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Understanding the Dimensions of Spirituality in Caucasian Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual College Students

Michele L. McGrady
Western Michigan University

UNDERSTANDING THE DIMENSIONS OF SPIRITUALITY IN CAUCASIAN
LESBIAN, GAY, AND BISEXUAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

Michele L. McGrady

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Spiritual development is a critical task for college students, but there is a paucity of information about how college students understand the construct of spirituality. Historically, organized religion has been oppressive to the lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) community. Furthermore, little is known about the spiritual understandings and spiritual experiences of lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students. This quantitative investigation sought to understand the underlying dimensions of spirituality for Caucasian LGB college students through the use of multidimensional scaling. Sixty Caucasian LGB college students were recruited through purposeful and snowball sampling. Findings indicate three dimensions of spirituality for this sample: connection with goodness, the process of seeking (both internal and external), and the process of discovery. Given that this investigation is the first to explore these dimensions, implications for future research are vast.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents—Continued

Table of Contents—Continued

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the Dimensions of Spirituality in Caucasian
Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual College Students

The college years are typically a crucial time for the growth and development of multiple aspects of young adults' identity. Young adults are discovering how to make meaning of their world within a new environment separate from the daily influence of their family of origin. College students are balancing between dependence and independence while essentially trying to find their way. In other words, these years are when students are striving to understand themselves as adults. As part of this process, young adults are beginning to examine their spiritual self from an adult perspective. "College is a critical time when students search for meaning in life and examine their spiritual/religious beliefs and values" (Bryant, Choi, & Yasuno, 2003, p. 726). Spiritual exploration and growth are often critical components of development for many college students.

College students consider spirituality an integral part of their identity and make the distinction between spirituality and religiosity. For example, Albertsen, O'Connor, and Berry (2006) discovered in their sample of 246 college students that 18.7% identified as religious only, 31.3% identified as spiritual only, 28% as both, and 22% as neither. The importance of spirituality and religiosity was also evident in the work of McGrady and Horneffer (2005). In their sample of 405 college students they found that 63%

identified as both spiritual and religious. While these findings suggest that spirituality is an important component of college students' identity, there remain numerous questions concerning college students and spirituality.

Although there is empirical data that examines some aspects of college students' spiritual development, it is still unclear how this population understands the dimensions of spirituality and spiritual identity. Love and Talbot (1999) suggested that "there is the need to explore the spiritual development of college students as a primary focus" (p. 370). The college student development literature has discussed the development of college students through generalist theories (e.g., Chickering's [1969] seven vectors; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) without consideration of the impact of spirituality. The spirituality literature has begun to explore the role of spirituality in the lives of college students, although the majority of the samples are limited to heterosexual students. There is reason to believe that lesbian, gay, and bisexual students may experience their spiritual identity differently, given the marginal position the LGB community has held in religious discussions, involvement, and communities (e.g., see Barret & Barzan, 1996; Ritter & O'Neill, 1989).

The combination of the new college environment and realization of a gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity can confound the developmental tasks for students (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). It is critical to understand the developmental process for Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) college students and how their various identities influence their understanding of spirituality. The current investigation purposefully focuses on Caucasian LGB students as a means of acknowledging the

current state of research and as well as exploring the potential impact of a Caucasian racial identity on the understandings of spirituality.

This literature review discusses the role of spirituality in the lives of lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students. More specifically the review will examine campus climate concerns and college student development models pertaining to lesbian, gay, and bisexual students; the spiritual experiences of the LGB community; the struggle to conceptualize spirituality; and the literature specifically addressing spirituality and college students.

Campus Climate and College Student Development for LGB Students

The experiences of Caucasian LGB college students on campus are unique, particularly given the current socio-political climate. The increased visibility of the prevalence of bullying LGB young adults and subsequent suicides highlights the critical nature of exploring campus climate. Campus climate for LGB college students varies depending on type of institution (religious vs. secular), overall politics of specific institutions, and location of the university or college.

This section explores campus climate for Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual students within the heterosexist culture. Specifically, this section discusses the main themes from the campus climate literature and research, including issues of harassment, as well as strategies for change. This discussion focuses on data from the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's *Campus Climate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender People: A National Perspective* (Rankin, 2003). In addition I will examine and critique two models of college student development: Chickering's (1969) seven vectors of college student development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) and

Meyer and Schwitzer's (1999) stages of identity development for LGB college students. Chickering's model was chosen given its vast usage in the college student development literature. It offers a broad understanding of the main developmental tasks of college students. Meyer and Schwitzer examine the impact of a minority sexual orientation on developmental tasks by highlighting the unique experiences of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students.

As stated previously, college is a critical time for development; developmental tasks are compounded for LGB students. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students are discovering and exploring the complexity of their sexual identity in a heterosexist society through sexual experiences and coming out to self and others. "Consequently, the developmental process for lesbian, gay, or bisexual college students is likely to be even more complex and challenging than for heterosexual students" (Eddy & Forney, 1999, p. 133). Campus climate is a critical aspect of LGB college student development (Rankin, 2003).

Campus climate for LGB students has had a tenuous history. Typically, college campuses have not been a welcoming place for LGB students, faculty, and administrators. While awareness of the need to create a more inviting environment has increased over the last 30 years, there is quite a bit to be done to improve overall climate (Rankin, 2003). Generally, campus climate research discusses LGB students as a whole group without consideration of other identities (e.g., gender identity and/or racial and ethnic identity). It is important to note that while students are discussed as a whole, there are individual differences among LGB students that impact their experiences on campus.

Part of the within-group differences are likely to be differences based on sexual identity as well as gender, racial, and ethnic differences.

The campus climate literature is replete with stories of harassment and violence towards LGB students on campus. Hostile campus environments encourage LGB folks to hide and isolate themselves as well as silence and censor their experiences. The mission statements at many colleges and universities emphasize diversity and inclusion, yet translating these missions into action has been slow. While more information is required to fully understand the complexity of campus climate issues, there are concerns that have been discovered. In order to highlight the concerns about campus climate for LGB students, I will discuss the findings from the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's *Campus Climate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender People: A National Perspective* (Rankin, 2003).

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force invited 30 colleges and universities to participate in a study aimed to assess campus climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students and faculty at various higher learning institutions. From this pool of 30 institutions, 20 agreed to participate, and 14 participated. These 14 participating schools were public and private colleges and universities from all regions of the United States. The survey included 35 items that asked about personal experiences on campus, perception of inclusion of LGBT faculty and perceptions of the policies of the institution. Researchers used purposeful and snowball sampling procedures to access LGBT community members at each institution. A total of 1,669 LGBT people (students, faculty, and staff/administers) provided responses to the survey. This sample consisted of 51% female, 43% male, 4% transgender, and 2% did not indicate a gender identity. The

participants were 43% undergraduate students, 22% staff, 17% graduate students, 9% faculty, 6% administrators, and 3% declined to indicate their status at the university or college. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (83%), while 17% were people of color. The researchers collapsed the racial categories into the people of color category given the small number of participants and cautioned against making broad generalizations based on race.

The survey used was constructed by the researchers to assess participants' "personal campus experiences as GLBT people, their perception of the climate for GLBT members of the academic community, and their perceptions of institutional actions, including administrative policies and academic initiatives regarding GLBT issues and concerns on campus" (Rankin, 2003, p. 17). The findings are as follows: 36% of undergraduate students experienced some form of harassment (79% of the harassment was in the form of derogatory remarks), 20% of all respondents feared for their safety because of their sexual orientation and/or sexual identity, and 51% of respondents masked their sexual orientation or gender identity in order to avoid discrimination. In summary, Rankin reports:

> Many GLBT campus members find that they must hide significant parts of their identity from peers and others, thereby isolating themselves socially or emotionally. Those who do not hide their sexual orientation or gender identity have a range of experiences including discrimination, verbal or physical harassment, and subtle or outright silencing of their sexual identities. (p. 2)

These experiences on campus can impact LGB college students' developmental process. If students are harassed, this may impede development emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, and socially. Many LGB students have also experienced both verbal and nonverbal harassment in their high schools, an environment where sexual

orientation is not openly discussed (Besner & Spugin, 1995). Furthermore, the heterosexist culture enforces the idea that a minority sexual orientation is abnormal, wrong, and even immoral, which is reinforced by some religious beliefs (Durby, 1994). These beliefs may play a part in self-concept development for LGB students in their pre-college experience and impact their undergraduate experience.

LGB adolescents face numerous obstacles, and therefore may suppress their identity until they are in what they perceive as a more accepting atmosphere; college is viewed as one of those environments (Besner & Spugin, 1995). Students may feel ostracized by family, peers, high schools, institutions, and religious traditions. LGB adolescents often look to college as a "freer" environment, a place where they can explore various aspects of their identity. Students who are seeking a more open and welcoming college environment might seek out specific schools that have active LGBT student groups. While college can be a place where students can more fully explore their multiple identities, the climate may not always be conducive to supporting their development.

LGB students who have previously experienced a supportive and positive environment may be in the position to serve as role models for other students in creating an open environment (Campos, 2003). Regardless of environment, the fact remains that LGB students live in a heterosexist society which endorses, supports, and validates heterosexual couples and individuals, while invalidating their own relationships and experiences. It is imperative that researchers and psychologists are aware of and can attend to the unique needs and experiences of the LGB college student population given that "in the last century, the population of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth

was overlooked, and their plight was often dismissed or trivialized" (Campos, 2003, p. 4).

Given the potential obstacles, it is important to tend the spiritual development of LGB

college students. With more understanding and emphasis, spirituality can become a tool

for self-acceptance. It is with this critical lens that Chickering's seven vectors and Meyer

and Schwitzer's model for LGB students are examined.

Arthur Chickering's seven vectors of development for college-aged students (ages

18-24) focus on the establishment of identity. This focus on identity reflects Chickering's

professional experiences as well as the influence of Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial

development (Chickering, 1969). Given Erikson's influence, Chickering's vectors reflect

a focus on phases of identity development (Evans et al., 1998). Instead of stages of

development, Chickering used the term *vectors* "because each [vector] seems to have

direction and magnitude even though the direction may be expressed more appropriately

by a spiral or by steps than by a straight line" (Evans et al, p. 38). Chickering

conceptualized college student development as a myriad of experiences, interactions, and

relationships impacting identity development.

Chickering's original theory was published in 1969; in 1993 Chickering and

Linda Reisser revised the theory to include new research findings addressing the needs of

various college student populations as well as to reflect societal changes. The revised

theory attempts to address the concerns related to gender differences, with a brief

consideration of sexual orientation and racial identification. The following description of

the seven vectors is based on the 1993 version of Chickering's model.

Chickering's first vector is developing competence. This vector focuses on

developing and building confidence in intellectual, physical and manual, and

interpersonal competences. For example, students are developing and honing such skills as critical thinking and communication as well as other interpersonal abilities. The second vector, managing emotions, examines how students are developing their ability to manage their emotions. Managing emotions focuses on the central task of students' recognition and acceptance of emotions. The ability to appropriately express and control a range of emotions (i.e., anger or vulnerability) is the hallmark of this vector.

Moving through autonomy toward interdependence is Chickering's third vector in which students are developing emotional and instrumental independence. Central to this vector is the development of instrumental independence which focuses on self-direction, problem-solving abilities, and persistence (Komives & Woodard, 1996). In addition, students begin to recognize the importance of interdependence and their interconnectedness with others through their collegiate experiences and relationships with others.

Chickering's fourth vector is developing mature interpersonal relationships. One of the central tasks in this vector involves students' development of healthy and lasting relationships with friends and partners. Another aspect of this vector is students' recognition and appreciation of intercultural and interpersonal differences (Evans et al., 1998). Establishing identity is Chickering's fifth vector. This vector involves the development of a "positive identity," which is defined as an identity that includes comfort with body and appearance, comfort with gender and sexual orientation, a sense of one's social and cultural heritage, a clear idea of self and feeling comfortable with one's roles and lifestyle, personal stability, and development of a secure sense of self in spite of feedback from others (Komives & Woodard, 1996).

Chickering's sixth vector involves students' development of their career goals and aspirations. Developing purpose focuses on students making meaningful commitments to their personal interests and activities. Central to this vector is students' ability to make and commit to their decisions even in the face of criticism (Evans et al., 1998). The final vector is developing integrity. This vector focuses on a shift in value systems which include the ability to consider others' beliefs and develop a sense of social responsibility. This shift consists of three components: humanizing values, personalizing values, and developing congruence. The process of moving from a rigid, moralistic value system to one that respects and acknowledges the beliefs of others is the central task of this final vector (Evans et al., 1998).

Although Chickering's theory captures important elements of college student development, the theory inadequately incorporates the developmental experiences of diverse groups of students. In particular, the model does not include an understanding of the myriad of issues facing LGB college students. Instead, the impact of multiple identities is relegated to the establishing identity vector and the development of a "positive identity." Within this vector, students are exploring the complexities of multiple aspects of their identity including sexual and gender identities, and racial and ethnic identities. Little is known about this process; therefore, the impact of these identities on college student development is not fully understood. Chickering neglects the complexity of societal systems of oppression that impact LGB students' development.

The impact of racial and ethnic identity development for Caucasian LGB students is relatively unknown, but could offer insight into their developmental processes. For the current investigation it is critical to understand the unique experiences and challenges of

Caucasian LGB college student spiritual development within a sociocultural context. While there are models of LGB development, one model specifically addresses the experiences of LGB college students. The Meyer and Schwitzer (1999) model of identity development focuses on the experiences of lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students.

Meyer and Schwitzer's (1999) model explores the developmental process for college-aged students who identify as lesbian, gay, and bisexual. Their model involves six sequential stages of development based on a series of qualitative investigations with lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students. The sample consisted of 165 college students from 7 unspecified colleges and universities. Of the participants, 58% were female and 42% were male. The racial and ethnic group membership can be described as 32.1% of the participants identified as Caucasian, 2.4% identified as African-American, 5.5% identified as Latino, and 40% of the sample did not specify.

The first stage, recognizing a difference, is one in which students begin to sense, contemplate, and question the perceived difference between themselves and their peers. During this stage, students are not yet aware of the source of the difference, yet they are able to sense it. Next, in the reflective observing stage, students begin to recognize and increase their awareness of others who hold a lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual identity. Central to this stage is the observation of how their family, friends, community, and the media portray and discuss their beliefs about sexual orientation.

The third stage is internalizing reflective observations. The central task of this stage is selecting "those behaviors and attitudes observed in others which 'fit' oneself, and beginning to more clearly define one's 'differences' from peers and others" (Meyer & Schwitzer, 1999, p. 51). During this stage, students realize that the difference between

themselves and others is related to their sexual identity. The fourth stage, self-identifying, involves students identifying themselves more concretely as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Central to this stage is students' ability to "move from general internalizations to finding a more definite, integrated framework to define, describe, or understand 'one's differences' that [center] on sexual identity" (Meyer & Schwitzer, 1999, p. 52). These two stages involve moving from uncertainty about sexual identity to identifying self as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

The final two stages, coming into proximity (stage five) and networking and connecting (stage six), involve forming friendships with other LGB individuals, identifying social and/or political supports, and developing connections within the larger LGB community. During these stages, students begin to experience a connection and investment in their sexual minority identity, through activities with the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community. The Meyer and Schwitzer (1999) developmental model identifies the specific needs and concerns of LGB college students through a sequential six-stage model.

The two developmental models reviewed attempt to further our understanding of the experiences of college students. Chickering's (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) generalist theory presents a broad understanding of the issues and challenges faced by a college student without a great deal of attention focused on the impact of the complexities of multiple, diverse identities. Meyer and Schwitzer (1999) focus in particular on some of the challenges and rewards of embracing a lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity in college. The Meyer and Schwitzer model adds depth to Chickering's fifth vector, establishing identity. Through this analysis, it is apparent that the Meyer and Schwitzer model offers a

glimpse at the simultaneous developmental process for LGB college students as they integrate their sexual identity while attending to the tasks outlined by Chickering. Neither of these models, though, takes into consideration the experience of other identities, such as racial and ethnic identification and socioeconomic status, on college student development.

In addition, neither Chickering's (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) nor Meyer and Schwitzer's (1999) developmental models adequately consider the impact of a spiritual identity on the other aspects of development. The integration of spirituality into Chickering's model could be accomplished in several vectors beginning with the third vector, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, in which he discusses the importance of interdependence and interconnectedness with others. Interconnectedness is often understood as a spiritual concept and could easily lead to a discussion of spirituality. In addition, Chickering's fifth vector, establishing identity, could be an ideal vector to discuss the importance of a spiritual identity and how it might evolve throughout the college years. Chickering's final vector, developing integrity, which focuses on a shift in value systems, could be another avenue to integrate a discussion of spirituality. Currently this vector focuses on moral development, which can be seen as loosely connected to spiritual development. A more explicit focus on the spiritual development concerns and triumphs of the college student population could expand understanding of some students' process of developing integrity.

Meyer and Schwitzer's model also omits consideration of spirituality and the impact it could have on the development of lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students. Spirituality could be easily be integrated into their discussion of the various stages of

development. For example, the second stage, reflective observing, could involve observing not only how family, friends and community discuss sexual orientation, but also how one's spiritual tradition discusses sexuality and sexual orientation (e.g., does the student's spiritual tradition ban LGB individuals from actively participating without a vow of celibacy?). Students' experiences of spirituality could also be a source of strength as LGB students find their voice and begin to understand their identities in a different context particularly given campus environment issues and concerns. The lack of attention given to spirituality and diversity in both of these developmental models represents an area of growth for the field which should include a focus on understanding how college students come to understand themselves as spiritual beings. The context provided about the lives of LGB college students provides one piece of the story about Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual students and spirituality. What follows is a brief discussion of the typical experiences of the Caucasian LGB community with organized religion. This section provides a framework with which one can understand the historical and cultural context of the current investigation.

Organized Religion and the LGB Community

The purpose of the following section is to summarize the main ideas from the literature about the historical impact of religious oppression and the unique experiences of the Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual spiritual community. This is followed by one empirical investigation exploring the positive faith experiences of the LGB population.

Research indicates the majority of Americans are raised in families where religious beliefs are present (Lease & Shulman, 2003). Thus, it can be assumed that

religion and spirituality have impacted the LGB community. Much of the literature and research on the impact of religion and spirituality on the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community focuses on the history of struggle and oppression (e.g., Barret & Barzan, 1996; Ritter & O'Neill, 1989). For example, lesbian and gay individuals have been ostracized by traditional religions because of the belief that same-sex relationships are morally wrong. "Representatives and followers of traditional religion have often hurt lesbians and gay men by weaving a moral and historical tapestry of guilt, shame and repression rather than by providing validation and inspiration for their inherent goodness" (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989, p. 9).

Ritter and O'Neill (1989) discuss how the church (focusing on the Judeo-Christian tradition) teaches its followers to love your neighbor and appreciate the inherent goodness of people, but lesbians and gays do not meet the criteria for acceptance by the church. Furthermore, organized religion has been used as a means to enforce the intolerance and oppression of the LGB community (Boswell, 1980). These anti-gay beliefs stem from the idea that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is sinful because gays and lesbians cannot procreate (Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris, & Hecker, 2001). Many within the gay and lesbian community have suffered psychologically, emotionally, or physically from the negative messages. For example, if lesbians and gay men have had some early negative experiences with the church, they are often taught to hate themselves. They may experience feelings of self-hatred, shame, and guilt, which can repress their psychosocial development (Schuck & Liddle, 2001). Furthermore, Davidson (2000) suggests that if one's family of origin is homophobic, the church's beliefs can be a vehicle to further their

ignorance. In addition, "families often use religious arguments as ground for abuse and rejection of gay, lesbian, and bisexual children" (Davidson, 2000, p. 424).

Given the history of oppression, it could be assumed that the LGB community would shun religion and perhaps spirituality. While this history has led to spiritual disillusionment for some in the LGB community, for others it has led to spiritual growth and nourishment (Tan, 2005). In fact, Tan suggests that "gay and lesbian individuals have been discriminated against by society, particularly by traditional religions, may have challenged them to look beyond the tenets of organized religions and to seek more intensely for answers to the meaning of existence and faith" (Tan, 2005, p. 141). Despite the attempts to alienate and oppress the LGB community, religious oppression has resulted in rich and unique experiences for spiritual LGB individuals. Tan also suggests that LGB individuals have more openness to spiritual nourishment than previously believed.

The unique spiritual experiences of LGB individuals have yet to be fully captured in the research and theoretical literature. However, O'Neill and Ritter (1992) discuss the three basic functions of an LGB spiritual identity: affirmation of basic goodness, connecting with community, and establishing a relationship with God and/or creator. It is critical to understand that religion and spirituality are not just an "issue" for the community, but a lived dimension of the LGB person's life experiences (Davidson, 2000).

The lack of research around this topic is further evidenced in the exclusion or "add-on" status of the experiences of bisexual women and men (Kolodny, 2000). The unique needs and aspects of people who identify as bisexual are overlooked or assumed

to be similar to lesbians and gay men. "Bisexuality has generally been neglected as a research topic, because its place as a viable identity had been denied by both gays and lesbian and heterosexual persons" (Davidson, 2000, p. 411). There are numerous reasons to be more inclusive of bisexual women and men, including the richness of life experiences that often challenges the binary categories that frame society. The current investigation considers the unique spiritual experiences of Caucasian LGB college students within the context of ongoing religious oppression. Furthermore, positive religious and spiritual experiences are recognized as a strength of the community.

Although there is a general lack of empirical work on the unique experiences of spirituality in the LGB population, there is one research study which addresses the positive faith experiences. The work of Lease, Horne, and Noffsinger-Frazier (2005) examines the impact of affirming faith experiences on spirituality, internalized homonegativity, and psychological health of Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. To justify the need for their study, the researchers explain that no previous research has explored the role of affirming faith experiences in the LGB community. Their study illuminates how positive faith group experiences with organized religion affect Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals.

