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The Relationship between Anxiety and Spirituality

Susanna Swilley

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANXIETY AND SPIRITUALITY

A Research Project
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for Research Design
and Statistics PSYC 497 and Southern Scholars
Research Project

Susanna Swilley
April 1998
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is one of the most common problems people face today. Life moves at such a pace and changes so rapidly that someone without anxiety is usually the exception rather than the norm. People experience anxiety to varying degrees, whether it be temporary test anxiety or a more long-term trait anxiety, experiencing constant feelings of tension and apprehension. Dr. William Carter says people worry because humans are the only species with “the ability to think about the future. That gives us tremendous advantages….But along with that ability to think ahead comes the recognition that things could go wrong along the way” (Parachin, 1992, p.22). And along with that recognition of possible future problems comes anxiety. Often people who experience the most anxiety have no concrete reasons for their anxiety, it is free-floating; however, they cannot rid themselves of their feelings even though they realize their feelings are not completely rational (Hallowell, 1997).

Anxiety can have many adverse effects on people who suffer from it. The effects of anxiety are often correlated with the severity of the anxious feelings. Many physical symptoms are noted, such as restlessness, difficulty concentrating, muscle tension, difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, irritability, and fatigue (Hallowell, 1997). Burns (1997) says that prolonged anxiety can also cause depression and the lack of enjoyment in life. Mentally, a person’s anxious thoughts can cause the brain to run down, lose its creativity and problem-solving ability, and thus actually increase the person’s anxiety. Thus, it can create an endless cycle of worry and fatigue.

Anxiety is dealt with or treated in many different ways. Some people attempt to help themselves dissipate their feelings whereas others seek professional help. Some
exercise to boost levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin (the "happy messenger") and forget about their anxieties for a time (Burns, 1997). Others seek security from their fears in other means, such as food, drugs, or strong defense systems (Lucado, 1997). Many also use forms of meditation to calm themselves, such as yoga, biofeedback, or self-hypnosis (Burns, 1997). E.G. White suggests a meditative time with God and a spiritual relationship to “free the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces” (1905, p. 115).

Joseph Stalin resorted to more extreme measures to control his feelings of anxiety. He had seven different bedrooms and he slept in a different one each night of avoid would-be assassins. Howard Hughes’ anxiety also controlled him; his paranoia of germs led him to Mexico where he died a hermit. The famous Beatle John Lennon also had consuming anxiety, constantly in fear, afraid to sleep with the lights off and afraid to touch anything for fear of its filth (Lucado, 1997). These examples show that no one is immune to feelings of anxiety, not even people who are famous and in the public eye. Since anxiety is such a widespread problem that is debilitating to so many people, it is in our best interest to determine some means that work to lessen feelings of anxiety. Without constant anxiety, people’s general quality of life would probably greatly increase. Many people claim their spiritual relationship with their God decreases their anxiety level significantly. Is there any validity to this claim?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not there is a correlation between anxiety and spirituality. This project will also study differences between Southern Adventist University (Seventh-Day Adventist affiliation), Lee University (Church of God affiliation), and the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga (not religiously affiliated). Also, gender, age, and class standing differences will be analyzed.
The predictor variable in this study is spirituality and the criterion variable is level of anxiety. The school the student attends, the age, sex, and class are other predictor variables.

Significance of the study

The researcher believes many people can benefit from the results of this study. First of all, teachers, especially those at religiously affiliated schools, can benefit by learning how spiritual belief can influence levels of anxiety, if at all. They can then better plan their curriculum, counsel students more effectively, or make changes accordingly. Parents can also better understand how the spiritual environment their children grow up in will later influence their anxiety levels. This may cause parents to alter their style of parenting or at least help them better understand their children. Pastors and other ministerial workers could also use this study to their advantage by learning exactly how spiritual beliefs affect students' anxiety levels, and this could help them counsel or relate to students in a more effective way. Finally, this study will be of use to students. It can aid students in finding helpful ways to cope with their anxiety by showing whether spiritual belief is shown to help lower anxiety levels or not.

Limitations

This study is limited to college students in and surrounding Chattanooga, Tennessee, particularly students at Southern Adventist University, Lee University, and the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga. This study is also limited by the measurement device used to determine an individual's spirituality. This tool has not been tested for reliability or validity and is known to be an inconclusive measuring device.

Assumptions

The researcher assumes that the subjects will answer the questionnaire honestly. It is also assumed that the questionnaire will accurately measure what it is intended to
measure. It is also assumed that the populations sampled from the three schools will be an accurate and unbiased representation of the school being tested.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Everyone experiences anxiety at some point; in fact, May (1977) states that anxiety is the most prominent mental characteristic of civilization. As well as anxiety being very prevalent in the general population, it is also the basis for most mental health problems. Freud said anxiety is the “fundamental phenomenon of neurosis” and Horney said it is the “dynamic center of neuroses” (May, 1977, p. 47, 65). As Levitt (1967) describes it, anxiety is a complex state characterized by a feeling of apprehension and increased physiological reactivity caused by any real or imagined stressor. The general purpose of anxiety, according to May (1977), is to protect us from dangers to our existence or to the values we identify with our existence. Although it is not believed that anxiety can be completely avoided, it can be significantly decreased to normal levels, and then it can be used to increase one’s awareness, vigilance, and zest for living. But where does anxiety come from in the first place?

There are numerous different theories about the origins of anxiety. Hallowell (1997) asserts that anxiety may have a biological root, caused by an insufficiency of the neurotransmitter GABA or of endorphins making it harder for anxious people to soothe themselves. Freud’s psychoanalytical theory originally viewed anxiety as a chronic inability to reach an orgasm, but then he altered his view to that of a specific state of unpleasure, whose symptoms exist to separate the person from a dangerous situation (Levitt, 1967). Freud also differentiated between realistic, neurotic, and moral anxiety. Neo-Freudian theory distinguished between primary and secondary anxiety. Primary anxiety is a frustration of dependency needs when a child realizes his helplessness and need for support, and secondary anxiety is caused by a threat to the person’s defense
system, requiring intensification of the existing defense or the creation of a new defense (Levitt, 1967).

