2020) said that individuals who describe themselves as religious often report to exert great effort in their daily tasks and voluntarily adhere to high ethical standards. This finding by Jacobsen gives a hint that autonomous task effort might be positively related to an individual's religious centrality. However, in the same study, Jacobsen expresses that non-religious individuals still exert autonomous effort into their daily performances and share similar beliefs about behavioral standards with those

who are religious. This finding for autonomous behavioral intention between religious and non-religious individuals highlights the difficulty of determining whether centrality of religiosity truly influences motivational needs. Overall, researchers are beginning to hypothesize that Gen Z's behavior motivations may not be due to religious centrality but rather their motivational needs, whether extrinsic or intrinsic (Ke & Stocker, 2019).

Ke and Stocker (2019) express that intrinsic factors are some of the greatest influencers of motivational need for all generational cohorts, including Gen Z. Especially so for those individuals who feel that religion does not guide their behavior (Ke & Stocker, 2019). When interviewing high school students across the United States in 2019, respondents described their relationship with religion, peers, and family members and how these external forces have influenced or motivated their behaviors. Themes from the interviews revealed that Gen Z students do not feel influenced by external factors (Ke & Stocker, 2019). This is evidence that Gen Z might be more motivated by intrinsic factors such as autonomy and competency (Ke & Stocker, 2019). However, respondents who labeled themselves as religious reported being somewhat influenceable by others, revealing a possible link between the motivational need for affiliation and religious centrality (Ke & Stocker, 2019). Respondents who labeled themselves as non-religious also felt somewhat influenced by peers and family members (Ke & Stocker, 2019). For individuals who subscribe to a religious belief system, religious centrality as an influence for behavioral motivation is often due to societally shared values and standards for behavior (Ke & Stocker, 2019). These values or standards often include responsibility for contributing to the community, performing ethical behaviors, and regularly participating in public prayer (Ke & Stocker, 2019).

Other research by Day and Hudson (2011) initially thought of religious centrality as strictly an external influence on behavior. Day and Hudson infer that religious values are more often imposed on individuals by the church, peers, and family members rather than oneself. Day and Hudson's study primarily focused on the Baby Boomer and Gen X cohorts. In an example, religious values or standards can be robust extrinsic influences due to individual perceptions about peer reward or punishment for partaking or not in religious practice and performing ethical behaviors (Day & Hudson, 2011). However, Ke and Stocker (2019) respond to Day and Hudson by saying that religious centrality may play a stronger intrinsic role in behavior than extrinsic. Ke and Stocker investigated Gen Z individuals who label themselves as religious. Gen Z individuals who labeled themselves as religious tended to report a desire for exploring their religious beliefs on their terms, guide their behaviors autonomously, and find self-fulfillment in their academics and careers (Ke & Stocker, 2019). Overall, Ke and Stocker's research concluded that religious centrality is intrinsically motivating for behavior.

In conclusion, because of the gap in findings between Day and Hudson (2011) and Ke and Stocker (2019), religious centrality as an intrinsic motivation for behavior is a factor worth exploring for the Gen Z cohort. The current study used Ke and Stocker's (2019) recommendation for examining religious centrality further as an internal motivation for individual behavior. The current study used Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Shin & Johnson, 2021) to explain Gen Z's intrinsic motivational needs and how religious centrality can predict those needs.

Problem Statement

Research surrounding motivational needs holds a broad understanding of what motivates past generations to perform and behave in various environments and contexts. For example, many behavioral motivations are studied using SDT, including intrinsic and extrinsic factors. These factors can consist of influences such as peer reward or punishment, belief systems that are non-religious or religious, and perceived control over one's behavior (Ajzen, 2011, 2021; Deci & Ryan, 2021). Barhate and Dirani (2021) addressed past motivational studies focusing too heavily on Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials' motivational needs. There is now a call to action by Barhate and Dirani to begin concentrating more on the Gen Z cohort. To motivate behavior, Barhate and Dirani claim that Gen Z requires autonomous self-exploration, strong affiliations with others, and opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge needed to make competent life and behavioral decisions.

Aziz et al. (2021) also claim that Gen Z will likely have uniquely different motivational needs compared to past generations. Davoodi and Lonbrozos' (2022) research agrees with Aziz et al. but goes further to say that Gen Z's behavior will be overall unaffected motivationally by their religious centrality compared to past generations. Davoodi and Lonbrozos explained that religious centrality as a motivator for behavior has not been conclusive, questioning where other studies began determining whether religion is a mediator or a moderator for behavior. Research does not collectively say that being religious leads to good and ethical behaviors, nor does it say the opposite (Davoodi & Lonbrozos, 2022). After all, not all religions hold the same views, behavioral ethics, standards, or values. In a qualitative study about college students by Greene (2021), themes from participant responses suggested that religious centrality generally

mediated between good or bad university performance within the Millennial cohort. However, neither a positive nor negative relationship appeared to exist between individuals having a religious belief system and performing well in a university setting (Greene, 2021). Greene's study conclusion stated that religious centrality as a mediator or moderator for behavioral motivation is still questionable.

The current study has located a gap in research concerning Gen Z's motivational needs and centrality of religiosity. Specifically, research surrounding Gen Z does not fully understand their motivational needs, external and internal influences, or whether religious centrality itself plays a role in behavioral motivation. Barhate and Dirani (2021), and Greene (2021) indicated that religious centrality may not influence Gen Z's motivational needs as strongly as it does for older generational cohorts. However, future research will benefit by further exploring Gen Z's religious centrality as an influence on behavior and their motivational needs (Barhate & Dirani, 2021; Greene, 2021).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between centrality of religiosity and motivational needs within the Gen Z cohort. Gen Z individuals were surveyed about their motivational needs for autonomy, affiliation, and competency as dependent variables while using religious centrality as a predictor of these needs. Furthermore, the five dimensions of religious centrality were examined as individual predictors of the three motivational needs to determine any differences in predictability.

Research Question(s) and Hypotheses

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a relationship between centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for autonomy?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for affiliation?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for competency?

RQ4: To what extent do the 5 dimensions of centrality of religiosity (intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and experiencing God's forgiveness) predict the motivational need for autonomy?

RQ5: To what extent do the 5 dimensions of centrality of religiosity (intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and experiencing God's forgiveness) predict the motivational need for affiliation?

RQ6: To what extent do the 5 dimensions of centrality of religiosity (intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and experiencing God's forgiveness) predict the motivational need for competency?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Centrality of religiosity will have a negative relationship with the motivational need for autonomy.

Hypothesis 2: Centrality of religiosity will have a positive relationship with the motivational need for affiliation.

Hypothesis 3: A motivational need for competency will not have any relationship with centrality of religiosity.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The current study assumed that data collection would be free from errors with participant responses being honest and non-biased. It was assumed that study participants would respond to all survey items, and in a timely manner. Participants were assumed to only be from the Gen Z cohort, with an even mixture of female and male respondents. Participants were assumed to have at least an 8th grade reading level. Participants were assumed to have a basic understanding of what religion means to them, a perceived value of religion and an understanding of how religion is practiced. The current study assumed that participant responses would be based on genuine, personal experiences with religion, the practice of religion, and if any, a relationship with God. The current study also assumed that participants would be free from environmental distractions during survey, researcher influence and biases in survey item framing.

The main limitation of this study was its ability to make strong inferences about centrality of religiosity having a relationship with motivational needs. Centrality of religiosity, until now, has not been studied in the context of motivational needs, especially for the Gen Z demographic. This study was the preliminary examination of these two constructs to explain if centrality of religiosity affects or influences Gen Z's motivational needs. Huber and Huber (2012) claimed that preliminary studies often receive more negative criticism than positive. These criticisms are in part due to new ideas not having substantial peer review (Chali et al., 2022; Huber & Huber, 2012). To build a strong foundation of information that was generalizable and usable, the current study took equally from religious and empirical literature.

As another limitation to the current study, research by Chali et al. (2022) explained that if a relationship does exist between religious centrality and behavior for

Gen Z, it will be difficult to infer directionality. Directionality is near impossible to conclude due to multiple variables being involved in behavior and an individual's environment. It is suggested by Chali et al. that a linear regression would be the most appropriate statistical analysis for this newly examined relationship. A linear regression will provide a prediction of one variable based on another variable, but not directionality, however, a linear regression will have its own limitations (Chali et al., 2022). The primary limitation with a linear regression is that it often makes data appear in a straight line, or might contain many outliers (Chali et al., 2022). Behavioral and statistical relationships are not always in a straight line, and other factors or variables may play a role in any relationship (Chali et al., 2022). One variable that is erroneous in the current study was the use of an online survey and self-response data rather than real-world, observable data. By not using observable data the current study risked error through researcher influence, survey administration method, miscalculation of data during analysis, and any subjective word influences for survey items. The limitations for the current study were accounted for by minimally interacting with participants, using clearly written and neutrally framed survey items, and carefully coding participant responses into SPSS for analysis.

Theoretical Foundations of the Study

Centrality of Religiosity

Centrality of religiosity is not a formal theoretical foundation, but it is a well-known construct throughout theological research (Riegel, 2020; Zarzycka et al., 2020). Researchers study this construct to describe how religious belief systems can influence individuals' behavior in various settings and environments (Riegel, 2020; Roznowski &

Zarzycka, 2020; Zarzycka et al., 2020). Religion is essential as a framework regarding an individual's worldviews, ethical behaviors, extrinsic and intrinsic influences, and how individuals choose to explore their beliefs (Zarzycka et al., 2020). There are three distinct classifications of individuals when discussing positions of religious centrality. (1) Individuals who are easily influenceable by their religious beliefs (central positioning), (2) individuals who are not at all influenced by religious beliefs (marginal positioning), and (3) those who are somewhat influenceable (subordinate positioning; Riegel, 2020).

To measure individuals' positions of religious centrality, a popular scale can be used. The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS; Riegel, 2020; Zarzycka et al., 2020) is a widespread tool for measuring an individual's influence on behavior by their religious beliefs. The CRS uses five measurable dimensions of religious centrality to categorize individuals as central, marginal, or subordinate. The five dimensions are intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and having experienced God's forgiveness (Riegel, 2020; Zarzycka et al., 2020). Dimensions of the CRS were operationalized into generalizable terms by past researchers to promote the use of the scale across various areas of study.

Self-Determination Theory (Theories of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations)

For the current study, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) helped to explain the intrinsic and extrinsic theories of motivation as aspects of an individual's motivational needs. SDT is described as an individual's perceived ability to make behavioral, or performance choices based on intrinsic or extrinsic influences (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2020). Examples of SDT are noted as an individual knowing their needs, desires, strengths, and limitations (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2020). Individuals use this information

about their needs to make behavioral decisions that allow them to set and achieve goals, complete tasks, or perform behaviors across various environments (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2000; 2020). Deci and Ryan indicate three pertinent constructs as motivational needs within research that reliably predict an individual's behavior or success in various settings. The three motivational constructs are autonomy, affiliation, and competency. These motivational needs are traditionally measured using a Needs Assessment Questionnaire (NAQ; Heckert et al., 2000; Ryan & Deci, 1985; 2000; 2020). The NAQ, after rigorous peer review, uses framed sentences that have been associated with each of the three motivational needs. Statistical analysis by researchers revealed that autonomy and competency hold a robust positive relationship with individual success in academics, the workplace and self-exploration (Heckert et al., 2000; Ryan & Deci, 1985; 2000; 2020). Whereas the motivational need for affiliation holds neither a positive nor negative relationship with overall success (Heckert et al., 2000; Ryan & Deci, 1985; 2000; 2020). The basis of the three motivational needs is explainable using SDT.

SDT is made up of six mini theories to explain intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. These theories reveal how individuals choose to make decisions and perform behaviors based on their motivational needs for autonomy, competency, and affiliation. The six theories are Cognitive Evaluation Theory (Deci et al., 1975), Organismic Integration Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008), Causality Orientations Theory (Stevens et al., 2014), Basic Psychological Needs Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2008; Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013), Goal Contents Theory (Cheng & Chartrand, 2003; Levesque et al., 2008) and Relationships Motivation Theory (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The six mini theories are discussed further within the literature review section of this study.

Biblical Foundation and Constructs

Many individuals find comfort in life through Christ's unconditional love and support, while some individuals may feel that they must repay Christ for the forgiveness that he provides. However, Christ only asks individuals to participate in the ministry of the gospel and devote themselves to Him. The Bible says that God will meet every individual's basic psychological and physiological needs (English Standard Bible, 2001/2016, Philippians 4:19). Individuals will not necessarily receive intrinsic or extrinsic rewards on this Earth for their devotion to Christ. However, their choice to follow Christ will result in the reward by the forgiveness of sin and passage to heaven and eternal existence with God after death (Acts 19:11-12; Acts 28:9). Paul explains in Philippians 4:12 that although health and wealth motivate some individuals, they must be content with their current worldly possessions. If individuals perform tasks or behaviors, God will not necessarily provide them with something they desire. Instead, individuals should devote themselves to Christ without expecting something in return (James 1:17). This devotion without expectation characterizes intrinsic motivation. Individuals must perform behaviors solely based on their self-determination to satisfy Christ's only expectation – devotion to God.

In Dominguez and Lopez-Noval's (2020) study, autonomy appeared to be the foundation for individuals who subscribe to a religious belief system and follow a set of religious standards. In detail, Dominguez, and Lopez-Noval claimed that religious centrality is an individual's response to four conscious processes. These processes are the external rewards and punishments received, intrinsic feelings of guilt or pride, cognitive valuation of the aspects of religion, and the assimilation of beliefs between religious

subscription and one's self-discovery. Dominguez and Lopez-Noval concluded that these regulatory processes for allowing religion to affect one's views and behaviors may be significantly affected by one's behavioral motivations.

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of definitions for terms used in this study.

Centrality of Religiosity

A measure of religion as an influence on an individual's day-to-day choices and behavior. Measurable by using the Centrality of Religiosity Scale. Centrality of religiosity is made up of 5 measurable dimensions: intellectual, ideology, public practice, private practice, and having experienced forgiveness by God (Riegel, 2020; Roznowski & Zarzycka, 2020; Zarzycka, Bartczuk, & Rybarski, 2020

Self-Determination

The theoretical basis for intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Self-determination explains why individuals feel motivated to behave or perform when they think their actions will affect an outcome (Ajzen, 2020; Deci & Ryan, 1975, 1985, 2000, 2020).

Intrinsic Motivation

Refers to an individual performing behaviors because it is internally rewarding (Ryan & Deci, 1975, 1985, 2000, 2020; Shin & Johnson, 2021).

Extrinsic Motivation

Refers to an individual performing behaviors because it is externally rewarding or abides by socially accepted standards (Ryan & Deci, 1975, 1985, 2000, 2020; Shin & Johnson, 2021).

Motivational Needs

An individual's fulfillment of basic needs to survive, behave, or perform. Measurable by using an NAQ to determine an individual's motivational need for autonomy, affiliation, or competency (Heckert et al., 2000; Ryan & Deci, 1985; 2000; 2020).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to build a better understanding of Gen Z's centrality of religiosity and predict their motivational needs. Currently, there is little knowledge about the motivational needs of Gen Z, with no understanding of religious centrality as an influence on Gen Z's needs. This study sought to measure Gen Z's centrality of religiosity and determine if any relationships exist between their position of centrality, the five dimensions of religious centrality, and their motivational needs.

Summary

The current study addressed the little understanding of Gen Z's centrality of religiosity and motivational needs. Centrality of religiosity has lost a lot of attention in recent years due to research becoming less interested in how religion plays a role in individual behavior. Instead, researchers claim that spirituality (instead of religion) and environmental factors are more indicative and predictive of motivational needs. Some researchers also believe that Gen Z's motivational needs will be like past generations, downplaying the importance of the cohort's unique needs. Individuals' motivational needs directly translate into an understanding of how they will behave and succeed across various settings and environments. This study attempted to determine Gen Z's religious centrality and make predictions about the cohort's motivational needs. In the next

chapter, this study explains more deeply the generational differences in religious centrality, motivational needs and gaps in the research surrounding these topics.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The literature review for this study focused on Gen Z's centrality of religiosity as a predictor of motivational needs and giving individuals the autonomy to be self-motivated. Motivational needs and self-motivation have predicted overall academic and work success across various settings for all past generational cohorts (Crisan et al., 2022). Religious centrality plays a significant role in autonomy through the self-regulation of specific behaviors that are ethical or unethical and whether an individual voluntarily chooses to follow the values or standards placed on them by society, their belief systems, and other influences. Research has exhaustingly covered how religious centrality can shape or influence older generations' behavioral choices in life. However, studies still lack knowledge about Gen Z's overall motivational needs and whether religious centrality or other specific influencers have more of an effect on their behavior (David & Iliescu, 2020; Walker & Rhoades, 2022).

Description of Search Strategy

The literature search for this study used articles from the Jerry Falwell Library and Google Scholar. Most studies for citation in this research have been published within the last five years. Search terms included the following: "religion and motivation," "centrality of religiosity," "Gen Z's centrality of religiosity," "Gen Z and motivational needs," "Gen Z intrinsic motivations," "diversity of religious beliefs between generations," "diversity of intrinsic motivations between generations," "religion as a mediator variable," "religion as a moderating variable," "association between religion and motivation," "intrinsic motivations for success," "extrinsic motivations for success,"

"religion as a predictor of behavior," and "religion as a predictor for motivational needs." After these search terms generated relevant articles, a review of cited studies was conducted and examined for any exciting research that might further relate to this study.

Biblical research was also conducted using the Jerry Falwell Library, Google, and Biblegateway.com. When searching for biblical foundations for this study, search terms included were "intrinsic," "motivation," "young generations," "motivational needs," "religious motivations," "religion and self-determination," "religion and affiliation," "religion and competency," and "religion and autonomy."

Review of Literature

Current research on religious centrality as a behavioral influence and motivational needs, separately, has made substantial headway over recent years but has not given enough attention to the Gen Z cohort (David & Iliescu, 2022). Recent research shows that subscribing to a religious belief system can positively relate to favorable behavioral choices for the Baby Boomer and Gen X cohorts (David & Iliescu, 2022). Some research even discussed the positives of religious centrality in the context of higher education, the workplace, community involvement, and self-discovery (David & Iliescu, 2022). David and Iliescu also explained that religious centrality and motivational needs, separately, are receiving attention to study attitudes about motivation, life satisfaction, and various behaviors between generational cohorts. Exploring religious centrality and motivational needs also allows researchers to study negative behavioral consequences. These negative consequences can counteract good behavior due to motivational issues resulting from the lack of intrinsic and extrinsic support (David & Iliescu, 2022).

When expanding upon previous research on the centrality of religiosity and predicting an individual's motivational needs, Obregon et al. (2021) state that intrinsic motivations are a robust and measurable variable. Obregon et al. reveal a positive relationship between religion and motivational need support for older generations. This relationship can predict an individual's behavioral choices and overall life satisfaction. However, most recent research has not begun to test this relationship between religious centrality and the motivational needs of younger generations, such as Gen Z.

As researched by Obregon et al. (2021), it is nearly impossible to predict behavior solely based on whether an individual attends church or is subject to external religious influences. Instead, Obregon et al. exclaim those individual aspects of religious centrality and practice may better predict behavior. Prayer in private and voluntary ethical behaviors, as personal aspects of religion, can give researchers a deeper view into the relationship between religious centrality and motivational needs. Researchers believe a relationship exists between religious centrality and motivational needs when individuals pray in private but still follow religiously set standards of behavior (Obregon et al., 2021). Obregon et al. say these intrinsic, religious influences are having experienced forgiveness by God or an individual viewing their religious beliefs as a higher calling.

More research by Riegel (2020) hypothesizes that if centrality of religiosity can predict life satisfaction, career satisfaction, and even community engagement, it might be able to measure and predict motivational needs, whether intrinsic or extrinsic. This hypothesis comes from the metanalysis of numerous recent studies claiming that religious construct systems are central to an individual's life; they will significantly impact their voluntary, day-to-day behavior (Riegel, 2020). Other past studies discuss religious

centrality as an extrinsic motivator; still, nearly no recent research compares centrality of religiosity to three well-known motivational needs: autonomy, affiliation, and competency (Riegel, 2020; Ryan & Deci, 1975, 2000, 2020).

Centrality of Religiosity

The centrality of religiosity scale (CRS; Riegel, 2020) consists of measurable constructs that tell researchers about religion's significant influence on an individual's choices, behaviors, motivations, ethics, and values. Centrality refers to the positioning of the individual on a spectrum of religious belief. This positioning on the spectrum is seen as unique to everyone's personality (Riegel, 2020). When individuals have a central positioning on this religious construct spectrum, they are said to feel unrestricted by the standards of that belief system (Riegel, 2020). This central position describes that the individual holds a prominent relevance in their life for religious belief. Still, the construct system does not entirely influence their basic psychological functioning and voluntary behavior (Riegel, 2020). Contrastingly, if an individual is in a subordinate religious position on the spectrum, the individual perceives the construct system as a restriction for behavior. Individuals who are subordinate on the CRS feel religious beliefs influence their behaviors and psychological functioning and ultimately motivate their behavioral choices (Riegel, 2020). Lastly, when individuals are in a marginal position of religious centrality, they rely minimally on a construct system to function in their day-to-day life (Riegel, 2020). Riegel says that marginal individuals tend to be self-explorative and set their standards and goals, but coincidentally those standards are grossly like that of the religious individual.

