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A FAITH THAT ENDURES? AN EXPLORATION OF THE PERCEIVED

INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL CONTROL AND RESPONSIVENESS

ON THE SPIRITUAL CHANGE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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A thesis

Presented to

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

_____

by

Joshua P. Riedel

May 2015

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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MASTER'S THESIS

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This is to certify that the Thesis of

Joshua Paul Riedel

entitled

A Faith That Endures? An Exploration of the Perceived Influence of Parental Control and
Responsiveness on Spiritual Change of College Students

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the

Master of Arts degree
in Higher Education and Student Development

May 2015

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Abstract

Research showed parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive) significantly influence child and adolescent development. Other studies consistently highlighted the many changes in an individual's spirituality during his or her time at college. However, little research exists examining the overlap of parenting styles during childhood and spiritual change during college, and the present study focused on this intersection. The present study examined the relationship between parental control and parental responsiveness—two key traits in the well-developed theory of parenting styles and spiritual change in college. The study analyzed data from the National Study of Youth and Religion to examine this relationship. The results of the current study indicated a small but significant relationship between parental control and parental responsiveness and its effect on the spiritual development of college students.

Acknowledgements

As a significant season of my life comes to an end and I reflect back on the least two years I am beyond grateful for the countless people who have helped me get to this point. The number of people I owe thanks to would fill more pages than I have space for here, but I do want to highlight a few specific people.

Thank you first and foremost to my parents, Paul and Jana Riedel, the most loving and gracious people I have ever met. As I read through the literature on parenting I continually thought about the ways you both raised me and am so thankful for the grace you gave, and continue to give me, to fail and learn to become an adult in this world. I would not be the man I am today if it were not for the love and care I received from you both growing up. I am forever indebted to you both, and owe more thanks to you than I do anyone else.

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Finally, I want to thank my cohort. I do not have words to express what you all have meant to me over these last two years. I am a better man today than when I began, and so much of that is due to what I have learned from all of you. Thank you for doing this with me, for giving me grace with me when I did not love well in return, and for continuing to care for me well in so many different ways. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to share life with each and every one of you for this short season.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The majority of college students today consider themselves spiritual to at least some extent (Astin et al., 2005; Lee, 2002). During their years on campus, many experience a change in religious belief or behavior (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Lee, 2002). Despite a decline in religious behavior or service attendance, many students remain committed to some sort of religious or spiritual belief (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Lee, 2002; Uecker, Regnerus, & Vaaler, 2007). A variety of experiences, including encountering different religious views, often serve as catalysts for these complex changes (Braskamp, 2007; Bryant & Astin, 2008; Capeheart-Meningall, 2005; Holcomb & Nonneman, 2004; Lee, 2002).

One key factor particularly influences an individual's religious and spiritual development emerges: the role of a parent (Chou & Uata, 2012; Smith & Denton, 2005). Parental characteristics influence the development of an individual, even after the child transitions out of living in the home (Baldwin, McIntyre, & Hardaway, 2007; Madigan, 2008; Strage & Brandt, 1999; Turner, Chandler, & Heffer, 2009). For example, one study found healthy levels of parental responsiveness and control positively correlated with academic adjustment and self-actualization during the college years (Dominguez & Carton, 1997).

Students' religious and spiritual beliefs often change over the course of college, and many different factors impact the degree to which a student's spirituality changes (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Bryant, Yasuno, & Choi, 2003; Capeheart-Meningall, 2005) However, little research has explored the impact of parental responsiveness and parental control on a student's spiritual change, with the exception of two studies (Dudley & Wisbey, 2000; Wheeler, 1991). While these two studies did not explicitly examine the two constructs parental responsiveness and control, they did study the theory of parenting styles by Baumrind (1968, 1971, 1991). Parental responsiveness and control refer to characteristics specific to Baumrind's parenting styles.

Wheeler (1991) examined the relationship between Baumrind's parenting styles and college student religiosity and spiritual well-being. He found the more the parent aligned with a strict authoritarian parenting style, the higher likelihood the child felt better about his or her relationship with God. However, that study examined only students attending Christian colleges in the Midwest and did not take a longitudinal approach. Dudley and Wisbey (2000) focused on the relationship between Baumrind's parenting styles and church commitment, finding individuals whose parents used "affectionatless control" more likely dropped out of the church. The study also remained limited in scope, examining only participants who attended Seventh-Day Adventist churches during childhood. Additionally, neither study proved nationally representative (Dudley & Wisbey, 2000; Wheeler, 1991).

Current Study

Because of the limitations in the above studies, significant gaps still existed in the literature. The research question guiding the current study therefore asks, "Is there a

relationship between perceived parental responsiveness and parental control and college students' spiritual change, and, if so, what is the nature of that relationship?" Perceived parental responsiveness refers to the degree to which an individual perceives how his or her parent encourages the child's free expression of thoughts and beliefs (Baumrind, 1966, 1991). Additionally, responsiveness includes recognition of the child's individual needs and the parent's attempt to support those needs during childhood (Baumrind, 1966, 1991). Perceived parental control indicates the degree to which an individual perceives his or her parent attempted to control the individual's behavior during childhood (Baumrind, 1966, 1991). The final construct, spiritual change, entails the degree to which an individual's religious and spiritual beliefs and practice change over time. The present study examined spiritual change longitudinally from early to mid-adolescence through the college years.