Alfred Adler viewed anxiety as neurotic feelings of inferiority, which are people's driving force towards superiority. He said every human was born biologically inferior, experienced anxiety, and endeavored throughout life to gain security by achieving superiority (May, 1977). Jung believed anxiety was the individual's reaction to the invasion of his conscious mind by irrational forces and images from the collective unconscious (May, 1977). Henry Stack Sullivan stated that anxiety was born in the infant's apprehension of disapproval of significant people in his/her life, especially the mother. Later anxiety was chiefly from frustration of the individual's needs for security and self-expression (May, 1977). Sullivan also stated that anxiety decreases self-awareness and restricts growth, so by decreasing one's anxiety level, one can expand his/her self-awareness and self, thus achieving improved mental health (May, 1977).

Tillich believed anxiety was man's reaction to the threat of nonbeing or the threat of meaningless in his life (May, 1977). Thus, anything that is life-threatening or hinders the things that give one purpose and meaning in life cause anxiety. If one's values provide meaning and are viewed as essential to existence, then a threat to them or to any defense pattern the person depends on will cause anxiety according to Karen Horney (May, 1977). Finally, Sugarman states some tangible events in an individual's life that cause anxiety, such as the prospect of change, the fear of aging, marital problems, and physical problems as one ages (Sugarman, 1970). There are almost as many ways of dealing with anxiety as there are theories of its origin.

There are both destructive and constructive ways of handling one’s anxiety. One destructive method is allaying or avoiding the anxiety without resolving the underlying conflict (May, 1977). Some defense mechanisms are used for this purpose of keeping
anxiety from the awareness, such as avoidance, denial, repression, projection, regression, and reaction formation (Levitt, 1967). Also, compulsive behavior, such as working, can be performed to habitually put off the anxiety-producing act. Rigidity of thinking or a belief in fate or superstition can also both be used to avoid full responsibility for the anxiety in one’s conflicts (May, 1977). Also, one can use anxiety as a defense, avoiding conflict by assuming the appearance of weakness.

Anxiety can be handled in constructive ways also. Hallowell (1997) suggests the use of meditation and prayer to lessen anxiety. Levitt (1967) describes some coping mechanisms to temporarily relieve tension, such as laughing, crying, talking about it, daydreaming, sleeping, working, and gaining reassurance by touch or sound. Anxiety can be used positively by accepting it as a challenge and a stimulus to resolve the underlying problem, which can possibly be resolved by expanding one’s awareness and restructuring one’s values and realistic goals (May, 1977). Another constructive use is admitting the worries but moving ahead despite them instead of avoiding the experiences. May also asserts that negative effects such as anxiety can only be overcome by more powerful constructive effects, and the ultimate constructive effect is possibly the individual’s “intellectual love of God” (1977, p. 89).

Literature also provides suggestions on practical ways to handle anxiety, many of which are related to spiritual connectedness and relationship. Hallowell (1997) suggests developing connectedness, getting reassurance, asking for advice, doing what’s right, praying or meditating, talking about worries, looking for the good, learning to give up worries to God, making friends with angels, and having faith in God’s power and control. Klein (1993) also suggests several healthy lifestyle characteristics, which are having firm commitments, an adequate philosophy of life, a willingness to be human, an inner sense of direction, and an ability to see self as unique.
Literature also notes an increased interest in spirituality and many benefits of having a spiritual commitment and relationship with God. Thomas Poole states that in colleges "there's a tremendous growth in a general kind of spirituality on campuses that's unaffiliated with any historic religious organization" (Anonymous, 1997, p. 17). College students are increasingly realizing their need for spiritual benefits, especially feelings of security. These benefits are numerous. Hallowell (1997) states that a benefit of having a belief in God is being able to give up worries and control to God, believing in a power greater than themselves to handle things out of their control. Ellen G. White also states that, "We need not look into the future with anxiety; for God has made it possible for us to be overcomers every day" (1958, p. 249), advocating the surrender of one's worries and need for total control to God in order to lessen one's anxiety. Hallowell (1997) also says that faith and a belief of any kind can be potent stabilizers to the anxious mind and the stability of an unchanging truth provides comfort.

Spiritual relationship and commitment have been shown to affect many areas of one's life. Westgate (1996) notes that spiritual functioning has equal relevance to physical, mental, and emotional functioning. Concerning mental health, Westgate also notes that a link has been suggested by many theorists between a lack of spirituality and lower levels of mental health, including increased feelings of hopelessness and meaninglessness. Similarly, Noble (1987) documented higher levels of psychological well-being among those who had a belief in God than among those who did not.

Some authors report findings specifically relating spirituality and anxiety. Maton (1989) suggested two ways spirituality may buffer against anxiety. First, spirituality helps to make sense of traumatic events and view them more positively, and second, those who gain support from their perception of being valued and cared for by God will have better self-esteem and less psychological distress. Maton also found that perceived
support from one's relationship with God contributed to one's well-being independent of social support from other sources. It has also been noted that thanking God for blessings each day helps eliminate anxiety and worry (Barrett, 1995). Barrett also notes that one can consciously choose to exchange worries for God's peace and by focusing on God and His wisdom, one can have increased trust in God and relinquish the need for total control.

Joy Smith (1992) states that many doors will open with an increased spiritual relationship with God. She states it will boost one's courage, give one strength to endure trials, fill one with joy and peace, give one confidence in God's power, and comfort one when sorrowful. Garne (1980) states that this comfort is from Jesus' encouragement to persevere and His assurance that our efforts are not in vain. Also, it provides comfort by knowing God is working on our behalf and constantly looking for ways to help us reach our goals (Garne, 1980). Spirituality also provides people with confidence in their daily lives because they believe life has meaning (J.N.C., 1983). Spirituality also provides strength. Juanita Kretschmar (1990) states that God gives enough power and strength to meet all of life's demands, including anxiety.

