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THE EFFECTS OF THE COUNSELOR'S SPIRITUAL BACKGROUND AND THE
PARTICIPANT'S SPIRITUALITY ON THE PARTICIPANT'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE
EXPERTNESS, ATTRACTIVENESS, AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE COUNSELOR

by

Mark Baldwin

A Dissertation

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Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of the counselor's spiritual background and participant spirituality on the perceptions of the expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness of the counselor. The following questions were examined using a MANOVA: 1) Did participants perceive a counselor's expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness differently based on the self-rated spirituality of the participant? 2) Did participants perceive a counselor's expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness differently based on the spiritual background of the counselor? 3) Was there an interaction between the counselor's spiritual background and the participant's self-rated spirituality with regard to how the participant perceived the counselor's expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness? To answer these questions, 267 participants from a large public urban university in the Southeastern United States completed a brief demographic questionnaire, received one of two counselor backgrounds, and then viewed a videotaped vignette portraying a client-counselor interaction. Participants then rated the counselor's trustworthiness, expertness, and attractiveness using the Counselor Rating Form – Short Version (CRF-S) and self-rated their spirituality using the Spiritual Assessment Inventory – Awareness Scale (SAI).

Results indicated that participant's ratings of the counselor's trustworthiness, expertness, and attractiveness was not significantly different based on the counselor's spiritual background or the participant's self-rated spirituality. The majority of participants self-ratings indicated high spirituality with a median score on the SAI Awareness scale was 4.11 (Substantially True). The mean CRF-S ratings were: Expertness (21.03), Attractiveness, (20.05), and Trustworthiness (21.69).

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
List of Tables	v
1. Introduction	1
Ethical Considerations	3
Multicultural Considerations	5
Treatment Considerations	7
Definition of Terms	10
Statement of Purpose and Research Questions	11
Hypotheses	11
2. Literature Review	13
Introduction	13
Defining Spirituality	15
Spirituality in Counseling	17
Spiritual Assessment and Spirituality in Treatment	22
Religious Background Self-Disclosure	25
Summary	26
3. Methodology	28
Instruments	29
Procedures	30
Analysis	31
4. Data Analysis and Results	32
Participants	32
Analysis and Results	34
5. Discussion	38
Summary	38
Implications for Theory and Research	40
Implications for Practice	41
Limitations and Future Research	42
Conclusions	43
References	45
Appendices	59

List of Tables

Table

1. Current Religious Preference	33
2. Counselor Rating Form – Descriptive Statistics	34
3. Non-Spiritual Counselor Background – Descriptive Statistics	34
4. Spiritual Counselor Background – Descriptive Statistics	34
5. Inter-Item Correlation Matrix – Expertness	35
6. Inter-Item Correlation Matrix – Attractiveness	35
7. Inter-Item Correlation Matrix – Trustworthiness	35
8. Multivariate Tests	37

Chapter 1

The Effects of the Counselor’s Spiritual Background and the Participant’s Spirituality on the Participant’s Perceptions of the Expertness, Attractiveness, and Trustworthiness of the Counselor

According to the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, a survey of over 35,000 Americans across all 50 states, 76.6% claimed a religious affiliation (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2014). Not only does the majority of the U.S. population report a religious connection, but the majority of the U.S. population also report that it is important for counseling. Bart (1998) noted a Gallup poll that indicated 81% of those surveyed want their spiritual and religious values included in counseling. A December 2018 Gallup poll found that 72% of U.S. respondents say that religion is important in their lives (Brenan, 2018). Other current research also reveals that clients want their religion and spirituality integrated into the counseling they seek (Bannister et al., 2015; Gockel, 2011; Harris, et al., 2016; Lietz & Hodge, 2013; Post & Wade, 2014; Post, Saenz & Waldo, 2013, Stanley, et al. 2011; Wade, & Cornish, 2014; Worthington Jr., 2016). The willingness, competency, and effectiveness of counselors in the U.S. to address spirituality in counseling is critical because the United States is considered to have one of the most spiritual populations in the world (Miller & Carroll, 2006). Danzer (2018) states that “it is not uncommon for clients to...be significantly more religious than helping professionals” (p. 399). It is important to evaluate the effects of the client’s perception of the counselor’s effectiveness, expertness, and attractiveness based on their own self-rated spirituality because, in contrast to the population, “Universities and research institutions are one of the few settings in U.S. life where nonreligious people are often in the majority” (Miller, Carroll, 2006, p. 260). Hyman and Handal (2006) added that “...there is a small proportion of mental health professionals who are

actively religious or spiritual (ranging from 20 to 35%) compared to the general public (ranging from 40 to 75%) who attend services or view themselves as religious or spiritually focused (Lukoff et al., 1992)” (pp. 265-266). Drobin (2014) has stated that “According to various surveys, 51 % of therapists have an anti-religious, anti-spirituality bias” (p. 790). Although Plante (2016) noted that progress has been made in professional psychology in seeing the benefits of integrating spirituality into clinical practice, he went on to note that “very few past and present graduate and postgraduate clinical or counseling students offer any training in integrating spirituality into professional clinical services” (p. 276). Stewart-Sicking, Deal, and Fox (2017) observed that although the attention to spirituality in counseling has increased, it has “not translated into changes in practice” (p. 234). Because of the disparity between the preference for counseling based on spirituality and religion by the public in general and the absence of it in academia, there appears to be a gap between the training for counselors and the fulfillment of the needs of the public (Brown, Elkonin & Naicker, 2013; Cashwell et al., 2013; Gockel, 2011; Harris, Randolph, & Gordon, 2016; Henriksen et al., 2015; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Stewart-Sicking, Deal, & Fox, 2017). Henriksen Jr., Bornsheuer-Boswell, and Poloyni (2013) noted two primary barriers to faculty providing training on religious and spiritual issues as the difficulty in defining religion and spirituality, and the difficulty of not including their own biases about the subject. Steen and colleagues captured this issue when noting that “For some counselors, the quandary lies in whether and how to exclude an entire realm of experiencing from the counseling process that is integral to human growth and development for individuals.” (Steen, Engels, & Thweatt, 2006, p. 51). Moore-Thomas and Day-Vines (2008) asserted that spirituality and religion are a significant aspect of African-American culture. Not

only is spirituality and religion a significant part of African-American culture but they are significant to the majority of the public (Hodge, 2005). Powell and Craig (2006) stated:

Whether the therapist has a religious orientation or not, if it is interwoven in the client's clinical issues, then exploration is warranted. A therapist should be open and prepared to discuss religion regardless of his or her own spirituality. If it is assessed that religion plays an important role in the client's functioning, the therapist is ethically obligated to address this area of concern. (p. 30)

Worthington (2016) has stated that the Millennial Generation "demand accommodation and respect for their particular brand of spirituality, no matter how idiosyncratic" (p. 150) If counselors are to become effective multicultural counselors, then a greater understanding of spirituality and its impact on the perceived effectiveness of the counselor is needed.

Ethical Considerations Regarding Spirituality in Counseling

The American Counseling Association (ACA; 2014) Code of Ethics identified spirituality in the context of client resources (A.1.d) (support resources that hold meaning to client), professional responsibility for self-care (Section C Introduction) (to promote their spiritual well-being in order to meet their professional responsibilities), nondiscrimination (C.5) (religion/spirituality), and multicultural issues in assessment (E.8) (recognize effect of religion/spirituality on assessment and interpretation and place in context). With an emphasis on client welfare and growth, diversity, and professional growth, it stands to reason that the ACA Code of Ethics includes spirituality and religion especially in light of the importance placed on spirituality and religion by the public in general. The call to consider the impact of spirituality and religion on the assessment process and the interpretation of the assessment(s) lays the foundation from the onset for exploring the needs, worldview, and spiritual values of the client.

This client-centered approach places the client's concerns and problems in the context that is important to the client rather than the counselor's perceived context. Including spirituality and religion in the assessment process is necessary to maintain a multicultural approach and helps to ensure an ethical atmosphere of non-discrimination because the client's perspective defines the context. Moving forward from the assessment process includes identifying resources that are important to the client as a means of support. This support includes spirituality and religious behaviors and practices when and where appropriate based on the needs and wishes of the client and flows naturally from the information gathered during the assessment process.

The body of research regarding spirituality and counseling has grown significantly in the last decade (Adams, 2012; Daniels, & Fitzpatrick, 2013; Gockel, 2011; Powers, 2005; Shafranske & Cummings, 2013; Vieten et al., 2013; Worthington, 2016; Worthington et al., 2013). One study that "examined conservative Christians' expectations that specific religious behaviors and attitudes would be included in counseling sessions on the basis of the perceived religiosity of the counselor" (Belaire, Elder, & Young, 2005, p. 84) supported by other findings that suggested that counselors should be concerned with the beliefs of their clients (Adams, 2012; Gockel, 2011; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Sperry, 2014; Worthington Jr., 2016). Furthermore, Engels and colleagues, noted that the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV-TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000), the previous standard for the classification of mental and behavioral health disorders, includes spirituality under its V codes and, as such, implies that the discussion and assessment of spirituality should be included in the diagnostic process (Engels, Steen, & Thweatt, 2006). The DSM-5 includes the same codes, as there were no changes specifically made to codes regarding spirituality (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Much of the literature refers to several concepts in support of utilizing

spiritual assessments (Harris et al, 2016; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Plante, 2016; Worthington, 2016). One such concept is gaining insight into the client's worldview (ASERVIC, 2009; CACREP, 2015; Daniels & Fitzpatrick, 2013; Henriksen, Bornsheuer-Boswell, & Polyni, 2013; Robertson, 2010; Stewart-Sicking, Deal, & Fox, 2017; Vieten, et al., 2013), which develops a more multicultural competent counselor (Hodge, 2005). Other concepts include having a strengths-based approach and following the wishes of the client, knowing that spirituality is an area of life that is particularly important to the public in general (Bruce, 2004; Hodges, 2001; Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012; Moore, 2003; Worthington Jr., 2016). For the purpose of this study the focus will be on multicultural counseling since it is included in counseling standards rather than focus on individual theoretical approaches to counseling.

Multicultural Considerations Regarding Spirituality in Counseling

Wolf and Stevens (2001) have indicated that spirituality can be viewed by the counselor as a resource, a culture, and a context. Numerous benefits of spirituality have been identified and supported, including physical and emotional health, support systems, and family cohesion (Koenig, 2012; Koenig et al., 2001; Sperry, 2014; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Stewart-Sicking, Deal, & Fox, 2017; Wolf & Stevens, 2001). Multicultural counseling has opened the door to talk about spirituality in an effort to provide comprehensive, holistic, and the most effective treatments for clients.

