Religiosity and well-being: meaning in life as coping strategy in Korean-American Judeo-Christian adolescents

Stephen M. Kang
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: http://rdw.rowan.edu/etd

Part of the Educational Psychology Commons

Recommended Citation
http://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/731

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact LibraryTheses@rowan.edu.
RELIGIOSITY AND WELL-BEING: MEANING IN LIFE AS COPING STRATEGY
IN KOREAN-AMERICAN JUDEO-CHRISTIAN ADOLESCENTS

by
Stephen M. Kang

A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 7, 2008

Approved by

Date Approved May 7, 2008

© 2008 Stephen M. Kang
The purposes of this exploratory investigation were to (a) assess the cognitive understanding of meaning in life as coping strategy utilized by Korean-American Judeo-Christian adolescents between the ages of 11 to 18 \((n = 74)\) and (b) to determine the significance of meaning in life in relations to subjective well-being. Initial hypothesis about "born again" Christian faith failed to support any significant correlation when compared with religiosity, meaning, and well-being indices. However, intrinsic religious orientation showed significant associations with meaning in life, purpose in life, prayer, daily Bible reading, and subjective well-being in satisfaction with life. Multiple regression analyses revealed prayer, intrinsic religious orientation, and religious meaning significantly predicted subjective well-being in satisfaction with life. Implications for utilizing religious meaning in life for the Christian adolescent population in reference to promoting subjective well-being in satisfaction with life are discussed.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Bucks County Presbyterian Church for allowing me to utilize their survey data collected for my thesis project. I would also like to thank all the faculty members at Rowan University for making my education enjoyable. Most of all, I would like to thank my wife and my daughter for sacrificing their time.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ii
List of Tables vi

CHAPTER PAGE

I. Introduction 1
   Need 1
   Purpose 2
   Hypotheses 3
   Theory/Background 3
   Definition of Terms 4
   Assumptions 5
   Limitations 5

II. Review of Literature 7
   Introduction 7
   Religion and Spirituality 7
   On the Popular Usage of Spirituality 9
   On the Popular Usage of Religion 11
   On the Usage of Religiousness and Its Relations to Spirituality 11
   Spirituality and Religion on Coping 13
   Understanding the Nature of Religion and Coping Mechanism 14
   Spiritual Appraisal 15
Personal Factors 17
Religious Orientation 19
Spiritual Coping Behavior 21
Spiritual Connections 24
Meaning in Life or Meaning of Life 25
Meaning in Life and Well-Being 28
Meaning in Life as Religious Coping Mediator 29
Summary 30

III. Design 32
Sample 32
Materials 33
Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) 33
Purpose in Life Scale (PIL) 34
Meaning 35
Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) 36
Hypotheses 36
Analysis of Data 37
Summary 37

IV. Results 38
Statistics 38
Meaning in Life and Satisfaction with Life 38
"Born Again" Faith and Other Religiosity Variables 40
Religious Orientations and Religious Practices 40
Regression Analysis on Satisfaction with Life

V. Discussion

Introduction

"Born Again" Faith

Intrinsic Religious Orientation and Other Variables

Meaning in Life and Purpose in Life

Conclusion

Limitations

Implications

References

Appendices

Appendix A Permission Letter from Bucks County Presbyterian Church

Appendix B Demographic Questionnaire

Appendix C Religious Orientation Scale (ROS)

Appendix D Purpose in Life (PIL)

Appendix E Meaning

Appendix F Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1 Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Matrix</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2 Regression Analysis on Satisfaction with Life</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Need

In recent years, growing attention has been given to the construct of meaning in life in conjunction with growing focus on religion and its connections to well-being (Emmons and Paloutzian, 2003, Kirkpatrick and Hood, 1990, Willis, Yaeger, and Sandy, 2003, and Stefano, Fricchione, and Benson, 2002). Meaning in life has been identified as being a potential link between religion and health. It is suggested that one derives a greater sense of meaning in life from their religious involvement both mentally and physically and in turn achieve greater well-being from it (Steger and Frazier, 2005).

Upon examination of relations among religiosity, psychological health and physical health, Pargament (2002) concluded that it is important to reflect on factors that are mediating these relationships. Better grasp of understanding why religiosity is related to well-being would benefit development in the study of religion, health, and psychology for use in clinical settings.

One mediating factor of high priority between religion and well-being is the construct of meaning in life and it needs further investigations (Chamberlain and Zika, 1988). Religion provides individuals with means to experience purposeful life, a sense of meaning, and rationality on ultimate truths (Emmons and Paloutzian, 2003). Religion allows one to pursue a sacred or a holy life in the domain of faith community and it provides opportunities for people to realize meaning in life as individuals; however, when
does this realization occur? This is a question that has not been answered. When does an individual become aware of one’s meaning in life in relation to their religious faith? This is rather an important question to answer in constructing a theory of cognitive understanding in personality development for the religious. If this understanding is age dependent, then finding a starting point would be helpful in clinical setting. If this cognitive understanding of developing meaning in life in reference to one’s own religion is age specific, then counseling can incorporate such understanding to promote better well-being by utilizing meaning in life as a coping strategy.

Purpose

Purpose of this study was to assess well-being for the adolescents in the Korean-American Christian community in relations to their religious orientation and a sense of meaning in life both secular and religious.

First, there was a need to examine the existence of faith-based construct of meaning in life for those who are of faith in the evangelical Christian religion. Second, there was a need to examine the existence of cognitive understanding where one became aware of one’s meaning in life and utilized it as a coping strategy for well-being. Third, there was a need to validate satisfaction in life, or well-being in comparison to having general life’s purpose, or a religious meaning in life. Lastly, there was a great need to look at the religious adolescent population and examine if this population utilized the cognitive understanding of “born again” nature of evangelical Christian faith to achieve greater well-being.
Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that cognitive understanding of meaning in life (offered by Frankl, 2000) is positively correlated with satisfaction in life in Korean-American Christian adolescents. It is also hypothesized that adolescents of intrinsic religious orientation and “born again” Christian orientation will show positive associations with daily practices of the Christian religion such as Bible reading and prayer. Participants with intrinsic religious orientation will utilize religious meaning more significantly than general purpose in life to achieve satisfaction with life. “Born again” nature of Christian faith is a strong predictor for one’s religiosity that is consistent with the intrinsic religious orientation.

Theory/Background

Religious orientation has long been studied. Initially, studies have come from Gordon Allport’s conceptualization of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity measures in 1950’s prejudice studies (Kirkpatrick and Hood, 1990). Allport’s religious orientation scale (ROS) distinguished intrinsic religiosity as practicing religion as a goal in itself. Religion is one’s life and lives according to it as an end in itself. On the other hand, extrinsic religiosity refers to a religious orientation where religion is a functional practice for an individual. It is utilized for a purpose and it is a means to an end. People of the extrinsic religious orientation were initially reported for being more prejudiced in Allport and Ross (1967) study.

Initially, ROS has been linked with prejudice but many other scholars have linked ROS with other factors such as a buffering effect of religiosity for adolescent substance
abuse (Willis, Yaeger, and Sandy, 2003), the effect of religious involvement of the urban adolescents and the prevalence of drug use (Hadaway, Elifson, and Petersen, 1984), and the intrinsic religiousness acting as a stress moderator in coping (Park, Cohen, and Herb, 1990). All these studies have shown positive correlation between the intrinsic religious orientation and well-being.

One chief function of a religion is to provide people with the experience of having purpose in life (Emmons and Paloutzian, 2003). Furthermore, religion gives people sensibility for meaning. People need to feel that their lives have certain purpose. People with meaning in their lives have more purposeful, significant, and understandable approach in life. This outlook in life, in turn, will create satisfaction in life. In this domain, intrinsic religiousness has been positively related to formulating meaning in life (Chamberlain and Zika, 1988).

Definition of Terms

Religiosity: The importance or predominance of religion in a person’s life where religion is the knowledge, beliefs, feelings, actions, and experiences of an individual who belongs to a system of transcendent faith such as a church, a religious sect, or a religious organization (Emmons and Paloutzian, 2003). Religion can be variously inclusive of subjective feelings, thoughts, and practices that are derived from the pursuit of the sacred. It can cultivate a relationship and responsibility to others through many moral and ethical codes presented by a particular religious theology (Zinnbauer et al., 1997)
Purpose in life: This term can be interchangeable with meaning in life where a person is committed to a concept or a set of values that makes one’s life more understandable and avail attainable personal goals for fulfillment (Ryff and Keyes, 1995)

Meaning in life: In this study, this term is synonymous with religious meaning that grew out of the theoretical framework of Viktor Frankl who asserted that the “will to meaning” is the main driving force behind human existence (Frankl, 1963). This is the driving engine behind personal goals. Meaning in life will drive a person to attain that person’s purpose in life (Pargament, 1997).

