
The role Spiritual Psychology plays in Psychotherapy: An Explorative Study in Cape Town.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelors of Arts- Honours in Psychology degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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Abstract

Background. Spirituality is a growing research field believed to have an essential contribution to human health and wellbeing. The role spiritual psychology represents in psychotherapy was investigated through a qualitative research design to obtain rich data from registered clinical psychologists in Cape Town. Spiritual psychology is seldomly incorporated in practice. A lack of literature and education programs leads to incompetent psychologists concerning incorporation. **Objectives.** To report on the role of spiritual psychology to psychologists. Establish the use of spiritual psychology as a therapy method in psychotherapy. Delineate different spiritual therapy methods incorporated. Bridging gap in South Africa's literature. **Method.** The study utilised semi-structured, in-depth interviews to assess the objectives. Inductive content analysis showcased five relevant themes. **Results.** Spiritual psychology does represent an overall important role for the studied psychologists in Cape Town. The degree of role representation varies, as well as the spiritual therapy methods, incorporated. Mostly, mindfulness, inner child work, and guided meditations were incorporated. Most psychologists delineated that all work they do, is spiritual of nature and that healing occurs when subjectively working with the psyche in a more spiritual manner. This report extends awareness of the inclusion of spirituality in mental health care through spiritual literature and rising trends.

Keywords: psychotherapy, spirituality, African spirituality, religion, spiritual psychology, psychotherapy.

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Section 1: Introduction

Background

Spirituality is an emerging research field believed to have an important contribution to human health and wellbeing (Pearce, Pargament, Oxhandler, Vieten & Wong, 2020a; Rosmarin, Harold & Koenig 2020). Spiritual Psychology (SP) is a psychology branch that amalgamates spirituality, science, and traditional psychology (Hulnick, 2011). When defining the word "Psyche" as per the dictionary, one finds; "the human soul, mind or spirit" ("Psyche," n.d). When defining the word "Psychology," one will assume it would follow the study of the human psyche. However, what you'll find is; "the science of mind and behaviour" (Hulnick, 2011: p.5). Which was intended as a study correlating to the human soul, mind, or spirit, is transferred to the scientific domain of mind and behaviour. What happened to the spirit and the soul? Why is it that the body of knowledge disassociates the psyche in its understanding and practice of psychology? This argument drove the researcher to investigate the case and found that it might be the most efficient placement of the research problem in literature by looking at spiritual psychology and its role in the body of knowledge. As one of the seminal authors states, "It's time to put psyche back into psychology" (Hulnick, 2011: p.5). Thus, psychology's definition might appear to be problematic in its association with the psyche (Rosmarin, Harold & Koenig, 2020). Numerous authors have acknowledged the relation among the body, mind, spirit, or soul, and should therefore be studied and applied together (Pearce et al., 2020a, 2020b; Rosmarin, Harold & Koenig 2020).

The research report delineates the above-specified argument through the following six sections. Section one identifies and deliberates the study's rationale and research problem; converse the research questions, aim, and objectives. The second section will discern the theoretical foundation and justification thereof. Section three embodies a literature review that will elucidate the relevant standing of spiritual psychology in South Africa and internationally, distinguish numerous influencing factors associated with the phenomena and place the research problem within the existing literature. The research design and methodology are discussed in section four, which outlines the paradigm and the chosen approach to investigate the problem; the population and sampling criteria, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques deployed in the study will converse in this section. Section five allocates significant findings and interpretation thereof and the study's validity,

reliability, and trustworthiness. Section six concludes the study together with the contributions the study could fulfil, the ethical considerations, and limitations thereof.

Rationale

The literature on spirituality in the light of social sciences is seen as problematic because it lacks consistent, conceptual, and operational definitions (Rosmarin et al., 2020; Van Wyk & Terblanche, 2018). Former studies indicate insufficient research on spirituality in educational programs and mental health professionals' training, especially in a South African context (Pearce et al., 2020a). The study intends to abet insights into spirituality and augment an understanding and comfortability in practice. The research introduces a paradigm shift from the mind more to the soul (Hulnick, 2011) by acknowledging the psyche's existence as part of spiritual psychology and exploring the value thereof as a beneficial psychotherapy tool. The researcher found the research problem relevant to investigate since it holds significance to human mental health and wellbeing and is believed to contribute to psychotherapy as an alternative modality (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). It is worth researching industry-related concerns to enrich the body of knowledge through practitioners' contributions in the field.

The American Psychological Association interviewed Kenneth Pargament, the leading expert in the psychology of religion and spirituality, in 2013 on 'What Role Do Religion and Spirituality Play In Mental Health?' Pargament reported that a range of spiritually integrated approaches to therapy are currently being created and tested by psychologists, including forgiveness programs that assists divorced individuals cope with bitterness and anger; interventions that help sexual assault survivors cope with their spiritual struggles; therapies for women with eating disorders to rely on their spiritual resources; and programs to encourage substance abusers 'reconnect' to their higher selves. The above initiatives are still in the early stages of development, but there are promising preliminary findings (Pargament, as cited by the APA, 2013).

Problem statement

Spiritual Psychology (SP) is an understudied phenomenon in South Africa (Van Wyk & Terblanche, 2018). Prior studies ascertain that most mental health professionals seldomly incorporate spiritual psychology in psychotherapy (Pearce et al., 2020a; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). Furthermore, the lack of understanding of the psyche in the body of

knowledge induced research on this notion. Accordingly, Oxhandler and Pargament (2018) suggest that there is not enough substantial research to prove the worthwhileness it might hold in the field of psychology, especially in that of psychotherapy. Former research considers spirituality an adequate tool, particularly in educational programs and mental health practices such as psychotherapy (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Mthembu, Wegner & Roman, 2017; Pearce et al., 2020a, 2020b; Hulnick, 2011). Prior studies indicated insufficient research in spirituality, specifically in educational programs and mental health professionals' training in South Africa (Rosmarin et al., 2020; Van Wyk & Terblanche, 2018).

Hence, the 'psyche' is disregarded in psychology incorporation (Hulnick, 2011; Brown, 2018). Finally, with this kept in mind, one can assume a lack of competence towards SP amid health professionals and its application as a viable therapy tool in psychotherapy (Pearce et al., 2020a, 2020b; Hulnick, 2011).

Research Aim and Objectives

The study aimed to investigate the role of spiritual psychology in psychotherapy. The objectives of this study include:

- Synthesising the definition of spirituality and spiritual psychology.
- Assessing the role of SP in practice, more specifically in psychotherapy.
- Assessing the use of SP as a viable tool in psychotherapy.
- Evaluating the extent to which SP is incorporated in psychotherapy.
- Bridging the gap in South Africa's literature on SP in relation to psychotherapy.

Research Question

The formulation of research questions was to support the study's aim and objectives. They are; what role does spiritual psychology play amongst clinical psychologists in Cape Town? Is spiritual psychology incorporated in psychotherapy, and to what extend?

Section 2: Theoretical Foundation

In the 19th century, a French philosopher and priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, wrote a profound statement: "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience." His statement has been referred to in numerous studies pertaining to religion and spirituality in psychology. He was known for his

theory that man progresses into an ultimate divine unification in mental and social dimensions (Tikkanen, 2020). Based on this concept, the study is grounded in Spiritual Theory (ST). In agreement with Tikkanen (2020), ST is a scientific proposal aiming to explain the existence of the spirit, the spiritual dimension, and the relationships among these with the material world. ST was developed based on facts about spiritual phenomena that are fundamental to establishing a Spiritual Science (Tikkanen, 2020). Several psychologists like Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, William James, and Abraham Maslow have considered spirituality as part of their theory of human behaviour (Tikkanen, 2020; Mahida, 2015). Among them, Abraham Maslow's contributions to humanistic work, circa 1960, led to the Transpersonal Theory's origin that utilizes psychological methods to examine the spiritual subject matter (Sauter, 2019). Embed in this theoretical framework is a branch of psychology referred to as Transpersonal psychology or, in more modern terms- spiritual psychology (Sauter, 2019; Paloutzian & Park, 2005).

The work of Paloutzian and Park (2005) established a definition of transpersonal psychology as an integrative aspect of the spirituality of human experiences within the context of modernised psychology. Transpersonal therapy is also a holistic healing intervention that includes the body, mind, and spirit/soul within the framework of psychotherapy (Sauter, 2019). This draws a close contrast to the study's focus, built on humanistic and existential viewpoints, to support the research problem. As Scott (2010) suggests, "being human is being spiritual in the same way that being human is being physical or emotional...." (p.270). The common element is the insistence that spirituality is part of human growth and development that it is necessary to recognise as part of our understanding of human experience and meaning (Sauter, 2019) and thus validate its inclusion in psychotherapy as intended to assist clients at all stages of life. However, how spirituality is understood depends on the individual context and recognition that one's understanding is rooted in cultural traditions, religious/non-religious beliefs, social and personal locations, and life experiences (Tikkanen, 2020). Thus, there is no single theory granted within the scope of spirituality (Scott, 2010). Consequently, it is essential to respect the evolving diversity and perhaps to resist a singular definitive model. It is also necessary to keep the spiritual phenomenon open in recognising its complexity, its cultural embeddedness, and its under-theorized state: as it remains, in part, mysterious (Sauter, 2019; Scott, 2010).