The study participants consisted of 583 women and men (240 women and 343 men) who were a subsample from a larger group ($N = 1, 382$) who completed a survey on spirituality and religion for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. The authors describe the subsample as those individuals who currently identified as members of organized faith groups. Lease et al. (2005) retained the transgender individuals in the sample if they also identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. The initial sample included a

small number of individuals who were racial or ethnic minorities ($n = 60$) and they were

omitted from the analysis. Given that the number was too small for separate analyses, the

authors believed "it was inappropriate to assume equivalent data and collapse their

responses into the larger data set" (p. 380). Although the researchers did not intend for

the sample to be Caucasian, the final sample participants all identified as so. Finally,

Lease et al. also described the participants' religious affiliations and the level of

acceptance of the participants' religious traditions.

The study examined if affirming faith experiences for LGB individuals are related

to psychological health through the variables of internalized homonegativity and

spirituality. The authors designed the study to test partially and fully mediated models of

the relationships between the above-mentioned variables. The following three

instruments measured spirituality: the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith

Questionnaire (Plante & Boccaccini, 1997), the Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale

(SIBS; Hatch, Burg, Naberhaus, & Hellmich, 1998), and the Intrinsic/Extrinsic-Revised

Scale (I/E-R; Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989) The following three instruments measured

psychological health: Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB; Ryff, 1989), the

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), and the

Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977).

The constructs of affirming faith experiences and internalized homonegativity

were each assessed with one measure. A measure of affirming faith group experiences

was assessed by 18 items

> regarding feelings of affirmation, support, and acceptance by one's current
> religious group (e.g., "Feel accepted by my faith/religion," "Current faith/religion
> allows me to feel a part of the community"), and behavioral manifestations of the
> religious organizations' attitudes toward homosexuality (e.g., celebration of

coming-out ceremonies, commitment ceremonies, openly LGB individuals in the congregation, anniversary celebrations for LGB couples). (p. 381)

This measure was developed as a result of a review of the literature, researchers' personal experiences, and "statements from Metropolitan Community Churches"[1] (p. 381). Internalized homonegativity was assessed using an adapted version of the Nungesser Homosexuality Attitudes Inventory (NHAI; Shidlo, 1994). The authors used the Personalized Homonegativity subscale and amended the items to be inclusive of lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals (the original inventory was created for gay men).

Lease et al. (2005) found that affirming faith experiences did not have a direct significant effect on psychological health for lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. However, by using structural equation modeling, the authors found support for the fully mediated model indicating that affirming faith experiences had an indirect effect on psychological health. This effect was mediated by the two remaining variables and their positive and negative relationship with psychological health (positive-spirituality, negative-internalized homonegativity). The findings suggest that affirming faith experiences may increase positive psychological health through decreased internalized homonegativity and an increased sense of spirituality. This empirical work clearly contributes to the knowledge in the area of spirituality and spiritual development in the Caucasian LGB community.

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[1] Metropolitan Community Churches (MCCs) were formed in 1968 as a response to the burgeoning LGB political movement. MCC's were developed as the "world's first church group with a primary, positive ministry to gays, lesbians, bisexual, and transgender persons" (http://mccchurch.org/overview/history-of-mcc/, 2010).

Given the overall lack of research on the spiritual lives of those who identify as LGB, empirical conclusions are limited. However, the LGB literature has suggested that the history of homophobia has been encouraged and sanctioned by traditional, organized religion. The negative messages have impacted the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community and subsequently have helped to create unique religious and spiritual experiences. As evidenced by Lease et al.'s (2005) work, there is a large percentage of Caucasian LGB individuals who are involved with faith communities. In addition, Lease et al.'s work highlights the potential positive power of affirming faith experiences for the LGB community. Furthermore, the voices of the bisexual community have not been fully acknowledged within the literature. This review demonstrated how the socio-politically charged oppressive history has impacted the Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual community's experiences with organized religion, while also focusing on the positive effects of faith.

Understanding Spirituality

The following section discusses the challenges of understanding and defining the construct of spirituality. The literature on spirituality and religion is plagued with debates about several definitional issues. The crux of the concern involves these questions: What are the definitions of spirituality and religion? Are spirituality and religion separate constructs? The various developmental models examining aspects of religion and spirituality also illustrate the confusion around defining religion and spirituality. The following discussion emphasizes the core ideas in the history of the definitional issues.

The psychology of spirituality and religion literature offers numerous definitions of spirituality and religion. Much of this body of literature, both empirical and theoretical, tends to define religion and spirituality as separate constructs that may overlap. There seems to be an increasing interest in differentiating and understanding the differences between religion and spirituality as well as understanding the nature of their relationship (Albertsen et al., 2006). The interest in these constructs has been complicated by the complexity of defining spirituality and religion. What follows are examples of definitions of religion and spirituality; these definitions highlight the range of understanding of these constructs.

Hindeman (2002), in his work with college students, defined spirituality as "a dynamic expression of who we are, truly. It gives shape to, and is shaped by who we really are at our deepest levels" (p. 168). Koenig, McCullough, and Larson (2001) offer the following definitions: "Religion is an organized system of beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols designed to (a) facilitate closeness to the sacred or transcendent" (p. 18); "Spirituality is the personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about relationship to the sacred or transcendent, which may (or may not) lead to or arise from the development of religious rituals and the formation of community" (p. 18). Love, Bock, Jannarone, and Richardson (2005) suggest that spirituality "involves seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness" (p. 724). In addition, spirituality encompasses feelings of connectedness and interrelatedness to self and others and the search for meaning and understanding. Religion is conceptualized by Love (2001) as "a shared system of beliefs, principles or doctrines related to a belief in and worship of a supernatural power or powers regarded as

creator(s) and governor(s) of the universe" (p. 80). These definitions exemplify the current struggle to concretize and understand spirituality and religion.

Given the preceding discussion, it is evident that there is no general consensus in the literature concerning the definitions of and relationship between spirituality and religion, therefore making it difficult to operationalize (e.g., see Helminiak, 1998, 2005; Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 1996; Pargament, 1999; Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). In order to understand this issue, the viewpoints of Daniel Helminiak and Kenneth Pargament will be summarized. Pargament and Helminiak are leading contributors to the psychology of religion and spirituality field. What follows is a discussion based on Pargament's and Helminiak's conceptual pieces which discuss the complexity of defining and operationalizing religion and spirituality.

Helminiak (1987, 2005) explores how the field of psychology tends to discuss spirituality and suggests that spirituality has often been connected to Christianity or theist points of view, therefore virtually silencing nontraditional voices. For example, Helminiak (2005) asserts that psychology has the tendency to conceptualize and define spirituality as it relates to a relationship with God, "or other similarly conceived, metaphysical, nonhuman entities" (p. 69), thereby assuming a primarily Judeo-Christian perspective. In addition, Helminiak states that because the field has tended to maintain God as the focus of spirituality, this further entangles the relationship between psychology and theology.

Helminiak (2005) suggests that conceptualizing spirituality in terms of a relationship to God is problematic because

> A psychological treatment of spirituality that rests on theological presuppositions is doomed from the start. It is basically theist religion in another guise. Or else, as

would be disturbing to believers as well as to honest psychologists, it is psychology that has, in fact, excised God by treating God simply as an aspect of the human mind and not as a distinct entity that might correctly be said to exist. (p. 73)

Instead Helminiak (1998) emphasizes that the spirit is part of a tripartite model of human beings, suggesting the notion that "spirit is that dimension of the human mind that makes us self-aware, self-transcending, open-ended, always one step beyond our explicit articulations" (p. 121). Helminiak's analysis leads to the assertion that if the spirit is a separate part of this model, then logically spirituality and religion should be conceptualized as separate constructs. Helminiak's perspective offers one point of view within the psychology of religion and spirituality, one which offers a sharp contrast to the work of Kenneth Pargament.

In contrast to the trend to separate spirituality and religion is the work of Kenneth Pargament and his work with SPiRiT (Spirituality and Psychology Research Team). In one empirical study conducted by Zinnbauer, Pargament, and other colleagues (1997), 78% of the participants identified themselves as religious while 90% rated themselves as spiritual, perhaps indicating an increasing inclination towards spiritual identification.

According to Zinnbauer, Pargament, and Scott (1999), this growing trend indicates that more people may be defining themselves as spiritual which they partly attribute to a change in the landscape of Americans' religious and spiritual belief systems. Since World War II, church membership has consistently dropped and "confidence in religious leadership has . . . eroded" (Zinnbauer et al., 1999, p. 890). In addition, there are more alternatives to traditional religious institutions that have been created or realized since the 1960s and 1970s. In general, these authors suggest there has been a shift in beliefs and many gravitated towards a more personal or alternative means of spiritual

expression. While Helminiak's research suggests that individuals tend to identify as either religious or spiritual, Pargament cautions against the polarization.

This shift in the spiritual thought and practice has also influenced academic circles resulting in an increased interest in the topic of spirituality. With the rise of interest in spirituality, Pargament asserts that the terms *religion* and *spirituality* have been polarized and subsequently discussed in contrast. More specifically, Pargament (1999) suggests:

> Religion is moving from a broadband construct that includes both the institutional and the individual, the good and the bad, to a narrowband construct that has to do with the institutional side of life, a side of life that often restricts and inhibits human potential, Spirituality, on the other hand, is becoming differentiated from religion as an individual expression that speaks to the greatest of our capacities. (p. 6)

Through this polarization, Pargament believes scholars overlook the potential interaction that occurs and what we can learn from both religion and spirituality.

Historically, he asserts the psychology of religion has not distinguished between spirituality and religion, but given the recent trends, he fears the field will suffer from the polarization. Instead Pargament (1999) suggests that spirituality is a part of the broader concept of religion and therefore should not be separated as two constructs; "I see spirituality as a search for the sacred. It is, I believe, the most central function of religion" (p. 12). In addition, Pargament argues that definitions of spirituality asserted by other scholars may very well be the definition of spiritual well-being, although he offers no examples. Pargament offers a differing point of view from Helminiak when conceptualizing the constructs of spirituality and religion through his assertion that religion is a concept which encompasses spirituality.

The psychology of religion may indeed have a rich history of understanding religion as a larger broader concept, but the current empirical data support the separation of religion and spirituality. Given the research and the current literature, Helminiak's position seems to be more relevant and realistic to the study of spirituality in college students. Furthermore, organized religion has historically been emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically damaging and oppressive to some in the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community. The combination of the literature and the historical antecedents warrants a separation of spirituality and religiosity for the current investigation. The lack of clarity around the definitions of religion and spirituality is also reflected in models concerning the development of spiritual or religious aspects of self.

Models of Spiritual and Religious Development

The lack of consensus concerning the definitions of spirituality and religion is exacerbated by the developmental models which capture certain elements of religious and spiritual experiences while neglecting the whole. For example, Allport and Ross (1967) discuss the development of religious sentiment throughout the lifespan. In addition, there are other developmental models which have discussed related religious or spiritual concepts, such as Fowler's (1981) stages of faith development. Drawing on the work of Fowler and others, Helminiak (1987) offers the only model of spiritual development. The following section offers a brief summary of three of the main developmental theories of Gordon Allport, James Fowler, and Daniel Helminiak.

Gordon Allport is one of the early theorists who examined the role of religion in the lives of children, adolescents, and adults. Allport is also known for conducting

extensive research on prejudice and religious orientation (e.g., see Allport, 1954; Allport & Kramer, 1946), as well as defining and understanding extrinsic and intrinsic religious orientation (e.g., see Allport & Ross, 1967). Allport advanced the field of the psychology of religion with these early discussions about the role of religion in our lives.

In the area of religion and spirituality, Allport was primarily concerned with the development of religious sentiment which he later specified as intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation. An extrinsic religious orientation is defined as using one's religion to meet one's individual needs, whereas intrinsic religious orientation is characterized as religion as a way of life. In other words, the "extrinsically motivated person *uses* his religion, whereas the intrinsically motivated *lives* his religion" (Allport & Ross, 1967, p. 434). Allport (1950), who was influenced by the work of Piaget, suggested that religion is a routine practice for children, experienced as a series of actions which holds similar significance as washing their face. At some point in their development children begin to realize that religion does not offer magical solutions for life and they begin to mimic the spiritual life of the adults in their life.

Adolescence fosters the ability to challenge the religious beliefs of parents and perhaps consider religious conversion. More specifically, "The adolescent is often a moral absolutist and believes that a God must exist in order to guarantee the moral values to which he holds" (Allport, 1950, pp. 34-35). Allport viewed religious rebellion as a natural step towards development as an adult. According to his research on religiosity and college students, he discovered a decline in religious sentiment. It is important, however, to understand that the focus of his work was primarily on educated, Caucasian heterosexual men. In his work, he inquired about praying, religious activities, and church

attendance. Allport discovered that the college years were a time of religious questioning as evidenced by more than half of his sample rejecting the religious tradition in which they were raised. This trend, Allport asserts, is not a new issue as evidenced by his empirical data dating back to 1926. Many of the issues Allport discussed also reflect the current reality and perhaps even more so with the increased interest in spirituality.

Another theorist who has attempted to make sense of the complexity of religion and spirituality through the examination of faith is James Fowler. Fowler, in his seminal work, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (1981), outlines seven stages or positions of faith. He defines faith as "an existential orientation formed in our relations with others that links us, in shared trust and loyalties, to each other, to shared values, and to a transcendent framework of meaning and power" (1991). In addition, Fowler (1991) asserts that faith is a human experience and one that can transcend religion or spirituality. Faith is larger than religion and is something that gives us stability and defines our "centers of value" (p. 32). He further explains faith by differentiating it from belief, stating that belief is a function of faith in that it aids in expressing faith.

Fowler's development of the stages of faith originated with his interviews of over 500 people in which he asked them to discuss "their centers of value, their images of power, and the guiding stories of their lives" (1991, p. 33). Fowler was also heavily influenced by the work of Piaget and Kohlberg in the development of the stages of faith consciousness. Through his research, he developed the following seven stages of faith development: primal faith, intuitive-projective faith, mythic-literal faith, synthetic-conventional faith, individuative-reflective faith, conjunctive faith, and universalizing

faith. Fowler's fourth stage is individuative-reflective which aims to examine faith development during the college-aged years. Essential to this stage is the "personal construction of one's own worldview on the basis of one's own self" (Helminiak, 1987, p. 59). Fowler's research adds to our understanding of spirituality by exploring the concept of faith. On the other hand, with this understanding, there remain questions about spirituality, in particular the process of spiritual development. Fowler's work influenced Daniel Helminiak who provides a model of spiritual development.

Helminiak, in his 1987 work *Spiritual Development: An Interdisciplinary Study,* reviews several theories of human development including those of Erikson, Gould, Piaget, Kohlberg, and Loevinger. He credits the work of James Fowler as an influence in his spiritual development model. As Helminiak asserts, theories such as Fowler's stages of faith development are not discussing spiritual development, but rather elements of religiosity or spirituality. As a result, Helminiak developed a model of spiritual development and utilized Loevinger's Ego Stages (1977) as the basis for his stages of spiritual development. Helminiak believes spiritual development compliments and validates the accounts of Fowler's faith stages and Loevinger's Ego stages.

Helminiak (1987) conceptualizes spiritual development as a part of human and psychological development; "Spiritual development is nothing more than human development viewed from a particular perspective" (p. xii). In his review, he discusses the paucity of literature prior to 1987 examining spiritual development from a psychological perspective. Helminiak reviews the scant amount of literature and notes that historically spiritual development has been discussed as an adult phenomenon, a

trend which he continues in his conceptualization of spiritual development. Furthermore, he discusses his understanding of spiritual development as a complex, holistic process.

Spiritual development, according to Helminiak (1987), involves several key factors: "an intrinsic principle of authentic self-transcendence" (p. 35), openness to that principle, and recognition that spiritual development involves the whole person and it is a part of human development. In other words, spiritual development is an ongoing, holistic, dynamic process of becoming who we are supposed to be. In addition, Helminiak views spiritual development as a process occurring in adulthood because it is crucial to possess self-awareness and self-responsibility assumed to be markers of adulthood. In his assertion that spiritual development is primarily an adult phenomenon, he differentiates between what children and adults experience. Children are seen as strictly the recipients of spirituality and therefore are educated, informed, and molded by extrinsic forces, while adults are able to judge for themselves how their spiritual path will unfold. Furthermore, Helminiak believes spiritual development is a universal human concern not one primarily reserved as a "religious or theological phenomenon" (p. 41).

Helminiak's stages of spiritual development are as follows: the conformist stage, the conscientious conformist stage, the conscientious stage, the compassionate stage, and the cosmic stage. Briefly, Helminiak's stages begin at a point in which one's beliefs are based on others' beliefs about spirituality. This is followed by a stage of self-responsibility when one begins to form opinions based on their thoughts and feelings about spirituality. The next stage, in which Helminiak believes spiritual development actually begins, is the conscientious stage. The central task of this stage is the ability to

base one's beliefs completely on one's own understandings of self, others and the beyond and the "unbending commitment to one's principles" (p. 85).

During the compassionate stage, one learns to relax into the uncertainty of life and some of an individual's spiritual rigidity dissipates, leading to a commitment to being "more supported by deeply felt and complex emotion" (p. 85). Finally, like those theorists that have come before him, Helminiak describes the difficulty in defining his final stage of spiritual development, the cosmic stage. He believes the cosmic stage involves self-actualization and suggests that perhaps there is more development beyond the cosmic stage, "but it is an open question whether that further development can be detailed as discrete subsequent stages or represents only a continuing perfection of the Cosmic stage" (p. 88).

Helminiak's holistic view of spiritual development is a progressive model which is open to a person's on-going understanding and reflecting. Furthermore he asserts that religion and spirituality are separate constructs. Given that he conceptualizes spiritual development as a part of human development, it could be argued that spiritual development is a process that begins earlier than adulthood, perhaps in late adolescence or young adulthood. Life is a learning process and learning about spirituality and religion begins early in life. In particular, adolescents are making decisions about what they do and do not believe on a daily basis and are influenced by a myriad of sources, even more so with the advent and integration of the Internet into their daily lives. College students begin their college experience with a set of beliefs which can be reinforced or challenged during these formative years. Given the importance of spirituality in the lives of college

students, there is value in learning more about their experiences and conceptualizations of spirituality.

There are several important contributions made by scholars in the field pertaining to spiritual development. Allport introduced the idea of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation through his work on religious sentiment. Fowler expanded the knowledge around development through his exploration of how people make sense of the presence of faith in their lives. Helminiak developed the only models of spiritual development which spans adulthood. Taking into consideration the work of these theorists provides a survey of the current conceptualizations of spirituality and religion. The next section discusses the current state of the theoretical and empirical literature focusing specifically on college students and spirituality.

College Students and Spirituality

Both the theoretical and empirical literature on the role of spirituality in the lives of college students suggest that spirituality is an important concept to investigate. It is also evident that there are a myriad of ways to examine spirituality and spiritual development in the college student population. A major limitation of the existing literature is the lack of attention paid to diversity issues. With the exception of a few empirical works, participant samples have primarily consisted of Caucasian heterosexual college students. The lack of diversity in the discussions and research ignores the contextual influence of oppression and multiple identities.

What follows are two theoretical pieces which lay the foundation for understanding why it is important to investigate spirituality in college students. The

combination of the theoretical and empirical literature highlights the importance of investigating the particular spiritual experiences of college students. Following the conceptual pieces, there will be a discussion and critique of eight studies exploring the various meanings of spirituality in the lives of college students.

Theoretical Literature

Hindeman (2002) discusses the significance of spiritual development in the lives of college students in his theoretical piece. In this article, Hindeman discusses the current conceptualizations of college students' spiritual development where he asserts that the college years are an important time for the exploration of beliefs. "Young adulthood is a fertile time for attending to one's spirituality. College can be a catalyst for intense growth, reflection, and exploration" (Hindeman, 2002, p. 166). These years are about growth, testing the boundaries, and discovering new ones as well as managing the struggle between independence and dependence. In order to cultivate their sense of spirituality, Hindeman suggests that college students need community, mentors, trust, and intimacy; the college setting can facilitate this exploration and examination.

In contrast, the phrase "splintered lives" is utilized by Hindeman to explain a lack of holism in the lives of college students, one in which parts of self may be attended to, but are compartmentalized. He states that college is often seen as a mill for producing productive and useful adults, but if students' spiritual lives are not explored and fostered, the college experience furthers the idea of living splintered lives. Hindeman (2002) suggests that "such a journey from splintered lives to wholeness is a spiritual quest" (pp.172-173). In order to bridge the disconnect, Hindeman proposes several things

college students can do to promote their spiritual development in addition to encouraging those who work with students to advocate for the spiritual in their lives. Fostering awareness of the present moment can assist students in recognizing and celebrating the sacred in life. In addition, he suggests finding and experiencing a religious or spiritual community as another avenue for exploring spirituality.

Hindeman's article presents a convincing case for the importance and critical nature of exploring the spiritual lives of college students. In order to live life more holistically, it is necessary for college students to explore their understandings of spirituality. He does not, however, consider the potential complexities or uniqueness of fostering a spiritual identity in addition to managing an oppressed identity, such as a minority sexual identity.

In another theoretical piece, Love and Talbot (1999) examine the lack of resources for cultivating spiritual development in college students. Similar to Hindeman (2002), they assert that spirituality and spiritual development are missing components in the developmental theories. According to the authors, student affairs professionals and others who work with college students should be promoting "holistic student development" (p. 362). They suggest that spirituality has been a taboo subject on campuses for many years and with the exception of the traditional campus ministries, there are few places to discuss spiritual issues on campus.

Love and Talbot (1999) offer a perspective outside of the traditional theorists in their nonlinear and interrelated framework examining spiritual development in college students. This framework encompasses several critical components of spiritual development and is outlined in the following paragraphs. The authors view spiritual

development as a process of searching for "personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness" (p. 365). This internal process is a critical aspect of spiritual development. It is often fueled by questioning, dissatisfaction, unsettling feelings, pain, and internal conflict. The development of a sense of connectedness to self and others is an integral part of spiritual development. This is often accomplished through relationships with others and community.

