

EXAMINING THE ROLE OF RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND WELL-BEING ON
ADULTS FROM DIVORCED AND NON-DIVORCED PARENTS

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the well-being of adults from divorced and non-divorced family backgrounds. The thrust of this thesis was to examine if and how adult well-being is influenced by family background factors, specifically support, safety, religiosity and spirituality.

Data for this analysis come from the National Survey of the Moral and Spiritual Lives of Children of Divorce, a nationally representative sample of 1,510 adults ages 18-35, evenly divided by either divorced or non-divorced backgrounds. Using Social Learning and Social Exchange Theories, a path model was created to inform and guide this investigation. Bivariate and multivariate analyses were used to identify similarities or differences within and between groups and test hypotheses.

Results indicate that adults from divorced homes, lower in spirituality and higher in religiosity experience lower well-being than adults from non-divorced homes, those with higher spirituality or lower religiosity. Childhood religiosity was not related to adult well-being for those from a divorced background. However, childhood religiosity demonstrated a positive relationship with adult well-being for adults from non-divorced backgrounds. The path model uncovered that, among other variables, income and family support were important predictors of well-being across groups. For the divorce group, education appears to be uniquely salient, while spirituality is more influential for the non-divorce group.

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Chapter One

Introduction to the Problem

Approximately 5% of first marriages in the 1850's U.S. ended in divorce. In contrast, between 40 and 50% of all U.S. marriages formed in the last decade of the 20th century are expected to end in divorce (Amato, 2000; 2001; Preston & McDonald, 1979). The increase in the number of divorces affects more than just two adults, as a result, approximately 40% of all children will experience parental divorce before reaching adulthood (Bumpass, 1990).

Research findings remain divided on how divorce affects children. The divergent interpretations may be separated into two views—traditional and adult fulfillment. The first, a more traditional view, holds that the heterosexual two-parent family is the fundamental institution of society—the setting in which adults achieve a sense of meaning, stability and security and the setting in which children develop into healthy, competent and productive citizens (Blankenhorn, 1995; Glenn, 1996; Popenoe, 1996; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Wallerstein, Lewis & Blakeslee, 2002; Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). Thus, any variation from the married two-parent family is less than optimal at best, and damaging at worst.

The second view, adults fulfillment, posits that children can and do develop successfully in any variety of family structures. Furthermore, divorce is seen as temporarily stressful but in the end represents a second chance for happiness for adults and an escape from a dysfunctional home environment for children. Under the adult fulfillment perspective, children are regarded as highly resilient individuals (Ahrons,

1994; Coontz, 1992; Demo, 1992; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Skolnick, 1991; Stacey, 1996).

Recent research findings have suggested that compared with young adults from intact families, young adults from divorced families often marry earlier, report more dissatisfaction with their marriages, and are more likely to divorce (Amato, 1999, 2000; Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin & Kierman, 1995; Kelly & Emery, 2003).

Furthermore, a longitudinal study by Cherlin and colleagues (1998) found that the gap in psychological well-being between offspring from divorced and nondivorced families grew larger—not smaller—with the passage of time. Consistent with this finding, a large number of related investigations have demonstrated that parental divorce is a risk-factor for multiple problems in adulthood. These studies revealed that low socioeconomic attainment, poor subjective well-being, increased marital problems, and a greater likelihood of seeing one's own marriage end in divorce were all risk factors of parental divorce (Amato, 1996; Amato & Booth, 1996; Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000; Ross & Mirowsky, 1999; Webster, Orbuch & House, 1995; Wolfinger, 1999).

Sun & Li (2002) found this pattern to be true for academic performance, but found psychological well-being as measured at two points pre- and two points post-divorce to display more of a U shaped distribution. Another body of concurring research has found that as adults, children of divorce suffer somewhat more difficulties than their peers from intact homes. A more recent investigation by Hetherington & Kelly (2002) suggested that 20 to 25% of children of divorce have serious psychological and social problems, compared with 10% of children from two-parent homes. However, Chase-

Landsdale, Cherlin and Kierman (1995) found that 82% of women and 94% of men from divorced homes did not exhibit any clinical levels of psychopathology. Differences are consistently found when comparing those from divorced backgrounds with those from intact backgrounds. However, the effect sizes reported are usually small (Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin, Cherlin & Kierman, 1995; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Kelly, 1993), and as a result call into question some of the previous findings, at the very least it makes some of the findings more dubious.

Purpose

Given the inconsistencies in research findings addressing the influence of divorce on adults who were raised in that family structure compared to a more traditional two-parent household, it stands that further investigation of this topic is warranted. Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to the research knowledge base by including some less utilized variables in the divorce adjustment literature into a new model based on the principles of social exchange and social learning theories in an attempt to see how adult well-being has been influenced by parental divorce status.

Rationale

A majority of the early research on divorce painted a bleak picture for children who grew up in divorced homes. Still, more contemporary researchers find that 75 to 80% of these children do not experience significant levels of psychological and/or social problems as a result of their parents' divorce (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002) and were just as likely to grow into well-adjusted adults. If divorce were as damaging as some researchers have predicted, then the problems believed to be associated with divorce should be greater among adult children of divorce than has currently been borne out by

research. If, however, divorce were only temporarily stressful, then long-term differences in psychological and social difficulties found between children who grow up in a divorced or intact home would be small.

Therefore it is possible to conjecture that other factors play an important role in mitigating the problems associated with divorce. Religion is one institutional factor that could provide some much needed information and answers to these complicated issues.

Much of the research conducted in the area of divorce adjustment is lacking in explicit theory. It is probable that this lack of theory utilization has contributed to the amount of contradictory findings on the subject. Explicit theories help investigators to reduce the amount of personal bias that can influence the research process. When no explicit theory is guiding the work, implicit theories, or personal values tend to guide by default. When findings guided only by personal values contradict one another much energy is wasted in critiquing the methodological weaknesses of the opposing viewpoint, when in fact, all methods of research have inherent problems. A more useful application of time and energy would be to seek to understand which theories are best applied to investigating divorce adjustment and how their components can further our understanding and improve our ability to explain the topic. Social Learning Theory, with its emphasis on learning and modeling behaviors, should help us to understand and explain how people are socialized in divorced versus non-divorced homes. Social Exchange Theory should facilitate our understanding of why people from both contexts choose to act in certain ways, while others do not. To this end, pertinent components of Social Learning and Social Exchange Theories individually, and then combined, will be reviewed as they

relate to the model of adult self concept, connectedness and well-being, developed for this investigation.

Research Questions

This study seeks to examine how growing up in a divorced/non-divorced context ultimately influences offspring well-being. In this investigation I also seek to develop a deeper understanding of how growing up in a religious/non-religious home influences adult well-being. To these ends, the following research questions were developed:

1. To what extent does growing up in a divorced home influence the well-being of adults?
2. To what extent does family religiosity influence well-being of adults in divorced and non-divorced homes?

Research Hypotheses

In order to address the research questions, three hypotheses were developed. Each hypothesis examines an important aspect of the current research questions. They are as follows:

H₁: Adults from divorced homes will display *lower* levels of well-being than adults from non-divorced homes.

H₂: Adults from non-religious homes will display *lower* levels of well-being than adults from highly religious homes.

H₃: Adults from non-religious divorced homes will display *lower* levels of well-being than adults from highly religious divorced homes.

Conceptual Model

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, a perspective fully explored by Albert Bandura (1977, 1986, 2001) and others (Bandura & Walters, 1959, 1963; Bussey & Bandura, 1999) suggests that learning occurs when children observe the actions or hear the words of others in any medium or format, and actively incorporate those observations into their own behavioral repertoire. He refers to this process as modeling, observational or vicarious learning. In essence, learning is a product of social interactions with others and emphasizes the role of the person in forming behaviors in response to their environment. Through modeling, one may learn a new behavior or improve upon a current behavior. The model may be symbolic.

How successful one is at modeling depends on a number of processes. First, attentional processes refer to the observers' ability to recognize and understand the unique characteristics of the modeled behavior, as well as those of the model performing the behavior. Combined, these factors influence if the behavior is even noticed in the first place. At this point I depart somewhat from Bandura (1977), where he sees observation as a reflective process involving mental expectations of outcomes based on modeled behavior instead of a product of past reinforcement experiences, I see room for both descriptions based on individual development.

Second, retentional processes suggest that observations of models or symbols need to be turned into a mental symbol and then be remembered and that rehearsal, particularly of unfamiliar behaviors, is of great benefit. Here Bandura suggests (1977)

that there may be variability in the ability to perform retentional processes based on development and level of maturity.

Third, the motor reproduction process suggests that the mental image of the modeled behavior and the imitation performed by the observer should match and that the observer should be physically capable of accomplishing the imitation.

The final process is motivational. How much value the observer places on the model's behavior as well as the benefits obtained by the model associated with the behavior are two factors influential to learning. If the model is in a position of power or status relative to the observer, or the observer self-identifies as similar to the model, then the influence of the model is increased. Awareness is key in this process. If the observer is not aware of the connection between a model's behavior and the outcome that follows, the observer is not likely to be motivated to imitate the observed behavior. The role of self-evaluation increases in importance in relation to motivation according to individual development (Bandura, 1977). These four processes are thought to be relevant for both children and adults.

Bandura posits (1977) that when the environments are equal, individuals with an array of behavioral options and practiced self-regulation will experience greater freedom than those with more limited behaviors and less self-discipline (Bandura, 1977). In sum, learning occurs when a model is observed to behave in a manner that is rewarding enough to be noticed, symbolized, remembered, imitated and motivating.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange theory is grounded in a number of assumptions. First and foremost is a focus on the individual. All social groups, from families to nations, are seen

as collections of individuals. Norms, culture, social structure, etc. spring from the actions of individuals. Social Exchange holds that if one understands an individual's motivation, that motivation can be used to predict future behaviors or explain past behaviors in social situations. Social Exchange posits that individual actors are motivated by self-interest. In other words, individuals seek things and relationships they regard as beneficial to themselves. What sets Social Exchange apart from strict Behaviorism is the assumption that individuals are rational. Individuals do not simply react to a stimulus, but actively choose from perceived alternatives. Consequently, individuals have the ability to calculate the ratio of costs to rewards and make the choice that is most rewarding (Chibucos, Leite, & Weis, 2005).

Concepts

Social Exchange theory is built upon the concepts of rewards and costs. Profit and comparison levels are also an integral part of Social Exchange theory. The above mentioned concepts are defined below. These principles form the foundation of Social Exchange theory.

Rewards

For something to qualify as a reward it must be perceived as a rewarding. A reward may be material, as in an Olympic gold medallion received by an athlete. It may also be immaterial, as to what that gold medallion represents to the Olympic athlete who received it. Some rewards are seen by nearly everyone as such, while other rewards may be perceived as rewarding by only a select few. Perception ultimately determines what is a reward and what is not (Chibucos, Leite, & Weis, 2005).

Costs

Costs are generally not perceived as beneficial to an individual's interests. Costs can be punishments or rewards that are lost as a result of social exchanges. In fact, there are three potential categories of costs associated with social exchanges. They are, direct, investment, and opportunity costs. Direct costs include things associated with the use of or loss of time, financial resources, or other structural resources that are dedicated to the exchange. Spending almost all of one's time in training, forgoing any social pleasures, not being able to spend any quality time with one's family and generally isolated oneself for continued practice sessions, all in the pursuit of Olympic gold can be seen as direct costs. Investment Cost consists of the aggregate of emotional, personal and cognitive energy invested into the social exchange by the actors involved. Opportunity costs represent any rewards that may be lost or sacrificed as a result of the relationship or social exchange. In the end, if there is no Olympic medal or even an Olympic appearance the cost can be seen as exceeding the rewards (Blau, 1964; Chibucos, Leite, & Weis 2005; Homans, 1974; La Valle, 1994; Lewis & Spanier, 1982; Makoba, 1993).

Profit

Profit is defined as the sum of rewards to costs for any decision. Profit may be calculated in the equation $R + C = P$, where R equals rewards and C equals cost, and P equals profit. If the net profit (R+C) is positive, the current behavior will continue or that alternative will continue to be selected. If the net profit (R+C) is negative, then the current behavior will be ended and will be replaced with an alternative behavior or choice that is perceived as more profitable. If one is experiencing a divorce and the pastor and congregation is supportive and friendly then the cost of attending that specific church and

maintaining relationships there will be less than the rewards, resulting in a positive net profit and continued attendance. On the other hand, if the pastor is aloof and the congregation ostracizing, this may make the costs of attendance exceed the rewards, resulting in a negative net profit forcing one to leave this environment for some other more profitable alternative.

Social Exchange theory differentiates between immediate profits and long-term profits. Social Exchange theory holds that when immediate profits are equal, then individuals will choose the alternative that provides the most profit in the long-term. Conversely, when long-term profits between behaviors/alternatives are equal, the alternative that provides the most short-term profit will be selected. If one believes in a life after death with rewards and punishments given according to your behavior here on earth, then one would most certainly attempt to act in a way that maximizes rewards in the afterlife, even if that means giving up short-term pleasures such as dating, pre-marital sex, alcohol or drugs. If one believes that there is no after-life, making long-term profits equal, then self-indulgence presents as a more viable option, as it would be one of many beneficial short-term alternatives to choose from.

Profit Comparison

The concept of profit may be analyzed on two separate levels. During the first level an actor compares what other actors in similar positions have relative to him/herself. For example, as it relates to the central idea of this thesis, if one grew up in a divorced family, a level one comparison could be evaluating general well-being compared to others who grew up in a divorced family. The second level involves how well an actor perceives themselves to be doing when compared to others who are not in similar

positions. In this case one who grew up in a divorced family one could compare general well-being with those who grew up in intact or adopted families (White & Klein, 2002). The basis of the comparison allows individuals to choose alternatives or behaviors that maximize their profits. Despite these rational choices, individuals may choose alternatives that bring them the greatest reward, which may not match with what others perceive to be rewarding.

Merging Learning and Exchange Theories

Concepts from both Social Learning and Social Exchange Theories will provide a framework for predicting and later explaining the results of this investigation. Modeling would suggest that adults who were raised in divorced homes may have learned unhealthy interpersonal skills as children and carry those skill deficits into their adult relationships. Profit comparisons would suggest that when comparing life-satisfaction, overall happiness and well-being for those from intact homes, a within group, or first level comparison should be fairly similar. A second level comparison, or comparing the life-satisfaction, overall happiness, and well-being of those from a divorced home with those from an intact home should yield differences between the groups. Modeling would also suggest that the relationship-based principles read in holy books, listened to over pulpits, in mosques or synagogues and demonstrated in supportive faith communities should elevate individual happiness, life-satisfaction, and well-being independent of family background. Social Learning Theory suggests that who we are may be a combination of environment, self, behavior.