The current study analyzed data from the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR). While the NSYR does not explicitly measure Baumrind's parenting styles, the present study framed the discussion of parental responsiveness and control in the context of the author's parenting styles. The characteristics of responsiveness and control prove core to Baumrind's theory of parenting styles. As a result, the present study used this theory in both the literature review and discussion of the results to make sense of parental influence on spiritual change during college.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Religion and Spirituality of College Students

　　Defining religion and spirituality. Religion and spirituality remain constructs notoriously hard to assess (Bryant et al., 2003; Holcomb & Nonneman, 2004). Both attempt to measure something deeply personal, which can prove nebulous and thus quite challenging to quantify. This ambiguity highlights the need to clearly delineate and define the differences between these two constructs.

　　Religion often becomes described as a commitment to a transcendent power marked by both individual and communal behaviors and rituals (Bryant, 2007; Capeheart-Meningall, 2005; Love, 2001). On the other hand, spirituality refers to the process by which individuals construct the world around them into order to make meaning; spirituality often becomes marked by an internal process of seeking personal authenticity and greater connectedness to others (Bryant, 2007; Capeheart-Meningall, 2005). One could therefore describe his or herself as spiritual without any commitment to an external set of beliefs or behaviors and can express spirituality in both religious and non-religious contexts (Bryant, 2007; Capeheart-Meningall, 2005; Lee, 2002).

　　The present study examined both religious and spiritual elements of college students but referred primarily to *spiritual change*, a term intentionally used given the exploratory nature of the study. While the use of this phrase proves fairly common in the

literature, it lacks clear definition (Balk, 1999; Dalby, 2006; Stewart & Koeske, 2005).

For present purposes, the study defined the phrase *spiritual change* as the degree to

which an individual's spiritual and religious beliefs and practice change over time. The

terms *religious* and *spiritual*, in the definition of spiritual change, apply as defined above.

Student spirituality and religiousness overview. Historically, some research

suggested students' religious commitment declines during college years (Funk & Willits,

1987). However, recent studies pointed to a more complicated story as students' spiritual

and religious development during college proves extremely complex (Astin et al., 2005;

Braskamp, 2007; Capeheart-Meningall, 2005; Holcomb & Nonneman, 2004; Lee, 2002).

While many students experience a change in religious perspective, most students remain

committed to their core religious and spiritual beliefs (Astin et al., 2005; Lee, 2002).

To start, students often enter college developmentally foreclosed to most belief

systems other than their own (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010; Parks, 1986;

Perry, 1999). However, the pluralistic nature of the college environment often leads to an

intellectual crisis for students (Braskamp, 2007; Evans et al., 2010; Holcomb &

Nonneman, 2004; Ma, 2003). This crisis frequently serves as a catalyst for further

exploration of one's faith as many students adopt new forms of religious and spiritual

commitment (Braskamp, 2007). In addition, nearly every aspect of the college experience

influences a student's spiritual and religious development and potentially contributes to

this crisis (Braskamp, 2007; Capeheart-Meningall, 2005; Ma, 2003).

While students commonly experience challenges to religious beliefs and a decline

in religious activity, most show an increase in spirituality and continue to hold some sort

of religious conviction (Braskamp, 2007; Bryant & Astin, 2008; Bryant et al., 2003; Lee,

2002; Uecker et al. 2007). Many students desire to develop purpose and derive meaning from life as well as feel a sense of connection with God or another higher power that transcends the personal self (Astin et al., 2005; Capeheart-Meningall, 2005).

The college experience influences the development of students' spiritual and religious beliefs, but the specifics of those changes often remain vague (Lee, 2002). The degree to which a student experiences change in his or her spirituality, as well as the type of change, often depends on a variety of factors (Braskamp, 2007; Capeheart-Meningall, 2005).

Other influencing factors. These factors vary in both type and degree of influence during the college years. Exposure to different belief systems and religions often challenges a student's paradigm and can result in a change of belief and practice (Braskamp, 2007; Bryant & Astin, 2008; Holcomb & Nonneman, 2004). Institutional type also plays a significant role in spiritual change, and research highlighted the positive effects Christian colleges have on students' faith development (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Ma, 2003). However, another study suggested students who attend Christian institutions more likely struggle spiritually than students who attend non-secretarian private or public schools (Bryant & Astin, 2008). Additionally, an individual's particular faith or religious denomination holds a significant role in religious and spiritual change during college (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Uecker et al., 2007).

A student's gender offers another key factor, although difficulty lies in determining gender's exact influence on spirituality (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Bryant, 2007; Buchko, 2004). Males seem more likely to feel skeptical about religion (Bryant, 2007; Buchko, 2004). Females, on the other hand, usually show more interest in spirituality but

also seem more likely to struggle with their spiritual beliefs (Bryant, 2007; Bryant &

Astin, 2008; Buchko, 2004).

A variety of factors influence individuals' spirituality and how that sense of

spirituality evolves during college (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Buchko, 2004; Ma, 2003).

While many of the various influencers appear known, they need continual exploration.

