EFFECTS OF NEGATIVE MEDIA ON EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS’ ATTITUDES TOWARD EVANGELISM

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By

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EFFECTS OF NEGATIVE MEDIA ON EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS’ ATTITUDES TOWARD EVANGELISM

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how negative media influenced Evangelical Christians and their attitude toward evangelism practices. Using self-questionnaires, participants identified their level of in-group identification and type of internalized motivation for engaging in religious practices. After viewing a negative media clip about the professional football player, Tim Tebow, and his public expression of faith, 412 Evangelical Christians rated their fear of negative evaluation about engaging in evangelism. A control group of 31 participants completed questionnaires but received no media exposure. Consistent with previous research, the current study found that media exposure activated internalized social norms and feelings of oughtness, which were shown to be statistically significant predictors of anxiety as measured by BFNE-II scores. Internalization types were not found to be significant predictors for control group scores. Although 82% of Evangelical Christians highly identified with their in-group and 72% endorsed voluntary participation in evangelism practices, 59% of all participants registered clinically significant anxiety about evangelism regardless of exposure to negative media. Evangelism anxiety appeared be influenced by a sense of moral duty (Johnston, 2003), feelings of oughtness (Lindenberg et al., 2011), the risk of interpersonal rejection (Ingram, 1989), and fear of prejudicial treatment (Bobkowski & Kalyanaraman, 2010). Results indicated exposure to negative media activated obligatory expectations for conformity with evangelism practices. The electronic version of the dissertation is accessible at the Ohiolink ETD center http://www.ohiolink.edu/etd.
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The process of writing a dissertation is as grueling as mining for gold with a toothpick. The culmination of reading and research is like squeezing oneself through a funnel, and if one is scrappingly tenacious, eventually emerging a very different person. Truly a metamorphic experience, the extensive undertaking is not exclusive to the writer, but also, witnessed by those around her. Without constant encouragement, the twisting grind might likely reduce the writer to fine powder that is blown away by gusting wind. Thankfully, there were many who selflessly cheered this writer along the way. Thank you, Dawn V.O., for your administrative gifts and setting up a solid article framework on which to build. A big appreciative chunk of gratitude to members of my committee, Dr. O’Brien (2nd faculty), Dr. Rosik (external expert), and my dear friend/student reader, A. Courtney (soon to be Dr. Stallings), as well as Dr. Kia-Keating (Dr. K2), the midnight stats guru. Working with such a wonderful team of professionals made this process not only bearable, but also pleasurable! Dr. Kadin (A.K.A. Dr. K), how can I ever thank you enough for not only being my dissertation chair, but my supervisor, mentor, and cheerleader throughout my entire doctoral pursuit! Your still water runs deep! Thank you, to my sons, Kyle, who challenged me to chase my passion and catch it; and Shaun, for sharing your enthusiasm even in my smallest victories. To my husband, Jared, no words can express my titanic gratitude for your love and support these many years. We did it! Lastly, thank you, Jesus, for Your promise to be everything I need in every way. You are true to Your Word.
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Thank you for believing my dreams were important enough to change our lives.

After 36 years of marriage, YOU are still the best present Jesus ever gave me!
CHAPTER 1-INTRODUCTION

In 1939, television (TV) was introduced as “a new art so important…that it is bound to affect all society” (Sarnoff, 1968). By 2011, there were over 114.7 million TVs in the 117.5 million American households (Nielsen, 2012; United States Census Bureau, 2013). Television viewing occupies more time than any other leisure activity in the US (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2012; Nielsen, 2012). With a push of a button, other peoples’ ideas and ways of life are brought into the living room. Television offers instant access to the world, but it provides no opportunity for personal contact or mutual exchange. Without this direct interaction, the viewer relies more heavily on what he sees on TV to form his beliefs about the world (Bandura, 2001; Fujioka, 1999; Oliver, Ramasubramanian, & Kim, 2007; Tyler & Cook, 1984).

Television provides instant access to information. The brain acts like a filing cabinet, storing information into broad categories (Allport, 1954; Aronson, 2012; Panksepp, 2004). Links are created between stored and new information, constructing a framework of general beliefs or stereotypes (Allport, 1954; Bandura, 2001; Fujioka, 1999; Shrum & O’Guinn, 1993). Although TV simulates real life situations, it presents a distorted view of reality, an integrated mix of fact and fiction (Fujioka, 1999; Shrum, Wyer, & O’Guinn, 1998). The encoding brain cannot avoid the influence of inaccurate information (Shrum, Wyer, & O’Guinn, 1998). Selective news reports highlight the sensational rather than the full, accurate account of an event (Zaller, 1992). Viewers tend to believe crime rates are higher because crime is shown frequently on TV (Shrum, 1995). Ethnic actors are typecast into stereotypical roles, promoting the notion that one represents all (Ramasubramanian, 2011).
Television makes immediate comparison possible. Through television, viewers have ready access for comparing themselves, as well as their beliefs to countless others. The act of comparison is human nature (Festinger, 1954; Tajfel, 1982), an action that can hint of competition and selfishness (Haidt, 2012). However, comparing oneself to the similarities and differences in others shapes and validates personal conviction (Allen & Wilder, 1975). Similarities are given preference, whereas, differences can be regarded as unfavorable, less desirable, and even morally wrong (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Haidt, 2012). This process of comparison ferrets out shared interests and beliefs that draw people together and satisfies the human need to belong (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1982; Van Veelen, Otten, & Hansen, 2011). It also creates distinct groups of us versus them (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1982). In groups, people feel supported, valued, and rally around the similar convictions of their fellow group members (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1982). These moral convictions represent a framework of virtues and values to which the in-group adheres, as well as a possible source of contention with out-group beliefs (Haidt, 2012).

Being part of an us group, or in-group, requires some level of commitment (Tajfel, 1982). Cooperation with group rules is expected (Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991; Horne, 2003; Ryan, Rigby, & King, 1993; Tajfel, 1982); however, the level of cooperation depends on how important the rules are to the individual (Ryan, Rigby, & King, 1993), how much he feels he should comply (Hechtner & Opp, 2001), and what happens to him if he breaks them (Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991; Joly, Stapel, & Lindenberg, 2008). Activating the group rules in the brain affects how the person behaves
(Horne, 2003), and watching TV for less than 30 seconds can activate the framework associated with the group’s rules (Lindenberg, Joly, & Stapel, 2011).

Television accentuates group differences by reinforcing stereotypes (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982; Ramasubramanian, 2011). The stereotypes can be positive or negative; however, negative information influences what an individual believes about others more than positive information does (Fujioka, 1999; Hawkins & Pingree, 1982). People are aware of the stereotypes others have toward their group, and often avoid situations where they might be criticized or mistreated (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Miller & Major, 2000; Pinel, 1999). Without direct contact with others, stereotypes remain uncorrected, unchallenged, and easily attributed to the whole group (Allport, 1954; Ford, 1997; Jo & Berkowitz, 1994; Pinel, 1999; Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen, & Carpentier, 2002). Television media, whether accurately or inaccurately portrayed, becomes a primary source of information about unfamiliar groups (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982; Tyler & Cook, 1984).

Television’s use of stereotypes may perpetuate prejudice. For example, when a TV director casts an Asian American as a hardworking, computer nerd, the role communicates and reinforces the ethnic stereotype (Ramasubramanian, 2011). In this case, prejudice occurs when the viewer prejudgets any Asian American individual simply by virtue of their presumed association with these stereotypic characteristics. Prejudice can be positive (i.e. hardworking) or negative (i.e. lazy) prejudgment (Billig, 2002); however, when stereotypes are attributed to an entire group without consideration of individual differences, it is considered prejudice (Allport, 1954; Billig, 2002). Likewise, when an individual is prejudged based on group membership, such assumptions
constitute prejudicial behavior. Prejudice can be subtle or blatantly intentional, leaving the recipient with feelings of inferiority and isolation (Miller & Major, 2000; Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzales, & Willis, 1978; Sue, et al., 2007). Targets of prejudice feel stressed and uncertain about how they will be treated in the future, further widening the gap between unfamiliar groups (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Miller & Major, 2000).

