ABSTRACT

Menke, Carrie Sue Cripe. Synthesizing a comprehensive definition of spirituality and spiritual development and the construct validity of the optimism subscale of the Belief Systems Analysis Scale. (Under the direction of Edwin Gerler and Tracy Robinson.)

The purpose of this work is two-fold in an effort to narrow the approach to the topics of spirituality, spiritual development and assessment of spirituality. First, a comprehensive review of the literature will accumulate and critique available material on the dimensions that define spirituality and three spiritual development models for similarities, differences, contributions and omissions. Both theoretical and empirical works will be reviewed. Comparisons are made among the definitions of spirituality. The models are critiqued for each one’s ability to explain how the concept of spirituality, as comprehensively defined by ASERVIC, develops in the model. Menke’s Model of Spiritual Orientation is presented as a model that addresses the gaps found in the literature. Second, an investigation of the construct validity of the optimism subscale of the Belief Systems Analysis Scale (BSAS). The BSAS is a measure of Afrocentric worldview which is one of the reviewed constructs embroiled in spirituality and spiritual development in need of further investigation. Two focus groups are conducted to determine the necessity for rewording of items. The focus group data is presented to reflect the insights and ideas provided by the focus group. The reworded items and the entire revised scale are presented. The revised scale is distributed to 67 participants to complete. A factor analysis is conducted on the data 67 participants. It is concluded that rewording items in positive direction might improve factor loadings of the optimism subscale items and analysis with a larger population is needed.
SYNTHESIZING A COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION OF SPIRITUALITY AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE CONSTRUCT VALIDITY OF THE OPTIMISM SUBSCALE OF THE BELIEF SYSTEMS ANALYSIS SCALE

by

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______________________   ________________________
Co-chair of Advisory Committee   Co-chair of Advisory Committee
DEDICATION

I dedicate this document to my father, Rodger Cripe. One day during my undergraduate studies I was visiting home and expressing my attitude about something, of what I can’t exactly remember. Anyway, his comment to me was, you’ll never get your PhD with that kind of attitude. I can’t say his comment motivated me to change my attitude, but I remember his comment to this day and have recalled it many times when I wanted to give up working on this project. You may not say a lot, but what you say is very powerful and lasts a long time. Thank you Dad for motivating me in ways that some might think aren’t proper positive supports. I do recognize that in more recent years, you have continually expressed your desire for me to finish this project, how happy you would be and how anxiously you await its completion. Wait no more and rest easy.
BIOGRAPHY

Carrie Menke is the Clinical Manager for the New Hanover County Juvenile Day Treatment Center. Having earned her MS in Educational Psychology and Guidance in 1989 and her License as a Professional Counselor in 1990, she has 15 years experience practicing counseling with children, adolescents and their families. Much of Carrie’s youth was spent in activities, youth fellowship, youth choir and summer camp, designed to promote spiritual growth. Carrie has long since believed that these experiences have shaped her life in profound ways. Career choice, doctoral research, strength and resiliency in her character, belief in and pursuit of purpose and meaning in her life as well as belief in and pursuit of connectedness with all walks of the human race have all been impacted or established by her early spiritual experiences. When considering a dissertation topic, Carrie wanted to choose one that honored her spiritual beliefs and reflected the value of these experiences by bringing the topic to the attention of the field as it needs to be a vital and foundational part of a client’s counseling and treatment process. It is her intent to continue to bring spirituality and experiences designed to promote spiritual growth into program development and counseling practice.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank God for giving me the opportunity, strength and well-being to accomplish this project. It is for His honor that the topic was chosen and the project completed. I would like to thank Dr. Tracy Robinson for staying with me across the miles and seeing me through to completion. Without her insights, editing, persistence and inspiring words of encouragement and support I would not have found the energy and motivation to finish. I would like to thank Dr. Edwin Gerler for helping me recruit students and faculty and Dr. Sylvia Nassar-McMillan for her time and allowing me access to her students for participation in the study. I would like to thank Dr. Craig Brookins for the extra hours of consultation and direction he has provided me throughout this process. I owe a debt of gratitude to the North Carolina State University statistic consultants, Sandy Donaghy and Joy Smith. I would like to thank my 13 year old son, Zachary, for understanding my limited availability to him during this 7 year process. I would like to thank my daughter, Amanda for being there for me with understanding and encouragement as I faced abandonment, betrayal and deceit in significant areas of my life during this project. I would like to thank my parents Jan and Rodger Cripe for providing me with the spiritual foundation that I needed to get through and be successful in life. Finally, I would like to thank my better half, Joe Minor, for providing for me in ways that I thought would never happen for me in a relationship. He has been my emotional, financial and psychological support through the last and most difficult leg of this project. I only hope, now, to give back as much as these significant people have given me over the course of this process.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

Background of the Problem  Recently, spirituality has become a topic of increasing interest in the fields of counselor education, counseling, psychology and social work. Many who explore this topic believe that in a pluralistic world, sensitivity to diversity is necessary in counselor education and counseling practice. A person’s spirituality, then, is another form of cultural diversity and a dimension of human development as important to understand as one’s racial, ethnic, sexual, religious and gender identities and cognitive, moral and psychosocial development (Derezotes, 1995; Burke, Hackney, Hudson, Miranti, Wats, & Epp, 1999; Myers & Williard, 2003; Bishop & Avila-Juarbe, 2003). Counselors who approach the counseling relationship without sensitivity to spirituality as a legitimate area of diversity impacting human lives in various ways are believed to be ineffective in counseling or at least in understanding all of the dimensions of their client (Stanard, Sandhu & Painter, 2000; Mattis & Jagers, 2001; Burke et. al., 1999) Existential Psychologists, Transpersonal Psychologists and others that ascribe to wellness models believe that this dimension of a person is so important in their health and well-being, that it is the key to the counselor’s effectiveness and the clients wellness. It is through spirituality and spiritual development that a counselor can become more effective and a client can move toward wellness. To address counselor effectiveness there has been increasing efforts in the field of counselor education to promote the inclusion of spirituality in course curriculums (Miller, 1999; Burke et. al., 1999; Myers & Williard, 2003; O’Connor, 2004; Cashwell & Young, 2004)

In addition to being another form of diversity, research is exploring the relationship and association of one’s spirituality with numerous mental and physical
health issues. In a study of 126 African American women who were survivors of partner abuse, Fowler and Hill (2004) found that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms remain significantly related to partner abuse after controlling for the effects of social support and spirituality. The study was examining partner abuse, mental health and coping. Social support and spirituality were considered cultural factors of coping. The mediating effects of social support and spirituality on the relationships between partner abuse and both depression and post-traumatic stress disorder were investigated. These results have implications for the inclusion of spirituality in the treatment of PTSD in victims of partner abuse. Berkel, Vandiver and Bahner (2004) found that while gender role attitudes were the best overall predictor of domestic violence beliefs, spirituality also contributed to the models for men and women. Piedmont (2004) found that pre-treatment spiritual transcendence scores were significantly related to post-treatment ratings. The spiritual transcendence scores predicted treatment outcomes better than did personality measures. According to Robert (2004), in addition to spiritual well-being being positively related to job satisfaction, the overall spiritual well-being scores also accounted for 10.4% of the variance in general job satisfaction scores. Brennan (2004) found that spirituality predicted better adaptation to vision loss. Weaver, Flannelly, Garbarino, Figley, and Flannelly (2003) reviewed the 469 research and non-research articles published in the Journal of Traumatic Stress between 1990 and 1999 and found that 8.7% of non-research articles, 4.1% of quantitative research articles and 2.9% of qualitative research articles considered religion or spirituality in their work.

Other research has focused on developing assessment measures. The Spiritual Well-Being Scale, (Ellison, 1983) and The Belief Systems Analysis Scale (Montgomery,
Belief Systems Analysis Scale (BSAS) are two assessment measures undergoing continued analysis and use in research. The Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) measures spiritual well-being in two dimensions. One dimension (religious well-being) refers to one’s sense of well-being in relation to “God”, and the other (existential well-being) refers to a sense of life purpose and life satisfaction with no reference to anything specifically religious (Ellison & Smith, 1991). The Belief Systems Analysis Scale (BSAS) measures the degree to which one adheres to an Afrocentric worldview. An Afrocentric worldview is one that is highly spiritual in nature. Persons adhering to an Afrocentric worldview assume there is a nonmaterial-spiritual reality underlying observed material phenomena and that there is a unity of spirit, (thoughts and feelings) and matter (five sense perception) (Montgomery, Fine & James-Myers, 1990).

Statement of the Problem

With a growing interest and collection of research on spirituality, spiritual development and assessments of spirituality, the field is diverse and inconsistent in its conceptualization of the construct. The different schools of thought have their own definitions and models of spirituality and spiritual development. Furthermore, assessment tools that measure various definitions of spirituality and models of spiritual development are still in the research phase and being recommended for use only in research. This leads to confusion and inconsistency among educators, practitioners and researchers when a discussion of the topic arises. Inconsistent and confusing counselor education of what spirituality is and what spiritual development means leads to no implementation or poor implementation of the construct in practice and research. Definitions of spirituality and spiritual development may be so inconsistent and
confusing that the constructs are not even included in counselor education curriculums or counselors may avoid recognizing them as a valid part of their clients’ multi-cultural identity thereby missing a large dimension of their client. To illustrate the confusion, regardless of one’s field of discipline, if the topic of moral development is broached by educators, practitioners and researchers, there is a high degree of likelihood that all members of the discussion will enter the discussion from the same point of view: Kohlberg’s definition of moral development. This is not the case when the topic of spirituality, spiritual development and assessment of spirituality is broached. The leaders of the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) believed that in order to promote the inclusion of spirituality in counselor education and counselor competencies, the construct needed to be defined comprehensively and consistently for proper education. They convened a summit in 1995 with one entire day devoted to the purpose of gathering ideas, theories and research in order to define spirituality (Miller, 1999). Furthermore, if valid assessment measures of spirituality and spiritual development are to be developed over time for use in research and practice, a comprehensive and consistent definition of the construct must be accomplished. An empirically tested and validated cohesive definition, developmental model and assessment tool is needed to help us narrow and become more solidified in our approach to the topic.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this work is two-fold. First, a comprehensive review of the literature will accumulate and critique available material on spirituality and spiritual development for similarities, differences, contributions and omissions. These
similarities, differences, contributions and omissions will be interpreted to determine the best definition of spirituality and model of spiritual development. Both theoretical and empirical works will be reviewed. Second, a mixed-method investigation of the construct validity of the optimism subscale of the Belief Systems Analysis Scale (BSAS) using focus groups and factor analysis will be conducted as the BSAS is a measure of Afrocentric worldview which is one of the reviewed constructs associated with spirituality and spiritual development in need of further investigation.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions formulated to pursue the second purpose were: (a) What do focus group participants think the BSAS Optimism subscale items are asking? (b) How can items be changed to improve factor loadings? (c) Do rewritten items have stronger more consistent factor loadings than previously? (d) Do participants recognize a difference between spirituality and religiosity? (e) Do participants believe a person can be spiritual without attending church? Four hypotheses were developed. (a) Insights and opinions uncovered from a focus group study will reveal that questions designed to measure optimism are confusing, misleading or asking about some other construct. (b) Discussion from the focus group will produce suggestions for rewording items. (c) Rewritten items based on data from the focus group study will produce stronger and more consistent factor loadings of the optimism subscale than previous studies have. (d) Participants will recognize a difference between spirituality and religiosity. (e) Participants will believe that a person can be spiritual without attending church.

Chapter Overview Following this Chapter 1 Introduction, Chapter 2 will present the literature review. Chapters 3 and 4 are dedicated to the second part of the study as
they present the method and results of the focus group and factor analysis. Chapter 5 will discuss the findings of the focus groups and factor analysis. Chapter 5 will also offer implications and recommendations for counselor educators, counselors and future research.
Chapter 2  Literature Review

Spirituality Defined

Many definitions and descriptions of spirituality appear in the professional literature. There are collections of definitions that indicate spirituality consists of a different number of dimensions, from one or two dimensions to greater than five dimensions. Definitions from three theoretical frameworks that have guided this work, Transpersonal psychology, Cognitive psychology and Afrocentric psychology. There is crossover and similarities between the schools of thought in terms of ideas and number of dimensions to include in the definition of spirituality, but they can generally be grouped by these frameworks. The transpersonal paradigm believes that spirituality motivates people toward self-actualization, self awareness and integrated wholeness. The cognitive framework focus’s on the dimension of spirituality that involves how a person finds meaning and purpose in one’s life. The Afrocentric paradigm believes that spirituality is actually our essence. We are material manifestations of spirit. Given the crossover of ideas, however, definitions of spirituality are organized here by the number of dimensions in the definition. They are summarized in Table 2.1.

One Dimension Definitions

Transcendence. Several writers identify transcendence as the salient dimension of spirituality. The following definition illustrates this:

Spirituality is a human characteristic that orients the self toward “Self”, or that which transcends the identification of the self with partial realities formulated around self-definitions determined by past experiences and conditioning. Human spirituality is a movement of the self toward its own deepest ground, its most
fundamental nature. This movement is toward wholeness and integrates that which has been fragmented. . . . Spirituality emphasizes personal growth and human authenticity and has an emphasis on the transcendent that is not necessarily related to religious institutions (Page & Berkow, 1998, p. 289).

In the same vein, Chandler, Hoden and Kolander (1992), known for their work in wellness psychology, define spirituality as: “Pertaining to the innate capacity to and tendency to seek to, transcend one’s current locus of centricity, which transcendence involves increased knowledge and love” (p. 169). Myers, Sweeney and Witmer (2000), known for their work in wellness which is theoretically based in Adlerian psychology defines spirituality as: “An awareness of a being or force that transcends the material aspects of life and gives a deep sense of wholeness or connectedness to the universe” (p. 78). Miller and Martin (1988) describe spirituality as the inner experience of “acknowledging a transcendent being, power and reality greater than ourselves” (p. 200).

These schools of thought posit spirituality as a journey toward self-actualization, self-awareness and integrated wholeness. Assagioli (1986) writes about spirituality as the development of self-realization: “A drastic transmutation of the ‘normal’ elements of the personality” (p. 21). He writes:

Spiritual refers not only to experiences traditionally considered religious but to all the states of awareness, all the human function and activities which have as their common denominator the possession of values higher than average-values such as the ethical, the aesthetic, the heroic, the humanitarian and the altruistic (p. 21).

Meaning and purpose. Another set of writings emphasizes meaning and purpose as the salient dimension of spirituality (Balk, 1999; Bolen, 1994; Ellison, 1983;
Garbarino & Bedard, 1996; Marrone, 1999; May, 1982; Nino, 2000). Fowler (1981), noted for his work on stages of faith development, illustrates the emphasis on meaning as he describes faith as: “A person or group’s way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives” (p. 4). Fowler’s definition reflects the inclusion of other’s defining dimensions, relationships and multiple forces that constitute spirituality.

**God or a higher power.** Other writers suggest that the salient dimension of spirituality is that dimension of a person that pursues a relationship with God, or a higher being (Davis, 1986; Moore, 1999). These writers believe that spirituality is primarily defined by the path that a person takes as they pursue a relationship with a higher power. The higher power is a being unseen that has ultimate control and power in the spirit and material world. People, in their pursuit of a relationship with their higher power, build trust and security by turning to their higher power for making meaning when they are confronted with the unknowns of the material world. These writers believe that spirituality can not be completely defined without including this dimension.