The Walker Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-being identifies influential aspects of the environment that together help form one's sense of

self. Parents are generally the first and initially most influential models of behavior available within our environment as children, and often their influence continues, though lessened, irrespective of age, physical, or emotional distance. Religion provides a model for parents to imitate, which in turn is observed by their children and may be imitated as well. Spirituality provides a connectedness between what or Whomever one symbolizes as sacred. Religiosity provides an additional parameter, whether concrete, as in a pastor or friend in the faith community, or symbolic, as in a prophet from a holy book or a Higher Power. Those with no exposure to religion, religiosity or spirituality in their environment may not have adequate models available to them as part of the sense of who they are. Social Exchange and Social Learning Theories suggest that if the observer, in this case the children, perceive the behavior modeled by their parents as rewarding or beneficial, then the children are more likely to value and imitate the behavior as adults. If they perceive their parents' behavior as less rewarding, they will likely seek to avoid modeling that behavior in their own lives. How successful adults from divorced and non-divorced homes are at modeling the behavior of their valued concrete or symbolic models will influence how satisfied and happy they are, which in turn contributes to well-being. If they perceived their parents to have profited from divorcing, and they feel they have profited themselves from the overall situation, compared to others in similar (e.g. divorced), and dissimilar (non-divorced) situations, then they should be happier and more satisfied with life, and demonstrate higher well-being than those who did not profit from their parents divorce. Furthermore, the same should be true of adult who grew up in non-divorced homes—if they perceived an overall profit they should be happier and satisfied than those who did not perceive such profits.

Conceptual Definitions

In this section brief descriptions of pertinent variables and concepts central to this investigation are introduced. A visual representation of how each variable fits together and interacts is presented as well. Family Background consists of certain demographics such as Age, Sex, Education, Marital Status and Religion. These measures along with other factors help to develop the conceptual model used in this thesis (see Figure 1.1). The section concludes with an overview of chapters one through five.

Family Background

The crux of family background is growing up in a divorced or non-divorced home. The types of models and modeling quality provided in either situation are likely to vary quite a bit within and between groups. This thesis seeks to describe if the differences that may exist between each family environment are temporary or of a lasting nature for children who are now adults.

Age

Age is used in to mark the passage of time, as well as the maturation and decomposition of the body.

Sex

Biological sex, and the socially constructed gender roles associated with those attributes, color one's view of and experience in the world.

Education

Education refers to the level of formal schooling one has completed and is usually measured in number of years spent attending classes or degrees earned.

Marital Status

Marital status is generally defined dichotomously as being legally and lawfully married or not.

Income

Income is defined as how much money one makes. It is common to have income reported in increments of money made per hour, day, week, month and year. Income is generally related to what job one has, which, consequently is also related to education.

Race/Ethnicity

Race is defined by Healey (2006) as a mode of categorization utilizing ancestry or heredity. Racial categorization, often based on phenotype, may influence how one is perceived and responded to by others. Ethnicity, a related concept, may be used to identify people based on nationality, language, traditions, ceremonies or rituals, and is not hereditary (Healey, 2006).

Religion

To put it succinctly, Burkhart and Solari-Twadell (2001) define religion as “a set of beliefs, rites, and rituals adopted by a group of people (p. 4).” Religion provides an organizational scheme that includes behaviors that are both prescriptive and proscriptive. Man’s relationship with and to God or some Higher Power or Organizational Force in the universe are particularly addressed by religion.

Self

What makes us who we are is a question for the ages. Scholars, scientists, religious leaders and philosophers have all weighed in on the matter and provided varied perspectives on how to answer the question. Social sciences have identified a number of

variables that together provide a more accurate picture of self development based on a combination of individual, group, social and cultural factors. Self concept changes with age. Whether we are married or not, and what level of formal education we have acquired holds powerful sway over our personal identities. Income is influential on who one is and how one sees the world. Race influences how one perceives and is perceived by others. All of these elements have been identified as particularly influential in the development of self. I propose that religion, in conjunction with family background, holds substantial influence on the formation of adult self concept.

Spirituality

Burkhart and Solari-Twadell (2001) define spirituality as the “experience of and integration of meaning and purpose in life through connectedness with self, others, art, music, literature, or a power greater than oneself (p. 5).” These definitions are essentially describing spirituality as depth of connectedness to something within and/or beyond one’s self, that is subjectively and individually sacred. Therefore, even one who is unsure of God’s existence (Agnostic) or who denies God’s existence (Atheist) may still be spiritual.

Religiosity

Religiosity may include three components: spiritual beliefs, religious practices and involvement with faith community (Dollahite & Marks, 2005; Lambert & Dollahite, 2006). An example of a spiritual belief is that one is a literal child of God. An example of a religious practice is praying five times a day while facing Mecca. An example of involvement in a faith community could be attending Bible study camp.

Life Satisfaction

Campbell (1976) suggest that the "...quality of life lies in the experience of life...(p.118)" Given that we all have different experiences of life, and even those with similar experiences may vary in their interpretation of those experiences, life satisfaction may be thought of as subjective and individual. Life Satisfaction is a global sense of satisfaction with life (Myers & Diener, 1995). Satisfaction with work and marriage, among other variables, contributes to or detracts from overall life satisfaction.

Happiness

The concept of happiness is subjective and personal. For example, one may be happy to be bumped from an overbooked flight and feel elated over the extra time in an unexpected destination. In the same situation, one may be unhappy at the disruption of travel plans and feel resentful and bitter towards what may be perceived as an irresponsible practice by the airline company. Surprisingly, positive and negative affect are unrelated (Bradburn, 1969; Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999; Myers & Diener, 1995). Happiness then, is feeling more positive feelings than negative feelings in one's life and is usually a result of positive interpretations and perceptions of one's circumstances (Myers & Diener, 1995).

Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being has been understood as people's evaluation of their own quality of life in both cognitive and affective matters (Campbell, 1976; Diener, 2000). Campbell (1976) suggests that "... [t]he major determiners of well-being are psychological rather than economic or demographic" (p.122). Thus, subjective well-being may be arrived at by combining how satisfied one is with life with their reported degree

of happiness. To that end, life satisfaction and happiness will be utilized, as they meet both of the conditions set forth.

Importance of Study

My study will make a number of contributions to the existing literature base. First, it will include religion as an important, yet often overlooked demographic variable. Second, it will shed further light on the relationship between spirituality, religiosity and well-being. The third contribution will be the utilization of a non-traditional family structure, along with a control group, for comparison in religious research. A fourth contribution will be to test the assumptions of traditional and adult fulfillment research traditions as they relate to divorce adjustment. Fifth, this study will use a non-college sample, thereby allowing my findings to be generalizable to populations beyond those who select themselves into higher education. Finally, in a related vein, the study is the first to use a nationally representative sample of adults who grew up in divorced/non-divorced homes, thus enabling me to generalize findings on a national scale. Each contribution in and of itself is important, but when taken together could be described as ground-breaking.

Overview

In Chapter One the reader was introduced to the investigative issue at hand, followed by the purpose and rationale for investigating said issue. The theoretical orientation and conceptual definitions, along with the model, facilitated cogent discussion. The literature review couches the thesis within an explicit context and provides an opportunity to compare hypotheses and research questions to the extant body of research. The results and discussion sections can be found in Chapters Four and Five.

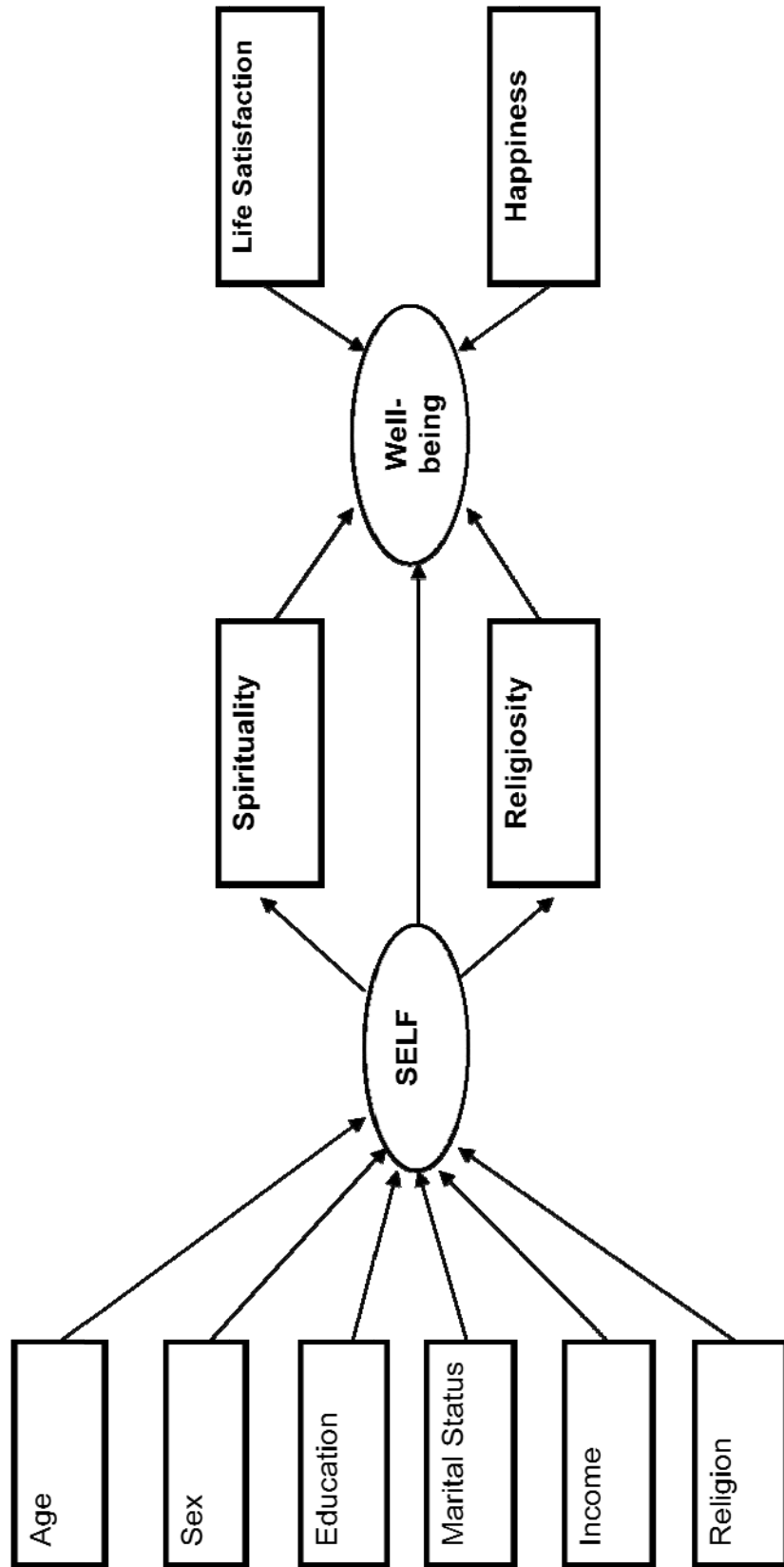


Figure 1.1 Walker Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-being.

The thesis comes to a close in Chapter Five with suggestions for future research directions and the conclusion. In addition, some implications for research and ideas about future analyses are discussed.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter begins with a review of pertinent literature related to specific issues found in this thesis and its theoretical constructs and model, these included such topics as religion, religiosity, spirituality and well-being. It continues by identifying and examining the nature of the relationships between and among well-being, religiosity, and spirituality. The chapter concludes with a summary statement addressing the relevant issues identified in the review of literature for this thesis.

Divorce and Future Relationships

Researchers generally agree that parental divorce affects children and that these affects can be present even into adulthood. Studies have revealed that adults who come from divorced homes have difficulties with relationships in general, and that these difficulties are exacerbated in close relationships (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004; Wallerstein, Lewis & Blakeslee, 2002). Wallerstein and Lewis (2004) suggested that children learn from the divorce and break-up of their parents' marital relationship that interpersonal relationships can be unstable, weak, and ultimately unreliable, and these assumptions lead to problems in their relationships. These difficulties included a negative attitude about romantic relationships and marriage, being mistrustful and fearing commitment (Arditti, 1999; Boyer-Pennington, Pennington, & Spink, 2001; Toomey & Nelson, 2001) as well as fear of repeating the mistakes of their parents (e.g. divorce), fear of abandonment, betrayal and rejection (Boyer-Pennington, et al., 2001; Mahl, 2001). These fears tend to negatively affect their current intimate relationships.

Many adults from divorced homes fear conflict, interpreting even the presence of conflict in their romantic relationships as a sign that divorce is imminent (Wallerstein, Lewis & Blakeslee, 2000; Conway, Christensen, & Herlihy, 2003). These fears were not completely unfounded, in light of the steady divorce rates and marital instability reported among children of divorce when compared to other populations. It was found that conflict often precluded their parents' divorce (Boyer-Pennington, Pennington, & Spink, 2001; Wallerstein, Lewis & Blakeslee, 2000). One explanation suggested the higher divorce rate among adults from divorced homes was a direct result of unhealthy communication skills learned from their parents. These children, now adults, often unknowingly carry the same detrimental patterns that led to their parents' divorce into their own marriages and romantic relationships (Toomey & Nelson, 2001; Mahl, 2001). Adults from divorced homes tended to withdraw more during conflict than their counterparts from intact families. This withdrawal has been shown to negatively influence their intimate relationships. Also, research findings uncovered that divorce seen by adults from divorced homes was often considered a more viable option than for adults from intact families (Conway, Christensen, & Herlihy, 2003).

Religion

Around 3.5 billion people the world over consider religion, whatever the definition, to be an important influence in their everyday lives (Paloutzian, 1996). Attempts to describe religion can typically be separated into two categories, or some mixture of the two: substantive and functional. In his critical and groundbreaking work, pioneering religious scholar William James (1902) concluded that religion consisted of the “[F]eelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they

apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.(p. 32)” Other scholars provided equally compelling descriptions that included beliefs in something/someone divine or all-powerful, rituals and other acts of worship directed towards that person or thing, and the idea that the very conception and how one relates to the divine is culturally informed (Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975; Spiro, 1966). Taken together, these substantive descriptions indicated that religion must be viewed through the lens of culture that demarcated a man’s position in relation to a being or force greater than him or herself.

Scholars that adhere to the functional description of religion suggested that religion consisted of actions, thoughts and beliefs relating life and death (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993), and a designated meaningful collection of symbols, behaviors and beliefs, adhered to individually or as a group, that center on life’s conditions (Bellah, 1970; Yinger, 1970). In other words, these scholars see religion as man’s attempt to come to grips with his own existential humanity.

It is beyond the scope of the current investigation to attempt to reconcile the diverging viewpoints of religious scholars over what is the most comprehensive or correct description of religion. Although it is likely that all have some merit, whatever definition is ultimately the concept holds influence, and as such merits further examination.

Religion and Divorce

The idea that religious denomination and divorce are related has received substantial attention. A meta-analysis comprised of 10 important studies (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar & Swank, 2001) that investigated the relationship between

religious affiliation and divorce proneness supported the hypothesis that having some form of religious affiliation did influence divorce probabilities. In fact, findings suggested that divorce rates varied by religious affiliation (Bumpass & Sweet, 1972; McCarthy, 1979; Albrecht, Bahr, & Goodman, 1983). The recent U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, by the PEW Forum on religious and public life (2008) confirmed this fact. The PEW forum study demonstrated that 12% of those were either separated or divorced, and the percentages between denominations ranged from 19% for other Christians to 5% for Hindus (see Figure 2.1). Those respondents who were unaffiliated reported separation or divorce levels equal to the average of the sample, of about 12%.