**Background and Rationale for the Study**

Most research about media and prejudice has focused on race and ethnicity (Sue and Capodilupo, 2008). However, religion has often been excluded as a significant factor in multicultural research (Grim & Finke, 2007), frequently being ignored or combined with other aspects of identity (Fearon & Laitin, 2000, as cited in Grim & Finke, 2007). This is unfortunate as approximately 85% of the world’s population embraces some kind of religious belief (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor fact sheet, 2011). Religious followers around the world increasingly endure prejudicial acts of intimidation, abuse, harassment, and violence from government restrictions, organizations, and other social groups in varying degrees (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, [PFRPL], 2011a). The United States is in not exempt from religious prejudices, as there are approximately 1400 religious hate crimes reported every year (Federal Bureau of Investigation ([FBI], 2011).

About 80% of Americans claim some form of religious belief (Gallup, 2014), with approximately 78% classifying themselves as Christian (PFRPL, 2011b). More than one-quarter of the Christians in America identify themselves as Evangelical Christians (PFRPL, 2011b). The group is bound together by three core beliefs: the Bible is truth, in salvation only through Jesus Christ, and in the moral duty to share one’s faith with others.
Although the media frequently uses the term, about 36% of TV viewers have “no idea” (p. 2) what an Evangelical Christian is (Ellison Research, 2008).

Television frequently casts Evangelicals in a negative light, stereotyping the group as intolerant, militant, and racist (Kerr & Moy, 2002; Hout & Fischer, 2002). One study found that people showed more hostility toward Evangelicals after they watched TV with negative content about the religious group (Wunthnow, 1996). Evangelical Christians were in the TV spotlight during the 2011 National Football League (NFL) season, when the media frenzied around a young quarterback named Tim Tebow. However, the media’s attention was not primarily his football skills; but rather, his public expression of faith. Tebow, a self-identified Evangelical Christian, knelt regularly on the sidelines to pray in a pose dubbed Tebowing™. On one side, media commentators criticized Tebow’s prayerful actions as grandstanding and inappropriate in the sports arena (Craggs, 2011; Engel, 2011). He was labeled a “goody-two shoes” (Taunton, 2011) and admonished to tone down his faith by former NFL players (Brooks, 2011; Smith, 2011). On the other side, commentators and people of faith rallied to defend his religious rights (Engel, 2011; Hallowell, 2011). Some claimed the criticism was fueled by anti-Christian hostility in the mass media (Meachum, as cited in Graham, 2012). One commentator and former NFL player, Chris Collingsworth stated, “It’s unbelievable…that one of the best kids…that’s ever come into the NFL-is hated because of his faith” (Collingsworth, as cited in Wilson, 2012).

Castelli (2007) suggested Christians often believe they are targets of unfavorable opposition in the media; however, research found Evangelical Christians have
experienced strong negative evaluation as a group (Ellison Research, 2008; Taunton, 2011). One research company did a survey with over 1000 people, asking them about what they knew about Evangelical Christians. The researchers reported:

The invective and vitriol directed at this population group by some Americans was truly shocking. Some people don’t have any idea what evangelicals actually are or what they believe – they just know they can’t stand evangelicals, whatever they might be (Ellison Research, 2008, p. 13).

Typically, people avoid those they know have prejudice against them (Pinel, 1999; Miller & Major, 2000; Pettigrew, 1997; Wright, Aron, & Tropp, 2002), but would the same be true for Evangelicals who believe sharing their faith is a moral duty (Baurain, 2007)? Some Christians decide not to talk about their religion at all, fearing they will be rejected or mistreated (Bobkowski, 2008), but would the risk of rejection or harmful treatment outweigh the religious conviction to evangelize? How important is evangelism to the average Evangelical? Is it possible to merely accept the group’s evangelism beliefs without actually practicing them? Perhaps just viewing TV containing prejudice toward their group could influence what Evangelicals think about sharing their faith.
CHAPTER 2-REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

For the past several decades, much research has focused on how media affects the viewer and influences the perception of social reality (Bandura, 2001; Hawkins & Pingree, 1982; Klapper, 1960; Ogles, 1987; Shrum & O’Guinn, 1993; Zillmann, 2002). This review presents how television media influences viewers; impacts social identity, activates social norms, communicates prejudice, and potentially impacts religious practices.

How Television Media Influences Viewers:

Cultivation, Exemplification, and Priming

Television’s influence as a “creative force” (p. 101) was anticipated from its inception (Sarnoff, 1968). At its introduction in New York at the 1939 World’s Fair, television was predicted to “benefit all mankind” (Sarnoff, 1968, p. 101), and create a “relationship” (p. 4) with the viewer to promote cultural growth, educate children about the world, and convey American ideals (US Senate Committee Report [SCR], 1955). Television use is widespread and frequent in the United States. In 2011, 114.7 million out of the 117.5 million US households had at least one television in use (Nielsen, 2012; United States Census Bureau, 2013). Rising as the number one leisure time activity, Americans spend between 2.8 and 6.5 hours watching television per day (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2012; Nielsen, 2012). Clearly, television is prominent within American culture and has the potential to influence a large majority of the population.

Television has been described as the “common storyteller of our age” (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, and Shanahan, 1986, p. 19). Television conveys a message, a general system of culture that cultivates the viewer’s sense of reality (Gerbner et al.,
1986; Shrum, 1995, Shrum, Wyer, & O’Guinn, 1998). In mass communication literature, cultivation theory stands as a paradigmatic premise for media research (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). Cultivation theory holds that repeated exposure to television’s cultural message cultivates the viewer’s sense of reality (Gerbner et al., 1986; Shrum, 1995; Shrum et al., 1998). Repetitive themes form a connection between the widely diverse audience and the shared messages within the content. The cultural themes are reinforced through mass distribution and repetition, creating a common template for social definition and order (Gerbner et al., 1986). Television “cultivates common perspectives” (p. 31) and steadily communicates a synthetic made-for-television culture to its viewers (Gerbner, et al., 1986). The viewer’s concept of reality is incrementally influenced and cultivated over a lifetime of exposure to “television’s version of the world” (Gerbner et al., 1986, p. 24). Shrum et al. (1998) described the cultivation process as a “systematic distortion of reality” (p. 448), a continual integration of exaggerated fiction with real life representations.

Viewing habits affect the viewer’s perception of the real world (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010; Shrum, 1995; Shrum & O’Guinn, 1993). Heavy viewers consistently gave higher incident rate estimates for violent crime, prostitution, and drug use than light viewers (Shrum & O’Guinn, 1993). Weitzer and Kubrin (2004) found a positive correlation between the frequency of viewing local news and fear of crime. Heavy viewing significantly distorted perceptions about racial minorities (Busselle & Crandall, 2002). Although Shrum (1995) found viewers readily agreed television does not accurately portray reality, further studies showed participants could not easily distinguish
whether information originated from television or from another source (Shrum et al., 1998).

Borrowing from cognitive theories, cultivation proposes media information accumulates and integrates with previously stored information in the brain (Shrum, 1995; Gerbner et al., 1986). The information is sorted into generalized categories that provide the raw materials to develop one’s perception of the social world (Allport, 1954; Bandura, 2001; Fujioka, 1999; Shrum & O’Guinn, 1993). The process of categorization is theoretically a survival mechanism used to distinguish friend from foe (Aronson, 2012; Bandura, 2001; Panksepp, 2004; Tajfel, 1982; Zillmann, 2002). The categorical information is economically synthesized into heuristics-rules of thumb or cognitive shortcuts for future retrieval (Oliver, Ramasubramanian, & Kim, 2007; Shrum, 1995). Heuristics utilize the most readily available information rather than conducting an extensive search of long-term memory (Shrum, 1995, 2004; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). The brain efficiently retrieves just enough of the most recent and easily accessible information to make the judgment at hand (Shrum & O’Guinn, 1993; Taylor & Fiske, 1978; Wyer & Srull, 1989). This is significant in that media exposure keeps information more readily available, and therefore more accessible to influence judgments (Shrum, 1995).

Judgments may be influenced by information retrieved from memory or presented during an immediate encounter with something or someone (Hastie & Park, 1986; Shrum, 2004). In memory-based, or first-order judgments, the recalled information is used to make estimates and approximations (Gerbner et al., 1986; Hastie and Park, 1986; Shrum, 1995; Shrum 2004). For example, individuals use information recalled from memory to
estimate the prevalence of violent crime; however, Shrum (1995) found viewer approximations were significantly influenced by the frequency of crime they had seen on television. In contrast, second-order judgments involve the individual’s attitudes and beliefs, and include present information to formulate an initial impression (Gerbner et al., 1986; Hastie & Park, 1986; Morgan & Shanahan, 2010; Shrum, 2004). This type of judgment can be influenced by a careful scrutiny of existing information; however, it is more likely to be derived heuristically by using short cuts like attractiveness, trustworthiness, and perceived expertise (Shrum, 2004). Second-order judgments are vulnerable to individual bias during both the encoding and retrieval processes (Hastie & Park, 1986). It would stand to reason that the accuracy of the information would be vital, as it will likely influence the individual’s next social response (Fujioka, 1999). Once information has been used to construct a judgment in a particular way, it is often difficult to alter (Tversky & Kahanman, 1973). Haidt (2012) suggested once the belief has been established, the individual will defend the belief and attempt to convince others of its rightness.

