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The Relationship Between Identity Formation and Faith Maturity

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
IDENTITY FORMATION AND FAITH MATURITY

By

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between identity formation and religious/spiritual commitment has been connected theoretically since Erikson’s work in the mid-20th century. Specific relationships within the constructs, such as spiritual maturity through identity exploration, have not been researched thoroughly. The purpose of this study was to examine the association between identity and faith formation processes in college students ($N = 285$) from a large public university in the southeast. Participants were self-identified Christians within the approximate age group known as emerging adulthood (i.e., 18-25), and completed questionnaire packets with measures of identity style, religious ego-identity status, faith maturity-commitment/integration, faith maturity-exploration, and strength of faith. Mature identity formation processes were highly associated with faith maturity-commitment/integration, moderately associated with questioning beliefs within faith maturity-exploration. Informational identity style exhibited predictive value for both outcome measures of faith maturity. Those practicing and representing mature identity processes are more likely to integrate their faith into their relationships. Construct validity concerns regarding the measure of faith maturity-exploration (i.e., Quest Scale) are discussed. Significant relationships concerning outside crisis, sex, and denomination affiliation with faith maturity measures emerged.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background of Problem

The primary task during adolescence is considered by identity theorist to be the formation of a mature and cohesive identity (Erikson, 1950, 1968; Gebelt, Thompson, & Miele, 2009), which in industrialized countries is now extended into the mid-twenties (i.e., emerging adulthood), allowing more time for exploration and commitment (Arnett & Jensen, 2002; Côté & Levine, 2002). The search for identity in adolescence is a topic in which numerous volumes of journals have dedicated research, yet its’ relationship with specific facets of religion and spirituality, including faith maturity (i.e., no research until 1998), has not been fully explored (Gebelt & Leak, 2009; King, 2003; Sanders, 1998). For this reason, the purpose of this study is to further distinguish the specific relationships between identity and faith formation, with the hypothesized expectation that maturity in both is reached through a similar informational process of exploration and commitment.

Erik Erikson (1950, 1968) highlighted the late adolescent period and considered spirituality/religion as an important domain in the formation of one’s identity (Gebelt & Leak, 2009; King, 2003). Erikson (1968) noted that through ideologies, beliefs, and transcendent worldviews, often provided via religion, adolescents are able to generate a sense of meaning, order, and direction in the world. This transcendent meaning derived from a perceived relationship with the divine found in religion was viewed by Erikson (1964; 1968) to be vital for adolescent identity formation, by which definitive answers can be provided over important issues in life (King, 2003). Adolescence may also be a sensitive time for spiritual exploration and development along with identity formation (Good & Willoughby, 2008). Research has shown that religious commitment or conversion often occurs during adolescence (Donelson, 1999). This suggested “sensitive” period is partially a product of identity research, in which spiritual commitments towards certain ideologies may be an important means of identity commitments (Erikson, 1950, 1968; Schwartz, 2001). Therefore, the search for one’s self during identity exploration will likely result in questions regarding spirituality learned as a child or taught by his/her parents (Good & Willoughby, 2008). For the majority of adolescents, spiritual/religious
identity formation is a key component to their overall identity (Smith & Denton, 2006). Strengthening this relationship is the notion that one’s spirituality/religion may act as a context (i.e., ideological, social, and spiritual) in which identity exploration and commitment is facilitated, promoting ecological influences on the development of identity as well (King, 2003). Spiritual and religious issues have played a significant role in identity theory since Erikson (1968), and for some people act as the central core of their identity (Kiesling & Sorrell, 2009).

**Faith Maturity: Exploration and Commitment/Integration**

The concept of faith maturity within the higher order constructs of spiritual and religious development is a term itself with many operational definitions (Bassett et al., 1991; Puffer et al., 2008; Sanders, 1998). As Sanders (1998) explains, many measures of faith maturity including religion-as-quest (Batson & Ventis, 1982; Batson & Schoenrade, 1991) and religious orientation scales (Allport & Ross, 1967; Donahue, 1985) have theoretical and empirical value, but focus more on the process of how beliefs and ideologies are formed and held rather than the integration of such beliefs, commitments, and behaviors. This process of how one forms his/her belief is important, especially within an Eriksonian theoretical framework, and should be accounted for through a spiritual exploration measurement. Emphasizing the importance of exploration, Leak (2009) found that when it is low, various forms of negative religiousness tend to be higher.

When researchers have looked specifically at faith maturity using a scale containing specific ideological commitments (e.g. Christian), results have indicated a positive relationship with mature measures of identity (Gebelt, Thompson, & Miele, 2009; Leak, 2009; Puffer et al., 2008), or negative relationships with immature identity measures (Gebelt, Thompson, & Miele, 2009; Sanders, 1998). Recent conceptualization of faith maturity (i.e., Faith Maturity Scale) has included not only intrinsic ideological commitment, but integration of this faith with pro-social concerns and service to humanity (Leak, 2009; Sanders, 1998). This integration is fully encompassed in Erikson’s views of a mature spiritual identity, and being able to integrate the “realist” domain (i.e., vertical faith) with the “naturalist” domain (i.e., horizontal faith) (Hoare, 2009). This integration is defined by a developmental movement from an “I”-focused to a “We”-focused identity, shaped by others and those we love (Hoare, 2009). This developmental pinnacle is known by Erikson (1964) to be the spiritual, ethical adult, increasing awareness and thought about ideologies, while at the same time, extending care and compassion to others.
(Hoare, 2009). This transition from “I” to “We”-focused identity is also encompassed in Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development during the transition from ego-identity (i.e., stage 5) to intimacy (i.e., stage 6) and generativity (i.e., stage 7) (Tate & Parker, 2007).

**Identity Formation**

With the association between identity and spiritual development in adolescence salient in research, and both constructs encompassing multiple or difficult operational definitions (i.e., identity: identity status paradigm and identity style paradigm; spiritual/faith maturity: orientation, exploration, development, and differences across religions), it is vital to use clear concepts and operational definitions based on sound theory (Watson & Morris, 2005). Identity is often operationalized using Marcia’s identity paradigm, which assesses ego identity commitment and exploration, via four statuses: diffusion (low commitment, low exploration), foreclosure (high commitment, low exploration), moratorium (low commitment, high exploration), and achievement (high commitment, high exploration) (Marcia, 1966; Sanders, 1998). Although Marcia (1980) did view certain statuses as more developmentally mature (i.e., from least mature, diffusion, foreclosure; to more mature, moratorium; to most mature, achievement), status regression, as well as different statuses for different identity domains (i.e., occupation, politics, and religion) at the same time are possible (Sanders, 1998, Waterman et al., 1974). It has been suggested by Goossens (2001) that because of conceptual differences between ideological domains (i.e., religion, politics, and occupation), that each domain-specific ego-status should be measured and used separately. When measured this way, statuses for the religious domain have displayed much higher internal consistencies (Goossens, 2001).

Another way in which identity has been conceptualized is through identity styles: informational (i.e., introspective, reflective, and exploratory), normative (i.e., close-minded, conforming, and passive towards authority), and diffuse/avoidant (i.e., procrastinate and avoid issues of identity) (Berzonsky, 1989). These styles are distinguished by individual’s differences in processing information relevant to ones’ identity, negotiation of conflicts within ones’ identity, and choices of resolution over identity issues (Gebelt, Thompson, & Miele, 2009). These identity styles are theoretically process-oriented, but directly associate with Marcia’s status paradigm. The informational style reflects those in moratorium and achievement (i.e., high exploration), while the normative style mirrors those in foreclosure (i.e., low exploration,
high commitment), and not surprisingly diffuse/avoidant style echoes those in the diffusion status (Berzonsky, 1989).

**Biblical Support for Current Faith Maturity Conceptualization**

Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, when applied specifically to the Christian faith, has provided a scientific lens that can be integrated into concepts of spiritual formation, growth, and maturity that are supported by Biblical concepts and scripture. With the focus on stages five (i.e., identity), six (i.e., intimacy), and seven (i.e., generativity) of Erikson’s theory, along with his writings directly addressing spirituality and identity, one can see the influence that Judeo-Christian values had on Erikson’s writings and theory, although he never adhered to one spiritual worldview (Tate & Parker, 2007; Hoare, 2009). Moving from an ego-identity to a relational identity in which care for others becomes central to one’s identity is a process completely supported throughout the Bible. Within stage five (i.e., identity vs. identity diffusion), overcoming identity issues is necessary, in which the Bible would suggest one’s identity, including his/her spirit (i.e., 1 Corinthians 2:12), mind (i.e., 1 Corinthians 2:16; Romans 12:2), and body (i.e., 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 2:10) has become new and is now in Jesus Christ, once committed to a Christian worldview. The process of making such commitments, Erikson would suggest should be through exploration and information gathering. The Bible is supportive of this process, encouraging the testing and examination of everything (i.e., 1 Thessalonians 5:21), being mature in thought (i.e., 1 Corinthians 14:20), using mature discernment through practice and training (i.e., Hebrews 5:12-14), and growing out of childish thoughts and ways (i.e., Ephesians 4:14-15; 1 Corinthians 13:11) and into mature principles of knowledge and truth (i.e., 2 Peter 3:18).