Religiosity

Merely identifying oneself as a Catholic or Protestant does not explain how Catholic or Protestant one may actually be. For this issue it is the degree on one's faith that is at issue, in short just how Catholic or Protestant is one's identity. Religions set forth a specific identity and delineate a baseline of behaviors and beliefs. Religiosity, within this context, describes how religious one is. In their research, Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Rye, Butter, Belavich, Hipp, Scott and Kadar (1997) reported that definitions of religiousness or religiosity included personal and institutional beliefs and practices. An example of a personal belief could be believing in God or some Higher Power (1997). Attending religious services on designated days, the amount that one engages in prayer, sacrifice and religious-based abstinence, organizational involvement, meeting faith community obligations, and accepting opportunities to be part of something 'bigger' than the self are all examples of religious practices (Dollahite & Marks, 2005). Religiosity has traditionally been measured by frequency of attendance at a house of

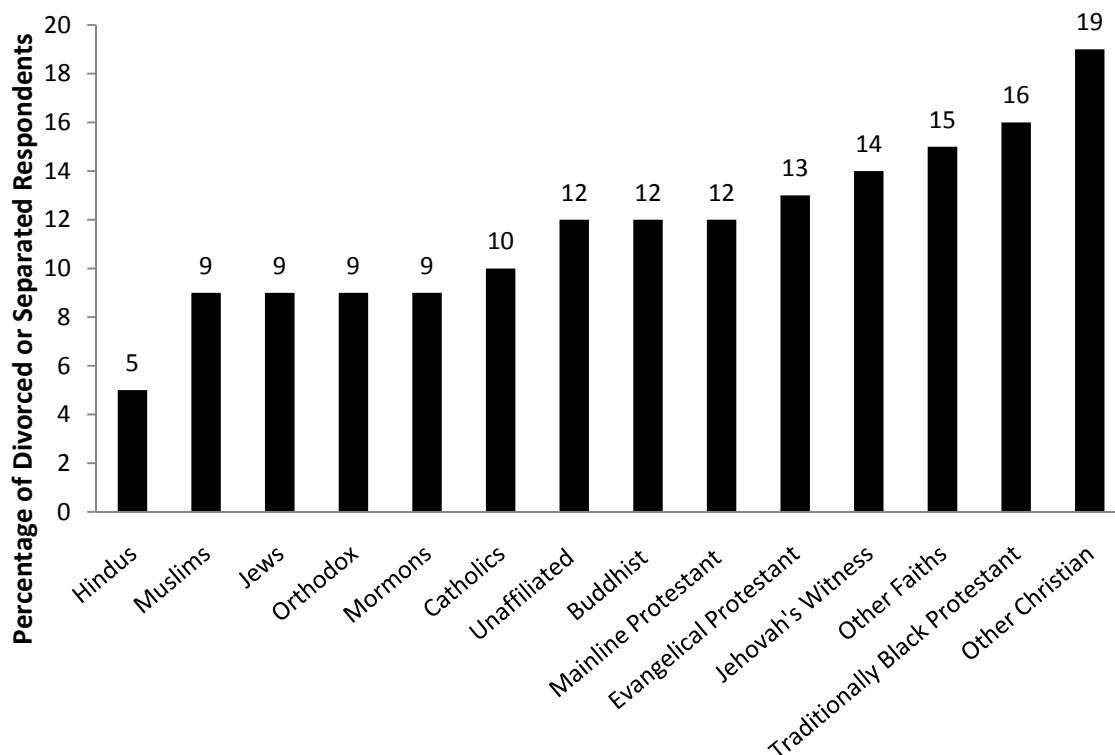


Figure 2.1 Prevalence of Divorce or Separation by Religious Denomination. Note: Adapted from the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2008), The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life¹.

worship (Maselko & Kubzansky, 2006; Poloma & Pendleton, 1990; Witter, Stock, Okun & Haring, 1985). This measurement has been found to be problematic, in that attendance

¹ The U.S Religious Landscape Study is a nationally representative study of adults 18 and older that utilized random digit dialing to obtain an n of (35,308). It was conducted in both English and Spanish and was combined with the Pew SURVEY OF Muslim Americans (2007) which was conducted in Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, and English. Each denomination represents a minimum of 100 respondents providing greater representativeness to date. The survey oversampled for Hindus, Buddhists, and Orthodox Christians, but was weighted to correct for this. 500 respondents were cell-phone only, but did not differ significantly from the land-line respondents.

expectations vary between denominations because using a count measure can miss the level of personal religiousness, based on personal belief and devotion. For example, are Catholics who attend Mass three times a week for an hour, more or less religious than Latter-day Saints who attend one service every Sunday for three hours? In fact, many denominations hold services only once a week and most measures that use the count method only measure days, not hours per day. A similar argument can be made for frequency of prayer. Are Muslims who pray five times a day equally religious to Southern Baptists who may pray just as frequently? To obtain useful information regarding level of religiosity across all faith traditions a global measure assessing personal salience was determined to be a more relevant measure over the simple activity count.

Spirituality

Gallup and Lindsay (1999) reported that 82% of adults in the U.S. feel a need for spiritual growth. However, spirituality is generally quite individual, and for this reason there is no consensus on the definition of this concept (George, Larson, Koenig & McCullough, 2000; Zinnebauer et al., 1997). Furthermore, Zinnebauer and colleagues (1997) found spirituality to be most often described in experiential and/or personal terms. Feeling or experiencing a relationship with God, Christ, nature, or a transcendent reality is an example of experiential spirituality. A personal belief example would be having a belief in God or a Higher Power or faith in the divine or personal values. However, spirituality has been found to be not confined to only those who can be identified with a Christian religion, in fact in some cases may have no relationship with formal religions at all (Dyson, Cobb & Forman, 1997). Therefore, several authors have concluded that

spirituality can include such concepts as the search for meaning, peace, wholeness, individuality, and harmony (Tanyi, 2002). Burkhart and Solari-Twadell (2001) suggested a more inclusive definition of spirituality that not only includes connectedness to a higher power or force, but with self, others, art, music, literature and by integrating these experiences, meanings and purposes through those connections. Therefore, even one who is unsure of God's existence (Agnostic) or who denies God's existence (Atheist) may still be spiritual. Measures of spirituality that place increased emphasis on individual thoughts, beliefs and experiences relating to spirituality in lieu of enumerating rituals and service attendance have recently surfaced in the literature (Sawatzky, Ratner & Chiu, 2005). Thus, much like religiosity, spirituality can also require a global measures assessing personal salience.

Religiosity and Spirituality

The overlap of the concepts of religiosity and spirituality has become apparent. In fact, religiosity and spirituality often share features, such as faith or belief in a Higher Power and integrating one's beliefs and values with one's behavior on a daily basis (Zinnebauer et al., 1997). Where they diverge is the focus of religiosity on organizational or institutional beliefs and practices, while spirituality emphasizes the more personal qualities of connection or a relationship with a higher being (Zinnebauer et al., 1997). It is possible for one to ascribe to a specific religion, yet not believe or practice according to the teachings of that religion. It is also possible for one to belong to a religion and go through the prescribed motions, yet feel no relationship or connection with its deity. In sum, spirituality and religiosity are distinct yet interrelated concepts. Any attempt to measure one without the other will likely lead to conflicting results as their relationship is

only partially understood. Thus, both constructs have been included in the current investigation.

Happiness

Happiness is generally defined as experiencing relatively more positive affect and relatively less negative effect. Research is divided as to how happiness relates to age, with some reporting no relationship between age and happiness (Latten, 1989; Myers, 2000; Myers & Diener, 1995; Stock, Okun, Haring, & Witter, 1983), while others found it varied over the life span (Argyle, 1999; Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Charles, Reynolds & Gatz, 2001; Easterlin, 2006; Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). In their survey of 2,727 respondents, Mroczek and Kolarz (1998) found positive affect declined slightly for the young (25-35) and then increased from 35 up through 74. Interestingly, these same authors found an inverse relationship between age and negative affect, with the greatest amount experienced by the young (25-35). Using four waves of the *Longitudinal Study of Generations*, Charles, Reynolds and Gatz (2001) found positive affect to be slightly higher for the young than for the old (15-85 years) and that positive affect decreased with age. Furthermore, these authors found negative affect levels to be highest for the young, but decreased rapidly from 15 to 60, then slowly leveled off through 85. Easterlin (2006) found happiness increased from 18 until 51, then began a slow decline through 89, while Frey and Stutzer (2002) suggest that happiness increases with age. In their analysis using the *General Social Survey*, Blanchflower and Oswald (2004) concluded that happiness increased with age. Most pertinent to this investigation is what occurs roughly between the ages of 16 and 35. Within these age ranges, it appears that findings are more easily reconciled; positive and negative affect declined slightly,

while overall happiness increased slightly, (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Charles, Reynolds, & Gatz, 2001; Easterlin, 2006; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). When compared to those 36 years and older, younger people appeared to experience higher levels of negative affect and were less happy overall (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Charles, Reynolds, & Gatz, 2001; Easterlin, 2006). Findings are less clear regarding positive affect, with some research reporting younger people experienced less when compared to those over 36, while others suggest younger people experienced more than their elder counterparts (Charles, Reynolds, & Gatz, 2001; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998).

The relationship between gender and happiness is more straightforward, with the majority of research pointing to no relationship between the two variables (Charles, Reynold & Gatz, 2001; Diener, Sandvik, Seidlitz, & Diener, 1993; Haring, Stock, & Okun, 1984; Robins & Regier, 1991; see Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998 for an exception). Those with more formal education report higher positive affect (Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998) and Easterlin (2001) found that while those with more education and greater income were happier, on average, than those with less, the level of happiness for both groups remained stable across the life course. Marriage has been associated with higher levels of happiness across the life span and those who are divorced, separated or widowed experience lower levels of happiness than the ever- or remarried (Easterlin, 2003). Remarriages appear, however, to be less happy than first marriages (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004). Thus, divorce appears to exert a small but possibly lasting influence on levels of happiness.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction has been understood as people's subjective evaluation of their own quality of life in cognitive matters (Diener, 2000). Easterlin (2006) discovered that satisfaction with family life approximately mirrored that of happiness when compared over the life span but peaked at 50 instead of 51. Research by Mroczek and Spiro (2005) reached similar conclusions only their model peaked at 65. Life satisfaction and education have been found to be significantly and positively associated (Bergan & McConatha, 2000). Married respondents reported higher levels of general life-satisfaction than non-married respondents (Bergan & McConatha, 2000). People who are specifically satisfied with their marriages/families and work tend to be generally satisfied with life. For example, in their study on life satisfaction, Bergan and McContha (2000) reported that married respondents revealed higher levels of general life satisfaction than those who were not married. Those who are generally satisfied with life typically report high levels of well-being (Myers & Diener, 1995). However, when people with high levels of life satisfaction encountered a major negative life event, (e.g. unemployment) they reacted more negatively than people with lower initial levels of life satisfaction, and were less likely to return to pre-negative event satisfaction levels up to three years after (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2004). Events such as unemployment (Lucas, et al., 2004), developing a (severe) disability (Lucas, in press-a), widowhood (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2003), divorce (Lucas, 2005; 2007) and experiencing parental divorce (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004) have been demonstrated to lower life-satisfaction, sometimes for years. Particularly pertinent to this thesis is the finding that when compared with ever-marrieds, those who do divorce started with lower pre-divorce

levels of positive affect and life-satisfaction. Furthermore, those who divorced typically did not return to even pre-divorce levels of well-being seven years after the event (Lucas, 2007). Thus, the experience of divorce appears to exert a small but possibly lasting influence on life-satisfaction levels for those involved.

Well-Being

Well-being is a term with numerous definitions. For example, a report in Australia by Kaldor, Hughes, Castle and Bellamy (2004) lists seven categories they suggest as dimensions addressed by health and well-being measures. The categories include, but are not limited to: a) general and physical health; b) mental health; c) other measures such as self-esteem, purpose in life, optimism; d) satisfaction with life; e) sense of security; f) relational well-being; and g) concern for others. Other research has defined well-being as cognitive, emotional and social (Amato, 2005), psychological (Blaine & Crocker, 1995; Genia, 1996; Krause, Ellison & Wulff, 1998), psychosocial/psychological adjustment (Salsman, Brown, Brechting & Carlson, 2005; Steffen & Fearing, 2007), spiritual (Genia, 1996; Lustyk, Beam, Miller & Olson, 2006; Miller, Gridley, Chester, Nunn & Vickers, 2001), subjective (Barkan & Greenwood, 2003; Ellison, 1991; Kamp Dush & Amato, 2005; Witter, Stock, Okun & Haring, 1985), and happiness (Myers & Diener, 1995).

Given the apparent multifaceted nature of well-being, the selection of elements must be carefully weighted by any researcher interested in using this construct. To that end, the three components of well-being identified by Myers and Diener (1995) are of particular interest. They defined well-being as; the presence of positive affect; the absence of negative affect; and satisfaction with life. For these authors having or experiencing mostly positive emotions, paired with generally positive interpretations of

life's daily events, predisposes one to feel elevated subjective well-being. They suggested that those who perceived life's daily events or circumstances as detrimental or out of their control tended to experience negative emotions related to those events or circumstances and that those negative perceptions created a disposition to feeling anxiety, depression and anger, which in turn tended to lower subjective well-being. Furthermore, Myers and Diener (1995) uncovered that positive perceptions or emotions were not mutually exclusive with negative perceptions or emotions. These authors hold that one could experience high or low levels of one or both types of emotions, or even have little variation at all. Interestingly, the frequency of positive and negative emotions is inversely related (Myers & Diener, 1995). An investigation by Davern, Cummins, and Stokes (2007) suggested that as a construct, subjective well-being include affective or emotional components, as well as cognitive components—a combination that allowed them to explain 90% of the variance in subjective well-being. In sum, general well-being is related to the relative presence of positive emotions, the relative lack of negative emotions, and satisfaction with life.

Religion and Well-Being

In a review study on religion and well-being, the authors concluded that those who are concerned with well-being must seriously consider the role the concept of religion can and does play in what is typically viewed as well-being (Poloma & Pendleton, 1990). Consequently, the authors reported that people who were religious tended to report higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction, when compared with their less-religious counterparts. An investigation by Okun (1983) involving predictors of subjective well-being found religion to be more influential than age, gender or race.

The same study found religion to be as influential on subjective well-being as education, marital status, SES composite and social activity. However, religion was found to be less influential on subjective well-being when compared to income, health, loneliness, adjustment, occupational status, neuroticism, family satisfaction and work satisfaction (Okun, 1983).

The relationship between religion and subjective well-being has been shown not vary by sex (Witter, Stock, Okun & Haring, 1985). Pollner (1989) found participating in a divine relationship to be correlated with global happiness and life satisfaction. The author also found a similar pattern when controlling for race, income, age, marital status, and church attendance. Ellison (1991) found that strong religious beliefs significantly enhanced cognitive and affective perceptions of quality of life, or life satisfaction. In reviewing the literature, Ellison (1991) reported that religion may positively influence subjective well-being taking four different paths: a) providing social support and integration; b) providing a personal relationship with a divine other; c) providing a meaningful world-view and answers to questions of existence; and d) outlining and encouraging specific patterns of personal behavior and religious organization.