To draw more relevance to the study, readers must consider the context of multicultural perspectives centred within African perspectives. Respectively, Indigenous African Thought is present and explained by Machinga (2020) as a worldview characterised by the basic relational ontology of ubuntu, transpersonal realities, collectivism, and the belief in a Supreme 'God' or existence of the Sacred. Accordingly, she elaborates that most African societies' value system is formed around respect for oneself related to the community, others, and the whole (Machinga, 2020).

Section 3: Literature Review

The literature review entails a comprehensive and systematic summary that is informed through available research. It appeared that there is a lack of spiritual literature, specifically on psychological practice and psychotherapy. Henceforth, the study's literature was congregated from South African sources, but mainly from international authors. Within a framework that allows for common identification and understanding, the research study explored the role of spiritual psychology (SP) among health professionals in Cape Town. More specifically, to examine the incorporation of spirituality in psychotherapy.

Introduction

By attending the concept of spirituality to psychology, this study sought to answer the research questions by giving an overview of the history of the phenomena and avowing the progression of SP's multifaceted phenomenon as manifested in the psychological industry. The collected information entails exploring relevant literature, the multidimensional and multicultural construct of SP, and conceptualising the key concepts. Departing from this discussion, a more critical reflection is provided by placing the research problem in prior literature. Key themes espoused by seminal sources are argued and linked to the study. Lastly, SP is equivalated in conjunction with establishing the role it represents in psychotherapy conditions and as prevailed in a practical setting.

Overview

Miovic (2004) stated numerous contemporary textbooks and journals on spirituality, religion, and mental-health compile a substantial body of work presenting that religion and spirituality are embedded in cultural truths; that treatments in the construct are value based;

and that religious or spiritual beliefs and practices, holds both positive and negative outcomes on mental-health (Koenig, 1998 as cited by Miovic, 2004). These are some of the reasons clarifying why religion and spirituality are clinically relevant to psychotherapy and psychiatric practices. Review of literature summarized in South Africa, a lack of empirical research exists. Hence, one could state that SP, as a phenomenon is worth looking into (Van Rensburg, 2018; Hodge, 2018). Key authors exposed evidence that most mental health professionals seldom incorporate spiritual psychology in psychotherapy due to a lack of comfortability and feelings of incompetency (Pearce et al., 2020b; Machinga, 2020; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). Among more practical matters, thus far, neither science nor philosophy could provide evidence or contradicted the presence of soul and spirit within human consciousness. Hence “the nature of consciousness remains in mystery” (Miovic, 2004, p105). Therefore, the multidimensional, complex, and multicultural nature of the respective study is worth exploring.

Conceptualisation

By conceptualising the key concepts, the research report allows effective measures to interplay the concepts, the relationship between spirituality and psychology, and the role it could represent in psychotherapy. Key concepts applicable to the study are; psychotherapy, spirituality, African spirituality, religion, and spiritual psychology. These concepts are critically related to the investigation and gave structure to reviewing current literature in the field.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy, also known as psychological therapy or talk therapy, is the use of therapeutic approaches primarily based on regular personal encounters with individuals and psychologists to improve an individual and assist in changing behaviour and focus on solving difficulties with a wide range of mental illnesses and emotional challenges, in desired ways (Parekh & Givon, 2019). The ultimate goal of psychotherapy is to support clients in reducing or monitoring problematic symptoms so that an individual can function effectively and improve well-being, healing, and recovery (Corey, Nicholas & Bawa, 2017). The HPCSA (2007) defines clinical psychologists' scope of practice as follows; the assessment, diagnosis, and administration of psychological treatments to aid individuals suffering from

life problems, especially those with increasingly severe psychological disorders and psychopathology symptoms.

Spirituality

Relevant research indicates controversy regarding how spirituality is defined. Hence, spirituality is a complex concept that is difficult to conceptualize and can be expressed in numerous ways (Pearce et al., 2020a, 2020b). Koenig et al., defines spirituality as a “personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about a relationship to the sacred or transcendent, which may (or may not) lead to or arise from the development of religious rituals and formation of community” (2015: p18). Charzyńska and Heszen-Celińska (2020) define spirituality as the fundamental human drive for transcendent meaning and purpose. As conflicting to religion or a belief system, spirituality can also be described as a progressive, individual, or collective inner capacity, consciousness, or awareness (Kaur, 2020; Rosmarin, Harold & Koenig, 2020). Hereupon; rather than being outlined as an instantaneous phenomenon, it may be seen as an eternal experience (Kaur, 2020). Kaur specified it as a humanistic realisation of the truth about the universe and human existence. Spirituality also suggests the mind-body contradiction, which indicates a separation between the body and the soul (Okpalaenwe, 2014). According to Hulnick (2011), when people speak of spirituality, they simply refer to an awareness of the sacred reality of the Divine Essence within as well as beyond all creation. In conclusion, the following meanings derived from Mahida (2015) is best suited for this study:

- (1) spirituality like personality, character, or health represent individual attributes that are influenced by culture, development, experiences, and ideas of existence;
- (2) spirituality is an inner belief system, centred upon the essence of being;
- (3) spirituality develops a sense of higher consciousness that connects the creator and the created;
- (4) spirituality helps people in exploring, and seeking personal truth to developing a sense of unity and emerging a personal philosophy;
- (5) spirituality means diving deep into the inner self and realising the identity of one's soul, within the spirit.

African Spirituality

The essence of spirituality shapes how African people comprehend life and overcome challenges. Deeply embedded in Indigenous African thought is a worldview grounded in community, wholeness, and spirituality (Machinga, 2020). This mindset has been passed down from generation to generation and infiltrates all aspects of life. Machinga (2020) stipulates that spirituality might seem to be even more grounded and essential to native Africans. African morals and ethics are stemmed from and inseparably interlinked with African spirituality (Manda 2008, p. 126), “even for those who do not share the African cosmology or worldview.” Therapists incorporate traditional healing in their repertoires of therapy more often than not (Machinga, 2020). Therefore, one can conclude that African spirituality is driven through traditional healing when incorporated into psychological practices.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared in 2006 that traditional healing seeks to restore harmony, balance, and equilibrium, not only by alleviating physical symptoms but also by re-integrating the person with their community, the earth, and the spiritual world. In 1998, the South African Parliament decided to enrol this specific traditional therapy in achieving meaningful primary health care goals. However, whether traditional healers should become part of the Department of Health itself or belong to their own association within the Department of Health membership remains controversial (Clarke, 1998, as cited in World Health Organization (WHO, 2001). Yet, African Spirituality showcases a structural standing that allows its incorporation in mental health practices. Why then the apparent struggle to value the vast construct of spirituality within psychology? It is also valuable to understand the formulation and think of African identity through Ubuntu’s concept. Ubuntu is the principle of “I am only because we are, and since we are, therefore I am” (Couture, 2017, p. 33 as cited in Machinga, 2020). This means that African thinking is more family- and community-oriented in contrast to individualistic (Machinga, 2020).

Religion

Religion and spirituality is a collaborative construct in the literature that has to be addressed together. However, according to Sinnott (2001), as cited by Nelson (2009), spirituality and religion could be seen as theoretically distinctive. This separation is advantageous to identifying spirituality on a broader scale as pertained to individuals outside of religious

institutions and cultural societies (Rayburn, 2004 as cited in Nelson, 2009). The general dispute in the domain of religion and spirituality regarding its definitions is perceptibly essential for conceptual developments and formulating pragmatic work (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). This necessitates conceptual theories and notions' operationalization into assessable constructs (Paloutzian & Park, 2005). The APA Handbook of Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality (2013) defines religion as “the search for significance that occurs within the context of established institutions that are designed to facilitate spirituality” (Park et al., 2017: p. 8). Paloutzian and Park (2005) report religion and spirituality may facilitate a similar psychological function. However, the diverse terms used by individuals is in an account of personal preference. Respectively, people identify themselves in the following manners; “religious and spiritual, religious but not spiritual, spiritual but not religious, and, very interestingly, a hair-splitting blend of religious spirituality plus nonreligion, e.g., a spiritual Christian but not religious” (Paloutzian & Park, 2005, p. 69).

Is Spirituality and Religion the Same?

