

Fall 2021

THE EFFECTS OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION ON FIRST- GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

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THE EFFECTS OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION ON
FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

Kayla Oliveira Ferreira

Submitted to the School of Honors Committee

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for University Honors Scholars

Southeastern University
2021

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2021

Dedication Page

To my parents: More than I could ever put to words, I'll thank you every day from the bottom of my heart for risking everything you knew— comfort, culture, and community— in order to give me the life you never had. Who I am today is because of your sacrifice. I appreciate it more than you could ever know. Te amo mais que pão de queijo.

To all the first-gen students trying their best to navigate the college world: you've made it. I know that at times it may get really hard and you may feel like you don't belong... but know that you are seen, you are supported, and you have a ton of people cheering you on. From one first-generation college student to another: congratulations. You've made it.

Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been written without the guidance and support of my thesis advisor, Dr. Joshua Britt. Your guidance, patience, and flexibility throughout this thesis writing process has been a blessing and I really (really) could not have done this without you!

Abstract

This study evaluates the effects and impact of spiritual formation programs on first-generation college students. Literature has shown that these students, who are of the first generational cohort in their family to attend a four-year institution of higher education, often face unique challenges such as lack of college readiness, lack of familial support, and experiencing biculturalism on their campuses. Despite this, however, studies have shown that involvement and engagement in campus community is vital for these students' success. The purpose of this study is to discover if participation in spiritual formational programming within the context of a Christian university has any effect on these students' lives, and if so, which programs most affected them and how.

Research consisted of surveying students belonging to this group, who were conveniently pooled at Southeastern University, through an online survey. After analysis, findings showed that first-generation students at this school had a significantly higher campus involvement rate than average. Additionally, nearly 85% perceived effects in engaging in spiritual formational activity and 81% saw these effects as positive. Participation in discipleship and/or small group activities was most significantly predictive of overall campus involvement. These results supported the researcher's hypothesis that engaging in spiritual formational activities gave support to first-generation college students.

KEY WORDS: first-generation college students, spiritual formation, academics, success, FGCS, Christianity

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Many of us understand that journeying through the college years is challenging. However, for first-generation college students, navigating higher education may often feel like climbing a big, steep mountain while it is pouring rain all around you and you just happen to be blindfolded with no destination in sight.¹ It is often daunting and overwhelming. These students who are first in their family to attend a four-year college or university often do-so without much support or guidance throughout their process and journey in obtaining a college degree. While these students may seem to be marginal due to their socio-economic status, first-generation college students are a critically important population that is steadily increasing at nearly all colleges and universities around the United States, and warrant a better understanding amongst researchers, as well as more intentional attention from higher education institutions.

As many college and university leaders are actively seeking avenues and methods to best meet the specific needs of this student population through campus engagement, services, and programs, faith-based universities carry a unique opportunity to target these students' spiritual lives as a manner of further targeting their support. This leaves the question of, "does participation and involvement in spiritual formational activities and programs produce any positive effect in first-generation college students?" Due to the broad nature of this topic, the following questions guide the research:

- To what degree did first-generation university students study participants perceive their overall level of campus involvement?

¹ The term "first-generation" may seem to be the newest buzzword in higher education, but it has actively been used for decades to describe these students who face unique challenges around the nation.

- To what degree did first-generation university student study participants perceive spiritual formation activity as beneficial?
- To what degree did first-generation university student study participants perceive spiritual formation activity as positive?
- Will study participant perceptions of spiritual formation programming as a positive experience predict perceptions of spiritual formation programming as beneficial to a statistically significant degree?
- Which of the study's variables was most statistically significant in predicting overall campus involvement?

While first-generation college students have been researched for decades, few studies have been conducted in reference to their spiritual formation throughout the college years. Therefore, this study looks to discover the effectiveness of incorporating spiritual formation in the targeted efforts to empower, encourage, and support first-generation college students. In order to ensure consistency and clarity in terms that will be used, definition for the terms may be found below.