Religiosity and Well-Being

The connection between religiosity and well-being has sparked commentary from professionals and laypersons alike. Freud equated religiosity with psychopathology (1966) and Ellis stated in no uncertain terms that an inverse relationship exists between religiosity and emotional health (1980). In contrast, almost three quarters of Americans (72%) agree that religious faith is the most important influence in their life (Bergin & Jensen, 1990).

Investigations thus far have done little to explicate the relationship between religiosity and well-being primarily because they have tended to treat these elements as separate outcome measures rather than underscoring some of the important interactions that can and do occur between and among them. Religiosity has been neglected in quality of life studies and when it has been included, it usually is narrowly focused on older adult populations (Peacock & Poloma, 1999). In his meta-analysis, Bergin (1983), found that of the 30 research effects examined, 23% demonstrated a negative relationship, 30% no relationship, and 47% showed a positive relationship between religion and mental health. In an attempt to clarify Bergin's findings, Gartner, Larson and Allen (1991) followed up with a review of over 200 studies on religious commitment and mental health. In sum, they found religion to be associated with better physical health, lower rates of drug use, higher marital satisfaction, lower divorce rates, lower mortality, reduced alcohol use, reductions in suicide, delinquency, depression and improved well-being. Gartner and colleagues (1991) also observed that studies involving non-clinical populations seem to find religious commitment either neutral or negative, while studies utilizing clinical populations described religious commitment as more beneficial than harmful. A final contribution of their work is the observation that measuring religious practices, not attitudes, seemed to result in positive mental health benefits. In a report that same year Ellison, (1991) concluded that individuals with strong religious faith report higher levels of life satisfaction, greater personal happiness and fewer negative psychosocial consequences of traumatic life events. These findings were particularly salient for the elderly and people without formal education. Furthermore, life satisfaction appears to vary by denomination, yet happiness did not. Larson, Sherrill, Lyons, Craigie, Thielman,

Greenwold and Larson (1992) reported associations between religious commitment and mental health, found that 16% were negative, 12% neutral, and 72% had positive associations. These authors also found that ceremony, prayer, social support and having a relationship with God were all separate aspects of religiosity that were positively associated with mental health 92% of the time they were included (Larson, et al., 1992). A decade later Koenig and Larson (2001), in a report analyzing 100 previous investigations, found that nearly 80% of showed religious beliefs and practices were related to greater life satisfaction, happiness, positive affect, and higher morale. They also found religious beliefs and practices to be better predictors of well-being than social support, marital status or income (Koenig & Larson, 2001). In the most recent review to date of religiosity and well-being, Hackney and Sanders (2003), disclosed that despite varying definitions of religiosity and well-being, a small but positive relationship (effect size .10) existed between them. Subsequent reviews demonstrated that small but consistent positive relationships have been found between life satisfaction and religiosity (Chamberlain & Zika, 1988). Okun and colleagues (1985) suggest that future investigations of the relationship between religiosity and subjective well-being utilize a latent variable approach. In their meta-analysis, Hackney and Sanders (2003) found that the relationship between religiosity and well-being varied as a function of the operationalization of religiosity and well-being. In their research, Peacock and Poloma (1999) found that perceived closeness to God was the strongest predictor of life-satisfaction. They also found that a strong, non-linear relationship exists between age and religiosity. Investigations have demonstrated that religious people are better able to maintain or recuperate higher levels of positive affect when compared with non-religious

people, even through events such as divorce, job loss, serious illness, or the loss of a child (Ellison, 1991; McIntosh, Silver, & Wortman, (1993).

Spirituality and Well-Being

The integration of spirituality and well-being has only recently emerged as an viable area of study in the literature. Cloninger (2007) posited that only a spiritual approach to life can lead to lasting happiness and life satisfaction and that having a spiritual perspective can lead to increased well-being. While this position seems extreme, a more moderate version does receive support from the literature. For example, Maselko and Kubzansky (2006) found daily spiritual experiences to be significantly associated with happiness for both men and women. Moreover, Kaldor, Hughes, Castle and Bellamy (2004) concluded that compared to those with a more secular view, more spiritually minded people have higher levels of self-esteem and optimism, as well as slightly higher levels of life-satisfaction. Moreover, highly spiritual people were twice as likely to say they were very happy when compared to people with lower spiritual commitment (Gallup, 1984). Furthermore, Sawatzky, Ratner & Chiu (2005), in their meta-analysis of spirituality and quality of life, determined that a moderate relationship exists between the two variables. Kennedy, Rosati, Spann, King, Neelon & Rosati (2003) in their study of a medically based rice-diet program, found that 51% of participants experienced an increase in spirituality, and that these increases were positively associated with increased well-being. Therefore it is possible to utilize the concept of spirituality and well-being in a more integrative manner in an effort to explore the theoretical construct utilized in this thesis. This brief literature review has provided some insight and direction for how this can and should be done.

Chapter Three

Methodology

In this chapter the focus is on applying appropriate methodological procedures to assist in answer the research questions and hypotheses. The chapter begins by outlining the research questions driving this work along with their associated research hypotheses. Operationalization of outcome and predictor variables along with the data source used for this investigation will be described. The chapter closes with a description of the plan of analysis, replete with univariate, bivariate and multivariate measures.

Research Questions

This study seeks to examine how growing up in a divorced/non-divorced context ultimately influences well-being. In this investigation, one goal is to develop a deeper understanding of how growing up in a religious/non-religious home vis à vis family context influences adult well-being. To these ends, the following research questions were developed:

1. To what extent does growing up in a divorced home influence the well-being of adults?
2. To what extent does family religiosity influence well-being of adults in divorced and non-divorced homes?

Research Hypotheses

In order to address the research questions, three hypotheses were developed. Each hypothesis examines an important aspect of the current research questions. The hypotheses received support from the literature and the theoretical perspective that I examined for this study. They are as follows:

H₁: Adults from divorced homes will display *lower* levels of well-being than adults from non-divorced homes.

H₂: Adults from non-religious homes will display *lower* levels of well-being than adults from highly religious homes.

H₃: Adults from non-religious divorced homes will display *lower* levels of well-being than adults from highly religious divorced homes.

Operational Outcome Measures

In order to develop a better understanding of how the Walker Model of Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-Being works it is essential that the elements in the model be examined in a more concrete or measureable form. In other words, the elements must be operationalized so that they can be tested via the selected statistical tests to be used in this thesis. The section that follows provides a brief discussion of how the variables are measured.

Happiness.

Happiness was indicated by the question *Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days?* With available responses falling on a three point scale, from very happy, pretty happy to not too happy.

Life-Satisfaction.

Life-satisfaction was indicated by the question *How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?* With available responses falling on a four point scale including very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Well-Being.

For the purpose of this study and in accordance with the literature, well-being will be measured by carefully combining the life-satisfaction and happiness variables with appropriate adjustments taking into account the differences in scale measurement. The four responses for life satisfaction and three responses for happiness were recoded into a three scale measure of well-being that ranged from 1) Low; 2) Average; and 3) Great.

Operational Predictor Variables

Family Background.

Family Background was measured with the question: *Did your parents ever divorce each other?* And a dichotomous Yes/No response.

Age.

Age was measured in two stages. The first filter question is *May I please speak to someone between the ages of 18 and 35 in this household?* This question was followed up with *To confirm, what is your age?*

Sex.

Sex, or gender, was determined by observation over the phone five to seven questions into the phone interview.

Education.

Education was measured by asking *What is the highest level of education you have completed?* And reading from a list of seven possible responses in ascending order, ranging from no education to Post-graduate training.

Marital Status.

Marital status was determined by asking *What is your marital status? Are you...* and reading from a list of six possible responses, including divorced, separated, and cohabitating.

Income.

Income was measured by asking *What is your current household income? Please stop me when I reach your category.* And reading from a list of five responses in ascending order.

Religion.

Religion was measured by asking *What is your religious preference today?* And reading from a base list until the respondent identified with a listed religion. If the respondent identified with the other religion/not Christian option, they were asked to further specify what religion.

Race/Ethnicity.

Race and Ethnicity were determined using a combination of questions. Question one read *Are you, yourself, of Hispanic origin or descent, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background,* with a dichotomous Yes or No available for response categories. Question two consisted of two parts: *Are you white Hispanic, Black Hispanic, or some other race?*, and *What is your race? Are you White, Black, Asian, or some other race?*

Adult Spirituality.

How spiritual do you currently consider yourself to be? with responses ranging from very spiritual, fairly, slightly, to not at all.

Operational Predictor Measures

Childhood Safety.

Childhood safety was measured with a scale of three questions, each with answers that ranged from (1) strongly agree, (2) somewhat agree, (3) somewhat disagree, to (4) strongly disagree (Chronbach's $\alpha = .543$). These questions include: *I generally felt physically safe, Children were at the center of my family, and my parents protected me from their worries.*

Childhood Support.

Childhood support was measured with a scale of four questions, each with answers that ranged from (1) strongly agree, (2) somewhat agree, (3) somewhat disagree, to (4) strongly disagree (Chronbach's $\alpha = .546$). The scale consists the following questions: *When I have a conflict with someone I usually feel it can only get worse, not better, I think my understanding of right and wrong is cloudy, I feel I can depend on my friends more than my family, and I don't feel that anyone really understands me.*

Childhood Family Religiosity.

Childhood family religiosity was measured with a scale of six questions: *My mother encouraged me to practice a religious faith?; My mother taught me how to pray; I often prayed with my mother,* with each question repeated verbatim only substituting the word father for mother. Responses were measured on a four point scale with responses ranging from (1) strongly agree, (2) somewhat agree, (3) somewhat disagree to (4) strongly disagree (Chronbach's $\alpha = .864$).

Data Source

The data used in this investigation are derived from *The National Survey on the Moral and Spiritual Lives of Children of Divorce* (MSLCD) conducted between 2001 and 2003 by Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. (Marquardt, 2005). The investigation was stratified into two layers—The survey is the first nationally representative sample of people who grew up in divorced homes (n=755), along with a comparable control group from intact families (n=755). Participants from divorced families were required to have seen both parents a minimum of once a year in the years following the divorce. Also, participants from divorced homes had to have experienced parental divorce before they were fourteen years old to ensure they spent at least some of their formative years in that particular family structure. Those who lost all contact with one or both parents post-divorce were excluded from the study². For the purpose of this survey, coming from an intact³ family means non-divorced.

Analysis Plan

The analysis will proceed using an Aristotelian approach going from the general to the more specific. Hence, it stands to reason that the analysis begins with simple descriptive statistics. Comparative statistics such as T-test and an ANalysis Of VAriance, or ANOVA, will be used when necessary to appropriately test the research hypotheses. The most specific techniques to be utilized in this analysis are path modeling using

² The exclusion of those who lost contact with their parents was applied with the intent of ensuring participants had access to and could still be actively influenced by both parents.

³ Marquardt (2005) defines intact family as having parents married before both participants were born and remaining so through the length of the investigation, unless one or both parents died after the participant turned eighteen.

Ordinary least squares (OLS) techniques. Combined, these research tools should provide what is needed to investigate the research questions and test hypotheses.

Univariate Analysis

Simple descriptive analyses for the sample were provided. Basic frequency distributions and concomitant measures of dispersion (means, medians, modes, standard deviations, and variances) were examined where necessary. When comparisons beyond the univariate level are needed, bivariate and multivariate levels of analyses work to fill that need.

Bivariate Measures

The nature of the current investigation necessitates the examination of the mean differences between groups. Multivariate exploratory analyses were done between gender and other dichotomous measures to see if there were differences associated with the outcome measure. In those cases concerning two or more groups, for example Religion, an ANalysis Of VAriance (ANOVA) will be used to fully explain the mean differences. When the need to analyze multiple means is encountered, such as the multiple predictor variables in the current analysis, ANOVA is advantageous.

Multivariate Measures

In order to answer research questions, hypotheses, and model testing require the use of techniques that are robust, clear, practical, dynamic, and understandable methodology in social science research. The links between measures are analyzed by correlation coefficients described by Pearson's R. Path modeling techniques will be used to explore the relationships between well-being and the elements in the Walker Model.

Chapter Four

Analysis and Results

Information and statistical analysis are vital to understanding the issues raised in this thesis. The demographic information provides clues as to how to go about the analysis process, and to a certain extent, point toward what results may be expected. The results of this thesis will be able to be compared with previous investigations on the topic, more specifically those focused on the influence of divorce on life changes. These data may also provide clues as to the quality of life issues and allow for some meaningful comparisons. Analysis and results will be described as they relate to the research questions driving this thesis.

Sample Demographics

Because of the unique sampling procedures employed in the MSLCD, exactly one half (755) of the total sample (n=1,510) was found to have grown up in a divorced family background. Again, because of the specific targeting measures used by the investigator, respondents ranged in age from 18 to 35, with the average age for the sample being 28.77 (SD= 4.60, MD=30). Females outnumbered males 57.8% to 42.2%. In terms of education, results ranged from None/grades 1-8 to Post-graduate training, with 43.1% of the sample having obtained a 4-year degree or higher (see Table 4.1).

Just over 60% of respondents were married at the time of the survey, while almost 28% were single. The residual 12% consists of those who were cohabiting, divorced, separated or widowed. Income ranged from under \$25,000 to \$100,000 or more. Slightly under 1/3rd of the sample (32.5%) made between \$45,000 and \$75,000 per household.

Approximately 84% of the sample is European American, with the remaining 16% divided between Hispanic American (5.9%), African American (5.0%), Asian American (1.8%) and Other (3.3%)⁴. Just under 90% of the sample identified as Protestant, Catholic, or having no religion or religious preference. The remaining 10% identified as Atheist/Agnostic, Non-Christian, Jewish or Muslim⁵.

Within the Walker Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-Being there are four observed measures to be used, religiosity, spirituality, happiness and life satisfaction. Data from Table 4.2 shows that a sizeable majority of the sample considered themselves to be very religious (61.9%) compared to (38.1%) that reported being only slightly to not religious at all. A similar, yet much stronger pattern is found among the data on spirituality where (72.2%) reported being fairly to very spiritual while the remaining 21.5% indicated being slightly spiritual. Just over 6.3% reported not being spiritual at all.

In terms of the predictor measures for Well-Being, Happiness and Life Satisfaction, the results are not too different from the religious measures. Greater than 90% (96.6%) reported being very to pretty happy with only 3.4% of the sample indicating that they were not too happy. The Life Satisfaction measure indicated that 61.1% were very satisfied and another 35.2% reported being somewhat satisfied. Despite the larger

⁴The race variable was recoded to create a category that actually measures the number of people who reported both race and ethnicity in the original variable. The rationale for separating these people out has more to do with the experiences that people have in the United States—for example, even though being Hispanic may be an ethnic group the actual response and treatment people receive in this group often parallel the treatment of a race group, hence the need to extract the membership from the overall race group category.

⁵ When similar adjustments are made to the U.S. Religious Landscape Study (2008), the demographic breakdown by denomination is nearly identical to those in this thesis, with the exception of the none or no preference category.