Also, spiritual commitment and relationship provide people with reasons for optimism and gives them a sense of meaning and joy in life because they know they are loved and accepted by their God (Argent, 1985). Ellen G. White also addresses the gift of love when she says, "The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power" (1951, p. 29), giving one strength to meet life's demands. Also, having faith in a Higher Power helps one to know that because of his God's love, He desires to bless those who seek Him (White, 1977).

Literature also cites some specific examples of benefits of a spiritual connectedness regarding anxiety. One study of Pueblo, a U.S. gunboat crew that was captured and imprisoned by the North Koreans, showed that these soldiers defended
against anxiety by faith in their leaders, faith in their cause, and their religious trust (May, 1977). Hallowell (1997) states that a 1995 study at Dartmouth showed that patients who drew strength from religious faith survived open-heart surgery at three times the rate of those who did not. Kaczorowski (1989) has noted in a study of 144 adults diagnosed with cancer a consistent inverse relationship between spiritual well-being and state-trait anxiety. Rasmussen and Johnson (1994) have also noted in a study of 208 undergraduate and graduate students that spirituality had a significant negative relationship with death anxiety, stating that usually the spirituality gave one an increased certainty of life after death and a greater sense of satisfaction and purpose in life.

Summary

Anxiety is very prevalent in our society and affects almost everyone at some point in life. There are many different theories as to the origin of anxiety and the best way to handle it. There are also many coping strategies people use to deal with their anxiety. It is proposed by some theorists that spirituality may help people handle or decrease anxiety. Spiritual commitment and relationship with a Higher Power may provide people with strength, hope, joy, peace, comfort, purpose, and surrender—all of which are qualities that could lessen one's anxiety level.

Hypothesis

On the basis of the review of literature, this study will be guided by the following two primary hypotheses: 1) increased levels of spiritual commitment or connectedness are inversely correlated with anxiety levels, and 2) non-religiously affiliated colleges will have higher levels of anxiety as opposed to religiously affiliated colleges.

Also, some secondary hypotheses will be analyzed: 1) different age groups (17-19, 20-22, and 23+) will have differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations, 2) different genders will have differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations, and 3) different classes
(freshman-senior) will have differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Anxiety is a very common problem in society and is especially prolific among college students. Anxiety can be a serious impediment to people, causing physical problems and preventing them from living life with full satisfaction. For these reasons, people use many ways to cope with and handle their anxiety, including sleep, exercise, repression, talking, etc. Spiritual connectedness may provide people some useful means to decrease anxiety, providing strength, hope, peace, purpose, joy, and comfort. To understand this relationship may possibly give people another option in handling anxiety. The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not spiritual commitment affects anxiety levels and whether there is a difference in anxiety levels between religiously and non-religiously affiliated schools. This study will be guided by the following two primary hypotheses: 1) increased levels of spiritual commitment or connectedness are inversely correlated with anxiety levels, and 2) non-religiously affiliated colleges will have higher levels of anxiety as opposed to religiously affiliated colleges. Also, some secondary hypotheses will be analyzed: 1) different age groups (17-19, 20-22, and 23+) will have differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations, 2) different genders will have differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations, and 3) different classes (freshman-senior) will have differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations.

Variables

In this study the variables are:

Dependent variable: anxiety levels

Independent variable: spiritual commitment/belief and college attended

For secondary hypotheses:
Dependent variable: correlations between anxiety and spirituality

Independent variables: age group/gender/class standing

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 73 students from Southern Adventist University (SAU), 194 Lee University students, and 29 University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) students. At each school, a general education class (Intro to Psychology) with at least 50 students was sampled. The students’ ages ranged from 17-23+ years and both males and females participated. Most of the students came from a middle class socioeconomic status, hopefully representing the general population composition of the university.

Instrument

A questionnaire was the instrument for this study. The questionnaire is included in the Appendix section. It consisted of four sections. The first section was the introduction, explaining the use of the questionnaire. The second section collected demographic information. The third section consisted of twelve statements, which the students rated in a Likert scale of 1-5 of how true the statement was for him/her. An example statement was “Your relationship with God gives you peace.” The questions assessed the subject’s spiritual connectedness. This section was scored by adding the numbers circled for each statement. The fourth section was the Beck Anxiety Inventory to assess current anxiety levels. Students were asked to indicate how often they had been bothered by symptoms such as numbness or tingling and trembling hands in the past week, either not at all (0 points), mildly (1 point), moderately (2 points), or severely (3 points). The points for each response in this section were added with a score of 0-7 points reflecting minimal anxiety, 8-15 points reflecting mild anxiety, 16-25 points reflecting moderate anxiety, and 26-63 points indicating severe anxiety.
Procedure

Data was collected using a questionnaire. The researcher surveyed students in the same general education class at the three different schools. At Lee University and SAU, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the students in the class and then waited until they were returned in the same class period. At UTC, students signed up to answer the survey outside of class, and the researcher met with interested students outside of class and administered the surveys.
Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not spiritual commitment affects anxiety levels and whether there is a difference in anxiety levels between religiously and non-religiously affiliated schools. This study was guided by the following two primary hypotheses: 1) increased levels of spiritual commitment and connectedness are inversely correlated with anxiety levels, and 2) non-religiously affiliated colleges will have higher levels of anxiety as opposed to religiously affiliated colleges. Also, some secondary hypotheses will be analyzed: 1) different age groups (17-19, 20-22, and 23+) have differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations, 2) different genders have differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations, and 3) different classes (freshman-senior) have differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations.

