

Spirituality Improves Well-being

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The purpose of this statement analysis is to examine the concept of spirituality and the concept of well-being, and the relationship between these concepts by incorporating Walker and Avant's (2011) seven steps in statement analysis. In order to understand this relationship, the concept of spirituality will be briefly reviewed, as well as the defining attributes, antecedents, consequences, and empirical referents. The concept of well-being will be defined and described in more depth, as defined and used in several referenced and literal works. Defining attributes, antecedents, consequences, and empirical referents will then be made for concept of well-being. In short, spirituality improves well-being. This proposition was chosen due to the importance of spirituality in holistic nursing practice, as a key area to address when treating a patient and their overall well-being. This statement will be classified while specifying the relationship between the concepts according to type, sign, and symmetry. This paper will examine the logic of this proposition statement as well as its validity and testability. Advantages and disadvantages to this proposition analysis will be noted. And lastly, this paper will discuss ways to utilize the analysis, as well as the importance of this proposition statement in nursing practice.

Concept of Spirituality Reviewed

Spirituality is defined as sensitivity or attachment to religious values, or the quality or state of being spiritual. It is an awareness of an internal force (Merriam-Webster, 2012). For clarification, the *World English Dictionary* (2012) defines spirit as the force or principle of life, or an incorporeal being. Other defining characteristics are temperament, disposition, an emotional state, reflective insight, and awareness. Spirituality is an "awareness of the metaphysical, the religious, or the sublime. In practice, spirituality includes participation in organized religion, contemplation, meditation, prayer, reflection, and activities fostering self-growth and connections with others and with nature," (Taber's Cyclopedia Medical Dictionary,

2009, p. 2176). Delgado (2007) defines spirituality as finding meaning or purpose, and the affirmation of an inner-relationship including nature or a Supreme One, a connectedness through trust, and the realization of one's transcendent values. In a *Journal of Advanced Nursing* article, spirituality is described as person's inner being, expressed by actions, thoughts, feelings, creativity, and judgments. Spirituality is activating one's spirit to be present for another to give and receive love, compassion, empathy, hope, and peace. The phenomenon present is best represented by "connectedness," implying a joining of two or more elements (Goldberg, 2008).

When considering the context and purpose of the concept of spirituality, the attributes of connectedness, awareness, reflection, and purpose must be present. Connectedness involves relationship, whether it is with an inner force or with other people. Awareness is necessary to know one's thoughts, beliefs, and values; and to be aware that others may share or differ in theirs. The ability to look back on prior experiences is the attribute of reflection. And finally, in all cases of spirituality, purpose must also be present. Purpose is a reason for being. Therefore, spirituality is defined as a connectedness and awareness of self and others, often obtained through the reflection on past experiences, that define purpose and meaning in one's life.

The ability to distinguish between internal and external stimuli is an antecedent to the concept of spirituality. One must also have the ability to receive and respond to verbal and nonverbal forms of communication. Peace, strength, resilience, and hope are consequences of spirituality, as are well-being and health. Words of optimism, positivity, and sharing stories are empirical referents, as are relationship forming and collective decision making.

Description and Definition of Well-being

Dictionary

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2012) defines well-being as the state of being happy

and prosperous. It is also defined as healthy. Synonyms used are health, wellness, upbeat, successful, and prosperous. To be aware of one's self, and the need for wellness.

According to a *Stanford Education Dictionary* publication (2001), well-being is an individualized determination of a state of being. This encompasses the positive and negative aspect of how one views life, or reflects upon life; or the quality of life. It can be a state of contentment, or discontent; a state of happiness, or unhappiness. Well-being is determined as an individualized value.

Cyclopedic

Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary (2009), defines well-being as good health. It is an awareness of health, and an appreciation or enjoyment of wellness. It is defined as a mental and physical state of balance. It is not just a lack of illness or disease.

Textbook

According to Cloninger (2004), "well-being arises when a person learns how to let go of struggles, to work in the service of others, and to grow in awareness. Well-being encompasses the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual processes of living," (pp.1). The author goes on to say that people differ drastically in the depth of understanding of themselves and relationships, and that all humans need coherence of personality, relationships and connectedness, as well as growth in self-awareness to achieve well-being and quality of life.

Nursing Articles

In nursing literature, well-being is defined as a health state that includes physical, emotional, psychological, social, environmental, and spiritual components (Taliaferro, Rienzo, Pigg, Miller, & Dodd, 2009). Well-being is a product of determining meaning and purpose in life through individual perceptions and feelings of fulfillment. In addition, Delgado (2007)

insists that well-being is a result of an individual's search for meaning while relating and connecting to others. It takes into account an individual's social and cultural environment, as well as their ability to create or maintain an awareness of self. According to Delgado, inner peace is the result of this coherence or connectivity of overall health state.