Transitioning from identity through exploration into stage six (i.e., intimacy vs. isolation) and seven (i.e., generativity vs. stagnation) of Erikson’s theory, and becoming more “mature” in one’s Christian identity, one needs to develop the capability to love and share with others (i.e., intimacy), and care for an entire group of people or society, promoting corporate piety, especially for the next generation (i.e., generativity) (Tate & Parker, 2007). This love and care for others is found in a multitude of passages in scripture, but summed up in Jesus’ call for his disciples (i.e., those with a Christian identity) to not only love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, but to love others as themselves (i.e., Mark 12:30-31). Christians are also
called by Jesus directly to go and make disciples (i.e., others with this identity of love and care for people through Jesus) of all nations, teaching them Jesus commandments to love God and others (Matthew 28:16-20). This addresses the significance of using a faith maturity measure that not only accounts for mature commitments through exploration, but a commitment that is integrated (i.e., horizontally) into thoughts, emotions, and behaviors toward others, bearing fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study given the clear interrelated nature of identity and faith development (i.e., within a Christian worldview) was to understand how mature identities are associated with mature faith commitments, when each is conceptualized in similar manners (i.e., exploration and commitment). The goal of understanding and promoting more mature spiritual identities is supported by its association with more positive psychological, behavioral, familial, and college adjustment. These include protecting against depression (Koteskey, Little, & Matthews, 1991), stress, loneliness (Hunsberger, Pratt, & Pancer, 2001), and problem behaviors (Regnerus & Elder, 2003), as well as being positively associated with academic achievement and persistence (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000; Regnerus, 2002), greater mental health (Frankel & Hewitt, 1994), self-esteem, optimism (Hunsberger, Pratt, & Pancer, 2001), and more positive family relationships (Good & Willoughby, 2006). One of the most relevant relationships found, a strong association with personal meaning and pro-social personality (Furrow, King, & White, 2004), relates directly to concepts of faith maturity (i.e., personal meaning > vertical faith, pro-social personality > horizontal faith).

**Research Questions**

Based on Erikson’s (1968) research and theory on psychosocial development, the following research questions were examined:

1) Are more mature measures of identity (i.e., achievement status and informational style) associated with higher levels of both faith commitment/integration and faith exploration?

2) Does development to maturity within both contexts (i.e., identity and faith) involve a similar process (i.e., exploration and commitment)?
3) Is there support for including both faith commitment/integration and faith exploration items in a measure of faith maturity?

**Hypotheses**

1) The most mature identity style (i.e., informational) and status (i.e., achievement) will be associated with more mature faith commitment/integration and faith exploration.

2) The concept of maturity within each context (i.e., identity and faith) will be reached by exploration and commitment.

3) There will be empirical support to conceptualize faith maturity as being represented by both commitment/integration and exploration.

**Delimitations**

Due to the lack of conceptual validity for faith maturity across studies, the following delimitation has been set:

1) A limitation of previous research has been lack of clear operational definitions within the field of spiritual/religious commitment and development. The terms in general are often overlapped in research, and are definitely related, but yet still conceptually different. Although both are considered personal views, feelings, and actions in relation to exploration of the sacred, spirituality aims to measure the transcendent relationship one perceives to have with a higher being, including the personal meaning one derives from such a relationship (Hill et al., 2000), while religious (i.e., religion & religiosity) measures look at more extrinsic, objective measures (i.e., church attendance, religious affiliation, & belonging to an institution) (Shafranske, 1996). There are two important aspects of this dichotomy to understand: 1) Spirituality can and is often measured outside the context of religion, but in this study is only considered within religious commitments (i.e., Christian “faith” commitments), 2) Religious institutions cannot be completely separated from spirituality for the fact that many prescribe, teach, and encourage the personal, spiritual search for the sacred (Hill et al., 2000). Religious institutions also promote much of the inter-relational and pro-social nature of a “horizontal” faith that is to be integrated with the personal, spiritual relationship and ideologies, or “vertical” faith.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The following review will include a discussion of Eriksonian identity development, the theoretical framework guiding the study. Emphasis will be on his views regarding spiritual identity formation. Conceptual paradigms widely supported to represent Erikson’s views on identity, including Adams, Shea, and Fitch’s (1979) ego-identity statuses and Berzonsky’s (1989) identity styles, will be described as well. Additionally, literature trends concerning the relationship between identity formation and faith maturity will be examined.

Theoretical Foundation

As mentioned before, Erikson (1950, 1964, 1968) heavily emphasized the importance of spiritual reconciliation during the time of late adolescence. In his writings on identity development, Erikson discussed how spiritual commitments acted as beliefs and worldviews that provided the adolescent with meaning, purpose, and answers to important questions in life (King, 2003). Erikson’s primary focus within his theory regarding the adolescent stage (i.e., identity vs. role confusion) and identity formation was overcoming crisis or diffusion, through exploration and commitment (Erikson, 1968). This focus on the need for exploration in order to form a mature spiritual identity was reiterated through Erikson’s views on ritualism (i.e., monotonous and mindless routines) (Hoare, 2009). He believed institutional ritualism lead to lack of control regarding ones ideologies and blind obedience (Hoare, 2009). In Carol Hoare’s (2009) review of Erikson’s writings on spiritual identity formation, she reported that Erikson promoted a “split personality” in regards to mature spiritual commitments, including the “earthly, horizontal region and the divine, vertical region” (p. 190). Erikson theorized that a mature faith was one that not only involved a sound transcendent relationship with the divine (i.e., vertical faith), but one that promoted pro-social human interactions (i.e., horizontal faith) (Hoare, 2009).

Spiritual identity maturity, as promoted by Erikson in his writings, is a commitment that was reached through exploration and self-chosen ideologies, and that integrates a transcendent vertical relationship with the divine with concern, care, and pro-social behavior toward others (Erikson, 1963, 1968; Hoare, 2009; King, 2003). These three concepts (i.e., exploration, vertical
faith, and horizontal faith) are all necessary in an adequate conceptualization of faith maturity, especially regarding specific ideologies (e.g. the Christian faith).

Faith Maturity Conceptualization

As mentioned, when discussing maturity within religious and spiritual faith, consistent concepts have not always been clear, leaving its’ relationship with identity formation complex and sometimes even contradictory, depending on the operational definition used (Leak, 2009; Puffer at al., 2008; Watson & Morris, 2005). Much of the reviewed literature has provided empirical support for the current study (Gebelt, Thompson, & Miele, 2009; Leak, 2009; Puffer et al. 2008; Sanders, 1998; Watson & Morris, 2005), while some of those same studies faced complex results (Puffer et al., 2008; Leak, 2009; Watson & Morris, 2005), possibly due to the mentioned lack of consistency across conceptualization of faith development and maturity. Two conceptualizations of faith maturity will be discussed in regards to identity and then related to, or integrated with the current conceptualization (i.e., faith commitment/integration + faith exploration = faith maturity), starting with faith development (i.e., faith development stages) and then faith orientation (i.e., religious orientation). This will transition the review into a discussion about this studies conceptualization of faith maturity.

Faith Development

The faith development theory, as developed by Fowler (1981), is probably the most influential theory regarding faith development and seeks to explain faith development by putting them in stages of reasoning about spirituality and questions of reality (Leak, 2009). It is a theory that can be applied to any faith, and the measurement tools associated with it face similar ideological issues mentioned for exploration (i.e., Quest scale) and spiritual experience (i.e., The Spiritual Experience Index) measures. Leak (2009) examined faith development in relation to identity development. Based off of Fowler’s faith development theory, Leak used his own Faith Development Scale (Leak et al., 1999), Faith Development Stage Scale (Leak and Randall, 1995), and Faith Development Stage Scale-Short Form (Leak & Hall, 2006) to measure faith development. Interestingly, those in moratorium scored significantly higher on all three faith development scales than any other status. Leak suggests the common factor that led to this finding was moratorium in identity and openness in personal religiousness. He also implied that
those in achievement may regress back to foreclosure once a strong commitment has been made regarding exploration, supporting the Hunsberger et al. (2001) claim that those in achievement may have stopped exploring once a strong spiritual commitment had been made. Leak also used the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger, 1995) as opposed to the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status and suggested that replication with other identity measures was necessary. Leak also included a scale (i.e., The Faith Maturity Scale) being used in the current study, but placed it under the conceptualization of “religious commitment”, supporting the complexity of clear operational definitions amongst researchers. Refer to the section, Current Operational Definition of Faith Maturity, for more on Leak’s (2009) study.

**Faith Orientation**

Religious orientation, as developed by Allport and Ross (1967) is one of the first measurements developed looking at different types of faith commitments. This measure separates the “mature” intrinsic orientation (i.e., based on ideologies and values of the faith itself) from “negative” extrinsic orientation (i.e., self-serving, based on the return of what the religion can do for individual) (Gebelt, Thompson, & Miele, 2009). Although intrinsic orientation has empirical support that displays correlation with faith maturity (Puffer et al, 2008), it has been heavily questioned as a maturity measure (Batson, Shoenrade, & Ventis, 1993) with the suggestion that it is merely a measure one’s sincerity in his/her commitment (Leak, 2009), focusing more on how these certain beliefs are held as opposed to how they are integrated into behavior (Benson et al., 2003; Sanders, 1998). A significant relationship between mature orientation (i.e., intrinsic) and more mature identity statuses has also not always been supported (Puffer et al. 2008), even with the use of a revised version of the scale that looks at one using internal or external motivations to live out his/her religion. This suggests that strong ideological commitments alone may not be enough to form a mature spiritual identity.

