

THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS

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THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS

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Introduction

Health and the global life satisfaction of college-aged students has become a topic of concern for many students, parents, counselors, educators, and administrators due to the social and academic demands of the college experience (Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009). While many mental health professionals focus on the students' cognitive, physical, social, or emotional well-being, other significant factors of student development are often overlooked including the spiritual development (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2005; Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009; Hartley, 2004; Kazanjian & Laurence, 2000; Laurence, 1999; Palmer, 1998; Rendón, 2000; Tisdell, 2003). Research on spirituality of the college student population has examined spirituality's relationship to psychological well-being, but little has been studied about the process of spiritual development through the college years (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). Due to the lack of research and training available in this area, many mental health practitioners are often reluctant to address spiritual concerns in counseling (Hartley, 2004). Counseling professionals and college administrators increasingly focus on the exterior lives of college students such as courses taken, grades and honors earned, co-curricular involvement, and persistence towards a degree, while the student's interior lives increasingly become neglected (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). The student's inner development includes values and beliefs, emotional maturity, sense of connectedness, moral development, spirituality, and self-understanding (HERI, 2003). By addressing spiritual health in counseling, a more holistic view of the client can be

achieved. Many studies found positive correlations between spirituality and holistic health and well-being (Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009; Dodd, Miller, Pigg, Rienzo, & Taliaferro, 2009; Hutchins, Hutchins, Nelms, & Pursley, 2007).

As part of the process of inner development, students may begin to develop a sense of religious struggle. In emerging adulthood, college students detect inconsistencies in their earlier self-descriptions as they attempt to construct a general theory of self. Students begin to question childhood lessons of religion and explore what fits with their concept of self. Considerable restructuring of self may take place in emerging adulthood which involves an increase in self-reflection about religious beliefs and a decision about a specific worldview (Santrock, 2010). A religious struggle may take place during this time which is defined as “the extent to which the student feels distant from God, has questions about his/her beliefs, or feels unsure of religious matters” (HERI, p. 21, 2007). Research addressing spiritual development, religious struggles, and their relationship to global life satisfaction was found to be sparse (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Hartley, 2004). The current study sought to create a better understanding of the traditional college student’s spiritual development and global life satisfaction and to provide new insights to practitioners working to implement a more holistic approach in counseling.

Spiritual development has been a difficult and elusive construct to define in the literature. According to Fowler’s Theory of Faith Development (1981), spiritual development followed a predictable pace and progressed from one stage to another in a linear fashion. However, more recent theories such as Love and Talbot’s Framework of Spiritual Development (1999) defined spiritual development as an interrelated process

which involved self-knowledge and centeredness and having a sense of spirit which greatly influenced one's life. According to Love and Talbot (1999), the process of spiritual development was not linear and discontinuous but can change and evolve through life experiences. Thus, spiritual development was a continuous process according to Love and Talbot's Framework for Spiritual Development (Love & Talbot, 1999). Although a number of different higher education scholars and practitioners have recently advocated for more attention towards students' spiritual development (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2005; Collins, Hurst, & Jacobson, 1987; Kazanjian & Laurence, 2000; Laurence, 1999; Palmer, 1998; Rendón, 2000; Tisdell, 2003), little research on the process of spiritual development had appeared in the higher education literature (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011).

The purpose of the current study was to determine how levels of spirituality change for traditional college students from one year to the next and whether this change follows a linear and discontinuous progression or a more continuous one. The study also sought to understand the relationship between spiritual development, students' religious struggles, and global life satisfaction. The researcher hoped the results would better inform college counselors by creating a more comprehensive understanding of the college student's identity development and how it impacts their life satisfaction.

Literature Review

Although the identity development process begins in adolescence (Erikson, 1968), the search for self-definition of one's values and beliefs continues during the late teens and early twenties. This time of self-exploration is especially true of industrialized countries where adult roles of marriage and parenthood are being postponed (Arnett,

2004). During the past fifteen years there has been growing awareness of how religiosity and spirituality affect identity development and global life satisfaction (Arnett, 2004).

While much of the literature has focused on religious aspects of various populations (Boyatzis, 2005), little research has been conducted to study spirituality for those transitioning into adulthood and their developmental processes (Barry, Davarya, Nelson, & Urry, 2010). The college years are a transformative time, and students may question their values and belief systems. Further research of spiritual development would create a more comprehensive understanding of how the process of spiritual development of college student population takes place.

As students enter college they develop the cognitive ability to detect inconsistencies in their belief and values system (Santrock, 2010). Young adults begin to question childhood ideas of religion as they attempt to create a more integrated sense of self-understanding. Research showed that college students were more likely than children to be self-conscious about, and preoccupied with, their self-understanding (Santrock, 2010). Through an increase in self-reflection and ability to engage in more complex and critical thinking, many college students have difficulty integrating their spiritual and religious beliefs into a unique worldview. Santrock (2010) stated that this process of spiritual and identity development may have been complicated due to college students having been easily influenced by their emotions in early adulthood. These emotions can distort thinking and cause college students to be too self-serving or too self-protective. Santrock (2010) found that it is not until 30 to 39 years of age that adults created a coherent, integrated worldview. One important factor about the college student population is that for the first time, physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development

advance to the point at which the individual can sort through and synthesize childhood identities and identifications to construct a viable path toward adult maturity (Santrock, 2010, p. 145). Resolution of the identity issue does not imply that identity will be stable throughout the course of one's life. An individual who develops a healthy identity was flexible and adaptive, open to changes in society, in relationships, and in careers. This openness ensured the ability to reorganize identity throughout one's life (Santrock, 2010, p. 145). During this time of inner development, the college student also works to overcome inconsistencies in spiritual beliefs and values. He/she has the cognitive and emotional capacity to question religious upbringing as well as having been exposed to new experiences which broadens the student's worldview. Spiritual and identity development may bring challenges unique to the traditional college aged student which will be further explored in the current research to create a better understanding of this population.

Despite the fact that spiritual development may present inner struggles for the traditional college student, research has found that many counselors were reluctant to explore this construct with their clients (Crook-Lyon, Freitas, Hill, & Kellems, 2010; Kiessling, 2010). Apprehension to discuss spirituality was true even when counselors thought a discussion about spiritual and religious struggles might benefit the student. This reluctance on behalf of the counselor may have been due to lack of knowledge on the subject, lack of training, lack of information, or general apprehension about discussing the subject. A study conducted by Kiessling (2010) found that even if the student had an interest in spiritual matters in counseling, there were many barriers in therapy towards authentic dialogue on the subject. Kiessling postulated that university

counseling center therapists were uncomfortable with the topic of spirituality; therefore, counselors did not bring it up even though they thought the client could benefit from the discussion. In many college counseling centers, training for counselors in this area was often informal (e.g., personal reading and supervision) rather than formal (e.g., coursework). Therapists in the study reported that they would feel more comfortable working with these issues if they had more adequate training. Kiessling (2010) stated that college students were also reluctant to bring up the topic for fear of offending the therapist if a discussion of spirituality occurred. According to Love and Talbot (1999) by failing to address these issues, college mental health professionals are ignoring a crucial component of student development. College students are working towards integrating their beliefs into a unique worldview which may present inner developmental challenges. To provide more effective therapy and benefit students holistically, spirituality should be addressed in college counseling centers as an important facet of identity development (Fowler, 1981; Parks, 2000). Using a holistic definition of health, which involves several dimensions including biological, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, and occupational (Hutchins, Hutchins, Nelms, & Pursley, 2007) the student's spiritual development should be considered when counseling this population.

The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI; Higher Education Research Institute, 2004) at the University of California in Los Angeles conducted the largest study to date exploring the spiritual and religious values, perspectives, and behaviors of college students. The study included data from more than 112,000 students at 236 universities, and showed that students came to university campuses with an interest in spiritual matters; they also expected the university to play a role in their spiritual quest (HERI,

2007). Results indicated that four in five college students “have an interest in spirituality” and nearly two-thirds say “my spirituality is a source of joy” (p. 5). Moreover, half of the students reported that they considered opportunities to help them grow spiritually were “essential” or “very important” to life as a student. Developmental theorists including Piaget (1971) stated that individuals at this age experienced a disequilibrium and disruption as they transitioned into a new environment; however, new cognitive structures emerged to increase capacity, flexibility, and stability. As the formation of personality evolved through the cognitive developmental process, spirituality became more deeply explored. According to a HERI (2004) study, students reported that not only were they “very much engaged in spiritual and religious pursuits” but “such pursuits were far more important to them than most people assume” which further emphasized Piaget’s Cognitive Theory of Development (1971). Similarly, Erikson’s Psychosocial Stages of Development (1968) theorized that the college-aged individual was in the process of identity formation. As the student entered college, he/she works to successfully overcome the feelings of misunderstanding towards self and/or others. Little has been done to understand the spiritual development of students and ensure college is a place where they can grow holistically (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2005; Collins, Hurst, & Jacobson, 1987; Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009; Hartley, 2004; Kazanjian & Laurence, 2000; Laurence, 1999; Palmer, 1998; Rendón, 2000; Tisdell, 2003). While much research has been conducted about the construct of spirituality and its impact on college students, little has been written about the process of spiritual development for this population. Research that has been conducted on college student spiritual development has been sparse, qualitative, and

has mostly focused on mono-theistic student population (Hartley, 2004). The current research examined students of different ethnicities, religious backgrounds, and grade level to correlate changes in levels of spirituality between grade levels. Spiritual development had an impact on inner development as the student worked to integrate their own unique belief and values system.

Spirituality versus religiosity

In order to understand spiritual development, distinctions between the constructs of spirituality and religiosity must be made. Fowler (1981) spoke of religion in terms of cumulative traditions, suggesting that traditions were a means of expressing religious faith and had a connection to people of the past. Such traditions included texts of scripture, including narratives, myths, prophecies, and accounts of revelations, as well as oral traditions, music, dance, ethical teachings, theologies, architecture and many other elements. Belief systems can be expressed individually or as part of a faith community; but, the beliefs and behaviors were generally shared and used to connect the individual with the transcendent source of power, or God.

