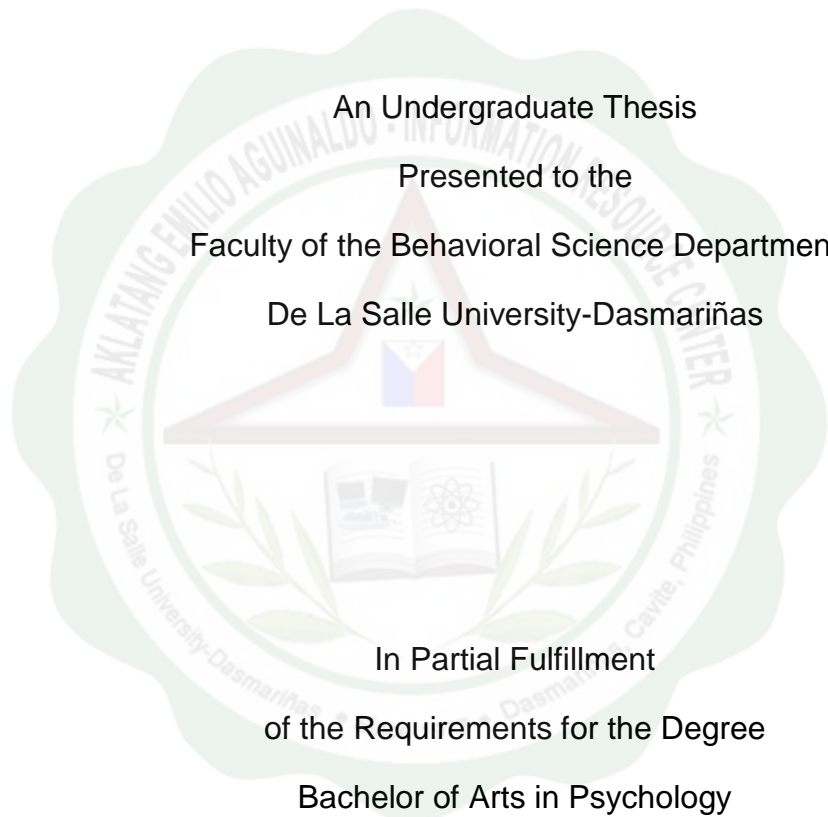


CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM



Adiao, Joane Christine I.

Navarro, Myris Dinah M.

Suarez, Regina Louise C.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Introduction	1
Theoretical Framework	3
Statement of the Problem	5
Scope and Limitation	6
Significance of the Study	8
Definition of Terms	9

CHAPTER 2

Spirituality Defined.....	13
Religion and Childhood	18
Spirituality and Parental Modeling	24
Spirituality in the Philippines	28
Spirituality, Religion and Disability	30
Autism Defined.....	32

CHAPTER 3

Research Design 39

Research Respondents 40

Research Instruments 41

Research Procedure 43

Data Analysis 44

CHAPTER 4

Statement of the Problem No.1..... 46

Statement of the Problem No.2..... 49

Statement of the Problem No.3..... 59

CHAPTER 5

Summary 62

Conclusion 64

Recommendations 66

Bibliography 67

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Certification from the Research Site	75
Appendix B: Certification from Languages and Literature Department	77
Appendix C: Letters and Parental Consent Form	78
Appendix D: Interview Transcription	82
Appendix E: Observation Table	116
Appendix F: Pictures Presented During the Interview	117
Curriculum Vitae	128

ABSTRACT

Name of Institution:	De La Salle University- Dasmariñas
Address:	Dasmariñas City, Cavite
Title:	Concept of Spirituality among Individuals with Autism
Authors:	Adiao, Joane Christine I. Navarro, Myris Dinah M. Suarez, Regina Louise C.
Funding Source:	Parents
Cost:	P 12, 000
Date Started:	June 2012
Date Completed:	March 2013

Statement of the Problem

This study was able to answer the following problems:

1. What is the demographic profile of the selected individuals with autism in terms of the following:
 - a. Age
 - b. Religion

- c. School
 - d. Educational Attainment
2. What are their concept of spirituality in terms of the following factors:
- a. Cognition(*Knowledge*)
 - b. Affective (*Attitude*)
 - c. Behavioral (*Outcomes*)
3. In what way are these factors influenced/ taught by the parent's perspective?

