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The Effects of Perceived Religious Support in Childhood on Internalizing Symptoms in Early Adulthood

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Perceived Support as a Protective Factor for Internalizing Symptoms

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INTRO:

- Those who report high religiosity have better social support and lower stress levels
- More frequent attendance of religious services is related to larger social networks and higher variety and perceived quality of social support
- The quality of religious social support protects against symptoms of anxiety and depression
- The relationship between perceived religious support in childhood and internalizing symptoms in adulthood have not been investigated in the literature

H1: Perceived religious support in childhood will be inversely correlated to anxiety, stress, and depression in adulthood

METHODS

- Data was collected using online, self-report surveys from students at East Tennessee State University ($N = 769$, 70.90% female, M age = 20.43, $SD = 4.51$)

DISCUSSION

- Perceived religious support during childhood may have a small protective effect against depression, anxiety, and stress in early adulthood
- Religious support in childhood may be more of a buffer for depression in adulthood compared to stress and anxiety
- Other factors like the type of religion may impact how strong childhood religious support acts as a buffer

Perceived religious support in childhood serves as a protective factor against depression, anxiety, and stress in adulthood



RESULTS

- Each measure had good internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha for the Religious Support-Short Form, PSS, PSWQ, and PHQ-9 were 0.70, 0.85, 0.94 and 0.93 respectively

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Past Religious Support	684	1.86	0.65	1.00	-0.26*	-0.20*	-0.30*
2. PSS	583	2.94	0.71	-0.26*	1.00	0.60*	0.64*
3. PSWQ	485	3.23	0.82	-0.20*	0.60*	1.00	0.43*
4. PHQ-9	568	1.99	0.82	-0.30*	0.64*	0.43*	1.00

* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2. Measures

Construct	Measure	Past or Present	Items	Example
Religious Support	Religious Support Short Form (a subscale from the Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness [BMMRS])	Past	8	As a child, how often did the people in your congregation make you feel loved and cared for?
Perceived Stress	Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)	Present	10	In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
Anxiety	Penn State Worry Questionnaire (PSWQ)	Present	16	As soon as I finish one task, I start to worry about everything else I have to do.
Depression	Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9)	Present	9	Little interest or pleasure in doing things