Spirituality, on the other hand, was a more elusive construct with multiple meanings; therefore, it was more difficult to operationally define. Fowler (1981) wrote that spirituality is concerned with how individuals put their lives together and what made life worth living. The meaning-making process took place through what Fowler defined as a “spiritual quest” (1981, p. 5). Spiritual quests involved looking for “something to love that loves us, something to value that gives us value, something to honor and respect that has the power to sustain our being” (Fowler, 1981, p. 5). College represented a transitional time in a person’s developmental journey, and some students may have felt

vulnerable as they struggled with these spiritual questions. Tisdell's (2003) comparison captured the nuanced difference between religion and spirituality:

Being religious connotes belonging to and practicing a religious tradition. Being spiritual suggests a personal commitment to a process of inner development that engages us in our totality. Religion, of course, is one way many people are spiritual. Often, when authentic faith embodies an individual's spirituality the religious and the spiritual will coincide. Still, not every religious person is spiritual (although they ought to be) and not every spiritual person is religious. Spirituality is a way of life that affects and includes every moment of existence. It is at once a contemplative attitude, a disposition to a life of depth, and the search for ultimate meaning, direction, and belonging. The spiritual person is committed to growth as an essential ongoing life goal. To be spiritual requires us to stand on our own two feet while being nurtured and supported by our tradition, if we are fortunate enough to have one (p. 17–18).

Although some overlap existed between the two constructs, important distinctions must be noted. Spirituality was a more individualized idea, meaning it did not include the same degree of community or shared belief system. Spirituality was generally a broader term which can be altogether separated from one's religious beliefs and practices. It included a process of meaning-making that evolved throughout a person's developmental journey. The individual worked to make sense out of life's activities and found an overall sense of purpose in one's life (Love, 2002). Some theories of spiritual and faith development, such as Fowler's Theory of Faith Development (1981) stated that the process as linear and hierarchal. The individual progressed through one stage at a

time, and they cannot continue to the next stage until the issues of the previous one has been resolved. Parks (2000) expanded this idea by stating that as adulthood gets postponed in American society, young adults had their own unique stage of spiritual development. Parks adhered to Fowler's ideas that spiritual development was discontinuous, occurring one stage at a time, in a linear fashion. Conversely, Love and Talbot (1999) believed that the process did not exist in stages and, therefore is not predictable. A person's spiritual journey can be thwarted or advanced by important events that occurred in life or emotional trauma. According to a HERI report (2004), spirituality of college students was associated with (a) spiritual quest, (b) ethic of caring, (c) compassionate self concept, and (d) equanimity. In contrast, religiosity was associated with (a) religious commitment, (b) religious engagement, (c) religious/social conservatism, (d) religious skepticism, and (e) religious struggle. The nuanced differences between spirituality and religiosity must be understood in order to fully grasp the importance of spiritual development in the college aged population.

Patterns of spiritual development

Changing attitudes.

Research indicated that students who entered college had high levels of spiritual and religious interest (HERI, 2004). Between 70 to 80% of the student respondents reported that they discussed religion/spirituality with friends and family. Participants also reported that they received a great deal of comfort from their spiritual/religious beliefs; about 69% saying that these beliefs "provide strength, support and guidance" (HERI, 2007, p. 5). Therefore, students came to college wanting to create their own,

unique spiritual belief system and looked for opportunities to do so through their spiritual quest.

Although students had deeply felt spiritual values, many struggled with their spiritual development and religious skepticism. Juniors in college were more likely to be engaged in a spiritual quest than freshman; although, they were less likely to attend church or other religious services (HERI, 2004). This might have been because students were more likely to attend church with parents or family members before college than they were during college. The social pressure to attend was much less during college. This may be because students met new people and academic work was harder; therefore, more time was spent socializing, studying, or developing romantic relationships. Juniors in the study felt more “stressed out” than incoming freshman possibly due to some of the aforementioned factors (e.g. the academic and social pressures of college). Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm (2005) believed this stress is due to fragmented aspects of their life at college.

Managing time and establishing order and structure in their lives are among the most important survival skills every college student must master. It is far more than a scheduling problem; creating structure and a sense of wholeness and meaning out of so much disjointed activity is a task so relentless that it threatens to overwhelm students at times (p. 169).

Overwhelming feelings of academic and social pressures in college caused students to struggle with their spiritual identity and self-understanding (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2005). Researchers found that college students’ self-concept varied across relationships and social roles. Identity and self-understanding differed depending on

whether they described themselves with their mother, father, close friend, romantic partner, or peer. This identity may have also differed when they described themselves in the role of student, athlete, or employee. Discrepancies and role confusion affected how college students integrated their belief and values system into a coherent understanding of self-identity (Santrock, 2010, p. 136).

Another area that showed differences between grade levels in college was tolerance of differing religions. The degree of tolerance for other religions was higher for juniors than underclassmen (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2005). Most juniors agreed with the statement “most people can grow spiritually without being religious” (HERI, 2007, p. 11). Students reported to have their own practices and faiths, but understood that everyone may not agree with their attitudes. Students appeared to have developed a more ecumenical world view as they progress through college (HERI, 2004). Bartz (2009) found that non-Christian participants saw themselves as “students who were interested in deepening their spirituality, asking life’s big questions, and being concerned with global issues” (p. 20). Therefore, meaningful research in the area of spiritual development cannot solely focus on religious beliefs because it would have excluded students that were spiritual without being religious. Students that reported to be atheist or agnostic can be highly spiritual, searching for their meaning, purpose, and direction in life. These students reported being left out of research on spiritual development that has focused on mostly mono-theistic populations (Hartley, 2004). The researchers suggested that it is important to include students from various religious/non-religious backgrounds in future research.

Another interesting finding was that as students continued to develop during their junior year, their political views also changed (HERI, 2004). The change in the political belief system was small, but it seemed to move in a more liberal direction. HERI (2004) found that students at the end of their junior year were slightly more liberal, not only in how they labeled themselves but also in their attitudes toward social issues such as gay marriage and abortion. Those students identifying themselves as highly religious tended to be more politically conservative and hold conservative views on many social issues. Only 15% of highly religious students called themselves “liberals” while 41% said they were “conservatives” (HERI, 2004). Liberal students were more likely than conservatives to express high levels of religious skepticism and to be engaged in a spiritual quest (HERI, 2004).

College student beliefs and values.

The current study examined how a student’s religious struggle changed throughout college as students underwent a spiritual and identity development processes. As college students searched for meaning and purpose in life he/she went through a process of spiritual quest (HERI, 2004). Evidence in the positive psychology movement has indicated that students with higher degrees of spirituality were more likely to be engaged in learning, involved in student affairs, and had greater academic success (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Czikszentmihalyi, 1997; Czikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2003; Finn & Rock, 1997; Marks, 2000). Spirituality had a positive correlation with purpose in life, which in turn had a positive correlation on academic engagement (Czikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2003). Responses indicated that students’ beliefs and values changed throughout their college career. Eighty-nine percent of participants said they were

searching for meaning in life, 82% had discussions about the meaning of life with friends at least occasionally, 98% said that integrating spirituality into their life was at least somewhat important, 94% said that seeking opportunities to grow spiritually was at least somewhat important, and 96% said the development of a meaningful philosophy of life was at least somewhat important. The high numbers suggested that students with a deeper sense of meaning and purpose are better adjusted in college and felt a greater sense of connectedness (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Czikszentmihalyi, 1997; Czikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2003; Finn & Rock, 1997; Marks, 2000).

The importance of feeling connected maybe problematic for students that dealt with religious struggles in college. As stated previously, “religious struggles” indicated the extent to which the student felt distant from God, had questions about his/her beliefs, or felt unsure of religious matters (HERI, 2004). As college students questioned childhood lessons of religion she/he worked to incorporate his/her own beliefs into a unique worldview. Therefore, many students felt a sense of disillusionment with their religious upbringing. Disillusionment of religious teachings may have happened more frequently as abstract thinking is more developed. HERI (2004) reported that levels of religious struggles were related to “frequent self-reflection, alcohol consumption, frequent television viewing, having a serious illness or injury, or experiencing the death of a close friend or family member” (HERI, 2007, p. 13). Students struggled to incorporate their religious and spiritual beliefs, often rebelling against rigid religious doctrine.

Spiritual development in college

As previously stated, the college students' understanding of self and spiritual identity varied across relationships and social roles. The current research addressed students' experience of college and spiritual development in order to understand how students integrate their unique belief and values system. Although, research committed to exploring the spiritual development of college students was limited (Hartley, 2004) two studies focused solely on the spiritual development of college-aged students. Both studies were qualitative and limited in terms of generalizability, but offered important contributions to the research on spiritual development of this population. One piece of research was a longitudinal study that found that after students arrived at college, their spiritual practices became much more diverse and pluralistic (Jones, 2009). This idea fit with Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm's (2005) aforementioned research that focused on added pressures of college life affecting spiritual identity. College itself did not cause a decrease in religiosity, but college was an opportunity to make life changes the participants had been thinking about prior to arriving to campus. Participants who did ground their spiritual quest in a Christian ideology felt that living out these values ran counter to the prevailing campus culture. Students reported that they felt that the dominate campus culture was one that encouraged students to "seek out their own personal happiness, satisfy their immediate needs, and believe whatever they wanted without thought to life's big questions" (Jones, 2009, p. 153). Major conclusions of this study found that the classroom was seen as having great potential to help students understand spiritual struggles, but class discussions did not incorporate spiritual topics. Not only were spiritual topics not covered but topics related to ethics, values, meaning

and purpose, and connection to a global community were also left out of discussion (Jones, 2009):

1. Participants entered the university environment as a certain type of spiritual seeker, which influenced how they perceived and engaged: (a) the general community, (b) the campus climate, (c) other students, (d) the classroom, and (e) social groups.
2. Participants struggled to integrate their spiritual life with a campus climate and curriculum that emphasized a rational, empirical, modern, and scientific epistemology. As a result, participants lacked an understanding of how to fulfill their passions or purpose after graduation.
3. Participants did not engage in authentic dialogue with much frequency due to a campus culture and societal norms that did not foster authentic dialogue. As a result, they often felt like minorities on campus and lacked mentoring relationships associated with the university (p. 160).

Limitations to the Jones (2009) study also included low number of participants; the sample self-selected to be a part of the research. Students that entered college with low levels of spirituality were not included in the study. Therefore, differences in their spiritual development were not explored. The sample was also not diverse in terms of race or ethnicity. The research questions in Jones's (2009) study focused on religious aspects and motivations of spirituality, for instance how their relationship with God changed over time, which provided only qualitative data. The current study sought to quantitatively explore college students' spiritual development including participants from

all backgrounds and religious affiliations which allowed greater generalizability of the results.

While Jones (2009) focused primarily on spiritual development within the context of college, another study focused on the relationship between religious development and the mental health of college students (Bartz, 2009). Bartz sought to find out if religious development followed discontinuous or continuous stages and if there were significant differences in Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 for religious versus non-religious participants (MMPI-2; Ben-Porath, Butcher, Dahlstrom, Graham, Kaemmer, & Tellegen, 2001).