Satisfaction with Life: It is a state of personal contentment of the given situation and current condition. This can be achieved through self perceived subjective appraisal of well-being. This does not have age limit from young and old alike (Diener et al., 1985).

Assumptions

In this study, it is assumed that all participants came from a Christian religious background and they reported the questionnaires with honesty and accuracy. In addition, all data analysis did not input personal bias in interpreting the findings. Another assumption is that all the questionnaire use in this study was valid measures for its specified use.

Limitations

This study had a particular limitation on the very definition of meaning in life. This study solely based its definition on Viktor Frankl’s meaning in life described above in the definition of terms. Another limitation of the study was that data collected for this
survey was a reinterpretation of previously collected data provided by Bucks County Presbyterian Church in Levittown, Pennsylvania. No controlling factors were considered during data collection. After initial screening of the data collected by the church, two of the surveys were dropped from the final analysis. Only a small sample size was analyzed for this study. Also, the sample size in this study was very homogenous in its ethnic make up and religious denomination. Since the survey was conducted at a Korea-American Presbyterian church, all the participants were Korean-Americans professing to be Presbyterians. This was a convenient sampling, not a random sampling. This may skew the final results and create biased analysis of the data.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

There are a great number of investigations that have made connections between religion and spirituality to general mental and physical health or well-being of individuals (Hill and Pargament, 2003; Hill et al., 2002; Maltyby, Lewis, and Day, 1999). One could ask what it is about religion and spirituality that contribute to one's well-being. Many researchers have given explanations about this question with certain framework of social, psychological, physiological mediators that may account for the connections to religion and spirituality that may lead to well-being. One also needs to think about religion and spirituality in itself. Much of the empirical studies have focused on connections between religion and spirituality to conclude well-being but what is it about the nature of religion and spirituality in itself, a priori, that may account for health connection of well-being.¹

In this chapter, study of religion and spirituality, coping, and well-being are discussed in detail.

Religion and Spirituality²

As noted by Hill and Pargament (2003), historical definition of religion

¹ The wording in this manuscript for well-being and health are synonymous for usage. Well-being and health indicate both physical well-being (physical health) and mental well-being (mental health).
² Much of studies of religion and spirituality are based on Judeo-Christian faith and reader should first refer to such faith base. When other religious faiths are discussed, it will be defined and given specific religious faith discussed.
in the domain of modern psychology has been both individual and institutional in its construct. William James (1902) made distinction between “firsthand” religious experience and inherited tradition. For James, these two experiences were both descriptive within the domain of religion. However, more recent development in the meaning of religion is becoming fixed into a system of ideological commitment. It has become a discernment and practice of religion, failing to incorporate personal component for human piety (Wulff, 1996). On the other hand, the term spirituality is gaining increasing popularity in its usage for personal aspect or individual side of “firsthand” religious experience. Here we see this dichotomy of personal spirituality and institutional religion in definitional usage to represent these belief constructs.

Hill and Pargament (2003) also pointed out that such contrasts in definition may serve as danger to religion and spirituality in perception of the two notions. First, there is danger of dividing religion and spirituality into institutional and personal realm that could lead one to think that there are no relations between the two. In fact, all spiritual expressions elicited in social context and all institutional faith based traditions are focused on leading an individual to personal faith expression and experiences (Wuthnow, 1998). Second, many of us understand the evolving definition of the terms - spirituality is good as to religion is bad. However, such simplistic understanding can mislead one to overlook many important facets of religion and spirituality (Pargament, 2002). Lastly, the reality of spiritual experiences arises out of organized religion. One could argue that an innate that is a priori, realization of spiritual experience can be experienced without being exposed to organized religion. However, empirical reality is that an individual
experiences spirituality initiated by organized religion and there is danger in failing to see this distinction of relationship (Marler and Hadaway, 2002).

Religion and spirituality are not dichotomous construct of belief but related. One could argue about the definition of religious and spiritual construct but it is limited. However, spirituality can be understood in terms of sacred where one searches for this transcendence. Spirituality is a process in which people seek to discover, to hold, and to transform this sacred transcendence in their lives (Pargament, 1997). It is this search that occurs within a larger religious context that may be traditional or nontraditional (Hill et al., 2002). Sacred is the key to spirituality and this is what distinguishes between religion and spirituality from other physiological phenomena. The sacred includes God, divinity, and the transcendent. It contains extraordinary characters: the innate nature, a priori, self-existent and non-physical realm. The sacred conjoins physical realms of the religious constructs and the spiritual constructs. It is this pathway, a destination required for the religious/spiritual person. When studying psychology of religion, measuring the role of this sacred pathways and destinations is a challenge because empirical studies can only measure phenomena described by our human faculties but objective of our studies lie within the sacred and that is transcendent (Hill and Pargament, 2003).

On the Popular Usage of Spirituality

Usage of spiritual is defined in many ways and usually separated from the physical or material reality. Spirituality is generally understood as having some component of the transcendence of the physical limits of space, time, matter, and energy; however, certain aspects of spirituality are observable through spiritual practices and
spiritually based behaviors (Thoresen and Harris, 2002). The concept of spirituality is multidimensional and there are no simple distinctive boundaries. When talking about spirituality, it is likely to differ from individual to individual and when scientists study certain characteristic parameters about the spirituality such as beliefs, feelings, perceptions, behavioral practices and effects, they all stem from individual believer’s perspective which are phenomena that fall short of comprehending the a priori definition of the thing in itself. Essentially, one is describing physical manifestations of the thing that is being studies -spirituality (Miller and Thoresen, 2003). Although behavioral scientists often make inferences about observable scientific constructs of certain parameters in human psychology, similar procedural methodology and problems also arise as studying about spirituality because unless it is purely descriptive in nature, true inferences or causal relationship of the mental or psychological realm cannot be concluded in any empirical studies. This is also a shortcoming of the scientific methodology in psychology. Therefore, when studies are conducted for spirituality construct, one needs to assert operational definition that is specific for certain category of religion namely tradition of religious belief. Much of the empirical studies have examined Judeo-Christian line of belief and when one describes spirituality, it should follow Judeo-Christian spirituality in its operational definition. For other traditions of religion, parameters of such belief should be identified and described. Unless this difference of meaning can be identified, procedural tension will arise in the study of spirituality.
On the Popular Usage of Religion

As noted earlier in this manuscript, religion is an institutional phenomenon. In this phenomenon, it is procedural behavior or construct that is of primarily material, organized as institutional. Religions are functional social bodies that constitute operational definition of transcendent belief. They are defined by their boundaries based on this operational definition. Mostly, religions differ by particular beliefs and practices that give rise to its membership and mode of social organization (Miller and Thoresen, 2003). It is physical and social expression of the transcendent usually characterized by non-spiritual concerns. Therefore, religion can be viewed primarily as a social phenomenon where as spirituality is mainly viewed as an individual phenomenon (Thoresen, 1998).

On the Usage of Religiousness and Its Relations to Spirituality

One other point of interest is the descriptor of being religious and that is religiousness. Religiousness describes certain adherence to beliefs and practices of the religion described at the level of the individual. In this category, religiousness captures the level of being spiritual by practicing the social construct of religion by behavioral expression of one’s belief about the religion described. However, flaw in this practice can be seen when an individual does not have spiritual motivation but only the religious motivation and that is practicing institutional social behavior without spirituality (Miller and Thoresen, 2003). Here, it may seem odd to deter religiousness away from the spirituality but individual can be religious without being spiritual thus unspiritual religiousness or unreligious spirituality can be practiced purely based on its practical
social benefits such as attending confession or feeling good about oneself from having positive spiritual aura.

Zinnbauer et al. (1997) surveyed 346 people from Ohio and Pennsylvania on perceived similarities and differences on religiousness and spirituality. This study also measured beliefs and attitudes about God, oneself, and the others. This study showed that people most often followed religiousness and spirituality. They overlapped each other but were not the same in 42% of the sample participants. 39% of participants believed that spirituality is a broader concept and had religiousness as its component but only 10% perceived religiousness as the broader concept.