In contrast to cultivation theory, Zillmann (1999) suggested exemplification is “mostly the starting point… to influence our perception and judgment of essentially all phenomena and issues of the so-called real world” (p. 73). Exemplification theory proposes the viewer is influenced by even a single visual example of an issue or event (Oliver et al., 2007; Zillmann, 2002; Zillmann & Brosius, 2000; Zillmann, Gibson, Sundar, & Perkins, 1996). Visual examples (i.e. via media news clips, commercials, documentaries, etc.) are called exemplars, and typify or exemplify a particular phenomenon or issue (Zillmann et al., 1996). Like photographic snapshots, exemplars
are grouped together by similar characteristics, stored categorically into memory, and used to form generalized impressions or inferences (Zillmann, 2002). Ideally, media exemplars present accurate and representative information; however, it is impossible to comprehensively and completely represent an entire phenomenon due to time and space limitations. Thus, brief exemplars are selected to represent the whole, much like a random sampling of the population at large (Oliver et al., 2007; Zillmann, 1999). The problem arises in that mass media tends to select atypical sensational exemplars over the typical mundane ones to boost ratings (Zillmann et al., 1996). Viewers are left to infer the accuracy of the representation and content. For example, suppose a media commentator reports a 10% increase in violent crimes and uses an exemplar showing only African American males. The viewer is given a distorted representation of the actual ratio of ethnic involvement in violent crimes. Even when quantitative information accompanied exemplars, research showed greater weight is given to what is seen rather than what is numerically reported (Zillmann, 2002; Zillmann & Brosius, 2000; Zillmann, et al., 1996). This misrepresentation is unfortunate because viewer judgment and behavior can be affected by viewing just one biased exemplar (Zillmann, 2002), and promotes misconceptions about unfamiliar social groups (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982).

Early research explored how the priming of neural activity during viewing influences thoughts and behaviors (Berkowitz & Rogers, 1986; Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2002; Shrum et al., 1998). Priming research suggested that media exposure activates neural nodes, or conceptual points within the cognitive network of the brain (Berkowitz & Rogers, 1986; Oliver et al., 2007). Nodes are concepts that consist of stored thoughts, emotions, and behavioral tendencies. When a node is primed, the activation spreads
along the net of interconnected links that make up memory (Berkowitz & Rogers, 1986; Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2002; Shrum et al., 1998). As similar cognitions are activated along the network, the related links become stronger by subsequent activations (Domke, Shah, & Wackman, 1998). A representation of similar information is readily brought to short-term, working memory to influence thoughts, judgments, and subsequent behaviors (Berkowitz & Rogers, 1986; Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2002; Shrum et al., 1998). For decades, mass media research has studied the priming effects of violent, aggressive, and stereotypical images (Berkowitz & Rogers, 1986; Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2002). Results showed that aggressive images primed aggressive behaviors for a short period of time (Berkowitz & Rogers, 1986). Valentino (1999) found that after participants viewed reports of crime by minority suspects, they negatively evaluated a political candidate’s performance regarding crime and welfare. Once primed, the information associated with crime and minorities acted like a filter through which subsequent judgments were made. Stapel, Joly, and Lindenberg (2010) took priming a step further to show how images can activate a social mindset and influence conformity to social rules. They found participants who were shown an image of a person in a library were more likely to talk quietly than those with an empty library. The implications suggested that the presence of another person could raise the importance of conforming to behavioral expectations set forth by social norms.

**Impact on Social Identity**

Social identity is formed through direct and indirect contact with others (Bandura, 2001). Direct interaction carries more weight in influencing social conceptions than the vicarious, synthetic contact experienced with television viewing (Gross & Morgan, 1985;
Morgan & Rothchild, 1983). However when firsthand contact is lacking, the influence of vicarious interaction becomes more significant (Bandura, 2001; Fujioka, 1999; Oliver et al., 2007; Tyler & Cook, 1984). Television offers immediate, indirect access to others; however, the selective information is folded into the individual’s real-world perceptions without the benefit of input or correction from direct interaction (Shrum, 1995; Shrum et al., 1998). Haidt (2012) suggested individuals need interaction with others to challenge and correct erroneous beliefs. In the absence of direct interpersonal contact, one’s social identity and worldview can be negatively influenced and distorted by misconceptions portrayed in the media (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982).

Humans are driven to compare their perceptions, opinions, and abilities to those of others (Festinger, 1954; Trajfel, 1972a, 1982). Comparison is essential for the formation of social identity and allows for reflection and examination of one’s thoughts and beliefs (Bandura, 2001). As individuals appraise the similarities and differences between desirable and less desirable attributes, they forge their own attitudes and beliefs in relation to those around them (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Tajfel, 1982). People tend to favor others most like themselves, validating personal characteristics in a positive light (Allen & Wilder, 1975; Tajfel, 1982). Likewise, those who are less similar are likely to be regarded unfavorably and less desirable (Allen & Wilder, 1975). The process of comparison creates a dichotomous us versus them dynamic that delineates similar from different into separate groups (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1982). Without the others part of the comparison equation, an individual’s social identity would not exist (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1975).
In-group membership: Importance of Belonging, Identification, and Social Norms

Groups satisfy the instinctive human need to belong (Allport, 1954; Van Veelen, Otten, & Hansen, 2011). In-group membership is essential for the self to exist, providing the security, safety, and resources necessary for survival (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1982). An in-group is identified as the collective we, an affiliation between two or more individuals based on the perception of shared commonality (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1982). Bonds of commonality can be common recreational interests or core values and beliefs that govern political and religious affiliation. Some in-group affiliations are made by choice, based on identification with common interests or beliefs. Other in-group membership, such as family and ethnicity are acquired at birth by virtue of parental group status (Allport, 1954). Although Allport proposed religious membership status is acquired by birth, an individual can exercise choice about religious affiliation. Recent statistics showed that 3.9% of Americans who were not raised with religious affiliation later chose to join a church, and 12.7% born into a religious family decided to disassociate from their childhood religion as adults (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life / U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, 2010).

The level of identification with a group depends on how much the individual includes the group characteristics in his self-image (Smith, Coats, & Walling, 1999; Tropp & Wright, 1999). Tropp and Wright (1999) suggested the degree of identification would be evident through self-representation and self-definition, an overlapping interconnection of the in-group with the individual’s perception of self. They described interconnection as a “basic psychological process” (p. 587) inherent in all in-group
relationships (Tropp & Wright, 1999). Haidt (2012) proposed connection allows the individual to become “part of a whole” (p. 261). Identification with an in-group is strengthened by shared similarities (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995), and increases as the individual adopts the characteristics of the in-group (Aron et al., 1991). The higher the degree of identification the more the individual tends to be guided by the actions and behaviors of other group members (Terry & Hogg, 1996).

Attitudinal and behavioral conformity are necessary elements of in-group relationships (Tajfel, 1982). The attitudes and values held by the group construct social norms, the rules that regulate “what is commonly done…what is normal…what is commonly approved…[and] what is socially sanctioned” (Cialdini et al., 1991, p. 202). Norms are the regulators for predictable and acceptable social behaviors in the collective society at large, as well as specific governing of in-group behaviors (Hechtner & Opp, 2001). Acceptance of the norm is initiated by a positive attitude toward the norm and then becomes internalized to varying degrees (Hechter & Opp, 2001; Ryan et al., 1993). Ryan et al., (1993) proposed two types of norm internalization: Introjection regulation and Identification regulation. Introjection regulation is the acceptance of a norm; however, behaviors are motivated by obligatory expectation and the avoidance of feelings of guilt for noncompliance. Identification internalization occurs when an external norm becomes an internal personal value, and incorporates into the individual’s self-concept (Ryan et al., 1993; Tajfel, 1982). Identified regulation behaviors are intrinsically motivated voluntarily rather than by a sense of obligation (Ryan et al., 1993). Horne (2003) suggested when a norm becomes fully internalized, “there is no disjuncture between duty and the good, between the social norm and the personal value, between the
social-interest and the self-interest…” (p. 336). This speaks of the strong sense of responsibility and conviction to adhere to the norms endorsed by the in-group.