“They [participants in the study] viewed spirituality as the foundation of the whole and believed that each aspect of the self must be addressed for healing to take place. Because spirituality was so central to their experience of healing they could not conceptualize counseling as being effective without addressing this aspect of being” (Gockel, 2011, p.159).

Furthermore, spirituality has been linked to both well-being and strengths-based approaches (Hodge, 2001; Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012).

As the counseling field moves toward focusing on the client's strengths and identifying assets available to the client, spirituality is a natural area of exploration. Plante (2016), noted that "professionals should consider spirituality and religious diversity in the same manner that they consider, respect, and receive training and consultation about any other forms of diversity" (p.278). Furthermore, accrediting bodies and professional associations have incorporated spirituality as an area to be explored (CACREP, 2015; Stewart-Sicking, Deal, & Fox, 2017). Just as academic and professional associations highlight the importance of training and competency in spiritual diversity, accreditation for clinics and hospitals highlight the need for implementation in practice and, "The fact that the nation's largest and oldest health care accrediting organization [The Joint Commission] requires spiritual assessments may give pause to those who believe that spirituality is peripheral or unrelated to service provision" (Hodge, 2006, p. 324). Worthington, Jr. (2016) warned that "People expect (and demand) that diversities of all sorts be not only respected but honored, making them more likely to expect accommodation of psychological treatment to their own religious and spiritual preferences. And if accommodation is not forthcoming, clients will seek treatment where it is and possibly (in our litigious society) demand redress publicly and perhaps legally" (p. 151) "Historically, content related to clients' religious/spiritual beliefs and practices has not been included in training programs across helping professions, yet many professional organizations include standing ethical mandates that clinical practitioners ethically, effectively, and competently assess and attend to this area of clients' lives as it relates to practice" (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018, p120.) and, even school counseling, an area where the separation of church and state is often

scrutinized, is being challenged to acknowledge spirituality (Bruce, 2004). Counselors have reported a lack of preparedness and competency to integrate spiritual and religious resources in the counseling process (Cashwell et al., 2013; Dobmeier & Reiner, 2012; Henriksen, Polonyi, Bornsheuer-Boswell, Greger, & Watts, 2015). There is growing evidence that spirituality is a central theme for many people, particularly in the U.S. (Bannister et al., 2015; Gockel, 2011; Harris, et al., 2016; Hodge, 2001; Saenz & Waldo, 2013; Stanley, et al. 2011; Worthington Jr., 2016).

Treatment Considerations

Morality has been linked to spirituality, through a positive correlation with purpose in life and inner spirituality (Ammerman, 2013; Brooks, 2015; Hernandez, 2006; Worthington Jr., 2016; Young, Cashwell, & Woolington, 1998). Fife, Nebeker, and Whiting (2005) pointed out that therapy is often attempted without regard to moral issues and concerns of the client. In the past, moral issues have been ignored and even discouraged in the counseling process, but observing that this perception and practice is beginning to change. A qualitative review of the counseling process conducted by Fife and colleagues, (2005) to examine morality in the counseling session. Four therapists and five clients each recorded their in-session experiences immediately following each session. The focus was on moral responsiveness, which they defined as the ability and willingness to be genuine regarding all aspects of the client including responding to and following the client's lead regardless of the therapist's initial plan for the session as an inspirational skill of the therapist. The purpose of the Fife, et al. (2005) study "was to identify morally responsive aspects of therapy" (p. 26). The results indicated that both client and therapist experienced moral responsiveness in the sessions. The results of this study suggested that additional understanding regarding morality and spirituality as it pertains to the

counseling process is critical to the treatment considerations. Examining the spirituality of the client and its impact on the perceived effectiveness of the counselor may help expand that understanding. Also, discontinuity, a sudden change in direction based on the content of the session, was experienced by both as well (Fife, et al., 2005). A morally responsive therapist will follow his/her inspiration about the client and be willing to abruptly change directions in order to truly be with the client. Despite the need to be responsive to client's in this manner, "... the counseling professions spend little time helping therapists develop or understand the influence of moral areas" (Fife, et al., 2005, p. 32). Fife and associates (2005) offered suggestions for clinicians to be more skilled at being morally responsive in the session. For example, they suggested that the way that the counselor responds morally within the session impacts the professional counseling relationship and therefore impacts the outcome of counseling (Fife, et al., 2005). Not only is the client impacted by the counselor's response, but Kwilecki (1990) noted that the religious component of moral development is attributed to one's response to the supernatural. In terms of working with a religious client, an awareness of God and the workings of God in their lives is incorporated into their personality, daily living, and their choices (Kwilecki, 1990). As a treatment consideration, counselors need to understand how the client's interaction and awareness with God impacts their daily life and to be morally responsive in their approach. When we explore integrating spirituality into the counseling process there is little in-depth research about the client's perceptions on spirituality as it relates to the counseling relationship (Gockel, 2011) and some clients may actually avoid seeking services for fear that their spiritual views will not be adequately considered (Buser & Buser, 2013; Harris, Randolph, & Gordon, 2016).

Numerous articles have been written to explore variables that have implications for the perceptions of the counselors (Harris, et al. 2016; McGowan & Midlarsky, 2012; Norcross, 2011; Parhami, Davtian, Collard, Lopez, & Fong, 2014; Worthington et al., 2013), and “Gaining a clearer understanding of client experiences of spirituality in the counseling relationship can help us to build theory that supports the effective integration of spirituality into counseling practice” (Gockel, 2011, p. 155). Factors such as counselor disability status (Strohmer & Leierer, 1996), multicultural issues, including race and ethnicity (Carter, 1990), and counselor self-disclosure regarding religious background (Danzer, 2018; Nyman & Daughtery, 2001) have been researched to examine their impact on counselor effectiveness. Despite a desire by the field to be and to produce multicultural competent counselors, Cashwell, Young, Cashwell, and Belaire (2001) suggest that there is much less research about spirituality’s impact on counselor effectiveness in the area of multiculturalism. Their research focused on the impact of spirituality and the type of counseling (spiritual versus non-spiritual) on the effectiveness of counseling as rated by the participants on the Counselor Rating Form – Short version (Cashwell, et al., 2001). They found that the participant’s self-reported level of spirituality did not impact the ratings of the counselor across the different counseling approaches including multiculturalism. However, participants with higher levels of self-rated spirituality rated the counselor more positively for expertness and trustworthiness across both approaches (Cashwell, et al., 2001).

Harris, et al., (2016) review of 64 peer-reviewed articles concluded that a majority of clients preferred counselors who were open to discussing spirituality and that talking about religious or spiritual issues was helpful. They continued to note that “Client degree of spirituality only accounts for some of the variability in client expectations for spirituality in counseling. What, then, accounts for the rest?” (p. 269).

Definition of Terms

Attractiveness: For purposes of this study, attractiveness was defined as “the perceived similarity to, compatibility with, and liking for the influence recipient” (Strong, 1968, p. 216).

Ethics: For the purposes of this paper, ethics was defined as “...the beliefs we hold about what constitutes right conduct. Ethics are moral principles adopted by an individual or group to provide rules for right conduct” (Corey, Corey, & Callanan, 2007, p. 12).

Expertness: For purposes of this study, expertness was defined as “the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions” (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953, as cited in Strong, 1968, p. 216).

Morality: For purposes of this study, morality was defined as “the general human endeavor to conform to standards of right conduct in social interactions” (Kwilecki, 1990, p. 443).

Religion: For purposes of this study, religion was defined as “one's search for the sacred that can be viewed objectively, occurs externally and involves a commitment to organizational practices, rituals and beliefs” (Hyman & Handal, 2006, p. 278). Furthermore, the religious background and current affiliation for participants were based on the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2014).

Spirituality: For purposes of this study, “spirituality is defined as a relationship with God, or whatever is held to be the Ultimate (for example, a set of sacred texts for Buddhists) that fosters a sense of meaning, purpose, and mission in life” (Hodge, 2001, p. 204).

Trustworthiness: For purposes of this paper, trustworthiness was defined as “the degree of confidence in the communicator's interest to communicate the assertions he considers most valid” (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953, as cited in Strong, 1968, p. 216).

Values: For purposes of this study, values are defined as “(a) concepts or beliefs, (b) about desirable end states or behaviors, (c) that transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance” (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, p. 551).

Worldview: For purposes of this study, worldview was defined as “the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the ‘big picture’ that directs our daily decisions and actions” (Colson, 1999, p. 14)

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of the counselor’s spiritual background and participant spirituality on the perceptions of the expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness of the counselor. The following research questions were examined:

1. Did participants perceive a counselor’s expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness differently based on the self-rated spirituality of the participant?
2. Did participants perceive a counselor’s expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness differently based on the spiritual background of the counselor?
3. Was there an interaction between the counselor’s spiritual background and the participant’s self-rated spirituality with regard to how the participant perceived the counselor’s expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness?

Hypotheses

1. Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in the participant’s perceived expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness of the counselor based on the participant’s self-rated spirituality.

1. Alternative Hypothesis: The participant's perceived expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness of the counselor will be higher when the participant's self-rated spirituality is higher.
2. Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in the participant's perceived expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness of the counselor based on the counselor's spiritual background.
2. Alternative Hypothesis: The participant's perceived expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness of the counselor will be higher when the counselor has a spiritual background.
3. Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in the participant's perceived expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness of the counselor based on the interaction of the participant's self-rated spirituality and the counselor's spiritual background.
3. Alternative Hypothesis: The participant's perceived expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness of the counselor will be higher when both the participant's self-rated spirituality and the counselor's spiritual background are congruent (high self-rated spirituality of the participant paired with spiritual background of the counselor or low self-rated spirituality of the participant paired with no spiritual background of the counselor).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Upon review of the history of the profession, the discussion of values, specifically spiritual values, in the counseling process did not enter the literature in any significant way until the early 1900s. Even then it appears to be more in the area of philosophy than in the field of psychology or counseling. However, findings in research have supported the importance of spiritual values in the counseling process (Harris et al., 2016; Gockel, 2011; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Plante, 2016; Worthington Jr., 2016). Watson (1997) conducted a literature review from 1974 through 1996 of spirituality and family systems compared to general counseling and found 389 references to spirituality and/or religious values. Similarly, Dr. Robin Powers from Gannon University conducted a search of the literature to find that the number of publications that discuss spirituality was non-existent in the mid 1800's to the early 1900's. These numbers have greatly increased and contributed to the conclusion that spirituality is an area that needs to be discussed in the counseling session and that counselor educators need to teach students how to deal with these issues that clients may bring up in session (Powers, 2005; Stewart-Sicking, Deal, & Fox, 2017; Worthington Jr., 2016; Worthington et al., 2013). Brown, Elkonin, and Naicker (2013) reviewed the barriers to spirituality in counseling and identified that the lack of training regarding religion and spirituality is a prevailing issue.