Woods and Ironson (1999) examined 60 people who had severe medical illnesses such as cancer, HIV, and a myocardial infarction. This study was conducted as semi-structured interviews with participants. In the interviews, participants’ spiritually and religiously motivated beliefs and behaviors were asked by the interviewers. Out of 60 participants, 43% acknowledged that they were spiritual, 37% as religious, and 20% stated that they were both religious and spiritual. In these three categories of subgroups - people who perceived themselves to be spiritual - viewed God as loving, forgiving, and nonjudgmental. On the other hand, people who perceived themselves to be religious viewed God as being more judging creator.

Shahabi et al. (2002) conducted similar study on distinction between religiosity and spirituality. They have examined 1,422 participants from their stratified national sample of adults with mean age of 45.6 years. Out of this sample population, 52% viewed themselves as being both spiritual and religious. 10% of the participants viewed themselves to be only spiritual and 10% said they were only religious. Out of the sample
population, 28% considered themselves to be neither religious nor spiritual. Few interesting demographics about each subgroup were found. Those who considered themselves to be only spiritual were female, younger in age, and educated than the older and larger spiritual and religious subgroups. Participants who described themselves to be only religious were found to be more judgmental, more structured in their beliefs, and more prejudice than all other subgroups.

From cognitive level of understanding and self-perception of spiritual and religious construct, there were some overlaps between the two but could have significantly different meaning of the words in common usage of spirituality and religion.

Spirituality and Religion in Coping

Over the past 20 years, religion and health has become a vastly studied area of interest for its benefit in both clinical and non-clinical settings. This increased interest in religion and health may be due to the fact that people turn to religion under extraneous circumstances such as terminal illness (Ganzevoort, 1998). Many empirical studies have identified significant connections between religious orientation, personal well being, and using meaning in life for construct of coping appraisal (Steger and Frazier, 2005).

One could ask what it is about religion and spirituality that describe connections to well-being. Researchers have answered this inquiry in many different facets of their investigations including psychological, physiological, and social mediators that may connect religion and spirituality to personal health. In these studies, the authors looked into this question more in detail and assessed the appraisal mediators for coping that lead to better personal health or well-being.
Understanding the Nature of Religion and Coping Mechanism

In utilizing the nature of religion as a coping mechanism, spiritual personal factors, such as belief construct, directed individual belief orientation and helped interpret life experiences. Such thought orientations will help construct individual meaning out of his or her stressors and provide more optimistic outlook in one’s life (Schwab and Petersen, 1990).

Spiritual appraisal and coping behavior are two operating mediators in the process of coping with stressor. Spiritual appraisal is the initial assessment mechanism where one attempts at making sense of the stressor based on individual religious belief orientation. One can explain through attempts at looking at a priori causal relation such as God’s will as the determinant factor for individual stressor. This God’s will is viewed as an end in itself and appraisal of such cause to be good in itself. When such appraisal is made, making meaning out of the situation will reduce initial levels of anxiety about the stressor (Davis, Nolen-Hoeksema, and Larson, 1998). When coping with stressor, spiritual coping involves behavior that are response to either problem-focused or emotion focused in its reaction to given stress.

Lastly, in this model, spirituality and religion can be employed at the situational meaning. The ability to making meaning out of given stressor will lead to success in coping, adaptation, and well-being. On the other hand, if meaning cannot be in the situation, it can lead to poor coping and mal-adaptation of the situation and ultimately result in poor outcome of the situation (Emmons, 1999). Here, spirituality can play a major role in constructing meaning in relation to personal attitudes and beliefs about the given situation in reference to self. A spiritual process of meaning-making can affect all
aspects of personal life that includes work, personal relationships, general attitude towards life and personal God (Park and Folkman, 1997).

Spiritual Appraisal

As described by Gall et al. (2005), coping process starts with appraisal and examines attributes that can play an important part in coping with stressor. When processing appraisal for the given stress, individuals can make cognitive perception of the situation in relation to the cause from self, fate or luck, others, and God (Pargament and Hahn, 1986). Furthermore, attributions of God in stressful situation may help individuals to preserve their belief in a just world. Attributes of spiritual causality are common means for comprehending stressful life events such as illness or injury.

In this spiritual appraisal, an individual first looks at desecration as spiritual evaluation of danger or loss. This desecration is evaluated for its damage to one’s sacred or connectedness to God. Following such assessment or appraisal, secondary appraisal evaluates the availability and efficiency of spiritual coping strategies that could be utilized in response to a given stressor.

Harris et al. (1995) examined the role of religion in long-term health of heart transplant patients through the first year post-transplant surgery. They interviewed these patients at 2, 7, and 12 months post-op intervals. Over the course of one year, frequency of church attendance increased from 18% at 2 months to 44% at 12 months post-op. Patients who considered their religion to be very influential in their lives had better physical functioning with fewer health related worries and less difficulty following the medical regimen at 1 year interval than other transplant recipients. Patients who reported
regular reliance on God for decision making and who prayed frequently in private had fewer problems following the medical regimen than other transplant recipients. Also, those who regular attended church reported less anxiety than those who were not regular attendees. Furthermore, those who were active members of their own congregation had higher self-esteem than those who were not.

Another study examined religion and disability in elderly women with broken hips in its relationships with religious belief, depression and ambulation status (Pressman et al., 1990). In the study, religiousness was assessed with three-item scale including church attendance, perceived religiousness, and rating of degrees of religion and God as a source of strength and comfort. The results indicated that religiousness was significantly and negatively related to depression even after the severity of patients' physical conditions were controlled. Religiousness was also positively correlated with the distance walked at discharge; however, this association was not significant when depression was controlled.

People appraised differently on their views of how spirituality and religion related to their terminal disability. In part, it was a function of their overall view of disability condition. Heinemann (1999) reviewed composite of studies on rehabilitation and noted that when people perceived of having negative or producing loss or threat of loss in their lives, patients prayed more since the injuries occurred but also felt angry with God and questioned God. This group had not found appropriate appraisal for religious coping especially in the area of meaning or purpose in their illness or disability. On the other hand, patients who viewed the disability as having neural or benign influence on their lives reported no significant pattern change in their prayer and religious practices. They
appraised faith as a way of coping with their illnesses and facilitated positive thinking to put things in perspective.

Overall, no special meaning or purpose was drawn from their illness or disability. This was just a normal natural aging process for them. Lastly, patients who saw their disability as a having positive or beneficial influence on their lives prayed more and had increased significance of religion in their lives. They noted that having faith as means of coping with the illness provided purpose for them in that they perceived their experience with the disability as a message from God. They have utilized positive appraisal for positive religious coping with their disability. For those individuals, faith was a crucial component for recovery from their debilitation morbidity and had greater satisfaction with their lives.

Personal Factors

People most often identify themselves with a particular religious group or denomination by understanding and practicing the doctrine that is taught by such social institutions. Personal faith in the religion or denominational teaching becomes closely juxtaposed with those of the same religious community that offer support and nurturing. Believers assume such support as part of the religion and in this way, religious doctrine can direct certain means of coping with life stresses (Gall et al., 2005).

In the Bible, in the first letter written to the Corinthians by the Apostle Paul, he viewed that one’s body was a temple of God where the Holy Spirit resides and when an individual misuses or abuses one’s body would be considered sinning against God. Also, the church was viewed as the body of Christ and believers are considered to be parts of
the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:18-20). Therefore, when misusing or abusing one’s body would be considered defiling the body of Christ and bringing disorder to church would also be considered defiling the body of Christ. Apostle Paul further stated that sinning against one’s own body through sexual immorality and murder were greater sin than other sins such as stealing, disobedience or coveting. When one sinned against one’s own body by being promiscuous or practiced sexual immorality in unnatural sexual act, it defiled the image of God. Therefore, these types of practices were instructed to be forbidden and were considered sinful in nature.

Many empirical studies support such practice and better health by religious individuals or those who consider religion to be important in their lives. Hestick et al., (2001) have surveyed 614 African American university students to quantify the magnitude of cigarette use, identify risk factors, and develop different modalities to predict smoking habits. The results indicated that the risk of being a lifetime smoker was reduced when neither friends nor parents of the participant smoked and the participant viewed spirituality as important.