**Multi-dimensional Definitions**

Some believe that spirituality is a multidimensional construct. There are those who sense the underlying nearness to each other’s ideas and synthesize them into one coherent definition encompassing all of the dimensions. In summary, the syntheses are: (a) meaning and purpose and relationship with God (Ganje-Fling, McCarthy Veach, Kuand & Houg, 2000); (b) self-awareness, interconnectedness and relationship to a higher power (Hamilton & Jackson, 1998); (c) faith, hope and love (Van Kaam, 1983); (d) wholeness and meaning in one’s cultural experience, further development, and social
change work (Tisdell, 2000); (e) transcendence and relatedness (Funk, 1987); (f) charity, community, compassion, forgiveness, hope, learning opportunities, meaning and morality (Mahoney & Graci, 1999); (g) religious faith, moral living, and emotional awareness (Carotta, 1999); (h) connectiveness, well-being, consciousness, meaning, religiosity (Derezotes, 1995); and (i) belonging, wholeness, connectedness and openness to the infinite (Shafranske & Gorsuch, 1984). Genia, as cited by Reinert and Smith (1997), listed criteria for spiritual maturity. Her criteria for being spiritually mature suggest that a person’s spirituality consists of dimensions of transcendence, relationship with God, meaning and purpose, and connectedness to others. Myers and Williard (2003) after an extensive literature review defined spirituality as “the capacity and tendency present in all human beings to find and construct meaning about life and existence and to move toward personal growth, responsibility and relationship with others” (p. 149). They elaborate that:

Human spirituality is a universal phenomenon that is central to human growth and development and is an integral, if not the central component of true wellness, spirituality can no longer be considered merely a component of the person or a separate aspect of wellness. Rather, it is the integrating force that motivates and shapes the physical, psychological, and emotional functioning of all human beings. (p. 150).

This view shows how much broader her conceptualization has become since her earlier one wherein spirituality was predominantly defined by transcendence and an aspect of wellness (Myers et al., 2000).

Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf and Saunders (1988) wrote:
Spirituality, which comes from the Latin, spiritus, meaning “breath of life,” is a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate. (p. 10)

They identified nine major components of the multi-dimensional construct, transcendent dimension, meaning and purpose in life, mission in life, sacredness of life, material values, altruism, idealism, awareness of the tragic and fruits of spirituality.

Myers et. al, (1991) agree with Elkins et. al, definition of spirituality as it relates to her Optimal theory, but add that to be optimal or spiritually whole, the certain identifiable values need: “To be in accord with peace, love harmony and justice” (p. 57).

Myers optimal theory is grounded in Afrocentric Psychology which promotes that psychological health is achieved when one adheres to an Afrocentric worldview.

Arriving at a consensus description was the goal of the Summit on Spirituality that was endorsed by the Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) and hosted by Burke and Miranti. This definition reads as follows:

The animating force in life, represented by such images as breath, wind, vigor, and courage. Spirituality is the infusion and drawing out of spirit in one’s life. It is experienced as an active and passive process. Spirituality also is described as a capacity and tendency that is innate and unique to all persons. This spiritual tendency moves the individual towards knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness, and compassion. Spirituality includes one’s capacity for creativity, growth and the development of a values system.
Spirituality encompasses the religious, spiritual and transpersonal. (Miller, 1999, p. 499).
Table 2.1

**Spirituality Defined**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Dimensions</th>
<th>Name of Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Dimension</td>
<td>-Transcendence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Meaning and Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-God or Higher Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Dimensions</td>
<td>-Meaning and Purpose and relationship with God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Self awareness, faith, hope and love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-wholeness and meaning in ones cultural experience, further development and social change work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-transcendence, interconnectedness, relatedness with God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-charity, community, compassion, forgiveness, hope, learning opportunities, meaning and morality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-religious faith, moral living and emotional awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-connectiveness, well-being, consciousness, meaning, religiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-belonging, wholeness, connectedness and openness to the infinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-transcendence, relationship with God, meaning and purpose and connectedness to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-meaning, personal growth, responsibility and relationship with others; motivates physical, psychological, emotional functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-transcendent dimension, meaning and purpose in life, mission in life, sacredness of life, material values, altruism, idealism, awareness of the tragic and fruits of spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-moves the individual towards knowledge, love, meaning, hope, compassion, transcendence and connectedness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spirituality versus Religiosity

When defining spirituality, confusion between religiosity and spirituality has been noted despite scholars contention that they are two different, but related constructs (Myers, 2003). Therefore, this spirituality defined section will close with a discussion of various definitions of religion and religiosity. Spirituality is reviewed as a human dimension, encompassing a grander scheme of things than religiosity. Religiosity is the context within which spirituality is practiced. It is an: “Organized social body with it’s own set of beliefs, rules, and practices” (Mullen, 1977, p. 11). Mattis and Jagers (2001) defined religion as a “shared system of beliefs, mythology and rituals associated with god or gods.” They defined religiosity as one’s degree of adherence to these rituals and beliefs. Religion has been defined as the organized attempt to give a framework to the sense of awe for the transcendent. Religion prescribes behavior and action to its practitioners (Myers, 2003). Myers et al., (2000) writes that religiosity is limited to institutional beliefs and behaviors. They write that for some group religious participation is often the forum for people’s expression of their spirituality, however, some do not participate in formal religious practice, yet acknowledge a need for transcendence and connectedness. Davis, Kerr and Robinson-Kurpus (2003) concur with the above authors. They write that:

Religiosity suggests an allegiance to a particular system of faith and worship.
Religious beliefs are characterized by adherence to a set of sacred doctrines or membership in a body of people who share similar beliefs about God, holy observance, and morality. Religiosity shares many attributes with the concept of spirituality; however, religiosity adds an element of theological structure and
formality not present in spirituality. While religiosity and spirituality can be conceptualized as separate constructs, they are, in reality, more overlapping than distinct. In many cases religiosity provides a structure conductive to spirituality. In other cases spiritual growth is pursued outside the context of a religious framework. (p.358)

Spirituality is experientially defined, transcends the tangible and connects one to the whole (Robinson & Watt, 2001). In short, religion, religious or religiosity is a narrower concept predominantly concerned with how the one practices their spirituality. Religion is often associated with an institutionalized and public set of beliefs yet religion can be intensely private as well. Religiosity is viewed as being a part of the broader concept of spirituality, distinctly different, but not altogether separate. It is possible for a person to be spiritual and not be religious and for a person to religious and not be spiritual (Burke & Miranti, 2001).

Spiritual Development Defined

Authors from various schools of thought have different conceptions of the development of spirituality. The authors describe this development in terms of their own definition of spirituality. They also include dimensions of spirituality from other schools within their own definitions and developmental models. For example, Assagioli (1986) uses transcendence as the main dimension of spirituality. His developmental model reflects this process of transcendence. However, he includes, meaning making in this process which is the salient dimension of spirituality that Fowler (1981) focuses on. Three models of spiritual development were selected for review, one from Transpersonal
Belief Systems Analysis Scale

psychology, one from Cognitive Developmental Psychology, and one from Afrocentric Psychology.

Transpersonal Psychology

Assagioli (1986) proposes a model which is based on the idea that spiritual development is the path of self-realization. He writes that spiritual development involves the awakening of potentialities that lie dormant: “The raising of consciousness to realms, a drastic transmutation of the ‘normal’ elements of the personality, a functioning along a new inner dimension” (p. 21). A “Normal” person takes life as it comes and does not question its meaning, its worth, or its purpose, he devotes himself to the satisfaction of his personal desires, he seeks enjoyment of the senses, emotional pleasures, material security or achievement of personal ambitions. The person can be a church goer, believer in God but only to conform to the injunctions of his church and share in the rites he feels that are required of him. He is not necessarily spiritual awoken by this act. Assagioli believes this process takes place as spiritual energy is transmitted from the superconscious, Transpersonal Self, to the “I” or world self. He ascribes four stages to this process. His model is summarized in Table 2.2.

In the first stage, Crises Preceding the Spiritual Awakening, the “normal” individual experiences dissatisfaction with his life, a sense of meaninglessness, wonderment at the origin and purpose of life, and questions the meaning of his own sufferings and inequities as well as those of others. One has a vague sense that something is missing. These crises signal that a spiritual awakening is about to occur. The channels through which energy will be released from the transpersonal self are about
to open. The elements of the “I” that need to be changed for personal growth are surfacing to the conscious realm.

In the second stage, Crises Caused by the Spiritual Awakening, the individual’s task is to assimilate the energy released in the spiritual awakening. If assimilated successfully the person experiences a release and relief from the earlier symptoms. Alternatively, the person can be overwhelmed and confused, unable to interpret the experience. Assagioli believes this “confusion of levels” to mean that individuals might attribute characteristics of the Higher Self to the “I” because their level of cognitive development and personality development does not allow for accurate understanding and assimilation. An example he uses is a man who believes his visions mean he is God or other similar self-deceptions that are found in the followers of cults: “A case of confusion between a relative and an absolute truth, between the empirical and the transcendent levels of reality” (Assagioli, 1986 p. 24). The “I” is our normal personality of which we are conscious of regularly. The Higher Self, Transpersonal Self, reveals itself to, “I”, in moments of spiritual awakening for the purpose of assimilating our understanding and promoting our growth toward self-realization. This stage is the high, the flow of the ebb and flow cycle.

The third stage, Reactions to the Spiritual Awakening, can be described as the ebb of the ebb and flow cycle. The purpose of the spiritual awakening is to transform the personality into higher levels of functioning. This is the period in which the “I” wants to return to its previous level of functioning. Assagioli (1986) describes three possible reactions to the process. The first is rare, but is a basically a successful integration and transformation of the personality. The energy transmitted in the spiritual awakening is
Belief Systems Analysis Scale 18

strong enough to keep it from reverting to the previous state. The second is less intense, so “only some of the regressive tendencies and patterns in the personality are fully transformed” (p. 25). However, what remains when the energies reside, is “a sense of direction which one can use to complete the transformation through his own purposeful methods” (p. 25). The third possibility is that “the energy transmitted by the Self is not sufficient to bring about the higher level of organization” (p. 25).

To elaborate, the high feeling experienced by individuals is the glimpse of where they are going, where they will exist and function as they work to Self-realize; the state of being in which the thoughts, feelings and behaviors are permanently transformed and integrated into the personality for consistent functioning. Assagioli (1986) describes this glimpse in terms that clearly reflect other authors’ notions of spirituality and what the ultimate development of spirituality will look like. Furthermore, such a description, a glimpse of self-realization, is what Assagioli believes can lead to depression and other maladjustments if the person does not continue into the fourth stage.

In the fourth stage, the Process of Transmutation, the individual has made the recognition that the necessary conditions for Self-realization are regeneration and transmutation of the personality. The stage has several phases according to Assagioli. They include removing obstacles to the inflow of superconscious energies; development of the higher functions which have been dormant; periods in which one can let the Higher Self work, receiving its guidance. He describes this phase as the longest with periods of joy and suffering and light and dark. He states that the process is not always smooth because individuals must contend with the activities of daily living as well as their process of transmutation. When individuals attempt to balance the energies for these
tasks, they may find themselves in periods of over investment in the self-transformation process while neglecting their normal life. Assagioli calls this a transitory stage. Further difficulties included in this stage are the tendency of individuals to ignore rather than transmute negative aspects of themselves revealed in the spiritual awakening. He suggests the use of a guide to promote the process. Finally the result of this process is Self-realization. Again, the elements of other writers’ dimensions of spirituality and its ultimate form are seen in Assagioli’s (1986) description of Self-realization.

Assagioli cautions one to understand and distinguish between the person pursuing a normal life and those pursuing a Self-realized, spiritually enlightened life. He maintains that: “The psychological difficulties of the average person have generally a regressive character” (p. 29). Individuals are trying to accomplish some normal developmental tasks. Conversely, “the difficulties produced by the stress and strife in the various stage toward Self-realization have a specifically progressive character” (Assagioli, 1986, p. 29). These people are being called upward to evolve. They are developmentally normal, yet feel a sense of something missing (stage one). Assagioli (1986) quotes Jung to demonstrate this concept.

To be “normal” is a splendid ideal for the unsuccessful, for all those who have not yet found an adaptation. But for people who have far more ability than the average, for whom it was never hard to gain successes and to accomplish their share of the world’s work-for them restriction to the normal signifies the bed of Procustes, unbearable boredom, infernal sterility and hopelessness. As a consequence there are as many people who become neurotic because they are
only normal, as there are people who are neurotic because they cannot become normal (p. 29).
Table 2.2

Assagioli’s Model of Spiritual Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description of Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisis preceding the</td>
<td>Occurs when the ‘normal’ man becomes surprised and disturbed by a change. He no longer wants to take life as it comes. He questions the meaning, purpose and worth of life. This can occur after a series of disappointments, emotional shock, loss of a loved one, or without any apparent cause in full enjoyment of health and prosperity. There is a growing sense of dissatisfaction, a sense of the unreality and emptiness of ordinary life. One inquires into the origins and the purpose of life, the reason for so many things one took for granted, the meaning of suffering and the reason for inequalities in the destinies of men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Awakening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis caused by the</td>
<td>A “high”, the inner awakening is characterized by a sense of joy and mental illumination that brings with it an insight into the meaning and purpose of life; it dispels many doubts, offers the solution of many problems and gives an inner source of security; life is one; love flows toward his fellow beings and the whole of creation. the opening of the channel between the conscious and the superconscious levels, between the “I” and the Self, creates a flood of light, energy and joy to produce a release. The opening of the channel between the conscious and the superconscious levels, between the “I” and the Self, creates a flood of light,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spiritual awakening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactions following the spiritual awakening</td>
<td>A coming down period, the ebb that follows the flow of the previous stage. It is when the energies subside and the personality reverts toward its previous state. Only some of the regressive tendencies and patterns in the personality were fully transformed. The “vision” remains however, an ideal model and a sense of direction which one can use to complete the transformation through his own purposeful methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phases of the process of transmutation</td>
<td>This is the longest and most complicated phase toward the “vision”, the state of consciousness characterized by joy, serenity, inner security, a sense of calm power, clear understanding and radiant love. In its highest aspects it is the realization of essential Being, of communion and identification with the Universal Life. It includes active removal of the obstacles to the inflow and operation of superconscious energies. Development of the higher functions which have lain dormant or undeveloped occurs. Periods occur in which one can let the Higher Self work, being receptive to its guidance, but one must balance the functions of everyday life with this and master his dual task and unify it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cognitive - Developmental Psychology

Fowler (1981) describes seven stages of Faith. Faith is the way one organizes meaning in one’s life. The ways of organizing meaning evolve, develop and change over the life span. His research involves interviewing individuals and charting their patterns of faith to illumine stages and patterns of all persons’ faith. Even though he does not use the word spiritual in his developmental model, several writers refer to his model as a model of spiritual development (Burke, et. al., 1999; Myers et. al., 1991).