While investigating definitions of spirituality, it is also vital to explore opinions on the relationship sustained between spirituality and religion. The terms spirituality and religion are frequently used interchangeably, and affiliates core topics investigating its association with one another (Rosmarin et al., 2020). Both terms are diverse and multicultural; however, they also impart differences (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). Recent spiritual and religious literature differentiates religion from spirituality. Regardless of term technicalities, the argument remains that both spirituality and religion can serve in psychotherapy (Rosmarin et al., 2020). Nevertheless, for this study's purpose, the literature review refers to this conception mainly in the light of spirituality.. Paloutzian and Park (2005) conclude religion and spirituality (R/S) as follow:

- (1) R/S are multilevel constructs denoting relation to biological, cognitive, personality or self-identity, social, cultural, and global phenomena;
- (2) R/S develops and changes over an individual's lifetime;
- (3) R/S obtains different meanings as the connotation thereof progresses and evolves;
- (4) habitually religion is related with social or group level of analysis;
- (5) whereas spirituality is associated more on an individual level of assessment.

The above etymological trends demonstrate crucial challenges for the psychology of religion and spirituality as the field progresses into the 21st century (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018).

Spiritual Psychology

Spiritual psychology (SP) examines the relationship between the human and 'divine' understanding and the mind's role in attracting abundance, achieving inner serenity, and spiritual growth (Mahida, 2015). Mahida further defines SP as a focused therapy towards understanding the means of spiritual fullness (e.g., believing in sacredness, unity, and transformation), the knowledge of the self, the use of calling on a higher domain, and spiritual practices (e.g., meditation, yoga and forgiveness interventions) as techniques for the treatment and assessment of not only spiritual disturbances but over-all, mental health. According to Hulnick (2011), SP focuses on treating souls by repairing or replacing missing pieces of the psyche. Therapy in this domain involves treating a fractured spirit, which is frequently a piece of the human puzzle that is ignored (Rosmarin et al., 2020; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). This field is unified in two respects. The first is linking body, mind, spirit/soul, and the second establishes the relationship between theory and practice within the regards mentioned above. To further understand SP, it is best to address it under the psyche domain, which has a vast body of context. Readers can refer to secondary sources provided in "Alef Trust- Transpersonal Perspectives. Selected writings on Transpersonal Psychology from students, faculty and alumni. Issue 1. 2020" found in the reference list. For this study, the researcher focused more on the practical stance and treatment modalities concerning psychotherapy from a more expansive spiritual perspective.

Placing Research Problem in Literature

Seminal authors have made various efforts to augment SP as a form of therapy within South Africa since mental health professionals seldomly incorporate spiritual psychology in psychotherapy (Machinga, 2020; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). Critical reasons for exploring the relevance to the available research gap include; (1) individuals are, either consciously or subconsciously, journeying on an existential search for meaning while trying to comprehend their existence in reality (Wallace, 2015). Yet, as Wallace (2015) noted, our cultures encourage the respective search by directing efforts outward- to finding happiness in material satisfaction while circumventing a search within. Accordingly, the belief of spirituality as dynamic becomes compromised and creates a misconception regarding the

depth of true-life satisfaction (Wallace, 2015). Corresponding to Wallace (2015), by broadening spiritual knowledge, it has the potential to be used as a beneficial tool for self-actualisation, constructing a meaningful life, and resolving internal negative dialogue that ultimately prevents life satisfaction and negatively affects overall wellbeing. (2) Regarding the four dimensions in which humans experience the world (physical, personal, social, spiritual), Wallace (2015) considers the spiritual dimension to be the mediating link and anchor of our essence in humanity. Respective to this notion, spiritual therapy becomes necessary due to an imbalance of these systems, thereby provoking attention (Wallace, 2015). Thereupon, research to increase therapist competency would result in addressing the matter with more comfort and ease. (3) A strong parallel between spirituality and psychotherapy is elicited in that psychotherapy is known for clients' self-discovery journey, which is sequentially spiritual (Nelson, 2015). On the other hand, spiritual counselling explores this life force's crux as the most fundamental power of existing (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). Thus, one can understand the undeniable union of spirituality and psychotherapy.

Spirituality and Relevance to Psychotherapy

Pearce et al., (2020b) stated strong motivations for integrating spirituality into mental health assessment and treatment. Because spirituality is strongly associated with health and wellbeing, many individuals rely on their spirituality to deal with life stressors. However, the question remains whether the Westernised society of South Africa depends on their spirituality in the same regard. Numerous research indicated spiritual beliefs and practices could be a viable resource in therapy and could promote positive psychological states and behaviours such as meaning, peace, social support, and forgiveness (Pearce et al., 2020b; Rosmarin, Harold & Koenig, 2020; Hulnick, 2015). In contrast, certain unconstructive forms of spirituality are also associated with an increased risk of mental and physical health problems and a poorer prognosis for psychotherapy (Abu-Raiya et al., 2015 as cited in Pearce et al., 2020b). Therapists need to be aware of and tactful in dealing with both strengths and weaknesses related to spirituality in psychotherapy (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018).

The literature also proposed that most clients prefer discussions of their spiritual needs and desire spiritually sensitive care in practice (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). Spirituality is

increasingly being included as a core component of psychiatric and psychological treatments and identified as an independent and dependent variable in psychotherapy (Pearce et al., 2020b; Koenig, 2015). Still, the application remains questionable in the context of South Africa. Rosmarin, Harold, and Koenig (2020) revealed how existing research on spirituality in practice could inform evidence-based treatment models for mental disorders and related behavioural health aspects. Respectively, they interpreted how integrating spirituality into clinical methodologies can enhance treatment and improve therapy's efficacy for various conditions (Rosmarin, Harold & Koenig, 2020). The latter aspects are particularly crucial since mental health professionals are seldomly trained and equipped to comfortably inquire about clients' spirituality, as this area is inadequately attended to in the context of patient care (Rosmarin et al., 2020; Pearce et al., 2020a, 2020b). As noted by the work of Rosmarin et al., (2020), spiritual factors are strongly related to a multitude of mental health characteristics, in both positive and negative ways to depression, anxiety, suicidality, psychosis, obsessions/compulsions, addictions, and many other facets of behavioural and mental health.

Moreover, in some patients, spiritual struggles might be manifested as psychopathological symptoms (Janse van Rensburg, Poggenpoel, Myburgh & Szabo, 2012). Research from Janse Van Rensburg (2012), Rosmarin, Harold, and Koenig (2020), as well as Oxhandler and Pargament (2018), all illustrated that spiritual and/or religious patients requires special needs relating to their spiritual issues. And they often look for specialists who share their devoted association as they prefer therapeutic techniques that are compliant with their value system (Janse Van Rensburg (2012); Rosmarin, Harold, & Koenig (2020); Oxhandler & Pargament (2018). The results of the mentioned studies suggest that although mental health professionals are generally optimistic about the idea of spirituality in therapy, they may appear to be less supportive of initiating the topic during diagnostic sessions or incorporating explicit spiritual techniques in psychotherapy (Janse Van Rensburg, 2014). Koenig (2015) also suggests potential inconsistency between mental health professionals' opinions on spirituality in psychotherapy and their actual practices, indicating the need to explore them together. Thus, it seems relevant to take a closer look at these professionals' conceptualisation of spirituality.

Research in this domain is necessary to draw more precise and accurate integrations to psychotherapy. Despite the positive developments, challenging barriers remain present in the field of spirituality, psychology, and mental health, such as well-established conceptual foundations and definitions, measures for testing, and the lack of programmatic research support, especially in South Africa (Janse Van Rensburg et al., 2012). More accurately, this might be due to the lack of testing and implementation of sophisticated scientific models for spirituality and psychotherapy (Koenig, 2015).

Respectively, there is abundant evidence showing a positive relationship between spirituality and increased mental health by aiding a coping strategy and permeating adverse events with significance and intention (Mosqueiro et al., 2020). Resulting in decreased depression, managing stress, enhancing wellbeing, and a healthier, positive mental state (Pearce et al., 2020b; Koenig, 2015). Furthermore, seminal authors evoked indications that deprived psychic health has undesirable physiological consequences (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Koenig, 2015). Thus, as mental health practitioners and therapists, it is advisable to assess, respect, and address clients' spiritual issues and needs as they relate to practice (Pearce et al., 2020b; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Koenig, 2015).

A lack of Spirituality in Practice

A few reasons have speculated to cause inconsistencies between the theory and practice of spirituality amongst psychologists. Hodge (2018), together with Vieten et al., (2016) summarised a few:

- (1) personal disbelief in the spiritual realm of mental health professionals;
- (2) difficulty defining spirituality;
- (3) ethical concerns and limitations;
- (4) the risk of violating ethical principles;
- (5) insufficient knowledge which results in inadequate spiritual training;
- (6) lack of experience and comfortability in the domain;
- (7) lack on empirical research to support its integration.

On these accounts, the existing educational shortfall in spiritual competency may negatively affect mental health care (Pearce et al., 2020b; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Vieten et al., 2016). One can conclude the need for further investigation to create a structure for the theoretical integration of spirituality in psychotherapy and its validity.