Definition of Terms

First-Generation College Students: For the purpose of this study, we will be using the U.S. Department of Education's definition of first-generation college student being: "an individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree; or in the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree."²

² "Higher Education Act of 1965, 1998 Higher Education Act Amendments Subpart 2—Federal Early Outreach and Student Services Programs." <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/triohea.pdf>.

Spiritual Formation: As means of clarity, this study will use spiritual formation as being referred to as the process of an individual looking within and striving to become and be conformed to be like the inner being of Jesus.³ 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, “And we all... reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”⁴

Spiritual Formation program/activity: Refers to any activity or program that assists or empowers someone to be spiritually developed. This study looked at church attendance, mentorship, discipleship/small groups, and community service.

Now that a general understanding of the basic terms and vocabulary of this thesis has been established, we can move forward to understand if and how participation and involvement in spiritual formation has affected first-generation college students. However, we must first gain a more in-depth understanding of who first-generation college students are and how spiritual formation has previously impacted their college experience.

³Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the heart: Putting on the character of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress. (2002) and “What Is Spiritual Formation?: Portland Seminary,” *What Is Spiritual Formation?* | *Portland Seminary*, accessed October 12, 2021, <https://www.georgefox.edu/seminary/about/formation.html>.

⁴*The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Today, the number of first-generation college students (FGCS) is growing faster than ever. In fact, nearly half of all students who graduated with a bachelor's degree (42%) in the 2015-16 school year were first-generation graduates.⁵ The Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA defines first-generation college students as those “students in the United States who are the first generational cohort in their family of origin to attend a four-year institution of higher education.”⁶ These students often encounter unique challenges when attempting to navigate the often-intimidating world of higher education. I will organize this Literature Review into three sections: The Challenges of First-Generation College Students, Spiritual Formation in Higher Education, and Spiritual Formation and First-Generation Students.

Challenges of First-Generation College Students

A great deal of unique challenges are present in the lives of first-generation college students in the United States. All college students already face challenges as they attempt to navigate the world of higher education. However, while first-generation college students experience the same challenges as non-first-generation students, they also encounter their own unique stressors that include lack of academic preparation, absence of support from family and

⁵RTI International. (2021). First-generation College Graduates: Race/Ethnicity, Age, and Use of Career Planning Services. Washington, DC: NASPA. Retrieved from <https://firstgen.naspa.org/files/dmfile/FactSheet-011.pdf>

⁶ Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). First in my family: A profile of first-generation college students at four-year institutions since 1971. (2007, May).

friends, financial stability, and difficult cultural transitions.⁷ A study conducted by Lisa House, Chelsea Neal, and Jason Kolb looked to assess whether differences in distress exist between first-generation college students and non-first-generation college students. The findings showed that FGCS reported significantly more academic distress, work hours, and financial distress than non-first-generation college students, showcasing the increased hardships FGCS face during their time at an institution of higher education.⁸

College readiness

College readiness is defined as the academic and practical knowledge needed to be successful in higher education.⁹ First-generation college students will often have to maneuver their way through college on their own and, thus, may lack the college readiness skills needed for success. Additionally, many first-generation college students often do not know how the college system works, such as how to apply for college, how to receive financial aid, or even how to choose a major due to their and their family's lack of experience. However, a study conducted by Pitre and Pitre showcases that educational opportunity initiatives that commit to the development of programs to increase equitable participation in higher education have been successful in increasing both the higher education attendance rates and educational attainment at

⁷ Lisa A. House, Chelsea Neal, and Jason Kolb, "Supporting the Mental Health Needs of First Generation College Students." *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*. Vol. 34, (April 2020). Falcon, Lauren. "Breaking Down Barriers: First-generation College Students and College Success." *Innovation Showcase* 10, no. 6, (June 2016).

⁸ House, Neal, and Kolb. 157.