Bartz (2009) defined a discontinuous style of religious development as a person who progressed smoothly into young adulthood from one stage to the next by incorporating values of family and church. Therefore, the discontinuous style of spiritual development is a fairly predictable process. In contrast, the continuous model of development is a process of the gradual accumulation of a behavior, skill, or knowledge. Development occurs at different rates as a person builds on previously learned religious beliefs and values. Bartz (2009) found that college students did not follow a linear, predictable pace of spiritual development. Instead, students were more likely to experience fluctuations in their religiousness in college due to their lack of identity development and process of individuation. This study implied that college was a time of personal growth through new experiences which may have impacted spiritual and identity development. Bartz (2009) found that college students experienced a more continuous style of spiritual development contradicting some theories such as Fowlers Theory of Faith Development (1981). Therefore, students in college had experiences that affected

their spiritual and identity development. Experiences such as death, trauma, meeting different types of people, studying abroad, or work caused students to question beliefs or integrate them into a more coherent worldview.

Bartz (2009) also found that religiously devout individuals were less pathological through adulthood on MMPI-2 scales (e.g., schizophrenia or hypomania). This finding was consistent with the literature that suggested spirituality and religiosity may facilitate positive mental health (Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009; Dodd, Miller, Pigg, Rienzo, & Taliaferro, 2009; Hutchins, Hutchins, Nelms, & Pursley, 2007).

Although, Bartz's (2009) study included several important implications in regards to the process of spiritual development and mental health, several limitations of this study should be considered. One limitation was that the participants were students at Brigham Young University (BYU), a faith-based university. Bartz (2009) stated that religion permeated student life at BYU which may have caused "high levels of social desirability that would be present in an environment that rewards religious devoutness" (p. 37). Bartz also used a small sample of students at a religious university and the sample showed little ethnic diversity, therefore generalizability of this study is limited. The current study sought to have a better understanding of student spiritual developmental style by using a student population of various backgrounds and religions.

Theories of spiritual development

The current study explored various theories of spiritual development. Some theories contradict, such as Fowler's Theory of Faith Development (1981) and Love and Talbot's Framework for Spiritual Development (1999). Fowler suggested that Faith Development follows a predictable and fairly reliable pace in which people progress

through one stage at a time and cannot move forward until the previous stage has been completed. On the other hand, Love and Talbot (1999) stated that Spiritual Development does not follow a discontinuous style and people may revert back to previous stages or advance forward. The current study examined the differing spiritual developmental styles by comparing levels of spirituality across different grade levels in college. By studying spiritual development from theoretical perspectives, it allowed a more comprehensive picture of how spirituality and inner development evolved for college-aged students. Three theoretical perspectives discussed are Love and Talbot (1999), Fowler (1981), and Parks (2000).

Love and Talbot conceptual framework for spiritual development.

Love and Talbot (1999) argued that linear stage models of identity development were not adequate in capturing the complexities of spiritual development. They stated that stage models are based on an American world-view in which independent thinking, autonomy, and being less reliant on family ties were of the highest value. Stage theorists also assumed that each stage is a higher level of thinking and caused increasingly abstract thought patterns which may not be true of spiritual development. This is one of the biggest differences between the Love and Talbot framework and other theorists such as Fowler's Theory of Faith Development (1981) and Parks' Theory of Spiritual Development (2000). Fowler (1981) and Parks (2000) stated that spiritual development occurred one stage at a time and the higher level stages were more desirable which assumed a final stage or endpoint developmental process. Love and Talbot (1999) argued that spiritual development evolved and changed through personal experiences causing a person to either progress forward or revert back to earlier stages. This idea of continuous

versus discontinuous development is an important distinction in theories of spiritual development and will be examined in the current study.

Love and Talbot (1999) based their framework on several assumptions. The first assumption was that the quest for spiritual development was part of the global human experience. The belief was that although one cannot force spiritual experiences to occur, one can create certain situations that make them more likely to occur (Chander, Holden, & Kolander, 1992). Spiritual motivations may have also been repressed as the person undergoes changes, pressures from society, and other struggles. Second, spiritual development and spirituality were interchangeable concepts in that both represented a process (i.e., movement, interaction, transcendence) with no endpoint. The last assumption was that openness is a prerequisite to spiritual development. Although a balanced openness is ideal, optimal openness was one that found a middle ground between shutting out all spiritual experiences and being obsessed with having a spiritual experience. Thoughts, feelings, and behaviors may not have been conscious or intentional, to the individual; this fact makes spiritual development ongoing in the human experience. As the authors state, “Openness to spiritual development can include being in awe of one’s surroundings, having a sense of wonder about the world, being receptive to what is unexplained, being alert and sensitive to changes in one’s relationships, or being curious as the root to our emotions” (Love & Talbot, 1999, p. 4).

Love and Talbot (1999) created five propositions of spiritual development. The theorists did not believe that the propositions were linear, nor did the propositions necessarily occur in chronological order; therefore, they were not considered stages.

1. Spiritual development involves an internal process of seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness as an aspect of identity development (p. 21).

Seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness involved being consistent with actions, beliefs, and to a true sense of self. As individuals questioned who they are and struggle with identity issues, the motivation for this search arises. An unsettling feeling that beliefs and actions were not congruent and a sense of meaning and purpose were unclear occurred. This incongruence was often the catalyst for growth and a reorganization of values and beliefs. This rethinking affected behaviors and influences a person's relationship with self and others.

2. Spiritual development involves the process of continually transcending one's current locus of centrality (p. 22).

According to Love and Talbot, the idea of transcending meant the ability to go beyond one's limits. Here, the individual was able to grow and learn from life challenges in order to create a higher level of self-transcendence. This idea included being aware of something beyond the self and the spatial-temporal world in which we live. Love and Talbot (1999) wrote that it relates to Maslow's (1971) theory of hierarchical needs in that this achievement was the highest and most self-actualized level of human consciousness.

Love and Talbot (1999) also distinguished between the different types of "locus of centrality". Chandler, Holden, and Kolander (1992) defined unhealthy egocentricity as self-centered and narcissistic. On the spectrum, there were also other levels of centeredness such as humanocentricity (centered in humanity), egocentricity (centered in the planet), and cosmocentricity (centered in the cosmos). There were also other types of

centricity that exist on different levels which relate to the communities we belong to, such as family, neighborhood, school, and church. Reaching beyond our current locus of centricity to develop a greater understanding of others was the goal of this proposition. It required transcending beyond self-centeredness and creating new perspectives.

3. Spiritual development involves developing a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships and union with the community (p. 22).

The paradox of spirituality was that it is a deeply personal and intimate experience; however, Love and Talbot asserted that this idea can only fully manifest in the context of a broader system. Throughout history, people have needed one another in order to accomplish goals that benefit the entire community. Individuals found meaning and comfort in their relationships with others, such as relationships with family, community, work, or a shared faith. Working together enabled people to feel closer and more connected to the world in which they live. Fowler (1981) wrote that spirituality is rooted in connectedness, relationship, communion, and community with the spirit.

4. Spiritual development involves developing meaning, purpose, and direction in one's life (p. 23).

Love and Talbot (1999) stated that spirituality is the basic human drive for finding meaning and purpose in life. These concepts were all related, as is the capacity for developing a greater worldview. When deriving meaning and purpose, each individual has a directionality of spiritual development. Helminiak (1996) described this directionality as the openness of spirit. The ultimate goal of the spirit was to seek all that there is to be known and loved. To constantly be moving in a positive direction in life, to learn from mistakes, and to learn from others. The spirit's nature was to move towards a

self-actualized state by reassessing and reworking our reality. This reworking of previous belief and values systems caused a person to be congruent with actions, beliefs, and values and to have an insatiable curiosity of life. In this proposition, the individual was able to use this congruence to recognize the role of power, values, and assumptions and how these concepts fit in the greater community.

The purpose of this proposition was to allow humans to find greater harmony in oneself and community by accepting what is without necessarily feeling the need to change it. It also required learning how to have unconditional, selfless love for others and to maintain an evolving sense of life's purpose. To work at making changes for the greater good and not expecting anything in return. The theorists believed that love provides the direction for this process. Further, spirituality gave a context to apply one's love, increasing knowledge, and developing cognitive skills.

5. Spiritual development involves an increasing openness to exploring a relationship with an intangible and pervasive power or essence that exists beyond human existence and rational human knowing (p. 23).

Love and Talbot (1999) stated that spirituality also involved openness to forces beyond oneself and locus of centrality. As one's spirituality develops, a greater awareness occurs of a spirit or force that is only accessible through faith, hope, love, and other irrational aspects of human experience. Many religious people refer to this source as God, but it can also be known in Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism which make no reference to God. Love and Talbot (1999) cite Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, and Saunders (1988) description of this idea:

These individuals know that there is more than what they can see and that it is important to stay in touch with this other world. Spiritual individuals know that life has meaning and that there is a purpose to their lives. They have a sense that they need to accomplish a mission or fulfill a destiny in their lives. Spiritual individuals believe that all life is sacred. They can find wonder in even ordinary things...Spiritual individuals are aware of the tragedies in life. While this gives their lives a serious side, it also makes them see their lives as more valuable. Spiritual individuals have evidence of spirituality in their lives. Their spirituality will affect their relationships with themselves and with everyone and everything around them (p. 7-8).

Together the five propositions described spiritual development as an interrelated process. This process involved seeking self-knowledge and centeredness, being open to one's community, recognizing the pervasive power beyond human existence, transcending beyond one's locus of centrality, and having a sense of spirit which greatly influenced one's life. Love and Talbot's (1999) framework differed from Fowler (1981) and Parks (2000) because it followed a more continuous style of development. As mentioned earlier, a continuous style is characterized by spiritual experiences that fluctuate in one's life. The five propositions did not follow a discontinuous, predictable, smooth path as the person moves from adolescence to adulthood. Instead, the person can have experiences that caused more or less commitment to one's developing spirituality. Love and Talbot's propositions did not follow a formulaic path suitable for everyone. Each person has different life experiences which caused differing spiritual developmental

paths. According to Love and Talbot (1999), spirituality was a personal construct contrasting from religious commitment which usually involved a faith community.

Fowler's theory of faith development.