Surveys were obtained from 29 UTC students, 73 SAU students, and 194 Lee University students. The surveys were categorized based on age groups, gender, and academic standing (freshmen-senior). The data were analyzed for descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, for Pearson correlation coefficients to describe the different groups' relationships between spirituality and anxiety, and by t-tests to see if there were significant differences between the groups' spirituality and anxiety scores. It should be noted that the highest possible score for the spirituality section was 60 and the highest possible score on the anxiety scale was 63.

One analysis entailed categorizing the surveys into age groups (age 17-19, age 20-22, and age 23+) and then subdividing them by respective universities. The descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for this analysis of spirituality and anxiety scores are summarized in Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2 below. Nineteen UTC students,
114 Lee students, and 37 SAU students were surveyed in this group. In this analysis, Lee had the highest spirituality scores and the lowest anxiety scores. SAU was in the middle, and UTC had the lowest spirituality scores and the highest anxiety scores.

For the 20-22 years age group, descriptive statistics are also summarized in Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2 below. Five UTC students, 61 Lee students, and 25 SAU students were surveyed in this group. In this analysis, Lee had the highest spirituality scores and the second lowest anxiety scores. SAU had the second highest spirituality scores and the lowest anxiety scores. UTC had both the lowest spirituality scores and the highest anxiety scores.

For the 23+ age group, descriptive statistics are also summarized in Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2 below. Five UTC students, 19 Lee students, and 8 SAU students were surveyed in this group. In this analysis, SAU had both the highest spirituality scores and the lowest anxiety scores. Lee was in the middle, and UTC had both the lowest spirituality scores and the highest anxiety scores.

Table 1. Means (X) and Standard Deviations (SD) of Spirituality and Anxiety Scores for Age Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age 17-19 Years</th>
<th></th>
<th>Age 20-22 Years</th>
<th></th>
<th>Age 23+ Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average Spirituality Scores for Different Age Groups

![Average Spirituality Scores for Different Age Groups](image)

Figure 1. This figure shows a visual comparison of the 3 universities' spirituality scores. Lee had the highest spirituality scores for 2 categories. UTC had the lowest spirituality scores in all 3 categories.

Average Anxiety Scores for Different Age Groups

![Average Anxiety Scores for Different Age Groups](image)

Figure 2. This is a visual representation of the 3 universities' anxiety scores. SAU had the lowest anxiety in 2 categories and UTC had the highest anxiety in all 3 categories.

Another analysis done entailed grouping the surveys by gender and then by university and comparing the spirituality and anxiety scores. The descriptive statistics for the different genders' responses are summarized in Table 2 and Figures 3 and 4 below. Ten UTC men, 91 Lee men, and 38 SAU men were surveyed. Lee men had the highest spirituality scores and the second lowest anxiety scores. SAU had the second highest spirituality scores and the lowest anxiety scores. UTC had both the lowest spirituality scores and the highest anxiety scores.

Scores were also obtained from females at the universities. Their descriptive statistics are also summarized in Table 2 and Figures 3 and 4. Eighteen UTC women, 98 Lee women, and 34 SAU women were surveyed. Lee had both the highest spirituality
scores and the lowest anxiety scores. SAU was in the middle, and UTC had both the lowest spirituality and the highest anxiety scores.

Table 2. Means (X) and Standard Deviations (SD) of Spirituality and Anxiety Scores from both Genders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spirituality</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th></th>
<th>Spirituality</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UTC Males</td>
<td>X 36.1</td>
<td>SD 14.8</td>
<td>X 11.6</td>
<td>SD 4.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC Females</td>
<td>X 51.3</td>
<td>SD 9.5</td>
<td>X 14.6</td>
<td>SD 11.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Males</td>
<td>X 54.5</td>
<td>SD 7.3</td>
<td>X 7.1</td>
<td>SD 7.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Females</td>
<td>X 56.9</td>
<td>SD 5.9</td>
<td>X 9.5</td>
<td>SD 8.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU Males</td>
<td>X 53.9</td>
<td>SD 6.0</td>
<td>X 6.8</td>
<td>SD 6.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU Females</td>
<td>X 52.4</td>
<td>SD 9.9</td>
<td>X 10.7</td>
<td>SD 9.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. This is a visual representation of different genders' spirituality scores. Both Lee males and females had the highest spirituality scores, and both UTC males and females had the lowest spirituality scores.
Average Anxiety Scores for Different Genders

Figure 4. This is a visual representation of the genders' anxiety scores. SAU males and Lee females had the lowest anxiety scores. Both UTC males and females had the highest anxiety scores.

The last descriptive analysis was based on academic standing. The surveys were grouped according to their academic standing (Fr.-Sr.) and by university and the spirituality and anxiety scores were analyzed. The descriptive statistics for the four classes are summarized in Table 3 and Figures 5 and 6. Sixteen UTC freshmen, 114 Lee freshmen, and 43 SAU freshmen were surveyed. Lee freshmen had both the highest spirituality and the lowest anxiety scores. SAU was in the middle, and UTC had both the lowest spirituality and the highest anxiety scores.

The sophomore class was also analyzed. Nine UTC sophomores, 49 Lee sophomores, and 21 SAU sophomores were surveyed. Lee again had the highest spirituality and the lowest anxiety scores. SAU was in the middle, and UTC had both the lowest spirituality and the highest anxiety scores.

A smaller number of juniors and seniors were surveyed due to the high percentage of freshmen and sophomores in the introductory psychology classes surveyed. Two UTC juniors, 20 Lee juniors, and 7 SAU juniors were surveyed. Lee had the highest spirituality scores and the second lowest anxiety scores. SAU had the middle spirituality scores and the lowest anxiety scores. UTC again had the lowest spirituality and the highest anxiety scores.
Due to the low numbers of seniors surveyed from UTC and SAU, only Lee University seniors could be analyzed. Two UTC seniors, 11 Lee seniors, and 1 SAU senior were surveyed. Between Lee and UTC, Lee had the higher spirituality and the lower anxiety scores.