Conformity with the group norms is important for establishing and maintaining group relationships and group goals (Joly, Stapel, & Lindenberg, 2008). A certain level of behavioral conformity is expected to maintain in-group membership (Tajfel, 1982).

Social norms can be brought to mind by social cues in visual stimuli (Cialdini et al., 1991; Lindenberg, Joly, & Stapel, 2011). For example, Lindenberg et al. (2011) found viewing a picture of a library primed the behavioral expectation of talking quietly. They proposed visual activation initialized the link between norm content and the degree of oughtness. Oughtness is the sense of expectation to comply with group social norms (Hechter & Opp, 2001). Lindenberg et al. (2011) suggested oughtness has three aspects: 1) the perceived importance or weight of the norm, 2) disapproval for noncompliance with the norm, and 3) an obligation to personally follow the norm. Lindenberg & Steg (2007) found people are “sensitive to what they think one ought to do”, and will do the “appropriate thing” (p. 120), setting personal feelings aside. They suggested behaviors are influenced when internalized norms are activated and coupled with a sense of moral obligation. Norm activation and behavioral conformity are strongly influenced by observing what others do (Cialdini, 2003), and whether the significant other has celebrity or special status (Stapel et al., 2010).

**Television’s Vicarious Contribution: A Prejudiced Perspective**

The television’s influence on social reality becomes significant when characteristics and norms of unfamiliar social groups are misrepresented or distorted (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982). For television viewers, the “constant drip” (p. 712) of
distorted and restricted images contributes to the development of stereotypes and prejudice (Graves, 1999). Unfortunately, negativity more highly influences attitudes than positivity when forming judgments about unfamiliar social groups (Fujioka, 1999). For example, Ramasubramanian (2011) found television frequently depicts Asian Americans as the “model minority”, intelligent, hard-working subordinates who are generally unfriendly and readily acquiesce to dominant Whites. Results indicated when participants had limited personal interaction with Asian Americans, they were more likely to internalize the stereotypic examples and attribute the characteristics to the ethnic group as a whole. Fujioka (1999) suggested television portrayals offer an unrealistic view of minorities, influencing both the viewer and the minority member.

The Nature of Prejudice

Regardless of the positive or negative nature of stereotypes, labeling all members of a social group with exaggerated or overgeneralized characteristics is considered prejudice (Allport, 1954; Billig, 2002; Ford, 1997; Jo & Berkowitz, 1994; Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2002). Tajfel (1982) defined prejudice as the prejudgment of other groups. He proposed prejudgment frequently relies on insufficient information, which increases vulnerability to prejudicial distortion. Tajfel (1982) recognized a tendency to emphasize “unfavourable [sic] aspects” (p. 131) of the out-group rather than favorable ones. While he considered the use of categorical comparisons between in- and out-groups as a helpful heuristic short cut, Tajfel believed prejudice posed a significant social dilemma. Much of Tajfel’s work tended to focus on the cognitive aspects rather than emotional or psychological ramifications of prejudice (Billig, 2002). On the other hand, Allport’s (1954) definition emphasized a “felt or expressed” (p.23) emotional component.
He defined prejudice as “an avertive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore assumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group” (p. 22). Allport agreed with Tajfel that prejudgments were often based on faulty or insufficient information. Allport (1954) believed prejudgments moved to prejudice when they remained inflexibly unaltered after exposure to new knowledge.

Prejudice takes many forms. It places the targeted individual in a vulnerable, disadvantaged position simply by virtue of association rather than by merit (Allport, 1954; Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007). Prejudice has been described as “daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities” (p. 273) directed toward specific racial and ethnic groups (Sue et al., 2007). Prejudicial behaviors have been termed microaggressions, which may consist of subtle or overt insults, looks, gestures, and tones that communicate inferiority and minority (Pierce et al., 1978; Sue et al., 2007). Sue et al. (2007) suggested three forms of microaggressions occur: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidation. Microassaults are intentionally hurtful discriminatory actions. Microinsults convey insensitivity and discourtesy toward racial heritage or identity. Microinvalidation express dismissive disregard for one’s racial experience or reality. All forms of prejudice can perpetuate feelings of inferiority, invalidation, and separation between social groups (Miller & Major, 2000). Almost all interracial encounters have the potential for varying degrees of prejudice that can negatively impact the individual or group (Sue et al., 2007). The potential for prejudice can negatively affect interaction with groups outside the individual’s social circle. Members of devalued social groups are uncertain about how they will be perceived by others outside their group (Crocker et al.,
Individuals frequently experience stresses from knowing their group is devalued, and tend to avoid situations where prejudicial treatment is a possibility (Miller & Major, 2000). Pinel (1999) reported individuals not only avoided situations where prejudice might occur, but participants passed up the opportunity to disprove stereotypes about their social group.

Haidt (2012) proposed that differences in morality could contribute to stereotypical misconceptions about other social groups. He suggested the construct of morality has the power to not only “bind people to together”, but also “blind them to…even the existence” of other groups’ beliefs (Haidt, 2012, pg. 129). In the media, this blinding to others’ beliefs is especially apparent in political partisanship. Haidt (2012) researched differences in Liberal and Conservative ideologies and found a polarization of in-group philosophies. He found Liberals tend to base their morality on three *individualizing-foundations*: Care/harm, Liberty/oppression, and Fairness/cheating. These foundations are broad, universalistic ideals that seek to empower the powerless individual and advocate for equality. In addition to the three individualizing-foundations, Conservatives endorsed three other *binding-foundations*: Loyalty/betrayal, Authority/subversion, and Sanctity/degradation. Conservatives tended to greatly emphasize the collectivist-type concepts, placing high value on groups (i.e. family and in-groups), order (i.e. hierarchy and respect), and tradition (i.e. patriotism and ritualistic practices). Haidt (2012) suggested the dichotomy between individualizing- and binding-foundations make for the “biggest and most consistent partisan differences” (p. 213) in society, calling the “American culture war a battle between a three-foundation morality and a six-foundation morality” (p. 321). Both Liberals and Conservatives were found to
exaggerate partisan stereotypes; however, Conservatives tend to be more understanding toward Liberal views than Liberals are toward Conservatives (Graham, Nosek, & Haidt, 2012).

**Religion: Significance, Prevalence, and Social Hostility**

Sue and Capodilupo (2008) suggested most of the social science research regarding the role of media and prejudice has focused on racial and ethnic groups. They found prejudices were directed toward people because of “gender, sexual orientation or almost any marginalized group in our society” (p. 278). However, most research in the multicultural field excludes religion as a significant factor within the social context (Grim & Finke, 2007). The subject of religion is often ignored or combined with other aspects of identity, such as ethnicity (Fearon & Laitin, 2000, as cited in Grim & Finke, 2007). This is regrettable because religious beliefs and practices have been found to be a great source of strength and support for an individual. Spiritual values are central in most cultural healing practices, and participation in religious groups promotes spiritual development, social support, and psychological health (McGoldrick, Giordano, & Garcia-Preto, 2005). Many familial and cultural values are communicated through religion and spiritual practices as well (Walsh & Pryce, 2003).

Approximately 85% of the world’s population adheres to a religious belief (U.S. Department of State fact sheet, 2011), and nearly one-half of the entire global population is comprised of Christians (32.9%) and Muslims (23.4%) (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, [PFRPL], 2011b). About 80% of Americans endorsed having religious beliefs or possessing a belief in God (Gallup, 2014). Approximately 78.4% of these religious adults identified themselves as Christian and 4.7% affiliate with other religions.
(i.e. Jewish 1.7%, Buddhist 0.7%, Muslim 0.6%, Hindu 0.4%, and other faiths 1.2%) (PFRPL, 2011b).

In a three-year analysis conducted by the PFRPL (2011a), approximately 32% of the world’s population experienced an increase in government restrictions and social hostilities concerning religion. Social hostilities were defined as religious hostilities displayed by individuals, social groups, or organizations toward others. The hostilities included acts of intimidations, abuse, harassment, and violence and were rated on a scale of low, moderate, high, and very high. Of the 198 countries included in the study, the most persecuted religion was Christianity, with 130 countries reporting governmental religious restrictions or social hostilities. In the U.S., religious social hostilities were rated at the moderate level. Annually, there are approximately 1400 reports of hate crimes involving religious prejudice in the U.S (Federal Bureau of Investigation ([FBI], 2011). Negative attitudes toward Christians have become a moderately acceptable social behavior among non-Christian college students (Hyers & Hyers, 2008).