Parental Control and Parental Responsiveness

Introduction. The present study did not examine parenting styles specifically,

however, it examines parental responsiveness and control—key characteristics of the

parenting styles by Baumrind (1966, 1991). Below, the current study highlights

Baumrind's theory of parenting styles and the various effects of those parenting styles to

examine the influence parental responsiveness and control have on children's personal

development.

Baumrind's theory of parenting styles. Baumrind (1966, 1991) defined

parental control as the degree to which a parent attempts to control the actions and

behaviors of his or her child. She also defined parental responsiveness as the degree to

which the parent encourages free expression of thoughts and beliefs by the child while

also recognizing the child's individual needs and an attempt to support those needs.

Baumrind (1966) developed a model of different parenting styles—permissive,

authoritarian, and authoritative—that all incorporate these two traits.

Baumrind's theory of parenting styles has received much study and has signifcant

influence on the field of child and adolescent development (Baldwin et al., 2007;

Baumrind, 1971, 1991, 2005; Berzonsky, 2004). Parenting styles influence children and

adolescents in a variety of ways, including impact on self-esteem and goal orientation

(Gonzalez, Greenwood, & WenHsu, 2001; Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter, & Keehn, 2007). Three different categories of parenting styles exist—authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive—and all three have varying impact on child and adolescent development.

Authoritative parenting. Authoritative parents value both autonomy and discipline and often guide children towards developing a core sense of values. They also set clear and reasonable rules they frequently explain to the child (Baumrind, 1966). Authoritative parenting typically becomes marked by responsiveness and a firm, but not harsh, sense of control (Baumrind, 1966, 1968, 1991). Children often receive the opportunity to express their views openly (Baumrind, 1966, Milevsky et al., 2007). While the child may push back against parental limits at times, authoritative parenting typically results in positive outcomes in children (Baumrind, 1966; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Milevsky et al., 2007; Steinberg & Lamborn, 1992).

Adolescents who perceived their parents as more authoritative more likely develop a goal orientation motivated by more intrinsic values (Gonzalez et al., 2001). Authoritative parents seem also more supportive of adolescent autonomy and correlate to academic success and higher self-esteem in children (Baumrind, 2005; Milevsky et al., 2007; Steinberg & Lamborn, 1992; Turner et al., 2009). However, another study found authoritative parenting styles also account for a significant portion of adolescents who have a normative processing style, marked by reliance on the expectations and ideas of others instead of a development of an autonomous identity (Berzonsky, 2004).

Authoritarian parenting. Authoritarian parents, in contrast to authoritative parents, attempt to control a child's behavior, often in line with a religiously informed code of ethics strict in nature (Baumrind, 1966, 1968). The authoritarian parent typically

appears non-responsive and has strict control with non-negotiable rules that allow little to

no room for child feedback (Baumrind, 1966, 1968, 1991). Children raised in

authoritarian homes more likely develop extrinsic goals and remain closed-minded

(Berzonsky, 2004; Gonzalez et al., 2001).

Undergraduate students who perceived a more authoritarian parenting style more

likely develop a goal orientation where they focus on proving their ability (Gonzalez et

al., 2001). Individuals who have authoritarian parents also more likely exhibit a

normative processing style and seem closed off to new ideas that might conflict with

current beliefs (Berzonsky, 2004). Additionally, an authoritarian parenting style

negatively correlates with creativity and positively correlates with socially prescribed

perfectionism among high-ability and high-achieving young adults (Miller, Lambert, &

Neumeister, 2012).

Permissive parenting. Permissive parents have few expectations for their children

and act in a generally affirmative manner toward demands, desires, and requests of the

child (Baumrind, 1966, 1991). Permissive parenting seems marked by a lack of demands

on a child and allowance of the child to practice self-regulation. Few rules exist for a

child, and the parent appears more as a resource than as an ideal or role model to follow

(Baumrind, 1966). The permissive parent might seem responsive to the child but still lack

a sense of control (Baumrind, 1966).

Individuals who experienced parental permissiveness more likely avoid

confronting identity issues and conflicts (Berzonsky, 2004). One study determined

permissive fathering as less damaging than permissive mothering (Milevsky et al., 2007).

More positively, though, permissive parenting positively correlates with creativity among high-ability and high-achieving young adults (Miller et al., 2012).

Influence of parental characteristics during college years. Parental influence continues well into adulthood and can thus influence the experience and growth of college students (Gonzalez et al., 2001; Patock-Peckham & Morgan-Lopez, 2006; Tuner et al., 2009). Authoritative parenting often associates with self-actualization, academic success, and development of a mastery goal orientation (Dominguez & Carton, 1997; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Strage & Brandt, 1999). Permissive parenting by one's same gender parent positively correlates with impulsiveness and drinking problems in college (Patock-Peckham & Morgan-Lopez, 2006).