Spirituality and healthcare are connected in one way or another in most populace ever since the commencement of documented history (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). Although, in the modern era, these healing practices have been alienated. The world known psychiatrist, Sigmund Freud, inspired the alienated demonstration. Freud began to emphasize spirituality in his research from 1907 (Pearce et al., 2020b). His writings left a legacy that influenced the practice in psychiatry, especially psychotherapy. His work led to a rupture between spirituality and psychological treatments. This division was showcased in the methodical examination of the religious and spiritual matter of DSM-III-R, which discovered nearly one quadrant of mental illnesses, incorporated spiritual and religious demonstrations (Larson, Thielman, Greenwold, Lyons, et al., 1993). The conflict continues to the present day and is revealed in several mental health professionals' clinical practices, who have commonly overlooked the spiritual properties of victims or even more so observed them as pathological, according to Koenig (2015). Regardless of some undesirable opinions held by various psychological professionals, studies on spirituality, religion, and wellbeing are rapidly growing, though most of it occurs outside the field of psychotherapy (Pearce et al., 2020b). The result is an enormous amount of literature distributed throughout the medical, social, behavioural, and psychological sciences (Pearce et al., 2020a, 2020b).

Of the above concerns, the present conflict might prevent psychiatrists and psychologists from researching spirituality concerning mental health (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018). Thereby, it might account for the lack of knowledge on the correlations of spiritual involvement and severe mental disorders (Koenig, 2015) only to address a few limitations.

Conclusion

The literature has indicated that spirituality and psychology are essential fields to investigate. However, the review of existing literature revealed the following shortcomings: (1) research lacks to address the various spiritual therapies and guidelines for more effective incorporation in psychotherapy. (2) lacks the establishment of training and education programs to increase professionals' competency. (3) the need for more coherent theories and education needs to be simplified. (4) the need for empirical evidence and case studies of actual spiritual therapies and treatment. (5) requires spiritually integrated psychotherapies. (6) deficiency of basic clinical guidelines for effectively addressing

spirituality in treatment within South Africa and outside of the scope of ubuntu. (7) lack a comprehensive and updated review of the research on the positive and negative effects of spirituality on mental health.

As the field of spirituality, religion, and health is expanding, it is being rearranged from the periphery into the mainstream of psychological core (Koenig 2015). Therefore, all health professionals could benefit from a familiarity with the motives for incorporating spirituality into psychotherapy and do so in a practical yet delicate manner. At stake is patients' health and well-being and satisfaction that health care providers can experience in delivering holistic therapy that addresses the whole individual—body, mind, soul, and spirit (Koenig, 2015). The literature review aimed to broaden knowledge of the rising phenomena, shed light on the study's argument, and propose that the domain of spirituality should not be ignored by the scientists who study, nor the clinicians who treat mental health. It is hoped that further research would enhance SP's understanding and conceptualization and that it could receive equal standing within psychotherapy.

Section 4: Research Design and Methodology

The methodology establishes how the study was approached, the research strategy thereof, and the target population to which the information and critical findings were significant (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). The methods interpret a sampling technique administered, the process utilised to collect the data, and the mode in which the data was analysed and synthesised. This section addresses the research approach and paradigm used to investigate the study problem, the population and sampling criteria, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques appropriate to explore the phenomena at hand. The necessary steps for applying the data collection methods and data analysis techniques are also critically discussed.

Research Design

A qualitative design guided the explorative study. A qualitative approach fitted inquiry in spirituality and psychology best, as it allowed to create holistic descriptions and understandings throughout the investigation (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). As Foxcroft and Roodt (2018) explained, this design typically entails collecting and recording the participants' realistic experiences, after which an evaluation would be administered. Accordingly, the

study implemented an interpretivist approach that explored the variety of beliefs, opinions, and attitudes amongst mental health professionals in Cape Town without restricting their responses (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). Since an interpretivist approach is based on realistic data collection methods, interviews were selected as the main instrument (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). Foxcroft and Roodt (2018) reported within qualitative research designs based on interpretivism, meaning arises towards the end of the research process. This research design naturally adopts an inductive manner of analysis that necessitates establishing a theory and/or key patterns from the collected data. In harmony with Foxcroft and Roodt (2018), the chosen research design is believed to benefit the study by providing a universal view of the studied phenomenon. Also, most prior research on religion and spirituality implemented this design method.

Research Paradigm

Research paradigm indicates a set of perceptions, norms, and practices that constitute a way of viewing reality for a like-minded community, especially in an intellectual discipline (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). The research design mentioned above introduced an interpretive stance to the study, which is subjective and integrative of nature. As a result, it created a holist interpretation of the vast phenomenon of spirituality. The researcher adopted an emic epistemology position (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018) directed to an inductive approach to fully grasp the parallels between spirituality and psychology held by each participant. This epistemological assumption views knowledge in an antipositivist stance. This means "more subjective, spiritual or even transcendental kind" that often discards the typical approaches of natural science (Cohen et al., 2001: 6 as cited by Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). By adopting this approach, the researcher could put aside prior theories and assumptions to allow the collected data from participants to "speak" for themselves and themes and concepts to emerge naturally. The study's ontological assumptions are embedded in a nominalist position. Undertaking that social reality is mutually constructed by language and labels formed in the individual's mind, within the domains of human consciousness (Cohen et al., 2001 as cited by Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). As a result, multiple realities can exist. When looking at the study's axiological influence, the researcher values the ethics and aesthetics of various philosophies held in the broad concepts of spirituality

and religion and its subjectivity to each unique individual and their personal meanings and experiences of these constructs through their worldview.

Moreover, the researcher values the study by providing information independent of researcher bias or opinion. The findings added to the explorative nature that sought a deeper understanding of spirituality's worldviews from psychologists in Cape Town. For these reasons, the study's chosen paradigm is permissible in the way the researcher chose the study's perspective to be collectively interpreted through the meaning of reality as created by the participants that are best aligned to the holistic and spiritual nature of the study.

Additionally, Machinga (2020) claimed in South Africa's context; an 'African thinking' exists that shows the presence of mystical power. This world view is parallelly aligned to the study since it relates to the same opinion; the existence of a spiritual realm. Research on spirituality from Machinga (2020) stated that an interpretive paradigm is best suited for inquiry on religion and spirituality as it is considered interdependent. Hence, traditional African epistemology, ontology, and axiology are all relational. These terms pronounce a value framework according to the nature of daily African realities (Machinga, 2020). The worldviews among Cape Town psychologists would play an essential role in formulating the study's focus since the notion of spirituality is seen as multidimensional and complex (Pearce et al., 2020a; Machinga, 2020). Also, prior studies encouraged a holistic approach to strengthen health sciences by acknowledging spirituality as an essential part of psychotherapy (Charzyńska & Heszen-Celińska, 2020; Pearce et al., 2020a).

Population

In research terms, Nelson (2009) describes the population as a broad category of people, organisations, artifacts, and so on with similar characteristics of interest to the researcher. The study's population applies to all individuals that belong to a specific group, being psychologists, which are under investigation (Creswell et al., 2020). The researcher specified the representative group's qualities as the essential characteristics needed from the population to support the study's aim and objectives. These key characteristics pertain to the comprehensive group of registered psychologists at the HPCSA and based in the Metropolitan area of Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa. Their application in the industry further defines this specific population by practicing psychotherapy with their clients.

Within the proposed study area, roughly 396 psychologists were relevant to the study, who could have been approached to participate as contributors. The identified population is best suited for the study criteria since registered psychologists are the professionals working in psychotherapy and would benefit the study by providing first-hand experience and information required. As the study investigated the role spiritual psychology represents in psychotherapy, it was essential to create a sample from these participants to help reach the study's aim and address the research questions.

By using available listings via online search engines such as Google search, the relevant psychologists were recorded. It also allowed the researcher to access their contact information and showcased proof of their registrations through their practice number.

Sampling

Out of the identified population and based on the required criteria aligned with the study's purpose, a small portion of the population was selected to represent the sample group. According to Creswell et al., (2020) several strategies may be applied to sample information-rich participants purposefully. Accordingly, after establishing the population, the researcher used homogenous sampling to select a smaller group from within the specified community as a sample that represents the whole. In homogeneous selection, the participants were purposefully selected because they have identical traits that meet the study's required criteria (Creswell et al., 2020). Homogeneous samples tend to be small, and the selected characteristics are most useful and beneficial to the study as stipulated by Creswell et al., (2020). Furthermore, participants in homogeneous samples share the same location and occupation (Creswell et al., 2020). Thus, the identified sample was narrowed down to registered psychologists at the HPCSA, who are based in the metropolitan area of Cape Town, and who applies psychotherapy.

