

## 2022-23 APNTS Thesis and Dissertation Abstracts

**Datu, Phoenicia S. “Transformation Via Self-Compassion Among Select Filipino Bible College Students: A Grounded Theory.” Doctor of Philosophy in Transformational Leadership, 2023.**

In Mezirow’s transformative learning theory (1978), the role of emotions has not received proper recognition. This study aimed to explore the connection between emotions and perspective transformation through the construct of self-compassion, an emotion-focused coping strategy. Self-compassion may be helpful when facing unpleasant experiences because it leads to positive emotional responses. Since its introduction by Neff in 2003, self-compassion has gained wide attention and has been applied in many settings. Studies have shown that the self-soothing mechanism of extending compassion to oneself enables individuals to overcome hurdles, recover from painful setbacks, and gain a positive outlook in life.

Specifically, this study sought to address whether self-compassion has any reflection on the perspective transformation of adult learners. Using a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach, data was analyzed through constant comparison, and the resulting outcome was the Theoretical Model of Recovering the Valued Self grounded in the lived experiences of select Filipino Bible college students from the National Capital and Calabarzon Regions in the Philippines. The findings showed that emotionally charged trigger events contributed to transforming perspectives, especially in increasing awareness and understanding of the self or the Filipino concept of *loob*, thereby expanding Mezirow’s theory.

**Horvath, Jordan Rachel. “Examining the Relationship of Childhood Trauma to the Attitudes of Pregnant Women towards Motherhood and Their Unborn Children in Northwest and Northeast Florida.” Doctor of Philosophy in Transformational Development, 2022.**

## *Abstracts*

This dissertation seeks to add to the growing body of research surrounding childhood trauma, specifically with pregnant women, by addressing the following questions: (1) What are the participant demographics in terms of the following: number of weeks pregnant, age range, race, socioeconomic status, educational status, marital status, and county of residence? (2) What is the extent of childhood trauma experienced in Northwest and Northeast Florida? (3) What are the most common instances of childhood trauma in Northwest and Northeast Florida? (4) Is there a relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences and participant demographics? (5) What insights can be gained from the Pregnancy-Related Beliefs Questionnaire regarding the attitudes of pregnant women towards themselves, others, pregnancy, their babies, and motherhood? (6) Is there a relationship between the ACE scores and types of participants and the attitudes of pregnant women regarding themselves, others, pregnancy, their babies, and motherhood in Northwest and Northeast Florida?

This research was guided by a theoretical framework of trauma as it relates to the holistic development of the individual. Trauma relates to interpersonal relationships, attitude, cognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual development. Bowlby's Attachment Theory, Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, and Fowler's Theory of Spiritual Development work in conjunction to form the framework of this research. Additionally, the biological development of pregnancy was utilized to inform the research. Conceptually, the extent of trauma experienced by the individual in development will influence this individual as a mother and her attitude towards mothering and her child.

In order to answer the questions posed, this research employed a mixed methods study using quantitative and qualitative measures. In Phase I of the research, fifty participants were offered the Adverse Childhood Experiences survey and the Pregnancy Related Beliefs Questionnaire. They also were given a survey of demographic information to answer. These results were scored, and their responses were categorized to determine possible attitudes. Frequency and percentage were used to answer questions one, two, three, and five, while the Chi-Square Test was applied to question four.

Question six was analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and standard deviation. A p-value of  $<0.05$  indicates a correlation.

In Phase II, twelve participants were interviewed to gain additional insights into childhood trauma and attitude. These responses were examined for themes and integrated with the data to form a narrative surrounding attitude and trauma. This research found that of the fifty participants, thirty-nine had an ACE score of at least 1 (72%). The majority of the fifty participants are between the ages of 18 and 26 (53%), while most participants are in the first or second trimester of pregnancy (65.4%). The ACE scores of the participants ranged from 0 to 10, with the most common ACE score being 0 (28%) or 1 (28%). Twenty-six percent (26%) of participants had four or more ACEs. The most common ACE Type was Parental Divorce/Separation (52%) followed by Substance Abuse (32%).

Using the Chi-Square test, a correlation was found between the length of pregnancy, sexual abuse, and mental illness. A correlation was also found between race, in particular white women, and verbal abuse, physical neglect, and mental illness. Marital status correlated with parental separation and divorce, domestic violence, and incarceration. Based on frequency and percentage, when PRBQ results were examined, the overall responses of all participants indicated a positive attitude towards the Self (13 of 25), Others (5 of 8), and Pregnancy (2 of 2). The overall responses of all participants indicated a negative attitude towards the Baby (6 of 11), indicated by attitudes more likely to be change-resistant. The overall attitude towards Motherhood could not be determined because there was a tie between change-receptive and change-resistant attitude responses (4 and 4). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the p-value ( $<0.05$ ) when evaluating the correlation between ACE Type and Attitude.