Parental influence and student spirituality. Parental characteristics prove extremely influential on a child or adolescent's faith and spiritual development (Chou & Uata, 2012; Dollahite & Thatcher, 2008; Smith & Denton, 2005). A national study on teenage spirituality found the importance of faith for a teenager closely relates to the importance of faith for the parent (Smith & Denton, 2005). Adolescents typically respond negatively to "parent-centered" conversations on faith, marked by parental initiative, dominance of conversation, and required religious service attendance (Dollahite & Thatcher, 2008). Another study found college men with authoritative fathers more likely viewed God as forgiving, loving, trustworthy, and available than men with authoritarian or permissive fathers (Chou & Uata, 2012)

One dissertation examined the relationship between parenting styles and spiritual maturity but found no conclusive results (Bryant, 2001). The study also did not focus solely on college students, and the sample drew from a highly religious population

(Bryant, 2001). Another study found a positive relationship between parental attachment and spiritual development (Madigan, 2008). One analysis of data from the *National Study of Youth and Religion* examined the association between patterns of parental socialization and commitment to a religious ideology in high-tension religions (Armet, 2009). The analysis found individuals who grow up in high-tension religions marked by "elevated demands and expectations" more likely retained their faith over time (p. 279).

Conclusion

Many different factors, including the role of a parent, prove extremely influential in shaping an individual's spirituality, and the college years often represent a critical time when spiritual changes occur (Capeheart-Meningall, 2005; Dollahite & Thatcher, 2008; Ma, 2003; Smith & Denton, 2005). Additionally, the level of parental control and responsiveness greatly influence a student's growth and college experience (Baldwin et al., 2007; Dominguez & Carton, 1997; Patock-Peckham & Morgan-Lopez, 2006). However, little research exists on the specific relationship between parental responsiveness and control and spiritual change of students during the college years.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The current study used a quantitative analysis of archival data via the NSYR. The NSYR refers to a longitudinal national survey directed by Dr. Christian Smith that explores the religious lives of American youth from adolescence through young adulthood. The study took place in three waves, and the present study used Waves 1 (2003) and 3 (2007-08).

Participants

The researcher selected participants in the present study from college attending students in the NSYR Wave 3. In Wave 1, the survey included 3,370 English and Spanish speaking teenagers between the ages of 13-17. Wave 3 attempted to re-interview all English speaking Wave 1 respondents. During this time, 2,532 respondents reported between the ages of 18-24. For particular purposes, the current study focused only on college attending participants, excluding all participants who did not indicate currently attending college. Of the 2,532 participants 1,020 individuals identified as currently enrolled in a college or university.

Instrument and Data Collection

The present study examined the relationship between perceived parental responsiveness and parental control, and spiritual change during college. While the NSYR does not specifically use any constructs that explicitly measure the parenting

styles developed by Baumrind (1966, 1991), the current research addressed parental warmth and control—key characteristics in her theory. For example, the question "Do parents monitor your music, television, and movies?" measured parental control. Additionally, the study did not employ any specific scales or measures to measure spiritual change. However, many of the questions sought to understand the individuals' personal spiritual and religious life. For example, the study asked individuals if they believe in God and, if so, how they would describe the nature of that relationship. The present study used questions similar in nature to these questions regarding belief in God to understand student spirituality. Other questions, such as "Do you attend religious services more than twice a year (not including weddings or funerals)?" better sought to understand religious commitment. While the questions encompassed both spiritual and religious elements, the present study measured the construct defined as spiritual change (Appendix C provides all questions for the spiritual change scale with original scaling)**.** Many of these questions appeared in Wave 1 and Wave 3. The present study thus compared questions asked in both waves to measure spiritual change.

Measures

       Independent variables. Perceived parental control and perceived parental responsiveness functioned as the independent variables. Wave 1 measured parental control by questions such as "Do parents monitor your music, television, and movies?" to which respondents responded "always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never." The study also asked respondents how much freedom their parent(s) gave them to develop and openly express their own views on important issues, to which respondents could answer "A lot, sometimes, a little, don't know" (Appendix A).

Questions such as "How often does your mother/father praise and encourage you?" and "How often do you feel your parents understand you?" measured parental responsiveness (Appendix B). The current study measured perceived parent control and responsiveness. In particular, an important distinction between observed and perceived parenting styles exists. Feedback from the child of the parent determines perceived parental control and responsiveness, while direct observation of parental behavior determines observed parental control and responsiveness (Gonzalez et al., 2001).

Dependent variables. Spiritual change over time functioned as the dependent variable. Spiritual change included questions emphasizing religious practice such as "How important is religion in shaping your daily life?" and "Do you attend religious services more than twice a year (not including weddings or funerals)?" Other questions focused on internal beliefs such as "How distant or close to you feel to God most of the time?" All questions in the spiritual change scale appeared in Waves 1 and 3, and therefore the spiritual change score results from the score in Wave 1 subtracted from the score in Wave 3. Thus, if an individual received a positive spiritual change score, his spiritual score increased over time.

Procedures

First, the researcher obtained permission to use the archival data used in the present study. "The National Study of Youth and Religion, whose data were used by permission here, was generously funded by Lilly Endowment Inc., under the direction of Christian Smith, of the Department of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame" (Association of Religion Data Archives, n.d., para. 15).

Wave 1 took place between July 2002 and April 2003, conducted by researchers at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A random-digit-dial method produced telephone numbers representative of household telephones in all fifty states, including Alaska and Hawaii. Eligible households included at least one teenager between the ages of 13-17 who lived in the household at least six months per year. Interviewers asked to speak with the teenager who had the most recent birthday in order to ensure randomization. While parent interviews addressed either the mother or father, the surveyor asked to speak with the mothers first. Stepparents, resident grandparents, resident partners of parents, and other resident parent-like figures also could function as eligible to complete the parent portion of the survey.