Love and Talbot (1999) discuss spiritual development as a process involving gaining knowledge and experiencing love which in turn provide direction and understanding of spirituality. This is accomplished through experiences of self-transcendence. Finally, Love and Talbot suggest that spiritual development includes cultivating one's openness to "exploring a relationship with an intangible and pervasive power or essence that exists beyond human existence and rational human knowing" (p. 367). Simply stated, according to Love and Talbot, spiritual development in college students involves openness to the process, fostering self-awareness, cultivating understanding, and developing a sense of centeredness.

Love and Talbot (1999) and Hindeman (2002) offer their understanding of the importance of spiritual development for college students. Hindeman conceptualizes the spiritual lives of college students through his holistic approach and subsequent suggestions for spiritual development. Love and Talbot suggest a framework of college student spiritual development. These authors deem the development of a spiritual community as essential to the spiritual lives of college students. In addition, their discussions highlight this spiritual process as involving a focus on meaning making, questioning, seeking answers, and developing a new and evolving sense of self. What

these authors have not attended to is the crucial first step of how college students come to understand spirituality. The next section reviews the empirical data on college students and spirituality.

Empirical Literature

The following section explores eight investigations which examine spirituality and religion in the lives of college students. This section is structured as follows: general studies about college students and spirituality and/or religion and studies exploring the impact of identity on spirituality and/or religion. In particular, sexual identity and racial/ethnic identity are highlighted in the identity studies. In the two general studies, the constructs of religion and/or spirituality are isolated as a part of a larger data set. The identity studies focus specifically on one aspect of students' identity as it relates to either religion or spirituality. The quantitative studies use already established measures and similar methods of analysis. The nature of the research questions while varied, do not directly address how college students conceptualize spirituality. Overall, these investigations represent the majority of what is known about spirituality, religion, and college students.

General Studies

Bryant, Choi, and Yasuno (2003) explored how often first year college students engaged in religious traditions and practices using the longitudinal data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey given in the fall of 2000 and a follow-up survey, Your First College Year (YFCY), in the spring of 2001. These measures are designed to assess a myriad of aspects of the first year of college

such as students' perspectives on their personal experiences, their residential experiences, their academic and social adjustment, their aspirations and life goals, how satisfied they are with campus life, and how they view their self-concept. The following research questions guided the investigation:

1. In students' first year of college, how do the dimensions of religious behavior and practices as well as "spiritual self-identification" shift? How do these changes compare to one another?

2. Of the students who identify as highly religious, how many also identify as highly spiritual and vice versa?

3. How does religious self identification (e.g., Catholic, Buddhist, Jewish) influence the percentage of highly spiritual students? Of those students not affiliated with a religious tradition, what percentage identified as highly spiritual?

4. What precollege experiences, activities, and first year college experiences predict religiosity?

Bryant et al.'s (2003) first hypothesis was that they would discover significant declines in students' self-identification as religious and students' sense of spirituality might increase or remain stagnant during the first year of college. Secondly, researchers predicted that students who identified as highly religious would also identify as highly spiritual. They believed that the opposite would not be true (highly spiritual students would not necessarily identify as highly religious). Thirdly, they hypothesized that a percentage of students with no religious affiliation would identify as spiritual. Finally, they predicted that the constructs of religiousness and spirituality would predict one

another, but "would [also] share predictive value with a variety of other personal characteristics, college environments, and college experiences" (Bryant et al., 2003, p. 728). In particular, the researchers assessed students' academic adjustment, social adjustment, life goals, self-concept, and satisfaction with campus life.

Bryant et al. (2003) used a cross-country sample of 3,680 students from 50 four-year colleges and universities in the United States. Their sample can be described as a little more than half female (58.9%). The racial and ethnic membership was as follows: 73.8% Caucasian, 11.3% African-American, 9.7% Latino/a, 7.3% Asian-American or Asian, 2.1% Native American, and 3.3% who were unspecified as "other." It is important to note that some students marked more than one racial/ethnic category, but it is unclear what category biracial and multiracial students were placed in. No information was gathered on students' sexual identity.

The survey also collected data on students' religious affiliations: 45% identified as Protestant (no specific religious traditions identified within the Protestant faith), 30.4% Roman Catholic, 1.8% Jewish, 1.1% Buddhist, .4% Islamic, and 5.9% identified an "other" religion, while 15.3% identified no religious affiliation. The types of postsecondary institutions are as follows: 29.6 % public institutions, 8.8% private universities, 34.3% public four-year colleges, 12.2% private nonsectarian four-year colleges, 3.9% Catholic four-year colleges, 3.6% public historically Black colleges and universities, and 7.6% other religious four-year colleges. The sample was randomly selected and described as reflective of the national first-year college student population at four-year institutions.

In order to assess if and how religiosity and spirituality may have changed during the first year of college, Bryant et al. (2003) completed five sets of cross-tabulations in which they utilized two unspecified individual spirituality measures and three unspecified individual religiousness measures.[2] The researchers examined whether students who identified as highly spiritual also identified as highly religious. In order to accomplish this, they completed and analyzed two cross-tabulations that compared high, medium, and low spiritually identified students with those who fell into the high, medium, and low religiousness category and the amount of overlap. A final cross-tabulation was conducted to explore how students' spirituality varied across various religious traditions and affiliations. After the series of cross-tabulations, the researchers used blocked stepwise regressions to evaluate the impact of students' experiences and influences prior to college in addition to the effects of college on their sense of religiosity and spirituality.

Bryant et al. (2003) found that despite a decrease for some college students in terms of their religiosity, they were increasingly committed to integrating spirituality into their lives. The data suggest there is more variability among students who identify as highly spiritual versus those students who identify as highly religious. For example, students who identified as highly religious were more likely to also identify as highly spiritual, whereas for the highly spiritual students, the percentage of students who also identified as highly religious was lower. Another note of interest from this study is that approximately 13% of the sample identified as highly spiritual without identifying any

[2] Information on specific questions can be found at the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, http://www.spirituality.ucla.edu/background/methodology/

specific religious affiliations, suggesting that students differentiated between religion and spirituality.

Finally, the regression analyses assessing the predictors of spirituality at the end of the first year of college yielded the following: attending religious services in high school and praying and/or meditating predicted positive change in spirituality, as did discussing religion and spirituality, and spending time with family. Those characteristics that negatively correlated with spirituality were having no religious preference, identifying as liberal, and being Caucasian. The regression analyses assessing the predictors of religiousness suggested that spiritual self-identification at the beginning of the first year of college was a positive predictor of religiousness; in other words, spiritual self-identification "curbed" the religiosity decline. The goal to integrate spirituality into one's life was also a positive predictor of religiousness. The negative predictors were identifying as politically liberal, having a Buddhist perspective or affiliation, and seeking recognition from future colleagues.

These findings indicate that this sample of 3,680 college students from across the country differentiated between religion and spirituality. The data suggest that spirituality plays a different role in the lives of first-year college students when compared to religiousness. The findings suggest the importance of differentiating between religion and spirituality as well as focusing on spirituality, given the decline in religiousness in college students. Furthermore, it is important to note that being Caucasian was one of the factors that negatively correlated with spirituality.

Barry and Nelson (2005) examined the role religion plays in the lives of "emerging adults" defined as students between the ages of 18-25. Arnett (2000) explains

that this period "is characterized by heightened risk-taking behavior and self-exploration of numerous domains, including one's spirituality" (Barry & Nelson, 2005, p. 245). The researchers explain the significance of emerging adulthood and its impact on spirituality and religiosity as "characterized as a time during which young people (a) question the beliefs in which they were raised, (b) place greater emphasis on individual spirituality than affiliation with a religious institution, and (c) pick and choose the aspects of religion that suit them best" (p. 246).

The researchers attempted to recruit a diverse sample in regards to religious affiliations in order to discuss some comparisons between groups based on this characteristic. The authors chose three different institutions from which to sample their population: a Catholic university, a Mormon university, and a public university. There were 445 participants in the study: 31 men and 89 women from the Roman Catholic university, 48 men and 200 women from the Mormon university, and 21 men and 56 women from the public university. In terms of race and ethnicity, the breakdown is as follows: 89% Caucasian, 2.9% African-American, 2.2% Asian-American, 1.1% Latino-American, and 3.4 % other (not specified). All participants were between the ages of 18-20 and there is no indication that they collected information concerning sexual orientation. Important limits of this sample are the lack of diversity and that the authors do not provide any further information about recruitment at each university.

The purpose of the study was to examine how religion impacted (a) the criteria set forth by the authors as necessary for achieving adulthood, (b) if students believed they achieved those criteria, (c) risk behaviors often associated with young adulthood (e.g., underage drinking, experimentation with illegal drugs), and (d) spiritual beliefs. The

authors hypothesized that the students from the Mormon university would have reached the criteria necessary for adulthood, would have exhibited less risk behaviors, and be more settled in their sense of religiosity and spirituality as compared to their peers from the Catholic and public universities.

In order to operationalize the spirituality variables it seems as though Barry and Nelson (2005) created questions, but this is unclear from their discussion. They included religiosity questions from five areas: religious culture, religious practices, religious certainty, religious importance, and belief in God. Although this study provides some interesting initial results, findings are limited because the researchers do not provide a rationale for development of the measure, and some of the concepts are measured with a single question. Religious culture was measured with four items and had an internally consistent composite alpha of .90. The religious practice category was measured with two questions and had an internally consistent composite alpha of .95. Religious importance was assessed with two items and reported an internally consistent composite alpha of .91. Religious certainty and belief in God were each measured with one question.

The criteria for adulthood and achieved criteria for adulthood variables were assessed using a questionnaire developed by Arnett (1994, 1998, 2001). The questionnaire asked participants to rate on a scale of 1-4 (1 being "very important" and 4 being "not at all important") the importance of 43 unspecified criteria for adulthood. Their answers were reverse coded and grouped into six categories: independence, interdependence, role transitions, norm compliance, biological transitions, and family capacities. The final section asked the participants to rate the extent to which they felt they had achieved the criteria for adulthood.

Barry and Nelson (2005) used three multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) as their primary statistical tool and several univariate tests as follow-up analyses. The results suggest that neither the college students who attended the Catholic institution nor those who attended the public higher education institution were settled into their religious lives or had solidified their religious beliefs when compared to the Mormon college students. In addition, these two groups of students had not integrated many of the criteria assessing for adulthood when compared to the Mormon college students. The authors note that the Mormon college students were more likely to be adopting behaviors than exploring behaviors. The Mormon college students also demonstrated less risky behaviors generally associated with college students (e.g., getting drunk, using illegal substances, etc.).

Barry and Nelson's (2005) investigation adds to the knowledge base about the role that specific religious affiliation plays in the lives of college students between the ages of 18-20. It provides an example of how religion might influence the behaviors of college students. It is interesting, given the college student population, that they made no mention of sexuality or sexual orientation as an area for inclusion or examination. The study offers understanding about the differences between certain groups of college students based on religious affiliation or higher education institution. On the other hand, given the nature of the spirituality variable, which was really religiosity, there are several unanswered questions about how students conceptualize spirituality in their lives.

Spirituality and Identity

There have been a few investigations that have considered the influence of minority identities, including racial and ethnic identification and sexual identity, on the spiritual lives of college students. Although quite a bit is unknown, it is evident that to some degree oppressed identities influence the spiritual and religious identities of college students. These empirical works, though, fail to take into consideration the impact of students' multiple identities, such as religious diversity, ethnic identity, and sexual orientation on their spiritual development. They also do not fully explore the meanings of the various identities and their influence on spiritual identity and development. What follows is a review of the investigations that consider the impact of one aspect of students' identity on their understanding of spirituality.

Albertsen et al. (2006) explored the role religion and ethnicity played in the manifestation of interpersonal guilt in college students. The researchers sought to understand the complex relationship between religion and interpersonal guilt while considering ethnicity, spirituality, and religious affiliation. Their participant pool consisted of 64.2% women and 35.8% men who were enrolled in an undergraduate psychology course in the western United States. Three hundred and twenty-five questionnaires were completed and 246 were selected "based on ethnic background and religious affiliation that would be large enough groups for statistical analyses and comparisons" (Albertsen et al., 2006, p. 72). The sample included 56.9% Asian-Americans, 29.7%, European-Americans, and 13.4% Latino-Americans. Researchers also collected data on religious affiliation: 35.8% Catholic, 23.6% Protestant, 11% Buddhist,

and 29.7% who indicated no religious affiliation. No information was reported on sexual orientation or identification.

Albertsen et al. (2006) hypothesized that the Asian-American and Latino-American students would have higher levels of interpersonal guilt than the European-American students. Secondly, the researchers predicted that the Catholic students would exhibit more interpersonal guilt than those who identified as Protestant, Buddhist, or those who had no religious affiliation. Finally, they hypothesized that students who identified as religious would have higher levels of interpersonal guilt than those who identified as spiritual.

The instrument used for this quantitative inquiry was the Interpersonal Guilt Questionnaire (IGQ-67; O'Connor, Berry, Weiss, Bush, & Sampson, 1997) as well as a background questionnaire that asked students to identify themselves as "religious," "spiritual," "religious and spiritual," or "neither" (Albertsen et al., 2006, p. 72). The Interpersonal Guilt Questionnaire assesses levels of maladaptive guilt "related to the fear of harming others" (p. 72). The IGQ-67 consists of 67 items and four subscales: survivor guilt, separation guilt, omnipotent responsibility guilt, and self-hate.

Albertsen et al.'s (2006) analyses consisted of multiple one-way ANOVAs to test their hypotheses. For the first hypothesis, they discovered that the Asian-American students experienced statistically significant higher levels of interpersonal guilt when compared with the Latino-American and European-American students. This discovery only partially supports their hypothesis that both Asian-American and Latino-American students would exhibit higher levels of interpersonal guilt. Albertsen et al. also partially confirmed their second hypothesis: both the Catholic and Protestant students experienced

statistically significantly higher levels of interpersonal guilt when compared with the other two groups.

Albertsen et al. (2006) also described students' religious or spiritual self-identification: 18.7% identified as religious only, 31.3 % identified as spiritual only, 28% identified as both spiritual and religious, and 22% identified as neither. Their one-way ANOVA revealed that those students who identified as both spiritual and religious had statistically significantly higher levels of interpersonal guilt when compared with students who identified as spiritual only or as neither. These findings partially support the researchers' third hypothesis.

The findings from this investigation suggest that religious or spiritual self-identification impact the levels of interpersonal guilt. Another interesting finding is that 31% of students identified as spiritual only. This statistic indicates that college students separate religion and spirituality. Similar to the Bryant et al. (2003) investigation, Albertsen et al. (2006) does not assess how students defined religion and spirituality, therefore limiting our understanding of the results. However, they discovered that Catholic students tended to identify as religious and the Protestant students tended to identify as spiritual. Interestingly, the Buddhist students tended to identify as neither spiritual nor religious. Another limitation of the Albertsen et al. (2006) investigation was their method of analysis. One-way ANOVAs limit the understanding of the interactions between various predictor variables such as ethnic identity and religious identity. For example, the researchers seem to assume that the Latino/a participants will be Catholic and the analysis does not consider a student who may be Latino/a and Protestant. The

following investigation explores other aspects of identity such as spiritual identity, race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Stewart (2002) explored the development and integration of multiple sociocultural identities, in particular, race, gender, and class, in a sample of African-American college students. Stewart focused on the findings related to the role of spirituality and faith in the identity development process for African-American college students at a predominantly White college. She suggested that faith and spirituality have been used as a coping mechanism to deal with racially oppressive environments. Stewart explained: "research has pointed to the reliance on spirituality by Black students as a means of navigating through their educational experiences and developing a positive racial identity in the midst of a culturally hostile environment" (p. 579). The author described the identity integration process as one that is impacted by sociocultural contexts. The purpose of Stewart's investigation was to capture how African-American students on a predominantly White college campus conceptualize the integration of their multiple sociocultural identities.

An Afrocentric and constructivist epistemology was Stewart's (2002) conceptual framework for the development and implementation of the study. She described her methodology as a "hybrid of portraiture and phenomenology, grounded in Afrocentric philosophy" (p. 582). This method considers the influence of the sociocultural contexts of both the researcher and the participants as a critical component of the study. In particular, it recognizes that our lived realities impact how the story is told and understood.

Stewart (2002) recruited five African-American students from a rural, selective liberal arts college that is predominantly White. According to one participant, the college

is "the kind of place that knows it is an elite institution and wears that elite status with a sense of pride that is paradoxically unaware of how that elitism implicitly labels others as inferior" (p. 583). The researcher purposefully sampled students to ensure a diverse group of students based on gender, socioeconomic status, and educational background. All students were either in their junior or senior years of college. The participants were one biracial woman (African-American and Caucasian), two African-American women, and two African-American men.

Stewart (2002) conducted four audio-taped, semi-structured interviews with each participant and administered a demographic survey. The interviews were conducted on campus between February and May 2001. The purpose of the first interview was to gather information about the life history of each participant and to expand on the responses given on the demographic survey. In the second interview, students were asked to describe their identities. One of the aims of the second interview was to capture the students' understanding of their identities within a sociocultural context. In addition, the second interview aimed to discover the students' awareness of identity integration. The third interview discovered how students conceptualized the interconnectedness of their identities, in particular, race, gender, and class. The final interview focused on their lives as college students in particular "around issues of dependency and home place" (p. 584).

Given the intended focus on the role of spirituality in identity development, Stewart's (2002) discussion section focused on this aspect of the interviews. The interviews suggested that four out of the five students indicated that spirituality was a critical component of their identity, although there was a great deal of variation in how spirituality was expressed and integrated. Each student conceptualized spirituality in

unique ways and also differed in their views concerning the role it has in identity integration. Using Fowler (1981) and Love and Talbot (1999) as frameworks for assessing levels of faith and spiritual development, Stewart discovered that all of the students lacked spiritual maturity. Stewart explains that these students tended to express their spiritual lives through individualized means as opposed to traditional religious practices. On the other hand, she observed that the faith and spiritual development models do not account for an understanding of spirituality as expressed through "cultural ties, emotionality, or individual moral codes" (p. 593). Given the limits of existing faith and spiritual development models, it is equally plausible to conclude that we do not have a clear understanding of how students conceptualize spirituality, rather than attributing it to spiritual immaturity.

Stewart's (2002) phenomenological study suggests that spirituality may be a critical component in the integration of multiple sociocultural identities for these students. Her investigation contributes to the knowledge base through her methodological and sampling choices. The richness of the students' stories illustrates the complexity of the meanings of spirituality in their lives. Furthermore, Stewart acknowledges the importance of the sociocultural context of college students, in particular African-American students, in their quest for identity integration.

Chae, Kelly, Brown, and Bolden (2004) explored the relationship between spiritual development and ethnic identity in their quantitative investigation with college students. The researchers asserted that ethnicity is a critical aspect of spiritual development. The racial and ethnic groups represented in the study were African-American, Asian-American, Latino-American, and Caucasian.

Chae et al. (2004) hypothesized that there is a relationship between spiritual development and ethnic identity development. More specifically, they sought to discover whether there were differences among the four racial and ethnic groups in their ethnic identity development and spirituality as measured by spiritual means and ends. "Spirituality means refer to the internalized and fully lived experiential and transcendent components of spirituality that serve to guide an individual's life" (Chae et al., p. 17). Spiritual ends, on the other hand, are the goals (such as social status) people pursue via their religious or spiritual affiliation. These goals are often manifested through observable behaviors with the intention of gaining social clout within the spiritual community. Given previous research and literature, Chae et al. predicted that the African-American students would score significantly higher on both of the measures of spirituality and ethnic identity development as compared to the other ethnic groups, particularly Caucasians. This hypothesis is based on the literature and research suggesting that "African-Americans rely more heavily on spiritual and religious resources as coping mechanisms compared with White Americans" (p. 18). Chae et al. included Asian-American and Latino/a participants in their sample to add to the literature. Secondly, they were interested in examining both spirituality means and spirituality ends to determine which best predicts ethnic identity development.

Chae et al. (2004) recruited 198 college students from a Catholic university in the northeast. The sample included the following: African-American ($n = 44$, 22%), Asian-American ($n = 47$, 24%), Caucasian ($n = 65$, 33%), and Latino-American ($n = 42$, 21%). The sample consisted of 108 women and 90 men all between the ages of 18-23. The authors note that in order to determine membership in a particular ethnic group, students

were divided based on how they responded to an ethnicity question on the demographic information sheet.

There were three measures utilized in this investigation: 14 items from the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) to assess ethnic identity development; the Spirituality Means Measure (SMM; Fiorito & Ryan, 1998) to measure the intrinsic components of one's spirituality or religious practice; and the Spirituality Ends Measure (SEM; Fiorito & Ryan, 1998) to understand spiritual extrinsic goals. In addition, students were given a demographic questionnaire asking age, sex, and ethnic group membership.

Chae et al. (2004) utilized a MANOVA and follow-up univariate tests as their statistical methods. The results indicated "ethnic group membership yielded a significant main effect on ethnic identity" (p. 21). The findings indicated that the African-American students had higher scores on the MEIM than the Caucasian students, but did not differ significantly from the Asian-American and Latino-American students.

Chae et al. (2004) found that the African-American, Asian-American, and Latino-American students scored higher on the SMM as compared to Caucasian students, indicating the potential impact of ethnicity on intrinsic spirituality. The results also indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between ethnic identity and the SMM and a negative correlation between ethnic identity and the SEM. These findings suggest a relationship between ethnic identity development and spirituality. Furthermore, results indicate differences in spirituality means as related to ethnic group membership. Chae et al. asserted that "ethnic minorities may be more likely to espouse an intrinsic spiritual or religious orientation than does the dominant culture" (p. 22).

Chae et al.'s (2004) research contributes to the knowledge base around spirituality and college students. Specifically, the results suggest that how spirituality is internalized and expressed varies based on ethnic identity for students who attend a Catholic university. This investigation has numerous implications for future research on spirituality with a diverse group of college students: How does ethnic identity impact spirituality? What are the nuances of Caucasian ethnic identity that influence their spiritual identity? Their investigation fails, however, to consider the diversity of definitions of spirituality. In addition, one of the limitations not thoroughly discussed is how the Catholic university impacted students' responses. The following study explored the multiple meanings of spirituality and religiosity in an African-American college student sample with a particular focus on gender.