Scope and Limitations

This whole study is merely limited on the concept of spirituality among the individuals with autism. To gather relevant information, respondents of this study are only comprised of high functioning individuals with autism. In addition to this, because of the nature of this study, the researchers decided to limit the respondents with a maximum number of 5 for them to be able to focus on the respondents personally and to gather more relevant information for the study. Respondents of the study are only composed of those who are attending school at the moment. They came from different schools, namely Sta. Belina Learning School and San Jose Elementary School. Due to this, it contributes to the

factor that may have an effect on the consistency of the data. As to the respondents' answers are or may be influenced by different curriculums of the two schools.

All the data that was gathered only came from interviews/conversations from the respondents and their respective parents. The researchers did not embrace the community (e.g. friends, priest, etc.) as a source of acquiring information about the respondent because they only want to focus on individuals that directly affect/influence the said individuals every day. Including the community will only broaden the scope of this research. The coverage of interviews and other ways of gathering information from the respondents was derived from the statement of the problem. The main method used in initiating the data gathering process in this study was mainly the presentation of pictures. Other methods like interview with the parents and use of observational form are only utilized as a support for the validity of the responses of the individuals with autism.

In line with this, the researchers did not tackle any other variable/factors that are not related to the research to avoid the inconsistency of results and tangentiality in the study. Researchers, however, are open to any answers that the respondents impart/disclose if it is in relation to their thoughts/belief about spirituality.

There was no time limit during the interviews for it may be an extraneous variable or factor that may affect the reliability and validity of results.

Methodology

In conducting this study, the researchers used qualitative method particularly descriptive method. This method is designed to describe the nature of a situation (concept of spirituality) as it exists at the time of the study and to explore the causes of particular phenomena. Gay (1976) defined Descriptive Method as involving collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject (individuals with autism) of the study.

In line with this, the data of this study was gathered from various sources, such as interviews and direct observation, which was used to illuminate the case. For this study, the researchers utilized an interview with the respondent, interview with the parent, and observational forms that was compared to see the similarities and differences of each method to determine the concept of spirituality of the individuals with autism.

Conclusion

One of the risks (and benefits) of qualitative research is that the researcher gives up some control of the research in order to let respondents guide conversations towards what they believe matters most.

This was the case with this research. The researchers began this study hoping to understand/know the concept of spirituality among individuals with autism in the basis of William James' psychology of religion (Forsyth, 2003) in which his intention was to "ignore the institutional branch entirely, to say nothing of ecclesiastical organization, to consider as little as possible the systematic theology and the ideas about the gods themselves, and to confine myself as far as I can to personal religion pure and simple." In short, what is to be studied here, supposedly, is not religion as expressed in theologies, moral teachings, or the organization of the church life but religion as it is experienced by the individual. Yet as the research progressed, the researchers discovered that what seemed to have the most significant impact on the children's spiritual lives or concept of spirituality is based on what is taught to them by their congregations, read in books, taught by the school, etc. In a sense, somehow, the source of their concept is mostly affected by what is taught to them. In fact two of the parents say, in general, that their son/daughter more likely to have something to say more based on what he/she learned/knows (intellectually) than he/she'd talk about feeling stuff.

Despite of this, from the results gathered, the researchers concluded that individuals with autism have a concept of spirituality; young as they are, they were able to determine the pictures that were presented

to them and this was validated by their parents. Results of the interview, though not so emphasized by the respondents, also showed that most of them demonstrated the characteristics of the “sick soul” and only one of them shows the characteristics of the “healthy-minded” religion. However, all the respondents seemed to, somehow, base their conception on higher Being to its pragmatic value (for instance, whenever they pray and ask for something). Lastly, observations made by the researchers also show the presence of spirituality among individuals with autism.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the findings and conclusions gathered, the researchers would like to recommend the following:

1. The researchers recommend to aim having respondents other than individuals with autism to be able to compare the concept of spirituality among different disabilities.
2. The researchers recommend using more methods in gathering data to be able to establish a stronger validity of the results regarding this topic.
3. For future researchers, it is recommended to increase the number of respondents/respondents. Four (4) respondents in

this research will not represent all individuals with autism in general.

4. A more comprehensive research is also needed to gain a fuller glimpse on the concept of spirituality among individuals with autism. Further research might include children from different Christian traditions—Catholic, Pentecostal, etc.—in order to gain a sense of the ways in which certain traditions might influence an individual's concept of spirituality.

