**Omega Graduate School**

**Dissertation Research Prospectus (Pre-Proposal)**

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**Problem Statement**

The problem is

dysfunctional intimate partner relationships among .

Parental influence can have a significant impact on their children’s behavior. Parents are the primary caregivers and teachers during a child’s formative years, and their actions, beliefs, and attitudes can shape the child’s behavior and worldview. (Dhiman, Dr. Bharat, 2023).

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between parental socialization and dysfunctional intimate partner relationships of Antiguan young men aged 18-30 living in St. Mary’s Parish in Antigua.

**Background of the Problem (1-2 pages)**

Recently, the issue of male-female relationships was discussed publicly at various levels in Antigua and Barbuda. Several men previously involved in intimate partner relationships indicated their disinterest in continuing such relationships. Women in long-standing, significant relationships left these relationships, citing their partners’ attitudes and behaviors as the reason for the separation. Additionally, there has been an increase in reported incidents of women being shot or stabbed to death by their intimate partners. Some of these happened in the presence of children. These brutal deaths sent shock waves through the community because the accused perpetrators were young men aged 20-30. As a person in the community and directly involved with some of these cases, the researcher witnessed firsthand the detrimental effects on the family caused by these relationship fractures.

Questions emerged from the population: What is happening in our little community? Why are some male-female relationships toxic and end in violent deaths and young men incarcerated? As the researcher reflected on the concerns expressed by members of the community and made observations about socialization in general and male socialization in particular, the researcher recognized that there is value in examining the relationship between socialization and intimate partner relationship (IPR) to determine if there any correlational relationship factors contributing to how males behave in their intimate partner relationships.

What, then, is an intimate partner relationship? An intimate relationship is an interpersonal relationship that involves physical or emotional intimacy. Although an intimate relationship is commonly a sexual relationship, it may also be a non-sexual relationship involving family, friends, or acquaintances. Intimate partner relationship (IPR) refers to a sexual relationship between a man and a woman.

Socialization refers to that lifelong process of internalizing society’s norms and ideologies. Individuals acquire culture and assimilate into society by practicing its customs and traditions. Language, attitudes, upbringing, values, and roles form part of one’s socialization.

Studies conducted on intimate partner relationships indicate that cultural and social norms acquired through socialization highly influence an individual’s attitudes and behaviors, including violent ones. Corporal punishment and witnessing violence in the family, media, or other settings contribute to social tolerance of violent behaviors. Sometimes, violence is regarded as the only method of resolving conflicts or rearing children, increasing the risk factor for interpersonal violence ([Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0886260517692336?casa_token=ypmG1ZyCPCEAAAAA%3ACws6eCQ_vylPOSHPW7vPq5j7UoFoebeqnvQiPSbJMxiY_BonB-zQ4l_ZGPr85x6itLgK8RKpDg)).

Studies also point to parents’ relationship with each other, their parenting philosophy, and also shape how their child selects their child’s “ideal partner.” This new dynamic plays a role in developing the image of the perfect partner for the child. Studies further indicated that exposure to violence during childhood has been linked to dating violence victimization and perpetration. Also known as the intergenerational transmission of violence, the link between violence during childhood and dating violence has traditionally focused on physical violence. Researchers have estimated that between 9% and 87% of high school and college students are involved in violent dating relationships (Harned, 2002). Although most research has focused on physical violence, other studies have examined psychological or emotional abuse, threats of violence, verbal abuse, and sexual violence. Experiencing and perpetrating dating violence is linked to exposure to violence in the family of origin.

Since relationships are foundational to us as humans, and we cannot exist without these nurturing relationships in the social context, we must be supplied with the requisite tools to engage in these relationships safely and securely. (Gover, et. al. 2008). The writer believes that understanding how our background and upbringing influence us can provide the knowledge and impetus to make necessary adjustments and advance our freedom.

**Significance**

This study will contribute to the gap in the literature by identifying how socialization factors, such as upbringing, contribute to how Antiguan young men 18-30 living in St. Mary’s Antigua function in intimate partner relationships.

This study may also contribute to positive social change by increasing the success of intimate partner relationships among Antiguan males aged 18-30 years. Increasing relationship success will contribute to a more stable family structure, potentially improving family well-being by providing a framework for healthier intimate partner relationships. A greater understanding of relationship functioning will ensure God’s kingdom’s purposes for families come to pass. Family members will achieve self-efficacy and enjoy better well-being when they are well.

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**Research Questions**

RQ1: What relationships exist, if any, between dysfunctional parental discipline practices and dysfunctional intimate partner relationships among young men aged 18-30 living in St. Mary’s Parish, Antigua?

**Research Methodology**

This study will utilize a quantitative methodology because hypotheses derived from research questions will be tested using statistical analysis.

 Social Learning

**Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

This study is framed by Social Learning Theory which suggests that people learn social behavior by observing and imitating the behavior of others. Psychologist Albert Bandura developed the Social Learning Theory, emphasizing the importance of monitoring, modeling, and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others.

Social learning theory considers how environmental and cognitive factors influence human learning and behavior. Albert Bandura (1977) agrees with the behaviorist learning theories of classical conditioning and operant conditioning in social learning theory. However, he adds two important ideas:

1. Mediating processes occur between stimuli & responses.
2. Behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning.

**Instrumentation**

Validated survey instrument that measures attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, or behaviors… (quantitative)

This study will utilize.

1. The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) is an instrument that measures general relationship satisfaction in intimate partner relationships. It is appropriate for use with individuals in intimate relationships, such as married couples, cohabiting couples, engaged or dating couples. The instrument consists of  7 questions.

1. The**Parenting Scale** ESPA29 was designed to measure dysfunctional discipline practices in parents of young children. It specifically measures three factors of dysfunctional discipline style: (a) Laxness, (b) Over reactivity, and (c) Verbosity. (Arnold et al., 1993)

**Research Design**

Correlational Design: examines the relationship between two continuous variables within the same group from a validated instrument (quantitative, deductive)

This quantitative study will utilize a correlational design because it will examine the relationship between socialization and intimate partner relationships among young Antiguan men 18-30 living in St. Mary’s Antigua.

**Population and Sampling**

The target population for this study will be young Antiguan men 18-30 in St. Mary’s Parish, Antigua.

**Hypotheses (Quantitative Only)**

Correlational:

H0: No statistically significant relationship exists between dysfunctional parental discipline scores and dysfunctional relationship scores among young men aged 18-30 living in St. Mary’s Parish, Antigua.

Ha: A statistically significant relationship exists between dysfunctional parental discipline scores and dysfunctional relationship scores among young men aged 18-30 living in St. Mary’s Parish, Antigua.

**Data Analysis Plan**

Quantitative:

This study will test data for normality and relevant assumptions of appropriate statistical procedures. If data do not meet assumptions for parametric procedures (results apply to the population), nonparametric procedures (results apply only to the sample) will be utilized.

This study will utilize Pearson’s Product Moment of Correlation (parametric) or Spearman’s Rank Correlation (nonparametric) to test the hypotheses for statistically significant relationships.

This study will utilize a t-Test (parametric) or a Mann-Whitney U procedure (nonparametric) to test the hypotheses for statistically significant differences.