

Title – Locus of Control and Support for or Opposition to Concealed Carry on Campus: A Correlational Study

Program of Study – Higher Education Administration

Presentation Type – Oral Presentation

Subtype – Basic

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Abstract: Higher education administrators are tasked daily with the safety of those under their care. One highly contested consideration is allowing the concealed carry of firearms on campus. In order for administrators to make well-rounded decisions, additional scholarly research on support for or opposition to allowing concealed carry among the potential stakeholders has become increasingly important. The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to determine if there is a relationship between faculty member locus of control orientation and their support for or opposition to allowing concealed carry on campus. Much of the existing literature has relied solely on basic demographic data as the primary predictors, creating a need for alternative methods to further broaden the literature. The instrument used in this study was the Levenson Locus of Control Scale (1981), which is designed to assess whether individuals perceive themselves as being in control of their lives (Internal), or if individuals in their lives (Powerful Others) or random uncontrollable occurrences (Chance) have more control. The focus of the current study was limited to faculty members, with an online survey administered at a large private university. The resulting data underwent binary logistic regression in order to determine if a relationship exists between one's support for or opposition to concealed carry on campus (criterion) and the individual's locus of control (predictor). The results of the study revealed a correlation between Locus of Control and support/opposition to allowing concealed carry on campus. Further, two of the individual subscales, Internality and Chance, provided a statistically significant correlation to the criterion variable with Powerful Others falling just

outside of the alpha = .05 parameter. This finding broadens the existing literature and opens up avenues to further expand the field of study using social-psychological and other theory backed constructs.

Christian worldview integration: As a Christian scholar desiring to perform research in a strongly divisive field of study, it was a challenge to find a scholarly approach to the subject where religious and political views related to the subject have proven to be highly contentious, while integrating my Christian values. While my Christian worldview undoubtedly influences my personal views on the subject, and will arise in any defense of the research, providing objective academic research guided me to deliberately choose to detach religiosity from the research. The goal of my research was to provide biased-free findings for higher education academia to critique, while striving to present myself as one with a higher calling by God. It is with that balance in mind that I pursued this research with subtly under-laden connections to religiosity (through choice of a theoretical underpinning that offers a bridge to a Christian worldview), with the desire to prove that Christian scholars can be both objective in research methodology and true to our faith at the same time.

While I fully concede that the above logic could be construed as contradictory, I do feel strongly that while our faith and how we present ourselves as Christian scholars should be the driving force behind our work, I do not believe that it should ever supersede strong, academically sound research. The topic I chose has already had number of studies considering religiosity and Christianity with mixed results, I found no gap in the literature in that respect that could be explored. Should my research be published, or contested, I will stand by the strength of my research in academia, while proudly presenting the fact that I am a Christian with an understanding of the topic that may not completely agree even with my own findings. We as Christians must show the world that we can have our beliefs and allow our convictions to guide us to research, but that we can also be scholarly and balanced with our methodology.