Much of the work in the area of spiritual values has come as a result of early theorists such as Lawrence Kohlberg and his work on moral development. He started as a developmental psychologist and then moved to the field of moral education. He was particularly well-known for his theory of moral development which he popularized through research studies conducted at Harvard's Center for Moral Education. His theory of moral development was dependent on the

thinking of the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget and the American philosopher John Dewey. These men emphasized that human beings develop philosophically and psychologically in a progressive fashion (Harvard Graduate School News, 2000). Moral development has been positively linked to spirituality (Ammerman, 2013; Brooks, 2015; Hernandez, 2006; Worthington Jr., 2016; Young, Cashwell, & Woolington, 1998; Young, Cashwell, & Woolington, 1998). Also, historically, the review of moral education and development has been the springboard for discussions and development of professional ethics codes (Francis & Freeman, 2006). A quick review of the current ACA Code of Ethics (2014) provides insight into the importance of spirituality in counseling as it is mentioned five times in sections A.1.d (client resources), Section C Introduction (professional responsibility for self-care), C.5. (nondiscrimination), and E.8 (multicultural issues in assessment).

Just as morality has been linked to spirituality, through a positive correlation with purpose in life (Ammerman, 2013; Brooks, 2015; Hernandez, 2006; Worthington Jr., 2016; Young, Cashwell, & Woolington, 1998), research by Hernandez (2006) indicated those with higher levels of moral development reported higher levels of spirituality. These studies suggest that there is significant overlap between spirituality, morality, and religion. Hyman and Handal (2006) indicate that although the constructs of religion and spirituality are overlapping, there are important differences. They indicate that spirituality has more to do with experience with the sacred rather than a focus on rituals or traditions (Adams, 2012; Ammerman, 2013, 2014; Davis, et al., 2015; Gockel, 2011; Stewart-Sicking, Deal, & Fox, 2017; Worthington, Jr., 2016; Worthington, et al. 2012).

During the creation of the DSM-IV, the Spiritual Emergence Network made recommendations to help clinicians gain a deeper understanding of spiritual issues in counseling

(Lukoff, Lu, & Turner, 1998). Lukoff and colleagues (1998), note that “The acceptance of religious and spiritual problems as a new diagnostic category in DSM-IV is a reflection of increasing sensitivity to cultural diversity in the mental health professions and of transpersonal psychology's impact on mainstream clinical practice” (p. 46). Although spiritual problems are included in the DSM-IV, it failed to point out that spirituality is often an integral part of the client’s worldview regardless of the presenting problems. The recent development of the DSM 5, saw no changes in the v-code, which are DSM codes for other conditions that may be a focus of clinical attention, for spiritual problems, regardless of the growing research. Despite this there is evidence that mental health professionals have not given enough credence to religious and spiritual issues in counseling despite the prevalence in life (Brown, Elkonin, & Naicker, 2013; Cashwell et al., 2013; Gockel, 2011; Harris, Randolph, & Gordon, 2016; Henriksen et al., 2015; Lukoff, Lu, and Turner, 1992; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Stewart-Sicking, Deal, & Fox, 2017). This conclusion was made even though research done by Worthington, Hook, Davis, and McDaniel (2011) reported that clients in religious/spiritual counseling demonstrated greater improvement, both in psychological and spiritual factors, than did clients in secular counseling (p. 204). Though there are many factors to explore, “One relationship factor that can potentially affect the outcome of psychotherapy is the match or mismatch between a client’s religious or spiritual (R/S) beliefs and the type of psychotherapy” (Worthington, Hook, & McDaniel, 2011, p. 204). These factors are of increasing importance as outcome measures predominate conclusions in the mental health and behavior health field.

Defining Spirituality

A White Paper of the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) says it well in that “It is difficult to perfectly define the numinous concept of spirituality because of the limited capacity of language. Therefore, a definition or

description of spirituality is only a starting point that cannot fully represent the entire concept.” (ASERVIC, 2015). However, as difficult as it may be, it is one that researchers must tackle in an effort to better understand the impact of spirituality on therapeutic processes (Harris, et al., 2016; Hill & Edwards, 2013; Oxyhandler & Pargament, 2018; Worthington, Kuru, McCollough, & Sandage, 1996). “The way religion and spirituality are conceptualized, defined and used varies from study to study.” (Hyman, & Handal, 2006, p. 265). The terms religious and spirituality overlap and are related but can be differentiated from one another (Ammerman, 2013, 2014; Daniels & Fitzpatrick, 2013; Davis, Rice, Hook, Van Tongeren, DeBlaere, Choe, & Worthington, 2015; Hill & Pargament, 2008; Hodge, 2001; Hyman & Handal, 2006; Knox, Catlin, Casper, & Schlosser, 2005; Stewart-Sicking, Deal, & Fox, 2017; Wolf & Stevens, 2001; Worthington Jr., 2016; Worthington, Hook, Davis, & McDaniel, 2011; Worthington, Kuru, McCollough, & Sandage, 1996). Hyman and Handal (2006) noted in their work to define these terms by religious professionals, that none of the religious professionals defined religion and spirituality as non-interconnected concepts. The starting point of differentiating the two seems to be a recognition that spirituality is the broader of the two terms (Davis, Rice, Hook, Van Tongeren, DeBlaere, Choe, & Worthington, 2015; Worthington Jr., 2016). Where *religious* is viewed more externally, associated with organized practices (Hyman & Handal 2006; Daniels & Fitzpatrick, 2013; Worthington, Kuru, McCollough, & Sandage, 1996) and involves “structure and community” (Knox, Catlin, Casper, & Schlosser, 2005, p. 287). Spirituality is more subjective and internal (Hyman & Handal, 2006; Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2008; Worthington Jr., 2016) and focused on a search for or connection to something greater than oneself (ASERVIC, 2015; CACREP, 2009; Daniels & Fitzpatrick, 2013; Davis, et al., 2015; Hodge 2001; Knox, Catlin, Casper, & Schlosser, 2005; Worthington, Jr., 2016; Worthington,

Hook, Davis, & McDaniel, 2011; Worthington, Kuru, McCollough, & Sandage, 1996).

Likewise, “Spirituality may be defined as ‘the search for the sacred,’ whereas religion may be defined as ‘the search for significance that occurs within the context of established institutions that are designed to facilitate spirituality” (Pargament, Mahoney, Exline, Jones, & Shafranske, 2013, pp. 14–15). Interestingly, Daniels and Fitzpatrick (2013) stated, “Some would also assert that spirituality does not necessarily have to do with belief in God but more with connection with nature and the relationship between animate and inanimate things around us” (p. 318). This connectedness then would not necessarily be seen as related to something greater than oneself. Though not focused on something such as a sacred text or higher being, it does follow the concept of going beyond oneself by focusing on a nonmaterial connectedness which helps to provide meaning (Adams, 2012) and purpose to life. The ASERVIC (2015) White Paper on the concept of spirituality expounded on the relationship between the material and nonmaterial by noting that “Spirituality leads one to search for and discover meaning in life, a meaning that goes beyond a merely material experience....” (p. 2).

Spirituality in Counseling

As discussed earlier, research has already shown that client’s expectations for counseling are important factors for success (Adams, 2012; Belaire, Elder, & Young, 2005; Gockel, 2011; Harris, et al., 2016; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Sperry, 2014; Worthington Jr., 2016), and that the general population tends to be more religiously oriented than does the counseling profession. As noted by Gonsiorek, et al., (2009), “Incorporating spirituality and religion into psychotherapy has been controversial, but recent contributions have argued the importance and provided foundations for doing so” (p. 385). According to the American Religious Identification Survey, as much as 76% of the general population self-identifies as religious (Kosmin & Keysar,

2009). Moreover, the total Christian population has seen growth which may be attributed to an increase in youth identifying as Christian (Kosmin & Keysar, 2009). Nyman and Daugherty (2001) suggested that providing information about the counselor's religious background may help the client make educated choices regarding the therapeutic relationship. For some, providing the counselor's religious background may alleviate the fear of being judged or their beliefs not being adequately considered, and counteract the uncertainty of now knowing the counselor's spiritual background (Buser, Buser, & Peterson, 2013; Cragun & Friedlander, 2012; Harris, Randolph, & Gordon, 2016).

Conversely, imposing one's values in the counseling process devalues the clients and their perspective and imposing one's values can be done for the "nonreligious or antireligious attitudes" of the counselor (Corey, Corey, and Callanan, 2007, p. 94). When considering spiritual interventions, the apparent lack of training for therapists may create an over-reliance on personal religious experiences which heightens the risk of imposing their values or applying interventions inappropriately (Walker, Gorsuch, & Tan, 2004). Additionally, there is growing concern related to insurance billing for services integrating spirituality. Gonsiorek, et al. (2009) gave examples that included billing religious education as psychotherapy, falsifying diagnoses and treatment plans to hide the actual activities, noting theological differences, resistance to therapy, or spiritual concerns as mental health symptoms, and noted that such practices are at best misrepresentation and possibly criminal fraud, especially when insurance billing is involved. Furthermore, a counselor's religious/spiritual education and personal experiences do not always convert to the skills necessary for integrating religions/spirituality into treatment; rather religious/spiritual integration in counseling is a professional skill that must be honed just as a counselor would other treatment approaches (Cummings, Ivan, Carson, Stanley, & Pargament,

2014). Therefore, counselors must be reminded of their scope of practice, which includes areas of competence. This discrepancy between competence and the need presented by the general public is problematic and one that needs to be addressed by academia. A study completed by Brown, Elkonin and Naicker (2013) identified barriers for the counselor to incorporating spirituality in counseling. Having a value system that was divergent from their clients was a barrier for counselor-client engagement on religious and spiritual contexts (Brown, et al., 2013). Some of the factors identified were ethics, conflicting beliefs, resistance by the client, lack of personal comfort with the topic, and spirituality as a justification for behaviors or lack thereof (Brown, et al., 2013). This study will broaden the view by looking at the influence from the client's point of view regarding the effectiveness of the counselor.