Berkel, Armstrong, and Cokley (2004) examined several types of religiosity and spirituality in their quantitative investigation. The purposes of the study were to understand the similarities and differences between spirituality and religiosity, and to understand existing contradictory findings regarding gender differences in religiosity and spirituality. The participant pool consisted of 171 African-American undergraduate and graduate students from two large eastern universities. Furthermore, the sample was 70% female and 30% male. Students ranged in age from 18-39; freshmen, sophomores, and juniors constituted 52% of the sample, seniors or beginning graduate students constituted 19% , and 21% were advanced graduate students. The majority of the sample was heterosexual (99%), and 76% identified a particular religious affiliation, although details concerning affiliation with specific religious traditions were not reported.

Berkel et al. (2004) used two measures to assess the types of religiosity and spirituality: the Armstrong Measure of Spirituality (AMOS; Armstrong, 1996) and the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS; Allport & Ross, 1967). The Armstrong Measure of Spirituality assesses the multidimensionality of spirituality. The AMOS also considers cultural influences of spirituality, particularly in the African-American community. There are four subscales to this measure: Spiritual Beliefs, Spiritual Characteristics, Spiritual Actions, and Religious Experiences. The Religious Orientation Scale was used to assess intrinsic and extrinsic religious motivation. The ROS consists of three subscales: an Intrinsic scale, a Personal Extrinsic scale, and Social Extrinsic scale. Berkel et al. used a revised scoring system based on previous research with African-American students (Berkel, 2003) that identified three scales that differed from the original ones listed above: Intrinsic, Personal Extrinsic, and Other Extrinsic. These three scales, Intrinsic, Personal Extrinsic, and Other Extrinsic were used for the investigation.

For the spirituality and religiosity variables, Berkel et al. (2004) conducted four hierarchical multiple regression analyses. The results of the first regression indicated that participants who scored higher on the ROS' Personal Extrinsic subscale and those who scored higher on the Intrinsic scale also scored higher on the AMOS Spiritual Beliefs scale than the group who scored high on the Other Extrinsic scale. The second regression results indicated those students who had a strong intrinsic religious orientation were also more likely to score higher on AMOS' Spiritual Characteristics subscale. The third regression further indicated that intrinsic religious motivation was the only statistically significant predictor of the AMOS' Spiritual Actions subscale. The final regression

model revealed that an intrinsic religious orientation was also the only statistically significant predictor of religious experiences.

The researchers clarified the question of whether or not there were gender differences between the types of spirituality and religiosity. Berkel et al.'s (2004) findings also confirmed the multidimensionality of both spirituality and religiosity through the discovery of several significant correlations between the variables. In particular, researchers interpreted the findings, suggesting that the expression of religiosity is a way of connecting to spiritual needs. In addition, one's religiosity also serves to fulfill other needs, such as social and/or personal. Similar to other findings (e.g., Albertsen et al., 2006; Stewart, 2002), spiritual expression was found to be independent of religious affiliation among college students.

There has been one empirically based work that has directly examined the interaction between college students' spiritual identity and sexual identity. Love, Bock, Jannarone, and Richardson (2005) explored the identity experiences of seven lesbian and five gay male college students in a qualitative investigation. The racial and ethnic identities reported for participants were based on the authors' assumptions. "Based on observation and interaction, it was determined that all of the participants were White" (p. 197). This is problematic because ethnicity and race are not always evident through visually observing participants.

The participants were recruited from two unspecified public universities through campus flyers, campus newspaper advertisements, and presentations at LGBT organizations on the campuses. The participants were all undergraduate students whose ages ranged from the late teens to late 20s. Each participant was interviewed with two

interviewers of the same sex as the participants and the semi-structured interviews were approximately 60 to 120 minutes. These interviews sought to gather information on personal history, past and present spiritual experiences, including the challenges and obstacles participants may have faced, and how they chose to deal with those challenges.

Using Levine and Evans (1991) and D'Augelli (1994) as investigative frameworks, the researchers found that most participants had achieved some level of lesbian or gay identity development, but not all of the participants had achieved the identity integration phase as outlined by Levine and Evans. In particular, this was the case when it came to the integration of students' lesbian or gay identity and their spiritual identity. The authors used Savin-Williams' (2005) research on gay teenagers to explain that youth tend to be coming out earlier/younger which "may mean an earlier disconnection from mainstream religious denominations and a failure to receive a religious foundation" (p. 204).

One of the particularly interesting findings was the use of participants' responses to illustrate three distinct kinds of interaction between their sexual and spiritual identities. These categories were reconciliation, nonreconciliation, and undeveloped spiritual identity. Love et al. (2005) defined reconciliation as those students who accepted both their spiritual identity and their gay or lesbian identity. In this category, students had worked through their feelings of shame and had a personal relationship with a higher being. The lack of dissonance between the identities was due to the fact that their relationship with God/higher power was "not mediated through a church, the Bible, or other structures or dogma, though they may have (but not necessarily) belonged to a church or religion and participated in religious or spiritual practice" (p. 199). On the other

end of the continuum, the nonreconciliation category, students fell into two categories: those who were nonreconciled but consciously aware of it and those who were nonreconciled and unaware. A prominent theme from the nonreconciled students was that they compartmentalized their identities. For example, a student might be out as gay or lesbian in some areas of life, but not at church or with their religious or spiritual community.

The final category consisted of students who possessed an undeveloped spiritual identity; these "students who were currently in this category appeared to lack a purposeful approach to their spiritual development" (Love et al, 2005, p. 202). Students with an undeveloped spiritual identity either avoided or rejected spirituality and perhaps debated or questioned the existence of a higher being. The students at this stage expressed a myriad of emotions ranging from passivity to anger. Through a review of the spiritual history for the total sample, it became evident that many students who seemed to fit best in one of the other categories had passed through the undeveloped spiritual identity phase earlier in their development.

Love et al. (2005) discovered that the reconciled students would move between different degrees of reconciliation based on both internal and external challenges.

> For some of the students, having a religious foundation as children gave them an avenue to the development of a spiritual identity. It is a paradox—the experience (religion) that rejected the individual (gay or lesbian person) served as the means through which that individual eventually developed an advanced spiritual identity. (p. 204)

This finding reflects Tan's (2005) thoughts on the LGB community moving through oppression towards spiritual nourishment.

Another finding from Love et al.'s (2005) study was the fact that "there are very few avenues for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender college students to discuss issues of spirituality and religion vis-à-vis their sexuality" (p. 207). Through this qualitative inquiry it was discovered that there is a great deal of complexity among identities that are unique to Caucasian lesbian and gay college students. Of particular interest is the fact that the researchers separated the terms *religion* and *spirituality* in the literature review reflecting their conceptualization of the terms, but allowed participants to define for themselves what these terms meant and how they had changed over time. Love et al. is one of the only studies to encourage students to offer their own ideas about how to conceptualize religion and spirituality. While Love et al.'s study provided valuable information about the spiritual and religious experiences of Caucasian lesbian and gay college students, it does not consider experiences of bisexual students. The researchers also do not explore on the impact of Caucasian ethnic identity on LG college students' identities. In addition, the qualitative format, while offering depth, does not provide a breadth of understanding of the Caucasian LGB student population.

On the periphery of studies examining the spiritual lives of college students, Love (1998) also conducted a qualitative study that explored the cultural barriers for lesbian, gay, and bisexual students at a Catholic college. He examined the cultural invisibility around sexual orientation issues at St. James College (a pseudonym), whose student population is primarily Caucasian, Catholic, and from a working or middle class background. Love asserts, "All colleges and universities exist within a societal culture that is homophobic and heterosexist and so all institutions struggle in some way with issues related to sexual orientation" (p. 299).

Love (1998) interviewed 26 people who were involved with the development of an LBG organization. Sampling was purposeful and he utilized snowball sampling to recruit participants. The sample included students, faculty, and staff who were lesbian, gay, or bisexual or allies. Love's data collection and analysis "proceeded concurrently" as he analyzed the transcripts for themes related to sexual orientation. He conducted a second round of interviews to receive comments and reactions to the coded themes. Love discovered eight cultural barriers that were used to oppress and "suppress the visibility of lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues at the campus" (p. 5): perceptions of Catholicism, fear of external and typically peripheral constituencies, homophobia, heterosexism, and discomfort with sexuality, invisibility, stigma, and appropriate ways to discuss sexual orientation.

While Love (1998) did not specifically discuss the spiritual development of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students or heterosexual students, it is important to include this study as an example of the unique challenges LGB students may face on religious campuses. It is evident that a student who identifies as LGB may be impacted by a homophobic and heterosexist environment that in turn could influence their spiritual identity development. In particular, these experiences could have consequences for how LGB students come to understand the dimensions of spirituality in an oppressive environment.

The empirical and theoretical literature reviewed indicates that spirituality is important in the lives of college students. It is also evident that there is a link between identity and spirituality. Studies asked various research questions about the experiences of religion and spirituality, and how it manifests for college students. Yet they failed to

ask the first necessary question: How do college students conceptualize spirituality? The focus of the current investigation is on Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students and how they understand the concept of spirituality.

What we learned from Love et al. (2005) is Caucasian lesbian, gay, or bisexual college students' experiences are impacted by their identities. Much is still unknown about how Caucasian LGB college students come to understand the various meanings of spirituality, in particular, how sexual identity impacts the understanding of spirituality. In addition, the research suggests that ethnicity may also influence spiritual identity, spiritual understandings, and experiences. Taking into consideration the impact of the historical and socio-political context of spirituality for the Caucasian LGB community, the current investigation used a quantitative approach to address how Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual students understand the meanings of spirituality.

From this literature review, it appears that the state of the literature is currently divided. Some of the literature focuses on spirituality in college students with little or no regard to diversity. Another aspect of the literature considers the impact of one aspect of students' identities, such as race and ethnicity or sexual identity. While the LGB literature discusses some aspects of spirituality, the primary focus is on the negative impact religion has had on the community (with the exception of Lease et al., 2005).

Given the previous theoretical, conceptual, and empirical work, researchers do not have a clear understanding about how college students see themselves as spiritual beings during a particularly critical developmental period. It also seems as though students who identify as Caucasian lesbian, gay, or bisexual may experience or understand spirituality in a unique way considering the complexities of the sexual and spiritual identity

interaction. Furthermore, the LGBT literature and research has focused on Caucasian populations without explicitly stating it. Using the LGBT literature as a foundation for the current investigation allows an understanding of how having a Caucasian identity impacts students' experience of spirituality. This is critical because most of the LGBT literature has focused on the experiences of Caucasian members of the community. Expanding the sample to include LGBT communities of color may not be appropriate because identifying as LGBT is seen as stemming from a White cultural perspective on identity. Furthermore, there is evidence that indicates spirituality may be experienced differently based on racial and ethnic identity (Berkel et al., 2004; Chae et al., 2004). Therefore, there is a great deal to learn about how having a Caucasian racial identity may also impact spiritual identity. The current study aimed at identifying how Caucasian lesbian, gay and bisexual college students understand the concept of spirituality. This investigation will further our knowledge about how Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students define spirituality. This study will help to inform future investigations pertaining to non-universal or unknown conceptualizations of spirituality, the spiritual development of college students, and how spirituality impacts students' sense of self in relation to others.

This investigation provides an essential step in understanding how college students understand spirituality during the college years through answering the following questions: Who are these Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual students spiritually? How do students conceptualize spirituality? What are the dimensions that underlie those conceptualizations? In addition, where data permitted, other aspects of students' identities were explored.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Significance and Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the underlying dimensions of spirituality in Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual undergraduate college students through the following research questions: Who are these Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual students spiritually? How do students conceptualize spirituality? What are the dimensions that underlie those conceptualizations? In addition, where data permitted, other aspects of students' identities were explored.

This investigation utilized quantitative research methods in the form of surveys: the Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire, constructed by the researcher (EPS; McGrady); the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Scale (LGBIS; Mohr & Fassinger, 2000); the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES; Underwood & Teresi, 2002; Underwood, 2006); the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS; Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982; Bufford, Paloutzian, & Ellison, 1991) and a questionnaire with background and contextual questions. Multidimensional scaling (MDS) was used as the primary statistical tool to discover the dimensions underlying college students' perceptions of spirituality. The remainder of this chapter provides details of the following: sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Sample

The sample consisted of 60 Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students recruited from six Midwestern colleges and universities in Michigan and Ohio. Participants' ages ranged between 18-27 with the majority ($N = 50$, 83%) falling in the traditional college student age range (18-23). The year in school was evenly distributed among first-year to fifth-year students. The majority of students identified as female ($N = 40$, 67%), while 14 students identified as male (23%), 1 student (2%) as transgender (female to male, FTM), 3 students identified as "other" (5%), and 2 students did not respond (3%). See Table 1 for demographic information.

Per recruitment procedures, all students were Caucasian. While the majority of students ($N = 48$, 80%) identified themselves as Caucasian and/or White, there were students who also identified with specific ethnicities. For example, European-American, German and English, Caucasian-Irish descent, and Polish and German were some of the other responses. A small number of students ($N = 5$, 8%) chose not to respond, with one participant stating, "I prefer strongly not to answer this question." While these five students did not report their racial or ethnic identities, they were aware of the criteria for participation and therefore were included in the final sample.

With respect to sexual identity, participants were asked to indicate their attractions as well as select from a list of sexual identity labels. Students were given space to write in a sexual identity label. One student identified as "pansexual." In addition, participants' comfort with and disclosure of their sexual identity was assessed using the LGBIS.

Table 1

Frequency Data for Participant Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	40	66.7
Male	14	23.3
FTM (Female to Male)	1	1.7
Other	3	5.0
Year		
First	12	20.0
Second	9	15.0
Third	11	18.3
Fourth	16	26.7
Fifth	11	18.3
Age		
18	6	10.0
19	7	11.7
20	10	16.7
21	12	20.0
22	11	18.3
23	4	6.7
24	4	6.7
25	3	5.0
27	2	3.3

Of the 60 participants, 58 (97%) responded to a question asking them to identify themselves on the continuum from "exclusively attracted to women" to "exclusively attracted to men": 9 (16%) female students identified as "exclusively attracted to women"; 12 (21%) female students, 1 (2%) transgender student, and 1 (2%) non-gender identified student indicated that they consider themselves as "mostly attracted to women"; 12 (21%) female students and 2 (4%) non-gender identified students indicated they are "attracted to both women and men"; 3 (5%) female students and 6 (10%) male students identified as "mostly attracted to men"; 1 (2%) female student and 8 (14%) male students identified as "attracted exclusively to men" (see Table 2).

Students were also asked to self-identify from the following list of sexual identity labels: lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, queer, and other (please specify). Of the 60 participants, 57 (95%) students identified themselves from the above list of potential sexual identity labels: 11 (19%) female students identified as lesbian; 3 (5%) female students and 13 (23%) male students identified as gay; 16 (28%) female students and 2 (4%) non-gender identified as bisexual; 3 (5%) female students and 1 (2%) male student identified as queer; and 2 (4%) female students identified as more than one label, i.e., bisexual and queer, pansexual.

Overall, this sample of Caucasian LGBT college students identified themselves with a variety of sexual identity labels. Their responses to the background questions seem to indicate that this sample also experiences fluidity in their gender and sexual identities. It also seems as if there is freedom in how they choose to identify and that those labels may evolve through their development. The LGBIS results further indicate that this group of LGB college students is relatively comfortable with their sexual identity at this point in

Table 2

Cross Tabulation: Gender, Sexual Identity, and Attraction

Gender	Attraction	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Queer	Other
Female	Exclusively women	9				
	Mostly women	2	2	3 (1[a])	3 (1[a])	
	Attracted to both			10		1
	Mostly men			3		
	Exclusively men		1			2
Male	Exclusively women					
	Mostly women					
	Attracted to both					
	Mostly men		5		1	
	Exclusively men		8			
FTM	Exclusively women					
	Mostly women					1
	Attracted to both					
	Mostly men					
	Exclusively men					
Other	Exclusively women					
	Mostly women		1			
	Attracted to both			2		
	Mostly men					
	Exclusively men					

[a]Students who identified with more than one label.

their development. This sample's group mean score of 3.52 (*SD* = 1.00) on the negative identity scale indicates they are relatively comfortable disclosing their sexual identity and being "out"; they accept their sexual identity and do not experience a great deal of internalized homonegativity.

<div align="center">Instrumentation</div>

Students were asked to complete five questionnaires related to spirituality and identity. Questionnaires were arranged in a research packet in the following order: the Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire (EPS; McGrady; Appendix A); the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Scale (LGBIS; Mohr & Fassinger, 2000; Appendix B); the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES; Underwood & Teresi, 2002; Underwood, 2006; Appendix C); and the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS; Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982; Bufford et al., 1991; Appendix D); a questionnaire with background and contextual questions was also included as the final measure (Appendix E). Questionnaires were placed in particular order so that the crux of the data was completed first. The Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire was somewhat cumbersome and assessed the constructs central to the research questions. The LGBIS gathered the sexual identity information and the DSES and SWBS followed. The DSES and SWBS were presented together in order to gather the spirituality information next. Finally, the background questionnaire was last because it was possible that the questions could influence responses on the other measures.

Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality Questionnaire

The purpose of this measure was to explore how students understand spirituality. It was created for the purposes of this investigation because there is currently no adequate questionnaire measuring the specific components of spirituality. In particular, this questionnaire directs participants to indicate the degree of similarity among 14 preprinted statements related to spirituality; each statement is compared to every other statement using a 5-point Likert scale (1 indicating very dissimilar and 5 indicating very similar). In addition, participants were encouraged to add up to five statements of their own to include in the comparison between their ideas and the preprinted ideas. Fifty-nine (98%) students fully completed the questionnaire, with only 2 (3%) students adding additional responses, such as examples of practices.

In the creation of this questionnaire, qualitative data were used from an investigation that explored aspects of religion and spirituality in college students (McGrady & Horneffer, 2005). Qualitative analysis of open-ended questions asking students to define the constructs of religion and spirituality yielded several themes. Concepts such as spirituality as self-awareness, spirituality as an avenue to connect mind, body, and spirit, and a distinction between religion and spirituality were developed into statements to be rated on the Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire. Information from various articles from the spirituality literature was also used in the creation of the Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire (Helminiak, 1987, 2005; Love & Talbot, 1999; Tan, 2005; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). For example, spirituality as a meaning-making process is a concept that is prevalent in the literature and included on the questionnaire. The multidimensional scaling analysis, which was the primary

analysis, focused on the 14 preprinted ideas on the Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire. Students were offered the opportunity to write in their own responses and there were two ideas written in by students. Those comments were reviewed for their fit with the MDS results and the descriptive results of participants' background questions about spirituality. The comments were examples of practices or an idea that was assessed in a different EPS item, thus were not added to the MDS analysis.

Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Scale

The purpose of the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Scale (LGBIS; Mohr & Fassinger, 2000) was to assess comfort with and disclosure of a lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity through six dimensions: internalized homonegativity, need for privacy, need for acceptance, identity confusion, difficult process, and superiority. The LGBIS was chosen for the present study because of its applicability to lesbians, gay men, and bisexual men and women. Previous scales have been developed to address the needs of a single group (i.e., gay men). This measure also provides information on how students currently see themselves.

The LGBIS is a slightly modified version of the LGIS (Lesbian and Gay Identity Scale; Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). The modifications involve rewording in order to include bisexuality. For example, on the LGIS item 8, "I am glad to be a lesbian/gay man," was reworded for the LGBIS to read, "I am glad to be a lesbian/gay man/bisexual person." It is important to note that the confirmatory factor analysis described below was determined using a lesbian and gay male sample and therefore not normed on bisexual women and

men. There are no published data on the LGBIS, but researchers indicate that unpublished data suggest that the psychometric data are similar to those of the LGIS.

The LGBIS contains 27 items that are measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "disagree strongly" to "agree strongly." It contains six subscales which are the six dimensions discussed above. These subscales are scored individually and some items are reverse scored. Furthermore, a second-order factor analysis determined that internalized homonegativity, need for privacy, need for acceptance, and difficult process loaded on a single factor, negative identity (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). Negative identity is calculated as an average of those four subscales and was the only subscale used in the current investigation because it provided information central to understanding this aspect of identity as it relates to spirituality.

In the initial development of the measure, items were normed on 1,004 adult (age 18-69) lesbian and gay men. The majority of the sample identified as Caucasian (86%) and was from across the United States (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). Researchers used exploratory factor analyses (EFA) and subsequent confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) for item selection (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). The EFA produced a six-factor solution for both groups (lesbians and gay men). Goodness of fit, as determined through the comparative fit index (CFI) and the Bentler-Bonnet nonnormed fit index (NNFI), attained at least a .90: CFI = .91 and NNFI = .90. Validity for use of this measure with adult LGB individuals was assessed and supported through correlations with the following measures: The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES; Rosenberg, 1965), number of years in LG identity process, and the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992).

Using 1,004 adult lesbian and gay men as the sample, the Cronbach's alphas for LGIS scales are as follows: homonegativity (.79), need for privacy (.81), need for acceptance (.75), identity confusion (.77), difficult process (.79), and superiority (.65). The Cronbach's alphas for the current sample were as follows: homonegativity (.85), need for privacy (.66), need for acceptance (.79), identity confusion (.91), difficult process (.82), and superiority (.48).

Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale

The purpose of the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES; Underwood & Teresi, 2002; Underwood, 2006) is to measure the experience of spiritual beliefs in ordinary life. The DSES measures awe, gratitude, mercy, sense of connection with the transcendent, compassionate love, and desire for closeness with God. Underwood (2006) states, "The instrument was designed both to get at breadth of experience found in various religious and spiritual traditions and also assess the depth of the experience" (p. 183). This measure was chosen because it captures elements of spiritual experience not found in other measures and because the daily experiences described in the items are not exclusive to particular spiritual traditions. For the present study, the DSES provided valuable information on the daily spiritual experiences of participants as well as aided in the understanding of who these students are spiritually.