Table 4.1 *Selective Sample Demographic Data.*

Variable	Coding Scheme	N	%
Family Background	Divorced	755	50.0
	Non-Divorced	755	50.0
Gender	Female	873	57.8
	Male	637	42.2
Education	None to 8 th Grade	7	0.5
	9 to 11 th Grade	53	3.5
	12 th or GED Certificate	292	19.4
	Technical training	45	3.0
	Some college	458	30.5
	Four year degree	449	29.9
	Professional training	198	13.2
Marital Status	Married	909	60.2
	Single	421	27.9
	Divorced	80	5.3
	Cohabiting	77	5.1
	Separated	17	1.1
	Widowed	2	0.1
	Income	≤ \$24,999	193
\$25,000 to \$44,999		392	27.2
\$45,000 to \$75,999		468	32.5
\$75,000 to \$99,999		204	14.2
≥ \$100,000		184	12.8
Race/Ethnicity	White/European American	1259	84.0
	Hispanic American	88	5.9
	Black/African American	75	5.0
	Other American	50	3.3
	Asian American	27	1.8
Religion	Protestant (Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Mormon ^a , Other Christian, etc.)	758	50.3
	Catholic, Greek and Russian Orthodox ^b	345	22.9
	None or No preference	252	16.7
	Atheist or Agnostic	59	3.9
	Non-Christian	32	2.1
	Jewish	24	1.6
	Muslim or Islamic	14	0.9

^a The Mormon and Other Christian categories were collapsed into the Protestant category for this analysis.

^b The Greek and Russian Orthodox category was collapsed into the Catholic category for this analysis.

somewhat satisfied numbers, relatively few people were somewhat or very dissatisfied (3.7%).

Table 4.2

Selective Independent Measures from the Walker Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-Being.

Variable	Coding Scheme	n (1510)	%	
Spirituality	Very Spiritual	484	32.3	
	Fairly Spiritual	598	39.9	
	Slightly Spiritual	323	21.5	
	Not Spiritual	95	6.3	
	Well-Being	Great	1055	70.4
	Average	419	28.0	
	Low	24	1.6	
Scale	Range	A	Mean	SD
Religiosity	1-4	.864	2.68	.918
Safety	1-4	.543	3.32	.647
Support	1-4	.546	3.50	.529

Note: Not all cases are included for every variable because of missing data.

Bivariate Analysis

Difference of Means Test

An independent samples t-test was run in order to compare the means of those from divorced family backgrounds to intact family backgrounds on safety, support, religiosity, spirituality, and well-being measures. These findings will be used to explore the answer to our research questions about to what extent does family home type and family religiosity influence well-being.

The mean response scores for overall safety differed significantly, for the two groups $t = -6.010$, $df = 1473$, $p < .001$) with the divorce group having a lower score ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.70$) when contrasted with the intact group ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.50$). Results were similar for support; the divorce group reported a lower mean ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.57$) in support than the intact group ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.47$) and the difference was again found to be significant ($t = -14.020$, $df = 1489$, $p < .001$). The difference between mean scores for divorce ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.76$) versus intact group ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 0.93$) on religiosity was found to be significant, ($t = 15.860$, $df = 1476$, $p < .001$) with the divorce group registering lower levels of religiosity. Meanwhile, mean scores for the two groups did not significantly differ when spirituality was examined ($t = 1.654$, $df = 1498$, $p < n.s.$) a result not completely unexpected given the lack of variation in the mean scores ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.91$, and $M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.87$) for both groups. People from divorced backgrounds had mean scores ($M = 2.66$, $SD = .52$) that significantly differed ($t = 2.530$, $df = 1497$, $p < .05$) from their intact counterparts ($M = 2.72$, $SD = .47$) when well-being was examined, with those from the divorce group registering lower well-being (see Table 4.3). Overall, the mean scores between the two groups found that with adults from divorced homes reported lower levels of support, safety, religiosity, spirituality and well-being.

Additional independent samples t-tests were run in order to compare the means of those from very or fairly religious or spiritual family backgrounds to those from slightly or non-religious or spiritual family backgrounds on safety, support, and well-being measures. Mean well-being scores differed significantly ($t = -3.925$, $df = 1466$, $p < .001$) with those from the more religious group reporting higher scores and thus lower levels of well-being ($M = 2.73$, $SD = .46$) than the less religious ($M = 2.63$, $SD = .54$).

Table 4.3

Independent Samples t-tests for Selected Model Factors by Religious Groups.

Variable	Divorced	Intact	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>
Safety				
<i>M</i>	3.09	3.54	1473	-6.010***
SD	(0.70)	(0.50)		
Support				
<i>M</i>	3.09	3.58	1489	-14.020***
SD	(0.57)	(0.47)		
Religiosity				
<i>M</i>	3.04	2.34	1476	15.860***
SD	(0.76)	(0.93)		
Spirituality				
<i>M</i>	2.06	2.00	1498	1.654
SD	(0.91)	(0.87)		
Well-Being				
<i>M</i>	2.66	2.72	1497	2.530*
SD	(0.52)	(0.47)		
Variable	More Religious	Less/Non-Religious	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>
Well-Being				
<i>M</i>	2.73	2.63	1466	-3.925***
SD	(0.46)	(0.54)		
Variable	More Spiritual	Less/Non-Spiritual	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>
Well-Being				
<i>M</i>	2.59	2.73	1488	4.660***
SD	(0.54)	(0.47)		

Note: * = $p < .05$, *** = $p < .001$; Not all cases are included for every variable because of missing data.

The more spiritual differed significantly ($t = 4.660$, $df = 1488$, $p < .001$) from the less spiritual in terms of well-being, with the more spiritual group registering lower mean scores ($M = 2.59$, $SD = .54$), and thus higher levels of well-being, when compared with the less spiritual ($M = 2.73$, $SD = .47$).

Overall, the mean scores between the two groups were found to be significantly different on virtually all of the variables investigated, with adults from more religious homes reporting significantly lower means (with the exception of well-being, which was reverse coded), and thus higher levels of well-being than their less religious peers. A similar pattern is observed for spirituality, with less spiritual adults reporting higher mean scores, and therefore lower levels of well-being, when compared to their more spiritual counterparts.

Findings

Mean comparisons are used to investigate if two groups differ across a single measure and to further identify if those differences are statistically significant. Independent samples t-tests were used to compare those from non-divorced and divorced family backgrounds across well-being. The same technique was used to compare those from highly religious homes with those from non-religious homes. The preceding simple mean comparisons set the stage to address two research hypotheses of this thesis.

Research Hypotheses

H₁: *Adults from divorced homes will display lower levels of well-being than adults from non-divorced homes was supported by this analysis.* Independent samples T-tests revealed that adults from divorced homes reported significantly lower levels of life-satisfaction, happiness, and well-being, when compared to those from non-divorced

homes. This finding provides additional support for the traditional view of divorce adjustment and further evidence for the view that coming from a divorced background may continue to negatively influence children from these situations even into early adulthood. These findings allow me to conclude that Hypothesis One is sustained, therefore the alternative is rejected.

H₂: *Adults from non-religious homes will display lower levels of well-being than adults from highly religious homes was not supported by this analysis*, and therefore the alternative must be accepted. Those higher in family religiosity displayed lower levels of well-being as adults compared to those from less religious homes. Therefore it is not possible to conclude that the second hypothesis is correct. I must reject Hypothesis two and accept the alternative. It is clear that more work needs to be done in this area. Independent samples T-tests also revealed that those higher in spirituality experienced higher well-being as adults.

Correlations

Specific elements of the model were tested with each other using simple correlations. In model building it is essential that theoretical elements have some connection to each other and yet it is important that these elements not be too highly correlated. Simple Pearson's correlations were run for religiosity and spirituality, as well as support, safety and well-being for both divorced and non-divorced groups in order to explore the relationships between variables. In most cases the relationships under investigation were found to be significantly correlated ($p < .001$), but the strength of those correlations varied within and between groups.

Interestingly, while religiosity was significantly correlated with safety ($r = .224$, $p < .001$), spirituality was not ($r = .055$, $p < n.s.$) (see Table 4.4). Support and religiosity were not correlated ($r = .068$, $p < n.s.$), while and support and spirituality were ($r = .099$, $p < .01$). Safety and support are moderate correlates ($r = .309$, $p < .001$). Well-being is moderately correlated with support ($r = .369$, $p < .001$), and demonstrated a weak yet significant correlation with safety ($r = .124$, $p < .01$), religiosity ($r = .104$, $p < .01$) and spirituality ($r = .134$, $p < .001$) for those in the divorce group.

For the non-divorced group, religiosity and spirituality displayed moderately to high levels of correlations as well ($r = .352$, $p < .001$). For the intact family background group, safety and support reported a moderate to weak correlation ($r = .268$, $p < .001$). For the non-divorced group the safety measure showed low correlation with religiosity ($r = .208$, $p < .001$), while no significant correlation was observed for spirituality ($r = .048$, $p < n.s.$). Support demonstrated a low correlation with religiosity ($r = .160$, $p < .001$) and spirituality ($r = .168$, $p < .001$) for those from non-divorced homes. Well-being showed significant correlations with religiosity ($r = .118$, $p < .01$) and spirituality ($r = .167$, $p < .001$), as well as with the safety measure ($r = .162$, $p < .001$).

Comparison of correlations across groups provided interesting findings. For those from the intact group, spirituality and well-being showed a stronger correlation ($r = .167$, $p < .001$) when compared to those from the divorce group ($r = .134$, $p < .001$). The divorce group boasts stronger correlations between well-being and support ($r = .369$, $p < .001$), but not religiosity ($r = .104$, $p < .01$) when compared to correlations of the non-divorced ($r = .357$, $p < .001$; $r = .118$, $p < .01$). Safety was found to demonstrate a higher correlation with religiosity for the divorce group ($r = .224$, $p < .001$), when contrasted

Table 4.4

Selective Pearson Correlation Coefficients from the Walker Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-Being by Growing Up in a Divorced or Intact Family.

Divorced					
Variable	Religiosity	Spirituality	Support	Safety	Well-Being
Religiosity	---				
Spirituality	.265***	---			
Support	.068	.099**	---		
Safety	.224***	.055	.309***	---	
Well-Being	.104**	.134***	.369***	.124**	---
Intact					
Variable	Religiosity	Spirituality	Support	Safety	Well-Being
Religiosity	---				
Spirituality	.352***	---			
Support	.160***	.168***	---		
Safety	.208***	.048	.268***	---	
Well-Being	.118**	.167***	.357***	.162***	---

*** = $p < .001$, ** = $p < .01$, * = $p < .05$. Note: Not all cases are included for every variable because of missing data.

with the non-divorce group ($r = .208$, $p < .001$) while spirituality was uncorrelated with safety for either group ($r = .055$, $p < n.s.$; $r = .048$, $p < n.s.$).

The most striking finding is related to religiosity, with four out of four variables correlating significantly on the intact side, compared to three of four on the divorce side.

For the non-divorce group, religiosity is more highly correlated on three measures, with the divorce group claiming safety as their sole superior religiosity correlate. Along similar patterns, spirituality for the intact group showed three of a possible four correlations significant, but all three were more highly correlated for the non-divorced group when compared with the divorced group. Moreover, the well-being measure demonstrated weaker correlates for those with divorced backgrounds, when compared with their intact peers, on three of a possible four measures. Furthermore, the divorce group showed higher correlations on two of four support, measures, in comparison to the non-divorced group. Overall, distinct constructs across groups displayed similar correlational patterns. Support was moderately correlated across groups and showed a moderate correlation with safety. Safety registered low but significant correlations across groups, and was the only measure not to demonstrate a significant correlation across all categories. Well-being was correlated moderately with support, and weakly with religiosity, spirituality and safety

These correlations not only demonstrate the conceptual significance of spirituality, religiosity, safety, support and well-being, but also provide further evidence that each of these constructs may vary in importance as they related to well-being by family background. However, more sophisticated techniques are needed to further explore the differences and interrelationships indicated thus far.

One Way Analysis of Variance

One way Analysis Of VAriance is vital to this analysis because it allows the testing of differences for two or more means. Comparing means of religiosity, spirituality, safety and support as they relate to well-being is particularly important to this thesis because it aids in theory building, an essential part of this research. Thus, in combination with post-hoc testing, this technique facilitates the identification of specific groups across multiple variables.

The difference among means for religiosity were statistically significant at the .001 level ($F = 15.208^6$, $df = 2, 1427$)(see Table 4.5). The difference among means for spirituality was statistically significant ($F = 17.418$, $df = 2, 1487$, $p < .001$). The difference among means for safety was statistically significant ($F = 17.379$, $df = 2, 1462$, $p < .001$). The difference among means for support was statistically significant at the .001 level ($F = 86.546^7$, $df = 2, 60$). Religiosity was positively associated with well-being; as mean scores of religiosity increased, so did mean scores of well-being. A similar relationship was demonstrated for spirituality means, with lower mean scores associated with lower well-being and higher mean scores associated with higher well-being. Moreover, mean safety scores behaved in a similar manner; lower safety scores were related to decreased well-being, and higher safety scores to increased well-being. The relationship between support and well-being mirrored that of safety, with higher mean scores associated with higher well-being and lower mean scores associated with lower well-being.

⁶ Religiosity violated Levene's test of Homogeneity of Variances, thus Welch's F is reported here.

⁷ Support violated Levene's test of Homogeneity of Variances, thus Welch's F is reported instead.

Tukey's post hoc test was run to further specify the differences between groups. Post hoc testing revealed that those in the great well-being group have significantly higher religiosity than those in the average ($p < .001$) or low ($p < .01$) well-being groups.

Those in the average well-being group demonstrated significantly lower religiosity than those in the high well-being group ($p < .001$), and higher religiosity than those in the low well-being group, though this difference was not significant. When compared to the other two groups, those with low mean scores in well-being reported lower religiosity than those in with average or great well-being scores, albeit only the latter difference was significant ($p < .01$).

The great well-being group reported significantly greater spirituality scores than either the average ($p < .001$) or low ($p < .05$) well-being groups. Comparing the average well-being group on levels of spirituality to the low well-being group revealed no significant differences. However, comparing the average well-being group with the great well-being group did reveal significant differences in level of spirituality ($p < .001$), with the great group scoring higher. Spirituality scores by low and average well-being did not significantly differ.

Similar pattern was observed for safety scores; those great in well-being had scores that were significantly higher than those with average ($p < .001$) or low ($p < .01$) well-being. Compared to the average well-being group those with low well-being score lower on safety, although the difference was not found to be significant. Those with average well-being do score significantly lower in safety ($p < .01$), when compared to those with great well-being.

Table 4.5
One Way Analysis of Variance for Religiosity, Spirituality, Safety and Support by Well-Being for Full Sample (n =1510)

<u>Religiosity</u>				
Source of Variance	<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between Groups	2	20.698	10.349	15.208***
Within Groups	1427	1216.242	0.830	
Total	1429	1236.940		

<u>Spirituality</u>				
Source of Variance	<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between Groups	2	26.997	13.498	17.418***
Within Groups	1487	1152.399	0.775	
Total	1489	1179.396		

<u>Safety</u>				
Source of Variance	<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between Groups	2	14.156	7.078	17.379***
Within Groups	1462	595.450	0.407	
Total	1464	609.607		

<u>Support</u>				
Source of Variance	<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between Groups	2	55.565	27.783	86.546***
Within Groups	1479	352.799	0.23	
Total	1481	408.364		

*** = $p < .001$. Note: Not all cases are included for every variable because of missing data.

Scores on support break somewhat from the previous relationship pattern. The great well-being group still scores significantly higher on support than the average ($p < .001$) or low well-being groups ($p < .001$). The variation appears when the average well-being group is examined. In keeping with previous behavior, the average well-being group scores significantly lower on support than the great well-being group ($p < .001$). However, when compared to the low well-being group, the higher support scores demonstrated by the average group reach significance ($p < .001$). Thus the lower well-being group is significantly lower in support scores than either the average ($p < .001$) or great ($p < .001$) well-being groups.