⁹ Charisse Cowan Pitre and Paul Pitre, "Increasing Underrepresented High School Students' College Transitions and Achievements: TRIO Educational Opportunity Programs." *National Association of Secondary School Principals. NASSP Bulletin* 93, no. 2 (June, 2009)

the high school level of students from first-generation backgrounds.¹⁰ Further, this population is less likely to, “know the difference between various higher education institutions” causing them to, “select one that does not suit specific educational needs and goals.”¹¹ By attending an institution that may not cater to their needs, first-generation students are impaired from attaining their full academic potential. Once students arrive at a higher education institution, they often feel as if they are “behind” in college knowledge compared to other students and often struggle with a lack of community. A study conducted by Katsiaficas surveyed 790 students in order to examine if developing peer support programs for these students was beneficial to their overall student success. The study found that the sense of belonging to a group, shared fate, and closeness with other group members are important aspects of forming a collective identity when seeking representation, assistance, and success on college campuses. Furthermore, “increased peer support and having a safe space on campus” created a community within the population which in turn was associated with increased civic engagement. By engaging with their own peers, particularly within safe spaces, students expressed the importance of this collective identity as they learned about each other's shared experiences and struggles. Campuses showcase a critical need for supportive peers and safe spaces for minority students in order to support their identity development and thus push them towards student success.¹²

¹⁰ Pitre and Pitre. 96.

¹¹ Lauren Falcon, “Breaking Down Barriers: First-generation College Students and College Success.” *Innovation Showcase* 10, no. 6, (June 2016).

¹² Dalal Katsiaficas, Vanessa Volpe, Syeda S. Raza, and Yuliana Garcia, “The Role of Campus Support, Undocumented Identity, and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals on Civic Engagement for Latinx Undocumented Undergraduates.” *Child Development* 90, no. 3 (May 2019).

Lack of familial support

Because the parents of these first-generation college students did not personally experience the demands that come with attending college, many FGCS lack the parental support and involvement needed in preparation for and adjustment to the college experience.¹³ Navigating the brand-new world of attending a higher education institution is already difficult—and doing it without the support of those closest to the student leads to FGCS feeling as if they are struggling alone. An Asian American female student Kathryn Ecklund interviewed stated, “...because of the [college capital knowledge] gap, since they haven't been through college, they don't know what you are going through. By talking with them about it, without being condescending, you help them understand what you are going through and you grow as a family.”¹⁴ To fix this issue, Kathryn Ecklund recommends engaging parents and families of FGCS through building an intentional, supportive educational environment that could serve as an empathy-building opportunity for parents. She found that first-generation students reported that their parents are more influential than their peers in the formation of higher educational aspirations and degree completion. Some students reported that their parents' commitment to their education supported their identity development; others reported that their education was not one their parents could understand and actively support.¹⁵

In addition to engaging parents, college and university faculty play a crucial role in developing student engagement of first-generation students in higher education. An exploratory

¹³ Katsiaficas. 790.

¹⁴ Kathryn Ecklund, “First-Generation Social and Ethnic Minority Students in Christian Universities: Student Recommendations for Successful Support of Diverse Students.” *Christian Higher Education* 12, no. 3 (May 2013).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 163.

study was conducted at a Midwestern university in order to examine the ways that faculty and staff perceive their roles in supporting students. The study found that developing a mentoring culture promotes both a sense of belonging and long-term student success, especially for first-generation students who may feel as if they are lacking support.¹⁶ The participants of the study noted that there should be an awareness of more specific student needs when mentoring minority and first-generation college students. These may need more mentoring and resources compared to students more familiar with academic culture. Participants also reported that this population of students often experienced a greater lack of belonging, isolation, and conflict with families as compared to non-first-generation students.¹⁷ Because of the lack of familiarity with academic culture, first-generation and underrepresented minority students often have a greater need for mentors in addition to having more needs that mentors may need to be made aware of. While the use of faculty mentors is beneficial to all students, first-generation college students especially benefit from it due to these unique needs. In a review of the literature, Tsui concluded that positive experiences with mentoring are associated with college success in minority students. Specifically, mentoring was correlated with students' college adjustment, grades, self-efficacy, persistence and retention, and better-defined academic goals.¹⁸ While first-generation college students may not have great familial support at home due to the family's lack of experience, staff and faculty at the university level can step up to mentor and empower these students.

