PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS:

HOW RELIGIOSITY PREDICTS ATTITUDES AND SOCIAL DISTANCE

TOWARDS SEX OFFENDERS

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by

Dana R. Persinger

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Dennis and Geri Persinger, who have supported me unconditionally and encouraged me to pursue my passion in life. Also, this is dedicated to my partner, Gage Matthieu, for the support through all the late-night struggles and being an amazing editor.

ABSTRACT

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Convicted sex offenders are amongst the most stigmatized individuals in society who experience individual and structural discrimination. Research regarding the public perceptions of sex offender treatment is important because public attitudes and responses to sex offenders can have a large impact on successful re-entry opportunities for sex offenders. Successful re-entry can play a large part in sex offender recidivism rates. Studies have indicated that many factors play a role in sex offender stigma such as age, political orientation, and interpersonal contact; however, there is a lack of literature regarding how religious orientation relates to sex offender stigma. Research has shown that differences in religiosity (i.e. intrinsic/extrinsic, quest) relate to different levels of prejudice when looking at race and sexuality. Participants will answer a self-report survey that contains intrinsic, extrinsic and quest religiosity measures, a disgust sensitivity measure, openness to experience measure, a Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders measure and a social distance measure along with a vignette of a specific sex offender. We hypothesize that extrinsic religiosity will be positively associated with higher levels of stigma towards sex offenders. We also predict the association between intrinsic religiosity and stigma towards sex offenders will be significantly weaker than the association between extrinsic religiosity and stigma towards sex offenders. Hypotheses regarding the association between quest religiosity and stigma towards sex offenders will be exploratory. Hypotheses regarding the differences between general behavioral stigma and specific behavioral stigma will be exploratory. We also

hypothesize that disgust will moderate the association between religiosity and stigma, such that as disgust increases, the association between both intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity and sex offender stigma will become more positive. It is important to research how religiosity predicts sex offender stigma because this information can be used to intervene in religious communities and create a foundation for future research regarding factors that influence stigma from probation officers and mental health professionals that have sex offender clients.

KEY WORDS: Sex offender, Stigma, Social distance, Religiosity, Intrinsic, Extrinsic, Quest

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

Introduction

As of 2017, there are 861,837 registered sex offenders living in the United States (NCMEC, 2017). Ex-offenders, especially convicted sex offenders, are amongst the most stigmatized individuals in society, partly due to stereotypes of dishonesty and dangerousness (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010). Stigma occurs when there is labeling and stereotyping in a power situation leading to status loss and discrimination of the negatively labeled person (Link & Phelan, 2001). Stigmatized individuals can experience individual and structural discrimination in which they are meant to believe they cannot "enjoy full and equal participation in social and economic life" (Link & Phelan, 2001, p. 380).

One of the largest problems that sex offenders face with re-entry into the community is finding affordable, stable housing in areas where they can give and receive social support (Edwards & Hensley, 2001; Whitmore et al., 2016). Bowen et al. (2016) found the more consequences experienced due to the registry, the less likely sex offenders will comply with the registry. Residence restrictions increase sex offenders' social isolation and financial and emotional stress, which in turn decreases stability and increases the risk of reoffending (Levenson & Cotter, 2005). According to the Council of State Governments Justice Center, there is no difference in recidivism rates pre- and post-implementation of residence restriction laws, and there is evidence of increased risk-related factors (Whitmore et al., 2016). Policies such as the residence restrictions continue to be supported by the public, although there are many problems with them.

Public views on sex offenders are often based on misconceptions. Many people believe that sex offenders are a homogenous group that poses a high risk to society; however, literature does not support this (Rogers et al., 2011; Schiavone & Jeglic, 2009; Willis et al., 2013). In a 2014 survey, 29.7% of participants were more worried about a child being abused by a stranger as compared to someone they knew, and 56.7% were equally worried about a child being abused by a stranger than by someone they knew (Schultz, 2014). This goes against crime statistics that show that the majority of sexual assaults are perpetrated by someone known to the victim; 50% of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children younger than 6 years old were family members, and less than 5% involved perpetrators characterized as strangers (Craun & Theriot, 2008). Despite misconceptions, people can see fault in sex offender policies. Schiavone and Jeglic (2009) suggest that people agree that community notification can make sex offenders fear for their safety; however, they do not believe that residence restrictions hinder sex offenders' chances of finding employment. While the public can see negative effects from legislation, it appears as though they do not understand the full scope of the problem because of their own fears and assumptions.

Public fears and assumptions affect legislators, which in part affect laws regarding sex offender registration, community notifications, and residence restrictions (Bowen et al., 2016; Calkins et al., 2014; Meloy et al., 2013). Legislation has focused on reducing recidivism rates by increasing punitive measures and registration policies, even though numerous studies suggest these policies do not reduce recidivism rates (Bowen et al., 2016; Edwards & Hensley, 2001; Levenson & Cotter, 2005). Research regarding the public perceptions of sex offender treatment is important because public attitudes and

responses to sex offenders can have a large effect on successful re-entry opportunities for sex offenders (Willis et al., 2010).

Factors of Stigma Towards Sex Offenders

Studies have indicated that a few different factors play a role in sex offender stigma/attitudes. Attitudes are typically broken down into cognitive (beliefs), affective (feelings), and behavioral components (Breckler, 1984). Willis and colleagues (2013) described the cognitive component as stereotypical beliefs regarding sex offenders and the affective component as "feelings of disgust, revulsion or compassion toward sex offenders" (p.231). Most studies regarding sex offender stigma focus on the cognitive and affective aspects of attitudes. Attitudes towards sex offenders become increasingly negative as victim age decreases (Rogers et al., 2011). Community members with more conservative viewpoints have more stigma toward sex offenders and more support for sex offender laws (Deluca et al., 2018). In an Australian population, respondents with lower educational attainment rated sex offenders more negatively than respondents with greater educational backgrounds (Shackley et al., 2014; Willis et al., 2013). Olver (2010) found that among undergraduates, 'extraversion' was associated with negative attitudes specifically about apprehension and treatment of sex offenders, and the personality traits of 'openness to experience' and 'agreeableness' predicted more rehabilitative attitudes toward sex offenders. Negative attitudes appear to decrease when interpersonal contact with sex offenders increases (Deluca et al., 2018).