Merrill, Salazar, and Gardner (2001), evaluated the relationship between several dimensions of parental and family religiosity and compared it with adolescent drug use. 1,036 undergraduate participants were recruited at Brigham Young University of which 99.1% are professing members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. 85% of the participants have reported never using recreational drugs. The most common reasons for not using drugs were that drug usage violated the religious belief of the church and their personal moral code taught by the church. In contrast, concerns about legal consequences, troubling family, and avoiding dishonest behavior were among least
of the reasons for not using drugs. This study also indicated that those who consider religion to be of minor importance were more likely to have used drugs in the past.

Protective factors were also noted by the authors. Frequent family discussions of religion and Christian conduct were considered to be highly correlated with non-usage of drugs. Also, mother’s view of religion showed a stronger correlation with non-usage of drugs then father’s view of religion or positions of church responsibility held by the parents.

The extent to which religiosity acts as a protective factor against sexual risk-taking behavior in transition to college in late adolescence was investigate by Zaleski and Schiaffino, (2000). This study examined 230 first year college students using Allport and Ross (1967), Religious Orientation Scale to examine the relationship between religiosity and sexual activity and condom use. Results indicated that positive correlation existed between greater intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity with less sexual activity and condom use. The author suggested that religious identification may protect late adolescents during the transition years in college against initiating sexual activity but may fail to protect them from practicing safe sex among students who are sexually active during that time.

Religious Orientation

The parameter for religious orientation proposed by Allport (1966) is still being used as the authoritative index in quantifying one’s religiosity. He proposed that there were two distinguishable religious orientations namely: intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. Allport described extrinsic religiosity as serving the individual for his or her own gain. This facet of religiosity provided comfort and safety of personal well-being. This
orientation is not guided by individual faith but is elicited by experience of guilt, anxiety, or pressure (Pargament, 1997). Because of the nature of extrinsic religiosity, effect or the process of coping and appraisal is less effective than its counter intrinsic religious orientation. On the other hand, intrinsic religiosity is described as of having internalized one's own faith in the belief of God and his or her relations to the transcendent through faith, hope, and love. It is rather altruistic in its motive because one lives his or her own faith as end in itself. Meaning and purpose in life is found within individual’s faith in God and he or she lives by that faith in God.

Park, Cohen and Herb (1990) found positive correlation with intrinsic religious orientation and individuals having sense of meaning under severe stress. Authors have examined stress-moderating effects of intrinsic religiosity and utilizing overall religious coping on the depression and trait anxiety in Catholic and Protestant college students. Both intrinsic religiosity and overall religious coping served as a protective function at highly controllable negative events in life. For uncontrollable life stress, relationship existed between intrinsically oriented Protestants and uncontrollable stress and depression. As intrinsic scale went up in one’s religious orientation, it was found negatively correlated with relationship between uncontrollable stress and depression. Highly intrinsically orientated individuals were found to have less uncontrollable life stress and less depression. This study demonstrated that intrinsic religious orientation was a positive and protective factor against uncontrollable life stress and depression.
Spiritual Coping Behavior

Maltby, Lewis, and Day (1999) have categorized spiritual coping behavior into three distinguishable domains namely, organizational religious behavior, private religious practice, and nontraditional spiritual practices. Organizational religious behavior is referred as being involved with formal, public religious institution and being involved with practices as worship service, church attendance, and church involvement in voluntary activities. In conjunction with organizational religious practice, Strawbridge et al. (2001) have illustrated a positive association between weekly service attendances. In this study, long term survival of terminally ill patients increased by improving and maintaining one's health through religious engagements. Harris et al (1995) noted that 24% of heart transplant recipients continued to pray on regular basis, attended church services, and made donations to their church following the post-surgery period.

Private religious behaviors are characterized by such activity as prayer, scripture reading, and meditation. Maltby, Lewis, and Day (1999) examined the frequency of prayer and psychological well-being in college students in the United Kingdom. In this study, the authors have examined religious orientation and psychological well-being and studied the role of the frequency of personal prayer as coping mechanism. A sample of 474 college students in the United Kingdom was administered with survey for three aspects of religious orientation namely intrinsic, extrinsic and Quest³. Authors stated that there were number of significant correlations between religiosity and psychological well-being but most identifiable factor was the frequency of personal prayer of religiosity that

³ Quest questionnaire developed by Batson and Schoenrade (1991a,b), typifies the individuals for their religious involvement as “an open-ended, responsive dialogue with existential question raised by the contradictions and tragedies of life” Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis (1993, p. 169).
served as the dominant factor in this relationship. According to Tepper et al (2001), much of individuals with prolonged mental illness dedicated up to half of their coping time in religious practices with prayer being most frequents followed by scripture reading.

Lastly, nontraditional practices are expressions of individual’s spirituality in non-traditional institutional way (Gall et al, 2005). There are much literature written about this form of practice namely in the area of meditation. Herbert Benson of the Mind/Body Medical Institute at Harvard University first illustrated certain physiological response elicited when meditation was practiced. He called this phenomenon the relaxation response (RR) (Benson, 2000). When Benson examined those who practiced transcendental meditation, basic bodily functions including heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, and immune system were affected positively. Much of what we know about the modern day illnesses such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and allergies can be controlled by eliciting relaxation response (Benson, 2000; Stefano, Fricchione, and Benson, 2002). This led one to think that when we elicit relaxation response, it will have positive affects on the modern day illnesses described above and that is exactly why the Mind/Body Medical Institute was created at the Harvard Medical Center.

Stress elicits our fight or flight response. This can be good if it is short term because such response heights our sense perception and increase our awareness to elude danger that is set before us. However, when this stress becomes chronic, it alters our basal heart function and affect circulatory system often leading into many forms of cardiovascular disease. Stress hormone such as adrenal and cortisol both affect our autonomic nerve system and depending on the amount of stress, duration of its influence, individual’s predisposition, and genetic components, individuals subjected to chronic
stress will have altering stress response component namely the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis and the sympathoadrenal medullary system (Stefano, Fricchione, and Benson, 2002). This fight-or-flight response is triggered by stress and its affect on circulatory system plays a significant role in susceptibility, progression, and outcome of cardiovascular diseases.

One recent account of the relaxation response and stress reduction comes from a study done by Dusek et al (2006). Authors have noted that relaxation response reduces volumetric oxygen consumption from test and has countering effect on stress. This study was conducted to measure the effect of nitric oxide upon eliciting relaxation response. Results indicated that depth of relaxation response was positively associated with increased concentration of changes in fractional exhaled nitric oxide. In this study, it was suggested that relaxation response may be mediated by nitric oxide helping to reduce stress⁴. This reduction in stress can also reduced stress related disease. Benson and his group have shown great level of promise in showing alternative religious practice that can lead to better health by reducing stress and its related disease.

In general, spiritual coping behavior is a frequent response to severe stress both mentally and physically. Its usage has positive outcome in personal well-being. As noted by Gall (2000), spiritual coping has greater predictability in well-being beyond the contribution of general coping both longitudinally and cross-sectional.

⁴ Role of nitric oxide (NO) is that of vasodilation, increase in vessel diameter for better circulation. NO works on the endothelium of blood vessel smooth muscle to relax. NO has greater effect on counteracting norepinephrine (NE) activity and sympathetic responsivity that are also countering the fight or flight responses of sympathetic nerve system.
Spiritual Connections

Research has indicated that a relationship with God plays an important role in coping process. For example, Pargament, et al. (1990) found that religious coping involving the notion of just and loving God, experiencing God as a supportive partner, and involvement in church rituals all had positive outcomes of such as recent mental health status and spiritual growth. Underwood and Teresi (2002) looked at daily spiritual experience and its relation to health. They have developed a scale using such items as, “I feel God’s presence”, I experience a connection to all life”, and 14 other questions for validation. The daily spiritual experiences scale (DSES) had good reliability across several studies and its internal consistency estimated in the 0.90s. When they studied correlation between other psychosocial and health related factors, they found statistically significant positive correlations with Quality of Life (SF-36), Scheirer Optimism, and Berkman Perceived Social Support. On the other hand, statistically negative correlations were found with Sleep Problems, Physical Ailments, Alcohol Consumption, Anxiety, Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression, Speilberger Anger-Coping Scale, Cohen Perceived Stress, and Cook Medley Hostility tests.