Fowler proposes stages in his model that are heavily influenced by the cognitive-developmental theorists Piaget and Kohlberg. Erik Erikson, a psychosocial theorist, also influenced his work. Fowler states that his model shows how faith is a way of knowing that is more complex than the ways of knowing described by Piaget, Kohlberg and Erikson. Fowler’s model includes an affective component that these theorists separate from knowing or cognition. Fowler’s work begins with a pre-stage that is not enumerated. It occurs in the time of infancy. He calls it Infancy and Undifferentiated Faith. He states: “The seeds of trust, courage, hope and love are fused in an undifferentiated way and contend with sensed threats of abandonment, inconsistencies and deprivations in an infant’s environment” (p. 121). He, like Erikson, believes this stage provides the groundwork for later faith development: “The emergent strength of faith in this stage is the fund of basic trust and the relational experience of mutuality with the ones providing primary love and care” (p. 121). This illustrates how the affective component is included in faith development. Meaning is made by the mutuality, or lack thereof, between the caretakers and the infant.
**Intuitive-Projective Faith.** (Stage 1) is characterized by the development of language and thought. It occurs between the ages of three to seven. It is a: “Fantasy-filled, imitative phase in which children can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions and stories of the visible faith of primally related adults” (p. 133).

**Mythic-Literal Faith.** (Stage 2): “Is the stage in which the person begins to take on for themselves [sic] the stories, beliefs, and observances that symbolize belonging to his or her community” (p. 149). The stage exists from approximately seven years of age to 12. Concrete-operational thinking is characteristic of this stage. Meaning is literal and one-dimensional. Children try to sort out what is real from make-believe. They can generate the story but not its meaning. The children are not reflecting on the conceptual meanings of the stories. Reciprocity is the principle governing divine-human relations.

**Synthetic-Conventional Faith.** (Stage 3): “Faith must provide a coherent orientation in the midst of that more complex and diverse range of involvements” (p. 172). This stage is characterized by formal-operational thinking. Meaning comes from the respected authority in individuals’ lives. This typically occurs in adolescence, but adults can remain in this stage of constructing meaning. Individuals believe they have their own ideologies, beliefs, values and feel deeply about them, but they actually come from the family and group of significant others. There is a reliance on external authority in the construction of meaning in interpersonal images and of the ultimate environment.

**Individuative-Reflective Faith.** (Stage 4) can occur, if it occurs, from young adulthood on into the thirties or forties. Transition to this stage is facilitated by either
emotionally or physically leaving home. Individuals must look critically at the assumptive system of values and relocate authority within themselves.

**Conjunctive Faith**, (Stage 5) expands the self-defined worldview to acknowledge that it is not absolute. Individuals in this stage find interconnectedness in the meaning of things. They must reclaim and rework their path to include the belief that others hold truth and meaning that compliment their own. The self-certainty necessary in the Individuative-Reflective Faith subsides. The values of others’ ideologies no longer need to be repressed and are integrated into the individuals own ideology.

**Universalizing Faith**, (Stage 6) is characteristic of persons who: “Have generated faith compositions in which their felt sense of an ultimate environment is inclusive of all being” (p. 200). Individuals act out their faith to the point of self-sacrifice. They actively pursue the transformation of the present realities to the point that they may be disliked, fired or even killed. Although Fowler credits people like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. with qualities of this stage, he believes one does not have to be this well known to possess these qualities. Fowler’s model is summarized in Table 2.3.
Table 2.3

Fowler’s Model of Faith Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description of stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infancy and Undifferentiated Faith</td>
<td>“The seeds of trust, courage, hope and love are fused in an undifferentiated way and contend with sensed threats of abandonment, inconsistencies and deprivations in an infant’s environment. He, like Erickson, believes this stage lays the groundwork for later faith development. “The emergent strength of faith in this stage is the fund of basic trust and the relational experience of mutuality with the ones providing primary love and care”. Thus, the affective development component of faith. Meaning is made by the mutuality (or lack of) of the caretakers and the infant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive-Projective Faith</td>
<td>A child in this stage attempts to organize sensory experiences, primarily from the significant adults in his life, into meaningful units. The child’s imagination, fantasy, allows them to create concrete symbols and images to construct meaning. The process of image forming and using these images for meaning is seen in fairy tales and suggests the importance of being in tuned to what images the child is forming. Imagination is the force by which they compose the ultimate environment and orient themselves toward the being(s) that constitute its character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief Systems Analysis Scale</td>
<td>Mythic-Literal Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Stage 2 ages 7-12            | If a child belongs to a community/family that believes in Christian concepts of religion or faith, the child starts to incorporate these concepts at face value, but does not grasp their meaning. Hymns, prayers and confessions are simply memorized. Interpretations of meaning, rituals, events of the community/family are adopted, practiced by the child. | It is characterized when a person’s world extends beyond the family wherein the adolescent has more involvements and therefore has feedback that there are other ways of making meaning in the world that are not exactly like his. The adolescent believes he has his own way of making meaning, but doesn’t see that it actually comes from authority figures in his life and therefore hasn’t yet critically challenged it and made a commitment to it after the challenge. Fowler calls it “conformist faith”.

|                              |                      | This is a transition stage wherein the person challenges his assumed values and beliefs and makes an informed commitment either to them or another set. A person can accomplish half of this task and remain in forever transition. In looking critically at meanings, symbols are recognized as separate from their meanings. This flattens the meaning. A person in this stage finds meaning by personally making rational sense of his or her own world. |                              |

Belief Systems Analysis Scale 27
| Conjunctive Faith | Ones committed way of making meaning is expanded to include others’ ways because they are considered truthful as well. “Discovering that someone who shares your identity also writes checks, makes deposits and stops payments on your checking account”, “Discovering that one’s parents are remarkable people not just because they are one’s parents. Revitalizes the power of meaning in symbols. This way of making meaning involves integrating into the self and outlook, much of what was suppressed or unrecognized in the interest of Stage 4’s self-certainty (others’ worldview). |
| Universalizing Faith | These persons pursue social justice to the farthest limits as they believe meaning making must include connections, responsibilities to and inclusion of all being in the ultimate environment of what is ‘good’. They believe and act congruently trying to transform the realities of today to a better world for all beings. |

**Afrocentric Psychology**

Myers et. al., (1991) propose a model of spiritual development based on Optimal Theory which derived from Afrocentric Psychology. Afrocentric Psychology was an outgrowth of the multicultural counseling movement. It developed from the need to counsel and or understand the world from African American values and cultural foundations or Afrocentric worldview as opposed to the dominant western values and worldview. Afrocentric worldview is characterized by a complex belief system that
Belief Systems Analysis Scale 29

operates from a non-materialistic and communal orientation. Specifically, Afrocentric belief constructs include: (a) reality is known in a sensory(material) and extrasensory(spiritual) fashion; (b) Value on interpersonal relationship; (c) value on harmony; (d) value on communalism; (e) value on experiential knowledge; (f) holistic worldview; (g) Diunital logic (objects can be alike and different at the same time); (h) extended self identity; (i) knowledge gained through inductive synthesis and self awareness; (j) sense of worth is intrinsic in being. There is a thrust toward the achievement of peace, happiness and positive interpersonal relationships (Myers, 1988). The tenets of Afrocentric worldview resonant with what others’ define as spirituality and encouraged Brookins (1994) to refer to the Afrocentric worldview as one that is characterized by a belief system that is spiritually based, holistic and values interpersonal relationships. If one adheres to an Afrocentric worldview then, one could easily be described as possessing a high degree of spirituality.

In the optimal conceptual system, spirit and matter are seen as one. People are worthy because they are unique manifestations of spirit or spiritual energy, not because they own or do not own something. This conceptual system serves to connect individuals with each other and all of life, including ancestors, those yet unborn, nature, and community. The system increases the value and power all individuals intrinsically possess and eliminates isms. It fosters peace and harmony among all people. Connectedness is yet another element of spirituality. Identity development or spiritual development is the process by which one comes to view the world in a way in which spirit and matter co-exist. Myers et. al, (1991) parallels identity development with spiritual development because in Optimal Theory the self is a coexisting combination of
spirit and matter. Spiritual and identity development consists of people coming to know themselves more and more fully as spiritual-material beings that they are. Myers et. al, (1991) conceptualizes the dimensions of self-awareness and connectedness as:

All forms of life are unique manifestations of spirit; therefore, self-worth is inherent and independent of external, physical realities. The process of identity development is actually one of increasing self-knowledge, thereby enhancing awareness of spirit, the essence of being. Accordingly, identity development cannot be separated from the context of spiritual development (p. 58).

She describes seven phases in which this process happens. In Absence of Conscious Awareness, (Phase 0), there is no awareness of spirit or being. Individuals do not separate themselves from their environment, and all life is accepted without judgement. In Individuation, (Phase 1), individuals perceive the world the way it was originally introduced to them. They rarely assign particular meaning or value to any aspect of their identity. In Dissonance, (Phase 2), individuals actively explore those aspects of themselves that may be devalued by others. In Immersion, (Phase 3), individuals fully embrace others like themselves who are devalued. Within a group of others like themselves, they develop a sense of belonging. In Internalization, (Phase 4), individuals effectively incorporated feelings of worth associated with the salient aspects of self, resulting in an increased sense of security. The individual is worthwhile. In Integration, (Phase 5), individuals’ sense of self has developed to a stronger place of inner security so that relationships and perceptions of others reflect this degree of inner peace. Others are worthwhile. In Transformation, (Phase 6), the self, spirit, is redefined
toward a sense of personhood that includes the ancestors, those yet unborn, nature, and community (Myers, et. al., 1991, pp. 59-60). Myers model is summarized in Table 2.4.
Table 2.4

**Myer’s OTAID Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Absence of Individuation</td>
<td>“It is”. There is an absence of awareness of self as separate from world, infancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Individuation</td>
<td>“The world is the way it is”. There is an egocentric sense of self, never questioning the way things were originally presented as parts of self that are devalued by society may never have been presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Dissonance</td>
<td>“I’m beginning to wonder who I am”. Individuals recognize and confront the devalued aspects of themselves creating a conflict between what individuals believe they are and the devalued self. Negative feelings accompany this experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Immersion</td>
<td>“I focus my energy on people like me”. Individuals immerse themselves, directly or vicariously in the culture of the devalued group. This experience provides them with acceptance and the ability to take pride in the devalued aspects of themselves. Will reject dominant groups mores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Internalization</td>
<td>“I feel good about who I know I am”. The acceptance gained in the previous stages experience allows the person to feel secure in including the devalued aspects of the self and include them as one of many components of the self. They can be more tolerant of others who do not threaten their sense of self.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Belief Systems Analysis Scale

Integration

“With my deeper understanding of myself I am changing my assumptions about the world. Individual’s sense of community has deepened and expanded as a result of a connection to more people because criteria of acceptance go beyond appearance. All people can oppress or be oppressed, depending upon one’s assumptions about one’s self and relationships to others.”

Transformation

“It is I”. Individuals have experienced shift in worldview based on the realization of the interrelatedness and interdependence of all things and are empowered to define their reality based on spiritual awareness rather than external circumstance.

Empirical Investigations

An increasing number of empirical investigations have been conducted that investigate various definitions or spirituality, components of spiritual development and tools that assess spirituality. A few of those studies and their results are presented here.

Hamilton and Jackson (1998) conducted a qualitative investigation on the paths and processes of spiritual development. The investigators chose 10 female helping professionals to participate in two 90 minute focus group sessions. The first session focused on two questions: What does spirituality mean to you? And How did you become aware of your spirituality? The second session focused on two questions: How did others in your life react to your emerging spirituality? and What in your life prohibits or blocks you from experiencing or getting in touch with your spirituality? Responses to “What does spirituality mean to you” centered around three themes including, self-awareness, interconnectedness and a relationship to a higher power. Responses to “How
did you become aware of your spirituality” centered around five themes including, adversity, transcendence, introspection, generativity and sensing an external power. Responses to “How did others in your life react to your emerging spirituality” produced a full range of responses including no change in relationships as well as diminished and enhanced relationships. Responses to “What in your life prohibits or blocks you from experiencing or getting in touch with your spirituality” centered around three themes including, cultural barriers, racing thoughts and lack of perceived need.

Elkins et. al, (1980) developed a measure of humanistic spirituality designed to indicate the degree to which one adheres to his 9 theoretical components of spirituality. He and his colleagues conducted a content validity study in which 200 items were presented to five experts in psychology and spirituality. The experts were to rate each item as being relevant to spirituality on a 5-point Likert-type guide with five being excellent. Items were eliminated that failed to achieve an average rating of about 4. The inventory was reduced to 157 items. A construct validity study was also conducted in which the scores of 24 adults nominated as being “highly-spiritual” persons were compared with the scores of 96 graduate psychology students. Statistical analysis revealed that the total inventory and eight of the nine subscales significantly differentiated between the 2 groups on the direction specified. This investigation gives empirical evidence to the nine components purported to define spirituality.

Batten and Oltjenbruns (1999) conducted a qualitative investigation designed to illuminate how spiritual development as compared to Fowler’s Faith development model occurs in adolescents following the death of a sibling. The authors recruited adolescent participants through hospice and compassionate friends organizations. Four participants
were interviewed using a set of specific open-ended questions and probes. The questions focused on the following themes: (a) the adolescents own situation; (b) relationship between religion, spirituality and bereavement; (c) personal outcomes to the death of their sibling. Six themes emerged from the data analysis. New perspective of self, new perspective of others, new perspective of sibling relationship, new perspective of death, new perspective of life and new perspective of higher power.

Montgomery et. al, (1990) conducted a quantitative investigation to validate the BSAS which was designed to assess an optimal Afrocentric worldview as defined by the OTAID model. The purpose of the investigation was to establish construct validity. Scores on the instrument were hypothesized to correlate negatively with scores of dogmatism, psychological distress and positively correlate to social interest. A factor analysis was also conducted. 140 white introductory psychology students of a private Midwestern university were given the BSAS, Dogmatism Scale, Symptom Checklist-90-R and the Social Interest Scale. The total score from the BSAS was significantly correlated (p < .001) in the expected direction with all of the criterion variables. Furthermore, the items loaded on five factors. The factors were interpreted as follows: Factor 1: Interpersonal Valuing, 8 items that indicate a higher value placed upon interpersonal relationship as opposed to material gain. Factor 2: De-emphasis on Appearance, 5 items measuring the degree to which one considers nonmaterial factors when making decisions and judgments. Factor 3: Integration of Opposites, 3 items measuring the extent to which one viewed progress as a dialectical process in which opposite occurrences are opportunities for growth. Factor 4: Nonmaterial Based Satisfaction, 5 items assessing the degree to which well-being was not based solely upon
material occurrences. Factor 5: Optimism, 4 items assessing the extent to which one perceived positive possibilities in a variety of situations. The five factors accounted for 38.3% of the total variance.