To recap, having a central positioning of religiosity means that the individual is only moderately religious and only feels somewhat restricted in their behaviors (Riegel, 2020; Zarzycka et al., 2020). Subordinate individuals describe themselves as highly religious and motivated by their beliefs, and marginal individuals are often non-religious, having little to no feelings of restriction on their behavioral choices (Riegel, 2020; Zarzycka et al., 2020). Riegel and Zarzycha et al. retest this idea of religious centrality on the general population to better understand if behavioral motivation is affected by the relevance of an individual's experience of God's forgiveness. When interviewing the general population, individuals proclaim that the closer they perceive themselves to God, the more aligned or obligated they feel to behave in ways deemed appropriate by the Bible, church, and community (Riegel, 2020; Zarzycha et al., 2020). When Riegel and Zarzycha et al. interview millennial college students about their experience of God's forgiveness, themes in their responses reflect little to no obligation to behave following the Bible or church's standards. However, students who did describe themselves as religious still report their behaviors to be autonomous (Riegel, 2020; Zarycha et al., 2020). These students claim their autonomous behaviors coincidentally align with strong ethics or values like those of traditional religious construct systems (Riegel, 2020; Zarzycha et al., 2020).

Religion vs. Spirituality

Early in the study of religion and psychology, Nelson (2009) and Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) discuss that religiosity and spirituality are overlapping constructs. These constructs exist in research across various contexts, settings and environments, demographics, generational cohorts, and religions (Nelson, 2009). However, researchers

today prefer the term religiosity when developing continuity across studies (Nelson, 2009; Riegel, 2020; Zarzycha et al., 2020). The component of religiosity – spirituality – is the center of one's religious lifestyle. Spirituality is a transcendent experience that is the foundation of one's religiosity (Nelson, 2009; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). Nelson, Zinnbauer, and Pargament also describe religion as a system of standardized beliefs with public and private practice expectations. These distinct aspects of religiosity can facilitate one's personalized experience of the sacred or transcendent (i.e., experience of God, a higher power, or the ultimate truth/reality; Houghton et al., 2016; Nelson, 2009; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). Aspects of religiosity also foster an understanding of the relation and responsibility to others living together in a community (Houghton et al., 2016). Lastly, religion is lacking if an individual does not hold a spiritual core (Houghton et al. (2016).

The difference between the two concepts, religiosity, and spirituality, was first seen between 1960 and 1970 when a prominent rise of secularism arrived (Hayden & Barbuto, 2011; Turner et al., 1995). The term spirituality began to be favored by the secular community as opposed to religiosity. With the rise of spirituality, a conflict also arose between the constructs of the two terms, which are dualistically rigid frameworks. Some famous examples of this rigid construct framework receive influence from institutionalized, substantive, and belief-based ideologies. Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) assert that these frameworks build upon subjective and experience-based personal opinions. When Zinnbauer and Pargament conducted qualitative analysis, they found themes in responses illustrating that spirituality was often associated with a more modern way of thinking, contemporary forms of dealing with life's profound meanings, and

discussing existential questioning. Spirituality subjectively being described as more open-minded than religion, autonomous in thought and practice, and more tolerant of individuals' self-discovery (Zinnabauer & Pargament, 2005). Whereas religion is often associated with old-fashioned ways of examining the meanings of life, closely following church-influenced tradition, that in some ways, limits an individual's freedom of behavior (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005).

In today's research, spirituality refers to the experiential and personal side of one's relationship with the transcendence of the sacred (e.g., one's own experience of the forgiveness of God's forgiveness; Maclean & Riebschleger, 2021; Wittberg, 2021). However, Maclean, Riebschleger, and Wittberg say that individuals who use the term spirituality this way contrast it with religion rather than seeing it as a part of religiosity. Spiritualists describe religion as being narrow and too guided by structure, with regularly scheduled public practice, and having to uphold ethical standards of behavior created by religious communities (Maclean & Riebschleger, 2021). In another explanation of religion vs. spirituality, Wittberg characterizes an individual's search for answers about the meaning of life and their sacred relationship with transcendence as developing from personal experience with rituals and communities guided by structured belief systems.

Most of today's research focuses more on spirituality than religion (Wittberg, 2021). In some cases, the term faith is even used in place of religion to promote the development of a neutral connotation while progressing the research that remains interested in religion (Wittberg, 2021). Many current studies highlight the components of spirituality as inner life, one's perceived life purpose, meaning, and involvement with the community (Maclean & Riebschleger, 2021; Wittberg, 2021). Some research also prefers

a broader description of spirituality, viewing it as part of an individual's culture, maintained and influenced by one's managerial spirituality while remaining separate from religiosity (Houghton et al., 2016). Compared to early research about religiosity (pre-2000s), researchers are now focusing on the term spirituality to understand better the function of belief systems rather than the substance and behavioral influences within these systems (Maclean & Riebschleger, 2021; Wittberg, 2021). In contradiction, Maclean, Riebschleger, and Wittberg suggest that future studies continue incorporating the term religion as this term can be subjective for many individuals during research. These researchers believe that the concept and standards of religion are lost within research if future studies do not explicitly discuss religion separately from spirituality.

Religion

Generally, research characterizes religion as a formal, traditional, or standardized practice of beliefs and values (Walker & Rhoades, 2022). Walker and Rhoades discuss how many recent studies hold distinctly different definitions between religion and spirituality. Salman et al. (2005) and Walker and Rhoades (2022) describe that some studies define religion as a standardized belief system subscribed to by individuals who hold the same values and ultimately seek the same life goals. A review of the literature surrounding the depiction of religion as a standardized practice reveals that tenets and dogma are the basis of religion. In contrast, spirituality is grounded on less traditional values and beliefs (Salman et al., 2005). Walker and Rhoades (2022) claim that religion's internal cognitive and voluntary behavioral aspects in worshiping an all-controlling power or person formalize through structured rituals, scripture, and practice. Further, Walker and Rhoades (2022) claim that religion is a construct containing a

multidimensional belief system built on commitments to practicing faith, community involvement, and restricted behaviors.

Knowledge of religion within different research areas is expanding to remain relevant amongst faster-growing topics. In academic research particularly, Walker and Rhoades (2022) find that study participants who characterize themselves as religious can more often identify unethical behaviors than individuals who describe themselves as spiritual. David and Iliescu (2020) use meta-analysis when reviewing various research articles investigating how religiosity relates to a model of values. David and Iliescu ultimately conclude that individuals who characterize themselves as religious are more favorable to ethical values supporting societal order maintenance. In other words, religious people favor tradition, standardization, conformity to laws, and security (David & Iliescu, 2020). Comparatively, Osikominu and Bocken (2020) proclaim that some religious individuals report to dislike others' values that encourage or support a change from tradition, push for autonomy and behaviors that do not align with their religious beliefs. Osikominu and Bocken conclude that pastoral peoples' responses to unethical values are constant across various religious ideologies (i.e., Christian, Jewish, Muslim) and cultures. However, a difference in reactions to unethical values in behavior is more notable at the socioeconomic level of the countries studied, revealing an essential contextual variable that will require further study (Coelho et al., 2020; Osikominu & Bocken, 2020).

Spirituality

Research by Obregon et al. (2020) find that spirituality is an individual's internal understanding of life's influences, their existence, their perceived meaning of life, and the

perceived importance of community. This description of spirituality illustrates the fluid relationship between one's religious centrality and life as an ever-changing phenomenon. Obregon et al. propose that spirituality is complex, focusing intensely on environmental influences. Obregon et al. conclude that spirituality is most likely an outcome of interactions between individuals, society, and communities. Obregon et al. also focus on individuals supporting others' belief systems. Spiritual individuals are more likely to support and facilitate others' exploration of the inner self, allowing the personalized search for meaningful lives, careers, and behaviors.

Salman et al. (2005) and Walker and Rhoades (2022) reveal that spiritually supportive environments positively influence individual behavior. Environments that provide an opportunity to transform one's internal self will see favorable and ethical behaviors, increasing overall life satisfaction of individuals and communities (Salman et al., 2005; Walker & Rhoades, 2022). Salman et al., Walker, and Rhoades conclude that spirituality is often associated with higher respect among peers, students, coworkers, families, and other belief systems. Research indicates that spiritual positivity in any setting can increase individuals' trust, responsibility, authentic behavior, and psychological well-being (Walker & Rhoades, 2022).

Religiosity and Behavior

Across many settings, religiosity is a complex topic due to differences in influential effects on individuals and those individuals' own experiences with religion and God. Hardy et al. (2022) give an example of religious-supportive settings and how these environments are more behaviorally productive. Emerging research by Hardy et al., Boer, and Bordoloi (2022) says that environments should allow individuals to publicly

practice their religious beliefs, follow and share traditions, and perform behaviors based on their personal beliefs. Research suggests that individuals shared religious belief systems with their peers can drastically improve behavioral choices, life satisfaction, and community commitment (Boer & Bordoloi, 2022; Hardy et al., 2022).

Religion, in general, has been extensively researched in recent years to keep it up to date with various areas of study, such as psychology and behavioral change, as two small examples. However, religious centrality as an influence, specifically influences on motivational needs, receives no attention, especially for younger generational cohorts such as Gen Z (Boer & Bordoloi, 2022; Hardy et al., 2022; Wittberg, 2021). Since the early 2000s, religious centrality as an influence on behavioral choices mainly focuses on the individual's commitment, connectivism, and support with external factors such as community (Ahmad & Omar, 2015; Ayoun, Rowe & Yassine, 2015; Houghton, Neck & Krishnakumar, 2016; Pawar, 2016; Wittberg, 2021). Much of the literature surrounding centrality of religion as an influence has only gathered general theoretical knowledge for older generations to convey a positive influence of centrality on behaviors and overall attitudes about life satisfaction. However, Pawar (2016) claims there is little empirical evidence exploring religion's moderator and mediator role on behavior. Thus, research does not know if religious centrality can potentially have harmful influences on behaviors and attitudes. Recent work by Ahmad et al. (2019) follows Pawar's claim. It asserts that religious centrality no longer significantly influences individuals' daily behaviors, making centrality a moderating influence (Ahmad et al., 2019). One example by Ahmad et al. (2019) measures millennials' academic performance and the behavioral influence of religious centrality. Ahmad et al. conclude that greater religious centrality does not

equate to better academic performance. Comprehensive models for Ahmad et al.'s study use the mechanisms of religious centrality that impact academic performance, shown in research by Haq et al. (2018). Through metanalysis, Haq et al. state that religious centrality on academic performance has a moderating effect. In one example by Haq et al., students report during interviews that they perceive academic institutional commitment as a voluntary behavior and not an obligation because they share a religious belief with that institution. In other words, an individual's institutional commitment does not correlate with religious centrality or an academic institution's religious values (Haq et al., 2018). Students can feel committed, even supported by their institutions, regardless of religious or non-religious beliefs (Haq et al., 2018).

Overall, research by Ahmad et al. (2019) and Haq et al. (2018) supports religious centrality as a moderator for positive behavioral choices and performance, especially in academic environments. For Gen Z individuals, Ahmad et al. and Haq et al.'s studies suggest and guide future hypotheses toward a better understanding of religious centrality as a motivation for behavior. In theory, however, individuals are more likely to have behavioral motivations that align with their personal goals in life (Haq et al., 2018). Further, Ahmad et al. and Haq et al. claim that some Gen Z individuals describe themselves as spiritual, creating more questions about whether religion or spirituality significantly affects behaviors influenced by centrality of religiosity.

Cross-Generational Religious Diversity

Recent research reveals that religious subscription is declining in younger generations (Abualigah et al., 2021; Cresnar & Nedelko, 2020; Obregon et al., 2021; Wittberg, 2021). However, these researchers believe religion is no longer a reasonable

explanation for the foundation of an individual's ethical behaviors or influences that affect how an individual might interact with others or even perform in various environments. Encouraging individuals to support each other's personal beliefs, whether religious or not, can boost life satisfaction and favorable behavioral choices (Abuligah et al., 2021). The role of supporting all belief systems remains a focus of many researchers today due to the growing number of individuals within these varying environments who subscribe to different belief systems (Abualigah et al., 2021; Cresnar & Nedelko, 2020; Obregon et al., 2021; Wittberg, 2021). Research indicates that support for religious, non-religious, or spiritual beliefs can increase ethical behaviors across various settings (Cresnar & Nedelko, 2020; Obregon et al., 2021). Cresnar and Nedelko (2020) also argue that promoting or supporting one belief system over another can hinder affiliation and performance across these environments. Studies focusing on generational differences show supportive environments lead to more significant community commitment, peer trust, and life satisfaction (Chowdhury, 2018). Cresnar, Nedelko (2020), and Obregon et al. (2021) acknowledge the differences in support needs for generations over recent years. However, research gaps exist for younger generations, such as Millennials and Gen Z.

Recent research on generational differences and religious views examines four cohorts across varying settings. David and Iliescu (2020) indicate that individuals within the same cohort hold similar standards for behavior, while these behavioral standards are drastically different between generations. Standards for teamwork, ethical choices in behavior, and even stress-coping strategies are distinct between cohorts (David & Iliescu, 2020). Older generations (i.e., Baby Boomers and Gen X) saw teamwork as less critical but abiding by peer standards for behavior and less able to cope with environmental

stressors (David & Iliescu, 2020). Whereas Millennials view teamwork as crucial for today's societal roles, not strictly adhering to society's traditional standards for behavior and having a greater ability to cope with stress (David & Iliescu, 2020). David and Iliescu's research reverifies that generational differences exist in behavioral choices. Still, it does not answer whether the Gen Z cohort will be like any of these past generations. Thus, a gap remains between generational diversity research for behavior, especially in the context of religious centrality.

Further examination of cross-generational religious diversity views behavior by breaking down the levels of society. At the overall societal level, generational diversity and religion can describe how a community supports belief systems, standards of behavior, and ethical values. At the mid-level (individual-level) perspective, cross-generational religious diversity describes the framework that integrates or links the person with the community. This link is through belief system empowerment, sharing belief systems, the affiliation between individuals within the community, and shared universal values (Benefiel et al., 2014; David & Iliescu, 2020). This mid-level framework is the connecting piece between individuals, peers, and the communities they live. As research builds its understanding of cross-generational religious diversity, focusing on external influences such as societal norms will become more prominent in the available literature. Research is quickly discovering that individuals' religiosity is becoming a more significant concern in the context of behavioral motivation (Benefiel et al., 2014; David & Iliescu, 2020). Millennials and Gen Z are pursuing more self-fulfilling experiences and finding more intrinsic motivations than extrinsic behaviors through things other than religion (Benefiel et al., 2014; David & Iliescu, 2020).

Gen Z

Gen Z is a generational cohort marked by their specific year of birth. Researchers commonly categorize this cohort as born between 1995 and 2009 (Ajzen, 2011; Ajzen, 2013; Ajzen, 2020). Over 60% of the Gen Z population has not completed their high school education (Ajzen, 2020). By 2027, the Gen Z population will account for more than 30% of the global workforce (Ajzen, 2020). Researchers are taking notice of the large cohort of future workers and have begun to examine their motivational needs across various settings. Aziz et al. (2021) explain that Gen Z high school and college students hold some of the same motivational needs as Millennials. Still, Gen Z may have drastically different motivational needs compared to Baby Boomers and Gen X. Some of Gen Z's specific motivational needs include having strong affiliations with peers, autonomous support from communities, flexible study, and work schedules, and the opportunity to find self-fulfillment (Aziz et al., 2021). One study discusses how self-satisfaction in an individual's behavioral choices may result from personal factors, such as having their basic psychological and physiological needs met, of which motivational needs are the basis (Bryngelson & Cole, 2021). Bryngelson and Cole list such factors as Gen Z's intention to perform well in their societal roles and Gen Z's belief systems. Results from Bryngelson and Cole's study suggest that Gen Z's motivation to behave favorably in their societal roles is instinctual, driven by their belief systems and support of those systems.

Gen Z's Motivational Influences

Recent studies focusing on high school students have found that Gen Z is highly motivated by their close affiliations and the opportunity to show their abilities to others

(Goh & Lee, 2018). However, Gen Z individuals report being motivated to perform well at school from intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Gen Z says their extrinsic motivations are the need for interaction with others, an affinity for social rewards and consequences, and recognition of their contributions and collaborations (DiMattio & Hudacek, 2020). DiMattio and Hudacek also discuss that Gen Z's intrinsic motivators often include self-fulfillment, the opportunity to develop more complex skills, and studying topics that have personal meaning to them.

With Gen Z's affinity for affiliation and self-fulfillment, Ebrahim (2021) believes this cohort of individuals will be highly motivated by environments, communities, and leaders catering to team-based work, providing flexible schedules, and fostering foster environments that allow self-discovery. Ebrahim's discussion also mentions that future studies should examine whether Gen Z's motivational needs to behave favorably may be religiously influenceable. Ebrahim asked Gen Z high school students about their religious beliefs and respondents had mixed responses. Many students described themselves as non-religious, spiritual, or agnostic, with only 8% of 700 Gen Z students claiming a subscription to a religious belief system. Further, half of religious Gen Z students did not cite their belief systems as an influence on their behavior or academic performance (Ebrahim, 2021). Overall, Ebrahim's interviews discovered no significant themes for academic performance relating Gen Z's religious belief systems to their behavioral choices. Ebrahim finishes their study by explaining that Gen Z's motivations for behavior could still be religiously fueled because religion is often a subjective term used to describe strict belief systems. Because of Ebrahim's findings, Ganguli et al. (2022) believe that Gen Z's motivations for behavioral choice may be better studied by

understanding the differences between generational cohorts. Ganguli et al. illustrate religious centrality as not being lost through generations nor less of an influence. Instead, religious centrality may be viewed differently with a varying description of religion while still holding similar ethical values and behaviors between generations.

Generational Diversity and Behavioral Choices

Diversity in behavior within various settings is notably changing as researchers explore how Millennials and Gen Z individuals have unique motivational needs compared to older generations. Each generation holds different behavioral standards, skills, competencies, personalities, and overall belief systems. Motivational and behavioral differences between generations are more pronounced in the Gen Z cohort than in any other generation (Wittberg, 2021). Generations are individuals born within a specific range of years and events (i.e., Millennials from 1985 to 1999, Gen Z from 2000 to 2014; Wittberg, 2021). The Multi-Generational Theory (MGT) describes generations as sharing not only birth years or events but also distinct personal beliefs and values (Wittberg, 2021). World and individual events can also influence these beliefs and values from each generation's early childhood and adolescence (Wittberg, 2021). These external contexts exist within generations' set expectations, the authority of values, attitudes, and behaviors (Wittberg, 2021). Generational cohorts identify themselves across research studies as Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Gen X (1965-1980), Gen Y or Millennials (1980-1999), and Gen Z (2000-2014; Wittberg, 2021).

Settings and contexts within societies are changing quickly, with Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials having completed most of their higher education and moving into societal roles. Past research focuses heavily on the older cohorts as they graduate high

school, attend college, have families, find careers, and exit their careers for retirement. However, research must shift its focus to younger generations to develop new ways of understanding motivational needs and supporting individuals' self-exploration (Aggarwal et al., 2022). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and religious or spiritual belief systems should be at the forefront of the research focus for Gen Z as they prepare to exit primary education and enter their important societal roles (Wittberg, 2021).

Through years of intentional studies, researchers have found generalizable characteristics for each generational cohort. As of 2019, Baby Boomers lost their title as the largest living cohort (Deepika & Chitranshi, 2020). Baby Boomers are competitive and hard-working, reporting high-stress levels due to work-life balance. Boomers are goal-setters with strong commitment behaviors (Deepika & Chitranshi, 2020). Gen X receives characterization throughout the research as holding low expectations about their past academic performance and at work. Gen X also features low organizational commitment behaviors, feelings of alienation by their peers during controversial scenarios, and sometimes portraying selfish behaviors at work. Gen X, in qualitative studies, appears to hold negative views toward authority but enjoys autonomous tasks (Deepika & Chitranshi, 2020). Millennials are described as technology babies, having a seemingly innate ability to navigate computers, the Internet, and electronic communication devices (Deepika & Chitranshi, 2020). Research characterizes the Millennial cohort as the most change-tolerant generation compared to past generations (Cresnar & Nedelko, 2020; Deepika & Chitranshi, 2020). Millennials are more tolerant of workplace diversity, risk-takers, multitaskers, and highly value personal time (Cresnar & Nedelko, 2020). Millennials also report having lower numbers of religious or spiritual

beliefs compared to past generations studied (Cresnar & Nedelko, 2020). This decrease in religious beliefs may provide reasoning, opportunities, and challenges for future research to focus on the motivational differences of Gen Z compared to other generational cohorts. From attitudes about academics, individual life ambitions, and values, research will benefit by getting to know Gen Z's motivations better before they leave college and enter their careers.

Considering that most Gen Z remains within an academic setting, Nikolic et al. (2022) offer a structured view of eight academic scenarios for motivational needs and behavior. This specific setting is a crucial area for current researchers to study generational differences in motivation. Nikolic et al. provide insight for researchers into how each generation performs and views academic behavior. The scenarios include behavioral choices, learning styles, communication styles, practice, and study, problem-solving, decision-making, leadership trust, and receiving feedback. Nikolic et al. explain that the Baby Boomer cohort tends to gauge their self-worth and performance by their chosen academic paths (i.e., Pre-Med path vs. Biology vs. Psychology, leading to varying career salaries). Gen X defines their success by gauging their responsibilities at work and home rather than their academic studies. In contrast, Millennials are confident about their academic abilities and future career successes (Nikolic et al., 2022).