¹⁶ Kristi L. Law, Deanna D'Amico Guthrie, Barbara R. Beaver, Susan M. Johnson, Jodie Parys, and Ozalle M. Toms, "Faculty and Staff Perceptions of Undergraduate Mentoring." *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 27, no. 4 (January 1, 2019). Rood, Robert E. "Driven to Achieve: First-Generation Students' Narrated Experience at a Private Christian College." *Christian Higher Education* 8, no. 3 (January 1, 2009).

¹⁷ Law, Guthrie, Beaver, Johnson, Parys, and Toms. 408.

¹⁸ Tsui, Lisa, "Effective Strategies to Increase Diversity in STEM Fields: A Review of the Research Literature." *The Journal of Negro Education* 76, no. 4 (2007).

Minorities and Biculturalism

Historically, African-American, Hispanic, Native American, as well as low-income students have graduated high school and attended college at a significantly lower rate than their White and higher-income student counterparts.¹⁹ Because of this, minority students are more likely to be first-generation students. In 2012, the Department of Education found that 41% of all black or African American undergraduate students and 61% of all Hispanic or Latinx students belonged to this demographic²⁰ Additionally, one in four 18 to 25 year olds in the United States come from immigrant origin backgrounds, making many first-generation students undocumented.²¹ While many undocumented youths experience a developmental transition that differs from that of documented students, they often experience different struggles such as living in impoverished and disinvested in neighborhoods, attending under-resourced high schools, possessing a “lack of college knowledge,” as well as a fear of deportation.²² These unique struggles create educational setbacks for these students and make it difficult to assimilate into the cultures of both higher education and of their new country. Many experience “firsts” that are new for both them and their parents and are faced with the task of charting new territory and familiarizing themselves with how things work in a country and culture that their parents may still be learning themselves.

¹⁹ Pitre. 98.

²⁰ “Profile of Undergraduate Students: 2011-12,” *U.S. Department of Education*, October 2014.

²¹ Katsiaficas. 790.

²² *Ibid.* 791.

These educational setbacks and difficulties assimilating into campus culture have been an issue that has consistently been echoed by first-generation students.²³ A study by Ecklund found that as minority students on culturally foreign college campuses, FGCS often reported feeling disconnected from the group identity of the college culture. They also reported stress related to their intersecting identities of their family's culture against their college culture.²⁴

Because of their diversity and intersecting identities, first-generation college students describing their college experiences frequently mention the perception of living in two worlds. Not only are they attempting to assimilate to the cultural context of the country they are living in, but they are also attempting to navigate the new culture of the college or university they are attending. Despite this, many also describe having their faith be a connecting point and a bridge between these two worlds.²⁵

Spiritual Formation in Higher Education

The first three centuries of higher education in America was predominantly both private and Protestant, however, the rise of the 20th century brought about a heightened scientific inquiry and a decline in religious focus in academia.²⁶ Today, faith and religion have not been nurtured on many college campuses, and researchers have found declines in student involvement

²³ Luna, and Montoya, "“I Need This Chance to... Help My Family’: A Qualitative Analysis of the Aspirations of DACA Applicants.” *Social Sciences* 8, no. 9 (September 19, 2019). Katsiaficas. Kathryn Ecklund. “First-Generation Social and Ethnic Minority Students in Christian Universities: Student Recommendations for Successful Support of Diverse Students.” *Christian Higher Education* 12, no. 3 (May 2013).