An important gauge of stigma is social distance, the behavioral component of attitudes, which is people's willingness to interact with the stigmatized individuals as neighbors, friends, and coworkers (Willis et al., 2013). Many studies show that there is

not a large gender difference in stigma; however, women socially distance themselves

from sex offenders more often than men (Deluca et al., 2018; Willis et al., 2013).

Previous research has indicated that attitudes do not solely predict specific behavior. As

stated by the theory of planned behavior, specific behavior towards people, such as sex

offenders, is influenced by attitudes toward specific behavior, perceived social pressure

to perform, and perceived ability to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Moreover, the

difference between intention (i.e., general behavior) and actual behavior is the perceived

behavioral control an individual holds, with the more control an individual exercises, the

stronger the intent to perform the actual behavior (e.g., avoiding a sex offender at school;

Cano & Prislin, 2008). Given all the research on individual-level traits, there is very little

research looking into the association of religiosity and stigma towards sex offenders.

Religiosity, Stigma, and Disgust

Religion is a major part of society and plays a large role in people's lives. In

2014, a Religious Landscape Survey with 35,071 respondents reported that 53% found

religion in one's life to be "very important," and 24% stated religion was "somewhat

important" (Pew Research Center, 2014). When broken down by generation, 59% of

baby boomers found religion very important compared to 41% of millennials, and 38% of

baby boomers stated they attended religious services weekly or more compared to 27% of

millennials (Pew Research Center, 2015). People's opinions and social interactions are

highly influenced by religious organizations and beliefs. Although many religions teach

tolerance towards outgroups, there are many studies that explored the relationship

between religion and prejudice. According to Allport and Ross, religion can "make . . . or

unmake prejudice" (Allport & Ross, 1967, p. 433). Researchers suspected that individual

differences in religious motivation might be the link between religion and prejudicial attitudes (Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005).

Allport and Ross (1967) proposed that there are two different religious orientations: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic orientated persons endorse and practice religion for self-serving reasons as a means for providing "security, solace, sociability and distraction, status and self-justification" (Allport & Ross, 1967, p. 434). Extrinsic religiosity was later subdivided into personal (Ep) and social (Es) (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). Personal extrinsic religiosity refers to religious motivations to fulfill personal needs such as anxiety reduction. Social extrinsic religiosity refers to motivations to fulfill external needs such as social contacts or esteem from others. Many studies have found that extrinsically religious persons are the most intolerant of outgroups. Hunsberger and Jackson (2005) found that extrinsic religious orientation was positively correlated with racial/ethnic intolerance in three studies and positively correlated to gay/lesbian intolerance in four studies out of 16 studies. A meta-analysis determined the social component of extrinsic religiosity is more strongly related to racial/ethnic prejudice compared to the personal component (Whitley, 2009). Herek (1987) found among students, extrinsically oriented scores correlated with racial prejudice, specifically anti-black racism, and the opposite was found with intrinsically oriented students.

Intrinsic religiosity is the degree to which someone has internalized their religion because people are "brought into harmony with the religious beliefs and prescriptions . . . and follow it fully" (Allport & Ross, 1967, p. 434). Previous research shows the relationship between intrinsic religiosity and prejudice is complex and suggests perhaps intrinsic religious motivations are related to tolerance rather than prejudice. Hunsberger

and Jackson (2005) found that intrinsic religious orientation was negatively correlated to racial/ethnic intolerance in four studies; however, it was positively correlated to gay/lesbian intolerance in seven studies out of 16 studies. A meta-analysis with a 1,488 sample size indicated that intrinsic religiosity is negatively correlated to anti-homosexual prejudice and positively correlated to prejudice against African Americans (Whitley, 2009).

Batson (1976) proposed another measure of religious orientation; quest religiosity refers to a person who views religion as a changing process generated by their own lives and in society. Quest orientation is not aligned with formal religion and involves raising questions about life and existing social structures (Batson, 1976). Hunsberger and Jackson (2005) found that quest religious orientation was not positively correlated to intolerance in any study and found it to be negatively correlated to racial/ethnic intolerance in two studies and gay/lesbian intolerance in seven studies.

Negative attitudes and desires to avoid sex offenders may be partly based on moral disgust. Disgust is a basic emotion that occurs after encounters with unpleasant stimuli to encourage humans to avoid certain contaminants (Stevenson et al., 2015). Disgust is suggested to have evolved beyond physical disgust into regulating the perceived morality of behavior (Rogers et al., 2011). Recent research regarding disgust has focused on how disgust sensitivity influences moral judgment (Eskine et al., 2011; Schnall et al., 2008). Disgust sensitivity is defined as "a predisposition to experiencing disgust in response to a wide array of aversive stimuli," and is context-dependent that is affected by individual differences such as different religious orientations (Olatunji et al., 2007). A study suggested there is a small correlation between high religiosity levels and

high levels of disgust sensitivity (Berger & Anaki, 2014). Disgust sensitivity was linked to sex offender stigma, such that individuals with greater disgust sensitivity believed a juvenile sex offender was more of a predator and had less empathy for them than individuals with low disgust sensitivity (Stevenson et al., 2015). There has been no research pertaining to how disgust might moderate religious orientation and sex offender stigma; however, disgust has been related to religion and sex offender stigma separately.

Purpose of Current Study

There is a gap in research regarding religiosity factors and sex offender stigma. The objective of the current study was to determine the associations of intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest religiosity with sex offender stigma. We hypothesized that extrinsic religiosity would be positively associated with stigma towards sex offenders as measured through cognitive and behavioral stigma. The second hypothesis was that the association between intrinsic religiosity and stigma towards sex offenders would be significantly weaker than the association between extrinsic religiosity and stigma towards sex offenders. We also hypothesized as disgust increases, the association between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity and sex offender stigma will become more positive. Hypotheses regarding quest religiosity were exploratory. Hypotheses regarding the differences between general behavioral stigma (i.e., social distance) and specific behavioral stigma (i.e., behavior indicated from a specific vignette) were exploratory.

CHAPTER II

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 149 undergraduate students recruited via the Psychology Research Participation System (PeRP). The minimum sample size required to detect a small effect size ($f = 0.10$) between religiosity and sex offender stigma as statistically significant at $\alpha = .05$ with a power of .80 is 134 participants. This was determined prior to data collection using G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009). Of the 149 undergraduate students, four did not report their age, four did not report a number for children, and one did not report their religion. Therefore, the demographic profile below represents a portion of the participants in the sample.