Fowler's Theory of Faith Development (1981) was one of the most widely known and most frequently discussed in the literature. Fowler's theory was similar to those of Piaget (1971) or Erickson's (1968) developmental theories because it assumed individuals progress through stages at a predictable and fairly reliable pace. Therefore, Fowler's Theory of Faith Development (1981) was a discontinuous developmental process. Stages were a part of a general human growth process and presented characteristic patterns of knowing, reasoning, and adapting to life changes. According to Fowler, faith development was part of the generic human struggle to find meaning, and the idea is not exclusive to religious expression. Individuals pass through stages one at a time and completion of one stage allowed the start of another. Growing spiritually can allow feelings of disequilibrium, such as the transition to college, to be more balanced and easier to manage.

The first stage in Fowler's Theory of Faith Development is called Intuitive-Projective Faith. Children at this age were intrigued by fairy tales and stories from sacred texts, such as the Bible. This stage was one where the child can be powerfully and permanently influenced by stories. The second stage of Fowler's theory is called the Mythic-Literal Faith. The person began to have a new understanding of the stories, beliefs, and observances that have been previously taught. These lessons typically had a literal interpretation, as are moral rules and attitudes. In stage three, Synthetic-Conventional faith, the individual started adolescence and underwent changes brought on

by puberty. Rather than simply finding meaning from stories, as in the previous stage, the person can step outside their realm of experience and analyze thoughts.

Stage four, called Individuative-Reflective Faith, is the stage that represented college-age students. At this time, the person began to take more responsibility for their chosen commitments, lifestyle, beliefs, and attitudes. The person faced some unavoidable tensions such as individuality versus being defined by a group or group membership (this can be seen in the fraternity or sorority culture of college). It was common to see an excessive confidence in one's critical thought. A transition from this stage usually came from disillusionment with stage four's logic of clear distinctions and abstract thought. The person searched for a more dialectical approach to faith and life truth by questioning lessons of religion and creating their own unique belief system.

Stage five is called Conjunctive Faith and, in this stage, self-certainty from stage four integrated with the person's true self, outlook, and reality. This caused a rethinking and reworking of one's past and was unusual before mid-life. Stage six is called Universalizing Faith and few people achieved this final transition or stage. It involved a committed moral and ascetic actualization.

Parks theory of spiritual development.

Parks (2000) described spirituality as a personal search for meaning, transcendence, wholeness, purpose and "apprehension of spirit (or Spirit) as the animating essence at the core of life" (p. 16). Parks built on Fowler's (1981) model but focused more on young adult and college students creating a unique faith development model. Parks' Theory of Spiritual Development (2000) was important to discuss in the current research because it was the only to create another stage called "young adult" to

more clearly focus on college-aged individuals. The additional young adult stage was what differentiates this model from others; rather than considering this age as merely a period of transition Parks created a separate and unique stage. This unique stage provided researchers with an opportunity to examine qualitative changes of college-age students.

Three elements made up faith development for young adults: forms of knowing, forms of dependence, and forms of community (Parks, 2000). Most college students were in the second or third stages of this model. Parks pointed out that as the expected human life span lengthened, preparation for adulthood grew longer (e.g. the addition of college and, more recently, graduate school as a requirement for occupations) the developmental phases from childhood to adulthood lengthened and differentiated (Love, 2002).

The young adult faith was characterized by what Parks (2000) calls a “probing commitment” (p. 13). Probing commitment was defined as a time when one explores many possible forms of truth as well as work roles, relationships, and lifestyles. The student thought critically about how these forms of truth applied to their own experience of the world. Students were also able to project a future for themselves that integrated the complex and contextual nature of the world (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2005). With this increase in independent thinking and self-awareness, students also felt somewhat dependent on their parents.

During stage three, the tested adult faith, a tested commitment occurs. Here, the student felt more at ease with the world and their beliefs and values. Parks (2000) described this stage,

One can no longer be described, nor as simply exploring one's worldview, marriage, career commitment, lifestyle, or faith. One's form of knowing and being takes on a tested quality, a sense of fittingness, recognition that one is willing to make one's peace and to affirm one's place in the scheme of things (though not uncritically). (p. 69).

Similar to Fowler's (1981) Individuative-Reflective Faith stage, the individual developed openness to multiple truths rather than a child-like belief in right or wrong taught by parents. A transition between focus on external authority to an internal focus also took place. Students in this stage were more likely to be older or graduate students, although, some undergraduates did reach this stage.

Parks (2000) gave us a better understanding of how college students are developing, specifically, how their cognitive and spiritual ways of being was challenged and how students deserve support during this time. Parks stated that college was a vulnerable time as students try to deepen their understanding of self including beliefs, values, and purpose (2000).

Spirituality and global life satisfaction

Spirituality has been shown to correlate with life satisfaction in several pieces of research, particularly research related to overall health and well-being, lower suicidal ideations, and positive adjustment at college (Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009; Dodd, Miller, Pigg, Rienzo, & Taliaferro, 2009; Hutchins, Hutchins, Nelms, & Pursley, 2007). Much of this research focused on mono-theistic student populations and has not compared students at different times during their college career.

Spirituality was not only a facet of identity formation but has an influence on college student overall life satisfaction (Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009). Hutchins, Hutchins, Nelms and Pursley (2007) found significant relationships between levels of spirituality and the holistic well-being of college students. The study examined relationships between levels of spirituality with current health status, overall physical health, physical activity, life satisfaction, tobacco-related behavior, alcohol-related risk behavior, and race. Results indicated a positive correlation between spirituality and overall physical health of college students. Students with higher levels of spirituality were found to be more satisfied with life, less likely to participate in risky alcohol and tobacco-related behavior and have better overall physical health and emotional well-being scores in the above variables. As stated previously, spirituality is defined as having purpose, meaning, and being committed to inner growth; therefore, it is intuitive that this construct would correlate with life satisfaction and physical health (Love & Talbot, 1999).

Spiritual health created meaning and purpose and provided a path to life satisfaction, particularly for students that did not adhere to a proscribed religious belief system. One study investigated the effects of spirituality as a predictor of suicidal ideation for the college-aged student population of various religious backgrounds (Dodd, Miller, Pigg, Rienzo, & Taliaferro, 2009). Researchers found that students with higher levels of total spiritual well-being reported lower levels of suicidal ideation. The results suggested that spirituality had a unique influence on suicidal ideation because spirituality promoted life satisfaction (World Health Organization, 2005). One explanation could be because the definition of spirituality was more inclusive and universal than religiosity.

Another study focused on adjustment at college. Cyphers, Kelly, and Kneipp (2009) found that both religiosity and spirituality made a significant impact on students; however, spirituality was a more likely predictor of positive college adjustment. Therefore, scores on spirituality assessments positively correlated with student's ability to adjust to their new surroundings. As students learned to live in a new environment with less interaction with their parents and family members, gaining greater independence was a struggle for this population. As stated previously, many students questioned childhood lessons of religion as they gained independence. This questioning of religious upbringing may have explained why religiosity is less likely to be correlated with positive adjustment in college. Spirituality, however, seemed to provide psychological benefits towards greater life satisfaction and adjustment (Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009).

Spirituality and spiritual development have a great impact on the college student identity developmental process. According to many cognitive developmental theorists including Piaget (1971) and Erikson (1968), college students were going through a time of questioning their old beliefs and creating unique belief systems. Due to the fact little has been done to explore the process of spiritual development and its relationship to global life satisfaction, the current study sought to examine how students develop spiritually (either through a discontinuous or continuous style), how students underwent a religious struggle and spiritual quest, and students' connectedness to their campus community. By doing so, this research will provide practitioners with a greater understanding of the college experience for traditional students.

Purpose of Study

The current study sought to explore the process of spiritual development for traditional undergraduate college students. In addition, the researcher examined relationships between level of spirituality and global life satisfaction in order to create a better understanding of the influence of spirituality on quality of life in college. The primary purpose of the research was to create better understanding of the two constructs in order to provide more effective mental health services to college-age students.

Research dedicated to understanding spirituality and spiritual development is sparse, especially for the college student population (Hartley, 2004). Many studies in the literature focused on qualitatively exploring religious struggles of mono-theistic student populations on faith based campuses. Previous research also examined aspects of religious development or spirituality's relationship to psychological well-being, without exploring the process of spiritual development and how this process impacted students' life satisfaction (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). Due to the lack of quantitative research exploring the spiritual development of college students, the current study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What differences, if any, exist in traditional college students' spiritual development from year to year (e.g. freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) as measured by the Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, Religious Struggle, and Ethic of Caring scales of the *College Student Belief and Values* (CSBV; HERI, 2004) survey?
2. How do scores on the Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, Religious Struggle, and Ethic of Caring scales of the CSBV correlate with students' global life satisfaction as

measured by the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Griffin, & Larsen, 1985)?

Methods

Participants

The sample in the current research included 294 participants. There were 17 participants that identified as African Americans (5.79%), 155 Caucasian (52.73%), 3 Asian (1.03%), 93 Hispanic (31.64%), 2 Native-American (.69%), 20 responded other (6.8%). The number of participants that identified as female was 221 (75%), along with 71 males (25%), and 1 person responded “other.” There were 70 freshman respondents, 93 sophomores, 75 juniors, and 55 seniors. The sample provided a diverse population of traditional college students which allowed the researcher to study differences in this population from freshman year to senior year. The data were screened in order to ensure that the requisite assumptions of the selected analytic method were met prior to any analysis. Surveys of nontraditional college students (e.g., students over 25 years of age) were not included in data analysis. Further, recruitment for participation in the current study was not limited to religious affiliation or ideology.

Operational definitions

Although there were many definitions of spiritual development, for the purposes of the current study, Love and Talbot’s (1999) framework for spiritual development was used:

1. Spiritual development involves an internal process of seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness as an aspect of identity development.

2. Spiritual development involves the process of continually transcending one's current locus of centrality.
3. Spiritual development involves developing a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships and union with the community.
4. Spiritual development involves developing meaning, purpose, and direction in one's life.
5. Spiritual development involves an increasing openness to exploring a relationship with an intangible and pervasive power or essence that exists beyond human existence and rational human knowing.

For the purposes of the current study, the traditional undergraduate college student was defined as a person aged 18 to 25 currently enrolled in college courses, without dependents, therefore, unmarried and without children. By studying spiritual development of traditional college-aged students only, the researcher hoped that the data might provide insights on qualitative changes in spiritual development specific to this population. Conversely, Collins, Hurst, and Jacobson (1987) defined the nontraditional student as a person who returns to school full- or part-time while maintaining responsibilities such as employment, family, and other responsibilities of adult life. Age, along with family life, was a common distinction between traditional and non-traditional college students. According to Love and Talbot (1999) certain experiences such as having children or transitioning to different stages of psychosocial development can impact spirituality. By limiting the current study to people in similar stages and ages in life, the data yielded information specific to this population. This gave researchers a clearer understanding of the traditional college-aged student population.