Overall, cohorts describe themselves differently throughout various settings, viewing their success differently through academics, career, and life goals. Nikolic et al. (2022) discuss significant differences that receive little to no acknowledgment from current research. The most crucial difference between cohorts is the religious influences

that motivate individuals within generations to behave in specific ways, which will translate to other settings and environments (Nikolic et al., 2022).

Further research concerned with generational differences in the academic setting reveals a discrepancy in views about religion and spirituality. Halafoff et al. (2020) indicate that Millennial college students report being less religious than older generations, particularly within study samples in the United States from 2005 to 2015. However, Millennial data shows no difference in the number of spirituality subscriptions compared to older generations (Halafoff et al., 2020). These lower levels of religiosity within the Millennial cohort have researchers questioning why religious subscription is rapidly declining. Less than 20% of Millennials report attending regular religious services (i.e., the church; Halafoff et al., 2020).

In contrast, Baby Boomers report a weekly church attendance rate of nearly 40% (Halafoff et al., 2020). To explain this disparity between generations attending religious services, Boer, and Bordoloi (2022) analyze British social surveys. Boer and Bordoloi's analysis reveals a decline in church attendance attributed to declining religious affiliation. This decline, however, is not solely due to aging effects or lessened mobility (Boer & Bordoloi, 2022). Boer and Bordoloi use social surveys to examine the individuals' subjectivity of religiosity, spirituality, and various sociodemographic variables. Boer and Bordoloi found that the Gen X cohort is more likely to hold spiritual beliefs than religious ones. In comparison, Millennials report being primarily spiritual, not following traditional religious beliefs, and seeking belief systems that support their self-discovery and self-fulfillment (Boer & Bordoloi, 2022). Overall, even with fewer religious subscriptions, cohorts appear to share similar morals and ethics, life goals, and academic

performance regardless of their belief system, exhibiting more autonomous thinking (Boer & Bordoloi, 2022).

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) studies individuals' autonomous thinking and behavior within various environments throughout previous decades, from work and academics to religious and spiritual influence (Ajzen, 2020, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 1975, 2000, 2020). Ryan, Deci, and Ajzen believe that meeting individual psychological needs will develop the autonomy, skills, and confidence needed for academic study and future career success, among other life contexts. Autonomous-supportive environments can assist in internalizing the individual's learning of materials and information, ultimately facilitating their positive affiliation and interaction with others in their communities (Ajzen, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2020). SDT assists researchers in arguing that environmental factors can either thwart or support an individual's growth and development emotionally, academically, career-wise, and internally - religiously or spiritually (Crasner, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

SDT uses three constructs that describe individuals' basic psychological needs for behavior within various settings. These constructs are affiliation (feelings of connectedness with others in their environments), competency (feelings of having the knowledge or opportunity to develop skills needed to behave favorably), and autonomy (feelings of being unrestricted by internal or external forces to make behaviors or self-determined choices; Ryan & Deci, 1975, 2020). Ryan, Deci, Shin, and Johnson (2021) explain that meeting an individual's motivational need for affiliation and competency leads to positive personal growth and can even predict an individual's ability to perform

tasks autonomously. According to Shin and Johnson's research, autonomy is critical in an individual's spiritual and religious exploration. SDT might also assist in explaining an individual's need to autonomously perform religiously motivated behaviors (Anderson & Burchell, 2021). Anderson and Burchell claim that intrinsic motivation is at the core of autonomy, and the ability to be autonomous grossly promotes an individual's overall well-being and behavioral choices.

Further, Anderson and Burchell say that SDT explains how one's environment can facilitate autonomy by introducing supportive or non-supportive aspects. Aspects of the environment can include institutional leaders or teachers, academic standards for performance, tools used for learning or practice, and the information needed for individuals to make behavioral choices autonomously. According to Anderson and Burchell, regulations within one's environment or thwarting one's autonomy harms behavioral choices, information internalization, and overall life satisfaction. An absence of motivation or thwarting one's autonomy illustrates the effect of extrinsic motivation. One negative example for individuals is an environment that does not support self-discovery or self-fulfillment. This environment undermines the individual's personal growth and internalization of faith, knowledge, and self-motivation (Anderson & Burchell, 2021).

SDT studies reveal that environments, where religious beliefs are supported can encourage autonomous thinking and thus help individuals to internalize shared ethical values (Anderson & Burchell, 2021). Some researchers have used the Autonomy Supportive Environment Scale (ASES; Anderson & Burchell, 2021) to measure information processing within various contextual settings. Higher scores on the ASES

correlate with improved individual behavior, public expression of belief systems, and higher levels of competency if the context is information learning (Anderson & Burchell, 2021). Conversely, aspects of an individual's environment that are controlling (i.e., regulation of behavioral choices or beliefs) tend to thwart autonomy and decrease internalized information learning (Anderson & Burchell, 2021). Anderson and Burchell further state that individuals who question or reject the regulation of behavior or religious expression in an environment should not receive characterization as abnormal or having inappropriate behavior. In Anderson and Burchell's research, meta-analysis reveals that religious exploration is a typical experience for all individuals, especially seen recently in Millennials and emerging in the Gen Z cohort. Anderson and Burchell also use the Religious Pressure Scale (RPS; Altemeyer, 1988) to measure Gen X and Millennials' perceived consequences of religious exploration in various settings. This examination of consequences describes how negative environmental responses to religious exploration can thwart an individual's autonomy and behavior (Anderson & Burchell, 2021). These negative consequences are controllers or regulations within an individual's environment (Anderson & Burchell, 2021).

Ryan and Deci (2020) describe how the theoretical continuum of internalization consists of various types of regulation. These regulations are the avolition of intrinsic motivation (thwarting one's basic psychological and motivational needs), which is the basis of SDT and autonomy. Ryan and Deci suggest that individuals go through three levels of intrinsic regulation to cope with their environment without the freedom to make their own choices and behaviors. These levels are introjection (the subconscious adoption of external ideas or attitudes), identification or second-guessing one's unique concepts

based on outside influences, and integration (integrating external ideas into one's beliefs or assimilation of beliefs; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Past studies examining Catholicism believers confirm that environmental factors play a vital role in internalizing beliefs, values, and behaviors (Brambilla et al., 2015). Brambilla et al. suggest that an individual's experience of a behavioral controller in their environment negatively relates to the introjection of Catholic values. There is also a low internalization of values and questioning of one's self-identification when behavioral restriction occurs (Brambilla et al., 2015). However, Brambilla et al. also report that individuals who are more developed spiritually rather than religious are less affected by external factors, reporting more shared value processing when regulated but no noticeable change in the internalization of these values. Comparably, individuals who perceive their environments as unsupportive of their faith exploration may develop more slowly spiritually than those with supportive environments (Obregon et al., 2021). Further, Obregon et al. indicate that less controlling Catholic environments promote affiliation and competency in individuals with varying levels of faith and with individuals who report having a perception of autonomy in their self-exploration (Obregon et al., 2021).

To better understand SDT and support Gen Z's autonomy for good behavioral choices, research suggests measuring three motivational needs that receive their explanation using six mini theories of motivation. The theories are Cognitive Evaluation Theory, Organismic Integration Theory, Causality Orientations Theory, Basic Psychological Needs Theory, Goal Contents Theory, and Relationships Motivation Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1975, 1980, 2000, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). These six theories for SDT and motivation explain the basic psychological needs and underlying

motivational factors behind individuals' perceived choice to behave or perform well across environments.

Theories of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

The theories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for SDT create the theoretical foundation for research surrounding past generations' motivational needs that can translate to behavioral predictions across environments. Using these theories to understand Gen Z's intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can provide detail about the younger generations' motivational needs. The following research extends across various settings for these theories' reliability, validity, and generalizable use. The generalizability of these theories across environments, contexts, and demographics improves the research concerned with behavior prediction, motivational needs, and even religious centrality (Ajzen, 2020; Deci & Ryan, 1975, 2000, 2020).

Cognitive Evaluation Theory

Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) focuses on the effects of social contexts, such as interpersonal controls, reward systems, and the involvement of the individual's ego. These contexts are seen as intrinsic motivations, negatively and positively affecting an individual's behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1975, 1980, 2000, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). In Deci and Ryan's studies, individuals report their perceived support of autonomous behavioral choice and non-supportive behaviors by others across environments. Deci and Ryan find that autonomous and supportive environments produce more favorable behavioral choices. By communities and individuals allowing others to take control over their behavioral choices, individuals can feel more motivated to make choices that result in favorable outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). These

favorable outcomes can include self-fulfillment, life satisfaction, better performance in academics and careers, and a more remarkable ability to cope with stress (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). Autonomously supported environments are quickly receiving recognition through research. The evidence for autonomous environments shows that they are the most effective settings for developing competent and successful individuals ready to enter societal roles (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). Competency and achievement are less studied, but they also have a positive relationship with supportive environments that predict behavior and success (Deci & Ryan, 1980, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Competency and achievement motivational needs are seen as contextual, receiving more study within academic and work settings.

Organismic Integration Theory

In the Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), extrinsic motivators are the focal point. Extrinsic motivators are often short-lived (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020) and minimally motivate an individual intrinsically. Extrinsic motivations often include externally regulated rewards, adopting values from other individuals and ideologies, and identification of oneself with other individuals to earn societal acceptance (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Deci and Ryan posit that extrinsic motivations are on a continuum, having extremes and centrality. For example, Deci and Ryan explain that extrinsic motivations are recognizable as regulating one's influence of peer approval or societal reward, which is external regulation to the extreme left of the continuum. One must also adjust the integration of others' values on one's values, with integration on the extreme right of the continuum. Individuals also control the acceptance of others' views or opinions about themselves, which is introjection and is in the middle of the continuum

(Ryan & Deci, 2020). Finally, one must regulate the assimilating of others' values into one's own, known as identification, and falls in the middle of the continuum (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Internalization of extrinsic motivation also varies along a continuum, affecting individual behavioral choices (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In one example, individuals may perceive that they are receiving rejection from others due to their behavior. In turn, these individuals may behave unfavorably within their environments compared to others who did not receive peer rejection for their behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Individual behavioral choices may also be unfavorable in specific contexts due to having different values or opinions compared to others (Ryan & Deci, 2020)

Causality Orientation Theory

The Causality Orientation Theory (COT) describes three ways causality orientation predicts behavior across environments. Causality orientation characterizes individuals as having an orientation for autonomous work. Individuals have an orientation for control over their behavior and completing tasks. However, COT states that individuals feel they do not have control overachieving goals. COT can predict behavioral choices and performance across different environments (Deci & Ryan, 1975, 1980; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Research suggests that individuals who face challenging goals still often perform well when they have a strong orientation for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). An orientation for autonomy is associated with a mastery-oriented learning style (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). A mastery-orientated learning style characterizes autonomous learners as enjoying learning new skills, improving current

skills, and assimilating old knowledge with new tasks. These individuals repeatedly attempt tasks until they perceive that skill as mastered (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Further, Ryan and Deci state that failure in one's performance is perceived differently among individuals, whereas impersonal-oriented individuals feel helpless. In contrast, autonomously oriented individuals feel the need to change their behavior and reattempt tasks. Control-oriented individuals respond to failure in performance through ego responses, ultimately lowering their performance during each reattempt of a task (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Basic Psychological Needs Theory

The Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT) describes that an individual's psychological health and physiological state will influence intrinsic motivation. An individual's psycho-physiological well-being affects motivational needs: autonomy, competency, and affiliation (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). Individuals who receive the support of these three motivational needs are less vulnerable to external restraints, such as societal expectations or even religious behavioral standards (Cresnar, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Individuals who do not receive support for their motivational needs are more vulnerable to external forces, potentially reducing an individual's psychological and physiological well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Deci and Ryan (2008) find that individuals with unfavorable behavioral choices across environments often not having their basic motivational needs met.

Goal Contents Theory

Goal Contents Theory (GCT) states that individual motivation is affected when a goal is valuable to them, intrinsically or extrinsically (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2008; Ryan &

Deci, 2000, 2020). GCT primarily focuses on extrinsic goals but intrinsic value, so it is essential to mention that these goals and their motivational effects are often long-lived (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic goals can include peer praise or monetary rewards, which must be of some intrinsic value to the individual. Framing extrinsic goals through instructions for performing a task can also affect an individual's perceived goal outcomes and intrinsic value (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). In one study, Deci and Ryan frame the instructions of a word memorization task positively or negatively. Individuals monitor dots on a computer screen accompanied by words and recall these words to earn monetary rewards for correct answers. These words range from low intrinsic value to higher value. Individuals who receive negatively framed study instructions paired with low-value words identify just 25% of the terms presented, resulting in less monetary rewards.

In contrast, individuals receiving positively framed instructions paired with high-value words recalled more than 50% of terms from the memorization task. Deci and Ryan's study also features a neutral-framed set of instructions paired with low- and high-value terms, resulting in at least 50% of words recalled by individuals. Deci and Ryan's study reveals the power of framing goals to affect the intrinsic value of external rewards.

Relationships Motivation Theory

Based on the Relationships Motivation Theory (RMT), individuals are motivated by creating or maintaining relationships with others. Ryan and Deci (2000; 2020) reveal that close relationships (affiliation) are imperative to an individual's well-being and behavioral choices. When an individual's need for affiliation combines with the support of their peers, communities, or even shared religious beliefs, favorable behavior choices

are noticeably higher (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). In a study by Deci and Ryan, individuals respond to a survey measuring their need for affiliation paired with a measure of the individual's regard for upholding social and behavioral standards. Individuals from this study who report a high motivational need for affiliation and high regard for behavioral standards were likelier to report less satisfaction with behavioral choices (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Conversely, students reporting low regard for behavior standards but a low motivational need for affiliation report having more satisfaction with their behavioral choices (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Individuals reporting a higher need for affiliation but perceived their motivational need to be thwarted by an external force also reported less satisfaction with their behavioral choices (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

These six mini theories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are the basis of SDT. These theories describe how motivational needs significantly affect an individual's psychological and physiological well-being and behavior. Research shows that supporting or thwarting an individual's motivational needs harms or boosts their overall life satisfaction and how they perceive control over their choices and behaviors (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Measuring Intrinsic Motivation

Over the last two decades, researchers and practitioners have used questionnaires to measure behavior and motivational needs within various settings. The Needs Assessment Questionnaire (NAQ; Broeck et al., 2021; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020) is a top choice because it allows researchers to alter words, framing of instruction, intrinsic reward values, and contents of the survey to measure specific motivational needs. The NAQ is a generalizable measure for all generational cohorts,

environments such as academics and work, and even when studying religious or non-religious belief systems (Broeck et al., 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Retesting the NAQ across generational cohorts, genders, socio-economic levels, and other demographics support its strength in predicting behavior and motivational needs (Broeck et al., 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

The NAQ has survey items that can reveal negative and positive correlations with the three motivational needs related to behavior prediction: autonomy, competency, and affiliation. The NAQ utilizes a standard Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and 3 (neither disagree nor agree). Broeck et al., Ryan, and Deci mention that Likert scales can be subjective or restrictive for some study respondents' answer preferences. However, Likert scales are one of the most convenient and reliable data collection methods due to their response simplicity (Broeck et al., 2021). One survey item example from an NAQ might be, "I like to talk to others," measuring an individual's motivational need for affiliation. Another survey item measuring autonomy on the NAQ might read, "I enjoy being on my own."

Validity research for the NAQ has recently been conducted by Broeck et al. (2021) through meta-analysis, analyzing the internal consistency of survey items across various contexts and demographics. Broeck et al. find that the NAQ can produce the data required for researchers to make strong inferences if survey items are easy to understand and remain consistent with words associated with the specific motivational needs (NAQ internal consistency, <.70; Broeck et al., 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Overall, measuring motivational needs using an NAQ is reliable and valid (Broeck et al., 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020). When measuring motivational needs in students or workers specifically, an NAQ

is one of the strongest predictors of behavior and performance (Broeck et al., 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Behavior Predicts Performance

As most of the Millennial cohort exits the education system and begins to enter the global workforce, academic institutions and organizations face unique challenges. These challenges are crucial to overcoming the global market economy that relies heavily on a skilled and motivated workforce (Barhate & Dirani, 2021). For the education system to adequately prepare students to enter the workforce is not only a matter of developing technical skills. Barhate and Dirani proclaim that the ever-changing demands of the global workforce to support the Gen Z cohort will require a vastly different range of skills and motivations for them to be successful. Gen Z students will need to be flexible and fluid to changes in their environments and be more competent, autonomous, and less affected by behavioral regulation to succeed in their work careers (Barhate & Dirani, 2021). Barhate and Dirani make a call to action to recognize the significant differences between Gen Z and older generations' motivational needs. The Gen Z cohort's learning preferences, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, behavioral choices, and religious centrality lack the research required to support their transition from academics to the workplace.

With economies also changing to better suit competitive industries, life-long transferable skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, self-regulation, creativity, and autonomy, are more important than ever (Barhate & Dirani, 2021). Barhate and Dirani also claim that a new challenge for educational institutions has arisen, providing career-relevant curriculums that produce transferable skills. However, educational

institutions recognize the urgency of this challenge. Institutions are beginning to offer various learning opportunities and courses tailored to specific desirable jobs and self-fulfillment requirements by today's youth (Barhate & Dirani, 2021). Internships, residencies, work placements, and paid training are also gaining traction amongst institutions wanting to develop students' skills (Barhate & Dirani, 2021). As research follows the change in curriculum, evidence suggests the highly effective learning strategies used today were unheard of just a decade ago (Barhate & Dirani, 2021). Barhate and Dirani summarize these newly introduced learning strategies and their contrasting differences to past teachings. These new strategies are described as unique processes and specialized to the individual and the individual's career interests. Barhate and Dirani also propose that individual learning in work environments assists employees in discovering their best skills and how utilizing them will promote self-fulfillment and job satisfaction. When positioning learners in situations that develop life-long skills, more opportunities for success will be available to them (Barhate & Dirani, 2021).

Moreover, Barhate and Dirani state that learners' opportunities to explore their skills will create a more engaged and committed student and workforce. For example, students involved in their learning choices and job creation find the process more autonomous, confident-boosting, and competency-building as they study or enter the workforce (Barhate & Dirani, 2021). Self-regulated learning is another term to describe the student-involved learning process. Zimmerman (1990) initially identifies the fundamental processes that enable self-regulation in learning, calling it a strategy for using self-motivation to guide good academic behavior.

An academic and work environment that promotes individuals' growth opportunities is one with supportive supervision and leadership. While supervision can sometimes thwart autonomy and competency, engaging in learning alongside individuals allows individuals to make mistakes and correct their errors. Alternatively, they create responsible and confident students and employees (Broeck et al., 2021). Workplaces that enable individuals to perform work interviews and develop their job tasks are also more likely to recruit motivated and creative workers (Broeck et al., 2021). Overall, academic institutions and workplaces that are supportive throughout are considered the most competitive organizations within their respective industries (Barhate & Dirani, 2021; Broeck et al., 2021).

Biblical Foundations of the Study

In the context of religion, motivation, and the Bible, it is believed that Christ tends to an individual's needs without requiring that individual to repay His generosity. One example of motivation from the Bible reads, **"**And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (*English Standard Bible*, 2001/2016, Philippians 4:19). This verse describes how individuals can find fulfillment intrinsically if they devote themselves to Christ. Comparatively, this quote illustrates how self-determination, in a biblical view, relates to an individual's behavioral choices across environments. Individuals are more motivated to make favorable behavioral choices when their motivational needs are met (Dominguez & Lopez-Noval, 2020). Higher self-determination and motivational needs satisfaction positively correlate with intrinsic motivations and self-fulfillment (Dominguez & Lopez-Noval, 2020). One of the most robust motivational needs, autonomy, also positively correlates with higher self-

determination and needs satisfaction (Dominguez & Lopez-Noval, 2020). Autonomy is at the core of an individual's active and voluntary devotion to Christ and religious belief exploration (Dominguez & Lopez-Noval, 2020).

The verse, "And my God will supply every need of yours…" (*English Standard Bible*, 2001/2016, Philippians 4:19) is often misunderstood as it coexists alongside the prosperity gospel. Some readers translate this quote as meaning they will receive monetary, material, or other external rewards for their devotion to Christ. This translation is because the Philippians had given Paul their only valuables for Paul to continue his mission of spreading the word of Christ and growing the church. The Philippians, however, knew that they would not receive an external reward for giving from their poverty. Instead, they would receive intrinsic rewards. These intrinsic rewards came to the Philippians as self-fulfillment, stronger faith, autonomy to explore themselves spiritually, and to create a larger faith-based community. For some individuals, it is difficult to understand that devotion to Christ and following His guidance will not result in external reward but will be repaid through love, support, and motivational needs satisfaction.

The Bible presents five constructs for illustrating intrinsic motivation through SDT. These five biblically grounded constructs motivate individuals to be autonomous, find affiliation with others, and make competent behavioral choices. These constructs are social and psychological aspects of religious practice, public and private practice of religion, and the individual's personal experience with believing in God.