The DSES assesses daily spiritual experiences through 16 items. For the first 15 items, respondents are asked to rate items using a 6-point Likert scale with answers ranging from "Many times a day" to "Never of almost never." For example, item 2 is "I experience a connection to all of life," and item 13 is "I feel a selfless caring for others."

Item 16 ("In general, how close do you feel to God?") uses a 4-point Likert scale with answers ranging from "Not at all" to "As close as possible." The DSES provides a score for the first 15 items and another score for the 16th item. The current investigation used the 1-15 item score because the final question asks if participants desire to be closer to "God" and does not directly relate to the broad spirituality focused research questions. For this scale, a low total score indicates many daily spiritual experiences, while a high total score indicates fewer daily spiritual experiences.

In the development of the DSES, Underwood and Teresi (2002) conducted interviews and focus groups with participants from a variety of religious traditions (e.g., Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) as well as participants who identified as Agnostic and Atheist. These data provided the researchers with information used to create the DSES items. Four groups of participants provided the initial data on the DSES: the Study of Women Across the Nation (SWAN) at Rush-Presbyterian–St. Luke's Medical Center, Chicago; patients at The Ohio University Medical Center; students from Loyola University; and participants from the General Social Survey (GSS). The nature of the samples was adult women and men, including 122 identified college students. For most of the items, there were moderate to high interitem correlations with the average range of correlations being .60-.80. Underwood and Teresi found the internal consistency reliability in two samples (Chicago SWAN and Loyola University) to be high for the 16-item version; Cronbach's alphas were .94 and .95 for the 16-item version of the DSE. For the current investigation, the Cronbach's alphas were .93 for the first 15 items and .94 for the total 16 items.

Spiritual Well-Being Scale

The purpose of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982; Ellison, 1983; Bufford et al., 1991) is to assess spiritual well-being through two subscales: religious well-being and existential well-being. The SWBS has been used on several samples including college students, religious groups, and counseling clients. It was chosen because of its widespread use in research including college student samples. For the current investigation, the SWBS was useful in gathering information on how students view the spiritual dimension through both a relationship with a higher being/God and through the existential realm.

The SWBS consists of 20 items: 10 assessing existential well-being and 10 assessing religious well-being. The questions for each scale are distinguished from each other by whether or not they include a reference to "God." The religious well-being questions refer to God (e.g., question 3 is "I believe that God loves me and cares about me"), while the existential well-being questions do not (e.g., question 10 is "I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in") (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982, p. 232). Items are responded to using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (6).

The Spiritual Well-Being Scale produces three scores: a total score (20 items), and scores for both religious (10 items) and existential well-being (10 items). According to the authors, approximately half of the items in each subscale (religious well-being and existential well-being) are worded negatively (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). Evidence of construct validity is provided via positive correlations between SWBS scales and "several standard indicators of well-being, including a positive self-concept, finding meaning and

purpose in life, high assertiveness and low aggressiveness, good physical health, and good emotional adjustment" (Bufford et al., 1991, p. 57). In the development of the SWBS, factor analyses were conducted using 206 college students from religious institutions of higher learning. The Cronbach's alphas for this initial sample were .89 (Total Spiritual Well Being Scale), .87 (Religious Well-Being), and .78 (Existential Well-Being). For the current investigation, Cronbach's alphas were .88 (Total Spiritual Well-Being Scale), .95 (Religious Well-Being), and .83 (Existential Well-Being). For the current investigation, the analyses focused on the two subscales to help understand the potential non-religious aspects of spiritual well-being for this sample.

Background Questionnaire

Students were asked to fill out a background questionnaire which provided demographic information as well as information concerning the influence of their family of origin on their spirituality. This questionnaire asked about students' ideas around religiosity, such as religious affiliation, religious practices, and the frequency of religious activities. There were also parallel questions about spirituality. Demographic information requested included gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnic identification, socioeconomic status, class standing, major, and involvement in extracurricular activities. Demographic information used in the analysis was spiritual and religious identity and affiliation, gender, sexual orientation and identity. This information provided data that were varied, were central to the research questions, and assisted in interpretation of MDS results. The demographic information not used in the current investigation (SES, extracurricular activities) did not provide enough sample variation to draw any links or conclusions.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from six Midwestern colleges and universities. Schools were chosen based on several criteria impacting the experiences of students: size and location of the college or university, public university versus private university or college, campus climate, and availability of LGBT services and organizations. Size and location of the college or university, and availability of LGBT services and organizations impact the students' experiences as well as the make-up of the student body. Some schools are located in more conservative cities as compared to other locations. Availability of LGBT services and organizations impacts not only campus climate, but also the experiences of LGBT students. For example, some schools have a myriad of student organizations available to undergraduate students. In comparison, other schools offer one LGBT student group for the undergraduate student population. The inclusion of these universities ensured the recruitment of a broad and diverse group of Caucasian LGB college students. Overall, these schools offered a breadth of participants from various backgrounds in order to gain a rich understanding of how Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students understand spirituality.

Students were invited to participate in this study using three methods: attendance at LGBT student meetings, snowball sampling, or email/advertisement. When possible, participants were recruited at LGBT student meetings. Students who were recruited through their participation in LGBT-focused student activities were invited to share information about the research with others who may be interested in participating. Snowball sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) was utilized in order to gain access to additional students who may not participate in LGBT student organizations. Recruitment

information was also sent via email to several organizations at each of the participating

colleges or universities (see Appendix I).

For students who were recruited during an LGBT student meeting, the invitation

to participate was extended to students by the researcher. Purpose of the study, informed

consent, and a one-time completion of the questionnaire packets were explained (see

Appendix F for recruitment script). Packets were distributed and those students who

agreed to participate mailed the packets back to the researcher in a pre-paid return

envelope.

For students who were recruited using snowball methods, an initial invitation

letter was included with their packet of questionnaires describing the purpose of the study

and extent of their requested participation (see Appendix H). If students had any

questions, they were encouraged to contact the researcher via email or phone. No

students contacted the researcher with any questions or concerns. Students who agreed to

participate filled out the questionnaires and returned them in the researcher-addressed

stamped envelope. Through these three methods, the number of students recruited is as

follows: in person via the researcher ($N = 39$, 65%), snowball sampling ($N = 19$, 32%),

and other methods such as email or announcements ($N = 2$, 3%). Overall return rate for

the sample was 34% (177 packets distributed and 60 usable packets returned). For data

on individual colleges or universities, see Table 3.

<center>Analysis</center>

Initial descriptive analyses were conducted on all quantitative data to clean the

data as well as to describe the sample. Frequencies, means, and standard deviations of the

spirituality variables and the LGBIS are presented in Table 4. The following section

outlines the analysis process for the current investigation.

Table 3

Recruitment Method and Return Rate by Institution

Institution	Packets Distributed	Returned Packets			Return Rate
		In Person	Snowball	Other	
Public university 1	75	12	9	0	28%
Public university 2	10	0	1	1	20%
Public university 3	15	0	1	1	13%
Private college 1	20	11	1	0	60%
Public university 4	25	2	0	0	8%
Public university 5	32	14	7	0	66%

Table 4

Variable Means, Standard Deviations, and Alphas

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha
DSETOT	59	3.0	0.83	.94
Negative Id (LGBIS)	59	3.5	1.0	.90
EWB	57	23.2	7.3	.83
RWB	56	35.8	14.8	.95
SWB	55	58.7	17.3	.88

Note. DSETOT = Total score (items 1-15) on the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale. Negative ID = Negative identity subscale score on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Identity Scale. EWB = Existential Well-Being subscale on Spiritual Well-Being Scale. RWB = Religious Well-Being subscale on Spiritual Well-Being Scale. SWB = Overall score on Spiritual Well-Being Scale.

After the initial cleaning of the data and running frequency data, several analyses were conducted. For the LGBIS, the negative identity subscale was calculated and interpreted. DSES items 1-15 were totaled to create a new variable that was then used to run a correlation with several other spirituality variables. The two subscales of the SWBS, religious well-being and existential well-being, were totaled separately to determine the scores. The DSES total score, SWBS with both subscales and two of the background questions pertaining to spiritual and religious identification were correlated. Finally, two cross tabulations were run; sexual identity, gender identity and attraction level were cross-tabulated to illustrate the relationships among these variables, and the background questions asking students to identify their level of spirituality and religiosity were cross-tabulated to gain a sense of the overlap in these two aspects of identity.

For the qualitative data collected, the process of analysis was similar to the one used in McGrady and Horneffer (2005). The qualitative raw data gathered were entered into a table, read, and reviewed to identify emerging themes. The information gathered was used to supplement the primary data collected and to provide initial, exploratory information.

The similarity ratings obtained from the Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire were subjected to three-way multidimensional scaling (MDS) analysis. MDS results provide a graphic or spatial representation of the data and its structure (Young & Hamer, 1987). The spatial representation, or common space, summarized the dimensions of spirituality underlying the similarity ratings made by participants on the Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire. The three-way, nonmetric MDS structure also yielded information about the importance of each dimension and a

goodness-of-fit index (model fit indices) for each student or group of students in the sample. More specifically, MDS generated dimension weights indicating the importance of each dimension of spirituality for each participant. In addition, MDS yielded the variance accounted for (VAF) by the overall model and by each dimension (see Table 8). Three-way MDS analysis was used as opposed to a two-way analysis because three-way allows for examination of individual and group differences. For the current investigation, it was particularly important to examine both individual and group differences to highlight the potential differences in how student groups use the dimensions.

Analyzing the spatial representation of the dimensions informed the researcher of the nature and the number of the unknown dimensions underlying students' understanding of spirituality. Similarity ratings are represented spatially such that the closer each item lies to another on a particular dimension, the more similar the concepts represented by each item are to each other. In addition, by analyzing the stress of the matrices, one is able to determine the number of dimensions through goodness-of-fit measures (Stalans, 2005).

MDS results were interpreted more fully by conducting additional analyses of the MDS output. For the present study, follow-up analysis consisted of two MANOVAs examining potential group differences in MDS results. Responses to background questionnaire items concerning level of spirituality and religiosity were combined to yield three distinct subgroups within the sample: those that identified as spiritual only, those that identified as both spiritual and religious, and those that identified as neither spiritual nor religious. Multivariate analysis of variance tested for group differences in the dimension weights obtained in the MDS results. Dimension weights provide a

summary of the extent of spread or separation among items associated with that

dimension (in this case, statements on the EPS); conceptually individual participant level

dimension weights tell us how much that participant is using a specific dimension to

distinguish among the items being rated. Thus, for this sample, examination of group

differences in dimension weights tells us how conceptions of spirituality may be

influenced by level of spiritual and religious identity. ANOVAs and Protected LSD were

used for the post-hoc analysis to determine the specificity of any observed group

differences.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The purpose of this investigation was to explore the underlying dimensions of spirituality in Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual undergraduate college students through the use of multidimensional scaling. This study sought to understand how Caucasian LGB students understand spirituality during the college years through posing the following questions: Who are these Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual students spiritually? How do students conceptualize spirituality? What are the dimensions that underlie those conceptualizations? In addition, where data permitted, other aspects of students' identities were explored. The aspects of students' identities that were considered for possible examination were Caucasian ethnic and racial identity, variations in socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, and the potential variations in sexual identity. The variables ultimately used in the analysis were spiritual and religious identity based on students' answers to the background questionnaire, the Daily Spiritual Experience items 1-15, and the two subscales on the Spiritual Well-Being Scale— religious well-being and existential well-being. Demographic information used in the analysis was spiritual and religious identity and affiliation, gender, sexual orientation and identity. This information provided data that were varied, were central to the research questions, and assisted in interpretation of MDS results. The demographic information not used in the current investigation (SES, extracurricular activities) did not provide enough sample variation to draw any links or conclusions.

79

To answer the research questions, students completed multiple measures. Two standardized measures were used to assess spiritual experiences and overall spiritual well-being: the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES; Underwood & Teresi, 2002; Underwood, 2006) and the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS; Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982; Ellison, 1983). The Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire was developed to identify the underlying dimensions of spirituality for this sample. Finally, a background questionnaire was developed to gather general demographic information as well as to assess aspects of spirituality. Specifically, quantitative and qualitative questions were developed to assess how students understood the concepts of religion and spirituality and their relationship, familial spiritual and/or religious identification, and participants' current spiritual and/or religious affiliation. This chapter presents the results of this study in the following order: defining religion and spirituality, spiritual identity and experiences, family of origin spiritual and/or religious background, and dimensions of spirituality.

Defining Religion and Spirituality

This section presents results addressing how the participants understand the concepts of religion and spirituality and their relationship to each other. To assess these ideas, students answered three questions as part of the background questionnaire. The two qualitative questions were: "What does the word 'spirituality' mean to you?" and "What does the word 'religion' mean to you?" Finally, they were asked to identify the relationship between religion and spirituality by answering one quantitative question. This question directed students to "Please circle the statement that best describes how

you see spirituality and religiousness as being related to each other (or not)": "Spirituality is a broader concept than religiousness and includes religiousness"; "Religiousness is a broader concept than spirituality and includes spirituality"; "Religiousness and spirituality are different concepts and do not overlap"; "Religiousness and spirituality are the same concept and overlap completely"; "Religiousness and spirituality overlap but are not the same concept."

Students were first asked, "What does the word 'spirituality' mean to you?" There were a variety of answers provided, but the two main themes were identified as connectedness and awareness. Many participants discussed the idea that spirituality is related to connectedness or the desire to connect. Some examples of responses include: "A basic, non-concrete way of feeling connected to the world we live in or having a higher purpose above self"; "A broader idea includes personal relationships with self, others, and earth. Appreciation for beauty and wonder without needing explanation"; "Spirituality is feeling connected to something bigger than yourself—can be nature, humanity, anything beyond yourself." This sample of students identified multiple ways of connecting: connection with self, others/community, higher beings, nature/earth.

They also identified awareness as an integral part of their understandings of spirituality. More specifically, students identified spirituality as an avenue of self-awareness and self-discovery. Some examples of responses include: "A concern of & awareness of your self and your relationship to the world—both natural & interpersonal"; and "Self awareness that allows you to get through the hard times." The themes of connection and self-awareness highlight the felt experiences of spirituality for this sample of students.

There were also two broad themes identified through the question "What does the word 'religion' mean to you?" The two themes revolved around organization and practices. Many students identified that practices or rituals are a main component of religion. For example, "Religion is a more specific adherence to a certain set of principles and traditions set by other individuals over time"; and "Following a set group of beliefs or practices or rituals centered around the teaching and worship of a specific god or gods." Unlike responses to "What does the word 'spirituality' mean to you?" there were several responses expressing negative thoughts, opinions, and feelings. Some responses include: religion defined as "organized oppression" and "An organized and somewhat restrictive view of God and worshipping." These themes identify religion as an organized practice of rituals related to a relationship with a God or gods. Furthermore, some students view religion as restrictive or oppressive in some way.

Finally, students were asked to identify the relationship between spirituality and religiousness by choosing from five statements. These choices were: "Spirituality is a broader concept than religiousness and includes religiousness"; "Religiousness is a broader concept than spirituality and includes spirituality"; "Religiousness and spirituality are different concepts and do not overlap"; "Religiousness and spirituality are the same concept and overlap completely"; and "Religiousness and spirituality overlap but are not the same concept." The majority of students ($N = 40$, 67%) identified the idea that religiousness and spirituality are concepts that overlap but do not mean the same thing. Eighteen (30%) of the remaining students endorsed the idea that spirituality is a broader concept than religiousness and includes religiousness. One student endorsed the

idea that religiousness and spirituality are different concepts and do not overlap, while one student did not answer the question.

From these results, it is clear that this sample identifies themes in defining religion and spirituality, but more importantly, they made a clear distinction between religion and spirituality. The participants identified connection and awareness as components of spirituality, while describing organization and practices as religious themes. Although participants acknowledged some overlap between religion and spirituality, they clearly identified them as separate concepts. The definitions of spirituality and religion provided by the participants provide important context in understanding their spiritual identity and spiritual experiences. The following section presents results related to data on spiritual identity and spiritual experiences.

Spiritual Identity and Experiences

In order to assess spiritual identity and spiritual experiences, students completed three quantitative questions on the background questionnaire: "How spiritual do you consider yourself to be?"; "How religious do you consider yourself to be?"; and "Please circle one of the following statements that fits best for you: I am religious but not spiritual; I am spiritual but not religious; I am both spiritual and religious; or I am neither spiritual nor religious." Students also completed two standardized measures: the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES; Underwood & Teresi, 2002; Underwood, 2006) and the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS: Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982; Ellison, 1983; Bufford et al., 1991). This section summarizes how this sample describes their spiritual identity and how they experience spirituality in their lives.

Of the 60 participants, 59 (98%) students answered the question "How spiritual do you consider yourself to be?" The majority of the sample ($N = 48$, 80%) identified themselves as "somewhat" to "very much" spiritual. The remaining 11 (18%) students identified as "not at all" spiritual. Of the 60 students who answered the question "How religious do you consider yourself to be?" 56 (93%) students identified as "not at all" to "somewhat religious." The remaining 4 (7%) students identified as "very much" religious.

Students were asked to respond to a background question in which they chose from four responses: "I am religious but not spiritual," "I am spiritual but not religious," "I am both religious and spiritual," and "I am neither spiritual nor religious." In response to the directive to choose one of the above statements, students responded as follows: 38 (63%) students identified as "spiritual but not religious," 13 (22%) identified as "both spiritual and religious," and 9 (15%) students identified as neither spiritual nor religious. Additional details can be seen in the cross-tabulation table (see Table 5). The middle section of the table confirms what we already know from the students' answers to the background questions; there is some variation among students on how spiritual they consider themselves. The first noticeable part of the table is the upper right-hand corner. This area indicates that none of the students in the sample claimed an identity that was very religious and not at all spiritual. The lower right hand corner illustrates the few students who identified as both very spiritual and very religious. Overall, the cross tabulation highlights the students who fall outside of the majority: very few students identified as both very religious and spiritual, while a slightly larger number identify as

neither. Strikingly, there were no students who claimed a very religious identity without also claiming a spiritual identity.

Table 5

Cross Tabulation of How Spiritual and How Religious

	How Religious					
	1	2	3	4	5	
How Spiritual	Not at all		Somewhat		Very much	Total
1 Not at all	5	0	0	0	0	5
2	4	2	0	0	0	6
3 Somewhat	7	2	4	0	0	13
4	11	2	4	0	0	17
5 Very much	3	6	5	1	3	18

Note. The "How spiritual" and "How religious" data were taken from background questionnaire questions 3 and 4.

Students completed the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale in order to assess their spiritual experiences. The DSES measures the experience of spirituality in ordinary life including such elements as awe, gratitude, mercy, sense of connection with the transcendent, compassionate love, and desire for closeness with God/Higher Being. For the purposes of this study, a score consisting of 15 items (out of 16 total items) was used to assess daily spiritual experiences. The lower the overall score, the more daily spiritual experiences a student has had. Of the 60 students, 59 (98%) completed the DSES and they reported a wide range of daily spiritual experiences from having little or no daily spiritual experiences to having spiritual experiences many times a day ($M = 3.0$, $SD = .83$). The narrative anchor for the mean score is "most days"; therefore, these results

indicate that this sample of Caucasian LGBT college students experience elements of spirituality (e.g., gratitude, connection, joy, awe) on most days. More specifically, on average this sample of students endorses many of the 15 items on most days. To further understand the types of spiritual experiences students are having, the individual items were analyzed (see Table 6). There were three items that had means at 3.00 or below, which indicates that students were experiencing these items frequently. These three items were DSES12, "I feel thankful for my blessings" ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.24$); DSES13, "I feel selfless caring for others" ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.23$); and DSES14, "I accept others even when they do things I think are wrong" ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.33$). This analysis is indicative of the spiritual experiences that this sample of college students has on most days.

Finally, students were assessed on overall spiritual well-being through their completion of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale. The purpose of the SWBS is to assess spiritual well-being or the spiritual dimension through two subscales: religious well-being and existential well-being. The religious well-being subscale (RWB) addresses relationship with God and all the items on the subscale include "God" in the questions. The existential well-being subscale (EWB) refers to life purpose, life satisfaction, and the experience of transcendence. The subscales are added together for an overall spiritual well-being score. Higher scores on all three scales indicate more well-being. It is important to note that overall spiritual well-being does not equate with spiritual maturity or spiritual health, but rather is defined as a complex construct involving religious and socio-psychological components. These components are assessed in the subscales.

Data from the 55 (92%) students who completed the SWBS indicate that while they have some level of spiritual well-being, there may also be some spiritual uncertainty

Table 6

Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale Item Means

Item	Mode	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
I feel God's/Spirit's presence.	6	4.00	4.12	1.72
I experience a connection to all of life.	2 [a]	3.00	3.08	1.48
During worship, or at other times when connecting with God, I feel joy which lifts me out of my daily concerns.	6	5.00	4.37	1.60
I find strength in my religion or spirituality.	6	4.00	3.81	1.67
I find comfort in my religion or spirituality.	3	3.00	3.71	1.69
I feel deep inner peace or harmony.	3 [a]	3.00	3.25	1.37
I ask for God's help in the midst of daily activities.	6	5.00	4.46	1.48
I feel guided by God in the midst of daily activities.	6	5.00	4.41	1.60
I feel God's love for me, directly.	6	5.00	4.39	1.71
I feel God's love for me, through others.	6	4.00	4.07	1.87
I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation.	1	3.00	3.17	1.86
I feel thankful for my blessings.	1	2.00	2.44	1.24
I feel a selfless caring for others.	1 [a]	2.00	2.40	1.23
I accept others even when they do things I think are wrong.	4	3.00	2.88	1.33
I desire to be closer to God or in union with the divine.	6	4.00	3.78	1.99
In general, how close do you feel to God?	1 [a]	2.00	2.00	.83

[a]Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

© Lynn G. Underwood. Underwood, Lynn G. (2006). Ordinary Spiritual Experience: Qualitative Research, Interpretive Guidelines, and Population Distribution for the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale. *Archive for the Psychology of Religion/ Archiv für Religionspsychologie,* 28: 1, 181-218.

and/or strife. The means for the two subscales are as follows: RWB (M = 35.8, SD = 14.82) and EWB (M = 23.2, SD = 7.29). These results indicate that this sample of college students fall somewhere in the middle of possible ceilings for the scale. In addition, they identify closer to religious well-being than with existential well-being. Given the item content on the religious well-being scale, this suggests that students are relatively comfortable with a relationship with a deity or deities. In contrast, the scores on the existential well-being scale may indicate that this sample of students are not yet aware of their life purpose and may be struggling with life satisfaction as they are searching.