Evangelical Christians comprise 26.3% of the religious landscape in the U.S. (PFRPL, 2011b). Dr. Leon Morris of the World Evangelical Alliance stated the term *evangelical* comes from the Greek word “euangelion”, meaning “gospel” (Ellison Research, 2008, p. 15). He suggested an Evangelical is one “concerned for the gospel”, making it “the centre of his thinking and living” (p. 15). This definition suggests the beliefs of the group become internalized to some degree and motivates behavioral compliance. Rich Cizik, vice president of the National Association of Evangelicals, provided three main criterion to define Evangelical beliefs: 1) the Bible is authoritative (i.e. infallible and inerrant) in faith and practice; 2) salvation through confession of faith
in Jesus Christ; and 3) participating in evangelism, sharing the message of faith with others through public social witness (Ellison Research, 2008). It appears the first two criteria involve individual application; however, compliance with the third criterion, participation in evangelism, requires interaction with others. Evangelism or expressing one’s personal story of religious transformation is also called witnessing (Bloesch, 2008). Witnessing involves telling others about a “new way of living and thinking…centered on a common faith in Jesus Christ” (Bloesch, 2008, p. 20).

Evangelicals view witnessing as a moral duty (Johnston, 2003) and “moral and spiritual imperative” (Baurain, 2007, p. 212). Bloesch (2008) reported Evangelical practices are “rooted in conviction” (p. 17), describing evangelism as a “significant factor…irrepressible missionary impulse…a vital role… in the communication of the faith” (p. 17). By virtue of its definition, Evangelical suggests a level of expected compliance with witnessing practices. According to Dr. Brad Waggoner, president of the B&H Publishing Company of the Southern Baptist Convention, “all believers are responsible to share the gospel with the lost” (Ellison Research, 2008, p. 15). This expectation to comply with a valued social norm seems to be in line with the sense of duty held by any in-group (Parsons, 1937). However, despite the importance placed on evangelism by the group, Bobkowski (2008) discovered that some Christians tend to refrain from disclosing their religious identity to avoid negative evaluation and reaction from others. For example, he found some Evangelical college students avoided identifying their religiousness, fearing they might appear overly religious and less socially desirable.
The survival of human group living is dependent, in part, on the willingness to share information with others (Brewer, 1999). Self-disclosure is a vital part of interpersonal relationships, strengthening social support, and increasing an individual’s psychological well-being (Greene, Derlega, & Mathews, 2006). However, the risk of interpersonal rejection threatens “the fundamental goal of being valued and accepted” (Stahl, Van Laar, Ellemers, & Derks, 2012, p. 524). Bobkowski and Pearce (2011) posited that Evangelicals in particular would more readily disclose personal religious beliefs, given the importance placed on public witness; however, they found no significant differences in disclosing religious identity between all religious and non-religious participants. Bobkowski and Pearce (2011) described religious self-disclosure as a “tightrope walk” (p. 744), a precarious choice between self-revelation and the risk of rejection from others. According to Ingram (1989), Evangelicals could experience guilt for not witnessing while facing a high risk of rejection for religious self-disclosure.

Bobkowski and Kalyanaraman (2010) submitted that nominal religious disclosure (i.e. identification of religious affiliation) was generally acceptable to non-religious individuals; however, negative stereotyping increased toward Christians who disclosed more about their religious beliefs and practices. Putnam & Campbell (2010) suggested some conservative Christians avoid self-disclosure in order to escape the sociopolitical stereotypes often attributed to Evangelicals. Castelli (2007) believed the reluctance to self-disclose could be the “Christian persecution complex” (p. 156), an ideology that Christian values are unfavorably targeted by social and governmental opposition. Castelli (2007) believed no empirical basis for the complex exists, and subsequently
proposed the “notion that the war on Christians” (p.157) is perpetuated in the media by significant Christian leaders.

The label *Evangelical Christian* is frequently used in media reports (Ellison Research, 2008). However, the independent research company found the definition or identifying characteristics of the group were not clearly understood by most Americans. Ellison Research (2008) indicated that most viewers had no direct knowledge of Evangelical beliefs and made assumptions regarding what defines Evangelicals as a group. From their independent survey of 1,007 American adults, 36% of participants had “no idea” (p. 2) what an Evangelical Christian was and about one-third of Americans reported never knowing one (Ellison Research, 2008). Many participants surveyed expressed strong negative views towards the group as a whole, even though they admitted having no previous direct contact with an Evangelical Christian.

According to the bulk of social research, the lack of direct contact would significantly increase the media’s role in the formation of the viewer’s judgments about Evangelicals. It is unfortunate that any social or religious group is depicted negatively in the media; however, according to the literature, the media regularly portrays Evangelicals as intolerant, militant, and racist (Kerr & Moy, 2002). The religious group is often cast in a pejorative light because of their conservative position on social issues (Kerr & Moy, 2002; Hout & Fischer, 2002). Wuthnow (1996) found that non-religious viewers generated more hostility toward Evangelical Christians after exposure to prejudicial media than after direct interaction.
Research Questions

1. Do Evangelical Christians endorse evangelism beliefs without voluntarily practicing them?
2. Would internal or external motivation affect attitudes about evangelism?
3. Could negative media discourage the desire to share one’s faith with others?

Hypotheses

H₁: Evangelical Christians with higher levels of in-group identification on the Inclusion of Others in Self Questionnaire (IIS) will be more likely to endorse Identified regulation than Introjected regulation on the Religious Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-R).

H₂: For Evangelical Christians with Identified regulation, scores on the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation-II will be significantly lower than for Evangelical Christians with Introjected regulation after viewing negative media.
CHAPTER 3-RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Description of Research Design

The purpose of this study was to quantitatively examine the effects of negative media on the attitudes toward evangelism in Evangelical Christians. Specifically, this study was designed to ascertain 1) the level of self-identification with the evangelical in-group, 2) the level of internalization of the group’s social norms, and 3) the attitude response toward evangelism after exposure to a negative media clip. A quantitative design assumed a demographically representative sample could be representative of the general population (Svajl, 2012); and, the research was objective, replicable, and makes use of reliable data (Bernard, 2000). However, there were limitations to these assumptions discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.

The independent variable for the first part of the study was the level of identification with the evangelical in-group. There were seven possible identification groups according to the Inclusion of the In-group in the Self (IIS) measure (see Appendix D). The scores were divided into three categories for analyses purposes: Low 1-4, Medium 5-6, and High 7. The dependent variable was the type of internalization, with two classifications: Introjected or Identified regulation, as measured by the Religious Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-R). The second part of the study had two independent variables: Introjected regulation or Identified regulation. The dependent variable was the score on the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation-II scale [(BFNE-II); see Appendix F].

Prior the administering the BFNE-II, participants were shown a brief negative valence media clip of Tim Tebow, a self-identified Evangelical Christian, kneeling in
prayer. A transcript of the negative media comment was available in printed form (see Appendix E).

**Selection of Participants**

Participants were recruited from congregants of Evangelical churches in the central valley of California. Therefore, this study uses a non-random sample. Pastors of Assemblies of God churches were solicited via email and telephone for permission to offer research participation to the congregants. Follow-up contact included confirming data collection times. Participants were adults at least 18 years of age who were capable of giving informed consent, attend evangelical Christian churches, and voluntarily consent to involvement in the study. There were no presumable limits to their ability to participate and their participation was entirely voluntary. If at any time they wished to withdraw from participation, they could do so without negative consequences. There were 412 participants exposed to negative media in the study: 208 men and 204 women from 14 different Assemblies of God churches. Additionally, a control group of 31 participants was not exposed to media and consisted of 9 men and 22 women from one church. Participants received no financial remuneration for their participation. Research results were provided to participating lead pastors via written correspondence. Hard copies of the data will be stored for seven years in a locked file and statistical information will be stored on a computer with password protection.

**Description of Instruments**

Instrumentation for this study included three questionnaires. The Inclusion of the In-group in the Self measure ([IIS]; Troop & Wright, 2001) was used to classify the level of identification with the evangelical in-group. The IIS is a seven-pair Venn diagram that
has been used with a variety of samples and in-groups (i.e. ethnicity and gender). The measure has shown high empirical reliability ($r = .76$) and construct validity in determining the level of in-group identification (Tropp & Wright, 2001).