A combination of social and psychological aspects might explain how religious centrality influences an individual's self-determination and motivational needs. In a

sociological approach, there is an expectation by peers that individuals abide by a high level of ethics and standards of religious practice. This societal expectation then roots itself intrinsically through feelings of guilt or happiness if the individual does or does not uphold the societal standards for religious practice (Borges et al., 2021; Walker et al., 2022). As Borges et al. and Walker et al. discuss, individuals often explain their views on transcendence and religiosity using their perceived experience from interactions with peers and society rather than the external rewards of acceptance for abiding by their religious standards. This explanation through their experience rather than extrinsic reward may be an indicator that religion is a robust intrinsic motivation for some individuals (Walker et al., 2022)

In the Bible, two scriptures describe society's standards for spiritual practice, which affect the individual's psychological approach to understanding how religious centrality influences their life. The first passage describes how individuals must follow Jesus' examples of social standards and behaviors. These standards are prominent factors for individuals' demonstration of the love of Christ through service. The passage reads, "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (*New International Bible*, 1978/2011, Matthew 20:28). This passage gives insight on how individuals must autonomously practice their devotion to Christ by following the ethical guidelines outlined in the Bible. Social collectivism reveals how the individual may feel psychological guilt or happiness by following religious guidelines. The second passage describes that individuals should not succumb to external influences but instead remain intrinsically focused on God and His standards for religious practice. This verse reads, "Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world but let God

transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind" (*English Standard Bible*, 2001/2016, Romans 12:2).

Public practice is often seen as a societal standard for religious groups and can have extrinsic influences on individuals who subscribe to these groups. However, it also holds intrinsic value for individuals due to their feelings of guilt or satisfaction if they participate in these religious gatherings (Greene, 2021; Junco et al., 2021). Although the Bible does not explicitly state that individuals must attend church or other religious gatherings, there is an influence on these religious subscribers. Instead, the Bible asks that individuals respect the house of God, and value our role in the body of Christ and the community. The Bible says to "Call the elders of the church to pray over them" and to "confess your sins to each other and pray for each other" (*English Standard Bible*, 2001/2016, James 5:14-16). These passages, at first, represent the public or external aspect of religious participation. They also describe the intrinsic and autonomous respect individuals should have for the church. Individuals' feelings of self-satisfaction for respecting the church, God's word, and the community have a direct connection with intrinsic motivation (Greene, 2021; Junco et al., 2021). Participation in religion through public practice is exemplified by attending church, mass, and other religious rituals such as community-based activities (Junco et al., 2021). From another intrinsic perspective, public practice also illustrates a pattern of behavior or action combined with a perceived sense of affiliation with individuals of the same social groups with similar religious beliefs (Junco et al., 2021). Research by Borges et al. (2020) says that the personal religious construct is measurable when asking how often an individual performs the

public practice of religious beliefs and whether the individual feels connected with the community through their shared beliefs.

Private practice, often informal, takes place within an individual's home, at their own pace and circumstances. Private practice can include a fixed pattern of prayer, Bible readings, or rituals or may not involve any set pattern (Borges et al., 2020). Private practice and personal religious constructs represent a pattern of behavior combined with an individual's autonomous dedication to the love for Christ. Junco et al. (2021) and Dominquez and Lopez-Noval (2020) say that researchers connect private practice to intrinsic motivation as there are little to no external influences. Junco et al., Dominquez, and Lopez-Noval claim that private practice is the superior approach for individuals showing their devotion to Christ because of its intrinsic nature in their motivation to practice. A passage from the Bible reads, "Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven" (*New International Bible,* 1978/2011, Matthew 6:1). From this verse, individuals can understand that religious practice will not receive an extrinsic reward but should intrinsically motivate them to trust in God (Dominquez & Lopez-Noval, 2020). Ultimately, the construct of private practice is at the core of self-determination as individuals autonomously make efforts to pray and ask God to forgive their sins without any external reward.

Lastly, the fifth construct of self-determination and autonomy from the Bible is an individual's lived experience of forgiveness by God. Individuals who describe themselves as religious hold an understanding that there is a higher reality (Junco et al., 2021; Dominquez & Lopez-Noval, 2020). Through qualitative research, this reality

affects the individual emotionally and is unique to everyone (Dominquez & Lopez-Noval, 2020). At the personal construct level, this can represent a pattern of perceptions, a broad experience, or feelings of forgiveness by God (Dominquez & Lopez-Noval, 2020). Those experiences are one-on-one with transcendence and sometimes a shared religious belief with others. Ways in which individuals describe having experience with forgiveness by God include admittance to God that they have sinned, thanking God for forgiving their sins, and trusting in God to alter their wrong attitudes and behaviors (Dominquez & Lopez-Noval, 2020). From the Bible, experiencing God's forgiveness is quoted as "To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (*New International Bible*, 1978/2011 Acts 26:18). This verse explains why individuals should place trust in God and confess their sins, and they will be saved from a life of unholiness. Individuals autonomously choosing to trust in Christ are experiencing God's love and forgiveness, releasing them from sin and behaviors that do not work towards their self-determination and motivational needs satisfaction.

This section's five biblical foundation constructs exemplify how religious centrality can intrinsically influence individuals' behavioral choices. By measuring the intensity or frequency of these five constructs, research can estimate whether religious centrality is an intrinsically motivating factor for individuals. For example, a central position on the centrality of religiosity scale describes an individual as being highly influenceable by religion to behave in specific ways. Sometimes this behavior is

performed for external reward, but more often for self-satisfaction or intrinsic reasons (Zarzycka et al., 2020).

Summary

This literature review discussed the most recent research surrounding self-determination, motivational needs, religious centrality, spirituality, and the theories of motivation. To better understand Gen Z's centrality of religiosity as a predictor of motivational needs, research focuses on giving individuals the autonomy to make positive behavioral choices that lead to good performance across various environments. Religiosity and spirituality are distinctively different but play similar roles when influencing an individual's autonomy and behavior. Societal regulation or strict standards for behavior can thwart an individual's perceived ability to make choices and achieve goals. Externally influenced individuals tend to follow the values or standards placed on them by society, their religious belief systems, and other external forces. While intrinsically influenced individuals tend to be less affected by belief systems and more in control of their choices and behavior. Researchers throughout the last decade discussed how religion and spirituality influence behavior and perceived goal outcomes differently but still lack specific knowledge about the Gen Z cohort. The next chapter in this study focuses on how religious centrality and motivational needs were analyzed to reveal a relationship between these variables.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Overview

In this chapter, the current study's research questions are presented, as well as a description of the research design, study participants, procedures, measures, and data analysis. This quantitative study used a minimally invasive approach to measuring Gen Z's centrality of religiosity and motivational needs by employing two electronic questionnaires – the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) and a Needs Assessment Questionnaire (NAQ). The CRS and NAQ data were analyzed using a simple linear regression to determine if a relationship exists between Gen Z's centrality of religiosity and motivational needs. This examination allowed researchers to predict motivational needs based on religious centrality. For an accurate analysis between the CRS and NAQ, at least 251 Gen Z participants were needed for this study. This study completed its data collection using 142 participant responses. This study attempted to show that measuring individuals' religious centrality can predict motivational needs. For religious, non-religious, and spiritually supportive environments, it is crucial to give researchers and practitioners every option for measuring behavioral motivation. Future research will need to combine the results of this study with observable behavior to determine whether the centrality of religiosity accurately predicts motivational needs for the Gen Z cohort.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a relationship between centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for autonomy?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for affiliation?

RQ3: Does a predictable relationship exist between centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for competency?

RQ4: To what extent do the 5 dimensions of centrality of religiosity (intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and experiencing God's forgiveness) predict the motivational need for autonomy?

RQ5: To what extent do the 5 dimensions of centrality of religiosity (intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and experiencing God's forgiveness) predict the motivational need for affiliation?

RQ6: To what extent do the 5 dimensions of centrality of religiosity (intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and experiencing God's forgiveness) predict the motivational need for competency?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Centrality of religiosity will have a negative relationship with the motivational need for autonomy.

Hypothesis 2: Centrality of religiosity will have a positive relationship with the motivational need for affiliation.

Hypothesis 3: A motivational need for competency will not have any relationship with centrality of religiosity.

Research Design

The research design for this study was survey-based, utilizing two surveys, via the Internet using Google Forms. One survey measured Gen Z's centrality of religiosity

(CRS) and one measured their motivational needs (NAQ). Both surveys are free for use in academic study as allowed by the copyright holders (for use permissions see APPENDIX A). The current study used a quantitative method to make statistical inferences about the relationship between the two variables while avoiding subjectivity. Subjectivity is often seen in qualitative surveys or interviews when researchers attempt to analyze what participants think, feel, and speak through open-ended responses. The current study's design is beneficial for future research because it eliminates any researcher biases when analyzing and describing the relationship between centrality of religiosity and motivational needs.

Participants

Participants for the current study included 142 responses from individuals who are from the Gen Z cohort. An initial power analysis using a two-tail test, with an error probability of 0.05 and effect size (r = 0.223), suggested a total sample size of 251 (see APPENDIX E). Participants were all born between 2000 and 2014 and at least 18 years of age. Demographics for the current study attempted to include 50% males and 50% females and held no preference for recruiting individuals from any specific race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic level, education level, gender preference, sexual orientation, marital status, family size, health status, disability status nor psychiatric diagnosis. This study did ask which religion, if any, the respondent subscribes to via multiple choice questions.

The current study's survey began with a qualifying question that terminated participation if the respondent is younger than 18 or older than the specified Gen Z age group. Study participants were not subject to discrimination, and this study's researchers

upheld full anonymity. Personal details about participants were not collected (i.e., name, contact details, email addresses, or geographic location). Study participants were recruited through social media (i.e., Facebook groups; see APPENDIX A).

Study Procedures

Google Forms and a sharable web link were used to transcribe and administer the CRS and NAQ scales. The initial qualifying question appeared on participants' screens to ensure they were at least 18 and within the Gen Z cohort. The following page of this survey briefly explained the study, how participants will respond, the benefits of participation in the study, and asked consent of involvement by the individual. Once the participant had qualified for the study based on age and consent, they began responding to the CRS and NAQ using a 5-point Likert-response multiple-choice format. The CRS and NAQ had 30 combined survey items (15 items per questionnaire) that took participants approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. After responding to all 30 items, participants received a debriefing message, thanking them for participating and instructions for printing the confirmation of their involvement.

Instrumentation and Measurement

This study's measurement tools included the most current version of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS; Belozersk & Dollnstein, 2020) and the most current version of the Needs Assessment Questionnaire (NAQ; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)

The CRS measures an individual's centrality of religiosity across a continuum based on 5 measurable dimensions: intellectual, ideology, private practice, public practice, and having an experience with receiving God's forgiveness (Belozersk &

Dollnstein, 2020). The CRS aims to measure the influence of religious centrality on an individual's day-to-day ethical behaviors. The newest version of the CRS uses a 15-item questionnaire developed through retesting survey items to increase validity, reliability, and generalizability across different contexts, including academic and work environments. Quantitative validity data by Belozersk and Dollnstein (2020) showed that the CRS accurately predicted an individual's religious centrality influence on behavior. Belozersk and Dollnstein's validity study used a 0.95 confidence interval to illustrate that the CRS accurately measured what it purported to measure. Belozersk and Dollnstein's CRS reliability tests revealed a Cronbach's Alpha between 0.8 and 0.9, making the scale predictable and appropriate for different contexts, such as measuring students' and employees' centrality of religiosity.

Needs Assessment Questionnaire (NAQ)

The NAQ measures an individual's three commonly studied motivational needs that are associated with good performance in academics and the workplace, (a) autonomy, (b) competency, and (c) affiliation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The purpose of the NAQ is to predict individual academic performance by measuring an individual's preference for needing any or all the mentioned motivational needs. The newest version of the NAQ (Ryan & Deci, 2020) uses a 15-item questionnaire (5 items per motivational need), developed through retesting survey items to increase validity, reliability, and generalizability across different contexts, including academic and work environments. Validity data by Ryan and Deci used a 0.95 confidence interval to show that the NAQ accurately predicts an individual's performance within an educational setting ($p < .05$). Validity data also indicates that the NAQ accurately predicted performance within a work

environment ($p < .05$). Ryan and Deci's NAQ reliability testing revealed that its use is predictable and appropriate for different contexts, such as being used to measure students', and employees' motivational needs related to performance (Cronbach's Alpha of .08).

Operationalization of Variables

Centrality of Religiosity (independent variable)

This variable is a continuous interval and measured a total score on the CRS continuum. The CRS used a 5-point Likert scale that does not feature an absolute zero but does feature fixed values between scores. A high score (51 to 75) on the CRS described an individual as being highly religious and affected by a system of beliefs (central). A low score (5 to 25) on the CRS described an individual as being non-religious and not affected by a system of religious beliefs (marginal). And a medium or neutral score (26 to 50) on the CRS described an individual as religious but not so affected by religious beliefs that it will influence their behaviors and performance (subordinate).

Five Dimensions of Religious Centrality (independent variables)

The five dimensions of religious centrality are also continuous interval variables. These variables are interval because they do not have an absolute zero point, but individuals are categorized by them as central, marginal, or subordinate. The five dimensions of religious centrality are ideology, intellect, private practice, public practice, and experiencing forgiveness by God. These five dimensions were measured using framed sentences and a 5-point Likert scale. For example, a medium or neutral score for all five dimensions translates to an individual being subordinate on the centrality of

religiosity scale (i.e., only moderately affected in their behaviors by their religious beliefs).

Autonomy (dependent variable)

This variable is interval, and the NAQ measured this variable via the individual's 5-point Likert responses (1 – strongly disagree, 2 – somewhat disagree, 3 – neither disagree nor agree, 4 – somewhat agree, and 5 – strongly agree). There were five survey items for the motivational need for autonomy. A high motivational need for autonomy was reflected by a NAQ score between 18 and 25. A moderate need for autonomy was scored between 10 and 17, whereas a low need was scored between 5 and 9. One survey item for autonomy read, "I would like to be my own boss." A "strongly agree" response for this item reflected a high motivational need for autonomy, and a "strongly disagree" response reflected a low motivational need for autonomy.

Competency (dependent variable)

This variable is an interval variable and the NAQ measured this variable via the individual's 5-point Likert responses (1 – strongly disagree, 2 – somewhat disagree, 3 – neither disagree nor agree, 4 – somewhat agree, and 5 – strongly agree). There were five survey items for the motivational need for competency. A high motivational need for competency was reflected by a NAQ score between 18 and 25. A moderate need for competency was scored between 10 and 17, and a low need was scored between 5 and 9. One survey item for competency read, "I am a hard worker." A "strongly agree" response for this survey item reflected a high motivational need for competency, and a "strongly disagree" response reflected a low motivational need for competency.

Affiliation (dependent variable)

This variable is interval and the NAQ measured this variable via the individual's 5-point Likert responses (1 – strongly disagree, 2 – somewhat disagree, 3 – neither disagree nor agree, 4 – somewhat agree, and 5 – strongly agree). There were five survey items for the motivational need for affiliation. A high motivational need for affiliation was reflected by a NAQ score between 18 and 25. A moderate need for affiliation was scored between 10 and 17, and a low need was scored between 5 and 9. One survey item for affiliation read, "I spend a lot of time talking to other people". A "strongly agree" Likert response for this item reflected a high motivational need for affiliation, whereas a "strongly disagree" response reflected a low motivational need for affiliation.

Data Analysis

The study used a simple linear regression to determine if a relationship exists between centrality of religiosity and motivational needs. A linear regression was also used to determine if a relationship exists between each of the five dimensions of centrality of religiosity (intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and experiencing forgiveness by God) and motivational needs (autonomy, affiliation, and competency). These relationships allowed researchers to predict motivational needs based on an individual's religious centrality. Bedrick (2019) stated that using a linear regression would give other researchers accuracy for making claims about one variable predicting a relationship with another. Further, Bedrick's studies indicated that using a linear regression to make variable predictions would increase the power of a study's inferential claims. Accurately predicting an individual's motivational needs via the CRS allowed this study to infer that the CRS can also predict an individual's success in their academic

or working careers. The NAQ is said to accurately predict an individual's academic and work success (Greene, 2021).

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations

The primary delimitation of the current study was the use of only the Gen Z cohort. This generational cohort currently spans various settings, such as being ungraduated from high school, beginning their college careers and some individuals already being employed. No other delimitations existed for the current study. This study chose to only use the Gen Z cohort because it is solely interested in this cohort's religious centrality and motivational needs.

Assumptions for the current study primarily included error-free data, with no researcher or participant biases, and honest participant responses. This study assumed that respondents would complete all survey items in the estimated timeframe. It was assumed that participants of this study would only be from the Gen Z cohort, being born between the years 2000 and 2014. The current study also assumed that it would capture data that is representative of both, males, and females, respectively. All study participants were assumed to read at an 8th-grade reading level and have a basic understanding of what religion means to them. Participants were also assumed to have a perceived value of religion and an idea of how religion is practiced, privately or publicly. The current study assumed that participants would have no experience, or a genuine experience with having religious beliefs and having prayed or not prayed to God for the forgiveness of their sins. Lastly, this study assumed that all participants would not have distractions while completing their surveys, nor would they be influenced or coaxed to participate.

Limitations of this study included the inability to make strong inferences about centrality of religiosity predicting a relationship with motivational needs. Centrality of religiosity does not currently hold a substantial amount of research surrounding the Gen Z cohort. This is also true about the motivational needs of Gen Z – little to no research exists. The current study was a preliminary examination of religious centrality and motivational needs. Because this study was the first of its kind, Huber, and Huber (2012) stated there will be more negative criticism than positive. Negative criticisms are often due to new studies having little peer review or inadequate grounding in theory (Chali et al., 2022; Huber & Huber, 2012). To build a strong foundation of information that is generalizable and usable, this study needed to take equally from religious and empirical study.

Further limitations of the current study included the inability to infer directionality. It is impossible for any study to infer directionality as there are multiple variables in the real world that might affect behavior (Chali et al., 2022). It is suggested by researchers to use a linear regression when predicting a variable related to religious centrality without inferring directionality or cause and effect (Chali et al., 2022; Huber & Huber, 2012). A linear regression provides an initial view of a relationship between two variables if one exists in the context of religion (Chali et al., 2022; Huber & Huber, 2012). However, simple linear regressions have their own limitations. One limitation of a linear regression is data appear in a straight line. Relationships between two or more variables in the real world do not always appear in straight lines, as many factors are involved in behavior (Chali et al., 2022)

Some factors involved in behavior that a linear regression cannot account for are researcher biases, administration of surveys, misinterpretation of data results, and survey respondents' psychological influences (Saeedi et al., 2020). The current study's limitations were addressed by using a minimally invasive and standardized approach when administering surveys. The current study used electronic surveys with survey items that are minimally subjective. This study's researchers are only inferring that a relationship exists between religious centrality and motivational need without cause and effect or directionality.

Summary

The current study attempted to address the gap in research for Gen Z's religious centrality and motivational needs by using the CRS and NAQ. This study's research questions and hypotheses stated that a relationship does exist between Gen Z's centrality of religiosity and motivational needs. By using online surveys to collect data about Gen Z, this study was minimally invasive and reduced researcher biases and participant fatigue, among other extraneous variables that may produce erroneous data. To make accurate predictions about motivational needs based on religious centrality, a simple linear regression was used for data analysis. A linear regression does not imply directionality between variables, nor does it guarantee a predictable relationship between variables. However, a linear regression was the most appropriate analysis when conducting preliminary studies for variables that have not historically held statistical relationships. Limitations of the current study included the errors associated with linear

regression analyses, participant biases during responses, and the inability to make claims about directionality or cause and effect.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to measure Gen Z's centrality of religiosity and motivational needs to better understand if a statistical relationship exists between these two variables. Gen Z individuals were recruited through social media and anonymously completed a 30-item questionnaire. Participant responses were coded accordingly and analyzed using a simple linear regression. This study's research questions asked whether centrality of religiosity could predict motivational need. This study's research questions also asked if any of the five individual dimensions of religious centrality could predict Gen Z's motivational needs. Study results are reported and discussed.

Descriptive Results

142 usable participant responses were statistically analyzed for the current study. Demographics of participants included the following frequencies for race (see Table 1): 5 American Indian or Alaskan Natives, 20 Asians, 21 Black or African Americans, 25 Hispanic or Latinos, 4 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders, 59 White or Caucasians, 3 others and 5 did not wish to answer.

Table 1

Race of Participants

Race	Frequency	Percent
American Indian / Alaskan Native	5	3.5
Asian	20	14.1
Black or African American	21	14.8
Hispanic or Latino	25	17.6
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	2.8
White or Caucasian	59	41.5
Other	3	2.1
I do not wish to answer	5	3.5
Total	142	100.0

Participant gender identities included the following frequencies (see Table 2): 9 non-binary, 5 transgender, 5 un-gendered, 60 females, 51 males, 6 others and 6 did not wish to answer.

Table 2

Gender Identities of Participants

Gender Identity	Frequency	Percent
Non-Binary	9	6.3
Transgender	5	3.5
Un-Gendered	5	3.5
Female	60	42.3
Male	51	35.9
Other	6	4.2
I do not wish to answer	6	4.2
Total	142	100.0

Participant religious subscriptions included the following (see Table 3): 6 Buddhists, 13 Roman Catholics, 28 Christians, 1 Confucianists, 2 Hinduisms, 8 Judaists, 23 Atheists, 9 Agnostics, 22 Spirituals, 5 non-religious, 16 non-religious but curious about religion, 4 others and 5 did not wish to answer.