It is evident from the data presented that this group of college students strongly identified as spiritual, with some students also identifying as both spiritual and religious. It is also apparent that this sample has spiritual experiences on a regular basis (most days). The SWBS scores indicate some spiritual uncertainty or hesitation. Based on the content of the SWBS, the spiritual uncertainty or hesitation may be attributed to lack of spiritual maturity, difficulties identifying with "god," or internal uncertainty about spiritual experiences. The following section provides additional information about who these students are spiritually with a presentation of results about spiritual and/or religious background.

Spiritual and Religious Background

To understand students' background with religion and spirituality, four questions from the background questionnaire were asked. The two quantitative questions were: "On a scale from 1-5, how religious was your family as you were growing up?" and "Using the same scale, how spiritual was your family as you were growing up?" Those questions

were followed by two qualitative questions: "When you were growing up, what was your family's religious/spiritual affiliation or identity (please be as specific as possible, for example: Protestant-Lutheran or Shaman)?" and "Currently, what is your religious/spiritual affiliation (please specify)?" This section presents the results from these four background questions.

Of the 59 (98%) students who answered the question "How religious was your family as you were growing up?" the majority ($N = 44$, 75%) identified their families as being "somewhat" to "very much religious." When asked how spiritual their families were, their responses were more varied. Out of the 58 (97%) students who answered this question, 23 (40%) identified their families as somewhere in between "not at all" spiritual and "somewhat" spiritual; 15 (26%) students stated that their families were "somewhat" spiritual; and 12 (21%) students identified their families as somewhere in between "somewhat" spiritual and "very much" spiritual.

Students were asked two additional qualitative questions about any religious or spiritual affiliations, past and present. Participants were asked to name their family of origin's religious and/or spiritual affiliations and their current identification, if any. A majority of this sample ($N = 52$, 87%) identified their families as having a religious affiliation from the Judeo-Christian traditions. This included Catholicism, Judaism, and other various Christian denominations. When asked to state current religious or spiritual affiliations, there was a variety of responses provided, including both traditional and non-traditional affiliations (e.g., Lutheran vs. Irish Celtic Pagan). The diversity of identification was vast. Some responses include the following: "spiritual agnostic (I believe in a higher power, don't know what it is)"; "yoga"; "Unitarian Universalist—with

particular emphasis on the teachings of Jesus and Buddhist principles"; "Combination of Native American beliefs about Mother Earth/Meditation/Womyn-centered/Tarot Reader—Impossible to be specific"; and "Pagan-Christian."

Taken together, the results from defining religion and spirituality, and understanding the participants' spiritual identity and spiritual experiences provide a holistic picture of who these students are spiritually. They conceptualize religion and spirituality as separate concepts with clear themes. Students had a myriad of spiritual experiences and may be uncertain about their life purpose or experience of transcendence. It is evident that students were raised with some sort of religious identification before the age of 18. These students were primarily raised in Judeo-Christian households, but many of them have currently chosen a different spiritual path.

The quantitative data from the background questionnaire, the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES), and the Spiritual Well-Being Scale examined together helps to add to the picture of who this sample of students is spiritually. Correlations were run on all spirituality variables (see Table 7). It is important to remember that within this sample, no one identified as very religious and not spiritual. There were significant correlations ($p \leq .01$) for several of the variables, and a few of these relationships will be discussed to provide a fuller picture of who this sample of students is spiritually. To understand these correlations, we need to remember that lower scores on the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale correspond with a higher frequency of daily spiritual experiences. There was a strong positive correlation between the DSES total score (which includes items 1-15) and religious well-being (a subscale of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale) ($r = .78$). This indicates that students who experience more daily spiritual

experiences identified less religious well-being. There was also a moderately strong

negative correlation between level of spirituality and the DSES total score (r = . –62).

This indicates that the more daily spiritual experiences a student has, the stronger they

claim a spiritual identity. There was a moderately strong negative relationship between

how spiritual a student is and his or her religious well-being (r = –.63). This correlation

indicates that the more a student claims a spiritual identity, the less religious well-being

he or she experiences. Finally, there was a moderately strong negative relationship

between students who identified as very religious and religious well-being (r = –.64).

This relationship means that as students claim a more religious and spiritual identity, the

less religious well-being they experience.

Table 7

Pearson's Correlations Among Spirituality Variables

RWB					
EWB	.17				
SWB	.91**	.58**			
DSETOT	.78**	.25	.77**		
How Spiritual	–.63**	–.07	–.54**	–.62**	
How Religious	–.64**	.07	–.50**	–.57**	.36**

Note. N = 49–56 due to missing data. DSETOT = Total score (items 1-15) on the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale. Negative ID = Negative identity subscale score on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Identity Scale. EWB = Existential Well-Being subscale on Spiritual Well-Being Scale. RWB = Religious Well-Being subscale on Spiritual Well-Being Scale. SWB = Overall score on Spiritual Well-Being Scale.
$**p \leq 0.01$.

The next section presents results on the underlying dimensions of spirituality for this sample.

Dimensions of Spirituality

In this investigation, dimensions of spirituality were examined based on responses to the Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire. The purpose of this measure was to explore how students understand spirituality. It was created for the purposes of this investigation because there is currently no adequate questionnaire measuring the specific components of spirituality for college students. In particular, this questionnaire directs participants to indicate the degree of similarity among 14 preprinted statements related to spirituality; each statement is compared to every other statement using a 5-point Likert scale (1 indicating very dissimilar and 5 indicating very similar). These ratings were analyzed using multidimensional scaling. This section discusses the results of this analysis.

Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) is an analysis that seeks to discover underlying dimensions of a construct through the analysis of similarity (or dissimilarity) ratings (Young & Hamer, 1987). In this study, the statistical tool PROXSCAL was chosen as the analytical tool for several reasons: it provides the decomposition of normalized stress for individuals and provides a representation of the proximity data in the common space for both the total group and individuals. Normalized stress is a preferred goodness-of-fit measure because its "value is independent of the scale and the number of dissimilarities" (Groenen & van de Velden, 2004, p. 11). Inclusion of both group and individual

proximity data allows exploration of how various aspects of participants' identity might be related to their conceptualization of spirituality.

One-, two-, and three-dimensional MDS models were run and examined to determine the best model fit for this data set (see Table 8). Solutions beyond three were not run because of the ratio of items per dimension. As a rule of thumb, the number of dimensions to items ratio is $1 > 4$ (Kruskal & Wish, 1978). In the current investigation, the 14 preprinted items were enough to support one-, two-, and/or three-dimension solutions. Although the 14 items supported all three solutions, additional statistics were used to determine interpretability of dimensions. The statistics used to determine the best model fit for this sample were goodness-of-fit measures: normalized raw stress and variance accounted for (VAF). For MDS analysis, the ideal normalized raw stress score is as close to .02, while the desired variance accounted for is ideally as close to 1.0 as possible.

Table 8

Comparison of Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) Models

MDS Model	Normalized Raw Stress	Variance Accounted for
One dimension	.11	.89
Two dimensions	.05	.95
Three dimensions	.03	.97

The three-dimension solution yielded a lower normalized raw stress score than either the one- or two-dimensional solutions. After checking for the assumptions of MDS (VAF, interpretability, and parsimony) and taking into consideration normalized raw

stress and the VAF scores, it was determined that the three-dimensional solution was the

best fit for these data. More specifically, the three-dimension solution was chosen as the

model to interpret based on a few factors. In comparing goodness-of-fit (measures of

stress) between models, the three-dimensional model accounted for more variance and

lower stress than the two-dimensional solution. The three-dimensional model provided

additional, unique information to help understand how this group of students understands

the underlying dimensions of spirituality. In addition, normalized raw stress was below

.05 (indeed it approached the .02 ideal value) indicating a better fit than the other two

possible solutions (0 being the best possible fit) (Stalans, 2005).

After determining model fit, the meaning of the dimensions for the full participant

group was determined through an analysis of the group common space (see Figure 1).
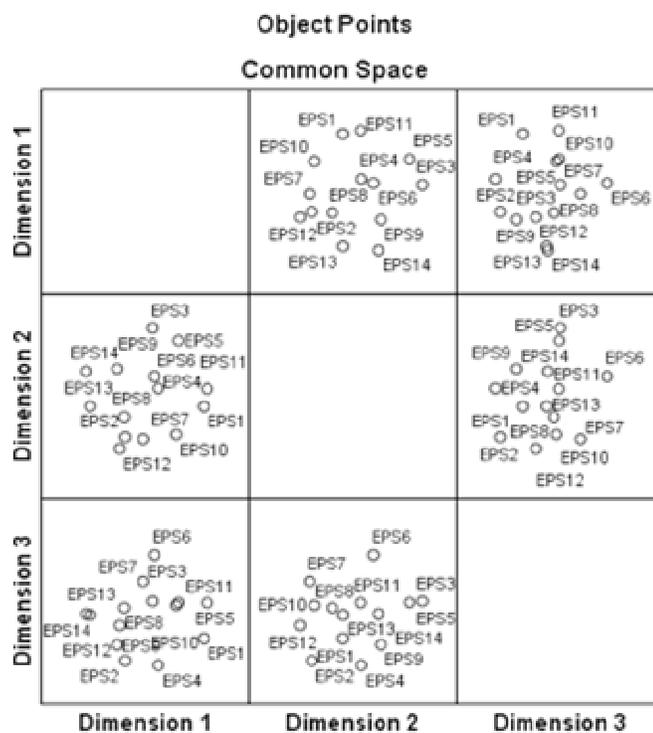
Figure 1. Multidimensional Scaling Group Spatial Representation of Dimensions

The common space provided a visual representation to interpret dimensions. Each of the three dimensions can be understood by examining the placement of specific EPS items in space. Those items at each end of a dimension serve to anchor the dimensions and aid in the interpretability of it. In addition, the items at opposite ends of a dimension represent ideas that contrast one another and are useful in further understanding the construct underlying the dimension. In addition to the spatial representation, the group dimension weights provided additional information to the interpretation of the dimensions (see Table 9). Taken together, the dimension weights and spatial representation portray the relationship among the individual items. All possible combinations of two dimensions are represented in the figure, and the combination of these pairs provides the full, three-dimensional picture.

The first dimension has two items anchoring it on each end of the continuum. On one end of the continuum are the following anchor items: relationship with God/Higher Being (EPS1), having faith (EPS11). On the other end of the continuum are the following items: compassion for self and others (EPS13) and affirmation of basic human goodness (EPS14).

The second dimension is anchored on one end of the continuum with two items: attending a church/worship service (EPS3) and practices and rituals (EPS5). There are two items that anchor the opposite end of this dimension: seeking a higher purpose in life (EPS10) and source of self-acceptance (EPS12). The third dimension has a single item anchoring it on each end of the continuum: sources of strength (EPS4) at one end and doctrine and teachings (EPS6) at the other end.

Table 9

Multidimensional Scaling Group Dimension Weights

	Dimension		
	1	2	3
EPS1	1.61	−.28	−.80
EPS2	−.56	−1.13	−1.57
EPS3	.19	1.91	.51
EPS4	.35	.23	−1.73
EPS5	.91	1.56	.46
EPS6	.24	.56	2.11
EPS7	−.06	−1.19	1.20
EPS8	−.59	−.57	.28
EPS9	−.78	.77	−1.01
EPS10	.85	−1.06	.36
EPS11	1.71	.21	.45
EPS12	−.71	−1.46	−.34
EPS13	−1.52	−.27	.03
EPS14	−1.63	.70	.06

Note. EPS = Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire items.

Two items, meaning-making process (EPS7) and self-awareness (EPS2), also contribute to both dimensions 2 and 3; therefore, they can be understood as supplemental items adding in the interpretation of these dimensions. In dimension 2, both of these items are clustered toward the same end of the continuum. In dimension 3, EPS2 (self-awareness) is on one end of the continuum, while EPS7 (meaning-making process) is

located closer to the middle of the continuum. Meaning-making process highlights the idea that this sample of students is looking to discover something about themselves through multiple means. Turning inward through the process of self-awareness seems to be another prominent way of discovery for these students. These ideas help create a fuller picture of how this sample of students conceptualizes spirituality.

Taken together, the three dimensions illustrate the distinctions these students make involving the construct of spirituality. These dimensions provide a nuanced understanding of spirituality. Through an analysis of the dimensions, it seems as though they are separating out aspects of spirituality based on subtle, yet impactful, differences: self and other based connection/goodness in the world, a process of seeking, and learning/meaning-making.

The first dimension focuses on connection to "goodness" in the world. This dimension helps to further understand what this connection to the larger world could look like for this sample. Some students may seek to facilitate this connection through a relationship with God or a higher being (EPS1), which is primarily a connection to something larger than self. This connection to goodness could also include the desire to feel connected with self or the environment. The connection to goodness or humanity in the world may or may not be facilitated by or related to organized religion. Compassion for self and others (EPS13) and affirmation of basic goodness (EPS14) is another way to feel connected, primarily to others/community. Compassion for self, though, highlights the students' desire to feel a sense of connectedness internally. This connection may then translate to feeling more connected to others. This dimension illustrates the theme of connection that was also highlighted in the qualitative answers. Students raised in

primarily in Judeo-Christian households seem to be seeking multiple ways of feeling connected through relationship with higher being, self, community, and the environment.

The second dimension highlights another element of spirituality and religion, the process of seeking, whether internal or external. Seeking a higher purpose (EPS10) allows students to understand themselves in a larger context and is a main goal in college. They may be struggling with how to fulfill this higher purpose or determining what their calling is, as evidenced by the lower SWBS scores, but it is evident that it is main concern for this sample of college students. Furthermore, the search process may be connected to their development as spiritual beings. For some students, external processes of attending a church or worship service (EPS3) may be one avenue to seeking information about themselves and the world around them. Practices and rituals (EPS5), which may or may not be connected to organized religion, are ways in which students could also be seeking to understand themselves.

Internally, seeking a higher purpose (EPS10) and self-acceptance (EPS12) provide an understanding of their process of searching: they are looking to impact others and seeking to accept themselves. Self-acceptance is an internal process of sorting out who they are and how they understand themselves. Adding EPS2 (self-awareness) and EPS7 (meaning-making process) to the interpretation of this dimension provides a fuller picture to the process of seeking to understand self and the world around them. In this dimension, self-awareness (EPS2) and meaning-making process (EPS7) are located very close to self-acceptance (EPS12) and seeking a higher purpose (EPS10) on one end of the continuum. The second dimension provides a distinct way that this sample of students

distinguishes between religious seeking and spiritual seeking. This dimension highlights the often unspoken, mystical process of understanding self within a spiritual context.

The third dimension adds to our understanding of the first two dimensions by highlighting the process of discovery, learning, and understanding. Doctrine and teachings (EPS6) are avenues for discovery and learning about self and others. Taking doctrine and teachings from spiritual and religious traditions seems to be one way that this sample is learning about themselves. Interestingly, this sample contrasted doctrine and teachings with sources of strength (EPS4). This may indicate while doctrine and teachings can be a way of increasing awareness and understanding that seeking sources of strength is an opposing idea to how they seek this understanding. Sources of strength can be related to having a sense of self-awareness and self-worth and subsequently adds to their process of discovery.

Adding two items to the third dimension, EPS2 (self-awareness) and EPS7 (meaning-making process), contributes to our understanding of this sample of students. Self-awareness (EPS2) is located close to sources of strength (EPS4) indicating that students connect these two ideas. Meaning-making process (EPS7) is located by doctrine and teachings (EPS6) indicating that students may be seeking some meaning from spiritual and/or religious teachings. Self-awareness and strength building are often processes which add to a process of discovery or which come as a result of discovery. Meaning-making process is often an integral aspect of the discovery process. This dimension illustrates a part of spiritual development in which students seek understanding through information gathering and internal processing.

As a group, the dimensions highlight nuanced aspects of spirituality. Connection, seeking, understanding, and discovery are part of the process of spiritual development. This sample of students is seeking out external and internal processes and ways to connect and increase awareness of relatedness to both self and others. Given their backgrounds, it is evident that students are seeking through multiple means: teachings, rituals, relationship, church, and self-understanding and acceptance. The following section explores within group differences in the MDS results.

Analyses of Variance

The next step in the analysis was to determine if the importance of the identified dimensions varied across groups of students sharing common characteristics as a means of exploring the research question addressing variations in spiritual identity. As part of the background questionnaire, students were asked to indicate how they identified themselves spiritually ("I am spiritual, but not religious"; "I am religious, but not spiritual"; "I am both spiritual and religious"; "I am neither spiritual nor religious"). Contrasting students who identify as religious versus spiritual would have been an ideal comparison point; the present sample, however, included no participants who identified as religious but not spiritual. The majority of students ($N = 51$, 85%) identified themselves in one of two groups: those who identified as "spiritual, not religious" and those who identified as "both spiritual and religious." A third group of students consisted of those who identified as "neither spiritual nor religious" ($N = 9$, 18%).

A MANOVA was chosen for the analysis of potential differences based on dimension weights and how students identified spiritually. While the distribution of

dimension weights for this sample violates the two assumptions of MANOVA (homogeneity of covariance and multivariate normality), the exploratory nature of the sample and study allows for some balance between Type 1 and Type 2 errors. The primary issue appears to be with non-normality, but it is important to note that MANOVA is robust to non-normality. Given the exploratory nature of the sample, a more liberal p value was also used ($p \leq . 10$) to determine statistical significance in all aspects of this analysis.

A MANOVA was run on the first two groups of students (those who identified as "spiritual, not religious" and those who identified as "both spiritual and religious"), which most closely approximated the intent to contrast spiritual and religious participants. Dimensions weights for these two groups were used as the dependent variables, while the groups of students were determined based on responses to background questions. No statistically significant effect was found (Wilks' $\lambda = .96$, $F(.74)$, $p = . 53$, partial eta squared = .05).

Given the statistically nonsignificant effect of the first MANOVA, a second MANOVA was conducted using the first two groups as well as the third group of students. The third group consisted of those students who identified as "neither spiritual nor religious." This second MANOVA revealed a statistically significant result (Wilks' $\lambda = .81$, $F(2.0)$, $p = . 07$, partial eta squared = .10). (See Table 10 for means and standard deviations for dimension weights by religious and spiritual identity.)

Given the statistically significant results of the second MANOVA, it was determined that three one-way between-subjects ANOVAs would be run as follow-up analyses. Using a liberal p value of .10, two of the three ANOVAs were considered

statistically significant. For the significant ANOVAs, protected LSDs were used as follow-up tests to increase power of finding potentially statistically significant group differences.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations for Dimension Weights by Religious and Spiritual Identity

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation
DW1	Spiritual only	38	.40[a]	.05
	Religious and spiritual	13	.39[a]	.04
	Neither spiritual nor religious	9	.45[b]	.10
DW2	Spiritual only	38	.40[a]	.04
	Religious and spiritual	13	.39[ab]	.03
	Neither spiritual nor religious	9	.37[b]	.03
DW3	Spiritual only	38	.36[a]	.05
	Religious and spiritual	13	.38[a]	.02
	Neither spiritual nor religious	9	.36[a]	.05

Note. Means with different superscripts indicate statistically significant differences. Dimension means that do not share superscripts (i.e., a, b, c) differ at $p < .10$ using protected Least Significant Difference comparisons. These comparisons were made following statistically significant analyses of variance as reported in the text.

The results of the first ANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant between-group difference, $F(2, 57) = 2.8$, $p = .07$. The results of the second ANOVA also resulted in a statistically significant effect, $F(2, 57) = 3.1$, $p = .05$. The results of the

third ANOVA yielded no statistically significant effect of between group differences, $F(2, 57) = .86$, $p = .43$.

Given the statistically significant effects found in the first two ANOVAs, post hoc tests of protected LSD were run to determine what groups were statistically significantly different on dimensions 1 and 2. Post hoc comparisons indicated that the mean score difference between the "spiritual only" group ($M = .40$, $SD = .05$) and the "neither spiritual nor religious" group ($M = .45$, $SD = 1.0$) was statistically significant for the first dimension. Furthermore, LSD results yielded a statistically significant mean difference between the "both religious and spiritual" student group ($M = .40$, $SD = .04$) and the group who identified as "neither spiritual nor religious" for the first dimension. These results indicate that two groups ("spiritual only" and "both religious and spiritual") were using the first dimension differently than the "neither spiritual nor religious" group of students. The differences in dimension weight means across these three groups indicate that the "neither spiritual nor religious" group made a bigger contrast in ideas in the first dimension than the other two groups.

Finally, the LSD results indicated a statistically significant mean difference in the second dimension between the "spiritual only" group ($M = .36$, $SD = .05$) and the "neither spiritual nor religious" group ($M = .36$, $SD = .05$). Results yielded indicate that the "neither spiritual nor religious" group uses the second dimension less than the "spiritual only" group.