²⁴ Ecklund. 165.

²⁵ Ibid. 166.

²⁶ Harold V. Hartley III, “How College Affects Students’ Religious Faith and Practice: A Review of Research.” *College Student Affairs Journal* 23, no. 2 (January 1, 2004).

in religious activities such as worship attendance and prayer.²⁷ This goes to show that the prioritization of the development of spiritual formation in college students has significantly declined and that now more than ever students are straying from their faith.

Despite this trend, many higher education institutions across the country emphasize the importance of developing students holistically.²⁸ Many higher education institutions have implemented the use of the Wheel of Wellness, a “holistic, multidisciplinary model of wellness and prevention over the life span.”²⁹ The Wheel of Wellness consists of five life tasks that consist of sixteen interconnected characteristics of healthy people including spirituality, self-direction, work, recreation, and leisure, friendship, and love.³⁰ Despite this, many institutions have replaced internal development of students with more practical discussions of topics such as math, science, and history. Religious institutions, on the other hand, have continuously focused on creating a space where students can expand their mind with practical career-oriented courses while *also* developing interior aspects of their lives such as students’ personal spiritual formation. In “Christian Higher Education Reaching the Whole Person,” Jeynes wrote that the purpose of Christian higher education institutions is to help strengthen each student as a whole.³¹ Spiritual formation refers to the process of an individual looking within and striving to become

²⁷ Ibid. 114.

²⁸ Laura Hensley Choate, and Sondra L. Smith, “Enhancing Development in 1st-Year College Student Success Courses: A Holistic Approach.” *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education & Development* 42, no. 2 (Fall 2003).

²⁹ Ibid. 182.

³⁰ Ibid. 182.

³¹ William H Jeynes, Christian higher education reaching the whole person. *Christian Higher Education*, 11(2), 67-68. (2012).

like the inner being of Jesus.³² By developing this, Evangelical schools place spiritual growth, or spiritual development, as their highest educational objective and will usually see students reporting not only spiritual growth throughout their time attending the institution, but also academic performance and character development.³³ While spiritual formation cannot be tangibly measured, it can be measured through the spiritual maturity demonstrated by an individual as well as through demonstrated eagerness to be involved in activities that focus on spiritual development such as personal devotional time, attending chapel services, and joining a small group.

Participation in religious activities and high spiritual well-being has shown correlation to a higher health-related quality of life. A study conducted in a sample of college students in the southern region of the United States investigated the relationship between spiritual well-being and the health of college students assessing physical health, mental health, and general health. Participants who reported a higher spiritual well-being score also reported better health related quality of life compared to non-religious students. Now, spirituality is now widely accepted as an important component of health. The results showed a positive relationship between spirituality, and health-related quality of life. Students who participated in more frequent religious activities and who scored higher in spiritual well-being also reported feeling physically and mentally

³² Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the heart: Putting on the character of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress. (2002).

³³ Kristin Paredes-Collins, and Christopher S Collins, "The Intersection of Race and Spirituality: Underrepresented Students' Spiritual Development at Predominantly White Evangelical Colleges." *JRCE20*, no. 1 (January 2011). Jeynes.

healthy for a greater number of days than students who had lower scores in spiritual well-being and reported less frequent participation in religious activities.³⁴

While spiritual formation is not usually an intended outcome for secular institutions, they, like religious institutions, often find students reporting spiritual gains. A researcher analyzed data for over 7,000 first year students at nearly 450 higher education institutions and found that international, Asian, and first-generation students experienced spiritual growth through “participating in worshipful activities, engaging in service learning and encountering diversity in the classroom.”³⁵ If students are reporting spiritual growth both inside and outside of the four walls of the classroom, in what ways, if any, do their higher education institutions play a role in this growth?