Table 3. Means (X) and Standard Deviations (SD) of Spirituality and Anxiety Scores of Four Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
<th>Juniors</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>X SD</td>
<td>X SD</td>
<td>X SD</td>
<td>X SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>47.3 12.6</td>
<td>45.3 17.0</td>
<td>45.0 11.1</td>
<td>45.0 14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>56.2 5.2</td>
<td>54.6 9.8</td>
<td>56.1 5.3</td>
<td>55.4 5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>52.9 7.2</td>
<td>54.0 10.0</td>
<td>52.7 5.9</td>
<td>---- ----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Spirituality Scores for Different Classes

**Figure 5.** This visually shows that Lee students had the highest spirituality scores in each class. UTC had the lowest spirituality scores in each class.

Average Anxiety Scores for Different Classes

**Figure 6.** This shows that Lee had the lowest anxiety scores in each class except one. UTC had the highest anxiety scores in each class.
To determine if a correlation or relationship existed between spirituality and anxiety scores, each group was tested for its Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient. First, the correlation coefficient was determined for the total sample in each group; for example, the correlation coefficient was determined for all the males. Then, a correlation coefficient was determined for each university subgroup, such as for Lee males or UTC males. Also, whether or not the correlation coefficient represented a statistically significant relationship was determined.

First, the different age groups were analyzed. A summary of these correlations is found in Table 4 below. For the total number of subjects 17-19 years of age (N=150), a correlation coefficient of −0.229 was determined. This correlation coefficient represented a significant relationship at the 0.05 level of significance. Unless otherwise noted, all relationships are measured at a 0.05 level of significance. In this analysis, no individual school displayed a significant relationship between spirituality and anxiety.

Students of 20-22 years of age were also analyzed for correlations. For the total number of subjects 20-22 years old (N=91), a correlation coefficient of −0.116 was determined, not suggesting a significant relationship. Again, no individual school displayed a significant relationship between spirituality and anxiety.

Next, students of 23+ years of age were analyzed for correlations. For the total number of students of 23+ years (N=31), a correlation coefficient of −0.36 was found. This does not signify a significant relationship. Again, no individual school in this age category exhibited a significant correlation between spirituality and anxiety scores.
Table 4. Correlation Coefficients Between Spirituality and Anxiety Scores for Age Groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>17-19 Years</th>
<th>20-22 Years</th>
<th>23+ Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Students per Age Group</td>
<td>-0.23*</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*denotes a significant relationship or a negative correlation

Then, the 2 genders were analyzed for significant relationships or correlations between spirituality and anxiety scores. These results are summarized in Table 5. For the total number of males (N=139), a correlation coefficient of -0.35 was found, which signified a significant correlation. By individual schools, both Lee men and UTC men had significant relationships between spirituality and anxiety scores.

For the total number of females (N=150), a correlation coefficient of -0.179 was found, which does not signify a significant correlation. By individual schools, only UTC women displayed a significant correlation between spirituality and anxiety scores.

Table 5. Correlation Coefficients between Spirituality and Anxiety for Males and Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total subjects</td>
<td>-0.35*</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>-0.73*</td>
<td>-0.51*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>-0.31*</td>
<td>-0.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-0.019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*signifies a significant relationship or negative correlation

Then, the four classes were analyzed for significant relationships or correlations. The correlation coefficients are summarized in Table 6 below. For the total freshmen (N=150), a correlation coefficient of -0.29 did denote a significant correlation between
spirituality and anxiety. By individual schools, only Lee freshmen exhibited a significant relationship between spirituality and anxiety scores.

For the total number of sophomores (N=79), a correlation coefficient of -0.14 did not show a significant correlation between spirituality and anxiety scores. No individual school exhibited significant correlations.

The total number of juniors (N=29) yielded a correlation coefficient of -0.26, which did not signify a correlation. Only Lee and SAU juniors could be analyzed independently for significant correlations because of the low number of UTC juniors surveyed. Between Lee and SAU, only Lee juniors displayed a significant relationship between spirituality and anxiety scores.

The total seniors (N=14) yielded a correlation coefficient of -0.30, which was not evidence of a significant correlation. Only Lee could be analyzed independently because of the low numbers of seniors surveyed at UTC and SAU. Lee's seniors did not show a significant correlation.

Table 6. Correlations between Spirituality and Anxiety Scores of Different Classes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
<th>Juniors</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in group</td>
<td>-0.29*</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>-0.27*</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>-0.48*</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*signifies a significant relationship or a negative correlation

Finally, t-tests were performed to determine if the differences in spirituality and anxiety scores between the universities in each group were significant. T-scores and their significances for the age groups are summarized in Table 7 below for spirituality scores and in Table 8 below for anxiety scores. In the age group 17-19 years, there were
significant differences between Lee and UTC in both spirituality and anxiety scores. Lee differed significantly with SAU in spiritual scores but did not differ significantly in anxiety scores. SAU did not differ significantly from UTC in either spirituality or anxiety scores.

For students 20-22 years old, UTC differed significantly with Lee in both spirituality and anxiety scores. Lee, however, did not differ significantly with SAU in either spirituality or anxiety scores. Like Lee, SAU differed significantly with UTC in both spirituality and anxiety scores.

For students 23+ years old, Lee differed significantly with UTC only in spirituality scores but did not differ significantly in anxiety scores. Lee did not differ significantly from SAU in either spirituality or anxiety scores. Like Lee, SAU differed significantly from UTC only in spirituality scores but did not differ significantly in anxiety scores.

