

## Understanding The Link Between Parent-Child Relationships and Children's Conflict Responses: An Emotional Security Mediation Analysis

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### The Library Research Award Essay

My research journey in psychology started in the Family Studies lab, in the Department of Psychology. After a few semesters of getting into data collection and my lab advisor's recurrent advice, I decided that I would write a thesis in my senior year. I made this decision at the beginning of my junior year because I knew I wanted to explore my interests in family dynamics and their effects on children's outcome behavior. However, before I embarked on the task of writing my thesis, I was worried about my ability to handle and analyze statistical data—a critical part of writing a thesis.

Luckily, during the winter break of the 2020/2021 academic year, the library, through the Centre of Digital Scholarship hosted data analysis sessions. As an international student who couldn't go home and spent the longest winter break in Fisher Graduate Residence, I had all the time in my hands. So, I decided to sign up for one of the sessions. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2021, at 9:00 am, I had my first Data Analysis and Visualization in R for Social Scientists session. With my limited knowledge of statistics and fickle technological abilities, I was skeptical to even join the session that morning. Surprisingly, Jessica Young (the presenter) gently eased us into the process, taking us step by step from the beginning, and ensuring that I was on track with everything that was being taught.

Not only was the lesson easy to follow, but the environment was also conducive for me to ask questions and request resources to assist me after the session. Julie Vecchio, one of the Directors of the program was also of great help. When there were sessions I could not attend due to my winter job, she was quite responsive and open to sharing recordings and other sessions that

would be held in the Spring during the semester. I attended 3 more sessions, one more on the same day and two on Thursday of that week. The sessions allowed me to establish a certain level of comfort with R studio, before I could take my advanced statistics class, as per the requirement of my Senior Honors Thesis class.

When it came to finding a topic for my thesis, the Psych Info database, under the subject of Psychology was of great assistance. The vast database allowed me to do my background research and discover gaps that have not been addressed in the literature. I knew that my specific area of interest—parent-child relationships and children’s outcome behaviors—had been researched extensively, so finding a gap in literature would require thorough research. During this process, I was particularly appreciative of the Thesaurus feature and Search Tips on the Hesburgh One Search website. These two features enabled, me to comprehensively search through the field of family research and make sure I am not replicating a research study that has already been done. In addition to my comprehensive research, I met with Cheri Smith who demonstrated valuable research features that carried me through my entire thesis journey. One of the most valuable skills Cheri Smith taught me was how to save and store all my articles for future reference. Prior to my meeting with her, I didn’t know that I could access extensions such as RefWorks through the Hesburgh Library, to save my articles and use it for referencing. Additionally, she demonstrated different ways I could customize my search given that I was specifically interested in adolescent samples. This narrowed my search and allowed me to spend more time writing a quality thesis paper, rather than conducting literature reviews.

Cheri’s assistance also helped me learn new ways of optimizing my search using other psychology research databases. Before meeting with her, I only used Psych Info to find articles, because intuitively, one assumes that it is the most reliable source for psychology research. But,

throughout my meeting with Cheri, I learned that I could use other psych databases such as Sage Research Methods, Google Scholar, and PubMed. This was mind-blowing for me because it allowed me to use different databases for different sections of my thesis. For instance, Sage Research Methods came in handy when I was working on my path analysis and methodology section because it offered different tools for me to practice different analyses either on R or SPSS. This drastically improved my understanding of a mediation analysis, how to perform one R and how to present findings in my paper.

For the final touches, I had to compile a list of all my citations. Honestly, for the longest time, this part was the most draining and tedious part of the writing process for me. But, for my honors thesis, it was much easier than I had envisioned. For this portion of the thesis, I revisited the skills Cheri had taught me on how to reference using RefWorks. Moreover, in instances where RefWorks did not provide an accurate APA 7th Edition citation, I used the in-built feature on Psych Info in the Hesburgh Library search database, which allowed me to simply click the quotations marks on the menu bar and my citation would automatically be generated. The best thing about this in-built feature is that it complies with the latest APA citation standards, and automatically maintains a list of all your citations in alphabetical order.

My thesis journey was not only a testament to my courage and curiosity, but also a demonstration of the Hesburgh Library's excellent and versatile services. Writing a thesis comes with waves of doubt and confusion, but the library services truly lighten the burden. At the end of it all, I am proud of all the work I put in for my thesis, from the day I decided to sign up for the library's data visualization sessions to the last line of my references. Most importantly, I recognize that I would not have done it without my advisor and the impeccable library research services.