The results discussed in this chapter indicate that this sample of Caucasian LGB college students have had a wide variety of spiritual experiences. They identified three nuanced aspects of spirituality that further help us to understand their conceptualizations

of spirituality. The three dimensions identified were connection, process of internally and externally seeking, and process of discovery and learning. In addition, how students identified spiritually influenced how they used these dimensions. The following chapter discusses the results, implications for practice and research, as well as the limitations of the current investigation.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The spiritual lives of Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students are virtually unknown and unexplored. Given the LGB communities' historically contentious relationship with organized religion, exploring spirituality offers another avenue to understand the richness of these students' experiences. Furthermore, an idea offered in the LGBT literature encourages the community to look beyond the tenets of organized religion to the openness of spiritual experiences (Tan, 2005).

The intention of this study was to explore the spiritual lives of Caucasian LGB college students by examining the underlying dimensions of spirituality. This investigation sought to understand how this student group understands and experiences spirituality during the college years through posing the following research questions: Who are these Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual students spiritually? How do these students conceptualize spirituality? What are the dimensions that underlie those conceptualizations?

A summary of the findings highlights broad, descriptive understandings of the spiritual lives of Caucasian LGB college students as well as adding a more nuanced perspective on spirituality. Some of the findings from the current investigation mirror results found in studies exploring aspects of spirituality in the general college student population that have not previously been studied with LGB students. This study provides

additional information on the specific spiritual experiences and previously unknown dimensions of spirituality from a Caucasian LGB student perspective.

One of the main findings from the current investigation is the idea that Caucasian LGB college students make a clear distinction between religion and spirituality. They also understand spirituality as a concept that is broader than religion. Furthermore, these students define spirituality as a process of connectedness and awareness, whereas religion is seen as involving somewhat rigid practices and rituals closely tied to the worship of "God." This conceptualization of religion may stem, in part, from the LGB community's experiences with exclusion from some religious traditions.

Spiritual experiences, such as gratitude, awe, and acceptance, occur on most days for this sample of college students. The multidimensional scaling results help to inform previously known ideas by providing a novel conceptualization of various aspects of spirituality. More specifically, the MDS results provided information on the three dimensions of spirituality as conceptualized by Caucasian LGB college students: connection, the process of seeking, and the process of discovery. The follow-up analyses provided further understanding of how specific student groups within this sample used the dimensions differently.

This chapter offers a discussion of the findings related to the research questions. Findings are collapsed into two sections based on the research questions: spiritual identity and spiritual experiences, and spiritual conceptualizations and spiritual dimensions. The section on spiritual identity and spiritual experiences responds to the following research question: Who are these Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual students spiritually? In addition, where data permitted, other aspects of students' identities were explored. The

section on spiritual conceptualizations and spiritual dimensions addresses the following

research questions: How do students conceptualize spirituality? What are the dimensions

that underlie those conceptualizations? Implications for research and practice are

discussed within each of these sections. Limits of the current investigation and

conclusions are provided at the end of the chapter.

<div align="center">Spiritual Identity and Spiritual Experiences</div>

Spirituality is a critical aspect of college student development. The literature in

this area highlights the importance of attending to and facilitating aspects of spirituality

during the college years (e.g., Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2005; Hindeman, 2002;

Love & Talbot, 1999). Given the importance of spirituality in the lives of college

students, it is crucial to not only understand how students identify spiritually as well as

how they experience spirituality. In particular, lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students

have potentially unique experiences with spirituality given the historical relationship

between the community and religion (e.g., Ritter & O'Neill, 1989). These ideas

contribute to the growing body of literature and research exploring the spiritual lives of

college students (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011).

It is evident from the findings that Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college

students have a wide variety of spiritual experiences and identify themselves very broadly

spiritually. The qualitative responses indicate that a majority of students were raised in a

household with traditional Judeo-Christian religious affiliations. The findings suggest that

although the majority of the students were raised in religious homes, they tended to claim

spiritual identity more so than religious identity. Furthermore, when given the

opportunity to qualitatively self-identify a spiritual identity, they name a variety of religious and/or spiritual traditions, both traditional (Christian) and nontraditional (Irish Celtic Pagan). This finding suggests that students are not only seeking a spiritual identity but also choosing tradition(s) that fit with how they see themselves currently as opposed to how their family of origin identifies.

In addition to how they identify spiritually as compared to their family of origin, how students conceptualized their upbringing was fascinating. While the majority of students in this sample identified as spiritual, they conceptualized their families quite differently. Many students identified their families as somewhat to very religious, while spiritually they indicated that their families were not very spiritual. Therefore, students' perceptions of their family strongly contrasted with how they understand their own spiritual experiences.

A striking and previously unknown finding indicates this sample of Caucasian LGB college students experiences a variety of spiritual experiences relatively frequently. These spiritual experiences exemplify the richness of how spirituality is expressed in everyday life for this sample of college students. The qualities of the spiritual experience they endorsed were broad, yet connected ideas. Experiencing gratitude, awe, and connection to all life are some of the daily spiritual experiences they endorsed. Students also indicated they had some of these spiritual experiences on most days. While they do not tend to identify with traditional religious identities, they are recognizing and experiencing spiritual qualities on a regular basis.

The implications of these findings for college student development literature are varied. Recognizing students' experiences as potentially positive can aid in assisting

lesbian, gay, and bisexual students in developing a source of spiritual strength within or outside of traditional religious affiliation. An initial step in facilitating this growth and development is to highlight aspects of college student development models where the present findings could be used to expand our understanding of the importance of spirituality in the lives of college students.

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) model of college student development addresses the multiple developmental tasks present during the college years without consideration of the role spirituality plays in development. Moving through autonomy toward interdependence is the third vector, addressing the task of developing and balancing interdependence and interconnectedness with others. For the present group of LGB college students, their spirituality may help them experience and express this balance. These students highlight the ideas of connection, awareness, and self-discovery as central aspects of spirituality. Using Chickering and Reisser's model of development, connection, awareness, and self-discovery reflect the idea of interconnectedness and learning about self through relationship (with self, others, community). Recognizing that spirituality plays a role in the lives of college students could aid them in developing a sense of interdependence. If this vector was expanded to include spirituality, it could assist students in facilitating growth and fostering positive relationships. Chickering and Reisser's (1993) fifth vector, establishing identity, provides another avenue to integrate these findings. This vector essentially addresses the development of a positive identity for college students, including multiple aspects of identity. This vector would be an ideal place to explore spiritual identity and how it may evolve throughout the college years. This group of LGB students is already identifying differently than family of origin;

therefore, there is reason to believe that spiritual identity will continue to change. In addition, this vector could also add an understanding of how spiritual identity interacts with other aspects of identity including sexual identity, gender identity, and racial and ethnic identities. How this may unfold for students would be varied, but could include a challenging of a religious identity, exploration of spiritual practices, and recognition of how spirituality can provide nourishment.

Students' multiple identities, such as sexual identity, racial and ethnic identity and socioeconomic status, may also have an impact on their experiences of spirituality. Though the present sample had limited variability on these other aspects of identity, collectively this sample of Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students appears relatively comfortable with their sexual identity. In addition, there is some evidence to suggest students are experiencing some spiritual uncertainty and/or spiritual seeking. While spiritual uncertainty and seeking are not unusual for college students, LGB students have different developmental tasks that may impact this finding (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998; Meyer & Schwitzer, 1999). More specifically, depending upon their history with organized religion as well as their experiences on campus, these students may be negotiating their spirituality in the face of significant oppression.

What is not evident from the findings is if and how other aspects of identity may also impact spiritual experiences and identification. There is evidence that indicates a relationship between spiritual development and ethnic identity development (Chae et al., 2004). In the current investigation, ethnicity and religious identification were of particular interest, but there was not enough variability within the sample to draw conclusions. In retrospect, another avenue for exploring ethnic variation in this Caucasian

sample might have been to look at White racial identity development. This could have been accomplished, in part, by including a measure of White racial identity (WRIAS; Helms & Carter, 1990).

In addition to exploring variations in Caucasian ethnic identity, it is useful to articulate other ways this sample of LGB college students might have been strengthened. Ideally, the sample would have been larger, more diverse ethnically (within the Caucasian population) and more diverse in terms of socioeconomic status. Recruitment strategies for obtaining a larger sample are discussed later in the chapter and strategies focus on using more purposeful sampling and expanding recruitment efforts.

Methodologically, it is also possible that the perceived lack of variability in the sample was due to problems in the background questionnaire. Specifically, there were two qualitative questions asking students to identify their SES and how many generations their families have been in the country. It was hoped from these questions that information could have been gathered to assess the potential impact of SES on spirituality. Socioeconomic status may link to spiritual development in college students. This information could have been assessed more thoroughly by asking more specific qualitative questions assessing SES and about the potential influence of SES on students' religious and spiritual beliefs. For example, how was SES perceived by this sample as influencing daily life?

Another lesser-known model of college student development also lends itself to revisions based on findings from the present study. Meyer and Schwitzer's (1999) model focuses on the experiences of Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students during the college years. This college student development model does not discuss the

impact of spirituality on the lives of LGB college students, or include any references to spirituality; therefore, the possibilities for inclusion of spirituality are broad. For example, the second stage in this model, reflective observing, emphasizes the developmental task of observing how family, friends, community, and the larger society discusses sexual orientation. This task could easily integrate the observation of how spiritual and religious traditions discuss and debate sexual orientation. How this change could impact development is varied, but it could facilitate connection for students to the larger LGB community. Furthermore, including spirituality in models of college student development gives a voice to experiences that are not often discussed or acknowledged and could subsequently encourage discourse and change.

Research implications of the findings on the spiritual identity and spiritual experiences of Caucasian LGB college students are broad. The methodological implications are many, given that this study was the first of its kind to explore the underlying dimensions of spirituality for this student group. The exploratory nature of this investigation lends itself to numerous follow-up studies.

One of the fascinating aspects of this study was how students understand their religious and spiritual background. Research on family of origin influences and students' understanding of those familial influences on spiritual development lends itself to both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitatively, focusing a study specifically on the family of origin's influence on spiritual development would yield information previously unknown. Specifically, if LGB students were raised in a strict religious household, how might that experience impact their spiritual development as well as their LGB identity development? How would their experiences differ from LGB students raised in a more

liberal spiritual tradition or no spiritual/religious tradition at all? Qualitatively, interviews would provide more in-depth information about the relationships between family of origin's religious traditions and spiritual choices made by LGB students. For example, some questions that could assess this information are: How do LGB students come to learn about spirituality, in particular, ideas that emphasize the mind-body connection (gratitude, self-awareness, etc.)? How do these LGB students experience aspects of spirituality given their upbringing? How do anti-gay messages from some traditional religious institutions impact their spiritual identity development? How do they make sense of those messages? Where do they seek spiritual nourishment? Exploring these relationships both quantitatively and qualitatively would assist us in further understanding the richness of Caucasian LGB college students' spiritual experiences.

Fully exploring the impact of multiple identities on both spiritual and college student development is a next step in understanding the relationship among ethnic identity and spiritual identity. The current investigation added to the research by offering an initial understanding and exploration of spirituality in the lives of Caucasian LGB college students. Furthermore, exploring the spiritual variation within the LGB community would also add new information to existing bodies of literature.

Strategies for recruiting for follow-up studies include recruiting larger and more varied groups of students. Recruiting a larger number of LGB college students from more colleges and universities would be a way to access more students in order to understand more fully their experiences of spirituality. Recruiting transgender college students would add another level of understanding within the context of both sexual and gender identity. Another student group within the present sample was those that identified as neither

spiritual nor religious. Research to explore how students come to understand concepts assessed in the DSES would provide additional information about their experiences. What meanings are they constructing about these connections? While they may not identify as spiritual or religious, the findings from this study indicate that students are having many daily spiritual experiences. In order to access this information, asking questions connected to the three dimensions (connection, process of seeking, and discovery and learning) might help us to answer questions about their experiences. Furthermore, asking students how they came to understand themselves as nonspiritual and nonreligious would provide information about their process. Using a myriad of research methods in order to research spirituality in LGB college students from varied perspectives includes using more qualitative methods and more varied quantitative methods.

<div align="center">Spiritual Conceptualizations and Spiritual Dimensions</div>

This section focuses on the findings and implications associated with two research questions: How do Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students conceptualize spirituality? What are the dimensions that underlie those conceptualizations? What follows is a discussion of the findings and how spiritual conceptualizations and dimensions can influence future research.

It is clear from the findings that LGB college students have definitive ideas about what spirituality is and its relationship to religion. Overall, students not only make a distinction between religion and spirituality, they also understand spirituality as a broader concept that includes religiosity. Qualitatively, these students discussed the meanings

they attribute to both the concepts of spirituality and religion. Religion is understood as rituals and practices associated with a group of people who worship the same higher power/God in an organized or institutionalized fashion. It is interesting to note that there were a few definitions of religion that identified negative aspects of religion. One response in particular stated that religion was "organized oppression." While this response was only one of many, it is a telling indication of the strife between the LGBT community and some organized religions.

The psychology of religion and spirituality literature discusses and debates these constructs and their relationship to one another. Pargament (1999) asserted the idea that spirituality is a concept that is encompassed by religion. In other words, religion is a larger concept than spirituality. On the other hand, Helminiak (1998, 2005) suggested the opposite, and the findings of this study concur with that idea. Students in the current sample identified the relationship between religion and spirituality as one in which there is connection between these ideas, but it is clear they view spirituality as a larger concept than religion. When given the choice, no student connected to the idea that religion is a broader concept that includes spirituality.

Spirituality was defined very broadly by this sample of LGB college students. There was a variety of responses, but the main ideas from these findings suggest that spirituality is an avenue for self-exploration and self-awareness. Students identified spirituality as a means of connecting with self and others. Furthermore, spirituality was a way to connect to the earth and/or nature. Given these results, students are searching for connection and spirituality as a means of self-awareness. Developmentally, this process of discovery and increasing self-awareness is part of college student development.

Students do not appear to be using religion in the same way. The dimensions underlying their descriptions of spirituality provide more insight into how students use spirituality and religion differently.

The psychology of spirituality and religion has debated the polarization of religion and spirituality (Pargament, 1999). The current findings suggest that while students indeed contrast religion and spirituality, the dimensions they identify help us understand the nuanced aspects of that interaction. Furthermore the dimensions aid in our conceptualization of Caucasian LGB college students, in addition to providing information not previously discussed in the literature.

The three dimensions identified by this sample offer an understanding of the underlying aspects of spirituality as well as provide a broad and in-depth perspective of spirituality. The three dimensions were connection to goodness in the world; the process of seeking both internally and externally; and discovery, learning, and understanding. It is evident that these students are seeking multiple ways of understanding themselves and the world around them. Moreover, they are seeking avenues to connect to others, whether it is through religion or spirituality. Results of the post hoc analyses help to further understand how these students conceptualize and implement the dimensions in their lives.

The post hoc analyses results offered further understanding of how certain subgroups of participants use the identified dimensions of spirituality to organize their understanding of the concept. Two of the three dimensions were used differently between students based on how they identified themselves spiritually. Dimension 1, connection to goodness and connection in general, offered the biggest distinction among groups of students. The group who identified as "neither spiritual nor religious" used this

dimension differently than the "spiritual only" group and the "both religious and spiritual" group. The students who identified as "neither spiritual nor religious" made a bigger contrast in the ideas in the first dimension as opposed to the other two student groups. These results indicate that the "neither spiritual nor religious" students use the dimension as a way of potentially contrasting the nature of how we connect. The connection to goodness in the world is seen by the "neither spiritual nor religious" students as an illustration of the multiple ways to connection to those around us and connect to goodness in the world. The "spiritual only" and "both religious and spiritual" students may be instead emphasizing steadiness of the process of connection across the whole first dimension.

The second dimension, the internal and external process of seeking, is also used differently by two of the student groups: "neither spiritual nor religious" and "both religious and spiritual." Findings indicate that students who identified as religious and spiritual used this dimension more than students who identified as neither spiritual nor religious. This may reflect the idea that the religious and spiritual group of students uses and values many processes of seeking, both internal and external, whereas those who claim neither a religious or spiritual identity may make less distinction among varied ways of seeking. For example, students who identify as religious and spiritual may seek in varied ways. They may use multiple avenues, both internal and external, in their process of seeking. For example, these students may engage with religious and spiritual texts, or participate in a church/worship service or other practices to stimulate their internal process of seeking. On the other hand, students who identify as neither spiritual

nor religious may make less of a distinction among religious or spiritual ways of seeking because they are less likely to engage in them.

The findings associated with students' spiritual conceptualizations and spiritual dimensions provide numerous research implications. As this study was exploratory in nature, there are multiple follow-up research studies that could be conducted. Exploring this topic with a broader student group such as lesbian, gay, and bisexual students from universities and colleges throughout the country would be beneficial in understanding the dimensions even further. Furthermore, research with a larger sample could be conducted to verify the dimensions and perhaps discover more underlying dimensions of spirituality. Exploring how spiritual identity impacts students' use of dimensions even further would be beneficial in understanding the nuances of the dimensions. Asking students to generate their own descriptors to use in the multidimensional scaling analysis would also give students more of a voice in determining aspects of spirituality to explore. This may further illuminate unique elements of Caucasian LGB college students' spiritual experiences.

For additional future research, it would be interesting to explore the potential impact of religious oppression on students' religious and spiritual experiences. From the LGBT and spirituality literature, we know that religious oppression by some religious traditions or institutions has influenced spiritual experiences for the LGB population. Interestingly, the current sample has rejected a religious identity, but embraced a relationship with God/higher being. This may reflect a rejection of institutional oppression while maintaining connection with other aspects of their Judeo-Christian

upbringing. What has not been explored is whether students' conceptualizations of their own identities—spiritual and religious—were influenced by religious oppression.

Qualitatively, research could be expanded to include focus groups to generate additional descriptive statements; focused individual interviews with students could also provide a fuller picture of how they conceptualize spirituality. Gathering more in-depth information from students who identify as neither spiritual nor religious would allow researchers to fully understand their perspective and experiences. Focusing more on the diversity within the LGB college student group would also be beneficial in understanding the role that multiple identities play in spirituality and spiritual development. Multidimensional scaling has not been used fully in the psychology of religion and spirituality literature. MDS could be used in future research to further add to our understanding of the underlying aspects of spirituality.

Limitations

There are some limitations of the current investigation. The results of the study are likely to generalize well to Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students within the Midwest, but may not adequately capture conceptualizations of spirituality for students with significantly different backgrounds/perspectives. While it was a conscious choice to focus on Caucasian students due to the limits of the existing LGB literature and the psychology of religion and spirituality literature, researchers should continue to focus more attention of the range of ways students identify.

There were also some related recruitment issues that should be addressed in follow-up studies. While the recruitment procedures outlined the recruitment of

Caucasian lesbian, gay and bisexual college students, putting this into practice proved to be challenging. These challenges included questions about whether or not the researcher had racist intentions. There were some organizations that did not want to participate or advertise the study because it asked specifically for Caucasian students. The intention of the recruitment measures was to be upfront with who was being recruited as opposed to recruiting all students and collapsing students of color into a single category. Recruitment was purposeful in order to vocalize the limits of much of existing literature and research on LGB concerns and the spiritual lives of college students. While this recruitment strategy was conceptualized as a strength by the researcher, it was not received as such by the students who were being recruited. These experiences highlight a potential disconnect between academic counseling psychology and the actual populations we seek to study and help. For future research, recruitment strategies should be developed to address these concerns. One recruitment strategy involves broadening the sampling pool to include LGB students from across the country to ensure a larger sample size. Using listservs created specifically for LGB students would be one avenue to increase both sample size and diversity within a sample. Recruiting LGBT students for multiple studies at the same time can also be used in conjunction with the other strategies listed above. This strategy would involve developing materials appropriate for usage by more than one group. For example, the current investigation could have used materials for Caucasian students only and another set for students who are racial and ethnic minorities.

In addition, the items used for the development of the constructed questionnaire were partially based on responses given in another research study (McGrady & Horneffer, 2005). The sample in that study was relatively homogeneous given that the

majority was Caucasian and heterosexual, and all participants were recruited from a single course at Western Michigan University. Although this likely limited the breadth of statements included on the EPS and rated in the MDS, LGB students in the present study were also able to add their own spirituality descriptors. Overwhelmingly, this sample of students added very few of their own descriptors, and those that were added tended to be specific examples of broader ideas included in the preprinted phrases. For example, one student named a specific practice, such as meditation. Another student named gratitude as an aspect of spirituality. In future research, pre-printed descriptors on the EPS could be expanded to include specific practices; alternatively, future research could be conducted on descriptors supplied exclusively by participants.

With MDS research, one possible threat to internal validity is lack of variation in the sample on an important dimension; this can result in not seeing that dimension in the obtained spatial representation of results. A suggestion for attending to this limitation might be to accumulate information from across additional studies to verify the existence of dimension.

Also, it is crucial to note the perspective of the researcher, because all research is conducted within a sociocultural context and filtered through a framework. The primary researcher identifies as a Caucasian lesbian woman from a strict Roman Catholic family who now identifies as spiritual. My perspective impacted the creation of the EPS (Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality questionnaire) and influenced my conceptualizations of the dimensions. Furthermore, the researcher's spiritual background and challenges could have influenced the conception and development of the current investigation. For future research, using a team approach to study the aspects of

spirituality would help to ensure that multiple perspectives would be present in the development of a study.

The student group recruited through this study does not have as many group spiritual differences as anticipated. Several things could assist in working toward having more variation in level of spirituality within the sample. Efforts to recruit a larger, more diverse LGB student group from other colleges and universities would be helpful in exploring the findings further. Although there are challenges to putting a research survey online, there were numerous requests for an electronic version of the questionnaires. This format should be considered for future research.

There were a few methodological issues that should be addressed in follow-up studies, including the MDS stress levels and the self-report nature of the study. Measures of stress are goodness-of-fit measures but can be conceptualized as badness-of-fit measures (Kruskal & Wish, 1978). The larger the stress value, the less the model fits the data. For the current investigation, stress levels in the multidimensional scaling results were not ideal, but given the exploratory nature of the current investigation, they were sufficient in helping to understand the underlying dimensions of spirituality. The nature of the study was one in which students self-reported their experiences. For future research that continues to explore the aspects of spirituality for Caucasian LGB students, it is suggested that recruitment efforts are expanded and more qualitative methods are used, allowing students to provide their own statements for comparison. Future research should also include more varied measures to attend to other aspects of identity that can have an influence on spirituality, such as more specific questions about socioeconomic status and the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS; Helms & Carter, 1990).