Spiritual Formation and First-Generation Students

A study conducted by Lauren Falcon found that the success of first-generation students can be partially attributed to academic and social integration, suggesting that higher education institutions may play a significant role in the experiences of their first-generation students through the holistic development of students.³⁶ Moreover, “young people with mature spiritual formation are more likely to participate in community service and extracurricular activities,” thus “[exhibiting] prosocial behaviors, improved self-esteem, self-control, and academic achievement

³⁴ Anye, Ernest Tamanji, Tara L. Gallien, Hui Bian, and Michael Moulton. “The Relationship Between Spiritual Well-Being and Health-Related Quality of Life in College Students.” *Journal of American College Health* 61, no. 7 (October 2013): 414–21.

³⁵ Eric G. Lovik, “The Impact of Organizational Features and Student Experiences on Spiritual Development during the First Year of College.” *Journal of College and Character* 12, no. 3 (September 1, 2011).

³⁶ Falcon.

with fewer risk behaviors.”³⁷ If this is the case, what role does the development of spiritual formation in higher education have on this student population? Knowing that first-generation students are experiencing spiritual growth both inside and outside of the four walls of the classroom, higher education institutions may research and implement programs and procedures to further the development of spirituality of their first-generation students. Besides this, however, not much study has been conducted regarding spiritual formation and FGCS.

Conclusion

As seen in the literature review above, first-generation college students often face unique challenges such as lack of college readiness, lack of familial support, and struggle with being bi-cultural on their college campuses. Moreover, while previous studies have been conducted involving spirituality on university campuses, not much has been studied regarding first-generation students. Because of this, following this literature review, a survey was conducted in order to gather data and examine if participation in spiritual formation programming effected, benefitted, or supported this population of students in any manner.

³⁷ Anne Puidk Horan, “Fostering Spiritual Formation of Millennials in Christian Schools.” *JRCE* 26, no. 1 (January 2017).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

As seen in the literature review, many faith-based universities struggle with the creation of programs that specifically target today's first-generation college students. In order to effectively support these students, faith-based universities of today must keep in mind their unique characteristics and challenges, especially those regarding their spirituality. The methodology of this thesis consisted of surveying current first-generation college students at Southeastern University, a mid-sized faith-based institution in central Florida, in order to better understand how participation in spiritual formation programs supports these students.

These students were diverse in their genders, majors of choice, class, ages, ethnicity, and country of origin.

After gaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher sent an email to 387 students in order to recruit participants. A copy of this approval, in addition to the recruitment email, can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B. This recruitment email contained an online version of the survey. The IRB emphasized that the responses to the survey must stay secure and that no one but the primary investigator and co-investigator could access the materials. In order to send out the survey, the researcher obtained students' information from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at Southeastern University. To participate in the survey, participants first had to agree to a consent form (See Appendix C).

Once the major themes were developed from the preliminary research, a list of questions was fabricated by the primary investigator which were asked to first-generation college students at a mid-sized Christian university in Central Florida. The survey was composed of 22 questions (see Appendix D). The questions consisted of yes or no answers, rating scale, multiple-choice, and short answers. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected from participants in the

form of a survey conducted through Google Forms. The main purpose of the survey was to identify if and how spiritual formation programs affected first-generation college students. The criteria for participation in this study was that the individual answering the survey must be or have been the first in their immediate family to attend a four-year college or university as well as being a current student at Southeastern University. In addition, all participants must have been eighteen years of age or older due to study restrictions.

The goal of the study was to compare the answers of each participant in order to find patterns of participation in spiritual formation programs in first-generation college students among students of various races, genders, and ages. The results of this survey, compared to one another, helped the researcher identify ways in which faith-based institutions can specifically target first-generation students through programs on campus that improve spiritual formation. The participants' answers were compiled into the Google Sheets platform where they were able to be seen and analyzed in an organized and efficient manner for simple data analysis.