The Religious Self-Regulation Questionnaire [(SRQ-R); Ryan, Rigby, & King, 1993] was used to assess the individual’s internalization type. The SRQ-R is a 7-point Likert-type scale consisting of 12 questions that measures two types of norm internalization: 1) Introjected regulation as characterized by obligatory motivation to conform with social norms (i.e. guilt, shame, self-or others-approval; and 2) Identified regulation, which describes a voluntary commitment to an internal personal belief or social norm. This scale was selected because of its high internal reliability ($\alpha = .82$) and construct validity with several validated religious assessments (ranging from $\alpha = .33$ to .78).

The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation-II Scale [(BFNE-II); Leary, 1983; Collins et al., 2005] was used to measure psychological response to engaging in evangelism practices. The BFNE-II has high inter-item reliability ($\alpha = .97$), test-retest reliability ($r = .94$), and adequate construct validity (Collins et al., 2003). The introductory phrase With regard to evangelism (sharing my faith) was added to the scale to give context. The scale was available free of charge, only requiring citation of the original source for use in research (Leary, 2014).

Participants in the experiment group viewed a brief television clip of Tim Tebow Tebowing™ while listening to the negative media commentary. The negative comment specifically targeted Mr. Tebow’s Christianity and public expression of faith. Based on norm-activation research by Stapel, Joly, & Lindenberg (2010), the clip presumably
activated the participants’ cognitive associations and behavioral expectations linked with evangelical norms. The administration of the research materials for the control group did not include any media exposure.

**Procedures**

The initial contact regarding congregational participation was made with lead pastors of evangelical churches. Once permission was obtained, a data collection date was scheduled and participation information was emailed to participating churches (see Appendix A). At the data collection event, participants were given an informed consent form (see Appendix B). The informed consent form was read aloud and explained, emphasizing voluntary participation. Informed consents and research packets were coded with corresponding numbers. This allowed for removal of the data in case an individual decide to discontinue participation at any time during the study. The list of codes connected with identifying information will be kept in a locked cabinet separate from the data. Participants were instructed to only view contents of the packet as directed to ensure proper design sequencing. Upon consent, participants were instructed to complete the brief demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C), the IIS measure, and the SRQ-R scale. For experiment group, participants were instructed to give attention to the Tebow media clip and listen to actual commentary by Krattenmaker (2011). Participants were asked to complete the BFNE-II. Control group participants proceeded directly from the SRQ-R to the BFNE-II questionnaire without media exposure. Participants were thanked for their contribution and research materials were collected.
Data Processing Techniques

Data was analyzed using SPSS Version 21. Frequency distribution analyses were conducted for experiment and control groups to determine the percentage distribution for self-identification levels, internalization types, and BFNE-II scores, respectively. Three separate multiple linear regressions were carried out for experiment and control groups to determine whether gender, years of group affiliation, level of self-identification, or various variable interactions were predictors for internalization type or BFNE-II scores. The four principle assumptions of linear multiple regressions were assessed for each regression model.

Methodological Assumptions and Limitations

This study design assumed the objectivity, reliability, and construct validity of testing instruments were valid based on previous research (Aron et al., 1991; Bernard, 2000; Collins et al., 2004; Leary, 1983; Ryan et al., 1993). It was assumed the media comment was of negative valence, and the norm-activated content would elicit an internal emotive responsive (Stapel et al., 2010). There was no previous knowledge of the participants’ temperament or level of anxiety regarding interpersonal contact.

Ethical Assurances

Risks to participants were minimal. Participants were not incarcerated, dependent on an institution, and were voluntarily consenting adults. One potential source of social risk was posing questions about religious practices. This type of questioning could incite or increase guilt feelings or fear of negative evaluation for not actively engaging in evangelistic activities. In order to minimize this, the informed consent clearly stated the questions were useful for research and not intended to be judgmental toward anyone.
The instruments used in this study have been well used for years in other research with minimal risk to participants. A brief explanation of the research followed the completion of the data collection, which included the recommendation to seek pastoral counseling or therapeutic services if negative symptoms persist. Some potential benefits to participants include increased knowledge about the effects of prejudicial media on psychological responses and social contact. The information adds to the clinician’s cultural competency to better serve their religious clients who may be experiencing depressive or anxious symptoms without apparent cause, present with unexplained feelings of guilt or inadequacy, or who avoid social contact with people outside their religious faith.
CHAPTER 4-RESULTS

For Hypothesis 1, a frequency distribution analysis on data gathered from the Inclusion of Self In Others (IIS) measure was conducted to ascertain the participants’ level of identification as part of the Evangelical in-group. The experiment group had a score mean of 5.54 and median of 6.00 on the IIS. Analysis indicated about 43% of participants in the experimental group endorsed the highest level of group identification, with 176 of the 412 participants marking level 7. Approximately 32% endorsed medium level of identification (5 and 6) and 25% low identification (1-4). These percentages indicated about three-fourths of the participants have a strong degree of identification as part of the Evangelical in-group (Table 1, Figure 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IIS</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<td>7.00</td>
<td>176</td>
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<td>42.7</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Experiment group distribution of self-identification on IIS.

The control group frequency distribution showed a mean of 6 and median of 7, with 58% endorsing high in-group identification, 32% at the medium level, and 10% for the low level. These percentages indicated approximately 90% of the control group endorsed a strong degree of identification as an Evangelical (Table 2, Figure 2).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IIS</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2. Control group distribution of self-identification on IIS.

The 15% difference between the two groups could be a limitation due to the control group’s sample size; however, results clearly indicated both groups strongly identified as part of the Evangelical group.

A frequency distribution analysis was conducted to determine the percentage breakdown of the internalization types, Identified (voluntary) and Introjected (obligatory) regulation. For the experiment group, Identified regulation scores had an average score of 38 and median of 39. Results indicated approximately 70% of participants in the experiment group endorsed a high degree of voluntary compliance, scoring 37 to 42 on the SRQ-R Identified regulation items (Figure 3).
Introjected regulation had an average score of 18.5 and median of 39. Results indicated about 54% of experiment group participants endorsed low obligation, scoring between 6 and 18, and approximately 34% showed an increase in obligatory compliance, scoring between 19 and 27. About 10% indicated a strong degree of obligation to conformity, scoring from 28 to 42 on the SRQ-R Introjection items (Figure 4).
The control group SRQ-R Identified regulation scores had a mean of 40 and a median of 41.5. Results indicated approximately 74% endorsed a high Identified regulation, with scores between 39-42 (Figure 5).

*Figure 5.* Identified regulation frequency for control group.

Introjection had an average score of 19.5 and a median of 19. Approximately 46% endorsed low obligation, scoring between 6-18. Twenty-five percent (25%) indicated a higher feeling of obligation with scores between 19-27 and 13% endorsed high Introjection, scoring between 28 and 42 (Figure 6).

*Figure 6.* Introjected regulation frequency for control group.
A taxonomy of multiple linear regression models was conducted to ascertain which predictors influenced the level of internalization for the experiment group (see Appendix G). Separate analyses were carried out on the control group data. For analyses purposes, IIS levels were divided into three categorical groups: Low 1-4, Medium 5-6, and High 7. Gender \(p = .000\) and high self-identification \(p = .000\) were found to be statistically significant predictors of Identified regulation (Table 3), using the regression model equation \(\hat{ID} = 34.236 + 1.978 \times \text{FEMALE} + 1.810 \times \text{IIS\_HIGH}\).

Table 3

*Multiple Regression Predictors for Identified Regulation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients(^a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIS Values of 7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(a\) Dependent variable: ID

The \(R^2\) indicated the level of identification with the in-group is associated with 9.2% of the variance in Identified internalization explained by variances in the two variables. The regression model suggested that males in the low and medium IIS groups had a predicted ID score of 34. For every unit of increase in self-identification as a group member, there was a 1.81-point increase in the Identified regulation score. However, for females with high IIS, the increase was an additional 1.98 points higher than males. The analysis suggested being female \(\beta = .217\) was a slightly more influential predictor than the highest level of self-identification \([\text{IIS Value 7 } \beta = .197]\).