Brookins (1994) conducted a quantitative investigation to further validate this instrument that assesses optimal Afrocentric worldview. The purpose of the article was to establish construct validity with an African American sample. 171 African American college students attending a predominantly White southeastern university participated in the study. Scores on the BSAS were predicted to correlate positively with the internalization subscale of the racial identity attitude scale (RIAS) and the overall score on the African self-consciousness scale (ASCS). The BSAS was also expected to be negatively related to the subscales of the RIAS that indicate less healthy or “suboptimal” attitudes towards one’s racial/ethnic group, i.e., preencounter, encounter, & immersion/immersion. As predicted, the Internalization subscale correlated positively with the total BSAS score (r = .16, p < .04). The preencounter subscale significantly correlated negatively with the BSAS total score (r = -.51, p < .001) and each of the subscales, interpersonal valuing (r = -.32, p < .01), Deemphasis on appearance (r = -.23, p < .001), Integration of opposites (r = -.31, p < .001), non-material based satisfaction (r = -.40, p < .001), and optimism (r = -.37, p < .001). The Encounter and Immersion/Emmersion scales did not significantly correlate. The total ASCS score did not significantly correlate with either the total BSAS or any of its subscales. Factor loading comparisons between the two samples show similar, but not identical loadings for the five different subscales. In the white sample eight items for Interpersonal Valuing loaded on this factor. In the African American sample, four of these items loaded on this
factor, three did not load on any factor and one loaded on a different factor. In the white sample, five items loaded on Deemphasis on Appearance factor. In the African American sample three of these items loaded on this factor, while two items did not load on any factor. In the white sample, three items loaded on the Integration of Opposites factor. In the African American sample, two of these items loaded on the factor while one item did not load on any factor. In the white sample, six items loaded on the Non-material based satisfaction factor. In the African American sample, three of these items loaded on the Integration of Opposites factor and three items loaded on three different factors. The Non-material based satisfaction items did not show a pattern of loading on its own independent factor. In the white sample, four items loaded on the Optimism subscale. In the African American sample, again, these items did not show a pattern of loading on a single factor. In the white sample, five items did not load on any factor. In the African American sample, these items loaded on other factors, but not on any one consistently. The factors, however, accounted for 36.2% of the variance which is comparable to the white sample.

Similarities, Differences, Contributions and Omissions

Several common threads weaving through the spirituality definitions in this literature review were revealed. First, all of these definitions refer to spirituality as a human dimension of human nature. Second, the definitions differentiate spirituality from religiosity. Third, the definitions assume spirituality is a universal phenomenon.

The present review seems to have uncovered one primary difference among the definitions of spirituality. The number and kind of dimensions that writers include and emphasize in their definition of spirituality is the source of variability that prevents the
field from being solidified in one definition that is used in research and discussions of spirituality. Some definitions include only one dimension, and most include more than one dimension. Within the multi-dimensional definitions, however, the dimensions are quite similar with various theorists using different terminology to describe the same dimension. In addition to being essentially the same, empirical evidence reviewed herein supports the multi-dimensional concept of spirituality (Hamilton & Jackson, 1998; Elkins et. al, 1980).

The developmental models presented have been critiqued herein for their adherence to the comprehensive ASERVIC definition as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the concepts presented in their theoretical stages of spiritual development. The ASERVIC definition was used because of the effort and method of deriving this definition put forth by the leaders of the Association. That is, convening a summit with various researchers of spirituality to gather their ideas, theory and research. Additionally, this definition was chosen as this author believes the simple titles of the 7 dimensions and their similarity to empirically tested definitions give it validity.

In the first model, Assagioli (1985) appears to account for all parts of the global definition of spirituality in his model. At moments of spiritual awakening and the closer one gets to Self-Realization, the more the individual has moved toward knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness, and compassion. His model clearly depicts how spirituality is the animating force in life, innate and unique to all persons. It shows how spirituality develops over time to infuse and draw out spirit, as given in the form of energy by the transpersonal self. This spiritual development is an active and passive process. The most valuable components I find in his model include the
Belief Systems Analysis Scale

The discussion of “crises” and “awakening” that promotes or stagnates spiritual development. The naming of spiritual energy as the part of the crises that motivates or ceases to motivate development is also a valuable contribution. A weakness of his model is the understanding of the role, if any, of a higher power in spiritual development. He speaks of the Transpersonal Self, universal life that gives one the energy to be spiritually awakened. It is unclear as to whether or not this represents the God, Ultimate Being, or Ultimate environment of the spiritual world. Furthermore, he does not elaborate on the cognitive development that he believes is necessary to adequately assimilate the spiritual energy.

In the second model, Fowler (1981) describes the tendency of spirituality to move one toward knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness and compassion. He further accounts for one’s capacity to do so. These are the strengths of his model. On the other hand, his model lacks the ability to communicate how spirituality is the animating force in one’s life and how the development of spirituality, faith, is the drawing out of one’s spirit. His conceptualization of one’s spirit and how it animates one’s life is unclear. Is it the spirit that motivates an individual through the stages or is it biology? It seems more likely that one should infer from his model that it is one’s spirit that motivates one to find meaning and purpose in life, which is determined by the biology of our cognitive structures. Also lacking is a clear and consistent use of the term faith. It seems reasonable to replace faith with spirit in order to find the model as representative of spiritual development as others have. Furthermore, despite his conviction that his model adds the affective component to development that Piaget and Kohlberg missed, it still seems vague. Certainly, his higher stages reflect spirituality as
defined in its all-inclusive form. As he describes the stages, though, it still seems relatively cognitive and linear and does not communicate how it meets even his own definition of faith or spirituality.

In the third model, Myers et. al, (1991) model adequately shows how spiritual development is the infusion and drawing out of spirit in one’s life. The development of spirituality in this model moves people toward knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness and compassion. It is a model of one’s capacity for growth and the development of a values system. The only limits are the lack of attention to the cognitive development needed for each stage and the heavy emphasis on those that are devalued in society. Each stage involves some way of contending with devaluation. This leaves a gap in the Universal application of the model, specifically to the White, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle-class males who represent a standard for normalcy and are valued within society? (Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 2000).

Focusing now on the results of the empirical investigations reviewed herein, it appears that they have varying support for the theoretical models reviewed. First, findings from Hamilton & Jackson (1998) indicate that female helping professionals have become aware of their spirituality through adversity, transcendence, introspection, generativity and sensing an external power. These themes do not reflect what is described in the stages of Fowler’s model. According to Fowler’s model one could become aware of one’s faith as early as seven years of age. During these early stages, one becomes aware of their faith through stories and observances of the community to which he belongs. These participants did not talk about church attendance or Sunday school as
ways in which they became aware of their spirituality. The themes are more reflective of higher stages and abstract thinking about events in one's life.

These themes do reflect what is described in Myers model. In the second phase, dissonance, one explores those aspects of themselves that are devalued by others. This can be brought on by an experience of adversity, generativity, transcendence and so forth. Furthermore, these authors found that cultural barriers, racing thoughts and lack of perceived need block spiritual growth. Again these findings do not appear to support Fowler’s model. Fowler does not address stagnation issues and what contributes to this other than the inability for one to develop abstract thinking. Again, these findings do lend support to what Myers’ model proposes. If lack of perceived need were to occur in the conscious awareness stage, then movement into the dissonance stage could not occur and growth would stagnate. If racing thoughts were to occur in the dissonance stage, then one would not be able to actively explore those aspects of themselves that were devalued, and growth would stagnate. If cultural barriers could not be brought down then, it is unlikely that one could progress from the internalization to the integration stage and spiritual growth would stagnate.

Second, Batten and Oltjenbruns (1999) found evidence that the death of a sibling promotes spiritual development by prompting the people in the study to develop a new perspective of themselves, others, sibling relationships, death, life and a higher power. They used this data to support Fowler’s model. New perspectives on such topics would also support Myers’ theoretical stages.

In the third and fourth studies, Montgomery, Fine & James-Myers (1990) and Brookins (1994) found support for the construct validity of the BSAS that is designed to
assess and Afrocentric worldview as described in Myers model. Given the construct validity of the scale, implications for the validity of the model could be drawn.

Overall, it appears that this literature review has revealed support for the multidimensional definition of spirituality, Myer’s OTAID model of spiritual development and validity of the BSAS designed to measure the degree to which one is spiritual or adheres to an Afrocentric worldview which is assumed to be at higher degrees in advanced phases of the model.

Menke’s Model of Spiritual Orientation

The outgrowth of the present literature review of the models of spiritual development has been continued theoretical work that addresses the shortcomings of the models presented herein. It appears that the time has come for a spiritual development model that accounts for the cognitive capacities that allow for the development of spirituality, and a normal developmental path of reasoning skills that “moves the individual towards knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness, and compassion” (Miller, 1999, p. 499). This should produce a model that incorporates cognitive abilities and limitations highlighted in Fowler’s model, but changes the word faith to spirituality because connotations of the word are much more representative of the process of interest. The model would incorporate Assagioli’s (1985) terms, crises and spiritual awakening, yet elaborate farther to include those crises brought on by environmental press rather than transmission of energy from the Transpersonal Self alone. The term transpersonal self may be redefined as Spirit or Ultimate Spirit, again for connotative reasons. Finally, concepts of drawing out spirit, reunifying spirit and matter posited by Myers et. al., (1991) will be incorporated into the cognitive stages around
issues of crisis rather than devaluation. The white, able bodied, heterosexual, male can not be devalued by society, but he will experience life crisis. Menke’s model of spiritual orientation is presented in Table 2.5.
### Table 2.5

**Menke’s Model of Spiritual Orientation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Thoughts</th>
<th>Feelings</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Absence of Spiritual Consciousness - Infancy</td>
<td>Hungry, tired, wet</td>
<td>Happy, sad, mad</td>
<td>Engage caretakers in responding to needs. Their response hinders or facilitates movement of the “spirit”, The spirit is drawn out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Spiritual Individuation - begins childhood</td>
<td>Geared toward family, family values</td>
<td>Content, benign</td>
<td>Express spirit in relation to families description of spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Spiritual Dissonance - begins in childhood and continues throughout the lifespan</td>
<td>What does this mean? Why is this happening: This is not love, hope, compassion…or there is no love, hope, compassion…</td>
<td>Anger, guilt, confusion, insecurity as they look toward a particular dimension(s) attempt, defy authority, fight, promiscuous</td>
<td>Isolative, withdraw, suicidal ideation or attempt, defy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Spiritual</td>
<td>I’m going to figure</td>
<td>Relief, comfort,</td>
<td>Active, healthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Thoughts</td>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>Behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immersion</strong></td>
<td>this out, who can help me</td>
<td>pride, excitement, joy, connectedness, belonging</td>
<td>resolution of crises through connections with other people with the same crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5-Spiritual</strong></td>
<td>I am ok, worthwhile, despite or because of crises</td>
<td>Inner peace, calming, security</td>
<td>Reduction in behaviors of stage 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internalization</strong></td>
<td>Other people are ok, all people, not just the ones with similar or same crises, the world is not as I originally assumed in regards to this dimension or because of this crises</td>
<td>Continued inner peace and security</td>
<td>Continued reduction of behaviors as well as an increase in peaceful relations with all others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6-Spiritual</strong></td>
<td>Nothing from which can be bad, everything and everyone is connected,</td>
<td>Joy, serenity, inner security, a sense of calm power, clear understanding and radiant love,</td>
<td>Serenity and order in the midst of life’s changing circumstances, growing mastery of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Orientation is used to describe the process of development because this model is not a linear stage model. Each orientation is defined by different tasks a person must accomplish to move toward spiritual transformation. A person can be oriented to any particular task depending on the event that sparked movement into the dissonance orientation. The first orientation is given a number because spirituality does exist in infancy. It is the part of the infant that is moving toward love, hope, meaning, knowledge, connectedness, compassion and transcendence and is noted by others when they comment on the “spirit” of the child. Even though the child is undifferentiated, the child is born with spirituality or the spiritual dimensions. Others describe a “happy” baby, “determined” baby or see the lack thereof in a failure to thrive case. In the second orientation, the movement toward love, hope, meaning, knowledge, connectedness, compassion and transcendence is developing or lack thereof through family influences and definition. It begins in childhood and can last through the lifespan depending on the extent to which the person has opportunities that provoke dissonance and movement.
through the other orientations. In the third orientation, the movement toward love, hope, meaning, knowledge, connectedness, compassion and transcendence is challenged. Due to life experience or crises (trauma, death, loss, racial incident…), the individual is struggling with one or more dimensions of spirituality that has been illuminated by the crises (“this is not love”, “I don’t understand, why did this happen?”, “it doesn’t matter anymore”). It begins to occur in childhood and continues cyclically throughout the lifespan. In the fourth orientation, people immerse themselves in the crisis at hand and the dimension(s) of spirituality it is effecting for the purpose of increasing their understanding, resolution of it. This orientation, in part, must involve connections with another person(s). The other person(s) needs to be struggling or have had struggled with a similar dimension of spirituality. The persons’ life crisis may be the same or different, but it must connect at the level of questioning love, hope, meaning or other dimensions(s). The similarity of dimensions that the persons are struggling with is the critical underlying dynamic. It gives the persons common ground to process together. Processing the crises with another person(s) in terms of its effect on hope, love, meaning etc., is what accomplishes the persons’ spiritual transformation. In the fifth orientation, the person, through the connections with the people that they have immersed with has been able to see and incorporate something positive, something of worth and value about themselves in relation to the dimension of spirituality that they were struggling with. In the sixth orientation, with the internalized sense of self-worth, the individual changes their assumptions of the world in the dimension of spirituality that they were dealing with. In the seventh orientation, the transformation has come full circle. The dimension(s) of spirituality is once again stable, but not under the same meaning prior to
the life crisis. The dimension(s) of spirituality that was challenged has been transformed from its original state to a new state that has a new way of thinking, feeling about and behaving toward self, others, the world and the Ultimate.

To conceptualize this part of the human, imagine a fire. A campfire with 7 flames representing the 7 dimensions of spirituality: knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness and compassion. The model assumes a human is born with this fire. All flames are burning brightly. It is inside us, animating our life. It is the impact of others, world and self’s corresponding thoughts that affect the continued brightness, spirit, of a person. As life continues, the rise and fall of the flames reveal the “spirit” of the person and how their spiritual development is oriented at any given time.

For one example, consider a child in Individuation. Their knowledge, hope, love, meaning, transcendence, connectedness and compassion is being fueled or introduced to them by their family and close community. When a life circumstance occurs and the child must consider what this occurrence has to do with his original beliefs about love, hope and other dimensions of spirituality, the child has moved into dissonance. The occurrence may be as traumatic as sexual abuse or as “normal” as a harsh word from a peer. Dissonance is an internal stage. Thoughts, questions, and feelings are kept internal, behaviors are external manifestations of the struggle. A child in dissonance about either one of these circumstances may be struggling with the dimensions of love and meaning or more. These flames could be diminishing, dying out or they may be flashing impulsively and dangerously. Because the child has heretofore been individualized spiritually about love and meaning from their family and close community they have an existing mind set that is being tested or threatened in dissonance. They may have learned
that people are to love one another and be kind. When people do this it means they are
good and worthy. If the harsh word from a peer evokes dissonance in the dimension of
love and meaning, the child may begin to question his worthiness and goodness as well as
the others. The child would probably immerse in family to resolve it and say to himself,
“Mom said that the person was harsh because they were having a bad day. It wasn’t me,
and they are still a good person. Everyone has bad days and sometimes we hurt other
people in our bad mood. One good thing that could come out of this is that you
understand how everyone affects everyone else and how important it is to understand our
moods so we can all keep working together and getting along.”

Because of the immersion/connection with family, the child was able to
internalize that he/she is ok despite the harsh word and integrate that the other person is
ok despite giving the harsh word. The original belief about love and meaning was to
rigid, there are exceptions. Finally, the child was able to transform the bad experience
into a lesson of higher meaning and connectedness with everyone. This example
illustrates a successful spiritual transformation in that the child was able to progress
toward a higher state in terms of the two dimensions.