The history of counseling and its connection to theories such as psychoanalyses created an early view of a "blank slate" approach to counseling. In other words, counselors were expected to approach the relationship from a "values free" perspective. It was believed that the counselor's values were not involved in any way (Patterson, 1989). Then, out of this view, grew discussions about counselors being aware of their own values but being cautious to not impose them on their clients (Patterson, 1989). Today, the view has grown to include the possibility that those in the counseling profession are actually imposing values by using a particular theoretical approach. When a therapist uses a particular model (cognitive approach, choice theory, etc.), then some would argue they are imposing the value system of the theory. Beutler (1979) saw that the counseling process methodically persuades the client to change beliefs approximate to those of the counselor. This latter view suggests that it may be an impossibility to counsel from a values free perspective and that doing so would not be beneficial to the client. Today's discussions, then, revolve around a complex process of integrating a philosophical debate of the

ethics of exposing and imposing values and the research regarding the importance of spiritual values in the counseling process.

Research in many respects has shown that it is possible to have a perspective of a “multicultural decision-making model based on universalist philosophy, an ethic of care, the context of power, and the process of acculturation” (Frame, & Williams, 2005, pp. 165-166). These authors reviewed a case that highlights a dilemma between the ethical code and the cultural perspective of the client. Through the case conceptualization, the authors suggested that it is possible to be both culturally sensitive and ethical when confronted with opposing perspectives. In other words, even when the spiritual values of the client and the counselor differ, it is possible to maintain an ethical and a multicultural perspective approach to such cases by utilizing a well-defined decision-making model with collaboration. Therefore, multicultural models cannot ignore spirituality. Culture and spirituality are not isolated and their relationship with one another suggests that each informs the other (Daniels, & Fitzpatrick, 2013). Research continues to affirm the importance of spirituality as part of a multicultural perspective (Cragun & Friedlander, 2012; Gockel, 2011; Plante, 2016; Worthington Jr., 2016; Ybañez-Llorente & Smelser, 2014).

Casuistry is a problem-solving approach to addressing dilemmas by bridging principles with real-life situations. Francis and Freeman (2006) asserted that “the need for a moral perspective through which professionals can deal with practical problems results in the establishment of codes of ethics” (p. 142). They “briefly discuss ethical principles and their applications and limitations while recommending the use of casuistry in addressing ethical dilemmas” (p. 143). Other researchers have focused specifically on working with the “religious” client (Bannister, et al., 2015; Belaire, et al., 2005; Cragun & Friedlander, 2012; Moore-Thomas

& Day-Vines, 2008). Kwilecki (1990) studied the faults of the traditional, linear, view of moral development as it pertains to religious behavior with morality defined as “the general human endeavor to conform to standards of right conduct in social interactions” (p. 443). Kwilecki (1990) called the connection between morality and religiosity “religious-morality”, by differentiating it from most ethics due to the connection to the supernatural versus pragmatic goals (p. 443). As noted earlier, Kwilecki (1990) concluded that “these supernatural logics are integrated into the personality and played-out in lives precisely” (pp. 463-464). This conclusion identified the need to be more integrative in the approach to working with religious clients, which requires counselors to be willing to expose their own values and openly explore the religious values of their clients. Counselor education appears to be lacking in preparing students for these issues (Brown, et al., 2013; Cashwell et al., 2013; Stewart-Sicking, et al., 2017; Gockel, 2011; Harris, et al., 2016; Henriksen et al., 2015; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Plante, 2016). However, there are articles that address this issue. For example, Henriksen and Trusty (2005) discuss counselor preparation as it relates to changing ethical codes and recommend J.A. Banks educational pedagogy. The J.A. Banks education pedagogy focuses not just on the students at hand but the process as a whole. The approach looks at spirituality in four areas: contributions, ethnic additive, transformation, and social action (Henriksen & Trusty, 2005). The contributions phase focuses on the heroes and holidays of various cultural groups; the ethnic additive phase focuses on the themes without changing the overall structure; the transformation phase focuses on more global changes in the overall process or course; and the social action phase focuses on decision-making and action (Henriksen & Trusty, 2005). They maintained that this teaching approach will help students better understand spirituality with their clients.

Although counseling outcomes have always been important, third-party billing, grants, and other funding sources continue to become more focused on evidence based (outcomes) practices. As noted by Henriksen and Trusty (2005), “As ACA continues to revise the *Code of Ethics*, the greater is the likelihood that counseling outcomes with diverse populations will improve because of the inclusion of a more diverse and multicultural value orientation” (p. 190). Cummings, Ivan, Carson, Stanley, and Pargament (2014) reported consistently that high religious/spiritual counselors are more open to integrating spirituality into counseling, are more confident in their ability to do so, and demonstrate actual integrative activities than low religious/spiritual counselors (p. 128). Sperry (2014) noted that counselors who are tuned into spiritual issues “...will routinely—intentionally or intuitively—recognize and respond to relevant clinical, ethical, and cultural considerations” (p. 103). Hopefully, as the importance of spiritual values continues to be explored through research, counselor education programs will begin integrating it into the curriculum.

Spiritual Assessment and Spirituality in Treatment

The body of literature about spirituality has grown significantly in the past decade and continues to grow rapidly (Adams, 2012; Daniels, & Fitzpatrick, 2013; Gockel, 2011; Powers, 2005; Shafranske & Cummings, 2013; Vieten et al., 2013; Worthington Jr., 2016; Worthington et al., 2013). There is growing evidence that spirituality is a central theme for many people particularly in the United States (Harris, et al., 2016; Bannister et al., 2015; Gockel, 2011; Lietz & Hodge, 2013; Post & Wade, 2014; Post, Wade, & Cornish, 2014; Saenz & Waldo, 2013, Stanley, et al. 2011; Worthington Jr., 2016). The types of spiritual assessments fall into two categories, qualitative or quantitative. Although a significant number of quantitative assessments can be found through simple searches, many lack empirical evidence regarding effectiveness (Hall, 2002). Both types have their strengths and weaknesses. However, it is important to note

that, generally speaking, quantitative measures take less time, provide concrete numbers, and may be easier to validate empirically. On the other hand, qualitative approaches tend to be more creative, offer greater flexibility to the clinician, and do not start with frontloaded assumptions about constructs and definitions. Much of the literature refers to several concepts in support of utilizing spiritual assessments, such as gaining insight into the client's worldview and thus being a more competent multicultural counselor, having a strengths-based approach following the wishes of the client (since we know that it is an area of life that is particularly important to the general public) (Bruce, 2004; Hodges, 2001; Moore, 2003). If counselors are to be able to view their clients from a multicultural perspective for the purpose of assessment, then learning about their spirituality is critical to fully being aware of the client's worldview. Hodge (2003) noted that "Regardless of which spiritual assessment instrument is used, it is critical that helping professionals consider and develop spiritual competency" (p. 118). As already discussed in chapter one, accreditation bodies for mental health, hospitals, and substance-abuse facilities are including standards for agencies to incorporate spiritual assessment into practice. Given that professional codes are including spirituality as a component of diversity and multiculturalism, it is evident that spirituality should be explored in the counseling process.

Steen, Engels, and Thweatt (2006) pointed to survey data that suggests that spirituality is an important component of people's lives; "Counselors need to be prepared to discuss spirituality with their clients..." (p. 115). The authors concluded that the counselor's willingness to discuss values different from their own may be more ethical in that they may be more willing to discuss spirituality. Fife, Nebeker, Whitting (2005) noted that morality in counseling has been undervalued or even ignored because these issues and concepts are subjective and inexact (p. 84). Fife, Nebeker, and Whitting's (2005) research, as noted in Chapter 1, supported the

importance for counselor's being responsive to the client's morality. "Yet the counseling professions spend little time helping therapists develop or understand the influence of moral areas" (Fife, et al., 2005, p. 32). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) included spirituality in the 2009 standards in two places. The first is under addiction counseling, noting that a counseling student "understands the role of spirituality in the addiction recovery process" (p. 18). The second is in a broad cultural diversity section that pertains to students working in higher education and stated that counseling students understand student development from a multicultural perspective which includes, among other things, spirituality (p. 48). The 2016 update to CACREP standards went further and included spirituality under Counseling Curriculum and Social and Cultural Diversity subheading for all entry level graduates to have foundational knowledge pertaining to "the impact of spiritual beliefs on clients' and counselors' worldviews (p. 11); again under the addiction counseling section (p. 20) but adding under the Practice subheading "assessment of biopsychosocial and spiritual history relevant to addiction" (p. 21); under the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and subheading Contextual Dimensions "effects of the onset, progression, and expected duration of disability on clients' holistic functioning (i.e., physical, spiritual, sexual, vocational, social, relational, and recreational)" (p. 27); and under the Glossary to Accompany the 2016 CACREP Standards defining multicultural as "term denoting the diversity of racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage; socioeconomic status; age; gender; sexual orientation; and religious and spiritual beliefs, as well as physical, emotional, and mental abilities" (p. 46). It appears, based not only on the trends of the profession and the requirements of ethical codes or accrediting and licensing bodies but also on the past and present research, that spiritual values are important to the client and the counseling process.

Religious Background Self-Disclosure

Danzer (2018) noted the lack of research and discussion about self-disclosure of the religious background or non-affiliation of the helping professional. Informed consent serves as a means of protecting the interests of the clients and allowing them to make educated choices regarding counseling (Corey, Corey, & Callanan, 2007) and is one means of counselor self-disclosure. Powell and Craig (2006) indicated that both having an informed consent disclosure about the counselor's religious background and not having a disclosure could be beneficial to the client if the disclosures align with the counselor's theoretical orientation. Powell and Craig (2006) noted that all counselors should have an awareness of their own religious beliefs and that those beliefs have implications on practice and the perceptions of the client about the counselor. After a review of the literature, the American Psychiatric Association issued guidelines (Giglio, 1993) for practitioners that indicated the importance of self-disclosure of religious beliefs due to the discrepancy between therapist's secular views and client's religious views. Denney, Aten, and Gingrich (2008) noted that there were indications in the literature of more effectiveness in counseling when there was congruence between the counselor and client's religious background. They also reported that there was improved rapport when the counselor and client were from the same background but that there was no difference when the counselor omits the information. Denney, Aten, and Gingrich (2008), noted that counselors need to be aware of the impact of such disclosures on their clients but offer little indication as to what the impact is directly. This research hopes to begin to answer that question by evaluating the perception of participants about the counselor's expertness, attractiveness, and/or trustworthiness based on the spiritual background of the counselor.