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 52 years old ($M = 21.24$, $SD = 5.37$). The sample was majority female, with 85.2% identifying as female. The sample was racially diverse; 44.3% of the participants were white-non-Hispanic, 31.5% were Hispanic, and 18.1% were black. In terms of religion, the sample identified as other (39.6%), non-religious (15.5%), Roman Catholic (14.9%), Protestant (12.8%), Agnostic (12.2%), Atheist (4.1%), and Buddhist (.7%). A majority of the sample reported having no children (93.1%). For more detailed demographic information of the sample, please see Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Measures

Demographic Items

A variety of demographic questions were presented to participants at the beginning of the survey (see Appendix A). Participants were asked to identify their age, gender, race, number of children, and religious identity.

Vignette

The vignette described a male sex offender wanting to return to college after completing treatment requirements. The vignette included five questions regarding their specific behavior towards the male sex offender using a 5-point Likert scale where "1" corresponded to a rating of "Most definitely not" and "5" corresponded to a "Most definitely" rating. Two validity questions were included (see Appendix B). Higher scores are indicative of less stigma towards sex offenders.

Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders Scale

The Community Attitudes Towards Sex Offenders scale (CATSO) was used to measure the cognitive dimension of attitudes towards sex offenders (see Appendix C). The CATSO is an 18 item self-report questionnaire on a 6-point Likert-type response scale, from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" with statements such as "Convicted sex offenders should never be released from prison" and "Only a few sex offenders are dangerous" (Church et al., 2008). Scores can range from 18 to 108, with higher scores being indicative of more negative attitudes towards sex offenders. In previous research, the CATSO items demonstrated an acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .74$). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was similarly 0.77. The CATSO was chosen over other established scales because previous research has used this scale, and this scale

incorporates many sex offender stereotypes. It should be noted that the CATSO scale

uses the phrase "sex offender" throughout. A total score was used in analyses.

Social Distance Scale

A social distance scale (SDS) was included to measure the behavioral component

of stigma towards sex offenders (see Appendix D). The SDS regarding sex offenders is a

14-item self-report questionnaire on a 7-point Likert-type response scale from "most

definitely not" and "most definitely" (Willis et al., 2013). The SDS includes questions

regarding social distance, such as the extent to which participants would be willing to

have a sex offender released from prison as a neighbor or colleague and anticipatory

behavior such as whether participants would employ a released sex offender. Scores can

range from 11 to 55, with higher scores indicative of more positive attitudes towards sex

offenders. The SDS has demonstrated excellent internal consistency in the development

sample (α = .93) and in the present study (α = .94). A total score was used in analyses.

Religious Orientation Scale-Revised

The Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale-Revised (I/E-R) was used

for this study (see Appendix E). The I/E-R is a 14-item self-report questionnaire in which

participants rate statements on a 5-point scale, from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly

Agree" (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). Statements such as "My whole approach to life is

based upon my religion" represent the intrinsic religiosity (I-R) construct. Overall

extrinsic religiosity (E_p/E_s-R) was broken down into socially extrinsic such as "I go to

church mainly because I enjoy seeing people I know there" and personally extrinsic such

as "What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow." The I-R

subscale has good internal consistency ranging from .83 to .76, and the E_p/E_s-R subscale

has an acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .65$). In the current study, the I-R subscale has good internal consistency ($\alpha = .73$), and the E_p/E_s-R subscale has excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .80$).

Interactional Scale

The Interactional Scale was used to measure quest religiosity (Batson, 1976). This scale is a 9-item self-report questionnaire on a 9-point scale, from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" with statements such as "My religious development has emerged out of my growing sense of personal identity" and "Questions are far more central to my religious experience than are answers" (see Appendix F). The Interactional Scale in this current study has poor internal consistency ($\alpha = .59$) compared to the internal consistency ranging from .75 to .82 in other samples.

Openness to Experience

As another measure related to quest religiosity, openness to experience was measured using two scales: Openness to Experience Scale and Judgment/Open-mindedness Scale (see Appendix G). Both questionnaires are on a 5-point Likert-type response scale, from "Very Inaccurate" – "Very Accurate." The Openness to Experience Scale is a 10 item self-report questionnaire with high internal consistency ($\alpha=.86$) and statements such as "I enjoy hearing new ideas" and "I avoid philosophical discussions" (Goldberg, 1999). The Judgement/Open-mindedness Scale is a 9 item self-report questionnaire with statements such as "I make decisions after I have all the facts" and "I try to have good reasons for my important decisions" (Goldberg, 2013). A total score will be calculated from the two scales. In the present study, the composite scale has acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .78$).

Disgust

Disgust was measured using the Disgust-Revised Scale (DS-R) (see Appendix H). The scale is a 27-item self-report questionnaire with three subscales: Core disgust, Animal-reminder disgust, and Contamination disgust (Olatunji et al., 2007). The DS-R scale uses a 5-point Likert response scale from 0 to 4 with statements such as "You discover that a friend of yours changes underwear only once a week" and "It would bother me to see a rat run across my path in a park." The DS-R scale has excellent internal consistency (α = .87) and, in the current study, had excellent internal consistency (α = .83). A total score will be calculated from the three subscales.

Procedure

The measures used in this study were compiled into a single online questionnaire. Participants were first asked whether they consented to the study. If they consented, the participants proceeded forward. Participants were first asked to complete demographic questions. Participants were required to answer a random question on each page in order to reduce missing data. All participants completed the vignette evaluation, CATSO, and Social Distance scales first. To reduce order effects, the survey was counterbalanced with a randomizing feature, specifically with religiosity measures. Participants either completed the I/E-R scale first or the quest measure or openness to experience measure first. All participants completed the disgust scale last. Participants received one credit after completing the survey. The survey took approximately 20-minutes to complete. IRB approval from the appropriate institution was obtained before data collection (see Appendix I). IBM SPSS software was used for all data analyses.

CHAPTER III

Results

Missing Data

A total of 157 participants responded to the survey items. One participant was eliminated for not completing the survey. Two participants were removed for completing the survey in less than 6.79 minutes which is one standard deviation away from the mean ($M = 17.99$). The Disgust Scale-Revised includes two validity questions. Five participants were removed for failing both validity questions. Following these eliminations, the sample consisted of 149 participants.