Table 7. T-Scores for Analysis of Significant Differences in Schools’ Spirituality Scores for Different Age Groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>UTC</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>SAU</th>
<th>UTC</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>SAU</th>
<th>UTC</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>SAU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-19 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3.13*</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3.81*</td>
<td>-2.84*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3.75*</td>
<td>4.74*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>3.13*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3.22*</td>
<td>3.81*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>3.75*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
<td>3.22*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-2.84*</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>4.74*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates a significant difference between schools’ scores (at 0.05 level of significance)

Table 8. T-Scores for Analysis of Significant Differences in Schools’ Anxiety Scores for Age Groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>UTC</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>SAU</th>
<th>UTC</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>SAU</th>
<th>UTC</th>
<th>Lee</th>
<th>SAU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-19 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>2.10*</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-2.93*</td>
<td>3.30*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-0.97</td>
<td>-1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>2.10*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1.002</td>
<td>-2.93*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1.024</td>
<td>-0.97</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>1.002</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3.30*</td>
<td>1.024</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-1.34</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates a significant difference between schools’ scores (at 0.05 level of significance)
Then, male and females were compared. The t-scores and their significances for the gender groups are summarized in Table 9 below for spirituality scores and in Table 10 below for anxiety scores. In the male category, Lee men differed significantly with UTC men only in spirituality scores but did not differ significantly in anxiety scores. Lee and SAU men, however, did not differ in either spirituality or anxiety scores. SAU men differed significantly with UTC men in both spirituality and anxiety scores.

In the female category, Lee women differed significantly with UTC women in both spirituality and anxiety scores. Lee women also differed significantly from SAU women in spirituality scores but did not differ significantly in anxiety. SAU women did not differ significantly from UTC women in either spirituality or anxiety scores.

**Table 9. T-Scores for Analysis of Spirituality Scores Between Genders in Different Schools***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>-6.57*</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>-3.30*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>-5.70*</td>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>-3.16*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Signifies a significant difference between schools’ scores (at a 0.05 level of significance)

**Table 10. T-Scores for Analysis of Differences in Anxiety Scores Between Genders in Different Schools***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>2.18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>-2.23*</td>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>-0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates a significant difference between schools’ scores (at a 0.05 level of significance)

Finally, the 4 different academic standings were compared. The t-scores and their significances for the 4 classes are summarized in Table 11 below for spirituality scores.
and in Table 12 below for anxiety scores. In comparing different academic standing groups, Lee freshmen differed significantly from UTC freshmen in both spirituality and anxiety scores. Lee freshmen differed significantly from SAU freshmen only in spirituality scores but anxiety scores did not differ significantly. SAU freshmen differed significantly from UTC freshmen in both spirituality and anxiety.

For sophomores, Lee differed significantly from UTC in both spirituality and anxiety scores. Lee sophomores did not differ significantly from SAU sophomores in either spirituality or anxiety. SAU sophomores did not differ significantly from UTC sophomores in either spirituality or anxiety scores.

For juniors, only Lee and SAU students could be compared because of a very small number of UTC juniors surveyed. Lee and SAU juniors did not differ significantly in either spirituality or anxiety scores. The universities were not able to be compared based on seniors’ scores because of the very small number of UTC and SAU seniors surveyed.

**Table 11. T-Scores for Analysis of Differences in Spirituality Scores Between Classes in Different Schools***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th></th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
<th></th>
<th>Juniors</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>SAU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-5.07*</td>
<td>-2.09*</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-2.22*</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>-5.07*</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-3.18*</td>
<td>-2.22*</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>-2.09*</td>
<td>-3.18*</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates a Significant Difference Between Schools’ Scores (at a 0.05 Level of Significance)

**Table 12. T-Scores for Analysis of Differences in Anxiety Scores Between Classes in Different Schools***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th></th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
<th></th>
<th>Juniors</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>SAU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-2.51*</td>
<td>-2.23*</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>2.18*</td>
<td>-0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>-2.51*</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>2.18*</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>-2.23*</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-0.64</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates a Significant Difference Between Schools’ Scores (at a 0.05 Level of Significance)
Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The object of this study was to analyze the relationship between spiritual belief/commitment and anxiety levels. Students from UTC, Lee University, and SAU were studied. Differences in spirituality-anxiety correlations between these universities were also studied.

This study was guided by the following two main hypotheses: 1) increased levels of spiritual commitment/belief are inversely correlated with anxiety levels, and 2) students attending a non-religiously affiliated college have higher levels of anxiety than students attending religiously affiliated colleges.

The first hypothesis of spirituality being inversely correlated with anxiety levels was not found to be universally true in this study. Significant inverse correlations between spirituality and anxiety scores were found in total students age 17-19 years, total male subjects, UTC males, Lee males, UTC females, total freshmen, Lee freshmen, and Lee juniors. However, many groups did not exhibit a significant negative correlation, such as subjects in the 20-22 age group, subjects in 23+ group, total females, SAU males or females, total sophomores, juniors, or seniors, and SAU freshmen, sophomores, or juniors.

For the second main hypothesis that students from non-religiously affiliated schools would have higher anxiety levels than students from religiously affiliated schools, this was found to be generally the case. In every category except one (23+ year category), at least one religiously affiliated school (Lee or SAU) had significantly lower anxiety levels than the non-religiously affiliated school (UTC). Also, in every category surveyed, UTC students had the highest average anxiety scores.
For the secondary hypothesis that different age groups would have differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations, it was found that only total 17-19-year-olds exhibited a significant negative correlation. However, the individual subgroups of UTC, Lee, and SAU students did not exhibit significant negative correlations in any age group. A clear reason for these results is not known. Perhaps, stress in college is greatest the freshman year and so a reliance upon God to reduce anxiety would be most evident. However, as students progress through college, perhaps they become more confident in their abilities to do well in school handle stress and a reliance upon God decreases.