In contrast to having positive relationship with God, negative perception of God such as punishing God or withholding God, may be related to an individual experience of overwhelming distress under stressful situations (Gall and Cornblat, 2002). For example, Battista and Almond (1995) found that hospitalized patients with affective disorder who had spiritual perception such as “God has been unfair,” experienced a longer hospital stay. Belavich and Pargament (2002) found that having discontent coping such as anger with
God were related to avoidance style of attachment to God and being anxious toward God that in turn was related to poorer adjustment in personal well-being.

Relationship to God or connectedness with the spiritual being is not as easily defined as having positive relationship or negative relationship with God. Certain spiritual struggles with God can be triggered by a painful event. A Jewish Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a book called *Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People*. This book was written in response to God’s will and his own understanding of the suffering that resulted in his son’s death. In this book, he pleaded with his understanding of why his son had to die. He reasoned the possible cause of suffering based on his understanding of God. But ultimately, he concluded that it was God’s will. Rabbi Kushner accepted the fact that finite beings are not able to understand God’s will no matter how people reason about their suffering. Will of God and a will of a man are two separate intentions.

Spiritual connectedness can bring a person closer to understanding the nature of one’s problem but ultimately, resolution may not come until certain meaning is drawn from that relationship and that relationship is made possible when an individual finds meaning in the situation. Meaning drawn here is not about the meaning of life but rather a meaning in life. It is this meaning in life that we account as the mediating factor, a spiritual appraisal for our well-being.

Meaning in Life or Meaning of Life

During Oskar Pfister Award Lecture 1985 at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in Dallas, Texas, Viktor Frankl spoke about the fundamental image of man and coined the term *self-transcendent* (p 138) (Frankl, 2000). He argued
that there is an intrinsic fact about people, relating and directing themselves toward something other than the self. Rather than being pre-occupied with pleasure or homeostasis, an individual becomes oriented towards the outer world stemming away from the self. Within this outer world from the self, he is involved in the fulfillment of meaning through the other human beings. By the merit of what Frankl called pre-reflective ontological self-understanding, where one became actualized to the extent that he is forgetting about himself and this extension of the forgetting becomes possible by giving himself to the others. He is serving a higher cause than himself, or loving an individual other than the self. He goes on to define the difference between will to pleasure as a typical representative of so-called “depth psychology” where as “height psychology” searches for meaning by seeking higher aspirations of the human psyche (Frankl, 1967). It is in this height psychology that supplements depth psychology where it addressed human phenomena. Among human phenomena, man’s desire to find and fulfill the meaning in life is strived by higher aspirations of the human psyche and for that matter confronting the individual. This desire has been termed will to meaning (Frankl, 1969), where people seek the most human of all human needs.

In Frankl’s position, he saw two types of meaning: The ultimate or universal meaning and individual meaning in each life situations. He argued that we possess an inner freedom to choose in every situation, even in situations lacking such freedom as in

---

5 Pleasure principle describes Freudian psychoanalytic psychology where basic motive for human drive derived from pleasure. According to Freud, pleasure principle is a derivative of more comprehensive principle namely of the homeostasis principle (Cannon, 1932) where ultimate personal drive is derived for the purpose of reducing tension for the homeostasis maintenance or equilibrating inner balance within an individual.

6 Here the usage of the word “phenomena” is a descriptor of Kantian definition from the book Critique of Pure Reason (Kant, 1781; translated by Guyer, P. and Wood, A. W. (1998). It described certain observable event or physical realm of its manifestation.
the Holocaust concentration camp. It is this inner voice of freedom that challenges us to take responsibility for our own actions. For Frankl, the meaning in life, or the meaning of life in a grander scale, did not restrict people. As for the meaning of life or the ultimate meaning, Frankl did not go in depth about its existence or made an argument for it being the determinant for our actions. He simply guided religion and its connection to having such ultimate meaning that is in God.

Carl Friedrich Graumann initially synthesized the concept of meaning in psychology (Graumann, 1960). Graumann attributed most of meaning definition based on construct with human experience and behavior. Within this context of the construct, Graumann described meaning as, “Results from, and is related to, the urge to find meaning fulfillment. Sense and meaning are synonymous. Meaning fulfillment takes place in a process, in the course of which the present occurrence has to be integrated into the existing individual reservoir in order to be experienced as meaningful. There is an implicit and an explicit meaning. The former is felt, sensed, the latter is comprehended (p106). Meaning as the openness of a horizon of possible self-behavior always implies a whole, namely the whole that unites the person, his way of behaving, with that to which he is relating, in a behavior to something in a situation.” (p 116; Auhagen, 2000). His description of the meaning of life did not account for one’s existence, but it pointed to experience and behavior that were viewed as particular components of life.

In Auhagen (2000), she defined the meaning of life as “a theoretical concept which denotes reflections on, and/or ways of experiencing, contexts of meanings in relation to human life in general, to one’s own individual life, or to parts of the latter.” She further argued four important aspects about the meaning of life. First observation
was drawn from Frankl’s work. There are two types of meaning: one being superior (cosmic, ultimate) level and everyday meaning (provisional). Second, meaning of an individual varies from person to person and it could be viewed as a personal construct. On the other hand, if this personal construct cannot be formulated, one needs to discover this meaning. Third, meaning of life is experience oriented that included cognitive, emotional, and motivational elements. Lastly, meaning of life is related to fulfillment, order, values, and purposes.

Meaning in Life and Well-Being

Frankl (1963) saw the possibilities of meaning making during his Holocaust suffering. According to Frankl, suffering can make an individual become aware of what is presented before us and what we wished for.

In Starck (1983), suffering was examined to support validity in provide empirical study in search for meaning. Starck examined 99 patients who suffered from various illnesses and surveyed them on the meaning of their suffering using Meaning in Suffering Text. Most of the participants reported that their suffering helped them understand their life better.

Another study looked at the meaning in life and coping that had positive correlation between two factors. Debats, Dorst and Hansen (1995) measured meaning in life with Life Regards Index and showed significantly positive correlation with positive coping and positive psychological well-being. Debats (1996) found that experiencing meaning in life positively predicted improvement during psychotherapy and outcome of
the therapy. This was shown independent of the patient’s level of well-being before starting the therapy.

Wong (1998) found that individuals with strong sense of meaning in life had better sense of well-being. Also, individuals with low sense of meaning in life had low level of perceived well-being. Also, it was found that people with less developed personal meaning scored higher on depression scale.

Meaning in Life as Religious Coping Mediator

In order for us to understand the mechanism of coping mediator in meaning in life, one needs to consider how religion contributes to well-being. Baumeister (2002) argued that investigators need to closely examine this mediator for this relation. In answering this need, Emmons and Paloutzian (2003) noted that religion provided people with a vehicle through in which they can experience a sense of purpose in their being, and also the benefit of such experience might be where religion gave people a sense of meaning and reason about ultimate truth. Religious practice is concerned with pursuit of the sacred or holy living within faith institution and it appears that it provides people with opportunity to discover personal meaning or purpose.

Steger and Frazier (2005) examined 512 participants for a study in linking meaning in life as mediator in religious coping to well-being. They have used surveys for measuring religiousness (utilizing four question questionnaire devised by the authors), meaning in life (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, and Kaler, 2006), and life satisfaction (Satisfaction with Life Scale, Diener et al., 1985). Results of part one study indicated that there were significant positive relationship between meaning in life mediated
between religiousness and life satisfaction. Also, they looked at self-esteem and optimism using Rosenberg Self-Esteem Test (Rosenberg, 1965) and Life Orientation Test (Scheier and Carver, 1985) for optimism. In the study, 53.4% of the determinant of meaning in life mediated the relationship between religiousness and optimism. Authors provided Sobel test statistic for this relationship. When meaning in life was incorporated as mediator, religiousness and self-esteem had no significant relationship. Lastly, they found that there was a significantly positive relationship between well-being, daily religiousness, and daily meaning in life. They also noted that when controlling for daily religious behavior, relationship between religious behavior and life satisfaction were no longer significant when meaning in life was introduced.