Wave 3 took place between September 2007 and April 2008 and employed Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system programmed using Blaise software. Interviewers made every effort to contact and survey all original NSYR respondents, including individuals out of the country or in the military.

Data Analysis

Given the exploratory nature of the study, the researcher grouped survey items to create three measures: perceived parental control, perceived parental responsiveness, and spiritual change. These items were collected over two testing periods. Because the items all had different scaling originally, the researcher rescaled all items to a five-point scale. After rescaling all items, the researcher ran a factor analysis and reliability analysis to ensure the reliability and validity of created scales. Given the reliability and validity of all three scales, the researcher also ran a linear regression in order to test the two predictors (responsiveness and control) on predicting spiritual change.

Chapter 4

Results

The following research question guided the present study: "Is there a relationship between perceived parental responsiveness and control and students' spiritual change, and if so what is the nature of that relationship?"

A total of 1,020 participants reported current enrollment in college at the time of the Wave 3 study. The researcher excluded from analysis any participant with missing data and therefore did not analyze all 1,020 participants for each construct. The following section provides an overview of the results from the factor analysis and reliability analysis for each construct, as well as descriptive and inferential statistics.

Factor Analysis and Reliability

A standard principal component extraction method analyzed shared variance and the number of significant components within each of the constructs. George and Mallery (2003) provide the following guide for reliability scores used for the current study: $\alpha > .9$ – excellent, $\alpha > .8$ – good, $\alpha > .7$ – acceptable, $\alpha > .6$ – questionable, $\alpha > .5$ – poor.

Perceived parental responsiveness. An original factor analysis of a 15-item scale produced a component with an eigenvalue of 5.071 that accounted for 38.8% of the variance. Additionally, this construct had high reliability ($\alpha = .835$). However, one item (How often do you talk with your father about personal subjects such as friendships, dating, or drinking?) had a loading score of .016 and brought the internal consistency

down by 0.025. Once the researcher removed this item, the final 14-item scale produced a

component with an eigenvalue of 5.067 that accounted for 36.2% of the variance.

Furthermore, this new 14-item scale had high reliability ($\alpha = .859$) (Table 1.1).

Table 1

Factor Loadings Parental Responsiveness

Item	Loading
How often, if at all, does your mother praise and encourage you?	.625
How often, if at all, does your mother hug you?	.674
How often, if at all, does your mother tell you that she loves you?	.657
How often, if at all, do you and your mother just have fun hanging out and doing things together?	.642
How often, if at all, does your father praise and encourage you?	.654
How often if at all does your father hug you?	.682
How often if at all does your father tell you that he loves you?	.694
Generally, how well do you and your mother get along?	.500
How often do you talk with your mother about person subjects, such as friendships, dating, or drinking?	.521
Generally, how well do you and your father get along?	.566
In general, how much do you feel that your parent loves and accepts you for you who you are?	.559
In general how much do you feel that your parent pays enough attention to you?	.515
How often, if at all, do you and your father just have fun hanging out and doing things together?	.574

Perceived parental control. An original factor analysis produced a component with an eigenvalue of 2 that accounted for 33.3% of the variance and a reliability score of $\alpha = .588$. However, one item (How much freedom does your parent give you to develop and openly express your own views on important issues) had a loading score of .039 and brought internal consistency down by .03. After removing the item, a factor analysis produced a component with an eigenvalue of 2 that accounted for 40.004% of the variance. An additional component with an eigenvalue of 1.036 accounted for 20.7% of the variance. Reliability for this construct emerged low ($\alpha = .618$) (Table 1.2).

Table 2

Factor Loadings Parental Control

Item	Loading
How much does your parent monitor your music, television, and movie watching?	.731
How much does your parent monitor who you hang out with?	.695
In general, how often does your parent know what you are doing when you're not at home?	.516
During a typical week, about how many afternoons are there, if any, that you spend time after school hours without adult supervision?	.516
During a typical week, about how many evenings are there, if any, that you spend time after school hours without adult supervision?	.560

Spiritual change pre-test. An original factor analysis included the 11 items in the current spiritual change scale plus "How often, if at all, do you think about the meaning of life?" This scale produced a component with an eigenvalue of 4.975 that accounted for 41.4% of the variance and an alpha score of .858. However, after a reliability analysis, this additional item lowered the internal consistency by .011 and had

a loading score of .254; the researcher removed the item from the scale. The final factor

analysis produced a component with an eigenvalue of 4.931 that accounted for 44.8% of

the variance. Reliability remained high (α = .867) (Table 1.3).

Table 3

Factor Loadings Spiritual Change Pre-Test

Item	Loading
Do you attend religious services more than once or twice a year, not counting weddings, baptisms, and funerals?	.430
Do you believe definitely, maybe, or not at all in life after death?	.566
Do you believe definitely, maybe, or not at all in the existence of demons or evil spirits?	.574
Do you believe definitely, maybe, or not at all in the possibility of divine miracles from God?	.731
Do you believe in God, or not, or are you unsure?	.677
How distant or close do you feel to god most of the time?	.766
Which of the following comes closest to your own view of God?	.620
How often, if ever, do you pray by yourself alone?	.728
How often, if ever, do you read from scripture to yourself alone?	.641
Do you believe definitely, maybe, or not at all in the existence of angels?	.751
How important or unimportant is religious faith in shaping your daily life?	.792

Spiritual change post-test. An original factor analysis including the item "How

often, if at all, do you think about the meaning of life?" produced a component with an

eigenvalue of 5.985 that accounted for 49.9% of the variance and an alpha score of .896.