Using the regression model \(\hat{IN} = 19.677 + -.051 \times \text{YRS SAVED} + -3.141 \times \text{IIS\_HIGH} + .112 \times \text{IIS\_HIGH}\_x\_\text{YRS}\) for predicting Introjected regulation (Appendix H),
the interaction of high self-identification with years of affiliation ($p = .009$) was a statistically significant predictor (Table 4). High self-identification ($p = .044$) and years of affiliation ($p = .089$) have a slight statistical significance for predicting Introjected regulation. The $R^2$ indicated the level of identification with the in-group is associated with 1.8% of the variance in Introjected internalization explained by variances in the three predictor variables. The regression model suggested that males in the low and medium IIS group had a predicted IN score of 19. For every year of affiliation, there was a .05-point decrease in the Introjected regulation score. Participants with high IIS had an additional 3-point decrease. However, the interaction between years of affiliation and high IIS suggested that Introjected scores increased .112 points for every year of affiliation. The analysis suggested having both high self-identification and years of affiliation ($\beta = .310$) was slightly more influential as a predictor than the highest level of self-identification ($\beta = -.201$) and years of affiliation ($\beta = -.123$) (Table 4).

Table 4

*Multiple Regression Predictors for Introjected Regulation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>19.677</td>
<td>.935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YRS Saved</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIS Values of 7</td>
<td>-3.141</td>
<td>1.551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIS_HIGHXHRS</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: IN

For Hypothesis 2, frequency distribution analyses showed 59% of all participants scored 25 or higher on the BFNE-II. The BFNE-II scores indicated the majority of Evangelicals experienced clinically significant anxiety about engaging in evangelism.
practices whether or not they were exposed to media. The experiment group had a mean of 28, a median of 28, and range of 48 (Figure 7). The control group mean was 28, median 26, and range 37 (Figure 8). Scores for both groups were distributed similarly; however in the experiment group, approximately 4% of participants endorsed significantly high anxiety with scores between 49 and 60. The control group had no scores over 49.

![Figure 7. Experiment group BFNE-II frequency distribution.](image-url)
Figure 8. Control group BFNE-II frequency distribution.

A taxonomy of multiple linear regression models was carried out to determine predictor variables for BFNE-II scores (Appendix I). The regression model used for the experiment group (BFNE = -8.545 + 2.353(FEMALE) + .713(ID) + 2.909(IN) + -.067(IDxIN) found four statistically significant predictors for BFNE-II scores: gender ($p = .030$), Identified regulation ($p = .015$), Introjected regulation ($p = .000$), and the interaction of both types of regulation ($p = .000$). The adjusted $R^2$ indicated 11.6% of the variance in BFNE-II scores could be explained by the variance in predictors. Overall, the regression model showed females scored 2.353 points higher than males on the BFNE-II. Additionally, with each point increase in Identified and Introjected regulation scores, participant’s BFNE-II scores increased by .713 points and 2.909 points respectively. These internalization effects were slightly smaller after taking the interaction of ID and IN into account at -.067 (Table 5).
Table 5

*Experiment Group Multiple Regression Predictors for BFNE-II scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-5.545</td>
<td>11.161</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Female Participant</td>
<td>2.353</td>
<td>1.081</td>
<td>.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ID</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>.293</td>
<td>.290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IN</td>
<td>2.909</td>
<td>.593</td>
<td>2.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IDxIN</td>
<td>- .067</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>-1.941</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the control group, a taxonomy of multiple regression models was conducted to determine predictor variables for BFNE-II scores (Appendix J). The regression model used for the control group (BFNE = 85.918 + 3.419(FEMALE) + -1.757(ID) + 1.165(IN) + .041(IDxIN) indicated there were no significant predictors of BFNE-II scores for the control group (FEMALE, p = .534; ID, p = .509; IN, p = .853; IDxIN, p = .791)(Table 6).

Table 6

*Control Group Multiple Regression Predictors for BFNE-II scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
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<td>5.413</td>
<td>.151</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ID</td>
<td>-1.757</td>
<td>2.616</td>
<td>-.521</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>IN</td>
<td>-1.165</td>
<td>6.206</td>
<td>-.865</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IDxIN</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.155</td>
<td>1.315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: BFNE
CHAPTER 5-DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Discussion of Findings

The current study examined how in-group identification, internalization type, and negative media influence how Evangelical Christians feel about engaging in evangelism. Results indicated an average of 82% of all participants readily endorsed their Evangelical group membership as a highly significant part of their self-identity. Consistent with previous research, this high endorsement of group identification suggested participants have adopted the characteristics of their in-group (Aron et al., 1991), and have a clear understanding of their groups’ norms and practices (Hechter & Opp, 2001; Tajfel, 1982). Higher group identification indicates the individual’s behavior is more greatly influenced by other group members (Terry and Hogg, 1996), and has some level of expectation for compliance with in-group norms and practices (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1982). As for all groups, including Evangelicals, these norms regulate and govern socially acceptable behaviors and common practices within the group (Cialdini et al., 1991; Hechtner & Opp, 2001).

Once individuals have accepted the norms, they become internalized to some degree (Hechter & Opp, 2001; Ryan et al., 1993). The level of internalization can be determined by whether motivating factors for compliance are voluntary or obligatory (Ryan et al., 1993). In the current study, results indicated approximately 72% of all participants endorsed a high level of Identified internalization. These findings suggested the majority of Evangelicals readily accept the group’s social norms and practices, such as witnessing and prayer, and comply because they want to not because they have to. Group identification and gender were found to be significant predictors of Identified
regulation in this study. Female participants with high group identification scored almost four points higher on Identified regulation than males with lower group identification. These results indicated that Evangelical women have a slightly higher degree of intrinsic motivation for voluntary compliance with in-group norms than Evangelical men.

Comparably, about 50% of all participants endorsed low Introjected regulation, or motivation through guilt or external compulsion for obligatory compliance with Evangelical practices. Results indicated high group identification was a slightly significant predictor of Introjected internalization at \( p = .044 \), decreasing scores by approximately three points for every year of affiliation. However, the interaction of high group identification and years of group affiliation showed a slight increase (.112) in Introjection scores. These results suggested obligatory compliance increases each year for participants who highly identified as Evangelicals; and reinforced previous research that “there is no disjuncture between duty and the good” once a norm has been internalized (Horne, 2003, p. 336).

Although only the experiment group was exposed to the media clip and negative comments, BFNE-II scores showed approximately 59% of all participants endorsed anxiety about being negatively evaluated for engaging in evangelism practices. Lower BFNE-II scores were anticipated for control group participants; but both groups had similar means, medians, and percentage distribution of scores. However, there were differences between the groups regarding predictors. The experiment group showed four predictors (i.e. gender, internalization types, and interaction of internalization types) of BFNE-II scores that were not significant for the control group. Of the predictors, Introjected regulation and the interaction between internalization types were the most
significant predictors at $p = .000$, indicating internalization was a factor in BFNE-II responses for participants in the experiment group. These results were consistent with previous research by Stapel et al. (2010), who found images activate social norms and influence behaviors. According to priming research, the negative media exemplar would have primed or brought social norms to mind for the experiment group participants (Lindenberg et al., 2011; Shrum et al., 1998. Significant predictors in the current study indicated internalization of social norms had been activated by media cues, initiating the participants’ feeling of oughtness (Hechter & Opp, 2001; Lindenberg et al., 2011), and influencing BFNE-II responses. The clinically significant anxiety endorsed by participants was consist with previous research that found individuals experience stress when their in-group is devalued or where negative evaluation might occur (Major & Miller, 2000).

Conversely, internalization types were not significant predictors for BFNE-II scores in the control group. Introjection and the interaction of Identified and Introjected regulation had no statistically significant predictiveness at $p = .853$ and $p = .791$ respectively. It appeared neither variable influenced BFNE-II responses for participants who had no exposure to the media exemplar or subsequent activation of internalized social norms. In light of these findings, the researcher anticipated the BFNE-II scores would have been lower for the control group. However, the results suggested BFNE-II responses for the experiment group could be attributed to feelings of oughtness from internalized social norms activated by negative media.
Implications of Present Research

These findings are consistent with previous research that suggested behaviors are influenced when internalized norms are activated and coupled with moral obligation (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007). Participants showed a high level of identification as Evangelicals and a high sense of moral responsibility for conformity with the group’s evangelism practices. Although the media exposure appeared to have activated internalized norms and expectations of conformity, Evangelicals overall showed a significant level of anxiety regarding engaging in evangelism. The elevated level of anxiety was not surprising, but was consistent with previous prejudicial research regarding the risk of self-disclosure and religious practices (Bobkowski & Pearce, 2011). Evangelicals’ evangelism anxiety may be the combination of moral duty (Johnston, 2003) and feelings of oughtness juxtaposed with the risk of interpersonal rejection (Ingram, 1989) and fear of prejudicial treatment (Bobkowski & Kalyanaraman, 2010). It appeared the evangelism anxiety level was present for both groups; however, the “constant drip” (Graves, 1999, p. 712) of negative media may adversely influence Evangelicals’ attitudes toward themselves and others’ attitudes toward Evangelicals.