Leak (2009), however, used the original religious orientation measure by Allport and Ross (1967), separating the two, placing them under the constructs religious commitment (i.e., intrinsic religiosity) and negative religiousness (i.e., extrinsic religiosity), and found achievement status to be the highest in intrinsic religiosity and lowest in extrinsic religiosity, with moratorium closely behind in scores of low extrinsic religiosity. This is interesting in that it suggests that
those in moratorium may not be committed to a particular faith, but that if they do make a commitment it will seemingly be a more mature commitment based on a sincere intrinsic orientation. Overall, intrinsic orientation seems to be correlated with more mature identity styles and statuses, while extrinsic orientation correlates negatively.

A third orientation was proposed by Batson et al. (1993), arguing against the orientation dichotomy promoted by Allport and Ross (1967). They suggested a third orientation, known as “quest”, should be included to account for those who search for ultimate meaning with the understanding that they might not ever find it, and who are open to questioning and changes to their beliefs (Gebelt, Thompson, & Miele, 2009). This third orientation leads the review to discussion about the current operational definition of faith maturity, as exploration, represented by a quest orientation, is included.

**Current Operational Definition of Faith Maturity**

Based on the literature and Eriksonian theory, it is proposed by Gebelt and Leak (2009) that both faith exploration (i.e., quest and spiritual openness) and faith commitment/integration (i.e., more commonly known as “faith maturity”) are needed to properly conceptualize the variable of “faith maturity”. Through relationships with both identity style and ego-identity status, faith exploration and commitment/integration are shown to be necessary for a mature spiritual commitment to be reached (Gebelt & Leak, 2009).

**Faith Maturity and Identity Style**

Gebelt, Thompson, and Miele (2009) used the quest orientation, as measured by the Quest Scale (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991), and its’ subscales, to look at spiritual exploration’s interaction with identity styles. They found all subscales were significantly correlated with the mature informational style, while not showing much association to the other two styles. Those with an informational style were not prevented from having a strong sense of faith by their tendency for exploration either. The relationship between informational style and strength of faith was significant and positive, supporting the current studies claim that a strong and mature ideological commitment can be reached even when using an exploring orientation. Conceptually, the only thing lacking in this study, was the integration within the faith
commitment scale. Maturity, as theorized by Erikson, should involve movement toward a relational identity and concern for others, which was not accounted for.

Watson and Morris (2005) exemplified the complexity of the faith maturity concept, when they challenged previous measures of both orientation and exploration in relation to identity style. They used the Spiritual Experience Index (Genia, 1991) to see if it could better record mature and open-minded forms of religious commitment. They included traditional measures of both orientation (i.e., Religious Orientation Scale) and exploration (i.e., Quest Scale) for comparison. The Spiritual Experience Index included two facets (i.e., spiritual openness and spiritual support) that were also analyzed. They also included an intolerance for ambiguity measure and a religious interest measure, claiming that a valid measure of open-minded religiousness would “correlate positively with religious interest, Identity Commitment, and the Informational Style and negatively with the Normative Style, the Diffuse/Avoidant Style, and Intolerance for Ambiguity” (Watson & Morris, 2005). All measures related to faith maturity in their study failed to exemplify this pattern. Alone, religious orientation doesn’t seem to differentiate between Informational and Normative identity styles, both highly correlated with intrinsic orientation, echoing the need for exploration discussed in the Faith Orientation section. Quest and spiritual openness faced similar lack of discrimination problems, reflective of both informational style as predicted, and diffuse-avoidant style. Interestingly, both quest and spiritual openness were associated negatively with religious interest and its’ positive association with informational style was insignificant which challenges their construct validity in theory. Watson and Morris suggested these constructs may measure commitment without any ideology, which may be “commitment without any commitment” (p. 378), supporting the need for ideological commitment with faith maturity conceptualizations.

Faith Maturity and Ego-Identity Status

Puffer et al. (2008) also examined both exploration and faith commitment/integration (i.e., faith maturity), in relation to identity status rather than style, providing much support for the current study. They used the Quest Scale to measure faith exploration. Exploration measured by quest was positively correlated with all but those in foreclosure, suggesting exploration is necessary for mature commitments, but is lacking in discrimination from other statuses, especially moratorium. They analyzed faith maturity, using the Spiritual Maturity Index (Ellison,
1984), a measure of development regarding evangelical Christian theology. They found achievement to be the only status significantly positively related to faith maturity. This provides empirical support for the current study, suggesting faith commitment/integration (i.e., faith maturity) and exploration are both necessary to reach and distinguish a mature spiritual identity. The foreclosure status was significantly negatively associated with maturity, meaning a strong commitment to a certain faith does not mean one is necessarily mature in that faith and is in need for exploration.

Although Leak’s (2009) focus was on faith development, he also included religious commitment variables, one of which was measured using the Faith Maturity Scale. Not only does this complicate his findings regarding faith development and its’ relationship to faith maturity, but may undermine the goal of the scale, labeling it as just a commitment variable. He found that “religious commitment” variables (i.e., faith maturity/integ ration, master motive, and intrinsic orientation) were all significantly higher for those of achievement status compared to other statuses, again supporting the current studies conceptualization and need for ideological commitments, as well as Puffer et al.’s (2008) findings using a different faith maturity measurement.

Sanders (1998) observed the relationship between faith maturity (i.e., commitment/integration, measured by the Faith Maturity Scale) and religious ego-identity status. He was the only researcher to focus solely on religious ego-identity, which prompted the current study to do the same with a different measure, providing higher internal consistency for identity statuses (Goossens, 2001). He was able to display the significant lack of faith maturity among the diffusion group in relation to the other three statuses. Sanders also highlighted a difference between foreclosed commitment and achieved commitment. Achieved participants scored higher than those in foreclosure on the horizontal subscale of faith maturity (i.e., FMS-H), meaning they emphasize prosocial ideas, such as service to humanity and concern for their community more so than the foreclosed individuals. Achieved and foreclosed groups both scored high in the vertical subscale, but the author suggest that achieved individuals might be better at effectively integrating their vertical ideologies (i.e., relationship with transcendent reality) with their behavior in society and in their relationships. This is the first support shown for integration to be included in commitment regarding the concept of faith maturity. This also
displays theoretical support for Erikson’s (1964) idea that the ethical/spiritual person is the most mature commitment, one that is focused on the relational nature of their identity as opposed to their own ego (Hoare, 2009).
CHAPTER THREE

Method

Procedure

Participants were recruited via classroom announcements and research credit opportunities located in class syllabi, or through email contact via student ministry (i.e., Florida State) contacts. Included in the announcement and initial email contact were recruitment information that consisted of the purpose of the study, what participation would include (i.e., duration), incentive for participation (i.e., research credit, or entry into raffle), deadline for participation, and qualifications for participation. Qualifications included: 1) Ages between 18 and 25, and 2) self-identified as a Christian with regard to their spiritual commitment. Students were told to contact the primary investigator displaying commitment to participate, then were sent an email with a link to the questionnaire packet via Survey Monkey.

The first page of the link was the informed consent form, further explaining the intentions of the survey, providing contact information of the primary investigator, and that the study was completely voluntary. Following this page were the four measures of interest and a page of demographic information.

Participants

Participants were students attending a large public university in the Southeast from either undergraduate classes (N=285) or student ministries (N=20). Due to the small sample gathered from student ministries consisting of only white males, who were older than the university sample (M = 21.95 > 19.69) and contextually different, these students were not included in the final analyses, resulting in a final sample of 285 university students. There were two qualifications for this study: 1) the participant was between the ages of 18-25 (i.e., emerging adulthood) and 2) the participant identified as a Christian in regard to their spiritual commitment. The final sample was 46 men and 239 women with a mean age of 19.69 years (SD = 1.44). The majority of the sample (i.e., 84.6%) was Catholic (32.6%), Baptist (21.4%), Nondenominational (20.7%), or Methodist/Wesleyan (10.2%). The remaining 15.4% consisted of various mainline Protestant denominations (i.e., Episcopalian/Anglican, Lutheran, Pentecostal/Charismatic, Presbyterian, and Seventh day Adventist). The sample was predominantly White/Non-Hispanic
(66%) with the remaining sample consisting of Hispanic origin or Latino (15.8%), Black/African-American (13.7%), Asian American (2.1%), and “other” (2.5%). Of the 305 participants, 185 (64.9%) answered “no” to whether they had been in a crisis outside of their control, while 100 (35.1%) answered “yes”.

### Table 1

**Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Sample (N = 285)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean Age</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist/Wesleyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nondenominational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Protestant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crisis Outside of Control</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measures**

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire including information regarding the participants’ age, sex, race/ethnicity, Christian denomination affiliation, how strong their current Christian faith commitment was (i.e., from 1-5 on a scale of strength), and whether they had
experienced a crisis outside of their control (answered yes or no). They also completed four previously validated and standardized self-report questionnaires.