To minimize missing data, participants were required to answer one question on each page before moving on to the next page. Pages were grouped by measure. Missingness was examined to be 0.6% and determined to be negligible; therefore, multiple imputations were deemed unnecessary. Cases were eliminated pairwise when data for specific analyses were not available.

Preliminary Analyses

Normality of the Data

The data for all variables were assessed for normality. For all stigma measures, religiosity measures, and a disgust measure, a degree of skew ranged from -.38 to .95. Kurtosis ranged from -.86 to .95. These levels fell well within the standard of +/- 1. Therefore, no transformations were performed for regression analyses. The data were examined for outliers with boxplots. No outliers were identified as extreme by the SPSS boxplot function (extreme points are those extending three quartiles from the box's edge).

Treatment of Categorical Data

Categorical variables were either changed into fewer groups for relevant analyses or removed. For example, gender was reduced to female or not. This was done when the *n*'s were small for some categorical responses in an effort to preserve power for relevant analyses. The race and religion variables were not included in analyses because the *n*'s in some of the categorical responses were not large enough to confidently say there were differences.

Correlation

Exploratory Pearson correlations were conducted for all possible control variables and dependent variables (see Table 2). Correlations for the CATSO and SDS were conducted to determine if planned regression analyses needed to be separate due to multicollinearity issues. As determined, the CATSO and SDS are moderately associated with each other; therefore, separate linear regression models were run for each dependent variable. Exploratory correlations were also conducted to determine which demographic variables to include as control variables in the initial regression model. Variables with coefficients over .30 will not be included in regression models to reduce multicollinearity. All demographic variables were weakly correlated with the CATSO scale, and all demographic variables except the number of reported children were weakly correlated with the Social Distance Scale, although not all variables were significant. In addition, the children variable was removed because there were so few individuals with children. Follow-up studies need to be conducted looking into this variable.

Insert Table 2 about here

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1:

    Extrinsic religiosity will be positively associated with higher levels of stigma towards sex offenders. Two linear regressions were conducted to assess if the independent variables (intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and quest religiosity) predict the dependent variables (sex offender stigma (as measured by CATSO and SDS)). This was done after controlling for demographic variables. The initial regression model for CATSO endorsement included the primary independent variables (intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest) and control independent variables (age, gender, and religious identity). Due to data-driven considerations, variables that never emerged as significant predictors for CATSO endorsement were removed from consideration. One participant was filtered out due to not representing the target population. The same decisions were made for the SDS model. Therefore, the predictors used in both regression models were age, intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest.

    To assess linearity, separate scatterplots of CATSO and SDS endorsement against age, intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and quest religiosity were plotted. There was a linear relationship between the variables as indicated by a visual inspection of the partial regression plots. There was homoscedasticity and the assumption of normality was met. All VIF values were below 10, suggesting the absence of multicollinearity. Both regression models were significant; all models included age, intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest

(see Tables 3 and 4). The total variance explained by the CATSO model was 5%, $F(4, 139) = 2.90$, $p = .024$, and the total variance explained by the SDS model was 6.2%, $F(4, 139) = 3.38$, $p = .011$. After controlling for covariates, the only significant predictor was age on both models. An increase in age was associated with a decrease in CATSO endorsement and fewer intentions to socially distance. In other words, younger age was associated with greater stigma towards sex offenders. Extrinsic religiosity was not a significant predictor of negative attitudes towards sex offenders ($p = .285$) or intentions to socially distance ($p = .606$).

Insert Table 3 and 4 about here

Hypothesis 2:

The association between intrinsic religiosity and stigma towards sex offenders will be significantly weaker than the association between extrinsic religiosity and stigma towards sex offenders. A Steiger's z-test would be conducted to compare the regression coefficients for intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity to determine which one is significantly stronger by transforming coefficients to z scores and comparing statistical significance (Steiger, 1980). However, a Steiger's z-test was not conducted because the regression coefficients for intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity on both CATSO and SDS model were not significant predictors of sex offender stigma. Therefore, hypothesis two regarding the association between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity was dropped.

Hypothesis 3:

As disgust sensitivity increases, the association between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity and sex offender stigma becomes more positive. A moderation effect of disgust sensitivity on religiosity measures will be evidenced by a significant interaction of the intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity measures in predicting sex offender stigma measures. Interaction terms for intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest religiosity were created by multiplying centered scores. For example, centered scores for intrinsic religiosity were multiplied by centered scores for disgust to create the intrinsic/disgust interaction. Centered scores are necessary to reduce the correlation between variables so that the effects of the predictors are distinguishable from the interactions (Warner, 2012, p. 632). Two linear regressions were conducted to assess if the independent variables (age, intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, quest religiosity, and interaction terms) predict the dependent variables (sex offender stigma (as measured by CATSO and SDS)) to determine if disgust sensitivity has a moderation effect.

To assess linearity, separate scatterplots of CATSO and SDS endorsement against age, intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, quest religiosity, and disgust were plotted. There was a linear relationship between the variables as indicated by a visual inspection of the partial regression plots. There was homoscedasticity and the assumption of normality was met. All VIF values were below 10, suggesting the absence of multicollinearity. Both regression models were significant; all models included age, intrinsic, extrinsic, quest, disgust, and three interactions (see Table 5 and 6). The total variance explained by the CATSO model was 7.6%, $F(8, 135) = 2.47$, $p = .016$, and the total variance explained by the SDS model was 9.8%, $F(8, 136) = 2.95$, $p = .004$. The

three interaction variables were not significant; as a result, there is no moderation effect of disgust sensitivity on religiosity measures. However, disgust was a strong predictor of CATSO and SDS. Specifically, an increase in disgust sensitivity was associated with greater intentions to socially distance and more CATSO endorsement. As in previous models, age continued to be a predictor of CATSO and SDS. An increase in age was associated with a decrease in CATSO endorsement and fewer intentions to socially distance.

Insert Table 5 and 6 about here

Exploratory Hypothesis #1

Two linear regressions were conducted to assess the indirect effect of openness on the independent variable (quest religiosity) on the dependent variables (CATSO and SDS). An indirect effect was determined by whether there was a significant change in the regression coefficient compared to the original model.