Life satisfaction was defined as a “cognitive evaluation of one’s life” (Diener, 1984, p. 550). Therefore, life satisfaction represented an evaluative judgment and was considered a component of subjective well-being. Life satisfaction was based on the concept that individuals made judgments as to their life satisfaction based upon a comparison of their circumstances with what is thought to be an appropriate standard (Diener, 1984). The standard was set by the individual and was not a criterion created by the researcher. For example, circumstances like health, relationships, and energy are characteristics associated with life satisfaction; different individuals may place different values on such characteristics. For this reason, Diener (1984) allowed the person to evaluate their overall satisfaction instead of using specific domains. The definition of life satisfaction used in the current research was a cognitive-judgmental construct that allowed the individual the freedom to evaluate their life satisfaction globally. The current study sought to discover the unique relationship between spirituality and life satisfaction for the college aged student population. Information provided by the current study indicated the importance of discussing of spiritual health in counseling with this population.

Procedure

In order to detect progression of spiritual development between freshman year and subsequent years, an ordinal logistic regression yielding a beta score was used in the data analysis. A Pearson Product Moment Coefficient was run to determine correlations between variables of spirituality (Religious Struggle, Ethic of Caring, Spirituality, and Spiritual Quest) and global life satisfaction. Additional correlational analyses examined relationships between life satisfaction and school year, gender, and ethnicity. Spearman

Correlation Coefficients were run to explore potential relationships that were not examined in the current study (an indication for research that might be done in future studies).

A sample of convenience was used by collecting data from students currently enrolled at a large southwestern university. Consent was obtained from the Institutional Research Board at the university, and then instructors in various departments on campus were contacted for permission to administer surveys to the students in their classrooms. At the time of administration, students received a consent form that stated their rights, the purpose of this research, the intention of the data collected, and possible publication in an easily understandable way. No identifying information such as name, social security number, address, etc., was part of the surveys, nor was it collected at any time. Participants' identities remained anonymous. Completion of the surveys posed no perceived risks to participants. Participation was completely voluntary, and students were allowed to quit or withdraw at any time. The same researcher administered the surveys to ensure standardization of administration.

Instruments

College student belief and values survey.

The Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, Religious Struggle, and Ethic of Caring scales of the *College Student Belief and Values Survey* (CSBV; HERI, 2004) were used to obtain data on the spiritual and religious beliefs and values of each student (see Appendix A). This survey was developed specifically for college students to explore issues of meaning, purpose, and spirituality. The CSBV was formulated through The Spirituality in Higher Education Project (HERI, 2004), which was a multi-year program of study

designed to explore the interior and exterior lives of college students. The project was designed to explore students' lives in the following areas: the values and beliefs that guide them, the meaning they derived from their personal experiences, and patterns of spiritual development. The Spirituality in Higher Education Project (HERI, 2004) funded by the John Templeton Foundation sought to study trends, patterns, and principles of spirituality and religiousness among college students. The CSBV was designed specifically for this population to better understand their own spiritual reality. The survey contained twelve different factor scales including spirituality, religious commitment, equanimity, spiritual struggle, religious engagement, religious skepticism, spiritual quest, compassionate self-concept, charitable involvement, religious/social conservatism, social activism, and pluralistic worldview. Not only did the survey capture domains addressed in the specific scales, but additional items were included in the CSBV to cover student activities, achievement, social life, extracurricular activities, and volunteer work, in order to obtain greater demographic information.

The HERI research team studied spirituality and spiritual development and used operational definitions including Love and Talbot's (1999) framework of spiritual development along with others [Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Baker, 2003; Burack, 1999; Cannister, 1998; Cobb, Dyson, & Forman, 1997; Cook, Kunkel, & Moore, 2000; Dehler & Welsh, 1997; Gibbons, 2000; Hayes, 1984; Hill & Pargament, 2003; Hodge, 2003; Pargament, 1999; and Rose, 2001 (as cited in HERI, 2007)]. The research team worked to be inclusive of students from various backgrounds and religious affiliations. Therefore, the assessment did not focus solely on Christian values and beliefs but incorporated the larger framework of spirituality:

The goal for the CSBV survey was to study spirituality in a way that: (a) does not assume (either explicitly or implicitly) a monotheistic/Judeo-Christian belief system, (b) distinguishes between interior and exterior manifestations of spirituality (e.g., between spiritual attitudes/beliefs/perspectives and spiritual action or behavior, (c) to allow all students regardless of their theological belief system to respond in a meaningful way, (d) to accommodate those who define spirituality in terms of conventional religious beliefs and those who define spirituality in other ways, (e) to make the instrument as “user-friendly” as possible (p. 2).

According to HERI, the CSBV served two purposes: (a) to develop more reliable measures of construct under study, (b) and to facilitate the task of interpreting the results. All of the scales on the CSBV, except for Religious Struggle were shown to have high correlation with each other and with Spirituality/Spiritual Identification. Evidence of concurrent validity was gathered using cross-sectional analyses which showed that the 12 scales differentiated in meaningful ways among students with different religious affiliations. Evidence of predictive validity was gathered using preliminary longitudinal analyses showing that scale scores obtained when students first entered college correlated significantly with selected college outcomes assessed at the end of their junior year (HERI, 2007).

A CSBV normative sample was based on a diverse group of 236 institutions and 112,232 students in a first-year orientation class or during the early weeks of the fall term. To insure a representative sample, only schools with at least 40 percent of their first-time, full-time freshman class was included in the normative sample. After

eliminating 27 institutions where the student participation rate was too low, a total of 98,593 students from 209 institutions were retained for inclusion in the normative CSBV sample. As mentioned earlier, the HERI (2007) study represented 12 scales which were classified into three broad categories:

1. Spiritual Factors: Spirituality, Spiritual quest, and Equanimity
2. Religious Factors: Religious commitment, Religious struggle, Religious engagement, Religious/social conservatism, and Religious skepticism
3. Related Qualities: Charitable involvement, Ethic of caring, Ecumenical worldview, and Compassionate self-concept

At the time of the current study, the HERI research team was in the process of revising the CSBV. Therefore, the survey in its entirety was not available for use. Four scales were chosen: Spirituality, Spiritual quest, Religious Struggle, and Ethic of Caring. The HERI team stated that these scales report a high degree of robustness as evidenced by the fact that despite variations in sampling, survey content, and method of administration, “the measures demonstrate remarkably similar reliabilities and intercorrelations across the different surveys” (HERI, 2007, p. 25). The HERI research team also stated that high reliabilities can be expected if investigators used a limited number of scales or include items from a given scale of the CSBV in a single list. The Spirituality, Spiritual quest, Religious Struggle, and Ethic of Caring scales were most consistent with the purpose of the current study and research questions; it also allowed the assessment to remain a reasonable length.

The Spirituality scale explored ways in which college students described their spirituality, specifically their likelihood of seeing oneself and others in “spiritual” terms

(HERI, 2007, p. 17). It was composed of 14 items which reflected the degree the student believed in the “sacredness of life, seeks out opportunities to grow spiritually, believes we are all spiritual beings, and reports having had ‘spiritual’ experiences” (HERI, 2007, p. 17). This scale was also referred to as Spiritual Identification by the research team because it related to the degree the students identified with beliefs of an intangible, pervasive power beyond their existence. This scale reflected proposition five in Love and Talbot’s (1999) framework of spiritual development. Sample items of the Spirituality scale included “integrating spirituality into my life” and “seeking out opportunities to help me grow spiritually” as personal goals of the student, and “experiencing the beauty and harmony of nature” as a spiritual experience for the student (HERI, 2007, p. 36). The reliability of this scale was .88 in 2004 (HERI) and .89 in 2007 (HERI).

The Spiritual Quest scale “assesses the student’s interest in searching for meaning/purpose in life, finding answers to the mysteries of life, and developing a meaningful philosophy of life” (HERI, 2007, p. 17). The idea of Spiritual Quest involved finding, discovering, and exploring life’s deeper meaning. These words were used in the survey to capture the idea of a “quest” and to understand the degree with which a student may have pursued deeper philosophical understanding. Not only did Spiritual Quest encompass finding answers to life’s big questions, but it also involved the individual’s urge to become more self-aware and enlightened. HERI found that students entering college with high scores on this scale expected college to be a place to find their life’s purpose. Further, the college experience was expected to increase self-understanding, as well as to have contributed to their emotional and spiritual development. Mindfulness based activities such as self-reflection, meditation, or yoga facilitated growth in this area.

This measure consisted of 10 items and included statements such as “personal goal: developing a meaningful philosophy of life”, “engaged in: searching for meaning/purpose in life”, and “personal goal: seeking beauty in life” (HERI, 2007, p. 10). As mentioned above, the items were answered with either “frequently, occasionally, not at all, or not applicable”. Spiritual Quest was shown to have a reliability of .83 in 2004 (HERI) and .82 in 2007 (HERI).

Religious Struggle indicated the extent to which the student felt distant from God, had questions about his/her beliefs, or felt unsure of religious matters. College students may question childhood lessons of religion and may disagree with family members as she/he incorporates beliefs. This scale explored any disillusionment students may have with their religious upbringing. A HERI report stated that levels of religious struggles are related to “frequent self-reflection, alcohol consumption, frequent television viewing, having a serious illness or injury, or experiencing the death of a close friend or family member” (HERI, 2007). Theoretical frameworks of spiritual development expand on this idea that a crisis can result in questioning of religious and spiritual beliefs or a search for greater meaning and purpose (Fowler, 1981; Love & Talbot, 1999; Parker, 2000). College students struggled to better understand their personal religious beliefs. This scale was included to better understand the correlation between spiritual development and religious struggles in college. This measure is composed of seven items such as “experience: Questioned your religious/spiritual beliefs”, “experience: struggled to understand evil, suffering, death”, and “experience: disagreed with your family about religious matters”. The Religious Struggle scale had a reliability of .75 in 2004 (HERI) and .77 in 2007 (HERI).