Unsuccessful examples may help to illustrate how a person gets stuck. If the
family had not been able to compensate for their earlier message of love and hope to
promote transformation, the child could have remained stuck until another group of
immersion was made available to promote orientation to the next stage. In other words,
if the mother had maintained that the person was wrong and people who act like this are
unworthy and bad, the child would continue to struggle. He might believe that he too is
bad as he has delivered harsh words before, that love is impossible to achieve and people
are not capable of being good or worthy. The child would remain in dissonance over his individualized spirituality of love and meaning. He would struggle with ways to cope with harsh words from peers thinking “do I let it happen so as not to be bad” (victim identification), or “fight back because I’m bad anyway, everyone else is bad and we’re all in it for ourselves” (perpetrator identification). This example illustrates how family serves to individualize spirituality and can serve as the group for immersion depending on their spiritual orientation at the time.

The key of this model is to move from Dissonance into Immersion. Dissonance will automatically occur. It is purported to occur when one is faced with a life crisis that challenges the previous conceptions of the dimensions of spirituality. While some kind of life crises will occur for everyone, not every life crisis will occur for everyone. Therefore, it is not the kind of crisis that determines movement into dissonance, it is that the dimensions of spirituality; love, hope, meaning, connectedness, compassion, knowledge and transcendence are challenged that indicate dissonance. In Myers model, only those that are confronted with their devalued status can move into dissonance. In these terms, a white, able-bodied, heterosexual male will never enter dissonance as they are not devalued by society. In Menke’s model, this same person can be confronted with a challenge of his understanding of one of the dimensions of spirituality by a life crisis and can be transformed.

The second key, Immersion, the group to immerse with must be healthy in that they help the person to internalize a sense of self worth despite the life crises. A person will attempt Immersion innately, but can be blocked and stay in Dissonance. This is seen in the first example of the child. The child may remain in Dissonance and isolate. Others
might attempt to immerse in gangs, cults, and negative peer groups. This is not Immersion, though. A gang is a group of kids in Dissonance; Dissonance and not Immersion because the group is perpetuating the challenge of the dimension of spirituality. The group is not helping to resolve questions that lead to higher levels of peace and connectedness with Universal Life. The key, then, is to capitalize on the innate capacity of spirituality for growth. The presentation of a healthy group will eventually promote spiritual integration and so forth. If nothing else a sense of belonging or connectedness occurs. The spark in one dimension can ignite thoughts and feelings in other dimensions, for example love. The person can integrate a sense of worth through belonging and a sense of worth for those he belongs with. Generalization and crossover occurs to the other relevant dimensions. In some cases this process may not occur naturally. It may require counseling skills to illuminate these possibilities and facilitate progression for the group.

It is important to note that a person struggling in dissonance on one dimension may not be in dissonance for all dimensions. Thus, an observer sees a person cycle in and out of his crises or acting out behaviors. He can be in Individuation on certain dimensions while in dissonance over another dimension and yet still in Spiritual Transformation of another dimension. The process is ever moving. It is observed in the behavior, affect, and conversation of a person as to how many of the dimensions are threatened and to where they are oriented overall. A person in dissonance over several dimensions, because of the behaviors and emotions experienced in dissonance, is most likely the person in prison, psychiatric hospitals or other contained environments. A person in dissonance a moderate amount of time with a moderate number of dimensions
threatened is probably in trouble at school, work and socially. They may be outpatients or
have occasional jail sentences. A person with healthy spiritual orientation has balance
between the number of dimensions threatened and the time spent in dissonance over
those dimensions. It is important to note that dissonance is not the end of spiritual
transformation, it is the beginning. This is to say that it is possible for those in prison and
psychiatric hospitals to begin their spiritual transformation in these environments. In
these institutions, however, it isn’t called spiritual transformation, it is called treatment or
rehabilitation.

This model contends that after Individuation begins there are a life time of crises
that orient us spiritually. The first occurrence of dissonance can happen when a child is
very young. He may not have the cognitive skills to struggle in dissonance-failure to
thrive-but his spirit is struggling to survive and without caretakers to meet his needs, his
spirit enters dissonance and begins to extinguish itself. He may have the cognitive skills
to struggle at 2-3 years of age and asks his mother for the answer. He would immerse in
family because this is the child’s world. The family’s response can promote orientation
to internalization and so on or it can leave the child struggling in dissonance. Whatever
the life crisis is, when the relevant dimensions have been transformed, the life crisis is no
longer a crisis to the person. When love, hope, meaning, compassion, connectedness,
knowledge and/or transcendence have come full circle to a new and higher meaning, the
life crisis is “resolved”. The person has come to terms with it. However, there is a life
time of crises. Once a person has spiritually transformed hope in one crisis, another crisis
later on my challenge hope again. In other words, completing this cycle once does not
mean a person is spiritually transformed for life. Orientation seven, spiritual
transformation, is the end of one cycle in an ongoing cycle. Each cycle may be shortened as life experience increases and one recalls lessons learned from previous life crisis or a cycle with an extended dissonance orientation and spiritual death could occur. For example, a new life crisis may send one into dissonance thinking “this is it, I can not take it anymore. I have been through too much. I give up. Every time I get through one thing, something else happens. Nothing good can possibly come from this. Obviously there is something wrong with me and everyone else. There is no use in trying anymore.”

A cycle with an extended dissonance orientation is possible if one isolates themselves, rejecting contact from anyone and repeating the thoughts above thereby blocking their own innate capacity to grow spiritually. In this case, if the self-imposed blocking continues to stifle the spirit’s innate capacity to grow or manifest itself in the physical body it will begin to extinguish itself, preparing to be released from the physical body. When the spirit is extinguished, the physical body will die either by neglect or suicide. The spirit is no longer driving or animating the force of life. At this point the spirit is released into the Universe where it can once again manifest itself with its ancestors and those yet unborn. This is not to say that the spirit must be extinguished before physical death can occur. The terminally ill have been noted for their “high spirits” in the face of their physical death. Their spirit continued to manifest itself up until the time the physical body could no longer sustain itself.

On the other hand, a person might shorten the cycle by immersing quickly with previous support persons and engage in finding the self-worth of internalization and so on as they move once again toward transformation. It is also possible for people several times spiritually transformed to rely less on the immersion process and generate, on their
own, thoughts and feelings of self worth, faith in the world and others and ideas of the positive possibilities inherent in their current crisis. A person perpetually in the state of spiritual transformation is a rare find. However, they are those who when faced with a life circumstance remain at peace. It can’t be called life crisis because it is not a crisis to them. It is simply life bringing them some new meaningful experience. They don’t return to dissonance because they no longer question love, hope, meaning, knowledge, connectedness, compassion or transcendence. They might smile and thank their adversary for the good that they have brought them, without knowing what that good is at the time. They would continue on with their daily tasks with love and hope for everyone because they know this circumstance is connected to the larger scheme of things for everyone and everything and it is good. It is all good.

Given the rarity of perpetually spiritually transformed individuals, one consideration this author continues to review is the idea of how a person can ever completely move out of individuation. The vast quantity of ideas, states, beliefs, feelings established in this building block stage of spiritual orientation and reinforced throughout life may be so firm a foundation that it is never totally and completely transformed. Instead, one by one, a person recycles from different orientations back through dissonance over and over again. It can not be assumed that a person reaches transformation every time. They may be “resting” or stuck in any one of the dimensions until another crisis blows their new conceptualizations and require rethinking, feeling and behaving. The model is very dynamic and a person may be “resting” in different orientations on different dimensions for different life crisis all at the same time. It is the author’s current belief that the spirit will continue to try and manifest itself and move an
individual toward spiritual transformation of love, hope, meaning, connectedness, compassion, knowledge and transcendence. The extent to which a person completely moves out of individuation through the other orientations and ultimately to transformation is moderated by the numerous number of variables that block the process i.e., enmeshed family system, privilege, internal destructive thoughts.

Another consideration this author continues to review is how a white, able bodied, heterosexual male can ever become completely spiritually transformed. Building on the above concepts, this person’s privilege is an inhibiting variable to his spiritual development. In order for him to transform his spirituality related to his beliefs about race or other status, like anyone, he would have to be confronted with a life crisis that includes race or other status in some way that challenges his beliefs. This could be in the Immersion orientation with a person of color or it could be a life crisis that is a racial incident. Unfortunately, it seems that a person with these status variables will have difficulty completely moving out of Individuation given the reinforcing factors in the environment. Even though the white, able bodied, heterosexual males is confronted with a racial incident, the social constructions that reinforce privilege, reinforce his privilege, so he can easily deny the incident and step back into individuation. A person who holds status that is devalued by society can not as easily step back into individuation. Once they see how their status is devalued by society they begin to see it, and see it again, and see it over again. Persons with devalued status seem to be confronted with more opportunities to move through spiritual orientations toward transformation. Persons with privilege would need to make a more deliberate and concentrated effort to stay cognizant and focused on making a spiritual transformation related to his privileged status.
variables. This model, however, allows for spiritual development to occur at some level whereas in the Myers model spiritual development was virtually unattainable.

Still another consideration for this author is establishing the difference between spiritual orientation and self-actualization, personal growth, and/or social growth. It is the author’s belief that spiritual orientation encompasses all of these. Any issue that threatens the animating force, the fire that moves individuals toward knowledge, love hope, meaning, transcendence, connectedness and compassion is a spiritual issue. In that sense, self-actualization, personal growth and social growth is spiritual growth.

Purpose Two This brings us to the purpose of the second part of this study. Although the literature provides preliminary evidence that the BSAS is valid, reliable and has a multi-factor structure, the authors of the previous studies call for further research with more diverse populations and further analysis to confirm and replicate their findings as well as rectify identified problems. Brookins (1994) encourages future work to solidify the factor structure of the scale, particularly the optimism subscale. In the Montgomery, Fine and James-Myers (1990) study, four items loaded on the Optimism subscale and five did not load on any factor or ‘subscale’. In the Brookins (1994) study, those four items did not show a pattern of loading on a single factor. These items loaded on other factors, but not on any one consistently. Additionally, some of the items that did not load on a factor in the Montgomery, Fine and James-Myers (1990) study, loaded on a factor in the Brookins (1994) study. As well as the reverse, items that loaded on the optimism subscale factor in the Montgomery, Fine and James-Myers (1990) study, did not load on any factor in the Brookins (1994) study. Furthermore, the internal consistency of the optimism subscale was tested using Cronbach’s alpha. The optimism subscale
demonstrated an alpha of only .29. Brookins (1994) suggests item revision and/or generating additional items to address problems with the optimism subscale.

The purpose of the second part of this study was to investigate and solidify the construct validity of the BSAS optimism subscale. The study is a mixed-method design using two different designs. First, a qualitative study involving two focus groups will be conducted to discuss items of the optimism subscale as well as the items that did not load on any factor from the Montgomery, et. al., study (1990). Discussion will focus on the degree to which it adheres to the definition of optimism and the need for item revision. The optimism subscale items and non-loading items will be revised, eliminated or new items generated according to the insights provided by the focus groups’ data. Second, a quantitative study will be conducted to analyze the resulting factor structure of the revised BSAS. It is predicted that the focus groups will identify the need to revise items and that the revised subscale items will load more consistently with the original study.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the method. Chapter 4 presents the results. Chapter 5 discusses the results of focus groups’ and factor analysis. Chapter 5 will also offer implications and recommendations for counselor educators, counselors and future research.
Chapter 3 Method

A mixed-method design was used in the study. Both a qualitative focus group design and quantitative factor analysis design were used. Both designs were selected so as to collect the two different kinds of data that each method produces. First, qualitative research is founded on the belief that participants in research are active participants in the research and their individual responses to stimuli can not be reduced to predicted responses. They respond to stimuli in context as they actively make meaning of the stimuli in context. In particular, focus groups, “provide richer information as various members of the group provide more details, disagree on points, and reconcile difference of opinions” (Heppner, Kivlighan & Wampold, 1999, p. 260). Data is represented linguistically. On the other hand, quantitative research is founded on the belief that the reality of the world can be reduced to mathematical representation. In particular, factor analysis reduces large amounts of information into smaller ones. Given the two kinds of data needed, as driven by the research questions of this study, both kinds of research design were used.

Part I Focus Groups

Subjects  Focus groups consisted of 12 participants, 6 in each group. One group consisted of three African American males and three African American females. The second group consisted of three European American males and three European American females. Focus groups were separated by race to compare data from each group, but not to formally test a hypothesis that the two groups would produce different results. The racial composition of focus groups follows previous research conducted by Montgomery, Fine and James-Myers (1990) and Brookins(1994). The subjects ranged in age from 22-
49. Educational backgrounds ranged in age from high school diploma to bachelor’s degree. (see Table 3.1).

Procedure Subjects were recruited from the researcher’s workplace. The researcher asked participants if they would be willing to participate in a group discussion that was part of my research to complete my dissertation. They were told that we would be discussing questions on the Belief System Analysis Scale. The researcher had a pre-existing rapport with the subjects which is believed to have encouraged a comfortable and open discussion. All participants agreed readily without further question into the purpose or nature of what would be required of them during the actual study. These participants answered the demographic questionnaire, but did not participate in the quantitative, factor analysis study.

The method of data collection in focus groups is to facilitate a group discussion around questions related to the purpose of the project. The facilitator develops questions designed to illicit the desired information or data from the participants. Open-ended questions are used to facilitate the most discussion and allows the respondent to determine the answer (Krueger, 1988). To ensure accurate recording of the data or discussion, focus groups are usually audio recorded. In this study, three questions were developed to obtain the necessary information. (1) Do you think the question is asking about optimism as it had been defined; (2) If you do not think it is asking about optimism, should the question be eliminated, reworded or an entirely new item should be generated; (3) If you think it should be reworded, what are your suggestions at rewording. The focus group sessions were audio recorded.
The two focus groups were facilitated separately. The first group was held in the conference room at our workplace. The second group took place at the home of one of the participants one week after the first. The length of the groups depended on how long it took them to discuss all of the 9 items. The first group took approximately one and a half hours. The second group took approximately one hour. Both groups followed the same format. First, participants were given the informed consent and demographic form to read and complete. Second, the researcher explained that the purpose of the study was to investigate the validity of the BSAS. The BSAS and what it was designed to measure was explained. It was explained that some items were designed to ask about “optimism”. The definition of optimism was read at the beginning of the session and repeated throughout the session as the participants referenced it. Montgomery, et. al., (1990) define optimism as “the degree to which one perceives positive possibilities in a variety of situations”. The participants were given a copy of the “optimism” items. The participants were told that it was their job to read these items and answer the three focus group questions. The focus group proceeded by reading each BSAS ‘optimism’ item, one at time out loud and discussing answers to each of the three focus group questions.

The first step in data analysis in almost every focus group study is to transcribe the data word for word. This was the first step in data analysis for this study. The method of further data analysis depends on the purpose and research questions of the study. Some studies look to identify key events or parts of processes in order that the whole process can be described. This kind of data might require an elaborate analysis for themes across the participants’ responses. The more frequent or common recurrent the theme, the more weight to the data. Other studies are designed to identify more narrow
information such as insight or vocabulary to use in a survey. Elaborate analysis is not needed or appropriate in this case (Krueger, 1988). In this study, the purpose is narrower, not requiring the elaborate coding and labeling of themes. Instead, after the data was transcribed, specific responses to each focus group question was analyzed for confirmatory or negating responses, direction of action to take and insights into rewording suggestions, if applicable. The trends or responses that occurred most frequently by participants guided the researcher’s decision to reword items or not. Therefore, the researcher did not require consensus to consider rewording of an item. For example, when the first item was presented to the group, if the trend was to negate this item as measuring optimism, then it was negated. If the next trend was to reword this item, then suggestions and insights into rewording were obtained. These suggestions were analyzed to interpret the meaning or taken at face value if a complete revision was accomplished by the focus group.