To assess linearity, separate scatterplots of CATSO and SDS endorsement against age, intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, quest religiosity, and openness to experience were plotted. There was a linear relationship between the variables as indicated by a visual inspection of the partial regression plots. There was homoscedasticity and the assumption of normality was met. All VIF values were below 10, suggesting the absence of multicollinearity. Both regression models were significant; all models included age, intrinsic, extrinsic, quest, and openness to experience (see Table 7 and 8). The total variance explained by the CATSO model was 4.5%, $F(5, 138) = 2.35$,

$p = .044$, and the total variance explained by the SDS model was 4.4%, $F(5, 139) = 2.31$, $p = .047$. After controlling for covariates, the only significant predictor was age on both models. An increase in age was associated with a decrease in CATSO endorsement and fewer intentions to socially distance. Openness to experience was not a significant predictor of sex offender stigma, and when compared to coefficients from Tables 3 and 4; therefore, we cannot draw meaningful conclusions about the effect openness had on the quest religiosity variable. It is important to note that the scale used to measure quest religiosity had poor internal consistency ($\alpha = .59$). This is discussed later.

Insert Table 7 and 8 about here

Exploratory Hypothesis #2

With regards to the specific behaviors towards sex offenders, a multiple linear regression will be conducted. Specific behavior towards sex offenders is not solely based on attitudes, according to previous research. The purpose of including this measure (vignette) was to explore if attitudes predict specific behaviors towards sex offenders with the possibility of other predictors. A linear regression was conducted to assess if the independent variables (intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and quest religiosity) predict the dependent variable (specific behavior). This was done after controlling for demographic variables. The initial regression model included the primary independent variables (intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest) and control independent variables (age and gender). The CATSO was moderately correlated with the specific behaviors. Thus, it was not included in the model because they are too closely related, causing issues with

multicollinearity. Due to data-driven considerations, variables that never emerged as significant predictors for specific behaviors were removed from consideration. Therefore, the predictors used in both regression models were age, intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest.

To assess linearity, separate scatterplots of specific behaviors against age, intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and quest religiosity were plotted. There was a linear relationship between the variables as indicated by a visual inspection of the partial regression plots. There was homoscedasticity and the assumption of normality was met. All VIF values were below 10, suggesting the absence of multicollinearity. The regression model was significant; the model included age, intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest (see Table 9). The total variance explained by the Specific Behavior model was 11.9%, $F(4, 140) = 4.55$, $p < .001$. After controlling for covariates, the only significant predictor was age. An increase in age was positively associated with less stigma towards sex offenders based on specific behavior towards a sex offender.

Insert Table 9 about here

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

The objective of the current study was to investigate the associations of intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest religiosity with sex offender stigma. Overall, the findings did not support any associations between religiosity measures and sex offender stigma measures. There was no previous research regarding the association of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity and sex offender stigma, hence the purpose of this study. Hypotheses regarding those associations were not supported, meaning extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity were not significant predictors of the sex offender stigma measures. The lack of significant results may indicate that religiosity is the driving factor in negative attitudes towards sex offenders. In line with previous research that has positively linked religiosity levels and disgust levels to prejudicial attitudes (Berger & Anaki, 2014; Hodson & Costello, 2007; Kiss et al., 2018) the current study suggests that disgust may be the primary predictor of negative attitudes, specifically towards sex offenders rather than religiosity. This idea is consistent with the current results, in which disgust was a strong predictor of CATSO and SDS but was not a moderator for intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations. Further, the increase in disgust sensitivity was associated with more negative attitudes toward sex offenders and greater intention to socially distance from sex offenders. When considering disgust in future research on attitudes toward sex offenders, we suggest concentrating on sexual disgust in particular. Sexual disgust includes how disgusting sexual acts are such as sex with minors, child pornography, and rape. (Crosby et al., 2020). Crosby et al. (2020) determined one of the six-factors of

sexual disgust to be a "Taboo" factor which supports "negative moralization" of individuals who engage in taboo acts like rape and sex with children (p. 10).

Across all models, younger age was a consistent predictor of more negative attitudes towards sex offenders (CATSO endorsement) and greater intention to social distance. Previous literature has indicated the same findings of younger people tending to endorse more negative attitudes towards sex offenders (Craig, 2005; Deluca et al., 2018; Kjelsberg & Loos, 2008), although findings related to age have been inconsistent and not significant (Wevodau et al., 2016). The age results in this study were surprising given that 90.34% of the sample was between the ages of 18 and 23 years. Given that 85.2% of the sample was also female, there may be an additive effect causing the significant results for age and not for gender. College-age females are the most likely to be sexually assaulted; based on a review of studies, about one in five undergraduate women are sexually assaulted while in college (Muehlenhard et al., 2017). Considering that young females are at a heightened risk; this quite likely influenced their perceptions of sex offenders especially after reading a vignette of a male sex offender wanting to return to college.

The salient or heightened risk to the majority of the current sample may have affected participant responses on a variety of the scales completed as part of the survey. Support for this possibility comes from Social Judgment Theory (Sherif, 1965). According to the theory, individuals have a latitude of acceptance for the responses they are willing to accept and a latitude of rejection when determining their attitude. When an individual feels threatened, their latitude of acceptance may narrow, and latitude of rejection expands (Sherif, 1965). Therefore, if the threat to our overwhelmingly young

female participant sample was made more salient by answering questions about sex offenders, their responses on all scales (religiosity, disgust) may have been impacted which could explain the lack of significant results. Specifically, the participant's answer may not accurately reflect the range of positions they could have accepted if not for the salient risk. We suggest further researching how latitude of acceptance and rejection when at a heightened risk impacts attitudes toward sex offenders.

Although quest religiosity is not a main independent variable, it is important to note the low Cronbach alpha ($\alpha = .59$), compared to the rest of the scales, affects the interpretation of results. For this current study, the quest measure is not a reliable scale, which may have occurred due to sample characteristics and the current climate. This current study was conducted during a global pandemic. COVID-19 has caused a lot of uncertainty and a lack of predictability relating to anxiety and stress (Zvolensky et al., 2020). This lack of certainty or searching for certainty would affect how individuals responded toward items on the quest measure, since many of the items are related to searching for answers. Items such as "I have been driven to ask religious questions out of a growing awareness of the tensions in my world" and "It would be said that I value my religious doubts and uncertainties" could bring up feelings of anxiety and stress more so than in different samples that had better internal consistency with the measure.