Summary

The majority of the U.S. report a religious affiliation and identify it as an important aspect of their life (Brenan, 2018; Pew 2014). The research also indicated that clients want their religious and spiritual beliefs to be respected and included in counseling (Harris, et al., 2016; Bannister et al., 2015; Gockel, 2011; Lietz & Hodge, 2013; Post & Wade, 2014; Post, Wade, & Cornish, 2014; Saenz & Waldo, 2013, Stanley, et al. 2011; Worthington Jr., 2016). Despite this there are indications of a lack of counselor education and training in the area of spirituality and its impact on the perceptions of the client (Brown, Elkonin & Naicker, 2013; Cashwell et al., 2013; Danzer, 2018; Stewart-Sicking, Deal, & Fox, 2017; Gockel, 2011; Harris, Randolph, & Gordon, 2016; Henriksen et al., 2015; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). Professional codes of ethics, counselor education standards, and accrediting bodies all provide support for the inclusion of spirituality in counselor's work with clients (ACA, 2015; ASERVIC, 2009; CACREP, 2015). Competence in working with clients spirituality is dependent upon attitude, knowledge, and skills, regarding spirituality, and is an ongoing process as are all areas of professional competence (Daniels & Fitzpatrick, 2013, p. 336). Previous research has explored various factors that may influence counselor effectiveness (Carter, 1990; Danzer, 2018; Nyman & Daugherty, 2001; Stohmer & Leierer, 1996) Despite the increased research about spirituality and counseling it has not provided practical application to be implemented in practice (Stewart-Sicking, et al., 2017). There appears however, to be a need for more research specifically regarding spirituality and counselor effectiveness (Cahswell, 2001; Danzer, 2018). To bridge the gap this research explored the impact of the counselor's spiritual background and the participant's self-rated spirituality on the perceptions of the participant about the expertness, attractiveness and trustworthiness of the counselor. The primary concern of the research was to

understand the perceptions about the counselor's effectiveness based on the spiritual background of the counselor and the self-rated spirituality of the participant. This study provides a mechanism for future research and practical application resulting in a suggested closure of the disconnect between the spirituality of the participants and the training of the counselors.

Chapter 3

Methodology

A sample of bachelor level college students at a large public urban university in the Southeastern United States completed a brief demographic questionnaire (Appendix B), received one of two counselor backgrounds (Appendix C), and then viewed a videotaped vignette portraying a client-counselor interaction. The vignette showed a counseling session between the counselor and a client with a vocational problem. The text transcript of the video vignette can be found in Appendix D. Participants rated the counselor's trustworthiness, expertness, and attractiveness, using the Counselor Rating Form-Short Version (Appendix E) and self-rated their spirituality using the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) after watching the vignette. Informed consent was obtained prior to the start of the research. Each participant then received a packet (manila envelope) containing the demographic questionnaire, counselor background, and the counselor rating form. Each packet was number coded and a random number generator was used to randomly assign one of the two counselor backgrounds to each packet. Packets were passed out in numerical order. Participants were asked to complete the demographic questionnaire and place it back in their packet. Then participants reviewed the counselor background prior to watching the video vignette. After the vignette was completed, participants rated the counselor using the counselor rating form (CRF-S). The counselor background and the CRF-S were then placed back into their packet. Finally, the researcher instructed participants to pull out the SAI and asked participants to complete it and place it back into their packet. The counselor's spiritual background and the participant's self-rated spirituality were compared with the counselor's expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness as rated by the participants. Based on a 95% confidence level, .5 standard deviation, and a margin of error (confidence interval) of +/- 5%, it was determined that 385 participants would be an appropriate sample size.

Instruments

A demographic questionnaire was developed to gather demographic information and religious background for the participants. The religious background and current affiliation questions were based on the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2014) and other demographic information, such as race, was based on U.S. Census Bureau categories. The demographic questionnaire consisted of 9 questions. The demographic questionnaire also asked about age, gender, city, and state the participant grew up in, self-reported social class, type of high school attended, and whether or not participation was a class requirement (see Appendix B).

Two statements regarding the counselor's background were created distinguishing one as spiritual and one as non-spiritual. The background statements included the counselor's name and professional licensures, a brief statement about years of experience and membership in a professional association, education level including bachelor's and master's degree, experience in types of counseling, theoretical approaches to counseling, and active involvement in the community (see Appendix C). This information was identical for each of the two counselor backgrounds used in the study. However, one of the backgrounds concluded with an additional statement indicating a "closeness with a higher power". This particular background was used for the counselor with a spiritual background, and the background with the statement omitted was considered as the non-spiritual background.

The Counselor Rating Form – Short (CRF-S) version was completed by participants. The CRF-S contains twelve items each containing two descriptive words with a seven-point Likert scale. The twelve items are broken down to three scales: attractiveness, expertness, and trustworthiness. For the three scales, the highest possible score on each is 28. The CRF-S has been suggested for use in both research and practice (Corrigan & Schmidt, 1983).

All participants also completed the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI; Appendix F). The SAI was created by Hall and Edwards (1996) and explores the quality of the relationship with God across five subscales: awareness, realistic acceptance, disappointment, grandiosity, instability (Hall and Edwards, 2002). This assessment's theoretical framework comes from object relations theory. The focus is on the relationship between self and God particularly as it relates to feelings and intentions. The SAI draws upon the idea that the client's development both relationally and emotionally is similar to their relationship with God (Hall and Edwards, 2002). Furthermore, the awareness scale points to more than just knowledge of God but rather to an experiential awareness of God (Fee and Ingram, 2004). The SAI, therefore, attempts to understand the client's relationship and experience with God. This study focused on the awareness scale. The original scale had good construct validity but needed improvement in the subscales. Therefore, the SAI was redesigned in 2002 and has 54 total items (Hall and Edwards, 2002). The Cronbach's coefficient alpha measure of internal consistency for the awareness subscale was 0.95 (Hall and Edwards, 2002).

Procedures

The participants were asked to participate from various lower division classes at a large urban public university in the southeast. Participation may have been required by the professor of the class and participants were asked to note such on the demographic questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained prior to the start of the research and collected by the researcher. Each participant then received a packet (manila envelope) containing the demographic questionnaire, counselor background, the counselor rating form, and the SAI. Each packet was number coded and a random number generator was used to randomly assign either the spiritual background or the non-spiritual background to each packet. Packets were passed out in

numerical order. Participants asked to complete the demographic questionnaire and place it back in their packet. Next, participants were asked to review the counselor background prior to watching the video vignette. After the vignette was completed, participants rated the counselor's expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness using the counselor rating form (CRF-S). The counselor background and the CRF-S were then placed back into their packet. Finally, the researcher instructed participants to pull out the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) to complete it and place it back into their packet. Once all participants completed the SAI, the packets were collected by the researcher. The script for the explanation of the procedures used in each class can be found in Appendix A.

Analysis

A 2 X 2 MANOVA was used to examine the research questions. The analysis examined the question of whether a counselor's spiritual background affects how participants perceive the counselor's expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness (CRF-S ratings), and if the participant's own level of spirituality had any interaction with how they rated the counselor's expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. One independent variable was the counselor's spiritual background, and the second independent variable was the participant's self-rated spirituality as measured by their self-reporting on the SAI. The dependent variable was the perceived expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness of the counselor as rated by the participants on the CRF-S.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Results

Chapter four presents the statistical analysis of the three research questions previously mentioned by first reviewing the description of the participants and then discussing the analysis and results.

This study was designed to explore the effects of the counselor's spiritual background and participant spirituality on the participant's perception of the expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness of the counselor. The goal was to expand the existing research on variables (i.e., counselor disability status, spiritual factors, perceived expectations) that may impact the perceptions of the counselor.

Participants

The participants of this study were undergraduate students at a metropolitan university in the southeastern U.S. Of the 270 students who responded to the questionnaire, three (3) were excluded due to incomplete data. Specifically, two participants from the group receiving information indicating a spiritual background for the counselor did not complete the SAI. By contrast, one participant in the group which received information indicating a non-spiritual (i.e., omitted statement indicating a "closeness with a higher power") background for the counselor did not complete the CRF (Short Version). Of the 267 students remaining, 132 (49.4%) had packets where the counselor background was non-spiritual and 135 (50.6%) had packets where the counselor background was spiritual. Two hundred eighteen (81.6%) of the 267 participants were female and 49 (18.4%) of the 267 participants were male. Of the 267 students, 142 (53.2%) were White, 87 (32.6%) were African American, 16 (5.9%) were bi-racial, 4 (1.5%)

were Asian, and 18 (6.7%) were “other”. The mean age was 20.64 years old and participants ranged in age from 18 to 50 years old.

The current religious preference reported by the students was 129 (48.3%) Evangelical Protestant, 35 (13.1%) Historically Black Churches, 32 (12.0%) Catholic, 16 (6.0%) Mainline Protestant, 14 (5.2%) Agnostic, 10 (3.7%) Muslim, 10 (3.7%) did not answer, 9 (3.4%) Atheist, 2 (0.7%) Buddhist, 1 (0.4%) Hindu, 1 (0.4%) Jehovah’s Witness, and the remaining 8 were “other”. The “other” responses included some spiritual or religious backgrounds and some self-identifying as not religious. The current religious preference reported by participants is represented in the following table (Table 1) and the full data set is presented in Appendix G:

<i>Current Religious Preference</i>				
<u>Religion</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Valid Percent</u>	<u>Cumulative Percent</u>
Evangelical Protestant	129	48.3	48.3	73.4
Historically Black Churches	35	13.1	13.1	86.9
Catholic	32	12	12	25.1
Mainline Protestant	16	6	6	93.3
Agnostic	14	5.2	5.2	5.2
Blank	10	3.7	3.7	12.4
Muslim	10	3.7	3.7	97
Atheist	9	3.4	3.4	8.6
Other: Not Religious	3	1.1	1.1	98.5
Buddhist	2	0.7	0.7	13.1
Other: Spiritual	2	0.7	0.7	100
Hindu	1	0.4	0.4	73.8
Jehovah's Witness	1	0.4	0.4	87.3
Other: Apatheist	1	0.4	0.4	97.4
Other: Punjabi	1	0.4	0.4	98.9
Other: Quaker	1	0.4	0.4	99.3
Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Analysis and Results

The mean CRF-S were (Table 2): Expertness (21.03), Attractiveness, (20.05), and Trustworthiness (21.69). The mean CRF-S ratings for the packets with a non-spiritual counselor background were as follows (Table 3): Expertness (20.83), Attractiveness (19.62), and Trustworthiness (21.38). The mean CRF-S ratings for the packets with a spiritual counselor background were as follows (Table 4): Expertness (21.21), Attractiveness (20.47), and Trustworthiness (21.99).