Table 3

Religious Subscriptions of Participants

Religious Subscriptions	Frequency	Percent
Buddhism	6	4.2
Roman Catholic	13	9.2
Christianity	28	19.7
Confucianism	1	.7
Hinduism	2	1.4
Judaism	8	5.6
Atheist	23	16.2
Agnostic	9	6.3
Spiritual	22	15.5
Non-Religious	5	3.5
Non-Religious, but curious about religion	16	11.3
Other	4	2.8
I do not wish to answer	5	3.5
Total	142	100.0

Overall, participants were only moderately influenced by religious belief systems in their behavioral choices (M = 45.04, SD = 17.94; see Table 4). Descriptive statistics revealed minimal skewness, a steep kurtosis and ranged from combined individual scores of 15.00 (minimum) to 75.00 (maximum).

Table 4

Overall Participant Scores on the Centrality of Religiosity Scale

N = 142	
Mean	45.04
Median	45.00
Mode	15.00
Std. Deviation	17.94
Skewness	-.177
Std. Error of Skewness	.203
Kurtosis	-1.02
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.40
Range	60.00
Minimum	15.00
Maximum	75.00

Note: Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Participants were only moderately influenced by their religious belief systems across all five dimensions of religious centrality. Intellect was the first dimension to be analyzed (*M* = 9.44, *SD* = 3.62; see Table 5). Descriptive statistics revealed a moderate, negative skew, and a steep kurtosis. Combined individual scores for the dimension of intellect ranged from 3.00 (minimum) to 15.00 (maximum), with a median score of 10.00.

Table 5

Participant Scores for the Dimension of Intellect

N = 142	
Mean	9.44
Median	10.00
Mode	12.00
Std. Deviation	3.62
Skewness	-.352
Std. Error of Skewness	.203
Kurtosis	-.951
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.404
Range	12.00
Minimum	3.00
Maximum	15.00

Ideology (*M* = 9.87, *SD* = 3.62; see Table 6). Descriptive statistics revealed a moderate, negative, skew, and a moderate to steep, negative kurtosis. Combined individual scores for the dimension of ideology ranged from 3.00 (minimum) to 15.00 (maximum), with a median score of 10.50.

Table 6

Participant Scores for the Dimension of Ideology

N = 142	
Mean	9.87
Median	10.50
Mode	12.00
Std. Deviation	3.62
Skewness	-.497
Std. Error of Skewness	.203
Kurtosis	-.695
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.404
Range	12.00
Minimum	3.00
Maximum	15.00

Public practice (*M* = 8.30, *SD* = 4.10; see Table 7). Descriptive statistics revealed a mild skew, and a steep, negative kurtosis. Combined individual scores for the dimension of public practice ranged from 3.00 (minimum) to 15.00 (maximum), with a median score of 9.00.

Table 7

Participant Scores for the Dimension of Public Practice

N = 142	
Mean	8.30
Median	9.00
Mode	3.00
Std. Deviation	4.10
Skewness	.002
Std. Error of Skewness	.203
Kurtosis	-1.44
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.404
Range	12.00
Minimum	3.00
Maximum	15.00

Private practice (*M* = 8.39, *SD* = 4.01; see Table 8). Descriptive statistics revealed a mild skew, and a steep, negative kurtosis. Combined individual scores for the

dimension of private practice ranged from 3.00 (minimum) to 15.00 (maximum), with a median score of 9.00.

Table 8

Participant Scores for the Dimension of Private Practice

N = 142	
Mean	8.39
Median	9.00
Mode	3.00
Std. Deviation	4.01
Skewness	.056
Std. Error of Skewness	.203
Kurtosis	-1.36
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.404
Range	12.00
Minimum	3.00
Maximum	15.00

Experience with receiving God's forgiveness (M = 9.02, SD = 3.92; see Table 9). Descriptive statistics revealed a mild, negative skew, and a steep, negative kurtosis. Combined individual scores for the dimension of experience ranged from 3.00 (minimum) to 15.00 (maximum), with a median score of 9.00.

Table 9

Participant Scores for the Dimension of Experiencing God's Forgiveness

N = 142	
Mean	9.02
Median	9.00
Mode	3.00
Std. Deviation	3.92
Skewness	-.184
Std. Error of Skewness	.203
Kurtosis	-1.117
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.404
Range	12.00
Minimum	3.00
Maximum	15.00

Overall, participants had a high motivational need for autonomy (*M* = 19.27, *SD* = 4.00; see Table 10). Descriptive statistics revealed a strong, negative skew, and a steep, positive kurtosis. Participants scores for autonomy ranged from 5.00 (minimum) to 25.00 (maximum).

Table 10

Participant Scores on the Motivational Need for Autonomy

N = 142	
Mean	19.27
Median	20.00
Mode	20.00
Std. Deviation	4.00
Skewness	-.851
Std. Error of Skewness	.203
Kurtosis	1.008
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.404
Range	20.00
Minimum	5.00
Maximum	25.00

Participants had a moderate need for affiliation (*M* = 17.42, *SD* = 3.32; see Table 11). Descriptive statistics revealed a mild, negative skew, and a moderate, positive

kurtosis. Participants scores for autonomy ranged from 8.00 (minimum) to 25.00 (maximum).

Table 11

Participant Scores on the Motivational Need for Affiliation

N = 142	
Mean	17.42
Median	17.00
Mode	17.00
Std. Deviation	3.32
Skewness	-.262
Std. Error of Skewness	.203
Kurtosis	.353
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.404
Range	17.00
Minimum	8.00
Maximum	25.00

Participants had a high need for competency (M = 20.76, SD = 4.11; see Table 12). Descriptive statistics revealed a strong, negative skew, and a steep, positive kurtosis. Participants scores for autonomy ranged from 5.00 (minimum) to 25.00 (maximum).

Table 12

Participant Scores on the Motivational Need for Competency

N = 142	
Mean	20.76
Median	22.00
Mode	25.00
Std. Deviation	4.11
Skewness	-1.291
Std. Error of Skewness	.203
Kurtosis	1.832
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.404
Range	20.00
Minimum	5.00
Maximum	25.00

Study Findings

Simple linear regression was used to test if centrality of religiosity significantly predicted Gen Z's motivational need for autonomy. The fitted regression model was centrality of religiosity = 19.713 - .010 * (autonomy; see Tables 13, 14 and Figure 1). The overall regression was not statistically significant (R^2 = .002, f (1, 140) = .28, p = .600). It was found that centrality of religiosity did not significantly predict the motivational need for autonomy (β = -.010, p = .600).

Table 13

ANOVA[a] for Autonomy by Centrality of Religiosity

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	.276	.600[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Centrality of Religiosity

Table 14

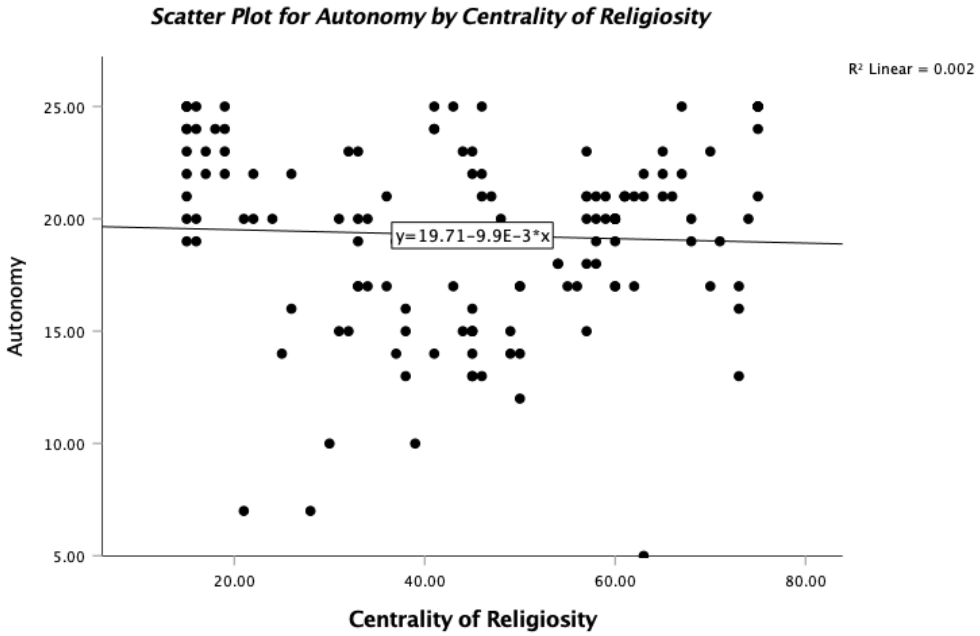
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Autonomy[b]	.002		
(Constant)[a]		19.713	< .001
Centrality of Religiosity[a]		-.010	.600

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Centrality of Religiosity

Figure 1

Scatter Plot for Autonomy by Centrality of Religiosity



Simple linear regression was used to test if centrality of religiosity significantly predicted Gen Z's motivational need for affiliation. The fitted regression model was centrality of religiosity = 13.705 + .082 * (affiliation; see Tables 15, 16 and Figure 2). The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 = .199, f (1, 140) = 34.68, p < .001). It was found that centrality of religiosity did significantly predict the motivational need for affiliation (β = -.082, p < .001).

Table 15

ANOVA[a] for Affiliation by Centrality of Religiosity

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	34.683	< .001[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Centrality of Religiosity

Table 16

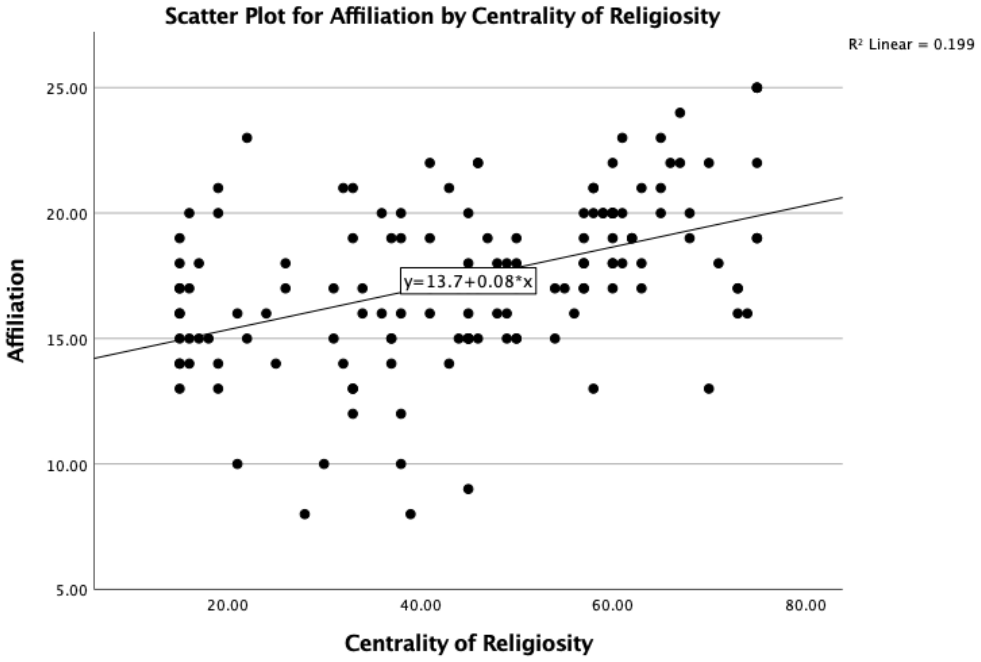
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Affiliation[b]	.199		
(Constant)[a]		13.705	< .001
Centrality of Religiosity[a]		.082	< .001

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Centrality of Religiosity

Figure 2

Scatter Plot for Affiliation by Centrality of Religiosity



Simple linear regression was used to test if centrality of religiosity significantly predicted Gen Z's motivational need for competency. The fitted regression model was centrality of religiosity = 19.393 - .030 * (competency; see Tables 17, 18 and Figure 3). The overall regression was not statistically significant (R^2 = .018, f (1, 140) = 2.50, p =

.116). It was found that centrality of religiosity did not significantly predict the motivational need for competency (β = .030, *p* = .116).

Table 17

ANOVA[a]

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	2.499	.116[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Centrality of Religiosity

Table 18

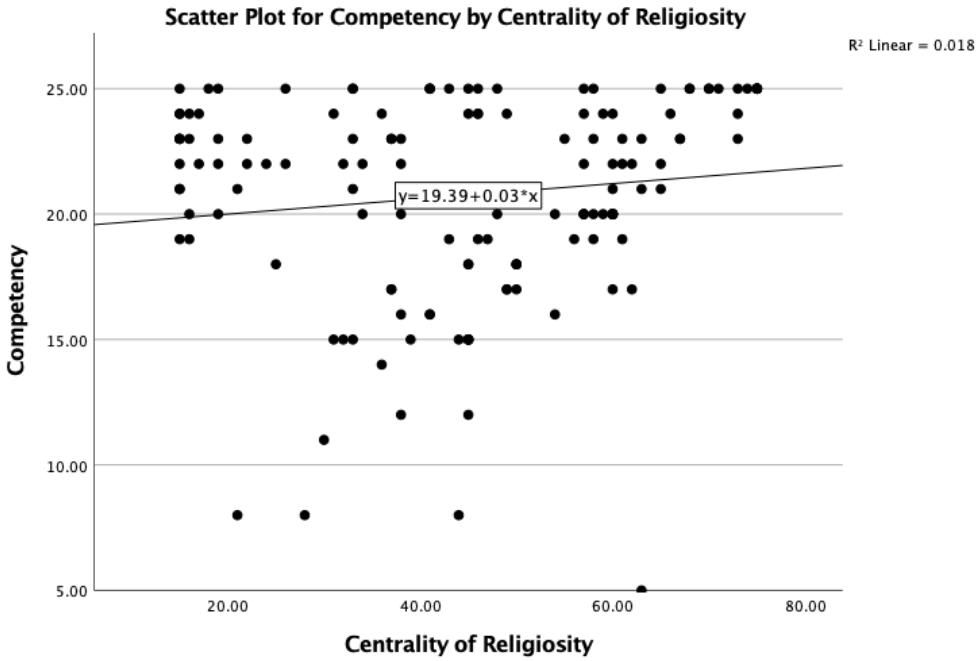
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Competency[b]	.018		
(Constant)[a]		19.393	< .001
Centrality of Religiosity[a]		.030	.116

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Centrality of Religiosity

Figure 3

Scatter Plot for Competency by Centrality of Religiosity



Simple linear regression was used to test if the five dimensions of religious centrality significantly predicted Gen Z's motivational need for autonomy. The fitted regression models were intellect = 19.031 + .025 * (autonomy; see Tables 19, 20 and Figure 4). The overall regression was not statistically significant (R^2 = .001, f (1, 140) = .072, p = .789). It was found that the dimension of intellect did not significantly predict the motivational need for autonomy (β = .025, p = .789).

Table 19

ANOVA[a] for Autonomy by Intellect

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	.072	.789[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intellect

Table 20

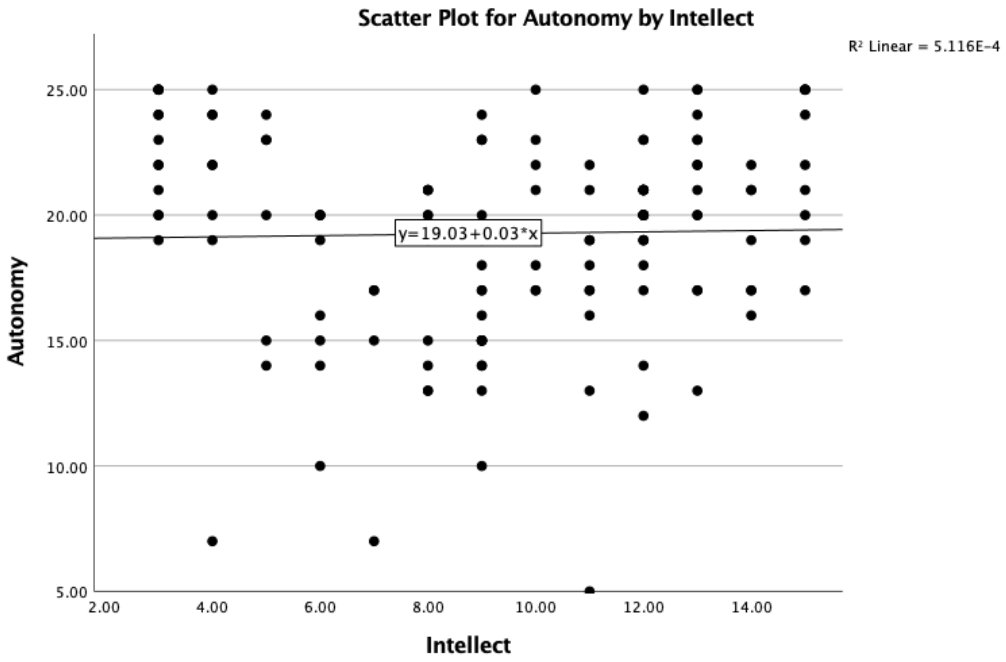
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Autonomy[b]	.001		
(Constant)[a]		19.031	< .001
Intellect[a]		.025	.789

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intellect

Figure 4

Scatter Plot for Autonomy by Intellect



Ideology = 19.118 + .015 * (autonomy; see Tables 21, 22 and Figure 5). The overall regression was not statistically significant ($R^2 < .001$, f (1, 140) = .026, p = .871).

It was found that the dimension of ideology did not significantly predict the motivational need for autonomy (β = .015, *p* = .871).

Table 21

ANOVA[a]

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	.026	.871[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Ideology

Table 22

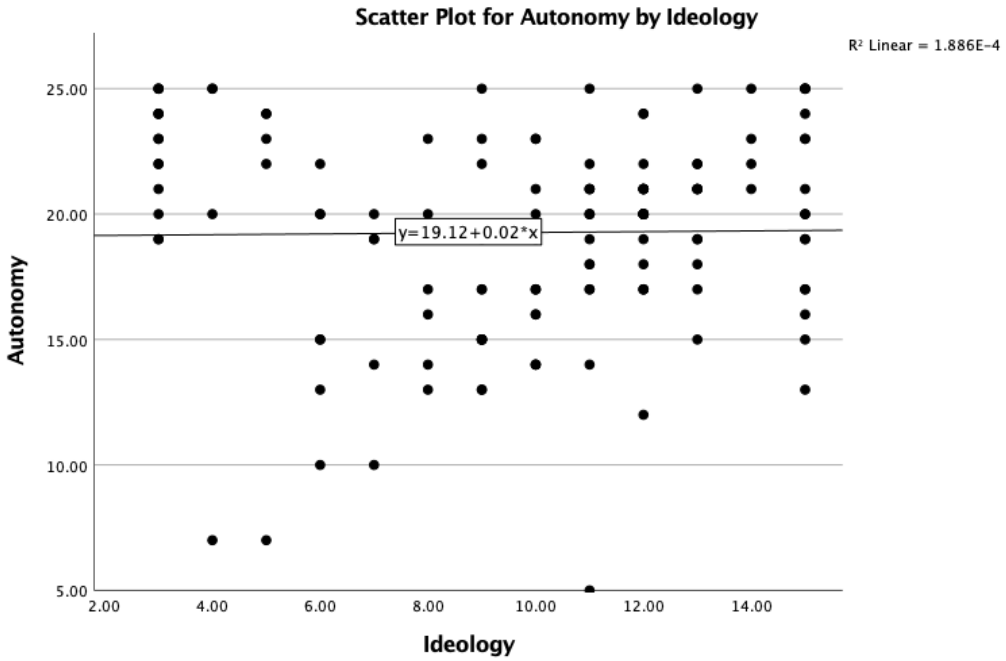
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Autonomy[b]	.000		
(Constant)[a]		19.118	< .001
Ideology[a]		.015	.871

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Ideology

Figure 5

Scatter Plot for Autonomy by Ideology



Public practice = 19.818 - .066 * (autonomy; see Tables 23, 24 and Figure 6). The overall regression was not statistically significant (R^2 = .005, *f* (1, 140) = .650, *p* = .421). It was found that the dimension of public practice did not significantly predict the motivational need for autonomy (β = -.066, *p* = .421).