Limitations of Present Research

Most prejudice research has focused on the impact of prejudicial media with regard to gender and ethnic identity. This study specifically focused on the influence and psychological effect of negative media for the religious in-group, Evangelical Christians. Although results suggest that negative media psychologically affects the majority of Evangelicals with regard to engaging in evangelism, caution should be exercised when interpreting results. The participants were solicited from a politically and religiously
conservative rural geographical region. Results from urban and more liberal areas or states may vary due to regional and politically philosophical differences.

Secondly, no information was gathered on the participants’ level of anxiety prior to exposure to the negative media clip. Although efforts were made to focus attention on elements within the current study, participants might already have a level of generalized anxiety or experience elevated anxiety in public settings, including during self-evaluation in research study groups. Conversely without knowing the previous anxiety level, it is difficult to ascertain how much the negative media influenced the participants’ levels of anxiety.

Thirdly, the negativity of the media comment was assumed. Although the comment explicitly criticized Mr. Tebow for his public expression of faith, the level of negativity was not previously determined. Fourthly, no information was gathered on the participants’ amount of exposure to television media. Previous studies showed high volume viewing considerably influenced the viewer’s perception of reality (Shrum & O’Guinn, 1993). Thusly, it could be posited that heavy volume watchers could have had a greater expectation for negative evaluation.

Lastly, results could have potentially been affected by a ceiling effect, as SRQ-R scores measured only to 42. Internalization types may have yielded different results by having continuous variables that allowed for greater variability in values. Likewise, an increased control group sample size may have allowed for stronger statistical comparison with the experiment group.
Recommendations

Practical Application of Results

Research has found that religious clients are often reluctant to disclose their religious beliefs in therapy for fear of ridicule or misunderstanding (Richards & Bergin, 2005). Likewise, only 50% of psychologists believe it is important to explore a client’s religious and spiritual beliefs (Shanfranske, 2000). This omission may bypass a crucial part of the client’s clinical presentation, leaving the source of possible psychological issues left untapped. The results of the current study provide significant support for the clinical exploration of religious beliefs, social norms, and expectations. As indicated, Evangelical Christians have a strong sense of what is expected of them with regard to their faith practices. Whether possessing feelings of voluntary or obligatory oughtness toward evangelism, these clients may experience significant anxiety after exposure to negative media. The client may be completely unaware of the source of anxiety, as the cognitive process involving social norm activation is automatically triggered in the brain by media images. The activation of the social norm and expectation of compliance coupled with the fear of pejorative response could place the client in a double bind. For the therapist working with an Evangelical Christian, careful and respectful exploration of religious expectations and social compliance would be advised. This practice could be helpful in ferreting out the delicate nuances of psychological distress experienced by a religious client.

Future Research

This study looked at the effect of negative media for Evangelical Christians in general; however, future research may benefit from studying differences with age,
amount of television viewing, and specific media content for influencing fear of negative evaluation. It would be beneficial to determine whether results would differ between general social anxiety and evangelism anxiety. Future studies could include other religious groups, their practices, varying social norms, and expectations for in-group compliance. Within the arena of understanding social norms and compliance, it could be advantageous to study the various sanctions imposed by religious groups for non-compliance and the risks for both in-group and out-group rejection.
REFERENCES


Shrum, L. (2004). The cognitive processes underlying cultivation effects are a function of whether the judgments are on-line or memory-based. *Communications, 29*, 327-344.


Appendix A

Sample of Solicitation Flyer

Dear Church Attender,

My name is Linda Hoover, and I am a doctoral candidate at Antioch University Santa Barbara. I am conducting a study to gain understanding about evangelical Christians and the media. I appreciate your consideration and possible participation in this study; however, you are under no obligation to participate.

Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and confidential. You will not be asked for any personal identifying information; but you must be at least 18 years of age to participate. Your participation will require attendance at a brief presentation at your church. You will be asked to view a short video clip and provide written answers for a series of questions. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete your portion of the study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at lhoover1@antioch.edu.

Sincerely,

Linda Hoover, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate
Antioch University, Santa Barbara
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form: Evangelical Christians and the Media Study

My name is Linda Hoover, and I am a doctoral candidate at Antioch University Santa Barbara. I am conducting a study to gain understanding about evangelical Christians and the media. I appreciate your consideration and possible participation in this study; however, you are under no obligation to participate.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked a few questions about yourself (your gender, age, etc.). Next, you will be asked to complete two short questionnaires. Then, you will watch a brief media clip and read a short paragraph about the clip. Finally, you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire. If you do not want to answer any question, simply skip it and move on.

There are possible risks from your participation. It is possible that religious questions might make you feel uncomfortable. Please know the questions are meant to be helpful for research. They are not intended to be judgmental toward anyone. Even though your participation may not directly help you, it is possible it will add information about how media may affect religious people.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Linda Hoover, MA, at lhoover1@antioch.edu. You may contact her for a list of pastors or counselors in your area if you continue to experience discomfort. You may contact Dr. Steve Kadin (Linda’s supervisor), or Dr. Sharleen O’Brien (IRB chair) at (805) 962-8179, if you have questions about the research process.

Your participation is voluntary. All information will be kept confidential. By signing below, you agree: you are at least 18 years old, you have read this informed consent form, you agree to the terms of this agreement, and you voluntarily wish to participate.

______________________________________
Signature of participant

______________________________________
Date
Appendix C

Demographic Questions

What is your age? __________

What is your gender? M F

Do you identify yourself as an evangelical Christian? Y N

If so, how many years? __________
Appendix D

The Inclusion of Ingroup in the Self measure  (Tropp & Wright, 2001)
Appendix E

Negative valence comment:

“Here’s the Tebow persona in a nutshell: Good looks and wholesome magnetism. A rugged, gung-ho playing style, times ten. A throwing technique that leaves you shaking your head in dismay. A pronounced, outspoken Christian religiosity that… sets your teeth on edge… Especially when he talks about his Jesus, or takes a knee in prayer on his football-field stage – “Tebowing,” as it’s now called…—eyes roll” (Krattenmaker, 2011).
Appendix F


Please circle the number that best corresponds to how much you agree with each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Not at all characteristic of me</th>
<th>A little characteristic of me</th>
<th>Somewhat characteristic of me</th>
<th>Very characteristic of me</th>
<th>Entirely characteristic of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I worry about what other people will think of me even when I know it doesn't make any difference.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It bothers me when people form an unfavorable impression of me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am frequently afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I worry about what kind of impression I make on people.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am afraid that others will not approve of me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am afraid that other people will find fault with me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am concerned about other people's opinions of me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking about me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. If I know someone is judging me, if tends to bother me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Sometimes I think I am too concerned with what other people think of me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I often worry that I will say or do wrong things.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score: __________________________
Appendix G

Taxonomy of Multiple Regression Models:

Results of fitting a taxonomy of multiple regression models predicting Identified Regulation among a random sample of 412 Evangelical Christians in US.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Model A</th>
<th>Model B</th>
<th>Model C</th>
<th>Model D</th>
<th>Model E</th>
<th>Model F</th>
<th>Model G</th>
<th>Model H</th>
<th>Model I</th>
<th>Model J</th>
<th>Model K</th>
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<td>Intercept</td>
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Appendix H

Results of fitting a taxonomy of multiple regression models predicting Introjected Regulation among a random sample of 412 Evangelical Christians in US.

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Appendix I

Results of fitting a taxonomy of multiple regression models predicting scores on BFNE-II among a non-random sample of 412 Evangelical Christians in US.

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Appendix J

Results of fitting a taxonomy of multiple regression models predicting scores on BFNE-II among a control group of 31 Evangelical Christians in US.

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Appendix K

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Title: Ingroup Identification as the Inclusion of Ingroup in the Self
Author: Linda R. Tropp, Stephen C. Wright
Publication: Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin
Publisher: SAGE Publications
Date: 05/01/2001
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