Part II Factor Analysis

Subjects Sixty-seven undergraduate and graduate students from a southeastern university were recruited to participate. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 53. There were 42 females and 25 males. There were 12 African Americans, 54 European Americans and one Asian American. (see Table 3.1).
Table 3.1

Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>&lt; 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor Analysis</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>42</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Instruments** A demographic questionnaire asked participants to identify their gender, age, race, years of education, number of times they attend church, religious affiliation, and to indicate True or False to two statements. There is a difference between spirituality and religion and A person can be spiritual without attending church.

The original BSAS is a 31-item assessment designed to measure Afrocentric worldview (Montgomery et al., 1990). Respondents answer questions on the BSAS according to a 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Total scores can range from 0 to 155. A high score on the BSAS reflects one’s adherence to an Afrocentric worldview. The instrument was initially validated on a sample of 140 White introductory psychology students at a private Midwestern university. The instrument demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = .80) and test-retest reliability (n = 41, 1 week apart; r = .63). The mean for this sample was 104.71 while the standard deviation was 13.05. The total BSAS score (n=95) was significantly correlated (p< .001) in the expected direction with all of the criterion variables: r = + .50 with the Social Interest Scale, r = -.51 with the Dogmatism scale, and r = -.38 with the
global severity index of the Symptom Checklist-90-R. A second validity study by Brookins (1994) was conducted with 171 African American students. In this sample the mean was 109.01, standard deviation 10.30 and Cronbach’s Alpha .71. The total BSAS score (n = 171) was significantly correlated (p<.001, r = -.51) in the expected direction with the Preencounter subscale scores of the Racial Identity Attitude Scale and significantly correlated (p< .04, r = .16) in the expected direction with the Internalization subscale of the Racial Identity Attitude Scale. The revised BSAS is a 33-item assessment.

Procedure  Subjects were obtained from the university’s undergraduate psychology department’s subject pool. These participants were given partial credit in their introduction to psychology class. The researcher met with these participants at scheduled times to administer the BSAS. The other 47 participants were obtained from the university’s counselor education master’s level class. The researcher met with these participants at the beginning of their scheduled class time to administer the BSAS.

All participants were given the revised BSAS, a demographic form and an informed consent to complete. They were told that the research project was a dissertation and the construct validity of the instrument was under investigation. They were assured of confidentiality and asked to respond truthfully to each question.
Chapter 4 Results

Part I Focus Groups

Krueger (1988) describes three different styles of reporting focus group data; the raw data model, descriptive model and interpretative model. The raw data model presents all of the focus group discussion as it was recorded and transcribed. The descriptive model provides typical or illuminating quotes from the raw data. The interpretative model presents a summary that is the researcher’s interpretation of the raw data. Thick description of all data is not practical; so many researchers identify the most important material to present (Heppner, Kivlighan Jr., & Wampold, 1999). The decision on how to arrange findings should be based on the purpose of the research (Krueger, 1998). The purpose of this study was to investigate the construct validity of nine items or questions on the BSAS. Focus group members had to answer focus group questions about each and every one of these items, one at a time. Their insights, comments, opinions and suggestions about these items are the data that was analyzed for the purpose of making decisions about the revision of the BSAS. The results section will present the decision that was made about each item and present the most important data that supports this decision in the form of typical or illuminating quotes. The results section will present the decision on each item and the data, starting with the first item discussed and proceeding to the next and so on until the decision on every item discussed are presented.

Original factors named in the Montgomery, Fine & James-Myers (1990) study are as follows: Factor 1, Interpersonal Valuing; Factor 2, Deemphasis on Appearance; Factor 3, Integration of Opposites; Factor 4, Nonmaterial-Based Satisfaction and Factor 5, Optimism. Specific item loadings are presented in Table 4.1. The focus group
discussion started with item number 23 which reads “Sometimes when I am good and do my best, I still suffer; this is an indication that good does not necessarily triumph over evil” loaded on the optimism factor (.47) in the Montgomery, Fine and James-Myers (1990) study and loaded on a different factor (.55) in the Brookins (1994) study. Members of both focus groups believed the wording in the negative direction was confusing. One European American participant said, “It sounds kind of pessimistic the way it’s written”. One African American participant said, “OK, so, if someone agrees with this statement, it’s not optimistic, it’s the reverse”. The confusion centered around the reversed wording of the item. Members of the European American group unanimously agreed that if the question was reworded straightforwardly and positive, no further revisions would be needed as it would be measuring optimism. Some members of the African American group had concerns about how the second half of the sentence contributed to the reversed wording confusion. One participant said, “The part where it says this is an indication that good does not necessarily triumph over evil, not the person that’s saying that she still suffer, because if you stop there, that’s not an optimistic statement”. Another said, “I agree with this statement up until the last part. It seems like this part throws the whole thing off”. Based on this data, the item was retained in the revised scale. Reversed wording or wording in the negative direction was retained despite both focus groups difficulty with it. It was determined that reversed wording is a common practice in scale development so, therefore, it would be retained in the revised version of the BSAS (Brookins, 2004).

The next item discussed, item number 24, reads “Although I have a favorite kind of music I listen to, I can usually get into and enjoy most kinds of music.” This item
loaded on the optimism factor in both the Myers (1990) study (.50) and the Brookins (1994) study (.50) and received unanimous and quick agreement by both focus groups that it did indeed measure optimism. Based on this data the item was retained in the revised scale without any alterations.

The next item discussed, item number 25, reads “When I am confused or unclear about myself or the world about me, I try to push these concerns out of my mind and go on with my life as usual.” This item loaded on the optimism factor in the Myers (1990) study (.44), but did not load on any factor in the Brookins (1994) study. Members in both the African American group and European American group thought that it could be optimism if it was reworded. One European American said, “Reword it so it would be positive, reword it so it would be more like optimistic”. Members of both groups had extensive discussion around whether pushing concerns out of one’s mind was a healthy and positive coping strategy or not. Examples of this include when an African American participant said, “it’s avoidance, just push it out your mind”. Another African American said, “For it to be a positive situation, the positive is just going on. That could be for one person. Because some people could just say, you know, it could get worse than that, but the positive is I’ll just choose to go on, push on”. One European American participant said, “no, that’s not dealing with reality”. Another said, “I don’t see a whole lot of positive possibilities there”. At one point a different participant argued that this was a healthy coping skill. She said, “I can see the optimism in that without rewording it. Cause if you got things that are confusing you or unclear or things with the world that you know you can’t do nothing about or even have any part of dealing with it, you know, you just, you can’t stay like that all the time or you just don’t feel yourself going
anywhere with all of it around you, you know, your friends or families around you, you just, so if you stay dealing with that you can’t go on dealing with anything else”. In response to her argument that it was a healthy coping skill and therefore optimistic, another European American participant said, “I see why this has to be a focus group because I see it as if you’re surveying people and half of them are depressed, your not gonna get a good world view because these are all, people that are depressed are gonna be ahhhh, oh yeah.” This participant was making the point that the focus group helped her see another way of looking at the healthiness of coping skills. In her opinion, pushing things out of her mind is unhealthy and something depressed people might do. Therefore, the depressed population might endorse this question “totally agree”, due to their limited functioning. However, this is not a healthy coping skill in her opinion, so she would endorse it, “totally disagree.” Her comment was critical in bringing the focus group to the conclusion that given the two opposite ways of responding, which depends on what the respondent thinks is a healthy way of coping, this item would not allow for an accurate reflection of worldview or optimism score. After this pivotal comment, several other participants added to the discussion. Another participant said, “Even though its not the healthiest thing to do, it might be how they survive”. Still another European American said, “maybe to them it is positive because they’re just putting it out of their mind, they’re not letting it stop them or change them.” Members of the European American group determined that if the question was left worded as is, describing this coping style, you would get polar opposite answers from people. Some would answer agree if they liked the coping style and others would answer disagree if they thought it was unhealthy. One would get a high score and one would get a low score , but they both
thought they were being positive and optimistic. It was suggested to change the second half of the sentence to a generic coping style that focused on ‘going on with life’ so as to get at optimism. Written this way, the respondent doesn’t endorse a particular coping style as being positive or negative. They endorse a statement that allows them ‘to go on with life’ the ‘best way they can’. Based on this data, the item was retained for the revised scale and it was reworded to read “When I am confused or unclear about myself or the world about me, I try to deal with it the best way I can so I can go on with the rest of my life.”

The next item discussed, item number 26, reads “Past philosophers like St. Augustine and Descartes are less relevant today than they were 100 years ago before the modern age.” Myers (1990) cut off for factor loading was .44. This item had a coefficient of .43 on the optimism subscale. The item loaded (.45) on the same factor as Interpersonal valuing items loaded on in the Brookins (1994) study. Members from both the African American group and European American group thought it could be optimism if it was reworded, particularly around the philosopher’s names and their philosophy. One African American said, “That’s not optimistic. What do they know that happened 100 years ago.” Members of the African American group discussed how the negative wording, “are less relevant” makes it be the opposite of optimism. One member suggested, “Past philosophers like St. Augustine and Descartes ARE relevant today”. There was discussion about who these philosophers were and what their philosophy was as if this information was necessary to determine if it measured optimism. “I don’t know, I forgot all my history for who is St. Augustine, but I do know that we need them and I know that they had them back then so there is a possibility there”. Another African
American saw the connection from the past to the present when she said, “when you’re talking to your great, great grandchildren about me, you won’t call me a philosopher, but it will be something I said to you in this life and you will be telling your grandkids someday and it’ll be positive. So, we get all the foundation we can get.” Members of the European American group struggled with the same issues. One European American participant said, “Who’s St. Augustine and Descartes?” Another said, “You can’t answer that question without information about who and what they philosophize about” are examples of this discussion. Still another said, “I think the average person would say, I don’t understand that question. If you ask that question to some people you work with, they wouldn’t have a clue”. The group shifted from discussing the specifics of these philosophers to the past/present issue when one participant said, “I guess you could say you’re optimistic if you think that there’s a variety of positive things even from way back”. Members of the European American group tried to change it to specific presidents, but decided that was too specific as well. One participant said, “Right, if it’s neither one because everyone’s got different opinions about politics and that what it comes down to is politics when you’re talking about presidents. Various members thought it needed to be generic issues from the past that are contributing to the present and it needed to be worded positively. One participant said, “What if you eliminated the people’s name to still get at the past contributing to the present idea”. One member pointed out the negative wording when he said, “If they’re saying they’re not relevant today, then they don’t see any positive possibilities”. One suggestion was offered as “say it straight out like, ideas and events from the past still have relevance and possibilities for our learning today.” Based on this data the item was retained for the revised scale and
was reworded, but negative wording was retained. The reworded item reads: “Ideas and events from the past do not have relevance for our learning and existence today.”

The next item discussed, item number 27, reads “Despite my religious preference (e.g., Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, etc.), I still believe there are teachings from different religions that are valid.” This item did not have a significant loading on any factor in Myers (1990) study. It loaded (.51) on factor 5 in the Brookins (1994) study. Interestingly, members from both the African American group and European American group agreed that it was optimism and did not need rewording. Members from the African American group unanimously agreed immediately and did not discuss the item further. Members from the European American group agreed that someone who endorsed this item with “completely agree” would be considered optimistic as the author defines it, but people with certain religious affiliations would endorse this item with “completely disagree” because they are taught that their religion is the only valid religion and therefore religious affiliation would effect ones score on this scale. Examples of this discussion include “the Muslim religion think their religion is the only valid religion so, I guess it would depend on what religion they are” and “…some religions like Mormons are taught, that other religions absolutely not do not associate with others so they would answer the question no, but I think its still measuring optimism”. Based on this data the item was retained for the revised scale without rewording it.

The next item discussed, item number 28, reads “I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at work and at home.” This item did not load (.41) on the optimism factor in the Myers (1990) study. In the Brookins (1994) study, it loaded (.56) on the same factor as non-material based satisfaction items and integration of opposites items loaded.
One member of the African American group’s first comment was “I don’t see no positive there”. Wording in the negative direction was discussed again, specifically showing, again, how a person could endorse this item “completely disagree” and be considered optimistic. After this discussion, there was humorous discussion generated about being optimistic at work, but then having to go home to a negative situation. “I think it is optimistic cause they hate to go home, they already messed up on the job and then they gotta go home to the bs”. While there were not specific conclusions made by the group about separating the question into two, one for work and one for home, the data was interpreted to mean that someone could look at this question and become confused because it includes both domains. Members of the European American group went through the same process of struggling again with wording in the negative direction and wanted to reword the sentence positively. The first response from a member was “I don’t see anything positive in there”. This led to the fifth explanation of wording in the negative direction. At one point the group was asked, “Do you think that the average person would have a better time endorsing optimism if the questions were worded straightforward instead of this reverse opposite wording”. Every member of the group responded simultaneously “yes”. They also discussed leaving the sentence as it is, but adding various things to it to make it positive. One participant said, “You can probably just put the word not. I am not bothered by ..” Another one said, “Or ‘even though I am bothered’, then put something else at the end like welcome the opportunity to grow”. Based on this data the item was retained for the revised scale, but separated into four separate questions. One reads “I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at work and am unable to see the likelihood that things will improve.” The second reads “I am
uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at home but I am able to look for new solutions and ways to handle them.” The third reads “I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at work but I am able to look for new solutions and ways to handle them.” The fourth reads “I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at home and am unable to see the likelihood that things will improve.”

The next item discussed, item number 29, reads “I can remain calm and peaceful even when my boss blames me for another’s mistakes”. This item loaded (.51) on the optimism factor in the Myers (1990) study, but did not load on any factor in the Brookins(1994) study. Members from both the African American group and European American group agreed that it was optimistic. Members of the European American group agreed unanimously and quickly and did not discuss it further. Members of the African American group discussed specifically how this was optimism, perceiving positive possibilities in a variety of situations. One person said “stay calm and peaceful” was optimistic. Another person said “keeping your job” was one of the positive possibilities. Another said “you could say God knows I didn’t do it or if I lose my job I can always get another one”. Based on this data the item was retained for the revised scale and was not reworded.

The next item discussed, item number 30, reads “If I were president, I would invest more money to develop social programs and less money in high tech development.” This item did not load on any factor in the Myers (1990) study. It loaded (.62) on factor 4 in the Brookins (1994) study. Montgomery, Fine and James-Myers (1990) do not report this item to be one that is worded in the negative direction. However, the focus group participants seemed to believe it was. One African American
said, “The statement is not being positive”. Another said, “it needs to say ‘and’”. I would invest more money in developing social programs and more money in high tech development. Members of the European American group discussed how negative wording made it not optimism. One member said, “sounds like they’re criticizing it to me, he’s not doing a good job”. Another said, “They’re getting at one possibility with social programs” Still another said, “Yeah, but they’re putting down the other”. Another member said, “less is what makes it negative, put and”. Members of the European American group also discussed at length how the political nature of the question might confuse a person. One said, “you could look at this like social programs are democratic, high tech development is more republican and people in either party are forced to choose, and they’re not gonna be able to merge the two beliefs if they have strong political beliefs” Based on this data this item was eliminated from the revised scale.