The researcher also used the conducted list of all possible participants to invite them via email to participate in the study. Out of all willing participants, the researcher randomly selected five registered clinical psychologists. Thus, the obtained sample size represents five (5) participants. Since the study is explorative, the data obtained from these five participants would be content rich and sufficient for a research study at an honours level.

Data-collection Methods

Data collection methods are specific processes or techniques used to collect data (Creswell et al., 2020). The aim is to gain evidence for data analysis to discover information and formulate a better understanding of the study phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2020). More specifically, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were selected as the method that best supports the study to attain its purpose and address the research questions and objectives. To answer the research questions, the researcher and the participants need to enter into a collaborative manner (Creswell et al., 2020). Further, it is believed that in-depth, semi-structured interviews deliver a framework for rich data analysis (Creswell et al., 2020). Within the selected method, the interviewer operates directly with the participants and is therefore regarded as a critical part of the measurement instrument and has to be well prepared to respond to any contingency (Nelson, 2009).

The researcher asked the participants a series of open-ended questions to derive a deeper, descriptive understanding of the specific study phenomena (Creswell et al., 2020). The benefits of using this research method lie in the meaning that realistic experiences hold to the participants, especially pertained to interpretivism studies. The goal of in-depth, semi-structured interviews is to gain insight into the participants' world and presented the most valuable source of information to the investigation (Nelson, 2009). Through the participants, individual descriptions, and experiences about the incorporation of spiritual psychology in practice and using it as an applicable therapy modality in psychotherapy, universal meanings could be derivative. Additionally, a standardised questionnaire was used to obtain biographical information from the participants in the study.

Application of Data-collection Methods

The researcher approached the application of the data collection method in four phases:

Phase One:

The shortlisted sample group was invited to partake in the study via email. The invitation email included the following; information informing the participants about the nature of the study; background on the study phenomenon; ethical clearance letter from the institute supporting the research study; informed consent forms and consent for recording the interview; as well as the biographical questionnaire to be completed, signed and retrieved

to the researcher. A copy of the interview questions was also attached to allow participants to prepare on the phenomenon under study.

Phase Two:

The researcher revised secondary sources to identify questions relevant to the study objectives and what type of data they will obtain. The questions have to investigate the current role of spiritual psychology within the psychologists' therapeutic practices, specifically if the psychologists use any spiritual psychotherapies. The questions also examined the psychologists' opinions towards the benefit spiritual psychology could hold for their clients. And lastly, the validity and credibility of spiritual methods in psychotherapy were also questioned. The interview structure was planned and developed alongside the specific open-ended questions to use during the interview. The accuracy of these open-ended questions was tested by speculating answers and comparing it to the study's research questions, aim, and objectives. Part of the developing process was to rework items where necessary to gaining precise and rich data. The researcher also prepared themselves by re-familiarising the literature reviews to have an informed understanding of their study before the interviews' enrolment.

Phase Three:

Online appointments for the interviews were scheduled at the most convenient date and time for each of the five participants. The interviews were scheduled for 45 to 60 minutes. Each participant preferred a different online platform for their interview. Three participants preferred Skype and the two other participants chose to use Zoom. The online interviews offered the researcher the ability to engage with the participants spontaneously to gain a comprehensive insight into their lived experiences with the phenomenon under investigation. Lastly, the researcher documented all participants' signed consent forms in a safe and secure location for administrative purposes. After completion of these steps, the researcher could proceed to the last phase.

Phase Four:

The researcher conducted the interviews with all five participants and saved a .mp4 audio recording directly after each interview for future use. The online communicating platforms used offered audio recorder functions, however, the researcher also recorded the interviews

on a mobile device as an alternative, more trusted method. The .mp4 audio recordings were saved on the researcher's computer in a password protected file and backed up on a secured hard drive.

The procedural steps for the semi-structured, in-depth interviews were deployed in the following order:

(1) the researcher introduced themselves to the participant and thanked them for their time and willingness to participate in the study; (2) a brief introductory followed on the ethical standards and procedures of the study whereby identity protection were ensured; (3) thereafter, the researcher elaborated on the study purpose, objectives and research questions; (4) next, the researcher briefly discussed the background of spirituality and the preliminary foundation thereof in psychotherapy, general terminology used within the interview questions were addressed to ensure a shared understanding and clarification of any ambiguity prior to participants answering the questions; (5) before formally proceeding to the interview questions, the researcher confirmed if the participants had any questions or unclarity they'd like to address; (6) after these procedures, the formal interview started and the researcher and participants discussed the five open-ended questions; (7) once the interview questions were discussed, the researcher concluded the interview by asking the participants if they have any questions they'd like to ask the researcher; (8) following that discussion and if time allowed to, the researcher summarised the main points discussed and noted to enable the participants to refine points or make additional comments if they chose to; (9) the researcher inquired on the participants interest to receive the final study once completed; (10) and lastly, the researcher extended gratitude to the participants for their availability and participation in the study.

After completing the online interviews, the researcher emailed each participant to extend gratitude for participating in the study.

Data Analysis Methods

Since the study's qualitative nature, the analysis method focused on "making sense" of the data by identifying and interpreting patterns in the collected data, rather than forecasting or describing it. The researcher focused the data analysis on aligning with the research paradigm; to be an interactive and interpretive process (Creswell et al., 2020). Within

qualitative analysis, the researcher used inductive content analysis to analyse the data critically. Inductive content analyses are related to the principle objectives of identifying, summarising, and synthesising data into meaningful and symbolic content and determining key themes (Creswell et al., 2020) to establish how psychologists understand and interpret the studied phenomenon. It also includes how the data gathered has been recorded and transcribed.

This analysis method was selected because it is an intellectual process that helps the researcher recognise specific words, themes, or notions within the context of qualitative textual data in an in-depth manner (Nelson, 2009). It also ascertains to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes (Creswell et al., 2020). Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2020) confirmed that inductive content analysis is best suited to explorative studies and allows the researcher to become submerged in the data.

Within this analysis method, the researcher examined participants' meaning-making to the study phenomenon, their opinions, standpoints, acquaintances, judgment, and expertise to approximate their overall interpretation of spiritual psychology and its representation in psychotherapy.

[Application of Data Analysis Methods](#)

The researcher applied the inductive content analysis in the following four phases:

Phase One:

The researcher precisely transcribed each interview into textually rich data transcripts that helped quantify the textual data to evaluate the meanings and relationships through the analysis method. The researcher did the transliterating by herself by playing back the audio recordings and typing the conversation out, word by word. This technique allowed the researcher to become acquainted with the data to commence with inductive content analysis. Conducive to ensuring participant anonymity, details that may contribute to their identity, e.g., names, were adjusted to participant 1, participant 2, etc. After that, the researcher confirmed each interview's accurate representation by listening over the audio-recording again and matching it to the typed transcript.

Phase Two:

After completing the transliterating of all five interviews, the researcher critically examined the transcripts by applying the principles from grounded theory (Nelson, 2009). Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2020) explain the grounded theory as an inductive methodology approach that evaluates recorded data based on a social phenomenon to develop assumptions about the study aspects. This approach aims to classify and label text data fragments into a series of codes (notions) and groups (concepts) to make associations to illustrate the analytical instrument (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). The researcher examined the entire collection of contents of the data by reading each transcript line by line to label relevant terms and phrases. This procedure is known as open coding and pertains to finding core ideas concealed within textual data (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020) as contributing to spiritual psychology.

Additionally, open coding allows the researcher to identify patterns that permitted the development of themes. The genuineness of the data guided the theme development (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). By applying this analysis method, the researcher could assess how the participants perceive spiritual psychology within their psychotherapies.

Phase Three:

After manually assigning codes to the text and building themes, the researcher grouped them using a table format to get a more precise presentation of the layers of repetitive words, phrases, and concepts from each transcript. This method accommodated the researcher to identify key themes and create sub-themes where necessary. Throughout the content analysis, the researcher continuously rearranged, accumulated, and refined the concepts' codes to expand the relations and meanings centred within themes and sub-themes. This method ensures structure to discuss the findings in an in-depth, logical, yet concise manner.

Phase Four:

After completing the data analysis, the researcher extracted evaluations into critical discussions to interpret the findings. Lastly, conclusions were formulated by linking the key themes in the findings to the literature and triangulated from theoretical frameworks and secondary sources to conclude the final results in a written report.

Validity and Trustworthiness of The Study

The fundamental aim of interpreting the findings was to draw evaluations into conclusions. Conclusively, to indicate a combination of the following; (1) how the data authenticates and correlates to that which is already known; (2) what possible insights were revealed; (3) disclosing the enhancement of existing theories; (4) anticipates gaps for further research within the phenomenon (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). In qualitative studies, concern about quality occurs and requires attention through the controversy of rationality, applicability, and efficacy of the study (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). According to Nelson (2009), a study's soundness reveals continuity and trustworthiness in the phenomenon-related actions and outcomes, as indicated by the analysis of findings discussed in the report. In line with Foxcroft and Roodt (2018), successful interpretations of results are highly dependable on supporting evidence that emerged from the data. By ensuring the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher applied credibility, transferability, and confirmability.