**Faith Maturity- Commitment/Integration:** The Faith Maturity Scale (FMS, $\alpha=.88$) (Benson, Donahue, & Erickson, 1993) is a 38-item Likert-type (i.e., 1= never true, to 7= always true) measure of faith commitment and maturity, and was developed with integration in mind. It includes two subscales, one focused on the vertical (i.e., transcendent, divine, relationship with the supernatural) aspect of one’s faith known as the FMS-V, and the other, the horizontal (i.e., integration of beliefs and values in everyday living and behavior) dimension known as the FMS-H. The subscales combined provide on overall maturity score (i.e., FMS-T). As Benson et al. (1993) explains, the FMS captures the extent in which the participant: “trusts and believes, experiences the fruits of faith, integrates faith and life, seeks spiritual growth, experiences and nurtures faith in community, holds life- affirming values, advocates social change, and acts and serves” (p.7).

**Faith Maturity- Exploration:** The Quest Scale ($\alpha=.78$) (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991) is a 12-item Likert-type (i.e., 1= strongly disagree, to 9= strongly agree) measure that assesses exploration of one’s spirituality. The scale includes three subscales of 4-items: Questioning Beliefs, measuring the amount of wonder the participant has faced regarding their spiritual beliefs; Valuing Doubts, accounting for importance of valuing doubts; and Expecting Change, looking at the participant’s anticipation of a belief change in future.

**Identity Style:** The Identity Style Inventory (Berzonsky, 1992) is a 40-item Likert-type (i.e., 1= not at all like me, to 5= very much like me) inventory that request responses on how the participant has come to make identity decisions, cope with identity conflicts, and whether they are stable. It includes informational ($\alpha=.87$) style, normative ($\alpha=.87$) style, and diffuse/avoidant ($\alpha=.83$) style. The inventory also includes a commitment subscale of 10-items that is not used in assessing identity style (White et al., 1998).

**Religious Ego-Identity Status:** The Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status II-Religion (Bennion & Adams, 1986) is an 8-item Likert-type (i.e., 1= strongly agree, to 6= strongly disagree) instrument measuring respondents’ scores regarding religion on each of the
four statuses: diffusion ($\alpha=.62$), foreclosure ($\alpha=.75$), moratorium ($\alpha=.75$), and achievement ($\alpha=.62$).
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Preliminary Data Analysis

The purpose of the study was to examine how mature identities are associated with mature faith commitments, if similar processes are needed to reach maturity in both contexts, and to examine if exploration should be included in a measure of mature faith. Findings will be discussed as they pertain to each hypothesis. The hypotheses about the relationships between identity, as operationalized by style and status, and the two faith maturity variables (i.e., faith commitment/integration and faith exploration) were tested with correlations. The correlations are reported in Table 2, along with their associations with “strength of faith”.

One way ANOVAs were run for the five demographic variables (i.e., age, sex, race/ethnicity, denomination, and outside crisis) and both faith maturity outcomes. Among these variables, only outside crisis in relation to faith exploration as well as sex and denomination in relation to faith commitment/integration were significant. Sex was not significant for faith exploration, $F(1, 272) = .101$, but was significant for faith commitment/integration, $F(1, 254) = 8.31$. Age was insignificant in regard to both faith exploration, $F(7,272) = 1.43$, and faith commitment/integration, $F(7, 254) = .771$. Race was also insignificant with faith outcome measures, $F(3, 270) = .575$ for faith exploration, and $F(3, 252) = 1.4$ for faith commitment/integration. Denomination approached significance for faith exploration $F(6, 267) = 1.97$, and was significant in regard to faith commitment/integration, $F(6, 249) = 4.62$. Outside crisis, however, was only significant within faith exploration, $F(1, 272) = 11.55$, and not for faith commitment/integration, $F(1, 254) = .88$. In addition to the correlations in Table 2, the hypothesized relationships were tested using multiple linear regressions. Analyses were run between the outcome measures of faith maturity and the seven identity predictors, along with strength of faith, and demographic variables that either displayed significant group differences (i.e., crisis for faith exploration; sex and denomination for faith commitment/integration) or approached a significant group difference (i.e., denomination for faith exploration), which acted as control variables. Analyses are presented in Table 3. Denomination affiliations with sample sizes below 5% of the total sample were not included in the regression analyses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FME- Questioning Beliefs</td>
<td>.225**</td>
<td>-.355**</td>
<td>.461**</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>-.288**</td>
<td>.145*</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>-.135*</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FME- Valuing Doubts</td>
<td>.213**</td>
<td>-.284**</td>
<td>.398**</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.349**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.118</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FME- Expecting Change</td>
<td>.318**</td>
<td>-.329**</td>
<td>.613**</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.123*</td>
<td>-.446**</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>-.299**</td>
<td>-.363**</td>
<td>.143*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FME- Total</td>
<td>.316**</td>
<td>-.392**</td>
<td>.614**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>-.446**</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FMCI- Vertical</td>
<td>-.685**</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>-.634**</td>
<td>.267**</td>
<td>-.167**</td>
<td>.419**</td>
<td>.343**</td>
<td>-.284**</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FMCI- Horizontal</td>
<td>-.378**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>.271**</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>.206**</td>
<td>.397**</td>
<td>-.063</td>
<td>.658**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FMCI- Total</td>
<td>-.576**</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>-.535**</td>
<td>.308**</td>
<td>-.131*</td>
<td>.358**</td>
<td>.414**</td>
<td>-.2**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strength of Faith</td>
<td>-.642**</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>-.635**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>-.098</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>-.362**</td>
<td>.672**</td>
<td>.753**</td>
<td>.439**</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. FME = Faith Maturity- Exploration (Quest Scale). FMCI= Faith Maturity- Commitment/Integration (Faith Maturity Scale). Diff. = Diffusion; Fore. = Foreclosed; Mora. = Moratorium; Ach. = Achievement (EOM-EIS, Religion). D/A = Diffuse/Avoidant; Norm. = Normative; Info. = Informational (Identity Style Inventory).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
### Table 3

**Multiple Regression Analyses**

**Multiple Regression Analyses for the Influence of Identity Measures, Strength of Faith, Sex, and Denomination on Faith Maturity- Commitment/Integration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Sample (n = 285)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFOSTY</td>
<td>1.362</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>+.252</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>NORMSTY</td>
<td>-2.31</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>-.037</td>
<td>.528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIFFSTY</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>+.047</td>
<td>.314</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACHSTA</td>
<td>.429</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>+.029</td>
<td>.549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORSTA</td>
<td>-2.136</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>-.185</td>
<td>.006</td>
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<tr>
<td>FORSTA</td>
<td>.516</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>+.051</td>
<td>.364</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIFSTA</td>
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<td>.79</td>
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<td>.014</td>
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<tr>
<td>STRENGTH</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
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<td>&lt;.001</td>
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<td>Baptist</td>
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<td>.096</td>
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<td>Catholic</td>
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<td>Methodist</td>
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<td>.761</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nondenominational</td>
<td>5.173</td>
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<td>.244</td>
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</table>

**Multiple Regression Analyses for the Influence of Identity Measures, Strength of Faith, Outside Crisis, and Denomination on Faith Maturity- Exploration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Sample (n = 285)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFOSTY</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>+.162</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORMSTY</td>
<td>-.561</td>
<td>.21</td>
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<td>.008</td>
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<td>DIFFSTY</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>+.091</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACHSTA</td>
<td>.826</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>+.097</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORSTA</td>
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<td>.45</td>
<td>+.515</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>FORSTA</td>
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<td>-.176</td>
<td>.002</td>
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<td>DIFSTA</td>
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<td>.46</td>
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<td>.782</td>
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<td>CRISIS</td>
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<td>.01</td>
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<td>2.27</td>
<td>+.085</td>
<td>.21</td>
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<td>Methodist</td>
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<td>2.87</td>
<td>+.163</td>
<td>.004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nondenominational</td>
<td>1.713</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>+.043</td>
<td>.497</td>
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</table>

Note: INFOSTY = Informational Style; NORMSTY = Normative Style; DIFFSTY = Diffuse/Avoidant Style; ACHSTA = Achievement Status; MORSTA = Moratorium Status; FORSTA = Foreclosed Status; DIFSTA = Diffusion Status; STRENGTH = Strength of Faith; CRISIS = Crisis Outside of Control
Mature Identity Measures

Hypothesis 1 stated the most mature identity style (i.e., informational) and status (i.e., achievement) will be associated with higher Christian faith commitments and high faith exploration. Results from the correlations in Table 2 provide some support for this prediction. Both achievement status ($r = .308$) and informational style ($r = .414$) were positively associated with faith commitment/integration, supporting a process of exploration and commitment within identity and its’ association with higher levels faith commitment/integration. Normative style was also correlated with faith commitment/integration ($r = .358$). The subscales of faith commitment/integration display a larger discrepancy between normative and informational styles. Whereas “vertical” faith was insignificant ($z = 1.01$) in its relations with informational ($r = .343$) and normative ($r = .419$) styles, “horizontal” faith displayed significant discrepancy ($z = 2.39$), displaying a higher correlation with informational style ($r = .397$) than normative style ($r = .206$).