The Ethic of Caring scale was an “internal” measure which involved the students’ sense of caring and concern for the welfare of others. The scale assessed the degree of commitment to values such as “helping others in difficulty, reducing pain and suffering in the world, and making the world a better place” (HERI, 2007, p. 21). The Ethic of Caring scale predicted behaviors such as hours per week spent in volunteer work, charitable giving, and taking a service learning course. It also included concern about social justice issues and caring for the community. Like Fowler’s 6th stage of faith development (1981), this scale addressed commitment to social and political activism and student’s willingness to make sacrifices for the greater needs of the community much like Fowler’s 6th stage of Faith Development. Positive growth in this area can be facilitated through study abroad programs, interdisciplinary coursework, or participating in community service as part of a class. There are nine items that made up this scale which included “ultimate spiritual quest: to make the world a better place”, “personal goal: influencing political structure”, and “engaged in: trying to change things that are unfair in the world”. The reliability was .79 in 2004 (HERI) and .82 in 2007 (HERI).

The Satisfaction with Life Scale.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Griffin, & Larsen, 1985) was a single factor, multi-item measure of global life satisfaction (see Appendix B). The five item scale can be added to longer assessments without greatly increasing the time required (Colvin, Diener, Pavot, & Sandvik, 1991). Research in the areas of subjective well-being has seen an increase in recent years (Diener, 1984; Diener & Larsen, 1984). Two broad aspects of subjective well-being have been identified including an affective component and a cognitive component. The affective component

can usually be divided into two domains, pleasant and unpleasant affect while the cognitive component focuses more on the cognitive conscious judgment of one's life. According to Diener and Pavot (1993) the cognitive component is referred to as life satisfaction. The SWLS is a cognitive-judgmental assessment of overall life satisfaction. A comparison of one's perceived life circumstances with a self-imposed standard or set of standards is presumably made, and the degree to which the conditions match the standards, the person reports high life satisfaction (Diener & Pavot, p. 164, 1993). This scale was also chosen for this study because the SWLS assessed individuals' global judgment of life rather than satisfaction with specific domains. Statements such as "I am satisfied with my life" and "If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing" are posed and the participant answered according to a seven point Likert Scale. The researchers stated that although there are important components of life, such as health or successful relationships, individuals assigned different weights to the components (Diener, Emmons, Griffin, & Larsen, 1985), therefore, individuals have their own standards for success in each area of their lives. The SWLS assessed an individuals' global judgment of their life and allowed respondents to assign their own weight to different domains based on their personal beliefs and values. Including the SWLS in the current study elicited a greater understanding of the correlation between spirituality and the respondent's cognitive judgment of global life satisfaction.

The items on the SWLS were chosen based on the guiding theoretical principle that life satisfaction represents a judgment by the respondent. Normative data for the SWLS was available for diverse populations, including older adults, prisoners, individuals under inpatient care for alcohol abuse, abused women, psychotherapy clients,

elderly caregivers of demented spouses, and persons with physical disabilities, as well as college student samples.

Measures of life satisfaction must report both temporal stability and sensitivity to change over time (Diener & Pavot, 1993). For example, the measure of life satisfaction should be representative of more than momentary mood states, but should also be sensitive enough to detect changes due to major life events such as divorce, death, or changes in employment. The SWLS has been examined for both reliability and sensitivity. The scale has shown strong internal reliability as .87 and a two month test-retest stability coefficient of .82. In order to test for sensitivity to life changes, the researchers viewed scores over longer periods, life events were found to be predictive changes in life satisfaction as measured by the SWLS (Diener, Fujita, Magnus, & Pavot, 1992). Another study was conducted by Diener and Pavot (1993) which examined the life satisfaction of clients beginning therapy. Diener and Pavot found that the mean scores of the SWLS for clients improved for the intake group (1993). Becker, Maiuro, Russo, and Vitaliano (1991) also reported sensitivity to changing life events of the SWLS by studying elderly caregivers who had a spouse diagnosed with primary degenerative dementia.

In terms of the construct validity of the SWLS, evidence from several sources was reported. One piece of evidence was gathered from groups scoring lowest on the scale such as psychiatric patients, prisoners, students in poor and turbulent countries, and abused women. Data for these groups was found to follow a pattern of lower satisfaction by the SWLS (Diener, Emmons, Griffin, & Larsen, 1985). Another method was to examine life satisfaction using an array of self-reports and external criteria. The SWLS

showed adequate correlations with interviewer ($r=.66$) and informant ratings ($r=.54$) to measure life satisfaction and modest to moderate correlations to other well-being constructs (Diener, Emmons, Griffin, & Larsen, 1985). Diener, Emmons, Griffin and Larson (1985) found $r=.68$ compared to the Andrews-Withey Scale (Andrews & Withey, 1976) and $r=.82$ compared to Fordyce Global Scale (Fordyce, 1977). The SWLS also reported strong negative correlation to clinical measures of distress by comparing the SWLS to the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, Erbaugh, Mendelson, Mock, & Ward, 1961) which elicited a negative correlation of $r= -.72$. Therefore, respondents that scored high on the SWLS were unlikely to score high on the Beck Depression Inventory.

The SWLS was chosen for the current study because it emphasized personal standards of evaluating life satisfaction based on values and beliefs. This assessment has shown moderate temporal stability as well as sensitivity to changing life events; therefore, the data elicits a global understanding of the respondent's life satisfaction. Further, the SWLS gave respondents freedom to draw on domains he or she found relevant in forming his or her own judgment of life satisfaction. The scale provided data to better understand the unique relationship between spirituality and global life satisfaction.

Data Analysis

The first research question examined differences in spirituality for students at each grade level: What differences, if any, exist in traditional college students' spiritual development from year to year (e.g. Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior) as measured by the Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, Religious Struggle, and Ethic of Caring scales of the *College Student Belief and Values* (CSBV; HERI, 2004) survey? In order to answer

research question one, an ordinal logistic regression was performed yielding both a beta score and a t-score. The independent variable was year in school and the dependent variables were the four scales of the CSBV. Four regressions were run to analyze Religious Struggle, Ethic of Caring, Spirituality, and Spiritual Quest in order to detect differences in college student spiritual development from one year to the next (see Table 1).

The second research question examined relationships between spiritual development and global life satisfaction: How do scores on the Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, Religious Struggle, and Ethic of Caring scales of the CSBV correlate with students' global life satisfaction as measured by the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Griffin, & Larsen, 1985)? In order to answer this research question, a Pearson Product Moment Coefficient was performed. The correlation coefficient, r , was reported as well as level of significance. Four Pearson Product Moment Coefficient correlations were performed to analyze relationships between Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, Religious Struggle, Ethic of Caring on the CSBV and global life satisfaction as measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (See Table 2).

Repeated reliability analysis was performed to reaffirm internal consistency of the instruments with these individuals. Reliability data of the instruments compared favorably with the results reported in the literature discussed in the methods section of the current study (see Table 3).

Results

It is important to have an understanding of the process of spiritual development when counseling college students in order to understand the client's challenges more

fully and meet the client where they are developmentally. Further, by studying the relationship between spirituality and global life satisfaction, mental health professionals can better understand how these constructs are related. The current study sought to explore patterns of spiritual development for this population. Researchers also ran correlational analyses to examine relationships between level of spirituality and global life satisfaction. Results from the current study will hopefully provide mental health practitioners with a greater understanding of challenges unique to the college student population. As students progress in the identity developmental process, questions about religious upbringing, spiritual beliefs and values, and worldview arise. The current study sought to illuminate the process of spiritual development by studying changes in each year of college.

In order to understand the results in the current research, each research question is explored:

1. What differences, if any, exist in traditional college students' spiritual development from year to year (e.g. freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior) as measured by the Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, Religious Struggle, and Ethic of Caring scales of the *College Student Belief and Values* (CSBV; HERI, 2004) survey?

The data analysis indicated that by comparing students in each year in college, Religious Struggle was the only scale to differ significantly from one year to the next ($t = 2.13$, $p = .03$, $\beta = .12$). Therefore, Ethic of Caring, Spiritual Quest, and level of Spirituality did not show any significant differences when comparing students from one year to the next. Results indicated that students at the university studied in the current

research had different levels of Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, and Ethic of Caring from freshman to senior year. More specifically, Religious Struggle was significantly higher in seniors than in the freshman on this campus. Religious Struggle was the only scale correlated with changes in spirituality through the progression of college years. Results indicated that participants in their junior and senior year of college had higher scores of Religious Struggle than underclassmen in the sample. No significant differences existed in level of Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, and Ethic of Caring when comparing students at different points in their college career. Results from the current study are important to mental health practitioners when providing services for students in this developmental period.

2. How do scores on the Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, Religious Struggle, and Ethic of Caring scales of the CSBV correlate with students' global life satisfaction as measured by the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Griffin, & Larsen, 1985)?

The only scale that significantly correlated with life satisfaction in this study was level of Spirituality ($r = .11$, $p = .5$). Therefore, a student responding with higher levels of spirituality on the College Student Belief and Values Scale (CSBV; HERI, 2004) also responded with higher levels of global life satisfaction on the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Griffin, & Larsen, 1985). The other scales including Spiritual Quest, Ethic of Caring, and Religious Struggle of the CSBV were not significantly related to the student's overall life satisfaction (see Table 2).

Discussion

The current study sought to quantitatively explore the spiritual development of college-aged students from freshman through subsequent years. The researcher hopes the results will better inform counselors and mental health professionals about the importance of examining spiritual beliefs in counseling with this population. Educators and parents focus much attention on student's cognitive, physical, and social/emotional developments (Morrison, 2009) while the spiritual dimension of student's health is often overlooked (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2005; Collins, Hurst, & Jacobson, 1987; Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009; Hartley, 2004; Kazanjian & Laurence, 2000; Laurence, 1999; Palmer, 1998; Rendón, 2000; Tisdell, 2003). Several studies conducted by HERI (2004) indicated that students who entered college have high levels of spiritual and religious interest. Between 70% and 80% of student respondents in the HERI study reported that they discussed religion and spirituality with friends and family. Students in the study also reported that spirituality provides a great deal of comfort, and 69% reported that spiritual beliefs "provide strength, support, and guidance (HERI, 2004, p. 5). Given the widespread interest in spirituality and religiosity by college students, counselors need to consider the importance of including spirituality as a component of holistic well-being when working with this population (Miller, 2002). Propst (1980) found that ignoring clients' religious and spiritual beliefs reduced counseling efficacy and increased premature termination. Miller and Thoresen (1999) stated that understanding clients' religious and spiritual views may assist the counselor in understanding the client's problem(s) which, in turn, positively impacts treatment. The current study found a positive correlation between

spirituality and global life satisfaction which further emphasizes the need to include spiritual health as part of the conversation in counseling. It seemed that as students gained a greater understanding of constructs used to define spirituality (e.g., their purpose and meaning in life, sense of belongingness, personal authenticity, and relationship with a higher power) the higher their levels of global life satisfaction. Results from the current study also indicated that as students progressed through college, they were more likely to struggle with integrating religious belief and values. College can be a tumultuous time and students are still engaged in identity development. Religious and spiritual struggles are part of the identity development process. By examining religious and spiritual beliefs in counseling; a more holistic view of student health can be achieved. This allows a greater understanding between counselor and client and strengthens the therapeutic relationship (Miller, 2002).