A correlation was found between Attitude Regarding the Self and physical abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, parental divorce and separation, domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness, and incarceration. For Attitude Regarding Others, there was a correlation between physical abuse, sexual abuse, divorce and separation, domestic violence, substance abuse,

mental illness, and incarceration. For Attitude Regarding Pregnancy, a correlation was found with physical abuse, physical neglect, substance abuse, mental illness, and incarceration. For ACE score and attitude, it was found that as the ACE score of the participant increased, the attitudes regarding the self, others, and pregnancy became more negative. The participant interviews demonstrated that although childhood trauma is pervasive and impactful, all women want to create a better life for their children than what they experienced.

**Jotiz, Arnel M. “Equipping the Laity for Ministry Involvement in the Local Church: An Action Research.” Doctor of Ministry in Transformational Ministry, 2023.**

This study was focused on addressing the problem of laity ministry involvement at Molo Church of the Nazarene. The researcher employed twelve weeks of intentional equipping intervention based on Ogden’s concept of equipping. In line with this, the researcher developed twelve lessons, which were utilized during the course of the twelve weeks of equipping sessions. The researcher used a pre-test, mid-test, and post-test to assess the growth of participants concerning ministry involvement.

This paper utilized the participatory action research methodology as a guide in the cycle of equipping intervention. In the data gathering, the researcher used a mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) to draw a comprehensive conclusion to answer the given phenomenon. The participants in this research were identified into two groups. The three key participants worked with the researcher in the planning and evaluating process, and the other twelve participants were the participants in the twelve weeks of equipping classes. This paper presented the findings of the study. The findings showed that equipping the laity in the local church brought significant change in individual lives and ministry involvement. The researcher formulated recommendations and conclusions from the findings drawn from the data gathered and analyzed.

**Lotha, Wobeni Nyimtsemo. "Towards Resilience: Enhancing Access to Spirituality Among Selected Children in Nagaland, India." Doctor of Philosophy in Holistic Child Development, 2023.**

Because children live in a world filled with complexities, problems, and challenges of many kinds, they need spirituality for the sake of resilience when faced with day-to-day challenges as well as larger problems. Being raised in a Christian home with an acquaintance of spirituality does not automatically guarantee true accessibility. In light of these realities, this study sought to explore methods that allow access to spirituality toward resilience.

Rebecca Nye's six foundational criteria for children's spirituality, namely space, process, imagination, relationship, intimacy, and trust, provided the theoretical foundation in this study for exploring methods that would allow children access to spirituality towards resilience. This qualitative case study employed a non-probability sampling technique that included a sample selection based on selected criteria to choose eight children, their parents, and two Sunday school teachers. The data from a total of 26 participants was collected using in-depth interviews, non-verbal observations, and journal reflections of the researcher. The research used MAXQDA software to analyze the findings and identify themes. Research results demonstrated that the six criteria—space, process, imagination, relationship, intimacy, and trust—provided the means for gaining valuable insight into methods that allow access to spirituality toward resilience.

The six criteria are distinct yet interrelated aspects of the indicated methods. The six criteria can serve as distinct methods that can be applied separately, yet they are also intertwined and interrelated, with each aspect being equally essential in allowing access. The research results also indicated that methods of access to spirituality require caution, a balanced approach, intentionality, a reflective and unhurried approach, freedom of space (emotional, auditory, and physical), innovative interfaces, creative tools, interactive cultivation in the form of ongoing conversations, vicarious experiences, and taking children's perspectives into account. Children's access to spirituality was also found to be highly relational and dependent on

the attitudes, behavior, and lifestyles of significant adults. The study recommends that adults in the church, parents at home, or students in the seminary should recognize and take the spirituality of children seriously. Adults can ensure that children have the necessary spiritual resources through their own awareness and resources.

**Nemade, Prakash. “Critical Consciousness: An Approach to Investigate and Address Division within the Christian Community of Two Holiness Groups in the Vidarbha Region of India.” Doctor of Philosophy in Transformational Development, 2023.**

This research investigated the possibility of misplaced social motivations of Christians within select holiness groups in the Vidarbha region of India. Guided by Paulo Freire’s “Critical Consciousness” theory, this research examined the causes of social conflicts within two holiness groups in Vidarbha. This research involved four pastors from the holiness groups and forty members from their congregations as research participants. Following the “Critical Consciousness” theory, the action-reflection conceptual model was used for this research. Data was collected through interviews with four pastors and group discussions with their forty church members. Four major themes and thirty-eight subthemes emerged from the data. Major themes included Dalit motivations for embracing the Christian faith, evidence of social conflicts within congregations, causes of divisions within congregations, and strategies to resolve conflicts. This research contributes to a study on Dalit Christians within the holiness groups in the Vidarbha region of India.