In regard to the multiple regression analyses, informational style ($\beta = .231$) was the only positive identity predictor for faith commitment/integration, supporting hypothesis 1. Moratorium ($\beta = -.164$) and diffusion ($\beta = -.156$) statuses were both significant negative predictors of faith commitment/integration.

Neither measure of mature identities was significantly associated with faith exploration, informational style ($r = .104$) and achievement ($r = .01$). Faith exploration was associated with identity measures defined by lack of commitment and exploration (i.e., diffusion status, $r = .316$), and lack of commitment, but high in exploration (i.e., moratorium status, $r = .593$). Faith exploration displayed negative correlations with measures associated with low exploration and high commitment (i.e., foreclosed status, $r = -.392$, and normative style, $r = -.446$). Subscales of faith exploration show some discrepancies within the construct and its relationship to mature identity processes. The questioning beliefs subscale showed positive correlation with both achievement ($r = .089$) and informational style ($r = .145$), and its' association with informational style was the only significant relationship between faith exploration and mature identity processes.

As analyzed by regressions, informational style ($\beta = .231$) and moratorium status ($\beta = .493$) acted as significant positive predictors of faith exploration, while normative style ($\beta = -$
Maturity through Exploration

Hypothesis 2 posited the concept of maturity within each context (i.e., identity and faith) will be reached via exploration and commitment. Although there was lack of support in regard to current mature commitments displaying high exploration as assessed by the current measure, Hypothesis 2 was still partially supported when comparing identities without any exploration (i.e., foreclosed status and normative style) and identities with exploration (i.e., achievement status and informational style), with faith exploration. Whereas identities that lack exploration and are high in conformity regarding commitment processes yielded significant negative correlations (i.e., foreclosed status, r = -.392, and normative style, r = -.446), identities that use informational and exploratory processes to make commitments (i.e., achievement status, r = .01, and informational style, r = .104) were not associated with faith exploration. Achievement status (r = .308) and informational style’s (r = .414) associations with faith commitment/integration were also supportive conceptually. That is, identities that go through exploration have stronger associations with certain aspects of faith maturity (i.e., commitment/integration). Informational style was also positively associated with faith exploration’s questioning beliefs subscale (r = .145).

Multiple regression analyses exhibited informational style (β = .162) and moratorium status (β = .493) as a significant positive predictor of faith exploration, and normative style (β = -.157) and foreclosed status (β = -.176) as significant negative predictors of faith exploration, all supporting the need for identity exploration in order to have faith exploration.

Faith Maturity Conceptualization

Hypothesis 3 postulated there would be empirical support to conceptualize faith maturity as being represented by both commitment/integration and exploration. The significant negative relationship between faith commitment/integration and faith exploration (r = -.2), coupled with the lack of significance with mature identity measures (r = .104 for informational and .01 for
achievement) and its’ association with statuses defined by lack of identity commitment (r = .316 for diffusion and .614 for moratorium), all point toward the current conceptualization of faith exploration as being incompatible with a strong faith commitment, mature or not. The only aspect of faith exploration to be associated with mature identity processes was the questioning beliefs subscale with informational style (r = .145). This was the only support for the current conceptualization of faith exploration to be included in overall faith maturity.

Multiple regression analyses support the conceptualization in regard to exploration and informational processes within identity being associated with both faith commitment/integration and faith exploration. Informational style was a positive predictor of both faith commitment/integration (β = .231) and faith exploration (β = .162). This displays some support for the current conceptualization using the identity style paradigm. Moratorium status (β = .493) was also a significant positive predictor of faith exploration, while moratorium (β = -.164) and diffusion (β = -.156) statuses were significant negative predictors for faith commitment/integration. These relationships present lack of support for the current conceptualization and exhibit a lack of discrepancy within the identity style paradigm (i.e., between informational and diffuse/avoidant style) in relation to faith exploration.

**Other Results**

Outside of the hypotheses regarding relationships between identity and faith processes, significant relationships among “strength of faith”, “outside crisis”, sex, and denomination (e.g. Methodist/Wesleyan) with faith maturity measures were discovered. Correlational results showed strength of faith to be significantly associated with both faith exploration (r = -.362) and faith commitment/integration (r = .656). Strength of faith was also positively associated with informational style (r = .25), normative style (r = .38), foreclosed status (r = .12) and achievement status (r = .29), while negatively associated with diffusion (r = -.642) and moratorium (r = .635) statuses.

Multiple regression analyses revealed that strength of faith (β = .329) and being female (β = .181) to be significant positive predictors of faith commitment/integration, in addition to informational style. Outside crisis (β = .122) and the Methodist/Wesleyan denomination (β = .163) acted as significant positive predictors of faith exploration, in addition to informational style and moratorium status.
The student ministry sample that was dropped from the final sample displayed significant
group differences in faith commitment integration scores when compared to the remaining
sample $F(1, 273) = 6.086$, and when compared to the remaining male sample $F(1, 54) = 17.242$.
Mean scores differences show that the excluded student ministry sample ($M = 197.6$) scored
higher than the remaining sample in faith commitment/integration scores ($M = 181.6$), with the
male university sample scoring the lowest on average ($M = 169.5$).
CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Results display some support for the three hypotheses generated for this study, while raising questions and concerns about the construct validity of the measure of faith exploration (i.e., the Quest Scale). As hypothesized, mature identity formation status (i.e., achievement) and style (i.e., informational) were associated with faith commitment/integration. This is consistent with previous research displaying mature identities positive correlation with measures of faith, such as commitment (Gebelt, Thompson, & Miele, 2009; Leak, 2009; Watson & Morris, 2005), other conceptualizations of faith maturity (Leak, 2009; Puffer et al., 2008; Sanders, 1998), and is supportive of previous research that has found participants to approach matters of faith and spirituality using the same process as their overall identity (Berzonsky, 1992; Gebelt Thompson, & Miele, 2009; White et al., 1998). Informational style was also the only identity process that was a positive predictor of faith commitment/integration, showing further support for the association between mature identity and faith processes.

Faith Maturity - Commitment/Integration

Associations with other less mature statuses are more complex. Whereas previous research has lacked discrimination between diffusion, foreclosed, and moratorium statuses (Leak, 2009; Puffer et al. 2008), or only shown lack of maturity for diffused status (Sanders, 1998), the current study displayed no association with foreclosed status, and strong negative associations with diffusion and moratorium statuses. This increased discrimination is likely due to the combination of the targeted sample being pre-identified as Christian and the ego-identity statuses only measured with religious identity variables as opposed to other ideological and interpersonal identity domains. The difference in associations between achievement and foreclosure with faith commitment/integration supports the need for exploration and commitment for an integrated faith commitment. Neither achievement nor foreclosed statuses were predictive of high faith commitment/integration however, and moratorium and diffusion statuses were predictive of low faith commitment/integration. This suggests the need for a religious identity commitment to be made before one can reach high levels of faith commitment/integration, but does not predict that one will reach these mature levels, unless he/she uses informational
processes to make the commitment. If one has not made a religious identity commitment, this will likely prevent them from reaching mature levels of faith commitment/integration.

As measured by style, mature identity processes again showed a strong correlation with faith commitment/integration, but lacked significant discrimination between normative and informational styles, which has been found in earlier research (Gebelt, Thompson, & Miele, 2009; Watson & Morris, 2005). Previous research has used different faith commitment measurements (i.e., focusing on strength of faith, and intrinsic orientation), which are highly correlated with faith maturity (Puffer et al., 2008), and results were comparable, but different in important ways. Whereas previous commitment measures have displayed high positive correlations with both normative and informational styles, with normative displaying slightly larger associations, the current study actually found commitment/integration to be higher with informational style. This relationship exhibited further discrimination when faith commitment/integration subscales were examined. Whereas vertical faith (i.e., FMS-V) was very comparable between normative and informational styles, horizontal faith (i.e., FMS-H) was much higher for informational style than for normative style. This suggests that a quality faith maturity concept should include horizontal integration and that commitments using an informational style are much more likely to integrate their vertical beliefs into their horizontal relationships and behaviors, which supports prior research as well (Sanders, 1998). As in prior research (Watson & Morris, 2005), diffusion-avoidant style demonstrated a significant negative correlation with faith commitment/integration. The discrepancy between informational and normative processes was further exhibited in that only informational style was predictive of higher levels of faith commitment/integration. Although normative styles can be associated with mature faith commitment/integration, it does significantly predict this outcome.