Table 2				
<i>CRF Descriptive Statistics</i>				
		<u>Expertness Total</u>	<u>Attractiveness Total</u>	<u>Trustworthiness Total</u>
N	Valid	267	267	267
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		21.03	20.05	21.69
Median		22.00	20.00	22.00
Mode		28.00	18.00 ^a	28.00
Range		24.00	22.00	20.00
Minimum		4.00	6.00	8.00
Maximum		28.00	28.00	28.00

Table 3			
<i>Descriptive Statistics (Counselor Background = Non-Spiritual)</i>			
	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
Expertness Total	132	20.97	5.01
Attractiveness Total	132	19.62	5.51
Trustworthiness Total	132	21.38	4.56

Table 4			
<i>Descriptive Statistics (Counselor Background = Spiritual)</i>			
	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
Expertness Total	135	21.21	5.30
Attractiveness Total	135	20.47	4.88
Trustworthiness Total	135	21.99	4.62

A reliability analysis was carried out on the CRF-S subscales comprising of 4 items for each category (Expertness, Attractiveness, Trustworthiness). For the four items on the scale that assess the Expertness category the $r > .776$ and $r < .685$, and Cronbach's Alpha of .915. For the four items on the scale that assess the Attractiveness category the $r > .769$ and $r < .675$, and Cronbach's Alpha of .903. For the four items on the scale that assess the Trustworthiness category the $r > .711$ and $r < .532$, and Cronbach's Alpha of .856 (See Tables 5-7).

Table 5						
<i>Inter-Item Correlation Matrix – Expertness</i>						
	<u>CRF-Experienced</u>	<u>CRF-Expert</u>	<u>CRF-Prepared</u>	<u>CRF-Skillful</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
CRF-Experienced	1.00	.74	.73	.74	5.5	1.30
CRF-Expert	.74	1.00	.69	.72	5.08	1.45
CRF-Prepared	.73	.69	1.00	.78	5.34	1.48
CRF-Skillful	.74	.72	.78	1.00	5.24	1.47

Table 6						
<i>Inter-Item Correlation Matrix – Attractiveness</i>						
	<u>CRF-Friendly</u>	<u>CRF-Likeable</u>	<u>CRF-Sociable</u>	<u>CRF-Warm</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
CRF-Friendly	1.00	.77	.69	.68	5.32	1.28
CRF-Likeable	.77	1.00	.70	.75	5.08	1.37
CRF-Sociable	.69	.70	1.00	.68	4.90	1.54
CRF-Warm	.68	.75	.68	1.00	4.81	1.66

Table 7						
<i>Inter-Item Correlation Matrix – Trustworthiness</i>						
	<u>CRF-Honest</u>	<u>CRF-Reliable</u>	<u>CRF-Sincere</u>	<u>CRF-Trustworthy</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
CRF-Honest	1.00	.61	.56	.59	5.78	1.18
CRF-Reliable	.61	1.00	.53	.71	5.22	1.32
CRF-Sincere	.56	.53	1.00	.64	5.35	1.52
CRF-Trustworthy	.59	.71	.64	1.00	5.45	1.34

The ratings for the Awareness scale of the SAI were: 1 = Not At All True; 2 = Slightly True; 3 = Moderately True; 4 = Substantially True; 5 = Very True. The median score on the Awareness scale of the SAI was 4.11 (Substantially True) and the mean score was 3.76. The data was not linear and therefore a Log10 Transformation was used and categorized into 3 groups (Low N = 85, Medium N = 93, and High N = 89). The full data set of the Spiritual Awareness Inventory – Awareness scale before the Log10 Transformation can be found in Appendix H.

A MANOVA evaluating the effect of self-rated spirituality (low spiritual awareness, medium spiritual awareness, and high spiritual awareness), and the spiritual background of the counselor (non-spiritual, spiritual) on the perceptions of the counselor's expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness as rated by the participants was conducted. For the participants where the counselor background was spiritual, there were 135 participants and the rating of the counselor on expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness were mean scores of 5.32, 5.13, and 5.51 (respectively), and for participants where the counselor's spiritual background was non-spiritual, there were 132 participants and the rating of the counselor on expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness (respectively) were mean scores of 5.22, 4.93, and 5.37.

The results were not statistically significant in the perceptions of the counselor's Expertness, Attractiveness, and Trustworthiness (CRF-S ratings) based on the counselor background and the participant's self-rated spirituality (SAI scores) according to Wilks' Λ (.99), $F(6, 518) = .57, p = .75$. Also, results from the MANOVA were not statistically significant in the perceptions of the counselor's Expertness, Attractiveness, and Trustworthiness (CRF-S

ratings) based on the counselor background according to Wilks' Λ (.99), $F(3, 259) = .49, p = .69$. Finally, results from the MANOVA were not statistically significant in the perceptions of the counselor's Expertness, Attractiveness, and Trustworthiness (CRF-S ratings) based on the participant's self-rated spirituality (SAI scores) according to Wilks' Λ (.96), $F(6, 518) = .176, p = .11$.

<i>Multivariate Tests</i>						
Effect		<u>Value</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Hypothesis</u> <u>df</u>	<u>Error df</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Spiritual Background of the Counselor	Wilks' Lambda	.994	.491 ^b	3.000	259.000	.689
Spiritual Awareness of the Participant	Wilks' Lambda	.961	1.757 ^b	6.000	518.000	.106
Spiritual Background of the Counselor * Spiritual Awareness of the Participant	Wilks' Lambda	.987	.574 ^b	6.000	518.000	.751
a. Design: Intercept + Background + SAI_Transormed_3_Groups + Background * SAI_Transormed_3_Groups						
b. Exact statistic						
c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.						

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study was designed to explore the effects of a counselor's spiritual background and participant spirituality on the perceptions of the expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness of the counselor. This chapter includes a summary of major findings as related to the literature on spirituality in counseling. Also included is a discussion on implications for theory and research and implications for the practice of counseling. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, areas for future research, and a summary.

Summary

The counseling profession, including clients, practitioners, accrediting bodies, and ethics committees, continue to be concerned with and striving for an improved practice of ethical, multicultural, holistic counseling, including spirituality, focused on the needs of the client. The counseling profession continues to improve in working to understand the counselor's own spirituality, willingness, and knowledge of how to gain an understanding of their client's spirituality, and finally how these impact the client's perception about the counselor.

In light of research which explored factors such as counselor disability status, self-disclosure, multicultural issues, and race and ethnicity on the perceptions of the counselor and the data that the majority of people in the US claim a religious affiliation, this research was designed to add to that conversation and body of work. This was accomplished by examining the impact of the counselor's religious background on the perceptions of the counselor and examining the impact of the participant's self-rated spirituality on the perceptions of the counselor. Whereas in the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, nationally 76.6% claimed a religious affiliation and in the Southern region of the United States 86% claimed a religious

affiliation (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2014), of the 267 participants in this study 89.8% reported a religious affiliation, and the vast majority fell under the broader category of “Christian”. Compare this, for example, to the West region of the United States where 72% claimed a religious affiliation and we see the importance for counselors to understand the culture of their clients and the geographical region within which they decide to practice. As Powell and Craig (2006) noted, therapists must be open and ready to talk about religion regardless of their own religious or spiritual beliefs and practices. This study corroborates those findings in that the participants were undergraduate students at a metropolitan university in the southeastern United States and 86.1% claimed a religious affiliation.

This study went beyond religious affiliation and looked at the participants’ self-rated spirituality based on the Spiritual Awareness Inventory. Specifically, the focus was on the Awareness scale, which gives insight to the participants’ relationship and experience with God. The median score on this scale in the study was 4.11 where 4 = “Substantially True” on the 1-5 scale. Of the 267 participants, 203 had a score of 3.0 or higher where 3 = “Moderately True” and 152 had a score of 4 or higher. The participants in this study from a large metropolitan public university reported significant awareness of God in their lives with seventy-six percent indicated a significant awareness of God in their lives. This again highlights the significance of understanding and researching this area of the culture and population.

Overall the ratings of the counselor on the Counselor Rating Form – Short Version (CRF-S), with a range of 7-28 on each scale, were favorable with a median score between 20 and 22 for the three categories (Expertness, Attractiveness, Trustworthiness). For the CRF-S ratings of the counselor’s Expertness, Attractiveness, and Trustworthiness where the background was spiritual (versus the non-spiritual background), there is a consistent trend of the medium

spirituality group (based on the SAI) rating the counselor lower than the low spirituality group and the high spirituality group. This could be explored in future research to determine other factors that may be impacting the data. Although the results of the MANOVA for the research questions was not significant, there are still potential implications for practice that can be learned from this research.

Implications for Theory and Research

This research adds to the literature which supports the concept and practice that counselors should be concerned with the beliefs of their clients (Adams, 2012; Gockel, 2011; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Plante, 2016; Powell & Craig, 2006; Sperry, 2014; Stewart-Sicking, et al, 2017; Worthington, 2016). As this and other research continues to highlight this fact, theoretical approaches need to include the importance of assessing the client's beliefs as related to spiritual and/or religious beliefs and practices (Belaire, Elder, and Young, 2005), and approaches regarding how to best work with client's for whom such beliefs and practices are interwoven into their awareness, personality, daily living, and behaviors (Bannister, et al., 2015; Belaire, et al., 2005; Cragun & Friedlander, 2012; Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2008). This current research's high median score of 4.11, on a 1-5 scale, of the Awareness scale of the Spiritual Awareness Inventory suggests that both theory and practice needs to go beyond that of religious affiliation and include understanding how the client's awareness of God is incorporated into their story and behaviors.

As noted earlier, the ethical standards and standards set forth by certification and accrediting bodies include exploring and understanding the spirituality of the client for the purpose of identifying and leveraging strengths of these beliefs including the culture, resources, and community that often comes with religious affiliations. Furthermore, a community of people

with common beliefs can provide increased resources and community for the client that support growth and well-being. Strengths-based approaches are well positioned to highlight this area when integrated into the theory and supported by the research.

Implications for Practice

All counselors practice within a context that includes the geography of their counseling practice. The sample in this study was from undergraduate students at a metropolitan university in the southeastern U.S. where 89.8% of participants reported a religious affiliation, and the vast majority fell under the broader category of “Christian”. Not only that, but the large percentage of participants with high Awareness scores on the SAI, provides a deeper picture of the culture of the geographical area. Interestingly, according to Florida (2016), approximately 30% of college alumni remain in the metropolitan area where they graduate. This has implications not only on the counselor education programs based on the context of the geography of the counselor and preparing counselors to understand the spiritual and religious culture where they may practice. According to the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, 76% of the more than 35,000 Americans, from across all 50 states, surveyed claimed a Christian religious affiliation compared to 64% in the West, and further compared to 54% in Vermont (the lowest percentage by state) (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2014). Therefore, there are potentially significant differences, at least in religious affiliation, based on the geography in which the counselor practices. It is imperative for counselors to understand the culture and context where they practice. As this research points out this may also be true beyond that of religious affiliation to include spirituality as it relates to awareness of God in their lives.

