Impact of Catholic Ministries on Student Development

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Introduction

Our project aims to better understand the religious lives of Catholic students as they develop on-campus. In collaboration with campus ministries across the US, we've designed and administered a series of surveys to answer questions relevant campus ministries, as well as social scientific research. With data collected from multi-university surveys, we want to answer how campus ministries influence students' faith development; professional goals; thoughts, expectations, and behaviors regarding charity and service; social and political attitudes; mental health; academic success; sexual attitudes and behaviors; and substance use.
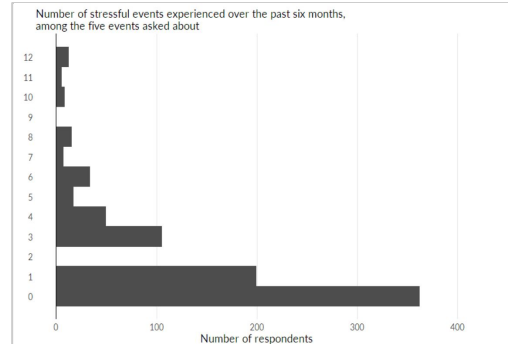
Data and Methods

Fall 2016 *Duke freshman* survey In the fall of 2016, we contacted students at Duke University who reported that they were Catholic in their application to Duke, and requested that they participate in our survey. Overall, 98 respondents (or roughly a third of all those contacted) completed the survey.

Spring 2017 *Duke cross-section* In the spring of 2017, we contacted all undergraduate students who were in the Duke Catholic Center's e-mail list and requested that they participate in a second, similar survey.

Fall 2017 *multi-university freshmen survey* In the fall of 2017, we sent out a third survey. This time, we collected a sample from eight universities across the US. As with the previous survey, questions had been revised in collaboration with the campus ministries. Further, campus-specific questions were added to the survey. Overall, more than 700 students completed the survey.

Results

Number of stressful events experienced over the past six months, among the five events asked about

Students with high resilience differed from students with low resilience on depression, anxiety and stress. In other words, resilience scores were found to predict levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Resilience was a significant predictor of stress (p-value < 0.001, r = -0.15) as we hypothesized, and also depression (p-value < 0.001, r = -0.35) and anxiety (p-value < 0.001, r = -0.24). Furthermore, resilience was a negative predictor of students' well-being, meaning that the more resilient an individual is, we would expect them to report lower instances of depression, anxiety and stress. Unsurprisingly, the mean stress level of students was a significant predictor of both depression (p-value < 0.001, r = 0.23) and anxiety (p-value < 0.001, r = 0.24) as we expected.

Results

In this wave of the survey, 34% of all respondents said that they were either not religious at all or slightly religious. However, 60% of all respondents said that religion was either moderately important or very important to them in their life. Therefore, a significant number of students may seek out religious life on college campuses. While in this survey data, mass attendance was not a significant predictor of resilience, there are many other ways students can be involved in campus ministry. Larger sample sizes and further statistical analyses are necessary to be able to determine what types of ministry involvement can be reliable predictors of resiliency. However, we have already shown that resiliency is a predictor of depression, anxiety, and stress. And likewise, stress is a predictor of depression and anxiety.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The team will continue to analyze data over the next few years to further investigate these relationships. We hope to quantify how this relationship changes as students enter college, throughout college, and as students prepare to enter the workforce or attend graduate or professional level education.

Acknowledgements