Concerning the secondary hypothesis that there are differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations for the two genders, an interesting finding was that a significant negative correlation was evident in total males studied but not in total females studied. Perhaps, women have stronger support networks in other people than men do, so men rely more upon their spiritual connection for support. Significant correlations were found in UTC and Lee men but not in SAU men. Also, a significant correlation was found in UTC women but not in Lee or SAU women. Perhaps more spiritual atmospheres present in schools decrease the emphasis on students' personal reliance and relationship with God. Perhaps UTC and Lee emphasize personal reliance upon God more than SAU.

For the secondary hypothesis that there are differences in spirituality/anxiety correlations in different classes, it was found that only total freshmen and Lee freshmen and juniors exhibited significant correlations. It should be noted that UTC juniors' and seniors' and SAU seniors' scores could not be correlated because of insufficient numbers surveyed. Again, perhaps the freshmen year is the most stressful and thus causes students to exhibit their reliance on God the most. Also, possibly as students leave home and go to school, their ingrained reliance upon God is strongest the first year, but as they
progress through school, they grow away from God and their reliance upon Him decreases. Lee University may offer a more spiritual atmosphere than other schools, causing its students to focus more upon their personal relationship with God. Also, it should be considered that the largest sample was from Lee University while smaller numbers were sampled from SAU and UTC. So, possibly larger sample sizes from UTC and SAU may result in increased significant correlations comparable to Lee University.

Then, to determine if there are significant differences between religiously affiliated and non-religiously affiliated schools’ spirituality and anxiety scores, t-scores were determined. In the 17-19 year age group category, Lee was found to have a significantly higher spirituality scores than both UTC and SAU. Lee was also found to have significantly lower anxiety scores than UTC. Perhaps Lee students, which are primarily from the Church of God, have more emphasis put on personal relationship with God from their school or their church than SDAs. Lee students may also feel a higher pressure for their spiritual relationships to be good and to meet all their needs.

In the 20-22 year age group, both SAU and Lee had significantly higher spirituality scores than UTC and significantly lower anxiety scores than UTC. It is possible that SAU and Lee’s increased spiritual emphasis help decrease anxiety, but it’s also possible that UTC’s academic program is significantly more difficult and creates more stress. This being doubtful, the results are probably due to the more spiritual background of Lee and SAU students and the more spiritual atmospheres at Lee and SAU.

In the 23+ age group, both Lee and SAU had significantly higher spirituality scores than UTC but there was no significant difference in anxiety scores between the schools. Perhaps by this age, students are more confident and less anxious about classes
Anxiety so there are no clear differences; however, the spiritual differences are still evident because of students' differing backgrounds and current environments.

For males, both SAU and Lee had significantly higher spirituality scores than UTC. However, only SAU had significantly lower anxiety scores than UTC men. For females, Lee had significantly higher spirituality scores than both UTC and SAU and only Lee had significantly lower anxiety scores than UTC. The perplexing result in this group is that Lee women had significantly higher spirituality scores than SAU women. Perhaps Lee does a better job emphasizing spiritual connections with God to its whole school population, including women, rather than primarily to theology majors, which are mostly men.

In the analysis of the different grades, both Lee and SAU freshmen had significantly higher spirituality scores than UTC and significantly lower anxiety scores. For sophomores, only Lee had significantly higher spirituality scores and lower anxiety scores than UTC. For each grade analyzed, Lee had higher average spirituality scores than SAU. So generally, it seems that Lee and SAU students have a closer spiritual connection that UTC students, and Lee students may have a closer connection than SAU students. Perhaps Lee places more emphasis on students' personal relationship with God and does so more effectively so students will remain connected to God throughout college than SAU. However, significant differences in the junior and senior class could not be analyzed because of insufficient UTC and SAU surveys so unfortunately any trend or significant differences later in college could not be determined.

Overall, it appears that the first hypothesis of an existing relationship between spirituality and anxiety is true in some cases. Freshmen, those age 17-19 years, total males, UTC and Lee males, and Lee freshmen and juniors are the groups where this correlation was evident. The second hypothesis of students from non-religiously
affiliated schools, namely UTC, having higher anxiety scores than students from religiously affiliated schools, namely Lee and SAU, does appear to be true. In every category except one (23+ year age group), at least one religiously affiliated school had significantly lower anxiety scores than UTC. For the secondary hypotheses, males generally had more significant relationships between spirituality and anxiety than females (only UTC females had a significant correlation). In the different age groups, only total 17-19-year-olds displayed a significant relationship between spirituality and anxiety. For the different classes, only total freshmen, Lee freshmen, and Lee juniors had significant correlations. So, in broad terms, it appears that younger students, particularly freshmen aged 17-19 years, males, and students from Lee University have the greatest relationship between spirituality and decreased anxiety levels. Also, Lee and SAU students do seem to have a stronger spiritual connection and lower anxiety levels than UTC students. Possible reasons for these occurrences have already been suggested, but more research could be done in this area to discover why the differences exist.

Implications:

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. Some theoretical implications include the fact that there does seem to be some relationship between spirituality and anxiety in some groups, and more research needs to be done to determine the exact reasons for the relationship and why the relationship does not exist in each group studied. And if spirituality does in fact affect people’s anxiety levels, more research needs to be done on how spirituality in general affects other areas of people’s lives and their personality development. Spirituality may play a larger role in people’s development and perception than was first thought. This idea of spirituality and its influence on people is complex and much more study should be directed at examining it.
Also, more study should be done on other age groups besides college students to examine the relationship between spirituality and anxiety.

Also, a theoretical implication that could be studied could be the overall impact that the college spiritual environment has on students. Since there does appear to be a difference in spirituality and anxiety levels between religiously and non-religiously affiliated schools, what causes the differences? Are the students' beliefs and attitudes before attending the school the defining factor, does the school's atmosphere and teaching emphasis have a significant impact on students after they arrive, or is there another factor? And what are students' attitudes toward the spiritual atmosphere of their schools and how do they feel it affects their anxiety level and their lives in general?