**Faith Maturity- Exploration**

Faith exploration, especially when measured by a quest orientation, is one of the most difficult concepts to operationalize and find clear associations with identity measures. The increase in discrimination mentioned for relationships with faith commitment/integration however, were also evident in the associations with faith exploration and identity statuses, likely due to similar factors (i.e., selective sample with high commitment, using only religious ego-identity). Although results were similar to previous research (Puffer et al. 2008), finding that
diffusion and moratorium statuses displayed strong positive associations, foreclosed showing a strong negative association, and achievement exhibiting no significant relationship, all relationships were stronger than in previous research. The exception was within achievement, with previous research displaying a small positive association (Puffer et al. 2008). Current findings suggest a negative perception of exploration as measured by the current tool within foreclosed Christian commitments, and an indifferent perception by those in achievement. This suggests that faith exploration as measured in the current study may be incompatible with faith commitment/integration, which is further exhibited by the negative relationship between faith exploration and faith commitment/integration. The insignificance of achievement’s relationship to faith exploration compared to the strong negative relationship faith exploration had with foreclosed status suggest achievement does not hold the same negative view of exploration and shows necessary discrepancy between the achievement and foreclosed statuses. In regard to the strong correlation between diffusion and moratorium statuses with faith exploration, this may display lack of commitment within the self-identified Christian commitments that were recruited for this study. This “commitment without commitment” is a critique within the construct validity of the Quest Scale that has been brought up in prior studies that considered the measure as a part of faith maturity (Watson & Morris, 2005). This is further supported by the lack of commitment/integration and strength of faith associated with these statuses. Regression analyses support these correlations, with moratorium as the only positive predictor status, foreclosed as the only negative predictor status, and achievement as an insignificant predictor, all suggesting that a balance of exploration and commitment is difficult in regard to predicting faith exploration as measured by the Quest Scale.

The complexity of faith exploration and its relation to identity formation is exemplified by contradictions in previous literature with faith exploration and identity style. The only clear relationship is that faith exploration and normative style have a significant negative association (Gebelt, Thompson, & Miele, 2009; Watson & Morris, 2005), which is supported by the current study. Findings from the current study revealed a positive yet insignificant correlation between faith exploration and both diffuse/avoidant and informational styles. This outcome was consistent with the findings of Watson and Morris (2005) who also used a predominantly Christian sample and found no discrimination between the two styles with multiple exploration
measures. These correlations were partly reflected by regression analyses. Informational style was predictive of faith exploration, while diffuse/avoidant style approached significance as a predictor, lacking clear discrimination, and normative style was a negative predictor of faith exploration, supporting prior research (Watson & Morris, 2005). Other research, using a sample with less selective commitment criteria (i.e., not all Christians or religious), found a positive association between faith exploration and informational style, and no clear relationship with diffuse/avoidant style (Gebelt, Thompson, & Miele, 2009), promoting the complexity of the relationship.

The current study looked at subscales of faith exploration for more specific relationships and found that the questioning beliefs subscale was the only aspect of faith exploration to display a positive association with mature identity processes, exhibiting a significant correlation with informational style. It is possible that certain items within the faith exploration conceptualization could be promoted within a strong Christian commitment, but this does not seem to be true regarding the valuing doubts and expecting change subscales. This suggests that the strength of faith commitment within a sample, which was highly correlated with faith commitment/integration (i.e., r = .656) in the present study, likely plays an important role in views of the current overall faith exploration conceptualization, even if they are committed through and informational process.

Faith exploration, as measured by a quest orientation is a multidimensional construct, with up to five dimensions, that may need special conceptualization within strong Christian commitments that have used mature identity processes (Edwards et al., 2011). This study supports this multidimensional nature and the possibility of including the questioning beliefs subscale within mature Christian commitments, but lacks support for current faith exploration using the other two subscale dimensions. Edwards et al. (2011) did an extensive psychometric evaluation of the quest construct, using multiple measures of quest, within a large Christian sample and found three (i.e., “beliefs tentative open to change”, “questions good”, and “doubts valued”) of the five dimensions formed to be correlated positively with horizontal faith integration (i.e., horizontal subscale) and provide some support for the current study in relation to the questioning beliefs subscale. The other two dimensions yielded either no relationship or a strong negative relationship with faith commitment/integration.
Overall, commitment satisfaction would be viewed as less mature within the current conceptualization of faith exploration, even if the participants have reached their commitments through mature processes, which exemplifies the current study. Although many participants may have achieved a mature spiritual identity and commitment through past exploration and informational processes, and be able to integrate this commitment in their relationships with others, the current faith exploration measure does not allow them to reach high levels of the current conceptualization of faith maturity because they do not value doubts within their commitment or expect their commitment to change. If a commitment is constantly being questioned, doubted, and expected to change, is it really a commitment? This question needs to be answered before one can measure faith exploration within a Christian commitment. It seems possible that dimensions such as “beliefs tentative open to change”, “questions good”, and “doubts valued” can be used in a balanced way within a commitment so that the perception of the items is not as negative as in the current study.

Other Findings

In addition to the relationships between identity and faith measures, strength of faith, outside crisis, sex, and denomination displayed significant associations with the faith maturity measures, suggesting moderating influences by strength of faith, sex, and contextual factors outside of identity processes. The positive association between strength of faith and informational style, normative style, and achievement status, along with its’ negative association with faith exploration, diffusion and moratorium statuses suggests that strength of faith act as a moderating variable between exploration and commitment within Christian emerging adults. The stronger the commitment, the less exploration and doubt, and the more commitment expressed through vertical and horizontal faith behaviors. “Strength of faith”, along with “vertical” faith lack discrimination between their relations with informational and normative styles, while “horizontal” faith displays a stronger association with informational style. In respect to the identity style paradigm, it seems that horizontal integration of faith into relationships and social behaviors best represents mature identity processes within Christian commitments.

Strength of faith was also a significant predictor of faith commitment/integration, along with being female. This suggests that stronger faith commitments are more likely to express
these commitments in both “vertical” and “horizontal” ways. Being female, at least within the age group sampled, seems to be associated with more mature commitments as well. It is important to note that the excluded student ministry sample that consisted of older males displayed higher scores than the university sample as a whole in regard to faith commitment/integration. This would suggest that there may be a gender delay in males to make and integrate Christian commitments, or that student ministries facilitate more mature faith commitments as exemplified by the even higher discrepancy between the university male sample and the student ministry sample. This suggests a sex influence on faith commitment/integration within the context of university students, outside of identity processes and strength of faith, as well as a large contextual influence on males and their faith commitment/integration.

Participants who faced a crisis outside of their control that led to their current commitment were more likely to score highly in faith exploration. The same was true for the Methodist/Wesleyan denomination. Although exploration and informational processes are identity processes that are intrinsic, extrinsic context, such as outside crisis events or denomination affiliation, can lead to more exploration in regard to faith commitments.

Limitations

The current study faces external validity issues, considering the selective sample. Identity and faith formation may be different for those of different religious affiliations or those with non-religious affiliations. Although the sample for males was sufficient (N=46), the majority of the sample were females. There is a possible selection effect with the majority of recruitment for participation coming from a family studies and child development undergraduate program in a large public secular university with a large population of females. The average age of the sample was on the lower end of the emerging adult spectrum, lacking generalizability to the entire age group.

The sample can only be considered representative of early emerging adults who attend college in the southeast and identify as Christian. Findings cannot be generalized to other geographical regions and context, in which different denomination preferences and educational backgrounds exist.

Conclusions and Future Directions
The relationships between mature identity processes and faith maturity/integration reveal support for the current conceptualization of faith maturity and is supported by past research (Gebelt, Thomson, & Miele, 2009; Leak, 2009; Puffer et al., 2008; Watson & Morris, 2005). Such findings support the idea that a mature faith that is integrated into relationships is related to exploration and informational identity processes, and is even predicted by these processes (i.e., informational style). This exploratory style and process does not carry over into participants’ current level of faith exploration however, as measured by the Quest Scale. This suggests that satisfaction with a current faith commitment made through mature exploration and informational processes may inhibit current dimension levels of quest (i.e., faith exploration), especially for dimensions of valuing doubts and expecting change in beliefs within the Quest Scale.

It is evident that measuring exploration, or openness to exploration, within a Christian faith commitment is a difficult task. Commitment and exploration can be considered opposite terms, often placing a negative view on items measuring openness, exploration, doubt, and change. Erikson (1968) would view many of these concepts as negative for development within identity formation, if one is constantly doubting, questioning, and changing their beliefs, they are exemplifying more confusion, crisis, and a diffused commitment. The current faith exploration measure seems to be much more representative of a moratorium or diffused status regarding ones’ faith. Arnett and Jensen (2002) found that emerging adulthood is a time when commitments about faith and ideologies are questioned, renegotiated, and religious involvement becomes relatively low. Thus, emerging adults beliefs and ideologies are under intense scrutiny during this time, and finding a balance between exploration and commitment is difficult, as exemplified by the negative correlation between our two faith maturity measures.

The relationship between mature forms of identity processes and faith commitment/integration seems to suggest these exploratory and informational processes have taken place and lead to more integration of that commitment into relationships and behaviors. While informational style was found to be predictive of faith exploration, there was a lack of discrepancy between it and diffuse/avoidant style. Many criticisms of the current measure of faith exploration have been made (Edwards et al., 2011; Watson & Morris, 2005), however, suggesting that it measures exploration without commitment, which was highly supported by its’ strong relationships with diffuse/avoidant identity style and moratorium religious ego-identity
status. In sum, a valid measure of faith maturity should include exploration, commitment, and integration, but the exploration has to be balanced within the commitment, or the commitment will not produce behaviors associated with that commitment.