However, the same item lowered the internal consistency by .01 and had a loading score

of .305. Regardless, the researcher removed the item for consistent scales, as done in the

pre-test. The final factor analysis produced a component with an eigenvalue of 5.907 that

accounted for 53.7% of the variance. Reliability emerged high ($\alpha = .906$) (Table 1.4).

Table 4

Factor Loadings Spiritual Change Post-test

Item	Loading
Do you attend religious services more than once or twice a year, not counting weddings, baptisms, and funerals?	.585
Do you believe definitely, maybe, or not at all in life after death?	.678
Do you believe definitely, maybe, or not at all in the existence of demons or evil spirits?	.667
Do you believe definitely, maybe, or not at all in the possibility of divine miracles from God?	.770
Do you believe in God, or not, or are you unsure?	.722
How distant or close do you feel to god most of the time?	.815
Which of the following comes closest to your own view of God?	.689
How often, if ever, do you pray by yourself alone?	.799
How often, if ever, do you read from scripture to yourself alone?	.680
Do you believe definitely, maybe, or not at all in the existence of angels?	.764
How important or unimportant is religious faith in shaping your daily life?	.849

Descriptive Statistics

A wide range of scores emerged for all three constructs. The spiritual change

averaged at -2.07 with negative median and mode. A negative spiritual change score

indicates a decrease from the pre-test to the post-test (Table 1.5).

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics

	Responsiveness	Control	Spiritual Change
Mean	57.39	18.19	-2.07
Median	59.00	18.00	-1.00
Mode	60.00	21.00	-1.00
Std. Deviation	8.23	3.47	7.32
Range	44.00	19.00	60.00
Minimum	26.00	6.00	-30.00
Maximum	70.00	25.00	30.00

Inferential Statistics

The test yielded a small but significant predictor of spiritual change. The variables

perceived parental control and perceived parental responsiveness had a small statistical

influence on spiritual change. While small, the finding proves significant and worth

noting. These results seem to indicate higher levels of both perceived parental

responsiveness and control relate to greater spiritual change (Table 1.6).

Table 6

Linear Regression

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
.089*	.008	.004	7.18

*Predictors: (Constant), Control, Responsiveness

Chapter 5

Discussion

Overview

The study sought to examine the relationship between perceived parental control and parental responsiveness and spiritual change over time among college students. The researcher grouped individual items from the NSYR to create three different constructs: perceived parental control, perceived parental responsiveness, and spiritual change. The researcher ran both factor and reliability analyses to ensure statistical strength of the scales. The researcher also ran a linier regression in order to identify relationship between perceived parental control and parental responsiveness and spiritual change.

The linear regression found a small relationship between the independent variables and spiritual change. Perceived parental control and responsiveness proved weak predictors of spiritual change. Given the strong relationship between parenting styles and a variety of other developmental factors in adolescents and young adults, one might expect a strong relationship in this study as well, so the results emerged somewhat surprising. A relationship consistent with the literature exists; however, based upon the weak nature of that relationship, one should hesitate to make any definitive claims about parenting styles and spiritual change in college students.

Even though the relationship appears somewhat weak, the fact that a relationship does exist should not be overlooked. As already noted in the literature review, individuals

whose parents seemed more authoritative (exhibited healthy levels of both responsiveness and control) typically develop a greater sense of autonomy, self-esteem, and intrinsic goal orientation (Baumrind, 2005; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Milevsky et al., 2007). Children with authoritative parents typically receive more space to freely articulate and develop their own views and opinions, even opinions different from their parents (Baumrind, 1966, 1991). This general trend might help explain the small relationship between the parental control and responsiveness and spiritual change.

Naturally, those who grow up in a home where they have the space to embrace and express their individuality also feel the freedom to explore their spirituality during college. Conversely, if an individual did not have freedom to explore his individuality and felt pressured to conform to his parents' ideals, he also less likely experiences any significant change in belief or practice. Whether one becomes more or less "spiritual," those with more authoritative parents could plausibly prove more likely to explore their spiritual beliefs and practices during college and therefore experience more change.

As highlighted in Table 1.1, on average students' spiritual change score dropped by about two points, indicating a decrease in spirituality from the pre-test before attending college to the time they attended college at the time of the post-test. This decrease proves consistent with some literature on college student spirituality that suggested students often undergo some sort of spiritual "crisis" during their time at college (Braskamp, 2007; Holcomb & Nonneman, 2004; Ma, 2003). Other literature indicated that, over time, students become more committed to their core spiritual beliefs, although most of that research focused primarily on spiritual beliefs surrounding meaning and purpose (Braskamp, 2007; Bryant & Astin, 2008; Bryant et al., 2003; Lee, 2002;

Uecker et al., 2007). The current study's emphasis on both religious behavior and personal beliefs created difficulty in placing the study in the context of past literature.