The first research question explored how change takes place by comparing student's level of spirituality in different years of college. The results indicated that there were no significant changes between Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, and Ethic of Caring scales of the College Student Belief and Values survey (CSBV; HERI, 2007) from year to year. Some freshman indicated higher levels of spirituality than seniors and vice versa. Therefore, advancement from one year to the next was not a significant indicator of spiritual development. As discussed previously in the current manuscript, different perspectives exist in reference to spiritual development falling into two points of view, discontinuous versus continuous. In the discontinuous process of spiritual development, a student progresses one stage at a time and an unsuccessful completion of one stage can impact the next. The discontinuous style is similar to Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial

Development (1968), Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory (1971), or Fowler's Theory of Faith Development (1981) in that development is fairly predictable and assumes that each stage represents a qualitative difference in development. While the continuous stage of development is a process of the gradual accumulation of a behavior, skill, or knowledge. According to continuous path, development occurs at different rates as a person builds upon or questions previously learned beliefs and values (Santrock, 2010). The results of the current study were similar to that of Bartz (2009) which found that students followed a continuous path of spiritual development into adulthood. Spiritual development was unrelated to year in school; therefore, college students in the current study reported to be at different places in their spiritual developmental journey. Students did not follow a predictable path of development, contradicting Fowler's Theory of Faith Development (1981), which stated that stages of spiritual development follow a discontinuous path and that individual's progress through these stages at a reliable pace. Fowler also stated that individuals pass through these stages one at a time, and completion of one stage allows the start of another. Students in the current study indicated different levels of spiritual development at different points in their college career. The results from the current study were representative of Love and Talbot's Framework for Spiritual Development (1999) which was based on the assumption that spiritual development represented a process (i.e., movement, interaction, transcendence) with no endpoint. Love and Talbot (1999) argued that spiritual development evolves and changes through personal experiences causing a person to either progress forward or revert back to earlier stages. Personal experiences including death of a loved one, illness, divorce of parents, or transitioning to college may have caused students to progress

through stages of spiritual development at different rates (Love & Talbot, 1999). Results of the current study found that students at each grade level (freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior) were not in the same stage in their spiritual development. These findings imply that this process is not predictable and reliable; instead, the spiritual developmental journey is a deeply personal one that progresses at different rates for everyone.

While the Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, and Ethic of Caring scales did not show significant changes in college students from year to year, results in the current study showed the Religious Struggle scale correlated to year in college. Upperclassmen (juniors and seniors) demonstrated a greater religious struggle than underclassmen (freshman and sophomores). These findings supported many of the previously mentioned developmental theories such as Erikson (1968). Erikson postulated that the identity development process began in adolescence and continued during the late teens and early twenties. During this time of late adolescence transitioning to adulthood, college students work to integrate belief and values gathered from childhood into a more integrative worldview. One study found that college students questioned religious upbringing through spiritual experiences such as being exposed to new people, studying abroad, trauma, or the transition of leaving home (Love & Talbot, 1999). Such new experiences may have caused students to engage in a religious struggle as they attempted to identify their own unique beliefs and values outside of their family of origin (Arnett, 2004). Emerging adulthood is a time of self-exploration as students struggled to identify their own religious beliefs and values they are having spiritual experiences at different rates. Spiritual experiences, either positive or negative, may have challenged old belief systems or allowed integration of religious beliefs into a new spiritual identity (HERI, 2004).

According to Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory (1971), individuals at this age experienced a disequilibrium and disruption as they transitioned into a new environment; however, new cognitive structures emerged to increase capacity, flexibility, and stability. As the formation of personality evolves through the cognitive developmental process, spirituality becomes more deeply explored. When a traditional college student leaves home for the first time, he/she is experiencing disequilibrium. Erikson (1968) stated that as part of the identity exploration, young adults experience psychosocial identity moratorium. Erikson used this term to explain the gap between childhood security and adult autonomy. Santrock (2010) reported that as college students begin to realize they are solely responsible for their life, they search for meaning and an understanding of what that life will be. A successful psychosocial identity moratorium involves an ability to adapt to new transitions of conflicting roles and identities and emerge with a new sense of self. College students who do not successfully resolve this difficult and confusing time may suffer from an identity crisis (Erikson, 1968). Students withdrew, isolating themselves from friends and family, or became overly involved in the world of peers and lose their sense of identity. Traditional college-aged students grapple with these issues throughout their college career. Results from the current study found that as students progressed through college, their level of Religious Struggle increases. These findings were consistent with Erikson's theory about psychosocial identity moratorium (Erikson, 1968). Students strived to find a new sense of meaning and purpose, connectedness with self, others, and/or a higher power, and personal authenticity in their life through the realization that they were solely responsible for themselves in college. This process is the core of spiritual development. The traditional college student was forced to learn new

ways of relating to self and others, adjusting to life away from home, and how to be successful throughout the process.

The second research question explored spirituality and global life satisfaction. Results indicated a positive correlation between spirituality indicated by the Spirituality scale of the College Student Belief and Values Survey (CSBV; HERI, 2004) and life satisfaction indicated by the Satisfaction with Life Survey (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Griffin, & Larsen, 1985). The results of the current study were congruent with much of the literature on spirituality and global life satisfaction. Recent results found a positive correlation between college student's level of spirituality and their holistic health and well-being (Hutchins, Hutchins, Nelms, & Pursley, 2007). Hutchins et al. (2007) explored several areas of health such as current health status, overall physical health, physical activity, life satisfaction, tobacco-related behavior, and alcohol-related risk behavior. In each of these areas, students with higher levels of spirituality were found to be more satisfied with life, less likely to participate in risky alcohol and tobacco related behavior, and had better overall physical health, and emotional well-being scores (Hutchins et al., 2007). One study found that students with higher levels of spirituality had fewer suicidal ideations (Dodd, Miller, Pigg, Rienzo, & Taliaferro, 2009). Another found that level of spirituality is an indicator of greater ability to adjust to changes brought on by college (Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009). Spiritual health has been shown to positively contribute to health in several different components (e.g., physical health and activity, life satisfaction, suicidal ideations, and adjustment) (Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009; Dodd et al., 2009; Hutchins et al., 2007). Results of the current study indicated that as a student's level of spirituality increased so did his/her score on the

Satisfaction with Life Survey. Results correlated with much of the research that has been conducted on spirituality and holistic health and well-being. This finding demonstrates how spiritual and religious beliefs can help students to feel more satisfied with day-to-day life in college or can create increased stress. According to HERI (2004), students that indicated high levels of spirituality felt more connected to the community and had a greater sense of meaning and purpose in life. These constructs may act as a psychological bolster against the difficult changes brought on by college. By addressing spiritual health in counseling with college students, a better understanding of the challenges unique to this population (e.g., feeling lost, homesick or undergoing religious struggles) can be achieved.

Implications

The primary purpose of the current study involved the role of spiritual development on global life satisfaction of the traditional college student population. Further, how these issues affect the therapeutic needs of this population was important. The results did provide mental health practitioners with a better picture of the overall experience for the traditional college-aged student, more specifically; results described spiritual development as an important component of overall development. Results from the current study indicated that as students progressed through college from one year to the next, a religious struggle took place. Beliefs, values, and ideas such as meaning and purpose, belonging, locus of centrality, and exploring a relationship with a higher power are being explored through the spiritual developmental process (Love & Talbot, 1999). Religious struggle may cause students additional stress, which makes spirituality an important topic to discuss in counseling with this population. Miller (2002) stated that

counselors may not view spiritual life of the individual as existing or of any importance. This bias inhibits sensitivity of the counselor by overlooking an important component of identity development in the college student population. Just as the current study included students from differing spiritual and religious affiliations, discussions about spirituality can be achieved in counseling with students from all religious backgrounds. These discussions allow a more holistic understanding of the client strengthening the therapeutic relationship.

Another important implication is the correlation between spirituality and life satisfaction found in the current study. The positive correlation between these two constructs demonstrated the way in which spirituality influenced the holistic well-being of the college student population. The current research found that students with higher levels of spirituality (e.g., finding meaning in life, seeking personal authenticity, feeling connected to self and others, transcending one's locus of centrality, and exploring relationships with a higher power [Love & Talbot, 1999]) are more satisfied with life. The findings in the current study were congruent with previously cited research that indicated that the student's level of spirituality related to not only their global life satisfaction, but their ability to adjust to change, physical health and activity, and suicidal ideations (Cyphers, Kelly, & Kneipp, 2009; Dodd, Miller, Pigg, Rienzo, & Taliaferro, 2009; Hutchins, Hutchins, Nelms, & Pursley, 2007). Spirituality is an important process of identity development that impacts the holistic health of students. Counselors need to be prepared to engage in spiritual discussions with this population especially considering students come to college seeking to discuss spiritual health (HERI, 2004). By giving students a place to explore struggles brought on by the confusing time of late adolescence

and emerging adulthood, counselors can provide support and promote self-understanding for this population (Miller, 2002). Avoiding the topic of spirituality might impair the therapeutic relationship between counselor and client thwarting progress in counseling (Miller, 2002).

The current research highlighted the importance of addressing spirituality in counseling with college students by illustrating the correlation between life satisfaction and level of spirituality. Results from the current research indicated that spirituality positively correlated to college students' global life satisfaction. Therefore, spirituality is an important construct to include in counseling. The current study also demonstrated the continuous nature of spiritual development and how grade level in college did not significantly impact level of spirituality. Therefore, merely progressing through college did not correlate to higher levels of spirituality. Perhaps other experiences in college created a deeper understanding of spiritual identity for the college student. These spiritual experiences should be addressed in counseling in order to attend to the health of college students holistically rather than focusing primarily on the academic, cognitive, physical, or psychosocial aspect of college.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

Several limitations existed for the current study. First, a sample of convenience was used; therefore, the sample in the current study may not be representative of the entire population of college students. The sample was also taken from a large southwestern university in the United States which limits generalizability of the results to other regions of the United States. Further, more females than males were represented in the study therefore results may be biased by gender influences. The current study cannot

be generalized to all traditional college students due these sampling limitations. Future research will want to use more sophisticated sampling procedures to ensure representation in the sample. This will increase generalizability of results to broader demographics. More specifically, considerations should include gender, ethnicity, religious affiliations, and country of origin. Efforts to expand research in these areas will help create a more complete understanding of college student's spiritual development.