Based on the demographics of this study and the high SAI ratings, we can see the need to include spirituality and religion in the assessment process as necessary to maintain a

multicultural approach and help to ensure an ethical atmosphere of non-discrimination because the client's perspective defines the context. Also, counselors must be open and ready to talk about spirituality with their clients. As this and other research (Cashwell et al., 2013; Dobmeier & Reiner, 2012; Henriksen, Polonyi, Bornsheuer-Boswell, Greger, & Watts, 2015), as well as oversight bodies (ACA, 2015; ASERVIC, 2009; CACREP, 2015), have indicated, more emphasis will continue to be placed on the importance of counselor competency in assessing and discussing spirituality with clients by understanding various factors that impact the counselor-client therapeutic relationship.

Limitations and Future Research

The main limitation of this study was the homogeneity of the sample both demographically and for the results of the SAI awareness scale. Of the 267 participants in this study, 89.8% reported a religious affiliation which was above both the national average and the Southern region average. As noted earlier, the results of the SAI awareness scale were heavily skewed with 203 of the 267 participants (76.03%) rating "Moderately True" or higher on the scale. As a result, a Log10 transformation had to be utilized before the sample could be divided into three groups of low, medium, and high spirituality. Furthermore, 218 of the 267 (81.65%) participants were female and 53.2% of the participants were white. It is possible that a more heterogeneous sample including a more diverse geographical area would produce different results.

Another limitation to the study was the design of the spiritual background of the counselor. Future research may explore greater diversity and variance in the wording of the counselor background and its impact on the perceptions of the counselor. For example, in this study the difference between the non-spiritual counselor background and the spiritual counselor

background consisted of one sentence at the end of paragraph (Appendix C). Future studies could explore less subtle differences such as including multiple statements throughout the counselor background so as to not assume the participants will notice a single difference at the end of the description of the background of the counselor. Also, it could be particularly interesting to include wording as it might appear on a website or counseling directory where the client reads about the counselor they are choosing to see.

Because one video vignette was used and controlled for variability based on the actual counseling being viewed, it also limited the content of the session. In this case the content of the session was not spiritual, and as such, the participants may have viewed the counselor's spiritual background less relevant. It is possible that a video vignette where a spiritual issue was raised in the session would produce different results and may also provide insight to the perceptions of the counselor as it pertains to integration of spirituality in the session. Another possibility for future research, would be to include religious symbols in the video vignette to match the background of the counselor as this would reinforce the spiritual background of the counselor.

Future research should address these limitations. Rather than the counselor background (spiritual versus non-spiritual) or the participant's self-rated spiritual awareness impacting the ratings of the counselor in this particular research, other factors such as genuineness, empathy, and a working alliance, may be factored in to future research regarding spirituality.

Conclusions

In summary, the results of the current study were not significant for the perceptions of the counselor's Expertness, Attractiveness, and Trustworthiness (CRF-S ratings) based on the counselor background and/or the participant's self-rated spirituality (SAI scores). The homogeneity of the sample may be the primary reason for this result. In spite of the results and

limitations, the area of spirituality and its impact on counseling including the perceptions of the counselor is an area that needs continued study.

Although the homogeneity of the sample's SAI scores creates a limitation for this study, it also highlights the localized culture and impact of religion and spirituality geographically. Counselors and counselor education programs need to be aware of the demographics of the area where they practice and the impact of religion and spirituality on that localized culture. Counselors also need to be open and ready to discuss spirituality with their clients and can continue to work toward becoming more competent in this area.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Script: Presentation to Classes for Research

Hello my name is Mark Baldwin and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Memphis in Counseling. I am conducting a research study about perceptions of the expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness of the counselor.

I will pass out a packet to each of you. Do not open the packet as we will go through it one document at a time together.

Before we begin the actual research I will ask each of you to review the informed consent and sign. The research begins with

1. a brief demographic questionnaire which will take you approximately five (5) minutes to complete.
2. Then you will receive a written description of the counselor's background and
3. watch an eight (8) minute video vignette of a counseling session in progress.
4. After watching the video, you will rate the counselor using the Counselor Rating Form in your packet, which will take approximately five (5) minutes to complete.
5. The final step is a nineteen (19) question form about yourself that will take approximately ten (10) minutes to complete. I will pass this out at the end and you will place it in your packet once completed.

Your participation is entirely voluntary; you may skip any questions that you don't want to answer. At the discretion of the class professor you may be given credit for participation and/or may be required to participate as a requirement of the class. You will be asked to note such on the demographic questionnaire. Also, all participants will be entered into a drawing to win a \$100 Amazon gift card. No personally identifying information is being collected other than the consent form containing your name and how you would like to be contacted regarding the drawing. The consent forms are kept separate from the other information collected and will be kept strictly confidential in a locked file in my office.

After I pass out the packets please review the informed consent and sign if you wish to participate.

Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

Appendix B

Demographic Questionnaire

Age: _____

Race: (based on U.S. Census Bureau categories)

- € African American
- € American Indian or Alaska Native
- € Asian
- € Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- € White
- € Bi-Racial
- € Other: _____

Gender: _____

City and State where you grew up?

Religious background growing up: (based on US Religious Landscape Survey)

- € Atheist
- € Agnostic
- € Buddhist
- € Catholic
- € Evangelical Protestant
- € Hindu
- € Historically Black Churches
- € Jehovah's Witness
- € Jewish
- € Mainline Protestant
- € Mormon
- € Muslim
- € Orthodox
- € Other: _____

Current religious preference:

- € Atheist
- € Agnostic
- € Buddhist
- € Catholic
- € Evangelical Protestant
- € Hindu
- € Historically Black Churches
- € Jehovah's Witness
- € Jewish
- € Mainline Protestant
- € Mormon
- € Muslim
- € Orthodox
- € Other: _____

What do you consider your social class:

- € upper
- € upper middle
- € middle
- € lower middle
- € lower

What type of High School did you attend:

- € home-schooled
- € non-religious private
- € public
- € religious private
- € Other: _____

Was your participation a requirement for a class?

- € Yes
- € No

Appendix C

Counselor Backgrounds

Counselor Background A

My name is Bill. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor with a Mental Health Service Provider designation in Tennessee. I have been in private practice for over 20 years and am a member of the American Counseling Association. I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Mississippi and my Master's Degree in Counseling from the University of Memphis. I have experience in both individual, group and marriage counseling. My approach to counseling is client-centered, meaning that I allow the client to guide the session. I am actively involved in the community.

Counselor Background B

My name is Bill. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor with a Mental Health Service Provider designation in Tennessee. I have been in private practice for over 20 years and am a member of the American Counseling Association. I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Mississippi and my Master's Degree in Counseling from the University of Memphis. I have experience in both individual, group and marriage counseling. My approach to counseling is client-centered, meaning that I allow the client to guide the session. I am actively involved in the community. Also, I have a closeness with a higher being that helps promote meaning and purpose in my life.

Appendix D

Video Vignette:

Counselor: Bill; Client: Larry

Larry: ... it really is pretty simple. I've been at this company for 8 years and I thought this is where I was gonna retire from. You know, my last job. I wasn't gonna have anymore and with the down turn in the economy and everything else they've essentially gone to declaring bankruptcy...

Bill: ...wow...

Larry: ...so uh, and they've gone from 1500 employees to 89...

Bill: ...wow...

Larry: uh, so...

Bill: ...and you didn't make the cut.

Larry: Well, actually I did. They called me and asked me for three more names...

Bill: ...ok...

Larry: ...of people to lay off and I'd already laid off half my people. So...

Bill: ...yeah...

Larry: ...I just gave them one and I said just take me and...

Bill: ...wow...

Larry: ...let the other people keep working. So...

Bill: ...that was quite a sacrifice...

Larry: ...well, when you've laid off half your people already...um....and most of them are younger than I am, all with families, you know. Um, it'd probably be harder for me to find a job at my age but I just felt like it was the right thing to do.

Bill: Wow.

Larry: The only trouble is now, I really don't know [chuckling] what I'm gonna do.

Bill: Fair enough. Well, I mean that was certainly a sacrifice for the moment but also kinda the way that you saw ending your career over the course of your lifetime. You were planning to retire there.

Larry: Uh. Yes. I really thought that would be the, you know, the last job. Kinda the last stop along the way.

Bill: Right.

Larry: And I guess my problem is I've never really looked for a job. Uh. And as I begin to think about it, I don't know that there are really gonna be any jobs for me in this area and at the same time I don't want to move.

Bill: Wow.

Larry: So, I've kinda been thinking, at least I've had some thoughts of, you know, do something that you've always wanted to do and never been able to do but I don't have any training to [laughter] do the things that...

Bill: ...What, what would that be...

Larry: ...uhh...

Bill: ...What've you always dreamed of doing?

Larry: Well, I didn't start out this way but, as...as years have passed and the jobs I've had, I've really thought more about teaching. Uh. It would be...but it's a totally different career path. I'm not really looking to start a new career but I'm just looking to do something that I know I would enjoy or think I would enjoy.

Bill: And maybe get paid too?

Larry: And get paid too, yes, I do need to make a living [laughter]. So, I'm really not ready financially to retire so I have to find something to do anyways. Uh...

Bill: ...So, what are the steps that stand between where you are now and your being able to do that?

Larry: Um. There's, my wife fortunately is working but it's not, you know, really a high paying job. Um. So there's some financial considerations. Uh...and I think the rest of it is just fear [chuckle]...

Bill: ...uh ha...

Larry: I haven't been to school in 40 years...

Bill: ...ok...

Larry: ...you know, so...

Bill: ...So you'd have to go back and get a teaching degree or?

Larry: Yes. I mean I'd have to become certified.

Bill: Do you have any college hours toward that yet or?

Larry: Well, I've got a Bachelor's degree but that was, you know, from the '60's. So, I don't know...I guess I haven't investigated enough...I don't know...I don't think any of that would even count or apply today. So...

Bill: What was your Bachelor's degree in?

Larry: Business.

Bill: Ok.

Larry: Business and economics.

Bill: What would you like to teach?

Larry: Um. Probably math [chuckle]...uh... there's really not a direct correlation there. So, I don't know even how long it would take me to get it and..uh...and what I'd have to do. But also, I...I think the biggest thing is...can I study? You know, I don't know if school's different today [chuckle] than when I went and...

Bill: ...or if you're different today than when you went?