The spiritual change construct used allowed for a more robust, well-rounded understanding of spirituality. Often studies on faith or spirituality compartmentalized different components and focused on one element, rather than all aspects of one's faith or spirituality. For example, some studies that examined spirituality focused on more nebulous beliefs about a "higher power" or equated spirituality with meaning making (Astin et al., 2005; Capeheart-Meningall, 2005; Parks, 2000). Additionally, other studies that examined religious commitment focused on behavioral elements of one's expression of faith (Capeheart-Meningall, 2005; Love, 2001).

In contrast with most literature, the current spirituality construct captured multiple elements of one's spirituality—cognitive, affective, and behavioral—rather than honing in on only one or two of these aspects. Questions such as "Do you believe there is life after death" or "Do you believe there is a God" concentrated more cognitive beliefs surrounding a deity and other "spiritual" beliefs. Other items, such as, "How distant or close do you feel to God?" highlighted the affective nature of one's spirituality, and other items ("How often, if ever, do you pray alone by yourself?") captured behavioral elements. Future studies on spirituality should employ more holistic methods of examining the complexities of an individual's spirituality.

Limitations

Despite the size and scope of the original NSYR study, the current study still had some limitations inherent in the methodology and data analysis. While the perceived parental responsiveness and spiritual change scales both proved statistically strong, the

perceived parental control scale remained rather weak and had only five items. Additionally, though the perceived parental responsiveness scale proved statistically strong, it only measured the *essence* of Baumrind's conceptualization of parenting styles and did not explicitly measure what she might deem responsiveness in parenting. Much of the literature explored connections between Baumrind's parenting styles and other developmental factors explicitly, and the current study explored implicit connections. The lack of direct exploration of her parenting styles could explain why a weak relationship between parenting styles and spiritual change existed in the current study.

Perhaps one of the biggest weaknesses in the methodology, however, came with the inability to control specific variables and thus highlight nuances in participants' college experiences. Literature suggested personal experiences contribute the most to spiritual changes undergone in college (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Holcomb & Nonneman, 2004; Ma, 2003; Uecker et al., 2007). For example, a Christian institution typically has positive effects on a student's spiritual development (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Ma, 2003). Also, greater exposure to beliefs in conflict with a student's current beliefs increase the chance of changing his or her own belief system (Braskamp, 2007; Bryant & Astin, 2008; Holcomb & Nonneman, 2004). The current study only asked if respondents currently attended college, collecting no data regarding institution type or college experience. The study lacked the specificity needed to identify key aspects that may influence spiritual change, thereby providing no way to know what factors might be at play.

Implications for Further Research

Little research explored how an individual's upbringing impacts changes in spirituality during college. Many other studies examined parental influence on overall

development, but few explored the intersection of the college experience and parental upbringing. Additionally, many studies focused on the relationship between parenting and development in college or spirituality and the college experience, but few explored the relationship among all three elements, necessitating further research to explore the connection between all three.

For example, a study by Gonzalez et al. (2001) explored the relationship between parenting styles and goal orientations of undergraduate students and provided valuable insight. However, the study did not focus on any other factors of the college experience, such as discipline of study, extra-curricular involvement, or presence of a mentoring relationship that may also impact the development of a specific goal orientation. Essentially, a study combining something akin to the 1984 student involvement theory by Astin along with the 1966 theory of parenting styles by Baumrind (or any other development theory focused on parenting) would invaluably add to current literature on college student development.

The indication of a relationship between parental responsiveness and control and spiritual change demands more research that specifically examines the relationship among parenting styles, spiritual development, and the college experience. Focusing on the relationship between two of these factors has merit, but honing in on the intersection of all three would prove invaluable. For example, one could use the parenting style theory by Baumrind (1966), the student involvement theory by Astin (1984), and whatever method of measuring spirituality proves most helpful and gain invaluable insight into the relationship among all three elements.

The present study also highlighted the connection between different elements of one's spiritual life. As previously noted, the spiritual change construct contained cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements of one's spirituality. The fact that the scale proved both statistically reliable and valid indicated a strong connection among all three elements and that they need not remain disconnected in the way research often has studied them. Future research ought to take the interrelationship of different aspects of spirituality into account and resist the temptation to compartmentalize. While compartmentalizing spirituality seems "cleaner" and can prove helpful in some ways, it negates the often nuanced and complex reality of most individual's spiritual lives.

Despite common misconceptions, research suggested most college students maintain some version of spirituality throughout college (Astin et al., 2005). Further research focusing on childhood upbringing and spiritual change during college would benefit the field of student development and higher education. A more concentrated focus on parenting styles and spirituality, as well as varying aspects of the college experience, would allow for more nuance and perhaps shed further light on the complex changes students undergo.

Implications for Practice

The current study highlighted the importance of considering students' current development in the context of their past. Practitioners should not overlook the small indication of the relationship shared by parenting styles and spiritual change; rather, they should take this finding into account when thinking about student spirituality. One often easily forgets college students do not enroll as "blank slates" but do, in fact, begin college with a past that shapes how they perceive and make meaning of the present college

experience. The current research indicated a connection between past upbringing and current spiritual development—a relationship worth considering in practice.