Following the study, the data was analyzed in order to find any trends in participant responses. In the analysis, names will remain confidential.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This portion of the thesis will examine the results of the data and evaluate courses of action that a faith-based university should implement in order to better reach and serve first-generation college students. The data gathered from the previously mentioned Google Form was gathered from 54 first-generation students enrolled at Southeastern University, a private Christian university located in central Florida. The study's research design was quantitative and non-experimental.³⁸ The study's sample was accessed through a non-probability, convenient approach.³⁹ After contacting the Office of Institutional Effectiveness for FGCS contact information and emailing the 387 first-generation students, the researcher was able to collect 54 responses. The response rate to the study's research instrument was 13.9% (n = 54). The analysis and reporting of study findings was conducted using IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v. 28).

Descriptive Statistics: Demographic Variables

Descriptive statistical techniques were used to assess the study's primary demographic identifying information. Out of the 54 responses, the participant pool was predominantly female, consisting of 39 female students (72.22%) and 15 male students (27.78%). 7.4% were freshmen, 18.5% sophomores, 33.3% juniors, 25.9% seniors, and 14.8% graduate students. Within this pool of students, there were 35 majors represented. This pool of students included the following

³⁸ WA Edmonds and TD Kennedy, "An Applied Guide to Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods (2nd ed.)."(2017).

³⁹JR Frankel, NE Wallen, HH Hyun, "How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education." 10th Ed. (2019). ISBN-13: 978-1260131451.

ethnicities: 62.9% White/Caucasians, 27.8% Hispanic/Latinx, 7.4% Black, and 1.85% Multi-Ethnic. In addition to this, three of the participants were born in a different country. Figures A, B, and C below contain a summary of findings for the descriptive statistical findings for the study's demographic identifier variables featured in the study. A more in-depth look can be seen in Appendix E.

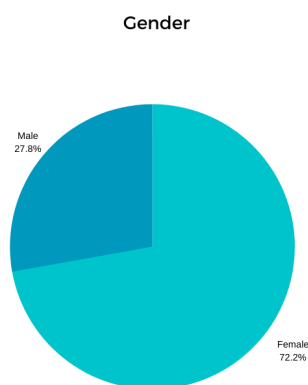


Figure A

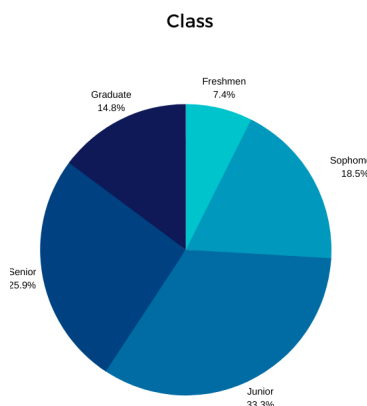


Figure B

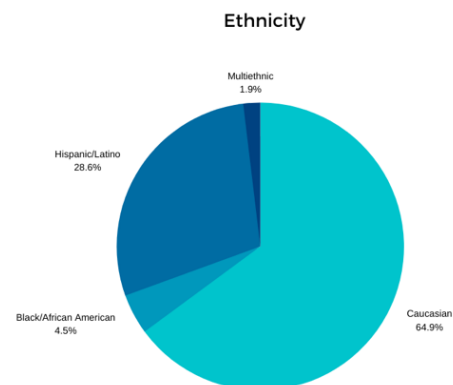


Figure C

Descriptive Statistics: Nominal Level Response Variables

Descriptive statistical techniques were used to assess the study's nominal level variables. Frequencies (n) and percentages (%) represented the descriptive statistical techniques used to address the study's nominal level response variables. When asked about their church attendance, 42 participants responded that they attend at least weekly while 12 responded that they attend bi-weekly or less. Moreover, 37% of participants responded that they participate in community service at least once per week while 63% responded that they serve the community less frequently than weekly. Figures D and E below contain a summary of this finding.