Another limitation included a ceiling/floor effect in the data-gathering procedure. The current study only focused on traditional college aged students; therefore, data may not have captured spiritual development over the lifespan but only a small window of a participant's life. Variance of the independent variable was not measured or estimated above or below the college years. This limitation may make it difficult to compare students at different stages in their developmental journey. Further, although the results from this study suggest spiritual development follows a continuous pattern, the narrow focus of age in this sample may have masked a discontinuous nature of development. Future studies would want to consider spiritual development over the lifespan which would provide greater clarity in the process and pattern of spiritual development.

Future studies might explore how students of various demographics develop at different rates or share common experiences that shape spiritual development. Research could also explore how the influence of other factors such as time spent in extracurricular activities, partying, volunteering, studying, or working influences spiritual development. Finally, exploring how students' values and belief systems along with their political affiliations uniquely contribute to level of spirituality might be investigated in future research. Studies on how certain beliefs systems or affiliations correlate with spirituality

would give practitioners an even deeper understanding of the spiritual developmental process. Each of these factors, student demographic information, lifestyle, and political affiliations, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of spiritual development and how this process impacts global life satisfaction.

Conclusion

Results in the current study indicated that students did not undergo spiritual development in a predictable, steady rate as indicated by some theorists (Fowler, 1981). Instead, students progressed at different times during college. This progression could be because of different experiences that took place as part of the student journey towards self-understanding. Participants in the current study did seem to encounter a more global religious struggle during college. Students seemed to question religious beliefs and create their own unique belief and values system.

Results from the current study offer the mental health professions insight and greater awareness of issues unique to traditional college students. Despite the fact that spiritual health creates a sense of meaning and purpose in student life, many counselors and mental health practitioners do not include spirituality as part of the conversation in therapy. This reluctance could be because of the greater focus on the cognitive, physical, and social/emotional well-being of students. It could also be due to a lack of training and social implications which make discussing religion and spirituality awkward for both client and therapist. Student's spiritual needs are as genuine and important as their physical and intellectual needs (Kline, 2008). The current study found a significant relationship between level of spirituality and global life satisfaction. By understanding and including spiritual health as a part of the conversation in counseling process, mental

health professionals are benefiting the traditional college-aged student population more holistically.

TABLE 1
Ordinal Logistic Regression for Research Question 1

	Beta Score	T Score	Level of Significance
Ethic of Caring	.37	.63	.529
Spiritual Quest	-.032	-.550	.583
Spirituality	-.06	-1.02	.309
Religious Struggle	.124	2.14	.03**

Significant at .05 level**

TABLE 2
Correlations between scales of CSBV and SWLS, Research Question 2

	Total Life Satisfaction
Year	
Pearson Correlation	-.111
Sig. (2-tailed)	.065
N	277
Ethic of Caring	
Pearson Correlation	.055
Sig. (2-tailed)	.363
N	276
Spiritual Quest	
Pearson Correlation	-.079
Sig. (2-tailed)	.192
N	276
Spirituality	
Pearson Correlation	.117
Sig. (2-tailed)	.052
N	277
Religious Struggle	
Pearson Correlation	-.357
Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001***
N	277

Significant at .01 level***

TABLE 3
Instrument Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha
Satisfaction With Life Scale	.814
Ethic of Caring	.697
Spiritual Quest	.831
Spirituality	.889
Religious Struggle	.890

Appendix A

Spirituality, Spiritual Quest, Ethic of Caring and Religious Struggle Scales of the College Student Belief and Values Survey

1. Please specify your ethnicity.

- ☐ African American ☐ Native American
☐ Asian ☐ Other
☐ Hispanic

2. Please specify your gender.

- ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other

3. Age:

4. How many years of undergraduate education have you completed so far?

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 or more

5. Please specify your undergraduate major:

6. Please specify your probable career/occupation:

7. What year are you in college?

- ☐ Freshman ☐ Senior
☐ Sophomore ☐ 5th year
☐ Junior ☐ Other

8. Please indicate the highest degree you plan to complete eventually at any institution. (Mark one)

- ☐ None
☐ Vocational certificate
☐ Associate (A.A. or equivalent)
☐ Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
☐ Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
☐ Ph.D. or Ed.D.
☐ M.D., D.O., D.D.S., or D.V.M.
☐ LL.B. or J.D. (Law)
☐ B.D. or M. Div. (Divinity)
☐ Other

9. Since entering college have you:
(Mark all that apply)

- ☐ Joined a social fraternity or sorority
☐ Had a part-time job on campus
☐ Had a part-time job off campus
☐ Worked full-time while attending school
☐ Participated in student government
☐ Discussed religion/spirituality with friends
☐ Attended a racial/cultural awareness workshop
☐ Participated in:
☐ intercollegiate football or basketball
☐ other intercollegiate sport
☐ Participated in leadership training
☐ Discussed religion/spirituality in class
☐ Joined a religious organization on campus
☐ Converted to another religion

10. During the past year, how much time did you spend during a typical week doing the following activities? (Mark one for each item)

Hours Per Week:

	None	Less than 1 hour	1 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 30	Over 30
Studying/homework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socializing with friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talking with faculty outside of class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exercising/sports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student clubs/groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching TV	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading for pleasure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using a personal computer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commuting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. For the activities listed below, please indicate how often you engaged in each since entering college. (Mark one for each item)

	Not At All	Occasionally	Frequently
Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Felt depressed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attended a religious service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drank beer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drank wine or liquor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussed politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sought personal counseling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Took interdisciplinary courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tutored another college student	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Your current religious preference: (Mark one)

- ☐ Baptist ☐ Lutheran
☐ Buddhist ☐ Methodist
☐ Eastern Orthodox ☐ Presbyterian
☐ Episcopal ☐ Quaker
☐ Hindu ☐ Roman Catholic
☐ Islamic ☐ Seventh Day Adventist
☐ Jewish ☐ Unitarian/Universalist
☐ LDS (Mormon) ☐ United Church of Christ

☐ Other Christian religion (*specify below*)

☐ Other religion (*specify below*)

☐ None

13. Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:
(Mark one for each item)

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Essential
Influencing the political structure	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Influencing social values	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Helping others who are in difficulty	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Helping to promote racial understanding	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Becoming a community leader	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Integrating spirituality into my life	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N

14. Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements:
(Mark one for each item)

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
We are all spiritual beings	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1
People can reach a higher spiritual plane of consciousness through meditation or prayer ..	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1

15. The relationship between science and religion is one of:
(Mark one)

- ☐ Conflict; I consider myself to be on the side of religion.
☐ Conflict; I consider myself to be on the side of science.
☐ Independence; they refer to different aspects of reality.
☐ Collaboration; each can be used to help validate the other.

16. How often do you engage in the following activities?
(Mark one for each item)

	Daily	Several Times/week	Once/week	Monthly	Less Than Monthly	Not At All
Meditation	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> M	<input type="radio"/> L	<input type="radio"/> N

17. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following describes you.
(Mark one for each item)

	To A Great Extent	To Some Extent	Not At All
Having an interest in spirituality	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1
Believing in the sacredness of life	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1
Feeling unsettled about spiritual and religious matters	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1
Feeling disillusioned with my religious upbringing	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1
Felt distant from God	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1
On a Spiritual Quest	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1

18. The ultimate spiritual quest for me is:
(Mark one)

- ☐ To discover who I really am
☐ To know what God requires of me
☐ To become a better person
☐ To know my purpose in life
☐ To make the world a better place
☐ Other _____
☐ I do not consider myself to be on a spiritual quest

19. Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:
(Mark one for each item)

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Essential
Seeking out opportunities to help me grow spiritually	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Reducing pain and suffering in the world	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Attaining inner harmony	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Attaining wisdom	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Seeking beauty in my life	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Finding answers to the mysteries of life	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Becoming a more loving person	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N
Improving the human condition	<input type="radio"/> E	<input type="radio"/> V	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N

20. Have you ever had a "spiritual" experience while:
(Mark one for each item)

	Not Applicable	Not At All	Occasionally	Frequently
Listening to beautiful music	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> C
Viewing a great work of art	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> C
Participating in a musical or artistic performance	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> C
Engaging in athletics	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> C
Witnessing the beauty and harmony of nature	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> C
Meditating	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> C
Other _____				

21. Since entering college, please indicate how often you have:
(Mark one for each item)

	Occasionally	Frequently	Not At All
Felt angry with God	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> N
Struggled to understand evil, suffering, and death	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> N
Questioned your religious/spiritual beliefs	<input type="radio"/> F	<input type="radio"/> O	<input type="radio"/> N

22. How many of your close friends:
(Mark one for each item)

	All	Most	Some	None
Are searching for meaning/purpose in life?	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> M	<input type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> N

23. Please indicate the extent to which you engage in the following activities:
(Mark one for each item)

	To A Great Extent	To Some Extent	Not At All
Searching for meaning/purpose in life	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1
Trying to change things that are unfair in the world	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1
Having discussions about the meaning of life with my friends	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1

24. Rate yourself on each of the following traits as compared with the average person your age. We want the most accurate estimate of how you see yourself.
(Mark one for each item)

	Highest 10%	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Lowest 10%
Spirituality	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 1

Appendix B

The Satisfaction with Life Scale

By Ed Diener, Ph.D.

DIRECTIONS: Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number in the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly Disagree

4 = Neither Agree or Disagree

5 = Slightly Agree

6 = Agree

7 = Strongly Agree

_____ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

_____ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.

_____ 3. I am satisfied with life.

_____ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

_____ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

Appendix C

Consent Form

The purpose of this research is to better understand the spiritual development of undergraduate college students. Your participation in completing these surveys is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time during completion of the survey. The duration of your participation is the length of time it takes you to complete the 29 items included on both surveys; although, you may choose to not answer any question(s) for any reason. Individual identities are not asked for or included as part of the survey, so all participants will remain anonymous; your right to privacy/confidentiality will be ensured. There are no known risks associated with your participation in completing the survey for this research study. Once all of the surveys have been submitted and collected, the data will be analyzed by the researchers. The results will be published in professional counseling literature and will be made available to you upon request by the researcher after June 1, 2012. Results from the study will be used to better inform the mental health profession about the process of spiritual growth and development. Questions about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Jon Lasser (512-245-3413, lasser@txstate.edu) or Becky Northcut, Compliance Specialist (512-245-2102).

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