Overall it appears that the high well-being group registers significantly higher scores on religiosity, spirituality, safety and support, when compared to groups lower in well-being. The average well-being group reports levels of religiosity, spirituality, safety and support that are consistently and significantly lower than those of the great well-being group. Religiosity, spirituality, and safety scores for those with average well-being, though higher, did not differ significantly with those obtained by the low well-being group. The average group only managed a significantly higher score than the low group on the support measure. As might be expected, the lowest well-being group scored significantly lower on religiosity, spirituality, safety and support than the highest well-being group. Somewhat surprisingly, the lowest well-being group only scored significantly lower than the average well-being group on the support measure. In sum, it may be concluded that those with the highest well-being appear to be a distinct group, while those in the lower two well-being categories are more alike than dissimilar.

A second one-way ANalysis Of VAriance was run with sample divided by family background. For the divorce group, the difference among means for religiosity was statistically significant at the .05 level ($F = 4.307, df = 2, 724$)(see Table 4.6). The difference among means for spirituality was also statistically significant ($F = 6.749, df = 2, 741, p < .001$) for people with a divorced background. For the intact group, the difference among means for religiosity was statistically significant ($F = 5.419, df = 2, 738, p < .01$).

Table 4.6

One Way Analysis of Variance for Religiosity, and Spirituality by Well-Being for Divorce and Intact Sample (n =1510).

<i>Divorce</i>				
<u>Religiosity</u>				
Source of Variance	<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between Groups	2	4.918	2.459	4.307*
Within Groups	724	413.414	0.571	
Total	726	418.332		

<u>Spirituality</u>				
Source of Variance	<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between Groups	2	10.943	5.471	6.749***
Within Groups	741	600.686	0.811	
Total	743	611.629		

Intact

<u>Religiosity</u>				
Source of Variance	<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between Groups	2	9.249	4.625	5.419**
Within Groups	738	629.801		0.853
Total	740	639.050		

<u>Spirituality</u>				
Source of Variance	<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between Groups	2	15.715	7.857	10.613***
Within Groups	743	550.092	0.740	
Total	745	565.807		

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$. Note: Not all cases are included for every variable because of missing data.

Furthermore, the difference among means for spirituality for this group was statistically significant at the .001 level ($F = 10.613$, $df = 2, 743$).

Tukey's post hoc test were conducted. These tests revealed no significant differences between groups high, average or low in well-being by level of religiosity for those from a divorce background. However, when spirituality was examined for the divorce group, analysis revealed those in the great well-being group have significantly higher levels of spirituality ($p < .01$) than those with average or low levels of well-being. For the non-divorce group, those with great well-being have significantly higher religiosity scores ($p < .05$) than those with average well-being. The average and low well-being groups do not significantly differ in their religiosity scores. For those with an intact

background, the great well-being group exhibits significantly higher levels of spirituality ($p < .001$), when compared to those with low or average well-being.

In sum, it appears that for those from a divorced background, childhood religiosity may make little difference in their well-being as adults. However, spirituality may hold particular importance, in regards to well-being for this group. Interestingly, those high in well-being from intact homes demonstrated significantly higher levels of religiosity and spirituality than those with average or low well-being. These tests essentially examined the basic elements in Hypothesis Three—

H₃: *Adults from non-religious divorced homes will display lower levels of well-being than adults from highly religious divorced homes.* The results clearly demonstrate that the hypothesis was not sustained, therefore I must reject it and accept the alternative. In other words, whether one came from a highly, moderately or non-religious divorced home is not significantly related to adult well-being. Interestingly, coming from a highly spiritual divorced home appears to be related to higher well-being, while coming from a moderately or non-spiritual divorced home is related to lower levels of adult well-being. Adults from highly religious non-divorced homes demonstrated higher adult well-being when compared with adults from less or non-religious intact homes. This pattern was repeated for spirituality; adults from highly spiritual intact homes displayed higher levels of adult well-being than adults from less spiritual intact backgrounds.

Path Modeling

The crux of this analysis is path modeling to test the model that the previous less complicated techniques helped to build. This technique should help parcel out what contributions, if any, the variables and measures identified in previous steps, make to

well-being. Path modeling is based on the assumptions that (a) a weak causal order exists and is observable between all variables in the model; and (b) all relationships between variables in the model are causally closed. For example, in the model under investigation, age logically comes before education, and education precedes one's income. The second assumption is satisfied by theoretical relationships between each variable being represented through direct and indirect connections as shown by arrows in the model. Age, education and income are considered exogenous variables, they may or may not have bi-directional arrows, although the assumption is that they are not connected. In path modeling, each variable is regressed on all of the previous variables as it is added to model. For example, assuming age, education and income have already been entered, support is then treated as the single dependent variable and standardized beta coefficients represent the relationships between age and support, education and support and income and support. The R squared adjusted score represents how much variance of the dependent variable is predicted or explained by the independent variables according to the path of entry. Each variable in the model may exhibit a positive or negative, significant or non-significant, and direct or indirect influence on other variables. A direct influence is represented in the model by an arrow to one variable from another variable. An indirect path indicates that a predictor variable influences a dependent variable, only through a second predictor variable. For example, the path from support to well-being would represent a direct effect, if it was significant, while a significant path from support to religiosity and then on to well being would be considered an indirect effect. Thus, age, education, income, support, safety, religiosity and spirituality will be entered, in that order, as predictor variables that theoretically should combine not only to predict adult

well-being, but reveal the relationships between predictor variables as well. Initially the theoretical model will be run using the full sample, with results briefly described. The theory testing portion of this analysis will culminate with the division of the sample by non-divorced and divorced family background groups, and results will be compared and contrasted. The combination and placement of variables allows one to predict or explain 16.2% ($R^2_{adj.} = .162$) of variation in well-being. Of the seven variables in the model, only three emerge as significant predictors of adult well-being (see Figure 4.1 and Table 4.7). Income appears to contribute a solid β of .128 ($p < .001$). Another variable that significantly predicts variation in well-being is support ($\beta = .318, p < .001$). Spirituality was the lowest significant predictor of well-being in the last stage, with a β of .095 ($p < .001$). These findings suggest that overall, income contributes indirectly to well-being via support. Thus, the higher the income, the more supportive an environment can be created for children, which in turn contributes to well-being. Income also holds a negative relationship with spirituality. In other words, the higher the income, the lower the spirituality. Income is also a direct contributor to well-being, in that the more money one has, the better the access to the goods, services and pleasures associated with well-being. A supportive family environment contributes directly to spirituality, which in turn positively influences well-being. Support also contributes directly to well-being. Spirituality makes a direct contribution to adult well-being. Walker's Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness, and Well-being enabled the identification of specific pathways that add to or detract from well-being for the full sample .

Split Sample Path Modeling Analysis

With the model concepts and variables identified and described and the pieces are in place to attempt to address hypothesis three, namely, that adults from non-religious divorced homes will display lower levels of well-being than adults from highly religious divorced homes. In order to address this question the sample must be split by those who come from a divorced home and those who come from a non-divorced home, a process that is ideal with this data due to unique sampling methods.

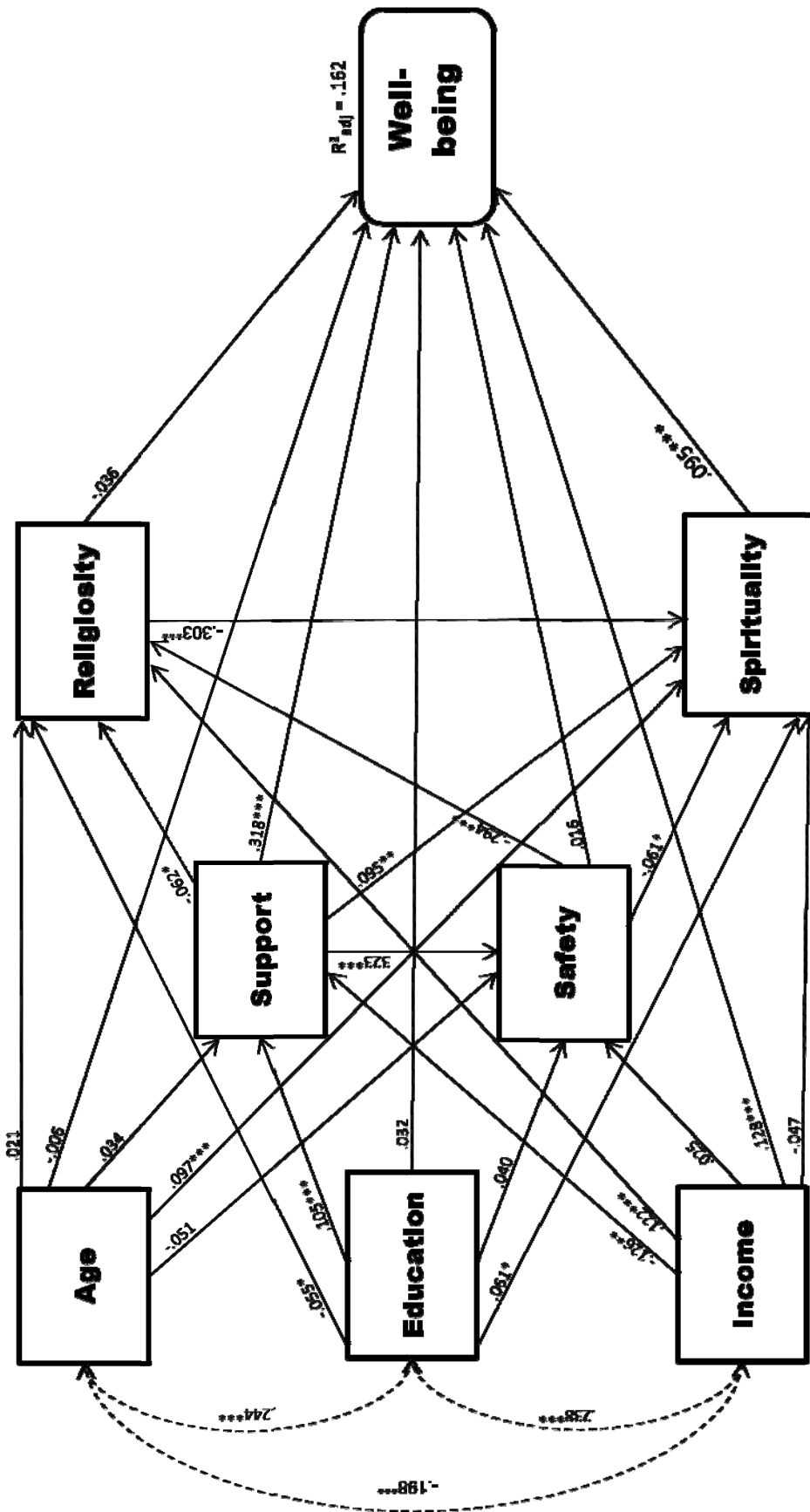


Figure 4.1 Walker's Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-being by Full Sample.

Table 4.7

Summary of Preliminary Path Analysis for Variables Predicting Adult Well-Being for Full Sample (n = 1510)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	R^2_{adj}
Constant	1.291	.140		.162
Age	0.000	.003	-.006	
Education	0.011	.009	.032	
Income	0.054	.011	.128***	
Support	0.301	.025	.318***	
Safety	0.012	.021	.016	
Religiosity	-0.020	.015	-.036	
Spirituality	0.053	.015	.095***	

*** = $p < .001$.

Path decompositions showed indirect effects to be virtually negligible, while the total effect of safety, education and family childhood religiosity could be somewhat explained by spurious effects (see Table 4.8). In general, these findings support the ideas contained in the initial model development.

Table 4.8

Path Decomposition for Walker's Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-being by Full Sample

Variables	Bivariate Effect (r)	Direct Effect (β)	Indirect Effect ($r_i - \beta$)	Spurious Effect ($r - r_i$)	Total Effect (r_i)
Age	.071	-.006	.065	.000	-.006
Education	.127	.032	.001	.094	.033
Income	.190	.128	.002	.060	.130
Support	.367	.318	-.012	.051	.306
Safety	.152	.016	.000	.136	.016
FamRel	-.126	-.036	.000	-.090	-.036
Spirituality	.155	.095	-.006	.066	.089

Non-Divorced Group.

The intent of this thesis and this model is to uncover what combination of variables influence well-being and to see if those same variables generalize to divorced and non-divorced group adults. The path model for the non-divorced group was run separately from the divorced group. The final model consisted of demographic variables, such as age, education and income, as well as scales measuring support and safety. Spirituality and a religiosity scale were included as well.

For the non-divorced group, support, income, and spirituality were significant predictors of adult well-being (see Table 4.9), with each variable demonstrating a direct relationship. Support demonstrated the strongest relationship with well-being ($\beta = .305$, $p < .001$). Spirituality showed the next strongest significant relationship with well-being ($\beta = .125$, $p < .05$), and income was found to have a weak but significant relationship with well-being ($\beta = .117$, $p < .05$). This model accounts for 15.8 % of the variance in well-being for adults 18 to 35 from non-divorced homes.

Table 4.9

Summary of Path Analysis for Variables Predicting Adult Well-Being for Non-Divorce

Sample (n = 755)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	R^2_{adj}
Constant	0.996	.208		.158
Age	0.000	.004	.001	
Education	0.009	.013	.027	
Income	0.047	.015	.117**	
Support	0.309	.038	.305***	
Safety	0.063	.035	.066	
Religiosity	-0.007	.020	-.013	
Spirituality	0.069	.021	.125**	

*** = $p < .001$, ** = $p < .01$

Age demonstrated a weak yet significant relationship with only spirituality ($\beta = .129, p < .01$) for the intact group (see Figure 4.2). Interestingly, education was not significantly related to any other variables in this model. Income, however, is a different story. Income was directly and significantly related to support ($\beta = .097, p < .05$), well-being ($\beta = .117, p < .01$), and spirituality ($\beta = -.085, p < .05$) for those in the intact group. Income indirectly contributed to well-being via positively influencing support, while detracting from well-being indirectly by decreasing spirituality. Income also makes a direct positive impact on well-being. Support performed robustly, demonstrating relationships with every variable it was connected to. Support and religiosity ($\beta = .100, p < .05$), well-being ($\beta = .305, p < .01$), spirituality ($\beta = .108, p < .01$), and safety ($\beta = .270, p < .001$) were all significantly related to support. Support directly contributes to safety. If one felt supported, it follows that one should also feel safe. Support positively contributes to both religiosity and spirituality, and through spirituality adds indirectly to well-being. Religiosity was the only variable to show a significant relationship from the safety variable ($\beta = .193, p < .001$). Religiosity was robustly related to spirituality ($\beta = .355, p < .001$). Safety is a direct contributor to religiosity. The safer one feels, the more religious one is enabled to become. The path to well-being from spirituality ($\beta = .125, p < .01$) showed a significant and positive relationship. Higher spirituality, or connectedness, facilitates better well-being. A decomposition of each path reveals that while each total effect is weakened due to spuriousness, the overall picture of results remained unchanged (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10

Path Decomposition for Walker's Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-being by Intact Sample.