Since there was some difference in spirituality and anxiety scores between students of SAU, which is primarily Seventh-Day Adventist, and Lee, which is primarily Church of God, another area for more theoretical study is a deeper inspection of the different religions. How do their respective beliefs, attitudes, and outlooks affect the general attitudes of the members of the two denominations? Does one religion emphasize different beliefs more strongly than the other religion, and if so, what effects are noted on the respective members? In many cases, Lee students had a more significant relationship between spirituality and anxiety than SAU students, and it would be interesting to study what differences between the two religions is responsible for the differing relationships in this study.

A practical implication is that for some people a spiritual connection significantly decreases anxiety, so increasing their spiritual connection could be an option to consider for people experiencing anxiety. Perhaps increasing time spent with God and thoughts about spiritual things could help decrease anxiety levels and improve coping skills. Also, it appears that Lee has somewhat higher average spirituality scores than SAU, and the
possible reasons for the differences could be explored. However both Lee and SAU have higher spirituality scores and lower anxiety scores than UTC, so this is a fact to consider for people deciding on a college to attend.

Counselors, teachers, parents, and students can all use these results by realizing that for many people, spirituality and anxiety are significantly related. So, for counselors, spiritual issues may be an area to address with people suffering with anxiety, and especially religion teachers may realize that stressing personal relationships with God may help students decrease anxiety and cope with life better in general. Parents can realize that introducing children to God and His power early can help their children as they grow to handle anxiety and stress in more productive ways.

Overall, this study fulfilled its purposes of studying the relationship between spirituality and anxiety and analyzing differences between religiously and non-religiously affiliated schools. Some improvements that could be made in the future to improve the study could be to increase the sample sizes from all the schools surveyed. Also, a more representative sample of the school’s population and each grade’s members could be used to improve the accuracy of the results. Also, if a standardized measurement tool of spirituality could be found and used, this would also improve the accuracy of the results.

This study provided an excellent introduction to research skills, procedures, and analytical thinking. It was small enough to be manageable but large enough to provide a challenge. The results were also very interesting. The benefits of a spiritual connection with God are often expounded upon, but to submit religious beliefs to a scientific test is very thought-stimulating, a bit scary, and very rewarding to see evidence of some positive results.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX
CONSENT FORM

School of Education and Psychology
Southern Adventist University

Directions: Please read and sign the form. Then, detach the form from the questionnaire and put it into the envelope which will be turned in separately from the questionnaire.

1. I understand that this study is about analyzing the relationship, if any, between spiritual belief/commitment and anxiety in college students. I know that the questionnaire I am given aims to collect information from me relative to the study above.

2. I understand that there will be no physical risks to me for participating.

3. I know that I am participating voluntarily and that I can discontinue my participation at any time.

4. I understand I can ask questions about the research or about any problem that may arise.

5. I understand that the information collected is for research purposes and that it will be kept totally confidential.

6. I have read the above points and consent to participate in the study.

_________________________________  _______________________
Signature                          Date
Spiritual Commitment and Anxiety Questionnaire
Southern Adventist University

This project is for a senior psychology research project. Your help and cooperation is very appreciated. Just be completely honest—the questionnaires are anonymous and no one will know the results of your questionnaire. Please do not write your name anywhere on this questionnaire.

I. Demographic Information
Directions: Please fill in the blanks or circle the appropriate answer for your status at this time.

College/University Attending: __________________________________________

Year (circle one): Sr Jr So Fr P.G. Sex (circle one): M F

Age (circle one group): 17-19 20-22 23-25 25-up

Major: __________________________________

Race (circle one): Caucasian/White Native American
African American Asian American
Hispanic Other: ______________________

Religious Affiliation (optional): _______________________________________

II. Spiritual Commitment/Belief Survey

Please answer the following questions by circling a number 1-5. Here is the key for answering the questions:

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)
2 = Disagree (D)
3 = Mildly Agree (MA)
4 = Agree (A)
5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

1. You have a very close, personal relationship with God. 1 2 3 4 5
2. You have faith that God takes care of you. 1 2 3 4 5
3. You feel God is always in control. 1 2 3 4 5
4. You trust that God is in control of your life. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Your relationship with God brings you joy or happiness. 1 2 3 4 5
6. Your relationship with God gives you strength. 1 2 3 4 5
7. You feel God can give you strength to handle any situation. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Your relationship with God gives you hope. 1 2 3 4 5
9. You believe God can give you eternal life. 1 2 3 4 5
10. You feel God cares about you and what happens in your life. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Your relationship with God gives you peace. 1 2 3 4 5
12. You trust God to handle your worries for you. 1 2 3 4 5

III. Beck Anxiety Inventory

Please complete the attached Beck Anxiety Inventory according to the directions on the Inventory, but please do not include your name. Again, please be reassured that no one will be told the results of your inventory, so just be honest.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and time. These results will be very useful.
Below is a list of common symptoms of anxiety. Please carefully read each item in the list. Indicate how much you have been bothered by each symptom during the PAST WEEK, INCLUDING TODAY, by placing an X in the corresponding space in the column next to each symptom.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NOT AT ALL</th>
<th>MILDLY</th>
<th>MODERATELY</th>
<th>SEVERELY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Numbness or tingling.</td>
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<td>2. Feeling hot.</td>
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<td>3. Wobbliness in legs.</td>
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<td>4. Unable to relax.</td>
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<td>5. Fear of the worst happening.</td>
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<td>6. Dizzy or lightheaded.</td>
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<td>7. Heart pounding or racing.</td>
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<td>8. Unsteady.</td>
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<td>11. Feelings of choking.</td>
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<td>14. Fear of losing control.</td>
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<td>15. Difficulty breathing.</td>
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<td>17. Scared.</td>
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<td>18. Indigestion or discomfort in abdomen.</td>
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<td>19. Paint.</td>
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<td>20. Face flushed.</td>
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<td>21. Sweating (not due to heat).</td>
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