Summary

It is a difficult task to quantify religion or spirituality based on empirical findings let alone make inferences about its effect on well-being. Construction of religious coping and possible mediators of cognitive level to define meaning in life - how they intercede between religion and well-being - is too great of task. However, when we systematically reason from the observable effects of individual religious orientation and life style that stems from such practice, we hope to gain some insight into this relationship that can serve to give in depth understanding between religion and wellness. In this undertaking, one could ask, do we feel well because we have certain meaning in life? or do we derive meaning in life because we feel well? I think they are both a valid statement. During a crisis, an individual can find certain meaning in the situation that will lead to greater
well-being. One can derive purpose and sensibility through crisis but we need to further investigate meaning in life as a coping mediator in religion that can lead to well-being.
CHAPTER III
DESIGN

Sample

The participants of this study were 76 junior high and senior high school students attending Bucks County Presbyterian Church in Levittown, Pennsylvania. This study was previously completed by the Bucks County Presbyterian Church, Department of Education, as a part of their ongoing church survey analysis for their youth group. Permission was granted by the department director in using the original surveys for data analysis. (Permission letter: Appendix F.) As was informed by the department director, the study was conducted during their weekly service on November 19, 2006.

In the study, 2 out of 76 surveys were excluded for incomplete entries in the survey. The surveys excluded only had the demographics questionnaire answered without completing the entire packet.

The final research sample was 74, and consisted of 39 females and 35 males. The age ranged from 11 to 18, with mean age of 14.63 (SD=2.08). The 11 and 15 year old group only had 3 participants in each group. Most representative age groups were 12 year old with 11 participants, 14 year old with 19 participants and 16 year old with 11 participants in their age groups. This was a religiously and ethnically homogeneous group represented with 100% Korean-Americans and 100% Protestants in their denominational orientation. In their family history, 68 out of 74 participants said that they were “born into a family of Christian belief,” and remaining 6 said that they were
“not born into family of belief.” In the “born again” questionnaire, 23 out of 74 participants said that they were “born again.” 26 out of 74 participants said that they were unsure of being “born again,” but knew of the concept. 16 out of 74 participants said that they were not sure what “born again” meant, and 9 participants said that they were not a “born again” Christian.

For the religious practice, out of 74 participants, 11 never read their Bible and 32 read the Bible once a month. In prayer, only one participant never prayed and 36 participants prayed on daily basis. Out of 74 participants, 22 said that they prayed more than once a week.

Materials

The materials used to conduct this study included a booklet containing the following items: a short self-report demographic questionnaire developed by the Bucks County Presbyterian Church Education Department (Appendix A), Religious Orientation Scale (Appendix B) (modified by Maltby, Lewis, and Day, 1999 from the original Allport and Ross, 1967), Purpose in Life (Appendix C) (Ryff and Keyes, 1995), Meaning (Appendix D) (Pargament, 1997), Satisfaction in Life (Appendix E) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin, 1985).

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale (ROS)

This scale of measure has been most widely used since its development of Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) (Allport and Ross, 1967). According to Maltby, Lewis, and Day (1999), this study has three main dimensions to the scale: intrinsic,
extrinsic personal and extrinsic social. Therefore, a modified version of ROS has been proposed. The Cronbach alpha statistic computed for revised ROS equal or above .7 criterions: intrinsic orientation, $\alpha$=.79, extrinsic-personal $\alpha$=.70, and extrinsic social, $\alpha$=.71. All the scale items measured in Likert scale.

Purpose in Life Scale (PIL)

The Purpose in Life (PIL) (Ryff, 1985) was developed as a sub-test of a larger scale called Psychological Well-Being Scale. Other sub-tests in this scale were Self-Acceptance, Positive Relations with Others, Autonomy, Environmental Mastery and Personal Growth. For the PIL scale, high scorer has goals in life and a sense of directedness. He or she feels that there is meaning in life and holds beliefs that life has a purpose. He or she has goals, aims and objectives for living.

In long form of Psychological Well-Being Scale, it has 84 questions in which 20 questions measure Purpose in Life. Internal consistency of the parent scale = .90.

The global satisfaction and domain satisfaction share common variance with PIL. PIL showed less desirable correlation with affect than with other measures of subjective well-being, and the PIL items revealed a good level of internal consistency and reliability $\alpha$=.84. This scale has been widely used and it is a well-validated measure of life satisfaction. This 7-point scale ranging from 1= “strongly disagree” to 7= “strongly agree” has 5 items which measures satisfaction with life that represents cognitive aspect of subjective well-being. Scores are then added for a composite scores ranging from 5= “low satisfaction” to 35= “high satisfaction”.

34
Meaning

This scale of meaning construct grew out of a theoretical work of Viktor Frankl where “will to meaning” is a necessary characteristic of human being in that when not fulfilled, it leads to physical and mental symptomatology (Frankl, 1963). As Frankl noted, search for meaning has been defined as one of the critical functions of religion. Meaning as he saw it was something to be “discovered rather than created.”

Since there are no scales measuring meaning from a substantive religious perspective, Pargament (1997) devised a scale to assess meaning within theistic religious domain. In this scale development, Pargament argued that spirituality and theistic meaning scale would differ in the form of questioning. For instance, an explicitly theistic meaning scale would ask an item such as: “The events in my life unfold according to a divine plan”; and “Without God, my life would be meaningless.” In spiritual meaning scale, this item would be worded as: “My spirituality gives meaning to my life’s joys and sorrows”; and “What gives meaning to my life is the knowledge that I am a part of something larger than myself.” The spirituality is more of a deistic perspective than an account for personally intervening relational God. Pargament incorporated both types of questions into the Meaning Scale for a broader assessment.

There are other measures that focus on the attainment of meaning that is the outcome but no scale measure meaning from a substantive religious perspective. Composite of 20 questions have been developed by Pargament (1997), with 5-point scale ranging from 1= “strongly disagree” to 5= “strongly agree”. No known validity and reliability has been measured for this index.
Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) measures subjective well-being and assess global life satisfaction. In the original study, SWLS showed favorable psychometric properties including high internal consistency alpha=.87 level. The scores on the SWLS correlate moderate to high with other scales measuring subjective well-being, and is a good predictor for certain personality characteristics. In the initial study, it included various age groups from college students to elderly; however, younger age group was not included. This scale is widely used due to a small number of items in its make up with 1 to 7 Likert scale measuring 1= “strongly disagree” to 7= “strongly agree.” Scoring this five item scale ranges from 5-9 being “extremely dissatisfied” to 31-35 being “extremely satisfied.”

Hypotheses

Based on the review of the literature, the following hypotheses were offered:

1. It is hypothesized that cognitive understanding of meaning in life (offered by Frankl, 2000) will show positive association with satisfaction with life.

2. It is also hypothesized that adolescents of intrinsic religious orientation and “born again” Christian orientation will show positive associations with daily practices of the Christian religion such as Bible reading and prayer.

3. Participants with intrinsic religious orientation will utilize religious meaning more significantly than general purpose in life to achieve satisfaction with life.

4. “Born again” nature of Christian faith will also show association with meaning in life that leads to satisfaction with life.

36
Analysis of Data

Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient matrix ran for this study between all the variables and noted statistical significance at the .01 level (2-tailed). Also, several multiple regression analyses were performed to assess the relationship between ROS, “born again”, daily spiritual experiences, religious meaning in life, and satisfaction with life as a measure of subjective well-being and significant results were reported in this study.

Summary

There were several indices that measured religiosity, meaning, and well-being. However, most of the indices were not geared toward religion in general and did not focus on Judeo-Christian population; therefore, several questionnaires focusing on Judeo-Christian faith have been utilized in looking at the religiosity, religious meaning in life, and satisfaction with life. One of the evangelical Judeo-Christian faiths is the notion of being “born again”. Much of the analysis were done with this factor to look at the effects of cognitive understanding of being “born again,” satisfaction with life, daily spiritual experiences, and religious meaning in life. It is hypothesized that Judeo-Christians adolescents - professing to be a “born again” Christian - will have significant increase in daily religious practices such as reading the Bible and prayer, religious meaning in life, and satisfaction with life.
Statistics

The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistics for all the variables were performed (see Table 4.1). Researchers have shown religiosity difference between genders with women being significantly more religious than men (Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle, 1997; Wulff, 1997). Due to a small sample size and given age, all statistics did not account for gender differences.

Meaning in Life and Satisfaction with Life

When correlating with religious meaning and other variables, age was negatively but significantly correlated. However, other variables such as daily Bible reading, prayer, purpose in life, intrinsic religious orientation, and satisfaction with life were all positively and significantly correlated with having religious meaning in life. In this study, religious meaning scale had negatively significant correlation with “born again” faith (p<.05, 2-tailed) level.