(1) Credibility serves to the research questions (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018) and the degree of corresponding findings. The study's integrity was enhanced by early familiarity with the sample participants; transparent, purposive sampling; and triangulation (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). The researcher aimed to facilitate a good understanding of participants by enriching them with the context of the study phenomenon before interviews. Some participants even researched the phenomena and formulated their answers to the interview questions preceding the formal interview.

(2) Transferability denotes that conclusions reached can't be generalised to a broader population (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018, p. 143) but is only applicable to the studies participating members in their context. With these means, it formed part of the researcher's responsibility to showcase the findings in a particular way, allowing the reader to determine the extent of transferability to their context. Therefore, the researcher increased transferability through thick descriptions and provided a purposeful account of the study (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018).

(3) Confirmability is of high importance in all explorative qualitative studies. Confirmability is defined as the researcher's amount of non-involvement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited by Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). Also, as the limitations imposed on research bias, commitment, and incentive to generate impartial results. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, (2020) elaborates

the meaning of unbiased, by objective means that the researcher has taken to all research steps and formulates conclusions without introducing their own vested opinions and values to the best of their ability. Thus, objective manners result in advanced confirmability (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). Throughout the data analysis, the researcher remained neutral and allowed the interpretation of findings to emerge from participant involvement.

Section 5: Findings and Interpretation of Findings

This section reports the findings of the participants during the semi-structured interviews. The collected data identified five themes. Responses conferred during the interviews are showcased within the following five themes. The participants' opinions on these themes are summarised as raw data in the findings and elaborated in the discussions section. Refer to table 1 for a summary of the participants' biographical information. Table 1 presents each participant's additional context, such as their years of experience and repertoire of modalities used in psychotherapy.

Table 1: Summary of Participants Biographical Information

PARTICIPANTS	GENDER	ETHNICITY	AGE	PROFESSIONAL TYPE	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	MODALITIES USED IN PRACTICE
Participant 1	Male	White	48	Clinical	15	Existential Theory Integral Psychology Psychodynamic Analysis
Participant 2	Male	White	46	Clinical	11	Psychodynamic Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Mindfulness Based Interventions
Participant 3	Female	White	32	Clinical	7	Mindfulness Based Interventions Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Psychodynamic
Participant 4	Male	White	63	Clinical	31	Transpersonal Theory Jungian Analysis

						Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
Participant 5	Female	Indian	44	Clinical	14	Insight Orientated Therapy Psychodynamic Analysis Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Theme 1:

Controversy to define Spirituality and its place in Psychotherapy

All participants agree that spirituality is a vague term that causes a lot of confusion. All participants felt that the entitlement of spirituality is problematic because spiritual psychology is seen as a phenomenological approach of human experience and does not fit within the boundaries of scientific, measurable methods, as stated by participant 1 and 4. On the contrary, it does not make it less valuable in psychotherapy. Various participants agreed that spirituality is a broad concept and has unique meanings to each individual, which makes it problematic in nature. Participant 4 explains, "...each religion and culture have their own meaning of spirituality, that does not make their opinions wrong, it only proves the vast possibilities of the transparent concept it holds." All participants emphasized the context in which one addresses spirituality. Participant 1 sees the misperceptions between transpersonal and existential psychology and bewilderment of humanistic and gestalt psychology.

All 5 participants reported inconsistency when specifying the usefulness and placement of spirituality in psychotherapy. Participants 1 and 2 seldomly met clients where spiritual psychology was relevant. Similarly, Participant 1 elaborated that clients have primitive, real-world problems that fall in the realm of psychodynamic therapy or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and can be treated with conventional psychology. He believes it would be more applicable in psychotherapy if spirituality was located within existential psychology. Two out of the five participants felt that their client's spiritual needs are met in more appropriate domains such as pastoral counselling or spiritual guides. Whereas participant 5

believes that "...it is not as if spirituality does not belong in psychotherapy, but that western psychologists do not offer the opportunity for clients to address spiritual aspects in therapy." Conversely, participants 3 and 5 reported that African spirituality had been practiced for years, and some of their clients see an African therapist to address spiritual growth.

Theme 2:

Role Representation in Psychotherapy

Spiritual psychology is present in all but one participant's practice. However, the extent of the representing role varies. Because spiritual psychology has a wide variety of concepts related to it, several variables can be present in psychotherapy. For participants 1 and 2, a holistic approach is mainly present. Participants 3, 4, and 5 established all their work as spiritual work and saw the broader psychological work aspect as delivering a spiritual service. Four participants reported spirituality to be an essential avenue in their therapy, and they assess clients through their spiritual orientation. Participant 2 does not believe that spiritual psychology represents a role in his practice. The majority of participants confirmed that therapists must be cautious not to force a spiritual agenda on clients and meet them where they are in terms of spiritual growth.

Theme 3:

Spiritual Methods used in Psychotherapy

In agreement with the variation found to the extent of representation, the way of incorporation also varies. Each participant integrates specific methods of spiritual psychology in psychotherapy. Participant 2 hesitates to label it as a spiritual therapy method. Participant 1 and 4 applies an overall holistic approach in their psychotherapy. For Participant 1, the application is not so much a technique, but more to resonate with his clients, to make them feel understood.

Interestingly, participants 2, 3, and 5 reported applying mindfulness as the base of their work. All of these participants also utilize guided meditation, inner child work, and focus therapies. For participant 3, an integration between body, mind, and spirit is vital. Participant 4 and 5 reported that they apply chakra energy work, reconnecting with ancestors, and connections to spirit guides. Therefore, they incorporate spirituality more from an energetical perspective. On the contrary, participant 2 applies mindfulness-based therapies with

selective clients but declares, "...what we're doing is a western medical science, and that's what the training is about." His purpose of using mindfulness is not a spiritual experience but more a tool to reduce anxiety.

Theme 4:

Spiritual Competency of Therapists

Two participants went overseas to educate them on a specialised modality of transpersonal and existential psychology. However, participant 1 claims most of what he knows about psychology is self-taught and feels that "psychologists are one of the most poorly trained professionals in the world" due to the lack of education on the psyche. Participant 4 noted that he increased his competency in the spiritual field by attending several years at a Buddhist center, practicing meditation, retreats, and a commitment to introspection. He worked with numerous psychologists throughout his career and stated that "most psychologists who work in spiritual psychotherapy are inadequately trained." Participant 2 admitted that he is inadequately trained to incorporate spirituality effectively. Participant 3 is busy with a post graduate certificate in 'Mindfulness-Based Interventions' at the University of Stellenbosch, the first in South Africa, to increase her field competency. She confesses that she is not well versed in African spirituality or ubuntu. Participant 5 has a natural inclination to spiritual competency due to her eastern heritage.

Theme 5:

Credibility and Viability of Spiritual Psychology

Most participants related the context to the definition. For participant 1, existential psychology and humanist psychology are credible, but "...transpersonal psychology is still on the periphery." Participant 2 stated spiritual psychotherapy is not credible but could be a viable method for an exceedingly small percentage of people. He believes that there is a shortage of acknowledging the importance of spirituality in psychotherapy, however, he is not convinced that it will work. Participant 3 revealed that society is still warming up to the idea of spirituality and that "...psychologists should start to create awareness around it, instead of immediately calling it credible." Participant 4 is concerned with the amount of gibberish found in the field. He denotes that "there are many misunderstandings, particularly in the new age movement." Thus, credibility and viability are questionable. According to

Participant 5, spiritual psychology is a vital therapy method that has credibility, the way the HPCSA would define and regulate it concerns her. She reports that "...we need to be protected from charlatans and should not be frowned upon." In short, she considers it to be viable.

Discussions

This research study set out to explore the role of spiritual psychology amongst psychologists in Cape town. To investigate the extent to which it is integrated into psychotherapy and whether it is or can be used as a viable therapy method. The findings confirmed that spirituality is a multidimensional construct, as found in the literature (Pearce et al., 2020; Rosmarin et al., 2020). Likewise, spirituality is embedded in cultural truths and meaning-making (Scott, 2010). All participants deliberated on a client's search for unity and meaning. In validation of secondary sources, most participants summarised spirituality as a means of connection and the formulation of personal truth and understanding. Three of the participants find spirituality relevant in their personal lives and follow spiritual practices. What was fascinating is the findings showcased a new phenomenon arising in mindfulness therapies, energy medicine as well as alternative psychedelic intervention programs being evaluated for the incorporation of treating mental health and disorders. This was a novel finding and opened an opportunity for further research. The following finding also correlated with prior literature from Koenig (2015), South Africa lacks empirical evidence on the study phenomena. The researcher discovered that most therapists practicing spiritual psychology relies on anecdotal evidence. Participants 3, 4, and 5 explained that they experience spiritual intuition during spiritual therapy sessions. These three participants elaborated on the principle of being present throughout the session. It allows a particular energetical flow as if they are entuned to a state of sensing information and clients 'blockages. They explained that they could achieve this optimal state if their own selfcare and spiritual practices are aligned in a spiritual realm.