Limitations

The present study has a number of limitations, which should be taken into account when interpreting the data. The sample is a small convenience sample and therefore is not representative of the U.S. population. Our sample was primarily female (85.2%), with a mean of 21.24 years old, where 61% of the sample was between 18 years and 20 years

old. When examining the total variance explained across models, it was consistent that a small effect size was detected. The restricted age range could be a factor in the small amount of explained variance which limits the interpretation and generalization of the results.

Most notably, this sample contained a large amount of people who identify as atheists, agnostics, and non-religious. Also, the majority of the sample stated they identified as "other," but a textbox was not included in the survey; therefore, we do not know specifically how those participants identified. At the very least, these results are not generalizable to the public; however, the lack of diversity might have affected the appropriateness of some of the survey items.

The religiosity scales, specifically intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, may not have resonated with a large portion of the sample who identified as atheist, agnostic, or non-religious. Many of the items assume the participant attends church or engages in other religious activities. That portion of the sample may respond to these scales in inherently different ways, which would greatly affect this study's findings. Perhaps age groups play a role in religious identity.

Two separate regression models were conducted because of the moderate correlation ($r = -.54$) between the CATSO scale and Social Distance Scale. The dependent variables were not run together because the scales are too strongly related, meaning they present some of the same information. Therefore, the results are not summative because the CATSO and SDS do not measure separate aspects of sex offender stigma. Significant predictors of the CATSO and SDS may be presenting some of the

same information but allow us to see some aspects that were not previously available on the other scale. This should be considered when interpreting results.

Directions for the Future and Implications

This study highlighted the fact that sex offender stigma continues to be prevalent and may be especially common amongst younger populations. Public opinions that are influenced by many factors have the potential to have a large effect on the re-entry process for sex offenders. Although hypotheses were not supported, this study provided further information regarding what predicts sex offender stigma (i.e., age, disgust) and what predictors were not associated. The age-related findings suggest efforts may need to focus more on targeting a younger demographic in educational interventions to reduce sex offender stigma.

Predictors of sex offender stigma are numerous and multifaceted. It is possible that there is a religious component to sex offender stigma; however, extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity are not the best predictors. Future studies could include different religious orientations and religious constructs. In addition, future research should focus on how to affect stigma towards sex offenders, given what we know about what affects those attitudes.

Research regarding the impact of religiosity on sex offender stigma can provide important information that will inform the development of possible interventions within religious communities. It might also facilitate future research regarding factors that influence stigma from probation officers, mental health professionals, and others who work with sex offenders.

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Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

	n	%
Age		
18 - 20	89	61.4%
21 - 23	42	29.0%
24 or older	14	9.7%
Gender		
Female	127	85.2%
Male	18	12.1%
Other	4	2.7%
Race		
White, Non-Hispanic	66	44.5%
Hispanic	47	31.7%
Black/African American	27	18.2%
Multiracial	6	4.1%
Asian	2	1.4%
Other	1	.7%
Religion		
Other	59	39.6%
Non-religious	23	15.4%
Roman Catholic	22	14.8%

	n	%
Protestant	19	12.8%
Agnostic	18	12.1%
Atheist	6	4.0%
Buddhist	1	.7%
Children		
0	135	93.1%
1	3	2.1%
2	4	2.8%
3	2	1.4%
4	1	.7%

Note. $N = 149$. Age data is out of $N = 145$, Religion is out of $N = 148$, Children is out of $N = 145$ due to lack of reporting.

Table 2

Correlations for Control Variables and Dependent Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. CATSO	—				
2. SDS	-.54**	—			
3. Age	-.18*	.27**	—		
4. Children	-.26**	.37**	.84**	—	
5. Gender	.01	-.04	-.01	-.03	—

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 3

Regression of Religiosity on CATSO Outcome Variable, Controlling for Covariates

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	UL				
CATSO						.08	.05*
Constant	59.6***	50.57	68.80	4.61			
Age	-.5**	-.83	-.17	.17	-.25**		
Extrinsic	.20	-.17	.56	.19	.11		
Intrinsic	-.08	-.38	.22	.15	-.06		
Quest	.04	-.11	.20	.08	.05		

Note. CATSO = Community Attitude Toward Sex Offenders scale; *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *CI* = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; ; *SE* = standard error of the coefficient; *β*= Standardized coefficients; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2.
p < .05. **p* < .01. ****p* < .001

Table 4

Regression of Religiosity on Social Distance Outcome Variable, Controlling for Covariates

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	UL				
SDS						.09	.06*
Constant	11.70**	3.86	19.54	3.97			
Age	.47**	.21	.73	.13	.29**		
Extrinsic	.09	-.24	.42	.17	.05		
Intrinsic	-.13	-.40	.14	-.10	-.10		
Quest	.05	-.09	.19	.07	.07		

Note. SDS = Social Distance scale. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *CI* = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; ; *SE* = standard error of the coefficient; *β*= Standardized coefficients; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2.
p < .05. **p* < .01. ***p* < .001

Table 5

Moderator Analysis: Religiosity and Disgust on CATSO, Controlling for Covariates

Variable	B	95% *CI* for B		*SE*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	*UL*				
CATSO						.13	.08*
Constant	50.34***	39.04	61.65	5.72			
Age	-.51**	-.84	-.18	.17	-.25**		
Extrinsic	.16	-.21	.52	.19	.08		
Intrinsic	-.11	-.41	.20	.15	-.07		
Quest	.11	-.05	.27	.08	.12		
Disgust	.15**	.04	.26	.05	.24**		
Extrinsic-Disgust	.001	-.03	.03	.01	.01		
Intrinsic-Disgust	-.004	-.03	.02	.01	-.04		
Quest-Disgust	.001	-.01	.01	.005	.03		

Note. CATSO = Community Attitude Toward Sex Offenders scale. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *CI* = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; ; *SE* = standard error of the coefficient; β= Standardized coefficients; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2.
p < .05. **p* < .01. ***p* < .001

Table 6

Moderator Analysis: Religiosity and Disgust on Social Distance, Controlling for Covariates