The next item discussed, item number 31, reads “There are some people in my past whom I believe I should never forgive.” This item did not load on any factor in neither the Myers (1990) study nor the Brookins (1994) study. Three members of the African American group thought that this was optimism. Three members had no comment. One member said, “There’s no optimism”. Wording in the negative direction was discussed again. They mentioned how the word should leaves room for the possibility of forgiveness. Members of the European American group wanted it reworded from reverse wording with some additions for clarification. The first comment was “just reverse it, take out never”. “If you hated one particular person, and then when you got out of school every time you saw someone that looked like that person you would shut them out, so you’re eliminating positive possibilities because you couldn’t get past
that other guy” and “like if your father was an alcoholic and he did terrible things because he was an alcoholic, then you might be against anyone who drank” were comments that led the group to decide that it should be clarified that ‘people’ refers to those in my past who have hurt me. Members of the group also discussed the use of the word should. One member said, “Say everyone should have the opportunity to be forgiven”. Another said, “There you go back to religious beliefs, you must earn redemption”. Finally, should was removed from the sentence because “saying ‘I will forgive’ gets away from what your religion says you should do”. Based on this data the item was retained for the revised scale and reworded to read “There are some people in my past who have hurt me that I will never forgive”.

Part II Factor Analysis

For the revised BSAS scale the overall mean score was 118.82 with a standard deviation of 12.93. In keeping with the Montgomery, Fine, James-Myers (1990) and Brookins (1994) study, a principle component analysis was conducted to determine the factor structure of the revised BSAS. The analysis revealed 12 factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0; 5.62, 2.89, 2.33, 2.11, 2.05, 1.78, 1.54, 1.44, 1.27, 1.2, 1.10, 1.01 respectively. In keeping with the factor structure of the Montgomery, Fine, James-Myers (1990) and Brookins (1994) studies the first five factors were retained for further analysis. This decision is further supported by the strength of the first five Eigenvalues. In keeping with the rotation method used in Montgomery, Fine, James-Myers (1990) and Brookins (1994), a quartimax rotation was conducted. The resulting factors explained 13% of the variance. Since the purpose of this study is focused only on those items making up the optimism subscale, only those results pertaining to those items will be
reported and discussed. Optimism subscale item loadings for all three studies are presented in Table 4.1. Two items loaded on factor one, one on factor two, one on factor three, two on factor four and two on factor five. Three items had no significant loadings. Overall, the revised optimism subscale items produced no more of a consistent loading pattern than either the Montgomery, Fine, James-Myers (1990) or the Brookins (1994) study.
### Table 4.1

Optimism Subscale Items and Factor loadings on the BSAS for Three Samples

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<td>28.</td>
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<td>28R.</td>
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Note: The table lists items with their corresponding factor loadings for three different samples: Montgomery, Fine, James-Myers, (1990); Brookins, (1994); and Present Study. The loadings are represented by the numbers in the table, indicating the strength and direction of the relationship between the items and the factors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>Eigenvalues</th>
<th>Explained Variance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29R. I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at home but I am able to look for new solutions and ways to handle them.</td>
<td>.36 .14 .27 .11 .17 .02 .15 .12 .62 .31</td>
<td>.03 .09 .08 .10 .78</td>
<td>1.95, 1.63, 1.39, 1.14, 1.11</td>
<td>7.22%</td>
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<td>30. If I were president, I would invest more money to develop social programs and less money in high tech development.</td>
<td>.36 .14 .27 .11 .17 .02 .15 .12 .62 .31</td>
<td>.00 .24 .16 .30 .77</td>
<td>1.95, 1.63, 1.39, 1.14, 1.11</td>
<td>7.22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>30R. I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at home but I am able to look for new solutions and ways to handle them.</td>
<td>.36 .14 .27 .11 .17 .02 .15 .12 .62 .31</td>
<td>.00 .24 .16 .30 .77</td>
<td>1.95, 1.63, 1.39, 1.14, 1.11</td>
<td>7.22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>31R. I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at home and am unable to see the likelihood that things will improve.</td>
<td>.36 .14 .27 .11 .17 .02 .15 .12 .62 .31</td>
<td>.00 .24 .16 .30 .77</td>
<td>1.95, 1.63, 1.39, 1.14, 1.11</td>
<td>7.22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>29/32R. I can remain calm and peaceful even when my boss blames me for another’s mistakes.</td>
<td>.36 .14 .27 .11 .17 .02 .15 .12 .62 .31</td>
<td>.00 .24 .16 .30 .77</td>
<td>1.95, 1.63, 1.39, 1.14, 1.11</td>
<td>7.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33R. There are some people in my past who have hurt me, that I will never forgive.</td>
<td>.36 .14 .27 .11 .17 .02 .15 .12 .62 .31</td>
<td>.00 .24 .16 .30 .77</td>
<td>1.95, 1.63, 1.39, 1.14, 1.11</td>
<td>7.22%</td>
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Further analysis was conducted to investigate the reasons for the problems with the subscale structure. Cronbach’s alpha for the subscale is .42. Principle components analysis on the optimism subscale revealed 5 factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0; 1.95, 1.63, 1.39, 1.14, 1.11 respectively. This 5 factor structure explains 7.22% of the variance in this subscale. Pearson Correlation Coefficient for age and optimism subscale score was .10336. This was investigated to explore the possibility of age having an effect on the results as the age range in this study was 19 to 53 as compared to 18 to 22 in the previous studies. Subjects’ responses to the optimism subscale were separated into two groups, one with subjects 25 years of age and under and the other with subjects 26 years and older. Principle components analysis was conducted on the two sets of responses. The 25 years of age and under response set yielded 4 factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0; 2.30, 1.81, 1.52, 1.06 respectively. The 26 years of age and older response set
yielded 6 factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0; 2.13, 1.87, 1.45, 1.22, 1.09, 1.01 respectively. A T-test produced insignificant difference between means of the 2 age groups. All of the participants indicated “True” to the statement: “There is a difference between spirituality and religion”. All but 2 of the participants indicated “True” to the statement: “A person can be spiritual without attending church”.

Chapter 5 Discussion

The first hypothesis, “Insights and opinions uncovered from a focus group study will reveal that questions designed to measure optimism are confusing, misleading or asking about some other construct” was confirmed. Six of the original 9 optimism subscale items were deemed confusing by both of the focus groups. There was no difference between groups in this determination. Of these 6 items, 5 were worded in the negative direction of the overall construct, Afrocentricity, and therefore in the negative direction of the subconstruct, optimism. Both groups on each item spent extensive amount of time trying to understand how a item worded negatively could still measure optimism if the item would be endorsed ‘strongly disagree’. Each item worded in the negative direction of Afrocentricity, numbers 23, 25, 26, 28 and 30, were deemed confusing by both groups because they were “negative” or “pessimistic” as written. The remaining item, according to Montgomery, Fine and James-Myers (1990) was worded in the positive direction of Afrocentricity. However, both groups discussed how the word ‘less’ in the sentence made it negative and therefore couldn’t be optimism and needed to be reworded. This researcher relied on the historical use of reverse wording in assessment development as a valid practice and therefore, took insights from the group but retained reversed wording. This could be the major flaw in the revision of the subscale items. There were individual differences across items in regards to specific wording that made them confusing, i.e., coping skill or politics, but the overriding, unanimous theme was that negative wording made the construct of optimism disappear. It is as if the participants are saying that the nature of optimism is so strongly and clearly positive that it can only be written in the positive direction. That when optimism is
written in the negative direction it can no longer be perceived or understood as optimism even to the point that someone would not recognize it as optimism and endorse it “strongly disagree”. Given the overall consensus of every member of both focus groups on every negatively worded item that it should be worded positively, historical use of wording in the negative direction in assessment scales is not valid when considering optimism. Items designed to measure optimism must be worded in the positive direction. The other three items were worded in the positive direction and easily determined to be measuring optimism.

The second hypothesis, “discussion from the focus group will produce suggestions for rewording items”, was also confirmed. Again the suggestions that were produced for rewording centered around wording the question in the positive direction. Words that had negative connotations were eliminated and replaced with words that had positive connotations. Attempts to eliminate the part of the sentence that made the sentence negative were made. Even Montgomery, Fine and James-Myers define ‘optimism’ to be “the extent to which a person perceives positive possibilities in a variety of situations”. This suggests that if the definition of the construct is positive, the wording of the item must also be positive.

The third hypothesis, “rewritten items based on data from the focus group study will produce stronger and more consistent factor loadings of the optimism subscale items than previous studies have” was not confirmed. The factor analysis of the optimism subscale items only produced 5 factors in itself. Only eleven items produced 5 factors, suggestion the items are measuring or describing different constructs, not just one, optimism. One could argue that sample size is a major contributing factor in the inability
of the rewritten items to load more consistently. Age appears to be ruled out as a contributing effect, as there was no significant difference between means of the two age groups. Another consideration could be that even though items 23, 28, 29, 30 and 31 were rewritten, they still appear to be asking two questions, not just one. It appears the stronger argument, however, is that the items were not rewritten using all of the data from the focus group. The strongest data from the focus group was to reword items in the positive direction. This was not done due to historically supported methods of assessment construction. Factor loading might be different if the items had been worded in the positive direction.

The fourth hypothesis “participants will recognize a difference between spirituality and religiosity” and the fifth hypothesis “participants will believe that a person can be spiritual without attending church” were also confirmed. 100% (N = 79) endorsed “True” for the statement: “There is a difference between spirituality and religiosity” on the demographic questionnaire. This is of considerable significance given the research presented in the literature review in which it is suggested that confusion about the difference of the two exists. Furthermore, it gives credence to the definitions of spirituality and religion in which the two constructs are defined distinctly different. Confirmation of this hypothesis suggests that going to church, a religious act, does not fully encapsulate the spirituality of a person. A person can be spiritual, without the religious act. This confirms definitions of religion that describe religion as being the practice of spirituality, the practice of certain indoctrinations, rites and rituals, i.e., church going. The confirmation of these hypotheses has implications for counselor educators and will be discussed later in this section.
Implications for Counselor Educators

As the field of counseling and counselor education continues to evolve we learn more and more about the multiple levels of diversity people have thru the multicultural counseling movement. Counselor educators need to consider that spirituality may be the one construct in the field of multicultural counseling that unites us all together, offers a source of commonality regardless of religion, race, gender, sexual orientation or other levels of diversity. Religiosity, as shown in the focus group data and responses to demographic questionnaire, separates us or is perceived to separate us, by the various practices and beliefs different religions adhere to. The dimensions of spirituality knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness and compassion, as identified by ASERVIC are experienced by everyone regardless of their diverse identities. The degree or level of intensity in which one experiences these dimensions is dependant on one’s locus of spiritual orientation i.e., dissonance, internalization, not one of their cultural identities. Regardless of one’s preferred religious orientation, for example, sermons, preaching and lessons in anyone’s ‘church’ will be around issues of knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness and compassion. How one practices, learns about or moves toward these concepts is dependent upon a religious orientation, but is really irrelevant. The fact that preaching and movement toward the concepts of knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness and compassion is what is important for one’s development and the world’s multicultural peace and harmony. This is demonstrated in the examples of the golden rule from 6 different religions; Buddhism, “Do not offend as you would not wish to be offended”; Confucianism, “Is there a maxim that one ought to follow all his life? Surely the maxim
of peaceful goodness: What we don’t want done to us we should not do to others”; Judaism, “What you don’t wish for yourself, do not wish for your neighbor. This is the law, the rest is only commentary”; Christianity, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”; Islam, “Not one of you will be a true believer who does not wish for his brother the same that he wishes for himself”; Taoism, “Hold as your own the gains of your neighbor and as yours his losses” (Everson, 1994).

We as counselor educators must learn more about the spiritual dimension of human beings and increase our understanding of it in order to better serve and understand ourselves, our students and clients. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) includes a V code diagnosis for a spiritual/religious problem. The writers of the DSM-IV acknowledge the impact these constructs have on people. Counselor education curriculum, then, needs to include coursework related to these constructs. When counselor educators consider spirituality as the unifying construct of multiculturalism, it implies another construct of diversity, religious identity. The difference between spirituality and religion needs to be taught. Experiences to explore one’s religious identity need to be provided. Efforts are already made in counselor education curriculums to explore other diverse identities, religious identity needs to be included.

Included in this exploration and understanding, counselor educators need to ask “how does an understanding of spirituality contribute to the counselor’s ability to address difficult issues with their clients?” Whereas a counselor’s religious beliefs may negatively impact, by judging or influencing their client who is considering abortion, coming to terms with a homosexual identity or considering divorce, a counselor’s
spirituality might allow them to transcend that negativity. Multicultural counselor educators need to consider how a counselor’s religious identity is biasing or influencing their treatment of a client just as significantly as the counselor’s racial identity is. As with any other multicultural identity, a counselor who is made aware of their identity and its influence on their ability to counsel is also made aware that it is preferable and ethical for them to deny counseling services for certain issues and/or clients.

In turn, spirituality may have implications for additional counselor competencies as the definition speaks to the heart of already defined basic counseling skills necessary to connect with, understand and be effective with clients.

**Recommendations for Counselors**

Counselors can serve themselves and their clients better if they will: (a) accept spirituality and spiritual development constructs as validly impacting themselves and their clients, (b) familiarize themselves with the related literature, and (c) begin to incorporate strategies derived from the constructs into their practices. Accepting that spirituality and spiritual development are valid constructs that impact themselves and their clients starts with examining their own spirituality and spiritual development. Counselors must ask themselves difficult questions like how do my religious beliefs effect my ability to non-judgmentally establish rapport and a working relationship with clients with certain issues? Am I ethically able to counsel certain clients or am I at risk of attempting to use my position of power and influence to move a client in the direction of my spiritual orientation and/or religious belief system? Do I perceive certain spiritual orientations or religious belief systems as inferior, bad or wrong and some how communicate this to my clients or do I accept people where they are at, understanding the
process of spiritual development. Avoiding this subject because it is uncomfortable is not the answer. These constructs impact the lives of our clients to greatly for it to be ignored. To demonstrate this impact, two relatively benign and unintrusive ways to incorporate the constructs into practice are to ask questions about spirituality/religion in the intake/social history assessment process and ask how, if at all, a client’s spiritual/religious identity is affecting their ability to address and resolve their presenting problems. The second question might demonstrate how pervasively our spiritual and religious identities shape and determine our lives as well as our ability to manage and resolve issues in our lives. For example, what spiritual and religious issues do homosexually oriented clients face in developing a healthy homosexual identity. What spiritual and religious issues do divorcees, victims of abuse, surviving parents of a deceased child, co-habitating unmarried partners, and substance abusers face? It seems that healthy resolution of many of these issues would require resolution of religious questions or concerns about falling from grace. If a person’s spiritual orientation and religious identity is left out of the counseling practice, the counselor may miss key elements needed for progress in counseling. Because such a pervasive and impacting identity exists in humans, the necessity for counselors to recognize, explore and validate it is an important reality.