On the contrary, the literature suggested that spiritual psychology is seldomly incorporated in psychotherapy due to a lack of therapist competence (Pearce et al., 2020). The findings concluded that therapists are becoming more competent as the awareness of the phenomenon is rising. Although spirituality is present in psychotherapy, there remains a

separation between body and soul and a lack of education on the psyche. Interestingly, all participants experience the essence of psychology problematic. Most participants conveyed that psychology is supposed to study the psyche/soul, but instead, it became the study of human pathology. Participant 1 states, “you can’t apply the human psyche, personality, and social interaction within scientific methods as such, it doesn’t exist in the biological realm.” Similarly, participant 3 disclosed society is moving in the direction of recognising their souls and starts to query spiritual work more often. Especially with contemporary trends arising in mindfulness, meditation, yoga, energy and breath work. Confirmed by research and the study results, spirituality is rapidly growing, although outside the field of psychotherapy (Koenig, 2015). This study’s results oppose the statement by proving an increased demand in psychotherapy, significantly since South Africa expanded educational opportunities in the field of mindfulness-based interventions acknowledged by the HPCSA.

Prior research suggested that most clients prefer discussions of their spiritual needs in psychotherapy (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018), although the participants from this research study reported a contradiction. They were of the opinion that numerous clients do not desire to address those matters in psychotherapy only, but more in the domain of religious counselling and traditional African therapists. This might be because of the Westernised context found in South Africa. Incongruity is present since some clients address their spiritual needs, as reported by four of the participants and most participants declared the offering of spiritual psychology to their clients. Nonetheless, all participants reported in agreement with literature that sensitive care must be applied in spiritual specific practices (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018).

The main argument resides in where the phenomena of spirituality really fits. Due to its various concepts to Transpersonal psychology, Existential psychology, Theology and even Philosophy, one questions its placement more than the value the theory holds in aiming to address the unity of human beings to the world and the purpose of generating meaning. Supplementary studies from Pearce et al. (2020) found a strong motivation for integrating spirituality into mental health assessment and treatment. This study necessitates the same demand from the perspectives of participants.

Section 6: Conclusion

Based on the findings, the researcher can answer the research questions in the following manner; spiritual psychology (SP) does represent an overall important role to the studied psychologists in Cape Town. At the same time, the degree of role representation varies. Spiritual psychology is incorporated in psychotherapy in various ways, mainly through mindfulness, inner child work, and guided meditations. Therefore, the aim of the study was met successfully.

Relating to the study objectives; (1) definitions of spirituality, spiritual psychology, and key concepts were precisely stated with relevance to the study. The study found that controversy exists not only to spirituality but also to spiritual psychology and, interestingly, to psychology. Most participants agreed that psychology is too scientific and could benefit through more philosophical theories or even adopting more Eastern-based methodologies. Most psychologists agreed with the study's argument, stating that the human psyche lacks acknowledgment in psychology. (2) The role of SP was explored in relation to psychotherapy by utilizing data collection and analysis methods. Sequentially the value of spiritual psychology in psychotherapy is dependent on the demand from clients. Some psychologists summarised that currently in South Africa, there is very little demand for spiritual specific psychotherapies. Yet, other psychologists declared several case studies as a vital representation of SP in their practices. (3) SP could be a viable tool in psychotherapy; however, its credibility remains under question. There appeared inconsistency amongst psychologists when addressing the validity and credibility of SP in psychotherapy. The concern of ethical acknowledgment by the HPCSA and a lack of informed knowledge might be reasons for the disparity. However, all psychologists agreed to the benefit of SP to human beings in general but also highlighted risks associated with it. Thus, proper education and training are needed before SP could be considered an equally valuable modality in psychotherapy. (4) The study critically evaluated the extent to which SP is incorporated in psychotherapy by knowledge gained through the psychologists. The researcher found new trends in psychology through an interest in alternative therapy methods such as energy medicine, breathwork, mindfulness-based interventions, and psychedelic medicine. These trends hold a heuristic value that could inspire further thinking and research to broaden the body of knowledge.

Even though uncertainty and controversy exist within spirituality, one cannot overlook its importance to human beings. As one participant states, we are just as much spiritual beings as we are physical beings. It can only be beneficial to the body of psychology to acknowledge the lack of psyche and spirituality by directing research for effective incorporation when addressing mental health and well-being through a soul-centred psychotherapy approach.

Study Contribution

The research study contributed to the prevailing gap in the literature on spirituality. Specifically as pertained to the incorporation thereof into psychotherapy. The findings shed light on the relevance of spiritual psychology to health and well-being and support its consideration within the scope of modalities applicable to psychotherapy. The researcher highlighted the lack of literature within spiritual psychology related to psychotherapy, especially the importance of the phenomena in a South African context (Van Wyk, & Terblanche, 2018). Further, the findings could extend available knowledge and ultimately bridge the current information gap in ally to spiritual psychology and the industry's equivalence of psychology. Alternatively, the findings could motivate the acknowledgment of the 'psyche' in psychology's definition and education. The study could also contribute to the current theoretical development of human understanding and practice in psychology.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations refer to the system of moral values established to conduct research (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2018). Since humans were involved in the research, it was particularly relevant. Therefore, measures were adopted to protect the research participants' and interests by ensuring their anonymity. As research at the honours level is aspired to the mastery of a research process and not about knowledge generation, the study topic remained at low risk to the participants.

With this being said and based on the ethical considerations stipulated by Foxcroft and Roodt (2018), the researcher considered the following concerns: no research involving individuals was conducted without ethical clearance from the IIE institute. Respondents were invited into the research study and received insight stipulating the study's aim and their

expected involvement and procedures taken during the study. Participants were informed that their participation is voluntary. They are free to withdraw at any given time without repercussions. Participants were required to sign an informed consent form prior to conducting the online interviews and a consent form that necessitated the interviews' recording to analyse the data. All data collected was stored in a password-protected location. The information gathered remained confidential. Participants were able to ask questions on any vague concepts at any given time and were informed that all interview questions are voluntary to answer. A thorough explanation of the study was shared with participants before they decided to participate in the study.

More specifically, ethical considerations relevant to the topic investigated pertained to bias opinions since no one is neutral when it comes to religion and spirituality (Pargament, as cited by the APA, 2013).

Limitations

The study's limitations are characterised as particular qualities of the research methodology that might negatively impact the findings (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020). Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2020) state this might also refer to the outcomes of unanticipated encounters that could emerge during the study.

The following five limitations played a role in the study;

- (1) the declaration of a National State of Disaster following the outbreak of COVID-19 challenged research within these conditions (Taljaard, 2020). Due to this state of emergency, no face-to-face interviews were allowable. Resulting in an online interview method instead. This method slightly constricted an interactive manner of engaging with participants and eliminated to obtain secondary data of observations from participants. COVID-19 also limited participant response and willingness to participate under the set-out conditions of the related pandemic.
- (2) Through using online methods to collect data for the study, encountered limitations on its own. At times the researcher and some participants experienced unstable internet connections. Additionally, it was challenging to transcribe interviews due to the loss of audio.
- (3) Another limitation was the contentious relationship of spirituality. Some invited

participants denied partaking in the study because of it. Thus, the study topic required a particular knowledge base from its participants that might limit the applicable population.

(4) Prior research investigations on the proposed topic were limited. Therefore the researcher chose an exploratory design as opposed to explanatory research. However, discovering this limitation served as a significant opportunity to identify new literature gaps and encourage further research.

(5) The risk of bias participant opinions, transparency of conducted information, and honest information gathering were also considered as a possible drawback (Creswell, Ebersöhn, Eloff et al., 2020).