Variables	Bivariate Effect (r)	Direct Effect (β)	Indirect Effect ($r_i - \beta$)	Spurious Effect ($r - r_i$)	Total Effect (r_i)
Age	.085	.001	.000	.084	.001
Education	.101	.027	.001	.073	.028
Income	.163	.117	.002	.044	.119
Support	.361	.305	-.005	.061	.300
Safety	.166	.066	.002	.098	.068
FamRel	-.123	-.013	.000	-.110	-.013
Spirituality	.176	.125	-.001	.052	.124

The Divorced Group.

The same path modeling techniques and conceptual model that were used for the intact group were applied for the divorce sample. Predictor variables were age, education, income, support, safety, spirituality and religiosity with well-being and the dependent variable.

For those from divorced homes only two variables made significant direct contributions to well-being, support and income (see Table 4.9). Income showed a significant relationship with well-being ($\beta = .144, p < .001$). Support was highly ($\beta = .324, p < .001$) and significantly related to well-being. Approximately 15.9% of the variation in well-being for adults age 18-35 from divorced homes can be accounted for using this model.

When the path going to safety from age was examined, age was found to significantly and negatively contribute to safety ($\beta = -.126, p < .01$) (see Figure 4.3). As age increases, for those from a divorce background, people feel less safe. The relationship

from education to support was significant ($\beta = .110$, $p < .01$), as was from education to spirituality ($\beta = .127$, $p < .01$) for the divorce group. Education positively and directly contributed to support and spirituality, which means that education also indirectly contributes to well-being via support. Income exerts a positive direct influence on support ($\beta = .147$, $p < .001$) and through support adds to well-being indirectly ($\beta = .144$, $p < .001$). For those from divorced homes, support has a strong relationship with safety ($\beta = .307$, $p < .001$), with spirituality ($\beta = .080$, $p < .05$), and with well-being ($\beta = .324$, $p < .001$). Safety was only significantly related to religiosity ($\beta = .223$, $p < .001$) and religiosity demonstrated a strong relationship with spirituality ($\beta = .257$, $p < .001$). Across groups, a number of similar relationships were found. Income was positively related to support and to well-being for those from divorced as well as intact homes. Support was positively related to well-being, spirituality and safety across groups. For both the intact and divorce groups, religiosity demonstrated a positive relationship with spirituality while safety exhibited similar behavior as it related to religiosity. Interestingly, more differences were found between groups than similarities. For example, age was positively related to spirituality for the intact group, but not the divorce group. Education was most helpful for those from divorced backgrounds. On the other hand, age and safety demonstrated a negative relationship for the divorce group. Education was positively related to both support and spirituality for the divorce group. The relationship to religiosity from support was positive for those from intact family backgrounds. Income was found to have a negative relationship with spirituality for those from non-divorced family backgrounds.

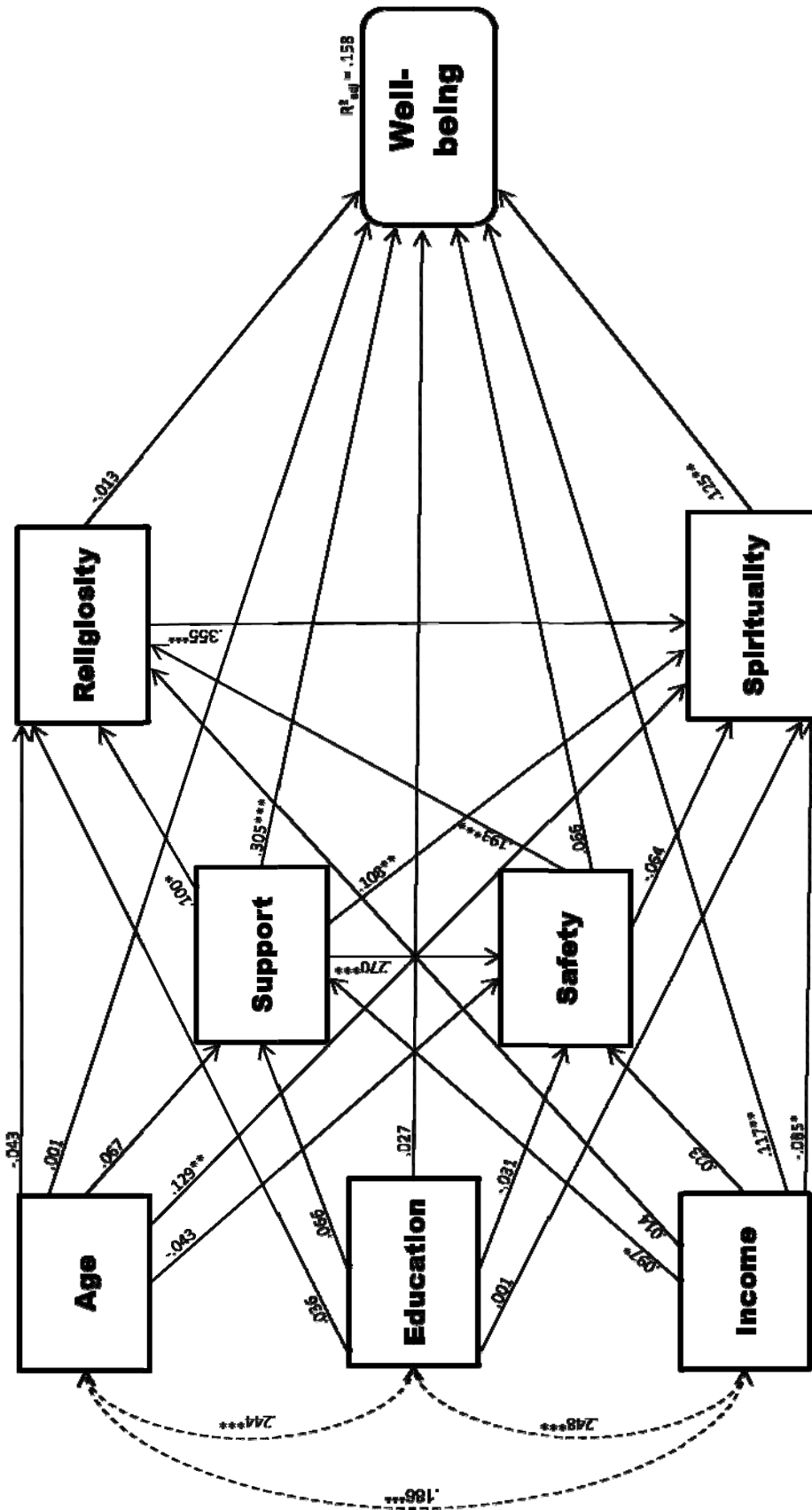


Figure 4.2 Walker's Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-being by Intact Group.

Table 4.11

Summary Path Analysis for Variables Predicting Adult Well-Being for Divorce Sample (n = 755)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	R^2_{adj}
Constant	1.510	.200		.159
Age	-0.002	.004	-.021	
Education	0.017	.014	.046	
Income	0.062	.016	.144***	
Support	0.296	.035	.324***	
Safety	-0.009	.028	-.013	
Religiosity	-0.044	.025	-.066	
Spirituality	0.037	.021	.065	

*** = $p < .001$.

Spirituality contributes to well-being for only the intact group. It is interesting to note that education was not directly or significantly associated with any other variable, but only for the intact group. When path decompositions were calculated, total effects were less than optimal due primarily to some spuriousness, while indirect effects had almost no effect. (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.12

Path Decomposition for Walker's Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-being by Divorce Sample.

Variables	Bivariate Effect (r)	Direct Effect (β)	Indirect Effect ($r_i - \beta$)	Spurious Effect (r-r _i)	Total Effect (r _i)
Age	.055	-.021	-.001	.033	-.022
Education	.140	.046	.001	.093	.047
Income	.213	.144	.001	.068	.145
Support	.366	.324	-.012	-.054	.312
Safety	.126	-.013	.000	.113	-.013
FamRel	-.102	-.066	-.002	-.034	-.068
Spirituality	.131	.065	.002	.064	.067

Findings

The path model functioned equally well for both groups, predicting 15.8% of the variance in well-being for the non-divorced group and 15.9% for the divorce group. Some patterns across groups were uncovered in the path analysis. For example, a supportive home environment positively contributes to feeling safe as a child, adult spirituality and well-being as an adult, independent of family background. These results lend strong support to the initial development of the Walker Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-being. It is clear that there are some elements that make a critical and valuable contribution to understanding well-being for those adults who have experienced divorce. It is also clear that feeling safe and supported is something that influences adult well-being, no matter what type of family structure. Parents who put their children's concerns above their own produce happy, balanced adults who can survive adversity—such as divorce.

Each model described a similar yet distinct picture of what factors contribute to adult well-being, along with a slight variation in total variance explained. The initial path model identified, in descending order of influence, support, income and spirituality as three factors that directly and significantly contribute to adult well-being. The path model with the non-divorced sample uncovered the same three factors as with the full-sample, only the order of influence is switched to support, spirituality, and then income. The divorce background model only showed support and income to significantly and directly contribute to adult well-being, dropping spirituality to non-significance for this group. Running the full sample only would have masked the order of significance for the non-divorce group, as well as the insignificance of spirituality for the divorce group. The full

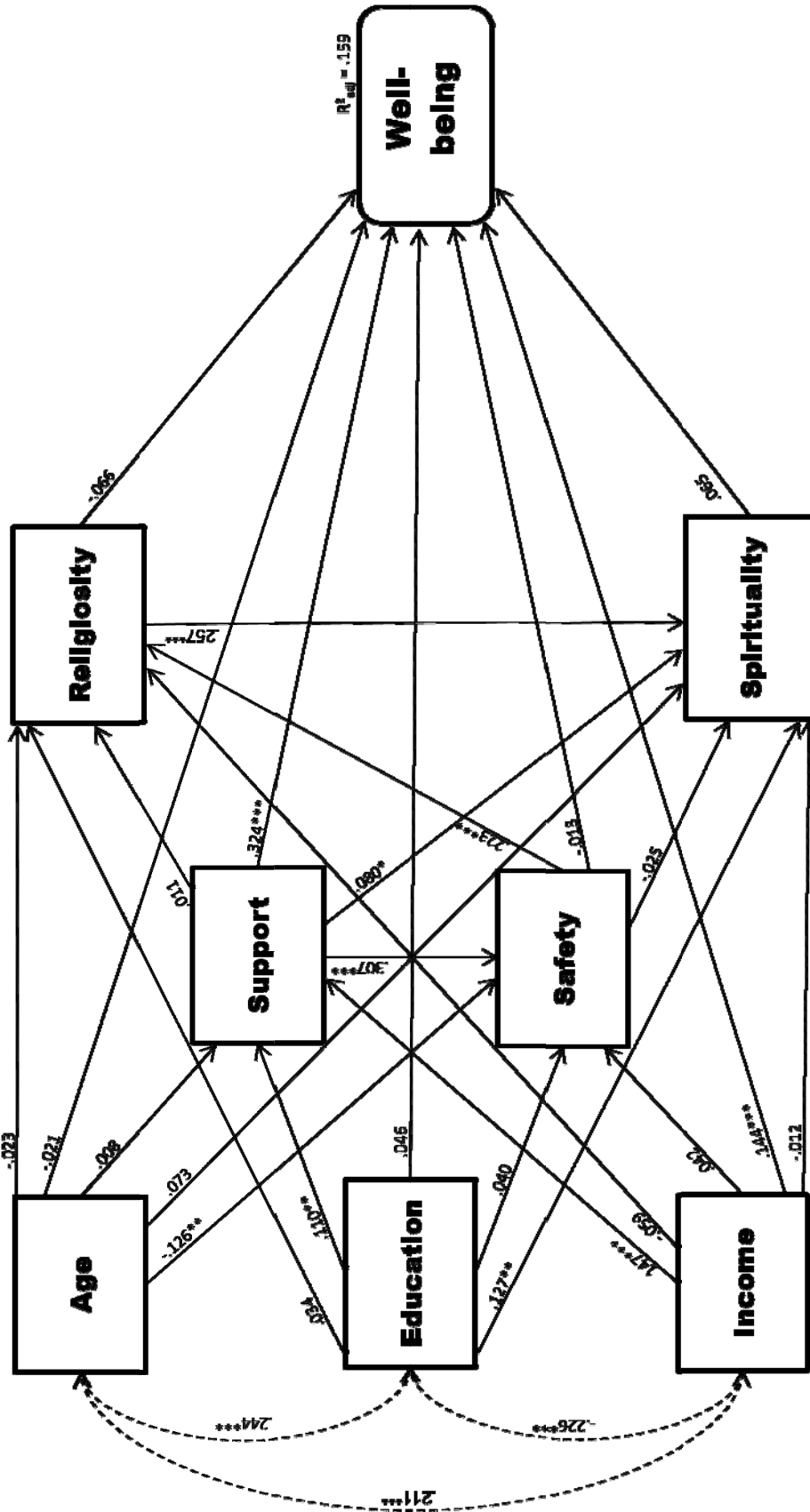


Figure 4.3 Walker's Model of Adult Self Concept, Connectedness and Well-being by Divorced Group.

sample path model obtained an adjusted R squared of .162, or 16.2% of variance explained. The intact path model explained the least amount of variance, with an adjusted R squared of .158 or 15.8%. The amount of variance explained by the divorce model is virtually identical to that of the intact model at .159 or 15.9%. While explaining a sizeable portion of variance for both groups, it is clear that approximately 84% of adult well-being remains unexplained by the variables in this model.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusion

In this final chapter, the results will be discussed as they relate to previous sections of this thesis generally and how they relate specifically to research questions, Social Learning and Social Exchange theories, previous literature, and Walker's Model of Adult Self-Concept, Connectedness and Well-Being. Thesis limitations will be discussed, as well as future areas that warrant further investigation.

Research Questions

This study seeks to examine how growing up in a divorced/non-divorced context ultimately influences offspring well-being. In this investigation I also explored how growing up in a religious/non-religious home influences adult well-being. The first research question addresses to what extent growing up in a divorced home influences well-being as an adult. In order to adequately address research question one, the fundamental questions of if, and then how, must be treated. Data revealed that coming from a divorced family background did, in fact, exert influence over adult well-being. Adults from divorced homes demonstrated lower well-being, when compared to adults from non-divorced homes. While consistent with what has been found in previous research (Amato, 2000; Wallerstein, 2004), this finding is further supported by the representative nature of data used in this thesis. Further inquiry into how the two groups differed revealed that, on average, adults from divorced backgrounds felt less safe and less supported in their family environments than adults from intact homes. Experiencing a supportive family environment was directly and positively related to feeling safe, and to adult well-being, independent of family background. Taken together, these findings

suggest a number of implications: First, a supportive family environment is optimal and influential for well-being. It does not appear to matter whether one grew up in a divorced or intact home, feeling supported as a child contributes to well-being, even into early adulthood. This finding would appear to support the adult fulfillment view, which suggests that children can develop successfully in a variety of family structures. Second, However, the finding that adults from divorced backgrounds felt less safe, and less supported as children, and ultimately had lower well-being as adults, when compared to their counterparts from intact homes, brings into question whether children actually do develop as successfully in both family types. Social Learning and Social Exchange Theories provide possible explanations. The lower well-being demonstrated by adults from divorced homes suggests that while divorce may be temporarily stressful, some children might not adapt, and the effects of divorce can echo into adulthood. It is also quite possible that another variable entirely may be influencing these differences.