Recommendations for Further Research

The implications for further theoretical research are clear. Assuming that the present literature review provided a representative sample of the data on dimensions of spirituality, any articles reviewed henceforth, would describe spirituality in dimensions already identified. New research reports and theoretical writings would not produce new dimensions to be included in the construct of spirituality. Therefore, further theoretical
Belief Systems Analysis Scale 86

Pieces will not necessarily advance the field in their ability to consistently and coherently reference the term spirituality. It is recommended that a collection of research be generated that aims to empirically test the comprehensive definition proposed by the ASERVIC. The next logical step is operationalizing this definition making it measurable and ready for assessment. An assessment tool, then, needs to be developed and validated. The BSAS may not be the ideal assessment tool for “Spirituality”. The development of an entirely different assessment tool that would capture the degree to which a person experiences the 7 dimensions of ASERVIC definition of spirituality is needed. A high degree of spirituality would be reflected by a high score on this assessment. Because the 7 dimensions of this definition are closely related to Afrocentric principles, the BSAS score is related to the construct of interest i.e., “the degree to which a person experiences the 7 dimensions of the definition”, but it is not a pure reflection of it. Next, operationalizing Menke’s Model of Spiritual Orientation is recommended. Once the definition is operationalized thru an assessment tool, it could be used to operationalize the model. In particular, a field wide acceptable definition of spirituality, measurement tool and developmental model would allow valid and reliable, consistent research on the impact of this dimension on human functioning, counselor educators, counselors and clients to proceed.

Conclusion This study has delved deeper into the constructs of spirituality and spiritual development. The literature review revealed numerous definitions of spirituality and limitations of models of spiritual development. The focus groups pushed for optimism subscale items to be worded in the positive direction and the factor analysis showed the continued need for development of the BSAS scale. Future considerations for spirituality
need to be focused on operationalizing the ASERVIC definition and including the construct in multiculturalism as the overriding construct that unites all people. Regardless of race, gender, religion, physical ability or sexual orientation, we are spiritual beings. We are not merely humans developing. Everyone and everything are spirits evolving in our understanding and manifestation of what that means. One’s spiritual orientation is defined by the current stage she is in and what dimension of spirituality she is struggling with. During our spiritual orientation journeys we come to understand the connectedness of our spiritual beings with other spiritual beings in the human form, nature’s form and transcendent form and celebrate.
APPENDIX A
CONFIDENTIAL DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Circle or fill in the correct answer.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Birthyear:
3. Race/Ethnicity:
4. Highest Educational Level:
5. College Major (if declared):
6. Religious Denomination/Affiliation:
7. On the average, I attend church service (circle one):
   - 4 times a month
   - 3 times a month
   - 2 times a month
   - 1 time a month
   - 6 to 12 times a year
   - 0 to 6 times a year
   - Never
8. There is a difference between spirituality and religiosity. True False
9. A person can be spiritual without attending church. True False
APPENDIX B
THE BELIEF SYSTEMS ANALYSIS SCALE

1. The more important consideration when looking for a job is not the money offered, but the people I would be working with.

☐ Completely agree  
☐ Mostly agree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Mostly disagree  
☐ Completely disagree

2. English should be the only national language. If one wants to live in this country, one should learn to speak the language; bilingualism is unimportant.

☐ Completely agree  
☐ Mostly agree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Mostly disagree  
☐ Completely disagree

3. If I could make a choice, I would prefer to lead a wealthy, exciting life as opposed to one that is peaceful and productive in terms of helping other people.

☐ Completely agree  
☐ Mostly agree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Mostly disagree  
☐ Completely disagree

4. In order to know what's really going on you need to look at the scientific data rather than the individual's personal experience.

☐ Completely agree  
☐ Mostly agree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Mostly disagree  
☐ Completely disagree
5. Working at a job with meaning and purpose is more important than the money received from a job.

☐ Completely agree
☐ Mostly agree
☐ Neither agree or disagree
☐ Mostly disagree
☐ Completely disagree

6. Winning the lottery would solve all of my problems.

☐ Completely agree
☐ Mostly agree
☐ Neither agree or disagree
☐ Mostly disagree
☐ Completely disagree

7. This country would be better off if we restricted immigration to a very select few.

☐ Completely agree
☐ Mostly agree
☐ Neither agree or disagree
☐ Mostly disagree
☐ Completely disagree

8. Welfare is a mistake: individuals must learn to help themselves.

☐ Completely agree
☐ Mostly agree
☐ Neither agree or disagree
☐ Mostly disagree
☐ Completely disagree

9. When I meet acquaintances on the street, I note the type of clothes they are wearing and compare them to mine.

☐ Completely agree
☐ Mostly agree
☐ Neither agree or disagree
☐ Mostly disagree
☐ Completely disagree
10. Race of nationality reveals more about an individual than he/she may realize.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

11. More than anything else, I am most convinced by another’s opinion if he/she has the statistics to back it up.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

12. When I encountered new acquaintances at meetings or work-related activities, I note the type of clothes they are wearing and am impressed if they are “dressed for success”.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

13. When someone challenges my beliefs, I am eager to set him/her straight.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

14. Pain is the opposite of love: In other words, an act of love cannot cause pain.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree
15. If a “friend” were to betray my confidence and tell some other people a secret of mine, the best way for him/her to learn a lesson is for me to do the same thing to him/her when I get a chance.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

16. If my opinion of my uncle has always been different than everyone else’s, then I must be perceiving him wrong.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

17. It is easy for me to see how the entire human race is really part of my extended family.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

18. When considering all the difficulties of life, I have trouble seeing any meaning or order to it.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

19. I find myself worrying a lot about circumstances in my life.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree
20. If I just had more money, my life would be more satisfying.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

21. If I were better looking, my relationships with others would be more satisfying.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

22. I feel badly when I see friends from high school who now have better cars, clothes, or homes than I do.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

23. Sometimes when I am good and do my best, I still suffer; this is an indication that good does not necessarily triumph over evil.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

24. Although I have a favorite kind of music I listen to, I can usually get into and enjoy most kinds of music.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree
25. When I am confused or unclear about myself or the world about me, I try to push these concerns out of my mind and go on with my life as usual.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

26. Past philosophers like St. Augustine and Descartes are less relevant today than they were 100 years ago before the modern age.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

27. Despite my religious preference (e.g., Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, etc.), I still believe there are teachings from different religions that are valid.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

28. I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at work and at home.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

29. I can remain calm and peaceful even when my boss blames me for another’s mistakes.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree
30. If I were president, I would invest more money to develop social programs and less money in high tech development.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

31. There are some people in my past whom I believe I should never forgive.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree
APPENDIX C
THE BELIEF SYSTEMS ANALYSIS SCALE-R

1. The more important consideration when looking for a job is not the money offered, but the people I would be working with.
   - Completely agree
   - Mostly agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Mostly disagree
   - Completely disagree

2. English should be the only national language. If one wants to live in this country, one should learn to speak the language; bilingualism is unimportant.
   - Completely agree
   - Mostly agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Mostly disagree
   - Completely disagree

3. If I could make a choice, I would prefer to lead a wealthy, exciting life as opposed to one that is peaceful and productive in terms of helping other people.
   - Completely agree
   - Mostly agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Mostly disagree
   - Completely disagree

4. In order to know what’s really going on you need to look at the scientific data rather than the individual’s personal experience.
   - Completely agree
   - Mostly agree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Mostly disagree
   - Completely disagree
5. Working at a job with meaning and purpose is more important than the money received from a job.

- [ ] Completely agree
- [ ] Mostly agree
- [ ] Neither agree or disagree
- [ ] Mostly disagree
- [ ] Completely disagree

6. Winning the lottery would solve all of my problems.

- [ ] Completely agree
- [ ] Mostly agree
- [ ] Neither agree or disagree
- [ ] Mostly disagree
- [ ] Completely disagree

7. This country would be better off if we restricted immigration to a very select few.

- [ ] Completely agree
- [ ] Mostly agree
- [ ] Neither agree or disagree
- [ ] Mostly disagree
- [ ] Completely disagree

8. Welfare is a mistake: individuals must learn to help themselves.

- [ ] Completely agree
- [ ] Mostly agree
- [ ] Neither agree or disagree
- [ ] Mostly disagree
- [ ] Completely disagree

9. When I meet acquaintances on the street, I note the type of clothes they are wearing and compare them to mine.

- [ ] Completely agree
- [ ] Mostly agree
- [ ] Neither agree or disagree
- [ ] Mostly disagree
- [ ] Completely disagree
10. Race of nationality reveals more about an individual than he/she may realize.

☐ Completely agree
☐ Mostly agree
☐ Neither agree or disagree
☐ Mostly disagree
☐ Completely disagree

11. More than anything else, I am most convinced by another’s opinion if he/she has the statistics to back it up.

☐ Completely agree
☐ Mostly agree
☐ Neither agree or disagree
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12. When I encountered new acquaintances at meetings or work-related activities, I note the type of clothes they are wearing and am impressed if they are “dressed for success”.

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13. When someone challenges my beliefs, I am eager to set him/her straight.

☐ Completely agree
☐ Mostly agree
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☐ Completely disagree

14. Pain is the opposite of love: In other words, an act of love cannot cause pain.

☐ Completely agree
☐ Mostly agree
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15. If a “friend” were to betray my confidence and tell some other people a secret of mine, the best way for him/her to learn a lesson is for me to do the same thing to him/her when I get a chance.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

16. If my opinion of my uncle has always been different than everyone else’s, then I must be perceiving him wrong.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
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- Completely disagree

17. It is easy for me to see how the entire human race is really part of my extended family.

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- Completely disagree

18. When considering all the difficulties of life, I have trouble seeing any meaning or order to it.

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- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

19. I find myself worrying a lot about circumstances in my life.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
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- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree
20. If I just had more money, my life would be more satisfying.

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- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

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- Completely agree
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- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

22. I feel badly when I see friends from high school who now have better cars, clothes, or homes than I do.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

23. Sometimes when I am good and do my best, I still suffer; this *means* that good does not necessarily triumph over evil.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

24. Although I have a favorite kind of music I listen to, I can usually get into and enjoy most kinds of music.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree
25. When I am confused or unclear about myself or the world about me, I try to deal with it the best way I can so I can go on with the rest of my life.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

26. Ideas and events from the past do not have relevance for our learning and existence today.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

27. Despite my religious preference (e.g., Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, etc.), I still believe there are teachings from different religions that are valid.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

28. I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at work and am unable to see the likelihood that things will improve.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree

29. I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at home but I am able to look for new solutions and ways to handle them.

- Completely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Completely disagree
30. I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at work but I am able to look for new solutions and ways to handle them.

- [ ] Completely agree
- [ ] Mostly agree
- [ ] Neither agree or disagree
- [ ] Mostly disagree
- [ ] Completely disagree

31. I am uneasy and bothered by my responsibilities at home and am unable to see the likelihood that things will improve.

- [ ] Completely agree
- [ ] Mostly agree
- [ ] Neither agree or disagree
- [ ] Mostly disagree
- [ ] Completely disagree

32. I can remain calm and peaceful even when my boss blames me for another’s mistakes.

- [ ] Completely agree
- [ ] Mostly agree
- [ ] Neither agree or disagree
- [ ] Mostly disagree
- [ ] Completely disagree

33. There are some people in my past who have hurt me, that I will never forgive.

- [ ] Completely agree
- [ ] Mostly agree
- [ ] Neither agree or disagree
- [ ] Mostly disagree
- [ ] Completely disagree
Belief Systems Analysis Scale and the construct validity of the optimism scale

Carrie S. C. Menke-Ball, MS, LPC

Hello. My name is Carrie Menke-Ball and I am a doctoral student in the Counselor Education Program at North Carolina State University. You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the validity of an instrument designed to measure worldview. There are no right or wrong answers. I am only interested in frank honest answers. All responses will be kept strictly confidential.

INFORMATION
1. You are being asked to participate in a focus group. Focus groups examine different issues from the perspective of the group participants. This focus group is examining the validity of some assessment items that have proven to be problematic in previous studies. Specifically, the Belief System Analysis Scale, which is designed to measure Afrocentric worldview, has a subscale that is supposed to measure “optimism” which is defined as “the extent to which one perceives positive possibilities in a variety of situation”. Your task as a focus group member is to:
   a) Read the items that are supposed to be asking about optimism.
   b) Answer three questions about each item: (1) Do YOU THINK the question is asking about optimism as it has been defined; (2) If you do not think it is asking about optimism, should the question be eliminated, reworded or an entirely new item should be generated; (3) If you think it should be reworded, what are your suggestions at rewording?
   c) The sessions will be audiotaped so I can be sure to get every word that people are contributing.
3. I will transcribe the sessions on paper and review the discussion for participants thoughts and ideas that will help me revise the assessment if needed.
4. If your thoughts, ideas and insights lead to item revision, I will reword the assessment items and distribute it to anonymous participants to see if the changed items work better to measure optimism.
5. I will write a report on the results and submit it for publication. Names of the participants will not be disclosed to any other person. Therefore, the name of the person making individual comments will not be disclosed and no names will be included in the report.

RISKS
You may experience some symptoms of stress and anxiety when you think about your responses to the questions. These symptoms include excessive worry and disturbances in sleep and eating patterns. Should these symptoms become disturbing to you, please contact the local Area Mental Health Program to help reduce the symptoms, (252) 399-8021.

BENEFITS
There is a growing interest in worldview in the fields of psychology, counseling and counselor education with little existing research on the assessment measures of the construct. There is a demand for further research in this area. The results of this study will have implications for training and education of professionals who help people with these issues. You may benefit indirectly by knowing you have contributed to the knowledge that helps others as well as directly considering how the impact of 9/11/01 has effected you.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

CONTACT
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Carrie S. C. Menke-Ball, at 910 458-2058. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148)

PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT
I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Subject's signature __________________________ Date ________________

Investigator's signature __________________________ Date ________________
APPENDIX E
North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Belief Systems Analysis Scale and the construct validity of the optimism scale

Carrie S. C. Menke-Ball, MS, LPC
Tracy L. Robinson, PhD, LPC

Hello. My name is Carrie Menke-Ball and I am a doctoral student in the Counselor Education Program at North Carolina State University. You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the validity of an instrument designed to measure worldview. There are no right or wrong answers. I am only interested in frank honest answers. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. This is student research in partial fulfillment of my doctoral dissertation.

INFORMATION
1. If you are over the age of 18, please complete the confidential demographic form, and the Belief Systems Analysis Scale. It takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON IT.
2. As you can see the demographic form and scale have been coded with numbers. The numbers take the place of a participant’s name and ensure that all participants’ responses will be kept confidential.
3. When you complete the Belief Systems Analysis Scale and Demographic form, return them to the principle investigator.
4. Keep this Informed Consent Form for yourself. By completing the scale and demographic form, you will have indicated your consent to participate. If you do not wish to participate, do not complete the survey.
5. When all of the assessments have been returned, my advisor, Dr. Tracy L. Robinson and I will be the only people to see the forms and scales. I will write a report on the results and submit it for publication. No individual responses will be discussed in the report and no names will be included in the report. Remember, I do not have access to the names of participants.

RISKS
You may experience some symptoms of stress and anxiety when you think about your responses to the questions. These symptoms include excessive worry and disturbances in sleep and eating patterns. Should these symptoms become disturbing to you, please contact the Campus Student Counseling Center, 515-2423.

BENEFITS
There is a growing interest in worldview in the fields of psychology, counseling and counselor education with little existing research on the assessment measures of the construct. There is a demand for further research in this area. The results of this study will have implications for training and education of professionals who help people with these issues. You may benefit indirectly by knowing you have contributed to the knowledge that helps others as well as directly considering how the impact of 9/11/01 has affected you.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

CONTACT
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Carrie S. C. Menke-Ball, at 910 458-2058. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148).

PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT
I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Subject's signature_______________________________________ Date _________________
Investigator's signature__________________________________ Date _________________
References


Miller, G. (1999). The development of the spiritual focus in counseling and counselor


Belief Systems Analysis Scale 110