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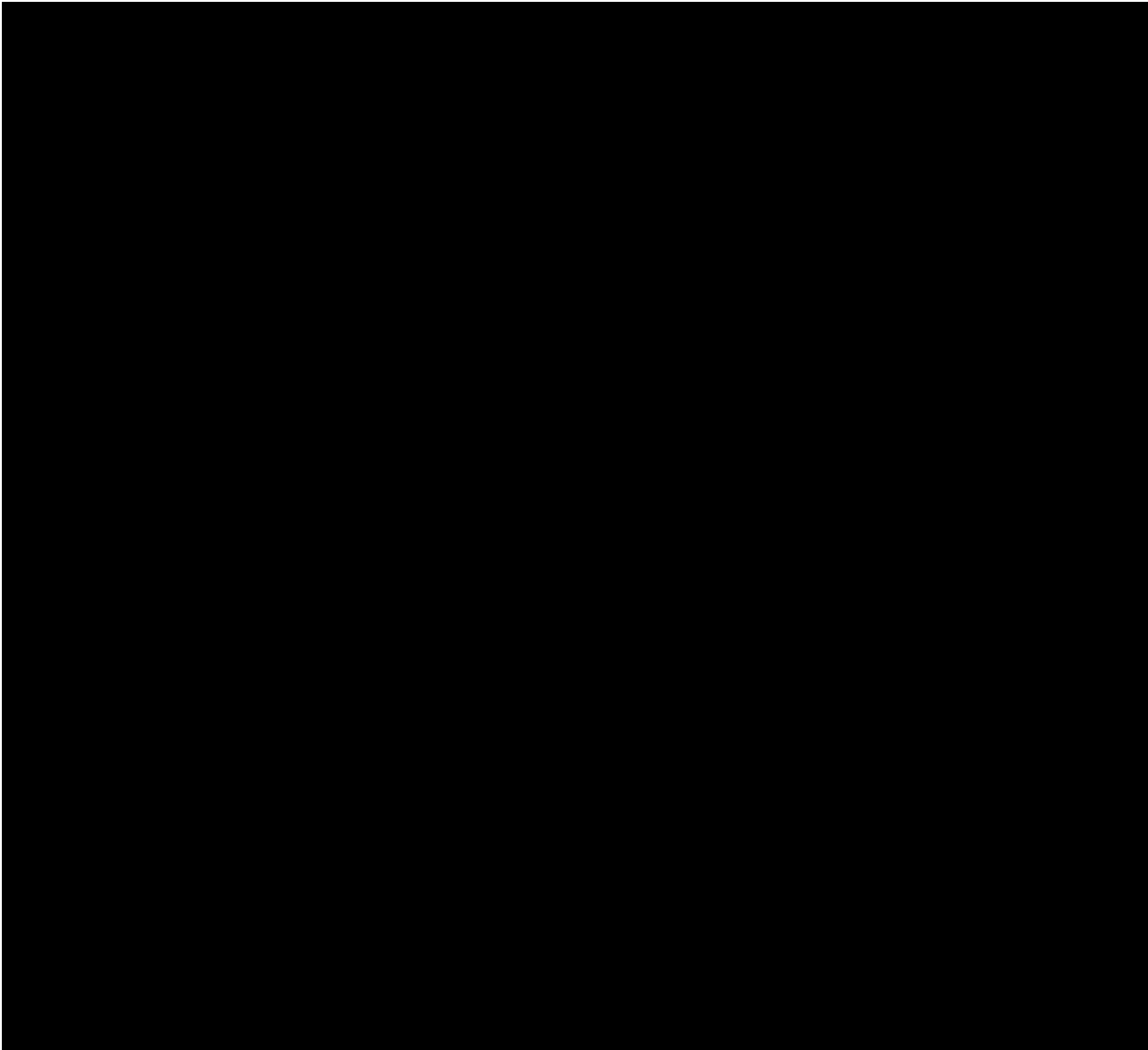
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Annexures

Annexure A: Example of Invitation Email send to Participants





30 June 2020

Student name: Bianca De Meyer

Student number: 20105325

Campus: Varsity College Cape Town

Re: Approval of Honours in Psychology Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!



EXPLANATORY INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

To whom it may concern,

My name is Bianca de Meyer, and I am a student at Varsity College, Cape Town. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Nicolene van Vuuren, about the role Spiritual Psychology plays in Psychotherapy. The aim of the proposed study is to address the manner in which Spiritual Psychology is incorporated into psychotherapy and whether it can be used as a viable therapy tool. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of Spiritual Psychology and broaden our knowledge of the construct under study as well as addressing a gap in literature regarding the importance of the above mentioned phenomena.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. Your participation in my study will be addressed in the following questions, explained here below. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because your contribution to the studied topic would be highly valuable as a key stakeholder to the field at present. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to invite you to an online interview of ± 40 minutes, where you will be asked a few questions related to the study.

You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

Are there any risks/or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your understanding of Spiritual Psychology as well as the manners in which it is incorporated in psychotherapy. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Varsity College, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my honours in Psychology. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

Consent form for participants

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Bianca de Meyer, about the role Spiritual Psychology plays in Psychotherapy. The aim of the proposed study is to address the manner in which Spiritual Psychology is incorporated into psychotherapy and whether it can be used as a viable therapy tool.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

1. I agree to be interviewed for this research.
2. My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
3. My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
4. I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
5. I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature

Date

Annexure D: Example of Biographical Information Questionnaire

Biographical Information

Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in my study. Please assist me with the following biographical information for background purposes in my data finding discussions. Take note, you will remain anonyms throughout the study.

Name: _____

Gender: Male / Female

Ethnicity: _____

Age:

Years of practicing psychology:

Type of psychologists: Clinical / Counselling

Main modalities used in practice: _____



Research Interview Questionnaire

Interview Questions:

1. Does spiritual psychology represent a role in your practice?
 - If so, too what extend?
 - If not, explain why?
2. Do you use any methods of spiritual therapy in your practice?
 - If yes, please state which?
 - If not, please explain why?
3. Do you think using spiritual psychology as part of psychotherapy can benefit a client?
 - If yes, how?
 - If not, why?
4. In your opinion, do you think spiritual psychotherapy is a credible and viable method of therapy?
 - Please explain your answer.
5. How often do you experience that clients desire to address the concepts of their soul in therapy?

Annexure F: Final Research Report Summary Document Table

The Role Spiritual Psychology Plays in Psychotherapy: An Explorative Study in Cape Town

Research Purpose	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Lit Review/ Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
Investigate role of spiritual psychology in psychotherapy.	What role does spiritual psychology (SP) play amongst psychologists in Cape Town?	The study intends to abet insights into the practice of spirituality and augment an understanding and comfortability in practice	Hulnick, R. & Hulnick, M.	Theme 1: Introduction	Paradigm: Interpretivism with a Holistic view	Qualitative Research	In-depth interviews through virtual online platforms of Skype and Zoom	Participation is voluntary and kept anonymous	SP is incorporated in psychotherapy - degree varies	Further investigation of religion and spirituality in psychology
Evaluating the extent to which SP is incorporated in psychotherapy.	Is SP incorporated in psychotherapy, and to what extend?	Highly relevant to the field of psychotherapy Raise awareness to rationality of spirituality in psychology	Koenig, H. G. Oxhandler, H. Pargament, K.I. Pearce, M.J. Vieten, C. Wong, S.	Theme 2: Defining Key Concepts Theme 3: Placing Research Problem in Literature Theme 4: Spirituality and Relevance to Psychotherapy	Epistemology: The study takes an interpretive stance that's subjective and spiritual of nature Ontology: Idealistic approach Reality is constructed through the human mind and through mutually social meanings	Population Registered Clinical Psychologists Must be registered at the HPCSA Must practice psychotherapy	A questionnaire instrument were used Interviews were recorded with audio recording tools	Informed consent were obtained prior to participation Collected was stored in a password protected platform Bias opinions about religion and spirituality	Mindfulness is incorporated the most Psychology is problematic Inconsistent definitions of SP Education on SP is insufficient and competency is low	Increasing competency of practitioners concerning spiritual psychology Expanding research on alternative therapy methods like mindfulness based interventions, energy and breath work, psychedelic medicine
Research Problem	Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method	Limitations	Key Contribution	
Spiritual Psychology is an understudied topic in South Africa	Synthesising definition of spirituality & spiritual psychology	Psychotherapy Spirituality	Spiritual Theory Transpersonal Theory	Theme 5: A lack of Spirituality in Practice	Multiple realities can exist Axiology: The uniqueness of the participants is valued most	Purposive Sampling Homogenous sample group	Unit of Analysis: Role representation of SP in psychotherapy Methods of SP incorporated in psychotherapy	Declaration of a National State of Disaster COVID-19 Online data collection methods	That the study confirmed a gap in psychological realm towards spirituality Spiritual Psychology is valuable to psychotherapy	Deeper exploration of spiritual psychology in education programs to enhance competency and allow incorporation
There is a lack in the competence of psychologists concerning spiritual psychology	Assessing the role of SP in psychotherapy Assessing the use of SP as a viable therapy tool in psychotherapy	African Spirituality Religion		Theme 6: Spirituality and Value to Mental Health Theme 7: Conclusion	Ethical perspectives should be Honest and Transparent	5 Registered Clinical Psychologists n= 5 Participants	Benefit of utilising SP in practice Data Analysis Method: Transliterating Inductive content analysis	Poor Internet Connection Reduction in sample size Bias participants Creditability Confirmability Transferability	Extend available knowledge on topic area Bridge the current information gap in South Africa	Acknowledgement of the benefit of spiritual psychology by the health council
There is a gap in available literature to how spiritual psychology could be utilised in therapy	Bridging the gap in South Africa's literature on SP in relation to psychotherapy	Spiritual psychology								