Analyses with demographic variables displayed at contextual influence on the outcomes of faith maturity as well. Environmental factors such as denomination affiliation, experiencing a crisis outside one’s control, and sex all acted as significant predictors. These relationships, coupled with the fact that the excluded student ministry sample of all males scored the highest on faith commitment/integration, suggests that the context of the sample is very important before interpreting results for associations within identity and faith processes. This supports previous findings regarding contextual factors (King, 2003). Important questions can be asked based off the current findings such as: Are the geographical influences in these relationships; Do sex differences extend beyond early emerging adulthood; What context best facilitate these mature processes? Future research should include a more generalized sample within the Christian community in an attempt to clear up some of these contextual influences. Certain environments seem to be better at facilitating or even forcing (i.e., outside crisis) mature identity and faith processes. In addition to including these different environments, future research should attempt to find commonalities between these context, in order to integrate common factors associated with exploratory and informational methods, promoting mature thought for Christian commitments.

Future research on faith maturity within Christianity should focus on informational processes, integration of beliefs and commitments into relationships, and developing a balanced scale of exploration that can take place within a commitment. A strong commitment would seemingly be less likely to explore, question, and doubt, but a strong mature commitment using informational processes should seemingly be open to discussion, tough questions, and reasonable doubts, to support growth in that commitment. This research also supports the analyses of subscales in future identity and faith research. Ego-identity status (i.e., religion), the subscales of faith commitment/integration, and faith exploration, all displayed unique and important discrepancies within the relationships of identity and faith maturity. The unique relationships would not have been found with the use of only their higher order constructs.
APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Approval
Office of the Vice President For Research  
Human Subjects Committee  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742  
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 1/9/2012

To: Jayce Long

Address: ************************  
Dept.: FAMILY & CHILD SCIENCE

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research  
The Relationship between Religious Socialization, Identity Formation, and Faith Maturity: An  
Account for Quality, Exploration, and Reasoning in Christian Emerging Adults

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the  
proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and one member of  
the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per per 45 CFR §  
46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to  
weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk  
and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be  
required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent  
form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be  
used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 1/7/2013 you must request a renewal of approval for  
continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your  
expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request  
renewal of your approval from the Committee.
You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is FWA00000168/IRB number IRB00000446.

Cc: Ron Mullis, Advisor
HSC No. 2011.7232
APPROVAL MEMORANDUM (for change in research protocol)

Date: 1/18/2012

To: Jayce Long

Address: ***********************
Dept.: FAMILY & CHILD SCIENCE

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research (Approval for Change in Protocol)
Project entitled: The Relationship between IDENTITY FORMATION AND FAITH MATUREITY

The form that you submitted to this office in regard to the requested change/amendment to your research protocol for the above-referenced project has been reviewed and approved.

If the project has not been completed by 1/7/2013, you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is FWA00000168/IRB number IRB00000446.

Cc: Ron Mullis, Advisor
HSC No. 2012.7694
APPENDIX B

Informed Consent
The Relationship between Identity Formation and Faith Maturity

Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating Christian commitments. The goal of this research study is to better understand how developing identities interact with Christian commitments in emerging adults.

This study is being conducted by Jayce Long.

There are 2 qualifications to participate in this study: (1) You must identify yourself as Christian (2) You must be between the ages of 18 and 25.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate in this study, you should continue with the following online questionnaire packet, which includes surveys about your identity and your Christian commitment.

Participating in this study may not benefit you directly, but it will help us learn about Christian commitments and facilitation of identity development within this population. You may find answering some of the questions upsetting, but we expect that this would not be different from the kinds of things you discuss with family or friends. You may skip any questions you don’t want to answer without penalty.

If you participate in the study, you will receive designated bonus points as appointed by your instructor or entry into a raffle for a cash gift for your time.

The information you will share with us if you participate in this study will be kept completely confidential to the full extent of the law. Your information will be assigned a code number that is unique to this study. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a secure digital file on the password protected computer of the researcher and only the researcher and his major professor, Dr. Ron Mullis will be able to see the list or questionnaires you participated in. No one at the Florida State University will be able to see your responses or even know whether you participated in this study. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, any information linking participant’s names to their responses will be destroyed. Study findings will be presented only in numerical form.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Jayce Long, *****************, or Dr. Ron Mullis, (850) 644-3271, rmullis@fsu.edu. If there are any additional questions or concerns, you can also contact the Florida State Institutional Review Board, Human Subjects Office at (850) 644-7900.
APPENDIX C

Measurement Tools
Mark one answer for each. Be as honest as possible, describing how true it really is and not how true you would like it to be.

Choose from these responses:
1 = never true  
2 = rarely true  
3 = true once in a while  
4 = sometimes true  
5 = often true  
6 = almost always true  
7 = always true

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never True</th>
<th>Always True</th>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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</table>

H1. I am concerned our country is not doing enough . . . . 1 to help the poor

V2. I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who . . . . . 1 died on the cross and rose again

V3. My faith shapes how I think and act each and . . . . . . 1 every day

H4. I help others with their religious questions and . . . . 1 struggles

H5. I tend to be critical of other people (R) . . . . . . . . . . . 1

H6. In my free time, I help people who have problems . . . 1 or needs

V7. My faith helps me know right from wrong . . . . . . . . 1

H8. I do things to help protect the environment . . . . . . 1

V9. I devote time to reading and studying my Bible . . . . 1

V10. I have a hard time accepting myself (R) . . . . . . . . . . . 1

V11. Every day I see evidence that God is active in . . . . 1 the world

V12. I take excellent care of my physical health . . . . . . 1
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>H13. I am active in efforts to promote social justice</td>
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<td>V14. I seek out opportunities to help me grow spiritually</td>
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<td>V15. I take time for periods of prayer or meditation</td>
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<td>H16. I am active in efforts to promote world peace</td>
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<td>H17. I accept people whose religious beliefs are different from mine</td>
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<td>H18. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and</td>
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<td>suffering in the world</td>
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<td>V19. As I grow older, my understanding of God changes</td>
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<td>V20. I feel overwhelmed by all the responsibilities and obligations I</td>
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<td>H21. I give significant portions of my time and money to help other</td>
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<td>H22. I speak out for equality for women and minorities</td>
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<td>V23. I feel God's presence in my relationships with other people</td>
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<td>V24. My life is filled with meaning and purpose</td>
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<td>V25. I do not understand how a loving God can allow so much pain and</td>
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<td>suffering in the world (R)</td>
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<td>V26. I believe that I must obey God's rules and commandments in order</td>
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<td>V27. I am confident that I can overcome any problem or crisis no matter</td>
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<td>H28. I care a great deal about reducing poverty in the United States</td>
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<td>H29. I try to apply my faith to political and social issues</td>
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</table>
V30. My life is committed to Jesus Christ . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
H31. I talk with other people about my faith . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
V32. My life is filled with stress and anxiety . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
H33. I go out of my way to show love to . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
people I meet
V34. I have a real sense that God is guiding me . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
H35. I do not want the churches of this nation . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
going involved in political issues (R)
H36. I like to worship and pray with others . . . . . . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
H37. I think Christians must be about the business . . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
of creating international understanding and harmony
H38. I am spiritually moved by the beauty of God’s . . . . . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
creation enough to help the poor

(R) ---reverse scored

12 item- Quest Scale

Batson & Schoenrade (1991)

Read each item and indicate to what degree it reflects your own thoughts and feelings.

Readiness to face existential questions without reducing their complexity

1. I was not very interested in religion until I began to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of my life.

   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 strongly agree

2. I have been driven to ask religious questions out of a growing awareness of the tensions in my world and in my relation to my world.

   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 strongly agree

3. My life experiences have led me to rethink my religious convictions.

   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 strongly agree

4. God wasn’t very important for me until I began to ask questions about the meaning of my own life.

   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 strongly agree

Self-criticism and perception of religious doubt as positive

5. It might be said that I value my religious doubts and uncertainties.

   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 strongly agree

6. For me, doubting is an important part of what it means to be religious.

   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 strongly agree

7. (-) I find religious doubts upsetting.

   strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 strongly agree
8. Questions are far more central to my religious experience than are answers.

| strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | strongly agree |

Openness to change

9. As I grow and change, I expect my religion also to grow and change.

| strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | strongly agree |

10. I am constantly questioning my religious beliefs.

| strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | strongly agree |

11. (-) I do not expect my religious convictions to change in the next few years.

| strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | strongly agree |

12. There many religious issues on which my views are still changing.

| strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | strongly agree |
IDENTITY STYLE INVENTORY (ISI3)
(Revised Version)

Michael D. Berzonsky
Department of Psychology
State University of New York at Cortland
Cortland, New York 13045

1992

Scoring Instructions:

Information-Orientation = (2 + 5 + 6 + 16 + 18 + 25 + 26 + 30 + 33 + 35 + 37)
Normative-Orientation = (4 + 10 + 19 + 21 + 23 + 28 + 32 + 34 + 40)
Diffuse-Orientation = (3 + 8 + 13 + 17 + 24 + 27 + 29 + 31 + 36 + 38)
Commitment = (1 + 7 + 9* + 11* + 12 + 14* + 15 + 20* + 22 + 39)

*For scoring purposes these items are reversed (9, 11, 14 & 20). I'd appreciate information about any investigations in which the measure is used.
PERSONAL SIMILARITIES

INSTRUCTIONS

You will find a number of statements about beliefs, attitudes, and/or ways of dealing with issues. Read each carefully, then use it to describe yourself. On the answer sheet, bubble in the number which indicates the extent to which you think the statement represents you. There are no right or wrong answers. For instance, if the statement is very much like you, mark a 5, if it is not like you at all, mark a 1. Use the 1 to 5 point scale to indicate the degree to which you think each statement is uncharacteristic (1) or characteristic (5) of yourself.