Conclusion

Given the current socio-political climate where the rights of the LGB population are up for public debate, fueled in part by formalized stances of particular religious institutions, it is a critical time to vocalize the needs and experiences highlighted in this study. It is evident that spirituality is an important aspect in the lives of many Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students. As a group, they have had multiple experiences with spirituality that impact their lives in some way. Underlying much of the findings is the idea of awareness and connection. These students identify with a myriad of mostly nontraditional spiritual traditions, even though they were raised within traditional religious faiths. Connection to goodness in the world, process of seeking, and the discovery process are the primary dimensions underlying their sense of spirituality. The findings further suggest that spiritual identity impacts how students use and understand these dimensions. While there are limitations to the current investigation, the implications for practice and research are many and varied. Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students are a vibrant student group from which we learned the importance of connection to self and others as well as how awareness is connected to their rich spiritual lives.

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Appendix A

Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality Questionnaire

Exploring Perceptions of Spirituality Questionnaire

All of the statements below represent ideas *some people* use to describe or explain spirituality or spiritual practices. Please read each of the following preprinted statements. In the space provided you also have the opportunity to add your own ideas (up to five). Then complete the section asking you to compare each statement to the others, including the ideas generated by you. Indicate the degree of similarity among every pair of statements using the scale listed below. Please fill in one number for each pair in the space provided.

First, please review the following preprinted statements and if you choose, add your own ideas (up to five). Please print clearly.

Possible Descriptions or Explanations of Spirituality

1.   Relationship with a God/Higher Being (however this is defined by you)

2.   Self-awareness

3.   Attending a church/worship service

4.   Source of strength

5.   Practices, rituals (e.g., prayer)

6.   Doctrine, teachings

7.   Meaning-making process

8.   Seeking personal authenticity and wholeness

9.   Connectedness to self and community

10. Seeking a higher purpose in life

11. Having faith

12. Source of self-acceptance

13. Compassion for self and others

14. Affirmation of basic human goodness

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

18. _____

19. _____

Comparison Ratings of Statements Concerning Spirituality

Please complete the following section asking you to compare each statement to the others, including the ideas generated by you (if any). Indicate the degree of similarity among every pair of statements using the scale listed below. Please fill in one number for each pair in the space provided.

For example, if you think that the first phrase "Relationship with a God/Higher Being" is not similar to the seventh phrase "Meaning-making process" you would mark a two.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all similar concepts		Somewhat similar concepts		Very similar concepts

Relationship with a God/Higher Being (however this is defined by you)

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Self-awareness					
Attending a church/ worship service					
Source of strength					
Practices, rituals (e.g. prayer)					
Doctrine, teachings					
Meaning-making process					
Seeking a personal authenticity and wholeness					
Connectedness to self and community					
Seeking a higher purpose in life					
Having faith					

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Source of self-acceptance					
Compassion for self and others					
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

Self-awareness

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Attending a church/worship service					
Source of strength					
Practices, rituals (e.g. prayer)					
Doctrine, teachings					
Meaning-making process					
Seeking personal authenticity and wholeness					
Connectedness to self and community					
Seeking a higher purpose in life					
Having faith					
Source of self-acceptance					

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Compassion for self and others					
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

Attending a church/worship service

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Source of strength					
Practices, rituals (e.g. prayer)					
Doctrine, teachings					
Meaning-making process					
Seeking personal authenticity and wholeness					
Connectedness to self and community					
Seeking a higher purpose in life					
Having faith					
Source of self-acceptance					
Compassion for self and others					

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

Source of strength

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Practices, rituals (e.g. prayer)					
Doctrine, teachings					
Meaning-making process					
Seeking personal authenticity and wholeness					
Connectedness to self and community					
Seeking a higher purpose in life					
Having faith					
Source of self-acceptance					
Compassion for self and others					

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

Practices, rituals (e.g., prayer)

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Doctrine, teachings					
Meaning-making process					
Seeking personal authenticity and wholeness					
Connectedness to self and community					
Seeking a higher purpose in life					
Having faith					
Source of self-acceptance					
Compassion for self and others					
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts

Doctrines and Teachings

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Meaning-making process					
Seeking personal authenticity and wholeness					
Connectedness to self and community					
Seeking a higher purpose in life					
Having faith					
Source of self-acceptance					
Compassion for self and others					
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts

Meaning-Making

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Seeking personal authenticity and wholeness					
Connectedness to self and community					
Seeking a higher purpose in life					
Having faith					
Source of self-acceptance					
Compassion for self and others					
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts

Seeking personal authenticity and wholeness

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Connectedness to self and community					
Seeking a higher purpose in life					
Having faith					
Source of self-acceptance					
Compassion for self and others					
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts

Connectedness to self and community

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Seeking a higher purpose in life					
Having faith					
Source of self-acceptance					
Compassion for self and others					
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

Seeking a higher purpose in life

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Having faith					
Source of self-acceptance					
Compassion for self and others					
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

Having faith

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Source of self-acceptance					
Compassion for self and others					
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

Source of self-acceptance

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Compassion for self and others					
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

Compassion for self and others

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts
Affirmation of basic human goodness					

Affirmation of basic human goodness

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts

	1 Not at all similar	2	3 Somewhat similar	4	5 Very similar concepts

Appendix B

Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Scale

Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Scale

For each of the following statements, circle the response that best indicates your experience as a lesbian, gay, or bisexual person. Please be as honest as possible in your responses.

	disagree strongly						agree strongly
1. I prefer to keep my relationships rather private.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I will never be able to accept my sexual orientation until all of the people in my life have accepted me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I would rather be straight if I could.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Coming out to my friends and family has been a very lengthy process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I'm not totally sure what my sexual orientation is.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I keep careful control over who knows about my relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I often wonder whether others judge me for being (lesbian/gay/bisexual).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I am glad to be a (lesbian/gay man/bisexual person).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I look down on heterosexuals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I keep changing my mind about my sexual orientation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. My private sexual behavior is nobody's business.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I can't feel comfortable knowing that others judge me negatively for being (lesbian/gay/bisexual).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Homosexual lifestyles are not as fulfilling as heterosexual lifestyles.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Admitting to myself that I'm a (lesbian/gay man/ bisexual person) has been a very painful process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. If you are not careful about whom you come out to, you can get very hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Being a (lesbian/gay man/bisexual person) makes me feel insecure around straight people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

disagree strongly							agree strongly

17. I'm proud to be part of the LGB community. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. Developing as a (lesbian/gay man/bisexual person)
    has been a fairly natural process for me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. I can't decide whether I am bisexual or (lesbian/gay). 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. I think very carefully before coming out to someone. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. I think a lot about how my sexual orientation
    affects the way people see me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. Admitting to myself that I'm a (lesbian/gay man/
    bisexual person) has been a very slow process. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. Straight people have boring lives compared with
    lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

24. My sexual orientation is a very personal and
    private matter. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. I wish I were heterosexual. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26. I get very confused when I try to figure out
    my sexual orientation. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. I have felt comfortable with my sexual identity just
    about from the start. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix C

Daily Spiritual Experience Scale

Daily Spiritual Experience Scale

The list that follows includes items you may or may not experience. Please consider how often you directly have this experience, and try to disregard whether you feel you should or should not have these experiences. A number of items use the word 'God.' If this word is not a comfortable one for you, please substitute another word which calls to mind the divine or holy for you.

	Many times a day	Every day	Most days	Some days	Once in a while	Never or almost never
I feel God's presence.						
I experience a connection to all of life.						
During worship, or at other times when connecting with God, I feel joy which lifts me out of my daily concerns.						
I find strength in my religion or spirituality.						
I find comfort in my religion or spirituality.						
I feel deep inner peace or harmony.						
I ask for God's help in the midst of daily activities.						
I feel guided by God in the midst of daily activities.						
I feel God's love for me, directly.						
I feel God's love for me, through others.						
I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation.						
I feel thankful for my blessings.						
I feel a selfless caring for others.						
I accept others even when they do things I think are wrong.						
I desire to be closer to God or in union with the divine.						

	Not at all	Somewhat close	Very close	As close as possible
In general, how close do you feel to God?				

Appendix D

Spiritual Well-Being Scale

Spiritual Well-Being Scale

For each of the following statements circle the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience:

SA = Strongly Agree
MA = Moderately Agree
A = Agree
D = Disagree
MD = Moderately Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

1. I don't find much satisfaction in private prayer with God.   SA MA A D MD SD
2. I don't know who I am, where I came from, or where I'm going.   SA MA A D MD SD
3. I believe that God loves me and cares about me.   SA MA A D MD SD
4. I feel that life is a positive experience.   SA MA A D MD SD
5. I believe that God is impersonal and not interested in my daily situations.   SA MA A D MD SD
6. I feel unsettled about my future.   SA MA A D MD SD
7. I have a personally meaningful relationship with God.   SA MA A D MD SD
8. I feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life.   SA MA A D MD SD
9. I don't get much personal strength and support from my God.   SA MA A D MD SD
10. I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in.   SA MA A D MD SD
11. I believe that God is concerned about my problems.   SA MA A D MD SD
12. I don't enjoy much about life.   SA MA A D MD SD
13. I don't have a personally satisfying relationship with God.   SA MA A D MD SD
14. I feel good about my future.   SA MA A D MD SD
15. My relationship with God helps me not to feel lonely.   SA MA A D MD SD
16. I feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness.   SA MA A D MD SD
17. I feel most fulfilled when I'm in close communion with God.   SA MA A D MD SD
18. Life doesn't have much meaning.   SA MA A D MD SD
19. My relation with God contributes to my sense of well-being.   SA MA A D MD SD
20. I believe there is some real purpose for my life.   SA MA A D MD SD

Appendix E

Personal and Spiritual Background Questions

Personal and Spiritual Background Questions

The following series of questions ask you to think about the role of spirituality in your life and in your family of origin.

1. What does the word "spirituality" mean to you?

2. What does the word "religion" mean to you?

3. How spiritual do you consider yourself to be?

     1   2   3   4   5

Not at all   Somewhat   Very much

4. How religious do you consider yourself to be?

     1   2   3   4   5

Not at all   Somewhat   Very much

5. Please circle one of the following statements that fits best for you:

    a. I am religious but not spiritual

    b. I am spiritual but not religious

    c. I am both religious and spiritual

    d. I am neither spiritual nor religious

6. Please circle the statement that best describes how you see spirituality and religiousness as being related to each other (or not):

    a. Spirituality is a broader concept than religiousness and includes religiousness

    b. Religiousness is a broader concept than spirituality and includes spirituality

    c. Religiousness and spirituality are different concepts and do not overlap

    d. Religiousness and spirituality are the same concept and overlap completely

    e. Religiousness and spirituality overlap but are not the same concept

7. On a scale from 1-5, how religious was your family as you were growing up

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Somewhat		Very much

8. Using the same scale, how spiritual was your family as you were growing up

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Somewhat		Very much

9. When you were growing up, what was your family's religious/spiritual affiliation or identity (please be as specific as possible, for example: Protestant-Lutheran or Shaman)

10. <u>Currently</u>, what is your religious/spiritual affiliation (please be as specific as possible, for example: Jewish-Orthodox or Buddhist- Zen)

Adapted from Zinnbauer et al., 1997

The final set of questions asks you about your background.

Age: _____

Please indicate your undergraduate class standing (e.g. freshman/1ˢᵗ year): _____

Major: _____

Minor: (if applicable):_____

Please circle all co-curricular activities you may be involved in:

    a. Political organizations, please specify:

    b. Sorority/fraternity, please specify:

    c. Special interest groups (for example: students of color, LGBT groups), please specify:

    d. Religious or spiritual group, please specify:

    e. Other organizations, please specify:

For the activities you are involved in please specify how long and how intense (e.g. amount of time and nature of involvement) your involvement has been:

Have any of these organizations influenced your spiritual development? If yes, please explain:

Please describe your racial and/or ethnic identity.

In terms of your sexual identity would you say you are:

    a. Exclusively attracted to women

    b. Mostly attracted to women

    c. Attracted to both women and men

    d. Mostly attracted to men

    e. Exclusively attracted to men

How do you identify?

    a. Lesbian

    b. Gay

    c. Bisexual

    d. Heterosexual

    e. Queer

    f. Other (please specify): _____

Gender: Female   Male   FTM   MTF

       Other: _____

How many generations has your family been in the United States?

Please describe your perceptions of you and your family's socioeconomic status.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!

If you are interested in being entered into a drawing for one of eight $25 Target gift cards, please send an email to Michele.l.mcgrady@wmich with an email address that is usable for six months after this date.

Appendix F

Recruitment Script (In Person)

Recruitment Script (In Person)

"My name is Michele McGrady and I am conducting my dissertation on Caucasian, LGB college students' understanding of spirituality. The study involves having you spend about 45 minutes filling out questionnaires that ask you about spirituality and your thoughts about how you perceive yourself and others. I ask you to carefully read the consent form and decide whether or not you would like to participate. Involvement in this study is voluntary and your answers will remain anonymous. Please take a few minutes to read the consent and ask any questions. If you choose not to participate, please return the blank packet to me.

If you agree to participate you will be completing several short questionnaires. The first questionnaire asks you to judge how similar or different a number of statements are. You will be comparing them two at a time. You are being asked to judge each pair using a 5 point scale and then mark the number corresponding to your judgment in the space provided. For example, if you think the statements are very similar to each other you would write down the number 5 in the space provided. Please keep in mind that there are no correct or incorrect answers and I am interested in how you as an individual compares these statements.

Following those comparisons you will be asked to complete a questionnaire asking you your attitudes, feelings, and behaviors regarding yourself and others. You also are asked to fill out two questionnaires about your spiritual and religious experiences. You are asked to complete a series of questions about your experiences with spirituality and religion, followed by a background questionnaire. Thank you for your time and participation."

Appendix G

Participant Consent

Participant Consent

Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Principal Investigator: Mary Z. Anderson, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: Michele L. McGrady, M.A.

Title of the Study: Understanding the dimensions of spirituality in
Caucasian Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual College Students

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Michele L. McGrady, M.A., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology at Western Michigan University. This study is Ms. McGrady's doctoral dissertation and is being conducted under the supervision of Mary Z. Anderson, Ph.D., of Western Michigan University.

The purpose of this study is to understand how Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual undergraduate college students understand and describe spirituality. Spirituality is recognized as a potentially important aspect of personal well-being, yet little is known about how young adults develop this aspect of their personal identity. Recognizing that there are many perspectives concerning the nature and expression of spirituality, we seek a broad range of participants for the present study.

Participation in the study involves completing five questionnaires: one which asks you to provide information about how you think about spirituality, two questionnaires which ask you about your experiences with spirituality, and one which asks you how you see yourself. Along with these questionnaires you will be asked to provide some demographic information and answer some background questions concerning your experiences with religion and spirituality while growing up. Completion of the questionnaires should take about 45 minutes. Returning the questionnaires to the researcher(s) indicates your consent to use the answers you supply.

Possible risks of participation in this study include mild stress or emotional discomfort in recalling and sharing information about your own experiences of spirituality. Benefits of participation include reflecting on issues pertaining to spirituality and contributing to a study that has the potential to inform others about your spiritual experiences, experiences often neglected.

All information collected from you is anonymous meaning your name will not appear on any papers on which research information is recorded. Data will remain stored in a locked file for a minimum of three years in the office of Dr. Mary Z. Anderson in Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology at Western Michigan University.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your replies will be completely anonymous, so do not put your name anywhere on the form. You may choose to not answer any question and simply leave it blank. If you choose to not participate in this study, you may return the blank surveys to the researcher.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact the student investigator, Michele L. McGrady, M.A., at 269-718-9893 or michele.l.mcgrady@wmich.edu, or the principal investigator, Dr. Mary Z. Anderson,

Ph.D., at (269)387-5113 or mary.anderson@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at Western Michigan University at (269)387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at Western Michigan University at (269)387-8298 if questions or problems arise during the course of the study.

      This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

      Thank you for your time and consideration!

Appendix H

Recruitment Letter for Snowball Sampling

Recruitment Letter for Snowball Sampling

Dear participant:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this important study. My name is Michele McGrady and I am conducting my dissertation on Caucasian, LGB college students' understanding of spirituality. The study involves having you spend about 45 minutes filling out questionnaires that ask you about spirituality and your thoughts about how you perceive yourself and others. I ask you to carefully read the consent form and decide whether or not you would like to participate. Involvement in this study is voluntary and your answers will remain anonymous. Please take a few minutes to read the consent and ask any questions. If you choose not to participate, please return the blank packet to the researcher in the envelope provided.

If you agree to participate you will be completing several short questionnaires. The first questionnaire asks you to judge how similar or different a number of statements are. You will be comparing them two at a time. You are being asked to judge each pair using a 5 point scale and then mark the number corresponding to your judgment in the space provided. For example, if you think the statements are very similar to each other you would write down the number 5 in the space provided. Please keep in mind that there are no correct or incorrect answers and I am interested in how you as an individual compares these statements.

Following those comparisons you will be asked to complete a questionnaire asking you your attitudes, feelings, and behaviors regarding yourself and others. You also are asked to fill out two questionnaires about your spiritual and religious experiences. You are asked to complete a series of questions about your experiences with spirituality

and religion, followed by a background questionnaire. When you have completed the

questionnaires, please return them using the envelope provided to the investigator. Thank

you for your time and participation."

Appendix I

Recruitment Paragraph for Listservs/Email

Recruitment Paragraph for Listservs/Email

"Dissertation participants needed!

I am a Caucasian, lesbian counseling psychology doctoral student from Western

Michigan University. I am conducting my dissertation on Caucasian, LGBT college

students' understanding of spirituality. I am interested in how being white and gay,

lesbian, or bisexual impacts your understanding of spirituality.

The study involves having you spend about 45-60 minutes filling out questionnaires that

ask you about spirituality and your thoughts about how you perceive yourself and others.

In addition, there is a background questionnaire with questions about family and religion.

Involvement in this study is voluntary and your answers will remain anonymous. You

have the opportunity to win one of eight $20 Target gift cards. Please contact

Michele.L.Mcgrady@wmich.edu or 269-387-3556 if you are interested!

I appreciate your help and I am open to any questions you may have!

THANKS!"

Appendix J

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
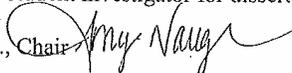Letter of Approval

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: March 12, 2008

To: Mary Z. Anderson, Principal Investigator
Michele McGrady, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 08-03-08

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Understanding the dimensions of spirituality in Caucasian, Lesbian, and Bisexual College Students" has been **approved** under the **exempt** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: March 12, 2009

Appendix K

Permission Letters

From: "Lynn Underwood" <lynnunderwood@researchintegration.org>
To: "Michele Lynn McGrady" <michele.l.mcgrady@wmich.edu>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2011 9:44:13 AM
Subject: Re: DSES use

Dear Michele,
You have my permission to use Underwood's Daily Spiritual Experience Scale if:
1) You return the attached registration form to me.
2) You include © Lynn G. Underwood and the citation: Underwood, Lynn G. (2006)
Ordinary Spiritual Experience: Qualitative Research, Interpretive Guidelines, and
Population Distribution for the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale. *Archive for the
Psychology of Religion/ Archiv für Religionspsychologie,* 28: 1, 181-218. on any copies
of the scale you print and in your results.
3) You keep me informed of results from your work and publications and presentations
that come from your work using the scale.
The best source for information on the scale, which I try to keep updated is:
www.dsescale.org
A pre-print of the 2006 Archiv paper is available there which includes an accurate copy
of the scale itself.
A recent review paper on the scale is also available.
I wish you the best in your work,

Lynn

Lynn Underwood PhD
Research Integration
37 Forest Drive
Chagrin Falls Ohio 44022
Cell: 440-7088501
www.researchintegration.org
www.dsescale.org
lynnunderwood@researchintegration.org

From: "Lynn Underwood" <lynnunderwood@researchintegration.org>
To: "Michele Lynn McGrady" <michele.l.mcgrady@wmich.edu>
Sent: Thursday, May 26, 2011 6:30:21 PM
Subject: Re: DSES use

Yes, definitely fine to reproduce it with citation in your dissertation.

From: "Jonathan Mohr" <jmohr@psyc.umd.edu>
To: "Michele Lynn McGrady" <michele.l.mcgrady@wmich.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, May 24, 2011 10:07:24 AM
Subject: Re: LGBIS copyright

Hi Michele,
Thanks for clarifying your request. It is certainly fine to reprint the LGBIS in your dissertation. It is rare for people to look up dissertations, but, just in case, it might be good to note that a revised version of the LGBIS has been published:

Mohr, J. J., & Kendra, M. S. (2011). Revision and extension of a multidimensional measure of sexual minority identity: The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Scale. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 58,* 234-245.

Take care,
Jon

From: "Ray Paloutzian" <paloutz@westmont.edu>
To: "Michele Lynn McGrady" <michele.l.mcgrady@wmich.edu>
Sent: Monday, May 23, 2011 3:54:07 PM
Subject: Re: SWBS Re: Spiritual Well-Being Scale

Michele,

This is a glitch that is totally understandable and easy to fix.
Not to worry. The regular price indicated on the Products Page of the
Life Advance website, www.lifeadvance.com, for an N of 60 is $2/copy or
$120. However, you are doing this research as a student, so you get
the student discount, which is 50% off. So for you the price is
$1/copy, or a total of $60.00, for your N = 60. Payment is normally
made with visa or mastercard on the website; however, given our
communications is probably easier to pay for it by check. Make a
check out to "Life Advance" and send it to Life Advance, 1250 Ferrelo
Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93103. Please include a copy of this email in the
envelope. That will do the job fine. With that, you are all caught
up on the necessities and formalities, so to speak, and can include
the SWBS in your dissertation so long as it includes the copyright line
that is printed at the bottom of the scale.

Ray