Larry: Well I'm...Yes, I'm a lot different today [chuckle] than when I went to school.

Bill: You know, I've found that adults tend to be better students than when they were 20 or 30 years earlier because of their interest level and a lot of work habits that they've picked up in the world of work.

Larry: Um hm.

Bill: Have you...have you...do you even know where to start to find out how far away from that kinda dream realized you would be?

Larry: I haven't' done anything. I guess I'd have to go meet with the school counselor.

Bill: Right. Yeah. Probably somebody at the school board or at one of the universities could probably sit down with your transcript and help you to, to see what you have that would count toward it and see how far you'd have to go.

Larry: Yeah. I don't even know what the admission requirements would be today. Uh. Cause I think that the test that my kids took to go to school, you know, was the ACT test.

Bill: Right.

Larry: That didn't even exist when I [laughter] went to school. So...uh... I don't know the fact if, if the fact that I have a degree would just mean I could, you know, uh, that would qualify for, qualify for admissions or not. I really...I haven't investigated so I don't know... really what my requirements would be or anything else but. Uh. I guess it just scares me to death to think about it bringing a bunch of books home and reading and studying again.

Bill: Financially are you in a position where you would have the time to study or would you have a lot of pressure on you for having to produce income and study at the same time?

Larry: Well, well, I'd have to find something to do to generate more income than what just my wife makes. Uh. Otherwise it means, really, you know, selling the house and everything else. But in order to stay there I'd have to have, at least, some kind of a part-time job.

Bill: Right.

Larry: You know, I think we'd be ok if I could make enough money to just make the house payment. If I could do that but...

Bill: ...is she supportive of you going back to school if you need to and pursue...

Larry: ...Well...Yes...Yes and no. You know, it's...you know...I'll...We'll just do whatever we need to do...says all the right things. And the next breath is...Well, I need some new clothes [laughter]...so...So, I'm a little nervous about that to. I know she wants to support me and do all of those things but if at the same time she's looking...she needs new clothes for work and so forth, you know, it might be ok for six or seven months but then, you know, I'm afraid I might lose that support...

Bill: ...right...

Larry: ...at some point.

Bill: Well, and it sounds like there's a lot of...you have a lot more questions right now than you have answers about what it would take to pursue that. And for probably both of you, certainly understandably for her and, and for you, it's kinda hard to commit to something you don't really have all of the information for. [pause] So where do you think that leaves you?

Larry: So, so you're saying my first step is go find out what it's gonna take first? ...

Appendix E

COUNSELOR RATING FORM (short version)

Client: Larry

Please rate the counselor on the following characteristics. For each characteristic on the following pages, there is a seven-point scale that ranges from “not very” to “very.” Please mark and “X” at the point on the scale that best represents how you view the counselor:

Friendly

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Experienced

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Honest

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Likeable

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Expert

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Reliable

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Sociable

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Prepared

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Sincere

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Warm

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Skillful

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Trustworthy

Not Very ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Very

Appendix F

SPIRITUAL ASSESSMENT INVENTORY

Modified from:

Copyright Todd W. Hall, Ph.D. & Keith J. Edwards, Ph.D.

Instructions

1. Please respond to each statement below by writing the number that best represents your experience in the blank to the right of the statement.
2. It is best to answer according to what *really reflects* your experience rather than what you think your experience should be.
3. Give the answer that comes to mind first. Don't spend too much time thinking about an item.
4. Give the best possible response to each statement even if it does not provide all the information you would like.
5. Try your best to respond to all statements. Your answers will be completely confidential.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not At All True	Slightly True	Moderately True	Substantially True	Very True
1		I have a sense of how God is working in my life			_____A
3		God's presence feels very real to me			_____A
6		Listening to God is an essential part of my life			_____A
9		I am aware of God prompting me to do things			_____A
11		My experiences of God's responses to me impact me greatly			_____A
15		I am aware of God's presence in my interactions with other people			_____A
17		I am aware of God responding to me in a variety of ways			_____A
19		I am aware of God attending to me in times of need			_____A
21		I am aware of God telling me to do something			_____A
23		My experiences of God's presence impacts me greatly			_____A
25		I have a sense of the direction in which God is guiding me			_____A
28		I am aware of God communicating to me in a variety of ways			_____A
30		I am aware of God's presence in times of need			_____A
31		From day to day. I sense God being with me			_____A
34		I have a sense of God communicating guidance to me			_____A
36		I experience an awareness of God speaking to me personally			_____A
40		I have a strong impression of God's presence			_____A
42		I am aware of God being very near to me			_____A
44		When I consult God about decisions in my life, I am aware to my prayers of his direction and help			_____A

Scales:

A = Awareness

Appendix G

Current Religious Preference of Participants: Full Data Set

<i>Current Religious Preference of Participants</i>				
	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Valid Percent</u>	<u>Cumulative Percent</u>
Valid	2	.7	.7	.7
Agnostic	14	5.2	5.2	6.0
Atheist	9	3.4	3.4	9.4
Blank	4	1.5	1.5	10.9
Buddhist	2	.7	.7	11.6
Catholic	32	12.0	12.0	23.6
Evangelical Protestant	27	10.1	10.1	33.7
Hindu	1	.4	.4	34.1
Historically Black Churches	35	13.1	13.1	47.2
Jehovah's Witness	1	.4	.4	47.6
Mainline Protestant	6	2.2	2.2	49.8
Muslim	10	3.7	3.7	53.6
Other Baptist	1	.4	.4	53.9
Other: Anglican	1	.4	.4	54.3
Other: Apatheist	1	.4	.4	54.7
Other: Baptist	24	9.0	9.0	63.7
Other: Baptist Christian	3	1.1	1.1	64.8
Other: Baptist/Nondenominational Christian	1	.4	.4	65.2
Other: Baptist Christian	1	.4	.4	65.5
Other: Blank	4	1.5	1.5	67.0
Other: Christian	40	15.0	15.0	82.0
Other: Christian Disciples of Christ	1	.4	.4	82.4
Other: Christian/Spiritual	1	.4	.4	82.8
Other: Christianity	2	.7	.7	83.5
Other: Church of Christ	3	1.1	1.1	84.6
Other: Church of God in Christ	1	.4	.4	85.0
Other: Episcopal	1	.4	.4	85.4
Other: Indifferent	1	.4	.4	85.8
Other: Lutheran	2	.7	.7	86.5
Other: Methodist	5	1.9	1.9	88.4
Other: Non-denominational	1	.4	.4	88.8
Other: Non-religious	1	.4	.4	89.1
Other: Nondenominational	1	.4	.4	89.5

Other: Nondenominational Christian	1	.4	.4	89.9
Other: Nondenominational Christian	9	3.4	3.4	93.3
Other: Nondenominational Christian	1	.4	.4	93.6
Other: Not Religious	1	.4	.4	94.0
Other: Pentecostal	2	.7	.7	94.8
Other: Presbyterian	5	1.9	1.9	96.6
Other: Protestant	3	1.1	1.1	97.8
Other: Punjabi	1	.4	.4	98.1
Other: Quaker	1	.4	.4	98.5
Other: Southern Baptist	2	.7	.7	99.3
Other: Southern Baptist Christian	1	.4	.4	99.6
Other: Spiritual	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Appendix H
Spiritual Assessment Inventory – Awareness Scale: Data Set Before Log10 Transformation

<i>Spiritual Assessment Inventory – Awareness Scale</i>					
		<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Valid Percent</u>	<u>Cumulative Percent</u>
Valid	1.0000	11	4.1	4.1	4.1
	1.0526	1	.4	.4	4.5
	1.1053	1	.4	.4	4.9
	1.1579	1	.4	.4	5.2
	1.2105	2	.7	.7	6.0
	1.2632	1	.4	.4	6.4
	1.3158	1	.4	.4	6.7
	1.3684	2	.7	.7	7.5
	1.6316	1	.4	.4	7.9
	1.6842	1	.4	.4	8.2
	1.7368	2	.7	.7	9.0
	1.7895	2	.7	.7	9.7
	1.8421	3	1.1	1.1	10.9
	1.8947	2	.7	.7	11.6
	2.0000	2	.7	.7	12.4
	2.0526	1	.4	.4	12.7
	2.1053	2	.7	.7	13.5
	2.1579	1	.4	.4	13.9
	2.2105	3	1.1	1.1	15.0
	2.2632	3	1.1	1.1	16.1
	2.3684	3	1.1	1.1	17.2
	2.5263	1	.4	.4	17.6
	2.5789	3	1.1	1.1	18.7
	2.6316	5	1.9	1.9	20.6
	2.6842	2	.7	.7	21.3
	2.7895	1	.4	.4	21.7
	2.8421	1	.4	.4	22.1
	2.8947	2	.7	.7	22.8
	2.9474	3	1.1	1.1	24.0
	3.0000	1	.4	.4	24.3
	3.0526	2	.7	.7	25.1
	3.1053	4	1.5	1.5	26.6
	3.1579	1	.4	.4	27.0
	3.2105	2	.7	.7	27.7
	3.2632	1	.4	.4	28.1
	3.3158	1	.4	.4	28.5
	3.3529	1	.4	.4	28.8
	3.3684	2	.7	.7	29.6
	3.4211	3	1.1	1.1	30.7
	3.4737	3	1.1	1.1	31.8
	3.5263	2	.7	.7	32.6

3.5789	2	.7	.7	33.3
3.6316	6	2.2	2.2	35.6
3.6842	4	1.5	1.5	37.1
3.7368	2	.7	.7	37.8
3.7895	4	1.5	1.5	39.3
3.8947	7	2.6	2.6	41.9
3.9474	3	1.1	1.1	43.1
4.0000	11	4.1	4.1	47.2
4.0526	4	1.5	1.5	48.7
4.1053	7	2.6	2.6	51.3
4.1579	1	.4	.4	51.7
4.2105	5	1.9	1.9	53.6
4.2632	6	2.2	2.2	55.8
4.3158	4	1.5	1.5	57.3
4.3684	6	2.2	2.2	59.6
4.4211	9	3.4	3.4	62.9
4.4737	4	1.5	1.5	64.4
4.5263	10	3.7	3.7	68.2
4.5556	1	.4	.4	68.5
4.5789	8	3.0	3.0	71.5
4.6316	7	2.6	2.6	74.2
4.6842	6	2.2	2.2	76.4
4.7368	4	1.5	1.5	77.9
4.7895	7	2.6	2.6	80.5
4.8421	4	1.5	1.5	82.0
4.8947	4	1.5	1.5	83.5
4.9474	9	3.4	3.4	86.9
5.0000	35	13.1	13.1	100.0
Total	267	100.0	100.0	