1. Regarding religious beliefs, I know basically what I believe and don't believe.  (COMM)
   (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME)  1  2  3  4  5  (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

2. I've spent a great deal of time thinking seriously about what I should do with my life.  (INFO)
   (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME)  1  2  3  4  5  (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

3. I'm not really sure what I'm doing in school; I guess things will work themselves out.  (DIFF)
   (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME)  1  2  3  4  5  (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

4. I've more-or-less always operated according to the values with which I was brought up.  (NORM)
   (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME)  1  2  3  4  5  (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

5. I've spent a good deal of time reading and talking to others about religious ideas.  (INFO)
   (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME)  1  2  3  4  5  (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

6. When I discuss an issue with someone, I try to assume their point of view and see the problem from their perspective.  (INFO)
   (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME)  1  2  3  4  5  (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

7. I know what I want to do with my future.  (COMM)
   (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME)  1  2  3  4  5  (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)
8. It doesn't pay to worry about values in advance; I decide things as they happen. (DIFF)
   (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

9. I'm not really sure what I believe about religion. (COMM/REV)
   (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

10. I've always had purpose in my life; I was brought up to know what to strive for. (NORM)
    (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

11. I'm not sure which values I really hold. (COMM/REV)
    (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

12. I have some consistent political views; I have a definite stand on where the government and country should be headed. (COMM)
    (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

13. Many times by not concerning myself with personal problems, they work themselves out. (DIFF)
    (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

14. I'm not sure what I want to do in the future. (COMM/REV)
    (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

15. I'm really into my major; it's the academic area that is right for me. (COMM)
    (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

16. I've spent a lot of time reading and trying to make some sense out of political issues. (INFO)
    (NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)
17. I'm not really thinking about my future now; it's still a long way off. (DIFF)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

18. I've spent a lot of time and talked to a lot of people trying to develop a set of values that make sense to me. (INFO)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

19. Regarding religion, I've always known what I believe and don't believe; I never really had any serious doubts. (NORM)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

20. I'm not sure what I should major in (or change to). (COMM/REV)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

21. I've known since high school that I was going to college and what I was going to major in. (NORM)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

22. I have a definite set of values that I use in order to make personal decisions. (COMM)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

23. I think it's better to have a firm set of beliefs than to be openminded. (NORM)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

24. When I have to make a decision, I try to wait as long as possible in order to see what will happen. (DIFF)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

25. When I have a personal problem, I try to analyze the situation in order to understand it. (INFO)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)
26. I find it's best to seek out advice from professionals (e.g., clergy, doctors, lawyers) when I have problems. (INFO)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

27. It's best for me not to take life too seriously; I just try to enjoy it. (DIFF)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

28. I think it's better to have fixed values, than to consider alternative value systems. (NORM)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

29. I try not to think about or deal with problems as long as I can. (DIFF)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

30. I find that personal problems often turn out to be interesting challenges. (INFO)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

31. I try to avoid personal situations that will require me to think a lot and deal with them on my own. (DIFF)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

32. Once I know the correct way to handle a problem, I prefer to stick with it. (NORM)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

33. When I have to make a decision, I like to spend a lot of time thinking about my options. (INFO)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

34. I prefer to deal with situations where I can rely on social norms and standards. (NORM)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)
35. I like to have the responsibility for handling problems in my life that require me to think on my own. (INFO)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

36. Sometimes I refuse to believe a problem will happen, and things manage to work themselves out. (DIFF)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

37. When making important decisions I like to have as much information as possible. (INFO)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

38. When I know a situation is going to cause me stress, I try to avoid it. (DIFF)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

39. To live a complete life, I think people need to get emotionally involved and commit themselves to specific values and ideals. (COMM)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)

40. I find it's best for me to rely on the advice of close friends or relatives when I have a problem. (NORM)

(NOT AT ALL LIKE ME) 1 2 3 4 5 (VERY MUCH LIKE ME)
EOMEIS-II: Religion (Bennion & Adams, 1986)

Read each item and indicate to what degree it reflects your own thoughts and feelings. If a statement has more than one part, please indicate your reaction to the statement as a whole.

Response Scale:  
1 = strongly agree  4 = disagree  
2 = moderately agree  5 = moderately disagree  
3 = agree  6 = strongly disagree.

1. When it comes to religion I just haven’t found anything that appeals and I don’t really feel the need to look.

   strongly agree  1  2  3  4  5  6 strongly disagree

2. A person’s faith is unique to each individual. I’ve considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.

   strongly agree  1  2  3  4  5  6 strongly disagree

3. I’ve never really questioned my religion. If it’s right for my parents it must be right for me.

   strongly agree  1  2  3  4  5  6 strongly disagree

4. I’m not sure what religion means to me. I’d like to make up my mind but I’m not done looking yet.

   strongly agree  1  2  3  4  5  6 strongly disagree

5. I don’t give religion much thought and it doesn’t bother me one way or the other.

   strongly agree  1  2  3  4  5  6 strongly disagree

6. I’ve gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual.

   strongly agree  1  2  3  4  5  6 strongly disagree

7. I attend the same church as my family has always attended. I’ve never really questioned why.

   strongly agree  1  2  3  4  5  6 strongly disagree

8. Religion is confusing to me right now. I keep changing my views on what is right and wrong for me.

   strongly agree  1  2  3  4  5  6 strongly disagree
Descriptive Questionnaire

**Birthdate:** (month/day/year) ___/___/_____

**Sex:**
_____ Male
_____ Female

**Race/Ethnicity:**
_____ White/Non-Hispanic
_____ Black/ African-American
_____ Hispanic origin or Latino
_____ American Indian or Alaskan Native
_____ Asian American
_____ Other, please specify:__________________

**Christian Denomination Affiliation:**
_____ Baptist
_____ Catholic
_____ Episcopalian/Anglican
_____ Lutheran
_____ Methodist/Wesleyan
_____ Mormon/Latter-Day Saints
_____ Pentecostal/Charismatic
_____ Presbyterian
_____ Other, please specify:__________________

**Strength of Faith:**

**Rate from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest):** How strong your current Christian faith commitment?
1-----2-----3-----4-----5

**Outside Crisis:**

Have you experienced a crisis outside of your control that has led you to your current spiritual commitment?
REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jayce E. Long

EDUCATION

2012- April (expected)
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL
M.S. Family and Child Sciences
3.88 GPA

2010
University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY
B.A. Psychology, Minor in Sociology
3.72 GPA, Magna cum Laude

PROFESSIONAL & ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Graduate Teaching Assistant, FSU Family and Child Sciences Fall 2010-Present

- Responsibilities (FAD 3220): Mentored students online, responding to email inquiry, grading discussion boards and paper assignments. Facilitated online learning through “reminder” and “herding” emails. Reviewed exams with students face to face. Met with fellow TA’s and supervising professors weekly.


- Responsibilities (FAD 3271): Contributed to development of new online course in department. Facilitated online learning using similar methods described for FAD 3220.

- Responsibilities (FAD 2230): Graded paper assignments, online post, and helped proctors exams. Handled questions and disputes about grading.

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<th>Course Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Florida State University</td>
<td>Summer 2011</td>
<td>FAD 3271 (online)</td>
<td>Ecological Contexts: Family as an Ecosystem</td>
<td>24</td>
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Counselor, Kanakuk/ Kids Across America Christian Sports “Kamps” Summer 2009 & 2010

Responsibilities: Mentoring and discipling multiple groups of 10-12 different adolescents, from urban areas, every eight days throughout the summer. Biblical teaching, healthy discipline, and coaching within multiple athletic sports. Displaying care, support, and affection for all participants of the camp.

Group Mentor, YMCA of Central Kentucky, Child Development Spring 2010

Responsibilities: Overseeing the afterschool program for fourth and fifth graders. Engaging the kids both mentally and physically. Creating challenging and fun activities for the children’s cognitive and physical development.

Undergraduate Research Assistant, UK Psychology Dept., Dr. Nathan DeWall Spring 2009

Responsibilities: Supervising participants in experiments, developing scripts, coding videos, and collecting data on mindfulness and self-regulation. Weekly meetings were attended to discuss current experiments and implications.

Undergraduate Research Assistant, UK Family Studies Dept., Dr. Jason Hans Spring 2009

Responsibilities: Contacting participants and executing a script for data collection on human reproduction practices.

Collegiate Athlete, University of Kentucky Football Fall 2006 – 2008

Contributed to bringing the program back to a winning tradition that included three consecutive winning seasons. A strong, disciplined work ethic, and interpersonal communication skills across diverse ethnic groups, was necessary.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Graduate assistantship and tuition waiver at the Florida State University, 2010 – 2012

Dean’s List five semesters at the University of Kentucky, 2006 – 2010

University of Kentucky Academic Commonwealth Scholarship, 2006 – 2010

Member of the Southeastern Conference Fall Academic Honor Roll, 2007 – 2008
RESEARCH INTERESTS

Religious socialization and identity formation, pertaining to Christian faith development/maturity; Adolescents and emerging adults.