Defining Attributes

When considering the definitions and characteristics for the concept of well-being, the attributes of coherence or connectedness, health, purpose, and determination of one's quality of life must be present in the use of the concept. Coherence or connectedness involves an integration of relationships or values. Awareness of one's quality of life is a sense of recognition regarding one's life, or simply the inner recognition regarding the life lived. Health is another defining attribute of well-being. Health is a state of physical, mental, and social well-being. Lastly, for the concept of well-being, purpose is the meaning of something or the reason for being. Therefore, well-being is defined as a state of coherence or connectedness involving all facets of health, based on a premise of purpose; determining one's quality of life.

Antecedents and Consequences

An antecedent for well-being is consciousness. One must acknowledge existence, sensations, and thoughts. This involves intuition and immediate apprehension, direct perception or recognition; independent of a reasoning process (Cloninger, 2004). When well-being is achieved or perceived, contentment, peace, and balance are a consequence. Other consequences of well-being are hope, resilience, and wholeness.

Empirical Referents

According to Walker and Avant (2011) empirical referents are phenomena that demonstrate the occurrence of a concept, or means by which to recognize the defining attributes

of a concept. With the concept of well-being, living a balanced and harmonious life would be an empirical referent. Other empirical referents are caring and being cared for. Forming relationships, communication, happiness, and affection are all empirical referents.

Statement Classification

According to Walker and Avant (2011) there are three basic classifications of systems. These are existence statements, definitions, and relational statements. Existence statements simply claim the existence of concepts, whether accurate or inaccurate. Statements as definitions are defined as descriptive, stipulative, or in terms of operational meanings. Relational statements specify a relationship between concepts, as is the case for this statement.

Type/Sign/Symmetry

The proposition statement being analyzed is that spirituality improves well-being. This is a relational statement. Due to the many variables that influence actual causation, this proposition will be classified primarily as probabilistic. As spirituality occurs, well-being will most likely occur also. As spirituality increases well-being, the relationship is positive in regards to sign, with a unidirectional symmetry. However, there are studies that also support a concurrent relationship between the concepts of the proposition. This is stating an existence between the concept of spirituality and well-being. If there is spirituality, there is also well-being.

Logic

Spirituality improves well-being. This is a logical statement evident in many ways, both in deductive and inductive constructs (Walker & Avant, 2011). On the most simplistic level, the attributes of the concepts are very similar and actually share many of the defining attributes. In addition, the antecedents and consequences mirror both concepts. Also in support of the logic of this proposition, are the similarities and relationship among the empirical referents.

Deductive Defense

According to existing literature, the proposition statement is accurate and can be supported in the real world through both deductive and inductive validity measures. The following are examples of deductive substantiations for the proposition. In a classic psychology book review, Cloninger (2004) maintains that a reflective or spiritual state of contemplation brings order, truth, and coherence. The author further states that spirituality in itself brings truth, wisdom, freedom, and self-awareness; that increase order, balance of health, quality of life, and well-being. A self-aware, fully coherent or connected individual is capable of being free, whole, and well; as spirituality is embraced. With purpose as a shared attribute among spirituality and well-being, the author also maintains that purpose is the fundamental unity of being. In an archived work from Archibald Alexander (1844), it was said that without growth in spirituality and knowledge of purpose, there is no life. He also states that spirituality is a necessity for mental and bodily health. Accordingly, health is a defining attribute of well-being. According to Goldberg (2008), spirituality is inseparable from psychological, social, and physical care. The author further states that these areas must all be addressed or connected in order to realize well-being.

Inductive Defense/Testability

In addition to the deductive or general substantiation of this proposition through literal works, there are others that substantiate the validity of the proposition through tests and inductive or empirical support. In a descriptive study involving hospitalized patients, the relationship among hope, spiritual well-being, and quality of life were explored (Pipe, Kelly, LeBrun, Schmidt, Atherton, & Robinson, 2008). The study examined these relationships from admission, to discharge, to a six week follow-up period. The instruments used for the study were

interviews on several occasions, Life Questionnaire and Index Measurement, several functional assessment tools, and open-ended interview questions. The results of this study are also supportive of the proposition statement. Hope, spiritual well-being, and quality of life were correlated significantly and positively during all time periods, adding empirical data that supports this proposition.