Table 23

ANOVA[a] for Autonomy by Public Practice

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	.650	.421[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Public Practice

Table 24

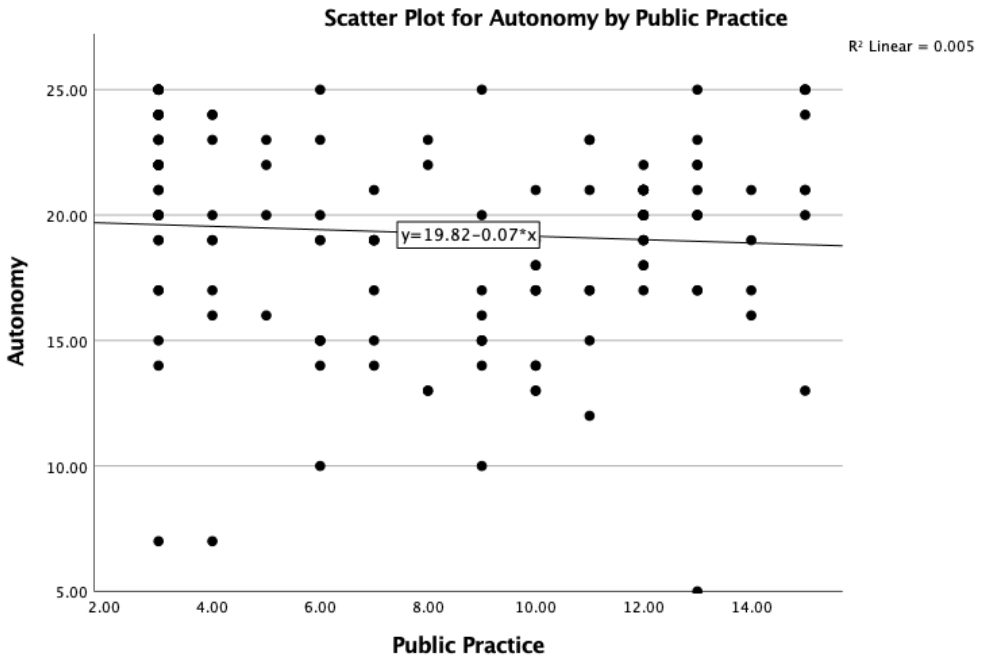
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Autonomy[b]	.005		
(Constant)[a]		19.818	< .001
Public Practice[a]		-.066	.421

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Public Practice

Figure 6

Scatter Plot for Autonomy by Public Practice



Private practice = 19.919 - .078 * (autonomy; see Tables 25, 26 and Figure 7).

The overall regression was not statistically significant (R^2 = .006, f (1, 140) = .852, p =

.358). It was found that the dimension of private practice did not significantly predict the motivational need for autonomy (β = -.078, *p* = .358).

Table 25

ANOVA[a] for Autonomy by Private Practice

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	.852	.358[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Private Practice

Table 26

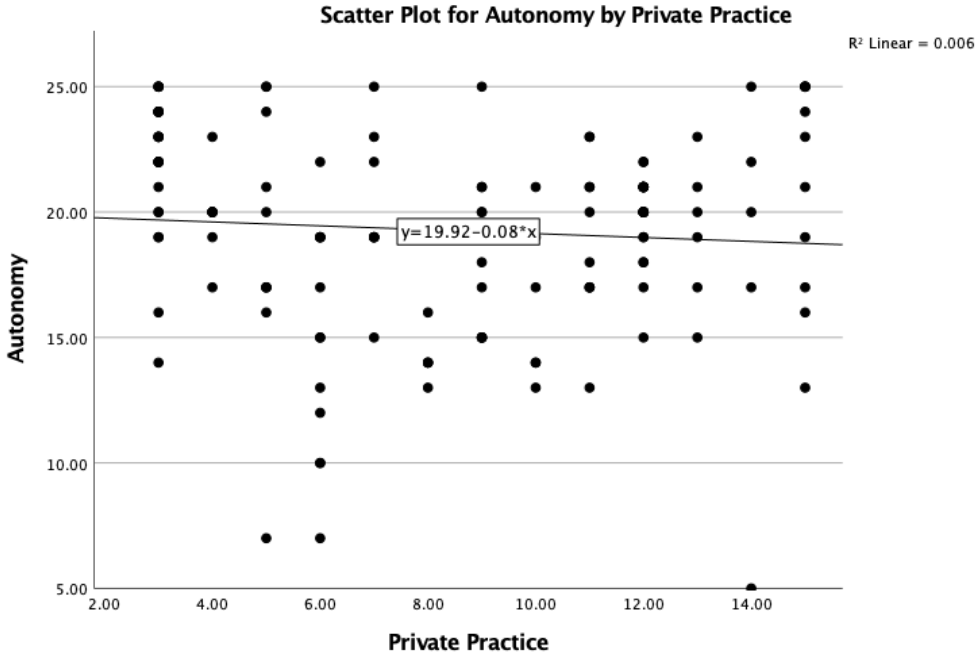
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Autonomy[b]	.006		
(Constant)[a]		19.919	< .001
Private Practice[a]		-.078	.358

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Private Practice

Figure 7

Scatter Plot for Autonomy by Private Practice



Experience with receiving God's forgiveness = 20.023 - .084 * (autonomy; see Tables 27, 28 and Figure 8). The overall regression was not statistically significant (R^2 = .007, *f* (1, 140) = .950, *p* = .331). It was found that the dimension of experience with receiving God's forgiveness did not significantly predict the motivational need for autonomy (β = -.084, *p* = .331).

Table 27

ANOVA[a] for Autonomy by Experience

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	.950	.331[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Experience

Table 28

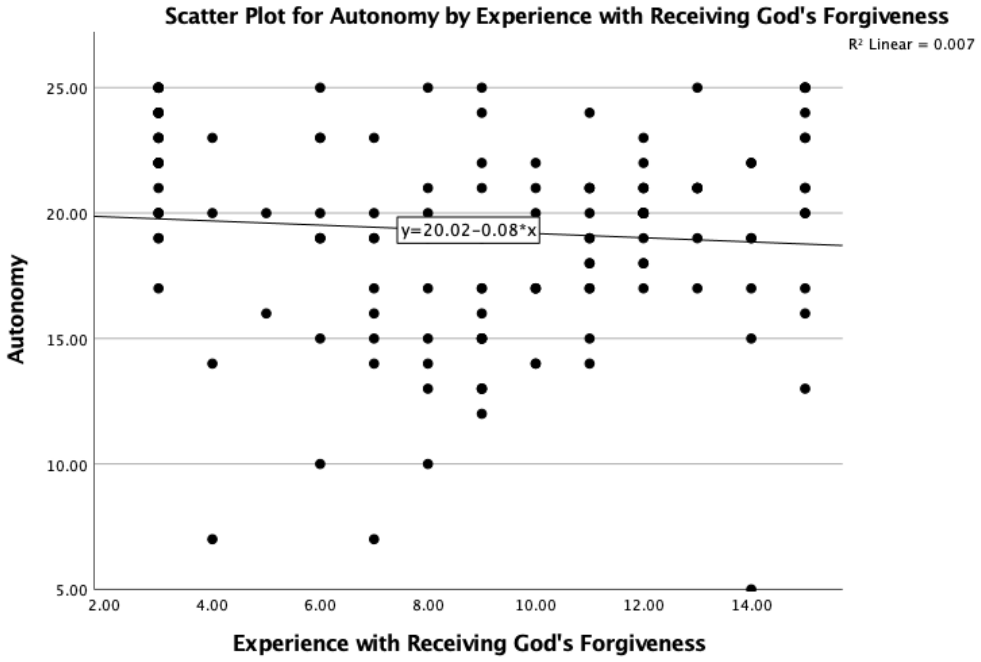
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Autonomy[b]	.007		
(Constant)[a]		20.023	< .001
Experience[a]		-.084	.331

a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Experience

Figure 8

Scatter Plot for Autonomy by Experience with Receiving God's Forgiveness



Simple linear regression was used to test if the five dimensions of religious centrality significantly predicted Gen Z's motivational need for affiliation. The fitted regression models were intellect = 13.922 + .370 * (affiliation; see Tables 29, 30 and Figure 9). The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 = .162, *f* (1, 140) =

27.16, $p < .001$). It was found that the dimension of intellect did significantly predict the motivational need for affiliation ($\beta = .370$, $p < .001$).

Table 29

ANOVA[a]

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	27.159	< .001[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intellect

Table 30

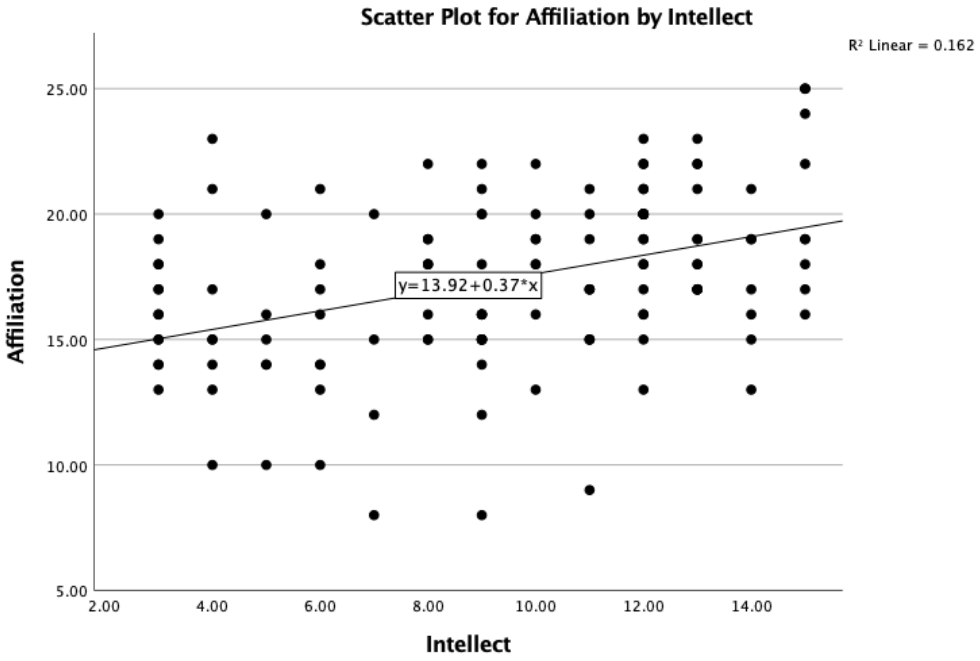
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Affiliation[b]	.162		
(Constant)[a]		13.922	< .001
Intellect[a]		.370	< .001

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intellect

Figure 9

Scatter Plot for Affiliation by Intellect



Ideology = 13.432 + .404 * (affiliation; see Tables 31, 32 and Figure 10). The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 = .194, f (1, 140) = 33.95, p < .001). It was found that the dimension of ideology did significantly predict the motivational need for affiliation (β = .404, p < .001).

Table 31

ANOVA[a] for Affiliation by Ideology

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	33.804	< .001[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Ideology

Table 32

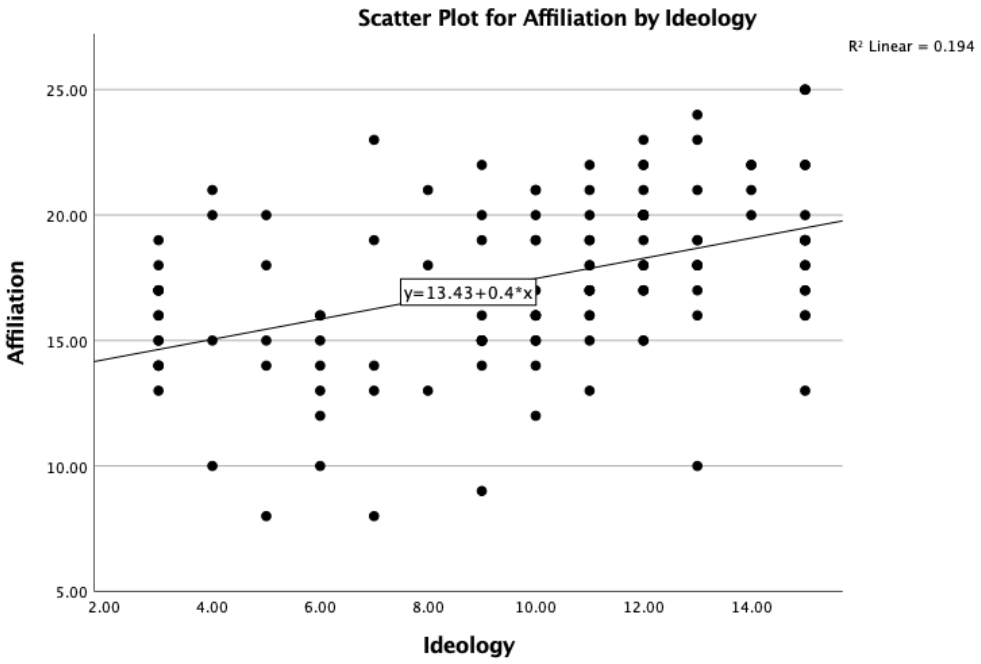
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Affiliation[b]	.194		
(Constant)[a]		13.432	< .001
Ideology[a]		.404	< .001

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Ideology

Figure 10

Scatter Plot for Affiliation by Ideology



Public practice = 14.641 + .334 * (affiliation; see Tables 33, 34 and Figure 11).

The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 = .171, f (1, 140) = 28.83, p <

.001). It was found that the dimension of public practice did significantly predict the motivational need for affiliation ($\beta = .334$, $p < .001$).

Table 33

ANOVA[a] for Affiliation by Public Practice

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	28.827	< .001[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Public Practice

Table 34

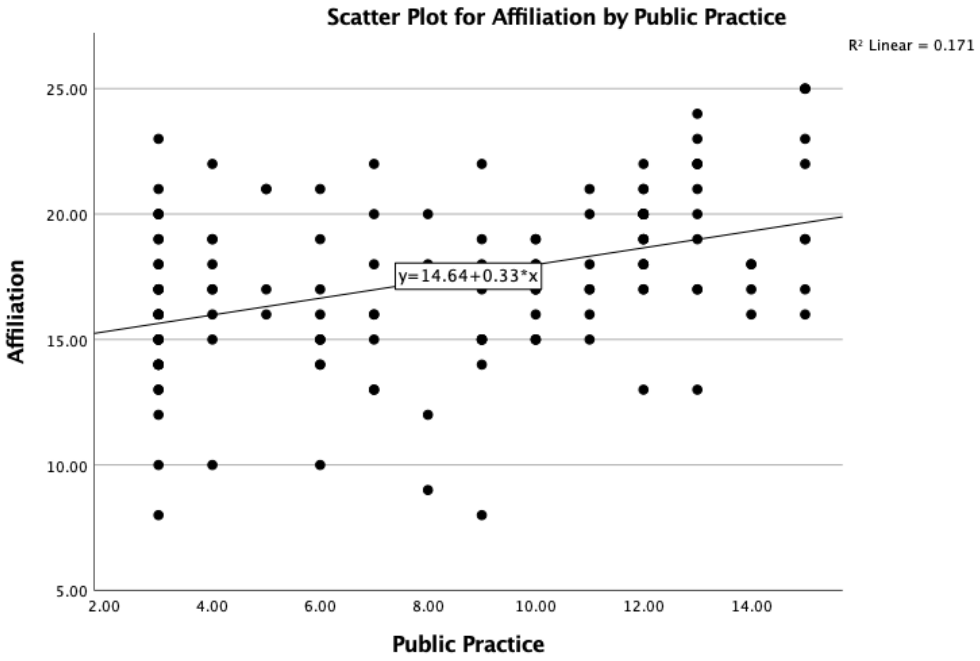
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Affiliation[b]	.171		
(Constant)[a]		14.641	< .001
Public Practice[a]		.334	< .001

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Public Practice

Figure 11

Scatter Plot for Affiliation by Public Practice



Private practice = 14.529 + .334 * (affiliation; see Tables 35, 36 and Figure 12). The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 = .173, f (1, 140) = 29.22, p < .001). It was found that the dimension of private practice did significantly predict the motivational need for affiliation (β = .334, p < .001).

Table 35

ANOVA[a] for Affiliation by Private Practice

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	29.221	< .001[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Private Practice

Table 36

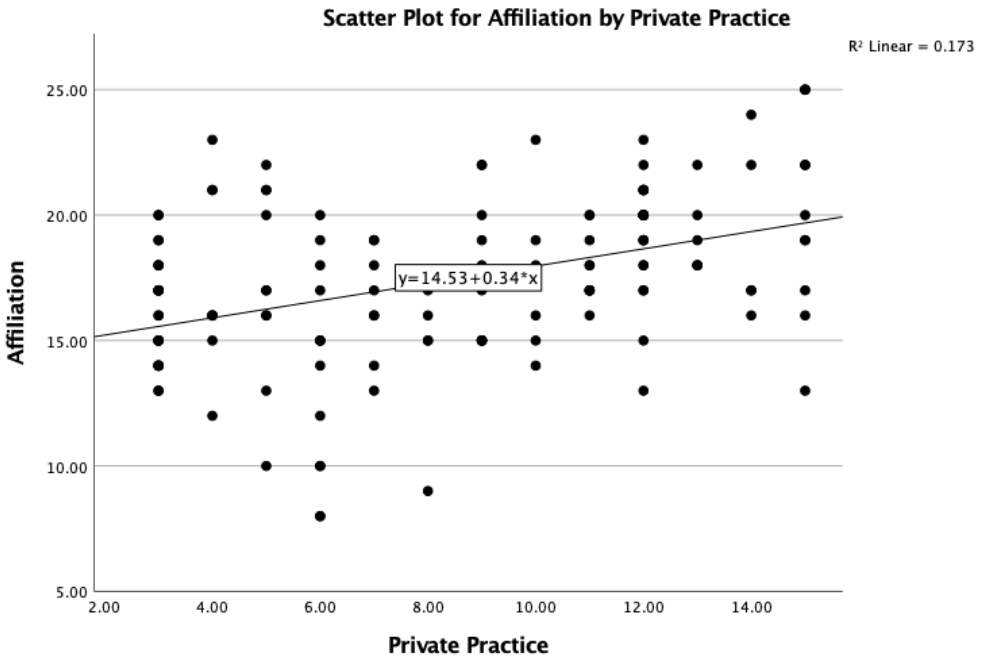
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Affiliation[b]	.173		
(Constant)[a]		14.529	< .001
Private Practice[a]		.344	< .001

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Private Practice

Figure 12

Scatter Plot for Affiliation by Private Practice



Experience with receiving God's forgiveness = 14.325 + .343 * (affiliation; see Tables 37, 38 and Figure 13). The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 = .164, f (1, 140) = 27.49, p < .001). It was found that the dimension of experience with

receiving God's forgiveness did significantly predict the motivational need for affiliation ($\beta = .343$, $p < .001$).

Table 37

ANOVA[a] for Affiliation by Experience

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	27.490	< .001[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Experience

Table 38

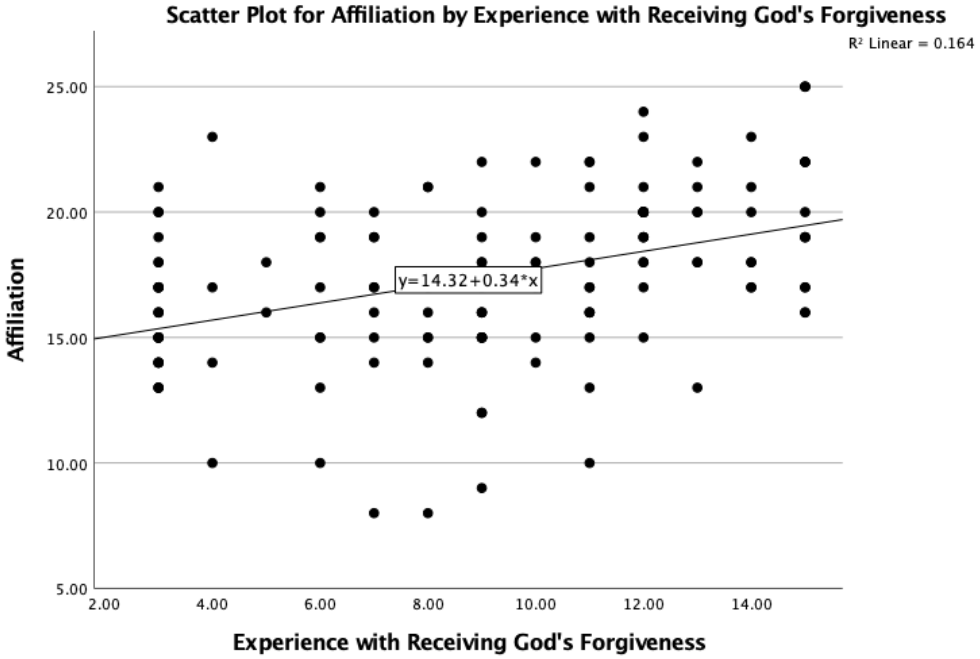
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Affiliation[b]	.164		
(Constant)[a]		14.325	< .001
Experience[a]		.343	< .001

a. Dependent Variable: Affiliation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Experience

Figure 13

Scatter Plot for Affiliation by Experience



Simple linear regression was used to test if the five dimensions of religious centrality significantly predicted Gen Z's motivational need for competency. The fitted regression models were intellect = 30.241 + .128 * (competency; see Tables 39, 40 and Figure 14). The overall regression was not statistically significant (R^2 = .013, f (1, 140) = 1.80, p = .182). It was found that the dimension of intellect did not significantly predict the motivational need for competency (β = .128, p = .182).