Variable	B	95% *CI* for B		*SE*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	*UL*				
SDS						.15	.10*
Constant	22.80***	12.54	33.06	5.19			
Age	.44**	.17	.71	.14	.27**		
Extrinsic	.08	-.26	.42	.17	.04		
Intrinsic	-.15	-.43	.13	.14	-.11		
Quest	-.01	-.16	.14	.17	-.01		
Disgust	-.13*	-.23	-.03	.05	-.22*		
Extrinsic-Disgust	.002	-.02	.03	.01	.01		
Intrinsic-Disgust	-.01	-.03	.006	.01	-.15		
Quest-Disgust	.002	-.007	.01	.004	.04		

(continued)

Note. SDS = Social Distance Scale. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; ; SE = standard error of the coefficient; β= Standardized coefficients; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2.
***p* < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 7

Regression on Religiosity and Openness on CATSO outcome variable, Controlling for Covariates

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	UL				
CATSO						.08	.05*
Constant	62.74***	47.39	78.10	7.77			
Age	-.48**	-.82	-.14	.17	-.24**		
Extrinsic	.20	-.17	.56	.19	.11		
Intrinsic	-.09	-.39	.22	.15	-.06		
Quest	.05	-.11	.20	.08	.06		
Openness	-.05	-.23	.14	.09	-.04		

Note. CATSO = Community Attitude Toward Sex Offenders scale. Openness = Openness to Experience composite. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; ; SE = standard error of the coefficient; β = Standardized coefficients; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$

Table 8

Regression on Religiosity and Openness on SDS outcome variable, Controlling for Covariates

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	UL				
SDS						.08	.04*
Constant	11.95	-2.51	26.42	7.31			
Age	.45**	.17	.73	.14	.27**		
Extrinsic	.02	-.33	.36	.18	.008		
Intrinsic	-.12	-.80	.43	.15	-.09		
Quest	.03	-.12	.18	.07	.03		
Openness	-.12	-.40	.17	.15	-.09		

Note. SDS = Social Distance Scale. Openness = Openness to Experience composite. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *CI* = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; ; *SE* = standard error of the coefficient; *β*= Standardized coefficients; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 9

Regression on Religiosity on Specific Behavior outcome variable, Controlling for Covariates

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	UL				
Behavior						.14	.12**
Constant	4.00	-.27	8.29	2.17			
Age	.34***	.20	.49	.07	.38***		
Extrinsic	.12	-.06	.30	.09	.13		
Intrinsic	-.06	-.21	.09	.08	-.09		
Quest	.01	-.06	.09	.04	.03		

Note. Behavior refers to specific behavior measured on the vignette. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; ; SE = standard error of the coefficient; β= Standardized coefficients; R^2 = coefficient of determination; ΔR^2 = adjusted R^2.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

APPENDIX A

Demographic Items

1. What is your age?

2. What gender do you identify with?

3. What is your race?

4. How many children do you have?

5. What is your present religion, if any?

APPENDIX B

Vignette

The following is a poll about how people would feel about sex offenders who have successfully completed a rehabilitation program wishing to return to the community and complete their academic career. Please read the following and answer the questions below.

Doug was convicted of sexual assault of a minor, a second-degree felony. Before his conviction, Doug attended college to get his degree in Biology. He had a lot of friends and was getting good grades. When he was 19 years old, he started to talk to a 14-year-old female online. They were really getting along and eventually they began to speak intimately. Eventually, they decided to meet up. Doug met the 14-year-old at her house where they had sexual intercourse. Later, her parents found out, and Doug was arrested which lead to his conviction of sexual assault of a minor. Since his conviction, Doug, now 25 years old, has completed all his treatment and supervision requirements without any issues. He is ready to go back to college and finish his degree in Biology.

1. Doug was convicted of:

2. Would you take classes with Doug?

3. Would you join a study group with Doug?

4. Would you live at the same off campus housing as Doug?

5. Would you be roommates with Doug?

6. Would you be willing to introduce Doug to your friends?

7. What is Doug going back to school for?

APPENDIX C

Community Attitude Toward Sex Offender Scale

1. With support and therapy, someone who committed a sexual offense can learn to change behavior.

2. People who commit sex should lose their civil rights (e.g., voting and privacy).

3. People who commit sex offenses want to have sex more often than the average person.

4. Male sex offenders should be punished more severely than female sex offenders.

5. Sexual fondling (inappropriate unwarranted touch) is not as bad as rape.

6. Sex offenders prefer to stay home alone rather than be around lots of people.

7. Most sex offenders do not have close friends.

8. Sex offenders have difficult making friends even if they try real hard.

9. The prison sentences sex offenders receive are much too long.

10. Sex offenders have high rates of sexual activity.

11. Trying to rehabilitee a sex offender is a waste of time.

12. Sex offenders should wear tracking devices so their location can be pinpointed at any time.

13. Only a few sex offenders are dangerous.

14. Most sex offenders are unmarried men.

15. Someone who uses emotional control when committing a sex offense is not as bad as someone who uses physical control when committing a sex offense.

16. Most sex offenders keep to themselves.

17. A sex offense committed against someone the perpetrator knows is less serious than a

    sex offense committed against a stranger.

18. Convicted sex offenders should never be released from prison.

APPENDIX D

Social Distance Scale

Would you have a sex offender released from prison as:

      your neighbor?

      your colleague?

      your boss?

      an acquaintance?

      a member in your church/sports club/community group?

      a close friend?

      a partner in marriage/civil union?

      a son-in-law?

Would you . . . a released sex offender?

      employ?

      rent a house to?

      introduce to your social group?

APPENDIX E

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale-Revised

1. I enjoy reading about my religion. (I)

2. I go to church because it helps me to make friends. (Es)

3. It doesn't much matter what I believe so long as I am good. (I)

4. It is important to me to spend time in private thought and prayer. (I)

5. I have often had a strong sense of God's presence. (I)

6. I pray mainly to gain relief and protection. (Ep)

7. I try hard to live all my life according to my religious beliefs. (I)

8. What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow. (Ep)

9. Prayer is for peace and happiness (Ep).

10. Although I am religious, I don't let it affect my daily life. (I)

11. I go to church mostly to spend time with my friends. (Es)

12. My whole approach to life is based on my religion. (I)

13. I go to church mainly because I enjoy seeing people I know there. (Es)

14. Although I believe in my religion, many other things are more important. (I)

APPENDIX F

Interactional Scale

1. Worldly events cannot affect the eternal truths of my religion.(R)

2. It might be said that I value my religious doubts and uncertainties.

3. I find my everyday experiences severely test my religious convictions.

4. I do not expect my religious convictions to change in the next few years. (R)

5. I have been driven to ask religious questions out of a growing awareness of the tensions in my world and in my religion to my world.