Subjective index of well-being in satisfaction with life was positively correlated with prayer and extrinsic religious orientation personal at 0.05 level, but no association was shown with “born again” faith.
Table 4.1  Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Born Again</th>
<th>Bible Reading</th>
<th>Prayer</th>
<th>Purpose in Life</th>
<th>Religious Meaning</th>
<th>Intrinsic Religious Orientation</th>
<th>Extrinsic R-O Personal</th>
<th>Extrinsic R-O Social</th>
<th>Satisfaction with Life</th>
<th>Family History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>-.320(**)</td>
<td>-.202</td>
<td>-.331(**)</td>
<td>-.302(**)</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>-.400(**)</td>
<td>.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.335(**)</td>
<td>-.168</td>
<td>-.255(*)</td>
<td>-.231(*)</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.240(*)</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>-.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible Reading</td>
<td>-.335(**)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td>.383(**)</td>
<td>.256(*)</td>
<td>.389(**)</td>
<td>.330(**)</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>-.291(*)</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose in Life</td>
<td>.383(**)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.248(*)</td>
<td>.459(**)</td>
<td>.455(**)</td>
<td>-.029</td>
<td>-.197</td>
<td>.281(*)</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Meaning</td>
<td>.383(**)</td>
<td>.248(*)</td>
<td>.459(**)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.455(**)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Religious Orientation</td>
<td>.383(**)</td>
<td>.248(*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.455(**)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic R-O Personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.248(*)</td>
<td>.459(**)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic R-O Social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
“Born Again” Faith and Other Religiosity Variables

Interesting results were noted for the “born again” Christian aspect of faith. Statistical significance of 0.01 were found with daily Bible reading and intrinsic religious orientation. However, they were negatively correlated with these two variables. Also, purpose in life and religious meaning were associated with “born again” faith at 0.05 level but again, they were negatively correlated with “born again” faith in Korean-American adolescents. Only positive correlation indicated for “born again” faith was with extrinsic religious orientation social at 0.05 level.

Initial hypotheses mainly focused on the “born again” aspect of the evangelical Christian faith, but showed many negative correlations with the variables that were assessed in the study. However, many other variables predicted satisfaction with life and were correlated with different aspects of religiosity and meaning based religious belief construct.

Religious Orientations and Religious Practices

Intrinsic religious orientation had the most significant correlations with all the variables studies. As noted earlier, age was inversely significantly correlated but other variables such as daily bible reading, daily prayer, purpose in life, religious meaning, and satisfaction with life were all positively and significantly correlated with intrinsic religious orientation. In correlating intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, only the extrinsic religious orientation social was negatively and significantly correlated. For the extrinsic religious orientation personal, had no statistical significance of 0.01 with any other variables.
For those who read the Bible more often and prayed more had positive associations with religious meaning and intrinsic religiosity.

Purpose in life in adolescents was positively correlated with religious meaning, intrinsic religious orientation, and satisfaction with life.

Regression Analysis on Satisfaction with Life

Multiple regression analysis predicting satisfaction with life from “born again”, daily Bible reading, and prayer resulted in statistically significant equation \[ F (3, 70) = 4.45, p= .005 \]. The predictor variables explained 16.4\% of the variance in the satisfaction with life. Of these three predictors, prayer significantly predicted satisfaction with life \( t = 2.16, p= .034 \) (see Table 4.2)

Also, in this analysis, intrinsic religious orientation resulted in statistically significant equation \[ F (3, 70) = 6.49, p= .001 \]. The religious orientation scale predictors, intrinsic, extrinsic R-O personal and extrinsic R-O social explained 18.4\% of the variance in the satisfaction in life. Out of the three variables, intrinsic religious orientation significantly predicted satisfaction in life \( t = 3.53, p= .001 \)

In predicting satisfaction with life, a multiple regression analysis yielded a significant effect \[ F (2, 71) = 11.01, p= .003 \] for religious meaning; however, no significance found with purpose in life. The purpose in life and religious meaning scales explained 23.7\% of the variance in the satisfaction in life scale and having religious meaning in life significantly predicted having satisfaction in life \( t= 3.07, p= .003 \)
Table 4.2. Regression Analysis on Satisfaction with Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Satisfaction with Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Meaning</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose in Life</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Religious Orientation</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic R-O Personal</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic R-O Social</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Again</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Bible</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Introduction

First, there was a need to examine the existence of faith-based construct of meaning in life for those who are of faith in the evangelical Christian religion. Second, there was a need to examine the existence of cognitive understanding where one became aware of one’s meaning in life and utilized it as a coping strategy for well-being. Third, there was a need to validate satisfaction in life, or well-being in comparison to having general life’s purpose, or a religious meaning in life. Lastly, there was a great need to look at the religious adolescent population and examine if this population utilized the cognitive understanding of “born again” nature of evangelical Christian faith to achieve greater well-being.

“Born Again” Faith

It is hypothesized that adolescents of intrinsic religious orientation will have higher levels of daily spiritual experiences. In addition, adolescents who consider themselves a “born again” Christian will show associations with daily spiritual experiences then those who are not “born again”. In this study, it was found that many negatively correlated results were drawn from the “born again” nature of the evangelical Korean-American Christian adolescents living in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. When multiple regression analyses were conducted with other variables such as purpose in life,
religious meaning, prayer, daily Bible reading, and satisfaction with life, “born again”
nature of faith did not predict any significant results. Furthermore, significant
correlations found were inversely correlated.

This is an interesting phenomenon to note for the evangelical Christian community. During recent years, in protestant denominations, a facet of the protestant Christian faith that distinguished itself from any other Christian segment of religious orientation was this concept of being a “born again” Christian (Piper, 2003). However, this faith was found not to be a significant factor in predicting religious meaning, purpose in life, satisfaction with life, and even religious practices such as prayer and daily Bible reading.

There are no known empirical tools measuring for this index, and in this study, participants were simply asked if they were a “born again” Christian. This cognitive understanding of being a “born again” Christian may not be a valid measure of one’s religiosity. Also, a method used in this study to measure “born again” faith was not an empirically validated scale. In the questionnaire for this study, participants were directly asked the question: “Do you consider yourself to be a Born-Again Christian?” Out of 74 participants, 66.2% either knew of the concept or were professing to be a “born again” Christian. However, this facet of Christian faith was not a good predictor for any of the variables analyzed in this study. This nature of the evangelical Christian faith should be further investigated to see if the “born again” faith can be empirically quantified in comparison to other known scales of religiosity.
Intrinsic Religious Orientation and Other Variables

In intrinsic religious orientation, correlation statistics and multiple regression analysis between variables suggest that there are a number of significant correlations between the religiosity measures for meaning and well-being. Intrinsic religious orientation was significantly correlated with daily Bible reading, daily prayer, having purpose in life, having religious meaning in life, and being satisfied with life as one’s subjective well-being.

This finding is consistent with other studies such as Maltby et al. (1999) that looked at psychological well-being, religious orientation, and role of the frequency of personal prayer, where they found positive correlation between all three variables in a sample of 474 British college students. In this study, they suggested that the correlations found between the measures of religiosity and psychological well-being may be mediated by the practice of religious ritual in frequency of personal prayer. That finding was also consistent with this study. Frequency of prayer was positively correlated with religious meaning, daily Bible reading, and age. However, age and prayer resulted in inverse significance where younger adolescents were shown to pray more frequently. Positive significance was shown also in purpose in life and satisfaction with life, but these correlations were at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Another Christian religious ritual practice of daily Bible reading showed similar correlation with that of prayer. Bible reading was significantly correlated with prayer, religious meaning and intrinsic religiosity, but purpose in life correlated at .05 significance level (2-tailed) and no significant correlation with satisfaction with life.
Meaning in Life and Purpose in Life

In suggesting religious meaning versus secular purpose in life, this study showed consistency in the practice of religious ritual such as prayer and daily Bible reading to be a stronger significance with having religious meaning but not as a strong significance with having secular purpose in life for the adolescent Christian population.

The results are consistent with the intent that was made by Pargament (1997) when the Meaning Scale was devised for narrower usage in the people of religious faith. In multiple regression analysis predicting satisfaction with life, religious meaning and purpose in life were analyzed. The result yielded a significant effect \( F(2, 71) = 11.01, p = .000 \) for religious meaning; however, no significance found with purpose in life. For the religious, even in the adolescent age group, religious meaning plays a significant role in predicting one’s subjective well-being of being satisfied with life. As Allport and Ross (1967) suggested, intrinsic nature of one’s religious orientation ultimately may give religious meaning in life for the religious; however, without a depth understanding of non-religious purpose in life, religious may not be able to think beyond the religious.