Table 39

ANOVA[a] for Competency by Intellect

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	1.797	.182[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intellect

Table 40

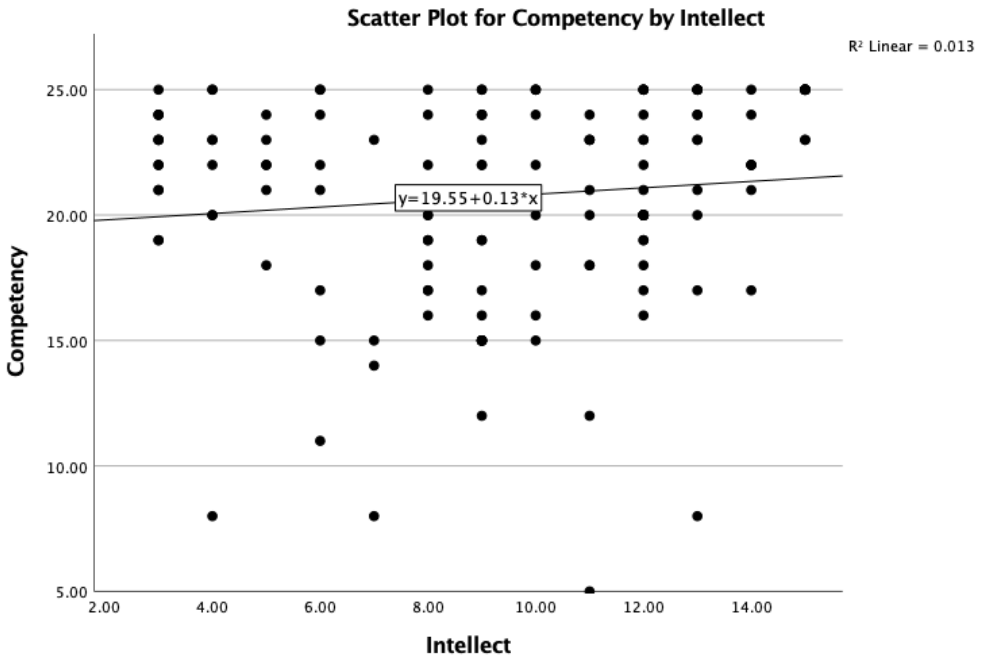
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Competency[b]	.013		
(Constant)[a]		19.551	< .001
Intellect[a]		.128	.182

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intellect

Figure 14

Scatter Plot for Competency by Intellect



Ideology = 103.911 + .266 * (competency; see Tables 41, 42 and Figure 15). The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 = .055, f (1, 140) = 8.13, p = .005). It

was found that the dimension of ideology did significantly predict the motivational need for competency (β = .266, *p* = .005).

Table 41

ANOVA[a] for Competency by Ideology

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	8.128	.005[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Ideology

Table 42

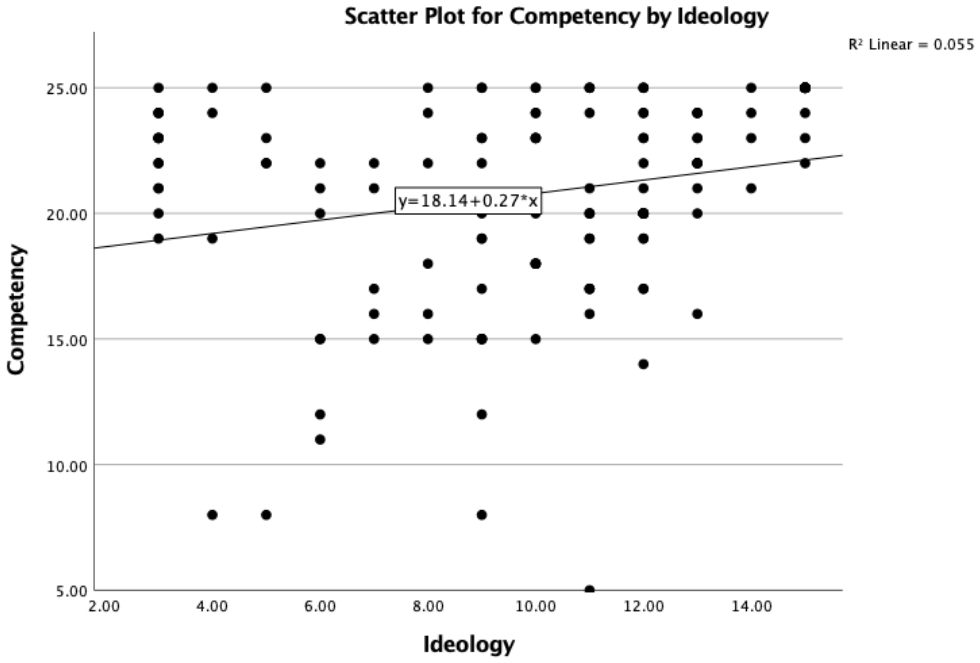
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Competency[b]	.055		
(Constant)[a]		18.138	< .001
Ideology[a]		.226	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Ideology

Figure 15

Scatter Plot for Competency by Ideology



Public practice = 20.466 + .035 * (competency; see Tables 43, 44 and Figure 16). The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 = .001, *f* (1, 140) = .175, *p* = .676). It was found that the dimension of public practice did not significantly predict the motivational need for competency (β = .035, *p* = .676).

Table 43

ANOVA[a] for Competency by Public Practice

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	.175	.676[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Public Practice

Table 44

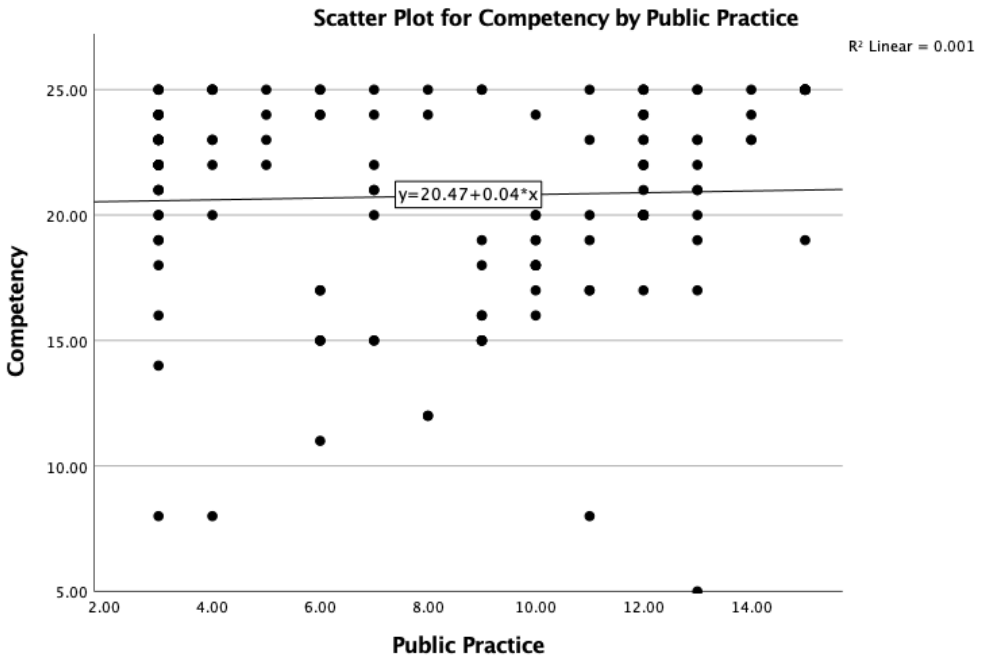
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Competency[b]	.001		
(Constant)[a]		20.466	< .001
Public Practice[a]		.035	.676

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Public Practice

Figure 16

Scatter Plot for Competency by Public Practice



Private practice = 19.978 + .093 * (competency; see Tables 45, 46 and Figures 17). The overall regression was not statistically significant (R^2 = .008, f (1, 140) = 1.166,

p = .282). It was found that the dimension of private practice did not significantly predict the motivational need for competency (β = .093, *p* = .282).

Table 45

ANOVA[a] for Competency by Private Practice

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	1.166	.282[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Private Practice

Table 46

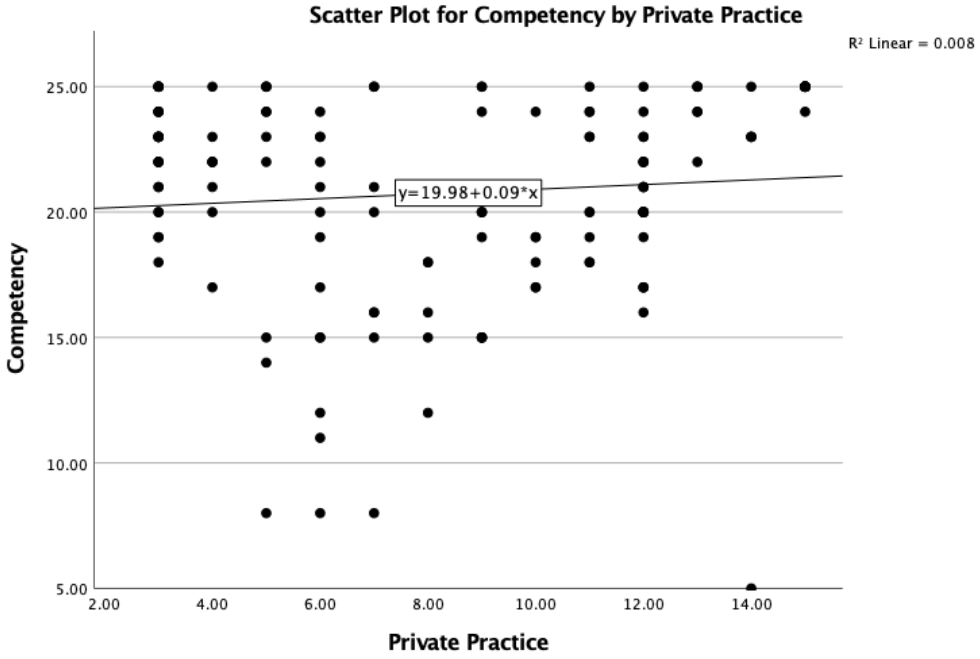
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Competency[b]	.008		
(Constant)[a]		19.978	< .001
Private Practice[a]		.093	.282

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Private Practice

Figure 17

Scatter Plot for Competency by Private Practice



Experience with receiving God's forgiveness = 19.241 + .168 * (competency; see Tables 47, 48 and Figure 18). The overall regression was not statistically significant (R^2 = .026, *f* (1, 140) = 3.711, *p* = .056). It was found that the dimension of experience with receiving God's forgiveness did not significantly predict the motivational need for competency (β = .168, *p* = .056).

Table 47

ANOVA[a]

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	3.711	.056[b]
Total	141		

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Experience

Table 48

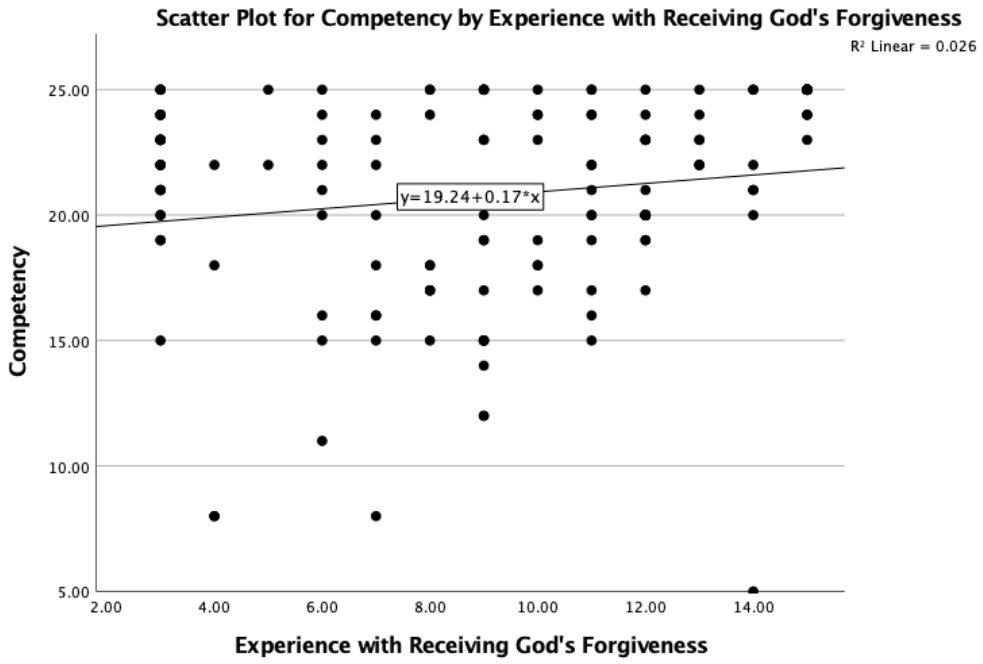
Model Summary[b] and Coefficients[a]

Model	R Square	Unstandardized B	Sig.
Competency[b]	.026		
(Constant)[a]		19.241	< .001
Experience[a]		.168	.056

a. Dependent Variable: Competency
b. Predictors: (Constant), Experience

Figure 18

Scatter Plot for Competency by Experience with Receiving God's Forgiveness



Summary

Overall, Gen Z participants held a subordinate position for centrality of religiosity and the five dimensions. Gen Z's motivational needs for autonomy, affiliation and competency were moderate to high. There was an even combination of female to male participants with various gender identities included in the sample, and a variety of

ethnicities and religious subscriptions. Statistically, centrality of religiosity did not reliably predict the motivational needs for autonomy and competency. However, centrality of religiosity did reveal a significant relationship with the motivational need for affiliation. Each of the respective five dimensions also held a significant, positive relationship with the motivational need for affiliation.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

This study sought to be the first examination of a relationship between centrality of religiosity and motivational needs. The Gen Z cohort was an appropriate sample due to its minimally studied motivational needs and having no literature focusing on their religious centrality. Based on research surrounding older generations' motivational needs and centrality of religiosity, the current study hypothesized that centrality could predict Gen Z's motivational needs. Using the Centrality of Religiosity Scale and a Needs Assessment Questionnaire, this study collected data and analyzed participant responses through a simple linear regression. While some motivational needs could not be predicted, there were statistically significant relationships between motivational needs and some of the five dimensions of religious centrality. This chapter discusses the findings of this preliminary study about Gen Z's centrality of religiosity predicting their motivational needs.

Summary of Findings

To summarize, a strong statistical relationship was not found overall between centrality of religiosity and motivational needs for the Gen Z cohort. However, a simple linear regression revealed that the motivational need for affiliation could be predicted based on Gen Z's religious centrality, including predictability for affiliation from each of the five dimensions of centrality. The current study's participants included an even mixture of men to women, with a variety of ethnicities and religious subscriptions. Based on descriptive statistics, it is found that Gen Z is subordinate in their positioning for

centrality of religiosity, with a moderate to high motivational need for autonomy, affiliation, and competency.

Discussion of Findings

Research Questions

The current study's research questions asked, (1) is there a relationship between centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for autonomy? (2) Is there a relationship between centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for affiliation? (3) Does a predictable relationship exist between centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for competency? (4) To what extent do the five dimensions of religious centrality (intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, or experiencing God's forgiveness) predict the motivational need for autonomy? (5) To what extent do the five dimensions of religious centrality (intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, or experiencing God's forgiveness) predict the motivational need for affiliation? And (6), To what extent do the five dimensions of religious centrality (intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, or experiencing God's forgiveness) predict the motivational need for competency?

RQ 1

Findings from the current study revealed that no statistically significant relationship exists between centrality of religiosity and autonomy (p = .600). The p-value from this analysis describes the relationship between these two variables as unpredictable. Further, the proportion of autonomy that can be explained by religious centrality is minimal (R^2 = .002). When viewing a scatterplot for the analysis there are many outliers for the independent variable (centrality of religiosity), while few outliers

exist for the dependent variable (autonomy). The outliers within the data are likely having a negative effect on the study's linear regression, as outlined by the limitations of this study. Conversely, this relationship between variables is likely to be consistent with real world data. This is because Gen Z reported a high number of agreeable responses for autonomy-framed survey items, and a wide range of religious subscription. It is likely that Gen Z feels they have the autonomous support from peers, family, and the Church to explore their own religious views and behavioral choices. However, this explanation does not align with the Bible and what Christ says about the freedom of choice.

The Bible reads, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (*New King James Bible, 1982/1984, Moses 3:17*). This scripture describes that while everyone holds the ability to make behavioral choices, they must still follow the guidelines for behavior that God has set. This explanation of scripture aligns with Aziz et al. (2021). Aziz et al. concluded through qualitative interviews that Gen Z high school students who were religious or not held similar views about societal standards for behavior. Overall, the motivational need for autonomy is not predictable based on Gen Z's position of religious centrality, but their positioning can predict a different motivational need.

RQ 2

Findings from the current study revealed that a statistically significant relationship exists between centrality of religiosity and affiliation ($p < .001$). The p-value from this analysis describes the relationship between these two variables as predictable. Further, the proportion of affiliation that can be explained by religious centrality is marginal ($R^2 =$

.119). When viewing a scatterplot for the analysis there is a visible positive slope. The more influenceable Gen Z is by their religiousness (i.e, having a subordinate to central positioning), the higher their motivational need for affiliation. While there are some outliers within the data, a slope exists, and affiliation is predictable based on Gen Z's centrality of religiosity. The current study's findings align with Ajzen (2020) and Crisan et al. (2022). Ajzen and Crisan et al. stated that for older generations and possibly Gen Z, individuals who are religious often feel drawn to interactions with peers, family, and the faith community. The positive relationship between religious centrality and affiliation also aligns with the Bible. The Bible states that individuals should be involved within the community for two reasons (1) to provide the evidence that we all walk in the light (*New King James Bible, 1982/1984, 1 John 1:17*), and (2) the fulfillment of Christ's command to help others (*Galations 6:2*).

RQ 3

Findings from the current study revealed that centrality of religiosity cannot predict Gen Z's motivational need for competency (p = .116). The p-value from this analysis describes the relationship between these two variables as unpredictable. Further, the proportion of competency that can be explained by religious centrality is minimal (R^2 = .018). When viewing a scatterplot for the analysis there is no visible slope, neither positive nor negative. Once again there are outliers that appear on the scatterplot, of which negatively affect the linear regression analysis. However, it is definitive that Gen Z's holds a strong motivational need for competency no matter their positioning for centrality of religiosity.

The current study's findings do not align with and Crisan et al. (2022). Crisan et al. determined that while Gen Z will have a high need for autonomy and affiliation, they would have a low need for competency. However, the current study reveals that Gen Z has a strong motivational need for competency. Crisan et al. strictly measured Gen Z's motivational needs in an academic setting, whereas the current study measured motivational needs in the context of religiousness. Gen Z's strong motivational need for competency aligns with their interest in learning more about religious topics, per the current study's descriptive data.

RQ 4

The fourth research question of the current study asked if a relationship exists between any of the five dimensions of religious centrality and the motivational need for autonomy. As a reminder, the five dimensions include intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and having experienced God's forgiveness. These five dimensions, combined, equate to an individual's overall positioning for centrality of religiosity. Separately, the dimensions and individual scores for each describe the strength of which an individual's religiousness influences their behavioral choices. The current study found that none of the five dimensions holds a relationship with the motivational need for autonomy (intellect and autonomy, $p = .789$; ideology and autonomy, $p = .871$; public practice, $p = .421$; private practice, $p = .358$; experience, $p = .331$).

When creating the research questions for the current study there were no studies found that discussed any type of connection between the five dimensions of religious centrality and any of the motivational needs. Based on the literature that does exist for the five dimensions, it was assumed that intellect, ideology, and private practice might hold a

relationship with autonomy. This was assumed because the roots of intellect stem from logical reasoning and objective understanding (Chali et al., 2022; Huber and Huber, 2012). The roots of ideology stem from the assimilation of beliefs, sometimes individualistically. And private practice is often associated with individuals who find self-fulfillment through making the autonomous or voluntary choice to trust and pray to God. Autonomy is distinctive of individuals who seek out opportunities to make their own behavioral choices and use their own assimilation of knowledge as understanding (Crisan et al., 2022). Despite the assumption of a relationship between variables, overall, no relationship predictability exists between any of the five dimensions of religious centrality and the motivational need for autonomy.

RQ 5

The fifth research question of the current study asked if a relationship exists between any of the five dimensions of religious centrality and the motivational need for affiliation. Simple linear regression revealed that a positive statistical relationship exists between all five dimensions of religious centrality and the motivational need for affiliation. However, due to the limited information available about the connection between the various dimensions and affiliation, the current study cannot fully conclude that the present relationship is valid or reliable. It was assumed that the dimension of public practice stems from individuals' interest in interacting with others who share similar values, views, and behaviors. This assumption does not explain the other existing relationships. Research by Ajzen (2020) claimed there is a strong motivational need for affiliation among individuals who are religious. The current study concluded that the majority of Gen Z are equally religious and non-religious. Gen Z's strong need for

affiliation does not align with Ajzen's claims, as Gen Z is both, high in the need for affiliation and somewhat non-religious. Further, future studies will benefit from a deeper examination of the relationship between Gen Z's need for affiliation and the five dimensions of religious centrality. It is coincidental that all five dimensions held a relationship with the motivational need for affiliation, and there is reason to believe that erroneous data or misunderstandings of the relationship exist.

RQ 6

The sixth research question of the current study asked if a relationship exists between any of the five dimensions of religious centrality and the motivational need for competency. The current study found that only one relationship exists between the five dimensions and competency (ideology, $p < .05$), and one relationship that nearly exists (experience, $p = .056$). It is understood by Ajzen (2020) that the motivational need for competency stems from an individual desire to develop the knowledge and skills needed to make behavioral choices. Huber and Huber (2012) explained that ideology also stems from the individual seeking knowledge or views that align with their behavioral choices. This existing relationship between ideology and competency likely holds a relationship due to the similar goal of acquiring knowledge to make informed decisions or behavior.