Simply taking time to understand a student's pre-college background and experiences can help shed significant light on his or her current development and equip professionals to offer more holistic support. As with all developmental models, the vast majority of students do not follow the model perfectly. However, maintaining a good grasp on models that highlight key influencing factors such as parenting styles adds to professionals' understanding of students. For example, taking a few minutes to ask a student about his or her parents could provide meaningful insight as to why he or she struggles academically, allowing the professional to provide support more effectively.

This deeper understanding can also allow professionals to not only provide better support themselves but also to help students sort through their own upbringing. An awareness of the relationship between parental upbringing and current development can help professionals equip students to develop deeper self-awareness. The goal should not remain to simply use awareness of parental influence to "solve" current development issues but rather to equip students with the ability to sort out for themselves the influence their parents had and how that impacts their current development.

Additionally, professionals must remember to consider all aspects of a student's faith, not just focus on one or two pieces. As previously noted, the statistical strength of the spiritual change scale indicated a strong relationship among these different components of spirituality. Higher education professionals ought to consider this relationship and help students come to a greater awareness of how each of these components influence one another. What students cognitively believe about God

influences how they feel toward God and how they act. Often in practice, professionals focus on one of these pieces without considering how they all fit together.

Both past literature and present research point to a developmental reality far more complex than higher education professionals and researchers often perceive or profess. Students' spiritual journeys manifest influence from a variety of factors, with parental upbringing as one of the key components impacting spiritual development. Furthermore, the present research indicated a more complicated and nuanced understanding of spirituality than often allowed for in research and practice. In order to better serve students, both professionals and scholars ought to take heed of what the literature and current research suggests and allow students' spirituality to be what it is: complex, messy, and deeply personal. Only when students have the space to explore their own narratives for themselves will they truly begin to begin grow and flourish in the enduring ways one might hope.

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Appendix A

Perceived Parental Control Scale

1) How much do/does your [parent type] monitor your music, movies, and television watching? (*Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never*)

2) How much do/does your [parent type] monitor who you hang out with? (*Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never*)

3) In general do/does your parent know what you are actually doing when you're not at home? (*Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never*)

4) During a typical week, about how many afternoons are there, if any, that you spend time after school hours without adult supervision (*1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7*)

5) During a typical week, about how many evenings are there, if any, that you spend time after school hours without adult supervision (*1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7*)

Appendix B

Perceived Parental Responsiveness Scale

1) How often, if at all, does your mother praise and encourage you? *(Very often, Fairly Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)*

2) How often, if at all, does your mother hug you? *(Very often, Fairly Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)*

3) How often, if at all, doe your mother tell you she loves you? *(Very often, Fairly Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)*

4) Generally, how well do you and your mother get along? (*Extremely well, Very well, Fairly well, Not so well, Pretty poorly, Very badly*)

5) How often do you talk with your mother about personal subjects, such as friendships, dating, or drinking (*Very often, Fairly Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never*)

6) How often, if at all, does your mother tell you that she loves you? (*Very often, Fairly Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never*)

7) Generally, how well do you and your father get along? (*Extremely well, Very well, Fairly well, Not so well, Pretty poorly, Very badly*)

8) How often, if at all, does your Father hug you? *(Very often, Fairly Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)*

9) How often, if at all, does your father praise and encourage you? (*Very often, Fairly Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never*)

10) How often, if at all, does your father tell you that he loves you? (*Very often, Fairly Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never*)

11) How often, if at all do you and your father just have fun hanging out and doing things together (*Very often, Fairly Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never*)

12) In general how much do you feel that your [parent type] understand you? (*A lot, Some, A little, None*)

13) In general, how much do you feel that your parent loves and accepts you for who you are? *A lot, Some, A little, None)*

14) In general, how much do you feel that your parent pays enough attention to you? *A lot, Some, A little, None)*

Appendix C

Spiritual Change Scale

1) How important or unimportant is religious faith in shaping your daily life? Is it: (*Extremely important, Very important, Somewhat important, Not very important, Not important at all*)

2) Do you believe definitely, maybe, or not at all in the existence of angels? *(Definitely, Maybe, Not at all, Don't know)*

3) Do you believe definitely, maybe, or not at all in the existence of demons or evil spirits? *(Definitely, Maybe, Not at all, Don't know)*

4) Do you attend religious services more than once or twice a year, NOT including weddings, baptisms, and funerals? (*No, Yes*)

5) Do you believe, definitely, maybe, or not at all that there is life after death? (*Definitely, Maybe, Not at all, Don't know*)

6) Do you believe, definitely, maybe, or not at all in the possibility of divine miracles from God? (*Definitely, Maybe, Not at all, Don't know*)

7) Do you believe in God or not or are you unsure? (*Yes, No, Unsure/Don't know*)

8) [If yes or don't know to previous question] how distant or close to you feel to God most of the time? (*Extremely distant, Very distant, Somewhat close, Very close, Extremely close*)

9) [If yes or don't know to belief in God question] Which of the following views come closest to your own view of God? (*Personal being involved in lives of people, Created world but not involved in world, Not personal like a cosmic life force, None of these views, Don't know*)

10) How often, if ever, do you pray by yourself alone? Is it: *(Never, Less than once a month, One to two times a month, About once a week, A few times a week, About once a day, Many times a day)*

11) How often, if ever, do you read from your scriptures to yourself alone? Is it: *(Never, Less than once a month, One to two times a month, About once a week, A few times a week, About once a day, Many times a day)*