In a study by Delgado (2007), questionnaires were mailed to patients with the chronic illness of COPD that were not currently hospitalized. The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between a sense of coherence and spirituality, and the association with quality of life. The study showed that individuals with a strong sense of coherence were also more spiritual, and rated their quality of life better. In contrast, individuals that felt more stressed and less at peace, rated their quality of life as lower. The results of the study supported the proposition, that spirituality increases well-being; when utilizing the defining attributes of the concepts. In addition to the probabilistic relationship, the reciprocal nature of the variables also supports the concurrent nature of the concepts within the proposition.

The probabilistic relationship within the proposition was also supported in a descriptive study of spirituality and psychological well-being (Kim, Reed, Hayward, Kang, & Koenig, 2011). This study hypothesized a positive relationship between spirituality and well-being among elders and their caregivers. A cross-sectional, correlation design was used for the study. Spirituality was measured by the Perspective and Self-Transcendence Scales, while psychological well-being was measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale, the Purpose in Life Test, the Positive and Negative Affect Scales, and the Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale. The results indicated that an individual's spirituality was positively associated with their

psychological well-being. Also supporting the concurrent relationship of the proposition was the interdependence and reciprocity of the concepts.

Advantages and Limitations

Then primary advantage to this statement analysis is the systematic way the concepts have been defined as well as the relationship among the concepts. Another advantage is the inductive logic of the proposition, as well as the deductive empirical data. Spirituality improves well-being. For the most part, this proposition was very well supported in the literature. A probabilistic relationship was demonstrated by the research, and in some studies a concurrent relationship was also present. The individual examination of the concepts allowed for clarity, while examining the relationship between the concepts allows for future theory analysis, once a framework is determined.

Although several defining attributes were shared among the concepts providing cohesiveness to the proposition, this also narrowed the literature review. This was a limitation to the proposition statement. Although very rigorous and time consuming, analyzing several propositions would allow for a broader literature review. In fact, as this literature review was conducted, several related propositions were brought to light. Spirituality improves psychological well-being, spirituality improves health, spirituality reduces stress, and spirituality improves quality of life; just to name a few. It would be tedious but possible to conduct a much larger literature review, and to analyze more statements. Perhaps the initial proposition would then be modified, or other statements included in a framework pertaining to spiritual care, for use in a thesis or project utilization activity.

Utilizing Results/Nursing Significance

According to Walker and Avant (2011), statement analysis can be used in academia,

research, in theory development, and in nursing practice. Statement analysis can lead to great discussions in the realm of education, and additional research studies could be designed based on empirical evidence that supported the statement. Discussions about the empirical data that supported this proposition and other similar propositions among related concepts, could lead to changes in nursing curriculum, or further research projects. Also, statement analysis in general allows the theorist or researcher to detect problems in a statement that may require additional research, concept clarifications, or a reformulation of ideas. If the proposition statement is sound, the theorist can pull other concepts and statements together with it, and eventually build a theory.

Research suggests that spirituality contributes significantly to well-being. This proposition analysis provides insights regarding spiritual care in nursing which are based on empirical evidence. This evidence may act to reinforce the need to better address psychosocial and spiritual needs of patients and families when providing care, to better individualize interventions, or to make appropriate referrals. Nurses structure their practice around the environment, mind, body, and spirit of individuals and families; allowing them to be treated as a whole being. In this respect, nurses have the opportunity to connect with patients and families in a way that other healthcare providers may not. By addressing spiritual needs of a patient or family, holistic nursing interventions can be employed that have been shown through empirical evidence to enhance the well-being of the patient and family. By using the empirical evidence needed for evidenced based practice, additional nursing diagnoses may be considered, and appropriate interventions may be chosen. This proposition analysis also opens the door to discuss the efficacy of other similar statements that may act to guide nursing practice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, spirituality improves well-being. The purpose of this statement analysis was to examine the concept of spirituality and the concept of well-being, and the relationship between these concepts. The concept of spirituality was reviewed, including the defining attributes, antecedents, consequences, and empirical referents. The concept of well-being was defined and described in more depth. Defining attributes, antecedents, consequences, and empirical referents were then made for concept of well-being. The proposition statement was classified while specifying the relationship between the concepts according to type, sign, and symmetry. This paper examined the logic of the proposition statement, as well as its validity and testability. Advantages and disadvantages to the proposition analysis were noted. And lastly, this paper discussed ways to utilize the analysis as well as the importance of this proposition statement in holistic nursing practice, as a basis for which to provide total care.

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