Conclusion

Initial hypothesis about the nature of “born again” Christian faith for the Korean-American adolescent population failed to support any significant measures when compared with other religiosity, meaning, and well-being indices. However, this concept of Christian faith is not well understood by many people, not even the religious. Although more than half of the population in this study knew of the concept of being a “born again” Christian, results did not yield any significance.
Idea of being a “born again” Christian is a personal profession or an annunciation where it is considered a statement of faith. For the Korean-American adolescent Christian population, this profession may not be a well understood concept. However, due to the significant statistics shown for the intrinsically oriented religiosity results, at this time, “born again” nature of faith should be negated as an invalid index to quantify one’s religious orientation in this given population. Further investigation on the concept formation of “born again” nature of the evangelical Christian faith should be considered.

For the Korean-American Christian adolescents, religious meaning in life was a positive predictor for satisfaction with life. Independent of being a “born again” Christian, intrinsically oriented participants in this study did show a positive association with religious meaning in life with $p<.01$ significant statistical correlation and the purpose in life index with $p<.05$.

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. First, the study was not conducted in a controlled environment. This study was first conducted by Bucks County Presbyterian Church in Levittown, Pennsylvania for their church use. Date collected by the church was use for this study under their permission. Due to the unknown nature of the environment in which the survey was conducted, validity of this data might be at jeopardy. Although the church official had said that the survey was conducted under a controlled environment, other unforeseen variables might have hindered the assessment.

The second limitation of this study was that sample population was a convenient sample not randomly selected. This study was very idiosyncratic where Bucks County
Presbyterian Church conducted a study for their church use and date collected was used for this current study. Population pool was very homogeneous with 100% Korean-American protestant adolescents in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Third, validity of the religious meaning survey developed by Pargament (1997) had not been empirically tested. Also, “born again” index was not an empirically validated religious orientation for the evangelical Judeo-Christian faith.

Based on the above limitations, there are several facets of this study that can be modified to ensure more valid yielding results. Future studies might want to include a broader adolescent population sample to ensure the effect of meaning on satisfaction with life for the general Christian adolescent population. This population should be randomly selected than being a convenient sample. Also, it would be of an interest to compare a sample from Korea and a sample from America to see the effect of the Christian religion on meaning making and utilizing it for satisfaction with life cross-culturally.

Also, future studies might want to consider assessing gender differences in adolescents and their religiosity and how they utilize meaning in life to cope with life.

Implications

The results of this study illustrated the effect of religiosity and religious meaning on subjective well-being - satisfaction with life. This information may be of use in clinical setting to promote better psychological well-being. Also, since this study looked at the adolescent population, this information can be used in school setting, such as by guidance counselors and school psychologist to better serve school aged children with evangelical Christian faith.
Some may believe that religious orientation and the effects of religion on an individual might come from the practice and socialization within the community of the religious; however, the ultimate implication of religious belief may lie within one’s understanding of meaning in life. Without a sense of meaning in life, religion may not serve any purpose for the people of faith.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Permission Letter from Bucks County Presbyterian Church

12/12/2006

Dear Deacon Stephen,

Thank you for your dedication and hard work for the church. This church project would not have been possible without your help. At this time, we would like to extend our thanks and give you all the church survey data for your own personal use in completing your school work. After you have finished your work, we asked that you return all the survey forms back to the Second Education Department.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Appendix B
Demographic Questionnaire

Please circle or fill in the best possible response for yourself in each of the questions.

What is your age? __________

What is your gender:  male   female

What is your ethnicity/race? ______________________

What school do you attend?  Middle School  High School  College

What denomination do you belong to?  Catholic  Protestant  Other____

Were you born into a Christian family?  Yes   No

If No, then did you become a Christian later in life?  Yes   No

If Yes, at what age? ______

Do you consider yourself to be a Born-Again Christian?

1. Yes    When did you profess this faith?__________________________

2. No

3. I am not sure if I am but I know what it means to be a Born-Again Christian

4. I am not really sure what it means to be a Born-Again Christian

How often do you read your Bible outside of your church?

Never---once a month----Once a week----more than once a week----on daily basis

How often do you pray outside of your church and beside your meal prayer?

Never---once a month----Once a week----more than once a week----on daily basis
Appendix C

Religious Orientation Scale (ROS)

Items used to measure the intrinsic, extrinsic-social and extrinsic-personal dimensions.

Maltby, Lewis and Day, 1999

Intrinsic:
1. I try hard to live all my life according to my religious beliefs.
2. It doesn’t much matter what I believe so long as I am good.
3. I have often had a strong sense of God’s presence.
4. My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life.
5. Prayers I say when I am alone are as important as those I say in church.
6. I attend church once a week or more.
7. My religion is important because it answers many questions about meaning of life.
8. I enjoy reading about my religion.
9. It is important to me to spend time in private thought and prayer.

Extrinsic – personal:
1. What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow.
2. Prayer is for peace and happiness.
3. I pray mainly to gain relief and protection.

Extrinsic – social:
1. I go to church because it helps me make friends.
2. I go to church mainly because I enjoy seeing people I know there.
3. I go to church mostly to spend time with my friends.
Appendix D

Purpose in Life (PIL)

Ryff and Keyes, 1995

Definition: **High Scorer:** Has goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; has aims and objectives for living.

**Low Scorer:** Lacks a sense of meaning in life; has few goals or aims, lacks sense of direction; does not see purpose of past life; has no outlook or beliefs that give life meaning.

(+) 1. I feel good when I think of what I've done in the past and what I hope to do in the future.

(-) 2. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.

(-) 3. I tend to focus on the present, because the future nearly always brings me problems.

(+) 4. I have a sense of direction and purpose in life.

(-) 5. My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.

(-) 6. I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life.

(-) 7. I used to set goals for myself, but that now seems like a waste of time.

(+) 8. I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.

(+) 9. I am an active person in carrying out the plans I set for myself.

(+) 10. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.

(-) 11. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.

(+) 12. My aims in life have been more a source of satisfaction than frustration to me.

(+) 13. I find it satisfying to think about what I have accomplished in life.

(-) 14. In the final analysis, I'm not so sure that my life adds up to much.

(+ ) indicates positively scored items

(-) indicates negatively scored items
Appendix E

Meaning (Measuring religious meaning in life)

Pargament, 1997

1. My spiritual beliefs give meaning to my life’s joys and sorrows.
2. The goals of my life grow out of my understanding of God.
3. Without a sense of spirituality, my daily life would be meaningless.
4. The meaning in my life comes from feeling connected to other living things.
5. My religious beliefs help me find a purpose in even the most painful and confusion events in my life.
6. When I lose touch with God, I have a harder time feeling that there is purpose and meaning in life.
7. My spiritual beliefs give my life a sense of significance and purpose.
8. My mission in life is guided/shaped by my faith in God.
9. When I am disconnected from the spiritual dimension of my life, I lose my sense of purpose.
10. My relationship with God helps me find meaning in the ups and downs of life.
11. My life is significant because I am part of God’s plan.
12. What I try to do in my day-to-day life is important to me from a spiritual point of view.
13. I am trying to fulfill my God-given purpose in life.
14. Knowing that I am a part of something greater than myself gives meaning to my life.
15. Looking at the most troubling or confusing events from a spiritual perspective adds meaning to my life.
17. Without my religious foundation, my life would be meaningless.
18. My feelings of spirituality add meaning to the events in my life.
19. God plays a role in how I choose my path in life.
20. My spirituality helps define the goals I set for myself.
Appendix F

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

Measuring Subjective Well-Being

Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin, 1985

Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

7 - Strongly agree
6 - Agree
5 - Slightly agree
4 - Neither agree nor disagree
3 - Slightly disagree
2 - Disagree
1 - Strongly disagree

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

_____ The conditions of my life are excellent.

_____ I am satisfied with my life.

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

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

Scoring:

35 - 31 Extremely satisfied
26 - 30 Satisfied
21 - 25 Slightly satisfied
20 Neutral
15 - 19 Slightly dissatisfied
10 - 14 Dissatisfied
5 - 9 Extremely dissatisfied