6. My religious development has emerged out of my growing sense of personal identity.

7. God wasn't very important for me until I began to ask questions about the meaning of my own life.

8. The "me" of a few years back would be surprised at my present religious stance.

9. Questions are far more central to my religious experience than are answers.

APPENDIX G

Openness to Experience Scale

1. I believe in the importance of art.

2. I have a vivid imagination.

3. I tend to vote for liberal political candidates.

4. I carry the conversation to a higher level.

5. I enjoy hearing new ideas.

6. I am not interested in abstract ideas. (R)

7. I do not like art. (R)

8. I avoid philosophical discussions. (R)

9. I do not enjoy going to art museums. (R)

10. I tend to vote for conservative political candidates. (R)

Judgment/Open-mindedness Scale

1. I try to identify the reasons for my actions.

2. I make decisions after I have all the facts.

3. I am valued by others for my objectivity.

4. I am a firm believer in thinking things through.

5. I weigh the pro's and con's.

6. I try to have good reasons for my important decisions.

7. I am valued by my friends for my good judgment.

8. I don't think about different possibilities when making decisions. (R)

9. I don't tend to think things through critically. (R)

APPENDIX H

Disgust Scale-Revised

1. I might be willing to try eating monkey meat, under some circumstances.

2. It would bother me to be in a science class, and to see a human hand preserved in a jar.

3. It bothers me to hear someone clear a throat full of mucous.

4. I never let any part of my body touch the toilet seat in public restrooms.

5. I would go out of my way to avoid walking through a graveyard.

6. Seeing a cockroach in someone else's house doesn't bother me.

7. It would bother me tremendously to touch a dead body.

8. If I see someone vomit, it makes me sick to my stomach.

9. I probably would not go to my favorite restaurant if I found out that the cook had a cold.

10. It would not upset me at all to watch a person with a glass eye take the eye

1. out of the socket.

11. It would bother me to see a rat run across my path in a park.

12. I would rather eat a piece of fruit than a piece of paper

13. Even if I was hungry, I would not drink a bowl of my favorite soup if it had been

2. stirred by a used but thoroughly washed flyswatter.

14. It would bother me to sleep in a nice hotel room if I knew that a man had died of a

3. heart attack in that room the night before.

15. You see maggots on a piece of meat in an outdoor garbage pail.

16. You see a person eating an apple with a knife and fork

17. While you are walking through a tunnel under a railroad track, you smell urine.

18. You take a sip of soda, and then realize that you drank from the glass that an

    acquaintance of yours had been drinking from.

19. Your friend's pet cat dies, and you have to pick up the dead body with your bare hands.

20. You see someone put ketchup on vanilla ice cream, and eat it.

21. You see a man with his intestines exposed after an accident.

22. You discover that a friend of yours changes underwear only once a week.

23. A friend offers you a piece of chocolate shaped like dog-doo.

24. You accidentally touch the ashes of a person who has been cremated.

25. You are about to drink a glass of milk when you smell that it is spoiled.

26. As part of a sex education class, you are required to inflate a new unlubricated condom, using your mouth.

27. You are walking barefoot on concrete, and you step on an earthworm.

APPENDIX I

IRB Approval Sheet

IRB #: IRB-2019-370

Title: Evaluations of Sex Offenders

Creation Date: 11-4-2019

End Date:

Status: Approved

Principal Investigator: Dana Persinger

Review Board: SHSU IRB

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type Initial **Review Type** Exempt **Decision** Exempt

Key Study Contacts

Member Donna Desforges **Role** Co-Principal Investigator **Contact** psy_dmd@shsu.edu

Member Dana Persinger **Role** Principal Investigator **Contact** drp039@shsu.edu

Member Dana Persinger **Role** Primary Contact **Contact** drp039@shsu.edu

VITA

Dana R. Persinger, B.A.

EDUCATION

M.A.   Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas
May 2021   Clinical Psychology
> Thesis: *Public Perceptions: How Religiosity Predicts*
> *Attitudes and Social Distance Towards Sex Offenders.*
> Proposed: November 2019; Projected Defense: April 2021
> Chair: Donna Desforges, Ph.D.

B.A.   University of Colorado-Boulder, Boulder, Colorado
May 2017   Psychology

B.A.   University of Colorado-Boulder, Boulder, Colorado
May 2015   Sociology

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

August 2018 – August 2020
Graduate Assistant, Department of Psychology and Philosophy, Sam Houston State University.

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Persinger, D. R. & Desforges, D. M. (April 2020) *Examining Sex Offender Stigma: How Religiosity Predicts Attitudes Towards Sex Offenders*. Poster submitted to the 2020 Southwestern Psychological Association, Frisco, TX.

Persinger, D. R., Webb, E., Tiznado, J., Mattox, A., & Anastasi, J. S. (April 2020) *Social Interactions Building Blocks: Collaboration Effects on In-Group/Out-Group Biases.* Poster submitted to the 2020 Southwestern Psychological Association, Frisco, Tx.

CLINCIAL/PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

October 2019 – August 2020
Master's Practicum Student
TEAM Forensic Services, PLLC – Conroe, TX
Setting: Probation setting
Population: Adult, male sex offenders

August 2019 – December 2019
Master's Practicum Student
Huntsville Unit, Texas Department of Criminal Justice – Huntsville, TX
Setting: Prison setting
Population: Adult, male offenders with severe and persistent mental illness, such as Major Depression, Schizophrenia or Bipolar disorder

August 2019 – Present
Master's Practicum Student
Mock Therapy Sessions, Sam Houston University – Huntsville, TX
Setting: University setting
Population: Ethnically diverse, adult college students with a variety of mental health concerns

CAMPUS SERVICE

May 2019 – Present
Master's Vice President
Graduate Students of Psychology Organization, Sam Houston State University

SCHOLARSHIPS

2019
College of Humanities and Social Sciences Graduate Summer Scholarship, *Sam Houston State University*

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

2019 – Present
Southwestern Psychological Association
Graduate Student Member

2018 – Present
American Psychology – Law Society (APA Division 41)
Graduate Student Member

2018 – Present
American Psychological Association
Graduate Student Member