The relationship between having experienced God's forgiveness and the motivational need for competency requires further examination. Survey items for experience with receiving God's forgiveness included phrases such as, "I often experience situations in which I have the feeling…". This framing indicates an assumption that individuals have a true and personal understanding of what it means to be religious, believe in God, or have asked God for forgiveness. This assumption resembles

the roots of competency, such that competency stems from the obtainment or active acquisition of information that leads to better understanding and informed choices.

Overall, statistical relationships do not exist between the five dimensions and competency, the current study believes that reframing survey items for the dimension of experience may yield better results in future studies. Survey items for experience assume that individuals have a strong understanding of what religion is, and what it feels like to receive God's forgiveness. However, many study participants reported being non-religious but wanting to learn more about religion, describing a low understanding about religion and receiving God's forgiveness. It is possible that the framing of survey items for experiencing God's forgiveness was resulting in the collection of erroneous data. In the next section, hypotheses, relationships are discussed in the context of positive or negative rather than overall between variables.

Hypotheses

The current study's hypotheses predicted that (1) centrality of religiosity would have a statistically significant negative relationship with Gen Z's motivational need for autonomy, (2) centrality of religiosity would have a statistically significant positive relationship with the motivational need for affiliation, and (3) a motivational need for competency would not have a measurable relationship with centrality of religiosity, whether positive or negative. This study found that (1) while the fitted linear equation was negative, there was not a statistically significant relationship between centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for autonomy, (2) a statistically significant positive relationship does exist between religious centrality and Gen Z's motivational need for affiliation, and (3) there were no measurable statistical relationships found between

centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for competency. The study's hypotheses accurately predicted two of the three statistical relationships between centrality of religiosity and motivational needs.

The current study's findings align with Riegel (2020) and Zarzycka et al. (2020) claims about Gen Z's centrality of religiosity positioning. Gen Z's subordinate position aligns with Haq et al. (2018) and Ke and Stocker's (2019) qualitative interviews where respondents who were religious felt that they want and could self-explore their religious beliefs, with minimal influence from extrinsic forces. Unfortunately, the current study's findings do not support Bryngeson and Cole (2021) and Jacobsen's (2020) research due to our first hypothesis inaccurately predicting a positive statistical relationship between centrality of religiosity and the motivational need for autonomy. However, based on Gen Z's strong motivational need for autonomy in the current study it holds true that these individuals prefer autonomous settings and contexts. Biblically, these findings for autonomy somewhat align with the understanding that individuals must make voluntary (autonomous) choices to trust in God and not expect extrinsic reward. The Bible says, "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (*English Standard Bible*, 2001/2016, Philippians 4:19), revealing that the current study examples Gen Z's desire for a relationship with Christ, but also a desire for self-fulfillment rather than external reward. Unfortunately, the five dimensions for religious centrality also did not hold a significant relationship with autonomy, which does not support the current study's first hypothesis. This study anticipated that the dimensions of intellect, private practice and experience with receiving God's forgiveness would hold a predictive positive relationship with autonomy based on research by Bryngelson and Cole

(2021). Per Bryngelson and Cole, and Jacobsen (2020), it was expected that if Gen Z had a strong need for autonomy but were religious, then they would also have a strong preference for intellect, private practice and experiencing God's forgiveness.

Hypothesis number two was supported by the current study's findings. Based on Cresnar and Nedelko (2020) and Obregon et al. (2021) studies, Gen Z was thought to have a strong motivational need for affiliation. This strong need for affiliation is often indicative of individuals being easily influenced by external forces (Obregon et al., 2021). While the current study's findings conclude that Gen Z is motivated by affiliation with others, Gen Z also reports the need to perform tasks on their own. These findings could be an indication that autonomy and affiliation, together, play their own unique role in motivational needs or religious centrality, which is not discussed by past research or the current study. Further, Gen Z's strong motivational need for affiliation aligns with Cresnar and Nedelko's research describing that religious individuals tend to be favorable of contexts and environments that include interaction with others. This preference for interaction with others examples the current study's found positive relationship between the religious centrality dimensions of ideology and public practice, and the motivational need for affiliation. Biblically, these findings also align with the passage, "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (*New International Bible*, 1978/2011, Matthew 20:28), is defining the responsibility of individual devotion to the Church, community, and Christ. This devotion includes the religious centrality dimensions of ideology, public practice and having experienced forgiveness by God.

Lastly, hypothesis number three is supported by Ryan and Deci (2021), Shin and Johnson (2021), and the current study's findings. Both studies concluded that competency is not always related to individual behavior or success in academics and work. Both studies suggested that competency holds a relationship with autonomy rather than success in academics, work, or ethical behavior. Further, it is unclear whether centrality of religiosity should have been the independent or dependent variable for this relationship analysis. The current study chose competency as the dependent and religious centrality as the independent. Research by Ahmad et al. (2019) and Haq et al. (2018) claimed that religious centrality can be a mediator or a moderator, and that a directional relationship cannot be determined. Based on the current study's findings a relationship could still exist between religious centrality and competency due to the analysis' p-value (p = .056). Biblically and statistically, competency should hold a positive relationship with centrality of religiosity. This is because at its core, competency is an individual's motivation to participate, persist and work hard towards a goal (Ahmad et al., 2019; Haw et al., 2018). From the Bible, we know that individuals who participate intentionally in devotion to Christ are likely to succeed in their efforts of receiving God's forgiveness.

Overall, based on the current study's findings there is no evidence that centrality of religiosity can predict any of Gen Z's motivational needs. While Gen Z has a strong motivational need for affiliation, and past research correlated strong religious influence with frequent peer or community interaction, it is not enough to say that religious centrality accurately predicted affiliation. Instead, a high need for affiliation could be a reason for why Gen Z or any other individual subscribes to a religious belief. Past studies claim that individuals attend religious gathering to be part of similar-minded groups, to

feel included, and receive affirmation for their ethical behavioral choices. Without an appropriate method for testing directionality between variables it will remain unknown about whether religious centrality leads to affiliation, or affiliation leading to a central or subordinate positioning of religious centrality.

Centrality of religiosity, theoretically, does not attempt to explain the affiliation or community interaction aspect of behavioral influence by religious beliefs or values. Centrality of religiosity only measures the frequency of which an individual attends religious gathering, but not for the purpose of implying that individual attendance correlates with a need for interaction with others. Further, centrality of religiosity measures an individual's frequency of private practice, which might imply again that it is unconcerned about one's need for interaction with others. Instead, centrality of religiosity is likely only interested in the individual's intensity of devotion to Christ and how religious values guide their behavioral choices. Without further study it will remain unknown whether centrality of religiosity can reliably predict Gen Z's motivational need for affiliation.

Autonomy and competency also do not theoretically align with centrality of religiosity. This is because centrality of religiosity's focus is not on these two motivational constructs. The current study hypothesized that because centrality of religiosity measures the dimensions of public and private practice, there was a possibility that autonomy gave individuals the voluntary choice to practice religious beliefs. However, centrality of religiosity does not speak about individual autonomy in devotion to Christ. It is possible, though, that centrality of religiosity's theoretical approach does

not include autonomy because it assumes individuals either believe in God, or they do not, there is no choice in having a genuine experience with receiving God's forgiveness.

Lastly, the current study hypothesized that centrality of religiosity, theoretically, could explain a significant, predictable relationship with Gen Z's high motivational need for competency. This hypothesis stemmed from centrality of religiosity's survey items that asked individuals about their curiosity in learning more about religion, the frequency of which they read and stay up to date about religious topics, and if religious issues were. Important matters. Although the current study made a shallow assumption based on survey items associated with religious centrality, there was value in conducting this preliminary examination of a predictable relationship between variables.

Implications

Implications of the current study suggest that Gen Z have high autonomy, affiliation, and competency needs. This means that the cohort will require environments and contexts that allow them to self-explore, connect with their peers, all while providing them the opportunity to develop needed skills for making successful and ethical behavioral choices. Gen Z's strong motivational need for affiliation is an important piece of the current study's results because it does not align with past research. A strong need for affiliation was found primarily in older generations and those who report to be religious. Gen Z was initially thought to be independent and mostly uninvolved with religious belief systems. Gen Z is still considered motivationally unique, and the current study does not reflect the intensity or level of autonomous, affiliative, or competency support they might need to succeed or devote themselves to Christ. In practice, Gen Z should be given the opportunity to choose whether they want to study, work with others,

or explore their religious beliefs. Based on the number of study respondents who reported their religious subscription to be non-religious, but curious to learn more, Gen Z may not yet have the autonomous or competency support they require. Further, one survey item that measured the dimension of intellect stated, “I am interested in learning more about religious topics”. This item received an overwhelming number of “strongly agree” responses.

Implications of the current study for centrality of religiosity revealed Gen Z’s desire to either learn more about religion, or that religion is already important to them. While the current study shows that Gen Z is not overwhelmingly religious, it is true that this generation believes in God and follows many of the societal standards for behavioral choices. In practice, centrality of religiosity can be a strong determinant for Gen Z’s openness to new ideas, contexts, and relationships. Further, Gen Z is not restricted in behavioral choices by their religious belief systems. Gen Z likely follows the behavioral choices of their peers, as they too want to be a part of similar-minded groups and receive affirmation for their choices. If academic organizations or employers want to determine Gen Z’s ability to make ethical choices, centrality of religiosity can be used as a framework.

Limitations

Limitations of the current study included an inability to make claims about cause and effect, directionality, errors in a linear regression analysis and participant biases. It is unclear whether the motivational need for competency should have been a dependent variable or the independent variable when determining a predictable relationship. Directionally, it is impossible to determine if religious centrality leads to motivational

needs for autonomy, affiliation, and competency, or vice versa. To confidently approach this directionality limitation, it was suggested by past researchers to use a linear regression when predicting relationships between two variables. However, a simple linear regression also held its own limitations. Linear regressions are subject to erroneous data that contain outliers and illegitimate survey responses. It is possible that outliers in the current study's data or responses are due to participant' self-reporting data. Disingenuous participant responses were an initial concern and limitation of this study. This study's researchers assumed that participants would give honest and genuine responses about personal experiences with religion, understanding what public and private practice meant, and having a true experience or no experience at all with receiving God's forgiveness.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended by the current study's researchers that future studies perform an ANOVA to examine and interpret the main effects and interactions between survey items and construct relationships. It is not enough that the current study supported its second and third hypotheses. It is possible that the two survey's items were too similar or held no true relationship. Future studies will benefit from a better understanding about the relationship between survey items and their accuracy for measuring the constructs they purport. Possibly, the mixture of survey items about religiousness and motivational need created biases or influence for participants. Participants may have felt that the overall survey was too interested in their religiousness rather than their motivational needs. If future research wants to understand the complex relationships involved with religious centrality and motivational needs, it should develop survey items and methods that further minimize influence effects from sentence framing and survey contextual biases.

In the context of affiliation and religious centrality, future research should also explore the use of a one-tailed test to determine directionality of variables. With this determination, future research could make inferences about whether Gen Z's strong need for affiliation leads them towards peer interaction such that religious gathering provides. However, centrality of religiosity does not theoretically explain the motivational need for affiliation. It is important that further research remains neutral when explaining how centrality of religiosity predicts affiliation. Future studies will also need to begin by retesting the current study's predictable relationship between religious centrality and affiliation. A retest of these constructs will add to the reliability and accuracy of the combination of the two surveys used. Overall, future research will benefit by continuing the current study's preliminary examination of the relationship between Gen Z's centrality of religiosity and motivational needs. This continuation will add to the peer reviewed literature surrounding centrality of religiosity, religion, Gen Z, and generational differences in motivational needs. If future research does not include religious aspects to popular topics as motivational needs, it will fail in providing a diplomatic understanding of behavioral influence and choice.

Summary

The findings from the current study partially supported the initial hypotheses. Centrality of religiosity statistically predicted Gen Z's motivational need for affiliation, and no relationship with competency. This study did not support the initial hypothesis for religious centrality predicting the need for autonomy. Overall, these results align with the Bible if Gen Z's autonomous, affiliative and competency needs are met. Religiously subscribed Gen Z individuals are interested in devoting themselves to this directive, but

on their own terms. Non-religious Gen Z individuals also report to be curious about religious topics but might now currently have the support for this approach to religion. Gen Z does resemble older generations with a strong motivational need for affiliation, but also require a high degree of autonomy and competency. This finding tells future researchers that any unfound relationships in the current study may need to be revisited. Revisitation of this study will benefit from different analyses that examine survey items for interactions that a linear regression does not account for. Ultimately, Gen Z is autonomous, seeks affiliation with peers, is competent, but moderately influenceable in their behavioral choices by their religious centrality.

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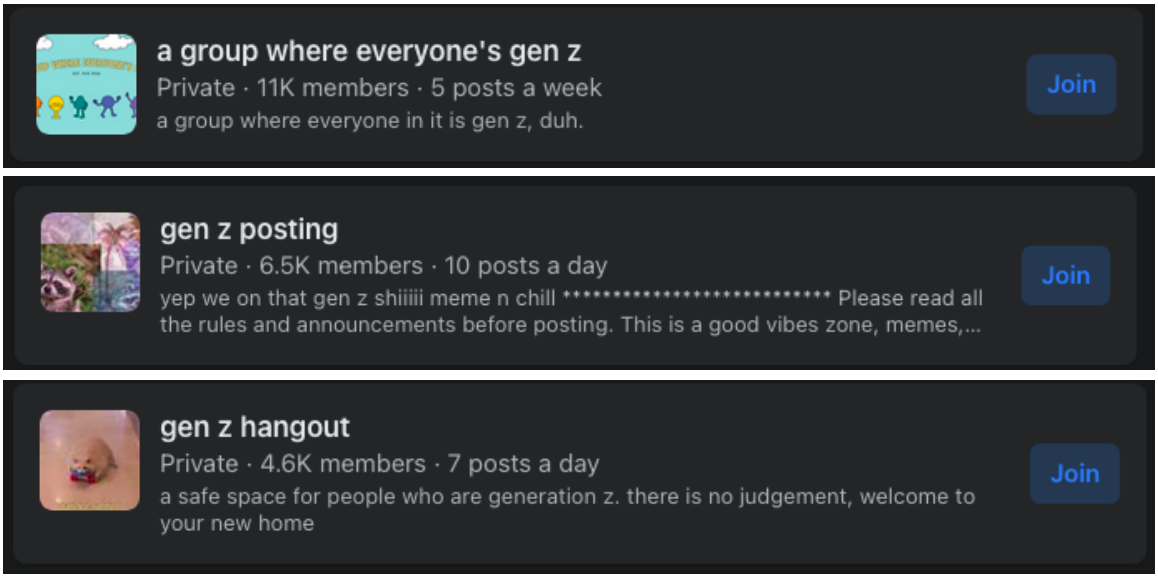
APPENDIX A: PERMISSION

Language Available:	English
Construct:	Facebook Behavior; **Need** for Affiliation
Commercial Availability:	No
Permissions:	May use for Research/Teaching
Fee:	No
Test Items Available:	No
Classification:	6400 Human-Computer Interaction
Reliability:	Cronbach's alpha value for the 7 items was .77.
Validity:	No validity indicated.
Factor Analysis:	No factor analysis indicated.
Methodology:	1100 Test Reliability 1110 Internal Consistency
Number of Test Items:	The measure consists of 7 items.
Administration Method:	Paper
Age Group:	Adulthood (18 yrs & older)
Population Group:	Human; Male; Female
Other Population Details:	Sample: College Students Location: United States
Keywords:	**Needs Assessment Questionnaire--Modified**; **Need** for Affiliation; Facebook; Online Social Networking; Personality Measures; Test Development; Internal Consistency
Index Terms:	Affiliation Motivation; Internal Consistency; **Needs Assessment**; Personality Measures; Test Construction; Test Reliability; Online Social Networks
Source Citation:	**Test Development** Park, Namkee (2011). Effects of self-disclosure on relational intimacy in Facebook. Computers in Human Behavior, 27(5), 1974-1983. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2011.05.004


a group where everyone's gen z
Private · 11K members · 5 posts a week
a group where everyone in it is gen z, duh.
Join
gen z posting
Private · 6.5K members · 10 posts a day
yep we on that gen z shiiiii meme n chill ********** Please read all the rules and announcements before posting. This is a good vibes zone, memes,...
Join
gen z hangout
Private · 4.6K members · 7 posts a day
a safe space for people who are generation z. there is no judgement, welcome to your new home
Join

APPENDIX B: CONSENT

Consent

Title of the Project: CENTRALITY OF RELIGIOSITY AS A PREDICTOR OF MOTIVATIONAL NEEDS FOR THE GEN Z COHORT
Principal Investigator: Ryan A. Willcockson, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Psychology, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must have been born between 1997 and 2005. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to better understand the motivational needs of the Gen Z cohort.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in an online survey that will take no longer than 30 minutes to complete.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct or personal benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include a better understanding of the Gen Z cohort's motivational needs. Learning about Gen Z's motivational needs can give insight about their current and future school or work performance. Insight about motivational needs can improve the way in which schools and workplaces support individuals.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on a password-protected computer inside of a locked office with no access except by the principal researcher. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Ryan A. Willcockson. You may ask any questions you have by emailing the researcher directly at [redacted]. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [redacted]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Spiridigliozzi, at [redacted].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

APPENDIX C: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Debriefing Statement

Title of the Project: CENTRALITY OF RELIGIOSITY AS A PREDICTOR OF MOTIVATIONAL NEEDS FOR THE GEN Z COHORT
Principal Investigator: Ryan A. Willcockson, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Psychology, Liberty University

Thank you for being part of a research study.

You recently participated in a research study. You were selected as a participant because you reported to have been born between 1997 and 2005. Participation in this research project was voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask any questions you may have.

What was the study about and why was it being done?

The purpose of the study is to better understand the motivational needs of the Gen Z cohort.

Why am I receiving a debriefing statement?

The purpose of this debriefing statement is to inform you that the true nature of the study or an aspect of the study was not previously disclosed to you.

You were originally told that this study was to better understand the motivational needs of the Gen Z cohort. You were not told this study will also measure your centrality of religiosity to make predictions about your motivational needs.

Why was deception necessary?

Deception was necessary because this study did not want to unintentionally create biases in your survey responses.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on a password-protected computer inside of a locked office with no access except by the principal researcher. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Ryan A. Willcockson. You may ask any questions you have by emailing the researcher directly at [redacted]. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [redacted]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Spiridigliozzi, at [redacted].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

APPENDIX D: MEASURES

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. “Were you born between the years 1997 and 2005?”

    A. YES
    B. NO

2. “What is your ethnicity?”

    A. American Indian or Alaskan Native
    B. Asian
    C. Black, or African American
    D. Hispanic, or Latino
    E. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    F. White or Caucasian
    G. Other

3. “What is your preferred gender identity?”

    A. Nonbinary
    B. Trans
    C. Ungendered
    D. Male
    E. Female
    F. Other.

4. “What religion do you subscribe to, if any?”

    A. Baha’i
    B. Buddhism
    C. Roman Catholic
    D. Christianity
    E. Confucianism
    F. Hinduism
    G. Islam
    H. Jainism
    I. Judaism
    J. Shinto
    K. Sikhism
    L. Taoism
    M. Zoroastrianism
    N. Atheist
    O. Agnostic
    P. Spiritual

Q. Non-Religious
R. Non-Religious, but curious about religion
S. Other.

Centrality of Religiosity (Huber & Huber, 2012; 2021)

For each dimension of religious centrality, please select the number that reflects your view of each statement.

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Disagree nor Agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Intellect

1. I think about religious issues often.
2. I am interested in learning more about religious topics.
3. I keep myself informed about religious questions through radio, television, internet, newspapers, or books.

Ideology

1. I believe that God or something divine exists.
2. I believe in an afterlife (e.g., immortality of the soul, resurrection of the dead or reincarnation).
3. It is probable that a higher power really exists.

Public Practice

1. I often take part in religious services.
2. Religious services are an important part of who I am.
3. It is important to be connected to a religious community.

Private Practice

1. I pray often.
2. Personal prayer is important to me.
3. I pray spontaneously when inspired by daily situations.

Experience

1. I often experience situations in which I have the feeling that God or something divine intervenes in my life.
2. I often experience situations in which I have the feeling that God or something divine wants to communicate or to reveal something to me.
3. I often experience situations in which I have the feeling that God or something divine is present.

Motivational Needs (Needs Assessment Questionnaire; Clark, 2012; Heckert et al., 2000)

For each motivational need, please select the number that reflects your view of each statement.

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Disagree nor Agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Autonomy

1. I would like a career where I have very little supervision.
2. I would like a job where I can plan my work schedule myself.
3. I would like to be my own boss.
4. I like to work at my own pace on tasks.
5. In my work or school projects, I try to be my own boss.

Affiliation

1. I spend a lot of time talking to other people.
2. I am a "people" person.
3. When I have a choice, I try to work in a group instead of by myself.
4. I prefer to do my own work and let others do theirs.
5. I try my best to work alone on assignments.

Competency

1. I try to perform my best at work or school.
2. I am a hard worker.
3. It is important to me to do the best job possible.
4. I push myself to be "all that I can be."
5. I try very hard to improve on my past performances.

APPENDIX E: POWER ANALYSES

*G*Power Analysis*