The second research question seeks to add religiosity to the variables used in explaining differences and similarities in divorce/intact comparisons. Thus, the question what extent does family religiosity influence well-being of adults in divorced and non-divorced homes is asked. Within group comparisons revealed that adults from intact families with higher levels of family religiosity also demonstrated higher levels of well-being, when compared to less religious adults from intact families. This finding is not surprising, given that the majority of research regarding religiosity is based on samples with traditional family structures. However, this pattern has not been investigated for adults from divorce backgrounds.

Findings from this thesis suggest that adults from divorced homes appear to come from less religious families than their intact peers. A selection effect may be at work here, with those parents who eventually end up divorcing being less religious. When examining only those from divorce backgrounds, adults who experienced higher levels of family religiosity as children exhibited lower adult well-being than those with lower family religiosity. This is a surprising and unique finding. Research by Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, and Diener, (2004) regarding life-satisfaction and unemployment may shed some light on the situation. These authors found that those with higher satisfaction reacted more negatively to unemployment than those with lower levels of life satisfaction. Moreover, those higher in initial satisfaction were less likely to return to baseline levels of life satisfaction when compared to those lower in life satisfaction. Applying a similar pattern to this thesis, it might be possible conjecture that adults from more religious divorced backgrounds could have had higher well-being than their less religious divorced counterparts in the time before the divorce, and then fallen harder and recovered slower than their less religious peers into adulthood. Another possibility is that family religiosity did not contribute to child well-being and experiencing parental divorce had a greater negative influence on the adult well-being of this group when compared to those from less religious divorced homes. Clearly more research using a prospective longitudinal design is needed to further investigate these possibilities.

Path modeling revealed interesting findings for both divorced and intact groups. For the divorce group, education played an important part in well-being. On the other hand, education held neither direct nor indirect observed influence on well-being for the intact group. In light of the between group differences in support, education may

allow those from divorce backgrounds to obtain support for themselves that may not be available from their families of origin. Furthermore, education contributes to both support and spirituality for those from divorced backgrounds, but not intact backgrounds. Surprisingly, age exerts a direct negative influence on feelings of safety for adults from divorced homes. This may be an anomaly, or it may support Wallerstein's (2005) assertion that even as adults, those from divorced homes continue to be anxious that some unexpected event will spoil their happiness. This suggests that although children can successfully adapt to many family situations and transitions, parents and other influential adults may, in large, directly determine the level of family supportiveness, and thus indirectly influence the well-being of their children into early adulthood. This finding is buoyed by the classical work on parenting styles and child outcomes by Diana Baumrind (1991). The finding that a supportive family environment contributes to adult spirituality is interesting. That support at home adds to feeling safe at home is encouraging for parents, who by choice or circumstance, find themselves in situations that are difficult for their children. Interestingly, higher levels of safety at home seem to lead to higher levels of childhood or family religiosity. However, whether religious homes are safer was not addressed by this thesis. Childhood or family religiosity is a strong predictor of spirituality in early adulthood. This would seem to indicate that children who observe their parents modeling religious behavior perceived that behavior to be rewarding, and thus continue the connective activities modeled by their parents even as adults.

Some findings were unique to one group or the other, as revealed by path analysis. For the divorce group, education played an important part in well-being. On the other hand, education held no direct or indirect observed influence on well-being for the

intact group. Education contributes to both support and spirituality for those from divorced backgrounds. It may be that education is especially salient for this group, acting as a gateway for self support and connectedness, allowing those from divorced backgrounds to symbolically model someone or something beyond their immediate family if those closer concrete models prove unsatisfactory.

For the non-divorce group, spirituality, safety and support were most important in contributing to well-being. The findings related to the intact group are not surprising. For example, spirituality increases with age. However, spirituality decreases as income increases. High levels of support contribute to childhood religiosity for the intact group, but not the divorce group. It may be that those who eventually divorce are less religious to begin with, but that question remains to be investigated. Spirituality directly contributes to well-being for the intact, but not for those from a divorce background. This finding is supported by research by Cloninger (2007). In sum, it appears as though there is little difference in well-being by family background, but the path each group takes to arrive at those scores is different.

Social Learning and Exchange Theories

The information that adults from divorced homes demonstrated lower well-being, when compared to adults from non-divorced homes is consistent with modeling principles of social learning theory. Modeling would suggest that that adults who were raised in divorced homes may have learned unhealthy interpersonal skills as children and carry those skill deficits into their adult relationships. Research by Mahl (2001) supports this finding, suggesting that adults from divorced homes may fall into one of three categories, based on their awareness of modeling parental relationship behaviors in their

own romantic relationships. Modelers unconsciously repeat parental relationship behaviors in their own romantic relationships. Strugglers are aware of their parental modeling, believe they should act otherwise, yet continue to repeat parental behaviors in their own relationships. Reconcilers consciously repeat only the parental relationship behaviors that they believe will contribute to a successful romantic relationship. Adults raised in non-divorced homes are likely exposed to a spectrum of parental relationship behaviors as well. However, the behaviors required to maintain a marriage and avoid divorce appear to be more successfully modeled by those from non-divorced backgrounds and may provide clues as to the difference in adult well-being exhibited between the two groups. It appears as though, while certainly some children perceived a profit from parental divorce, and some children likely experienced a net loss with parents who were unhappily married, both of these groups are likely in the minority, given the differences in adult well-being between the two groups. In other words, on average, adults from divorced homes did not perceive parental divorce as beneficial for their well-being, while those from non-divorced homes perceived their parents' marriages as positive for their well-being.

The introduction of family religiosity provides some expected and unexpected findings for the two groups. Social Learning Theory suggests that the concrete and symbolic models available to the more religious should provide them with more options after which to model, when compared to the non/less religious, and thus result in higher well-being. This suggestion held true for those from intact families: adults from intact families with higher levels of family religiosity also demonstrated higher levels of well-being, when compared to less religious adults from intact families. This suggestion did

not, however, hold true for those from divorce backgrounds. Adults who experienced higher levels of family religiosity as children exhibited lower adult well-being than those with lower family religiosity, despite exposure to additional potential models. It may be that children from more religious homes that eventually divorced were forced to participate in religious activities and did not perceive those forced activities as beneficial in adulthood. An alternate scenario is that the models that were initially important and influential to them as children (e.g. parents, faith community, etc.) drop in importance following parental divorce, leaving them to search for other replacement models. It is also possible that those from their faith did not reach out to them in a time of need, and thus were then interpreted as less important models to emulate. This loss and the likely confusion of model replacement may contribute to the lower well-being exhibited by this group when compared to those from less religious and divorced homes.

Walkers' Model of Adult of Adult Self-Concept, Connectedness and Well-Being identified a number of interesting findings across the divorce and intact groups. Support directly contributed to well-being for both groups. Positive parental modeling of support appears to be beneficial and present for those from divorced, as well as those from non-divorced homes. Family support also contributed to levels of spirituality for both groups. The more one feels supported from their family, the more spiritual they may be. It may be that having one or more concrete model of supportiveness in one's circle of influence facilitates the development of a relationship of connectedness with spirituality, independent of family background. Support also led to feelings of safety for both groups. If a model is consistently supportive, then an observer may safely rely on that model to provide appropriate behaviors to pattern after. If support is inconsistent or unreliable,

then one may conclude that that model provides less beneficial behaviors and one may look elsewhere for models that pattern safer and more beneficial behaviors. Higher levels of family religiosity as a child led to higher levels of spirituality as an for those from intact as well as divorced homes. Family religiosity may provide children exposure to multiple models, whether symbolic, as in God, or concrete, as in a pastor or priest, to pattern their behavior after. This multiplicity of models may also facilitate a personal connection with a Higher Power in early adulthood. Finally, feeling safe led to higher levels of family religiosity, independent of family background. If one feels unsafe in one's family, behaviors that resulted in increasing levels of safety would be perceived as more beneficial than religiously oriented activities. However, if safety is not a concern in the family, then there would be little profit in attempting to increase the safety levels. Instead, more benefit could be had in seeking out rewarding social relationships such as those that may be found in a faith community, worship service, or prayer.

Walkers' Model of Adult of Adult Self-Concept, Connectedness and Well-Being identified a number of interesting findings between the divorce and intact groups. Education played an important part in well-being for the divorce group, but not for the intact group. Social Learning Theory would suggest that children observed the financial struggles of their custodial parent (often the mother) who may have had less formal education than the non-custodial parent (often the father) and consequently less options in terms of acceptable and viable employment. Due to these observations, children with divorced backgrounds likely learned to perceive education as highly beneficial to their well-being. Those from non-divorced families may still value education, but since they were less likely to be exposed to parenting models that struggled to provide for the needs

of the family due to lack of education, it likely did not increase in perceived benefits as it did in divorced families. Furthermore, education contributes to feeling supported for those from divorced backgrounds, but not intact backgrounds. Education exposes people to multiple models and varied ways of looking at the world. Since those with divorced parents may be looking for replacement models, academia may present a veritable goldmine for this population. Those from non-divorced homes may have less of a need for additional models, and therefore perceive education as less valuable in comparison. It may also be that because adults from divorce backgrounds perceive education as highly beneficial, they also perceive any help received from their families in obtaining an education as highly beneficial. Receiving support from intact families in obtaining an education may be perceived as more normative, and therefore less beneficial.

Another interesting finding regarding education across groups is that it contributes to spirituality for those from divorced backgrounds, but not intact backgrounds. This difference may also be due to the diversity of religious and spiritual traditions available at virtually any university campus across the nation. Those from divorced homes may feel more of a need for connection than those from intact homes.

Finally, age exerts a direct negative influence on feelings of safety for adults from divorced homes. Adults from divorced homes may feel that they cannot turn to their models for advice regarding relationships specifically or life generally, whereas adults from non-divorced homes may feel confident and at ease in doing just that. The inability to ask for advice may perpetuate a feeling of being on their own or having to figure out life by themselves, a situation that could become more frequent with age.

Limitations of the Study

As with any research, this thesis has a number of limitations. Secondary analysis limited the potential contributions of some variables due to level of measurement. For example, income, which could have been measured at the ratio level, was instead collected at the categorical level. Question availability was also limited by secondary analysis. Well-being was not directly available for measurement, but instead was assessed by combining happiness and life satisfaction questions. The retrospective nature of some of the questions could present themselves as limitations given the possibility of recall bias. While nationally representative in most respects, respondents in this analysis enjoyed education levels that are above average, thereby limiting the overall generalizability findings to the more educated. This data set treated missing data as valid responses, requiring recoding for a more accurate count of valid responses. Race and ethnicity were difficult to disentangle. Recoding allowed for the number of Hispanic Americans to be teased out.

Implications

This thesis identified a number of implications for research and practice. Of interest is the finding that religiosity exhibited different patterns depending on the group examined. This suggests a more careful and nuanced look at the influence of religiosity by sample and more caution in generalizing findings to whole populations. It also suggests that religious research be conducted with diverse populations.

Path modeling techniques are indicated when there are consistent, yet small differences found between groups, as they may indicate more fruitful, less traveled paths to pursue.

Parental and family life education programs should emphasize principles and skills that encourage parents to provide a supportive home environment for their children. This focus on supportive skills should be a necessary component of any educational program designed to help families with children

One of the hallmarks of a supportive home environment is the discussion and negotiation of boundaries and rules to adjust for increasing levels of child maturity. Clearly this is especially challenging to parents in the realm of religious and spiritual matters. However, as children's capacity for understanding and responsibility increase, the role of parents should slowly shift as well. Whereas once parents may have functioned, among other things, as teachers, enforcers, and protectors of their small children, it is likely that if this approach continues as the child matures, forced religiosity as a child may actually be harmful to that child's well-being as an adult. Once a child has reached a certain level of maturity and development, religious parents would do well to maintain an open dialogue with their children about their own religious beliefs, as well as provide opportunities for children to express what they do or do not believe, and within certain bounds, allow children to act in accordance with their own beliefs. Helping children to find their own religious bearings and sense of self within the relative safety of home life, while challenging, is preferable to mandated adherence while home followed by an adulthood unsure of one's religious identity. While there are no guarantees in parenting, this more democratic process and approach to religion in the home should help children to develop into happier, healthier, and better balanced adults.

Children whose parents divorce commonly internalize feelings and/or externalize behaviors in reaction to the divorce that interferes with schooling. Moreover, it is

common for the custodial parent, often the mother, to move to a less affluent residence post-divorce, requiring a move from a school with more resources to a school with less. Fathers do not always pay child support, and mothers do not always use the child support received supporting the children. All of these factors combine to decrease the likelihood of children from divorced homes from obtaining adequate preparation and support to gain a formal education. Grants and scholarships should be developed for those from a divorced family background. These types of funds exist, for example, for those under a certain height and for females. Creating funding for those from divorced homes is all the more important given the findings of this thesis. To further motivate fathers to support their children and reduce the misuse of this support by less than scrupulous mothers, courts could begin to mandate parents to pay into a court-created college trust fund for each child, taking into account custody, income and education level of both parents.

Suggestions for Future Research

One suggestion for future research is to examine the relationship of family background and highest level of education obtained. Do those from divorced backgrounds obtain less formal education than their intact counterparts? Given the salience of education for well-being for those from divorced homes, this topic seems particularly appropriate. A second suggestion for future research could be examining spirituality and well-being across and between groups. Spirituality seemed to be a constant contributor to well-being throughout this thesis. Does spirituality behave in the same manner as religiosity? Why or why not? Questions related to childhood and parental religiosity may also prove beneficial in the study of adult well-being. Does childhood religiosity predict religiosity as an adult? Is the religiosity of one parent more

influential than the other on religiosity and well-being? Also, are more religious homes more or less supportive than non-religious homes?

An issue that may not be able to be addressed through the current data, but has been indicated as an avenue for continued investigation, is the possible influence of coming from a divorced family on religiosity. Are these homes really less religious to begin with, or does the process of divorce influence those levels in some way? There are many paths yet to be explored in the realm of family structure and family process. This is just a beginning.

Conclusions

As is the case with most things in life, the world is more complicated than it seems. This thesis supports the position that family structure and family process in childhood are influential into early adulthood. Adults from divorced homes have lower well-being than adults from non-divorced homes. However, a divorce background does not doom one to a life of misery. One or more supportive parents or role models may serve to offset much of the potential negative outcomes sometimes associated with parental divorce. Childhood religiosity was associated with higher adult well-being for the highly religious only for the full sample. However, when broken down by family background, family religiosity does not seem to influence the well-being of adults from divorced homes. This finding is counterintuitive and justifies further exploration into the realm of religion, religiosity, and spirituality. Utilizing a non-traditional family structure to investigate the effects of religion will help us to learn not only about religion and family structure, but how they may combine in unique and interesting ways to influence the human condition.

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