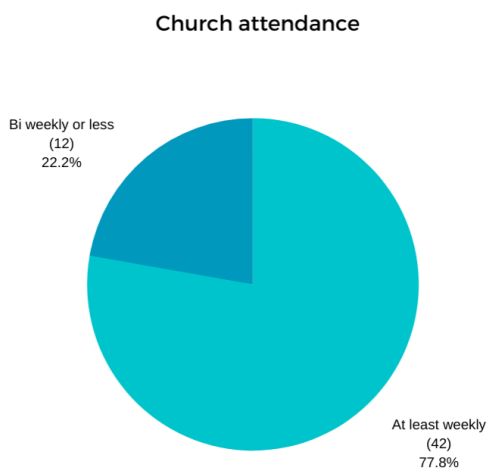


Figure D

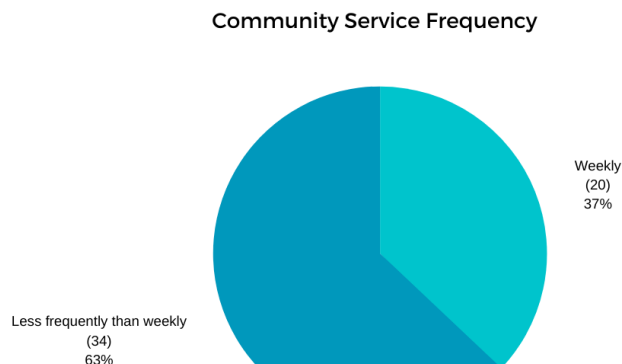


Figure E

94.4% of participants engaged in spiritual formational activities and 83.3% saw it as beneficial while 5.6% did not engage in spiritual formation at all and 14.81% saw it was unbeneficial. Some of those that did not perceive spiritual formation as beneficial gave the following statements as to why:

“All groups involved in any spiritual formation activity appear to already have their cliques and avoid making new connections. It seems like they avoid involving new people.”

“Just sometimes [spiritual formation programs] feels forced and I have had people come up to me that don’t have the [same] faith-oriented background that I do and it was interesting to see how it affected them.”

“I would say [that] sometimes the chapels at SEU almost feel like a club; you’re either a part of the group or not.”

These responses represent the desire for belonging that most first-generation students long for.

Figures F and G below contain a summary of these findings:

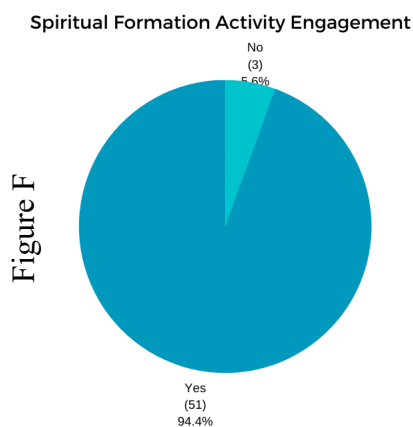


Figure F

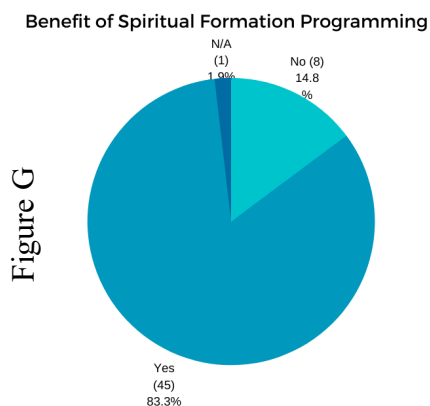


Figure G

Additionally, 85% of surveyed students felt prepared for university life, contrasting with previous studies examining first-generation college students. 42.6% of students surveyed participated in a discipleship or small group while 57.4% did not. Lastly, almost 82% viewed participation in spiritual formation as a positive experience on their college campus. Figures H, I, and J below contain a summary of these findings. Appendix F showcases a more in-depth summary for the descriptive statistical findings for the study's nominal-level response variables featured in the study:

Perceptions of Being Prepared for University

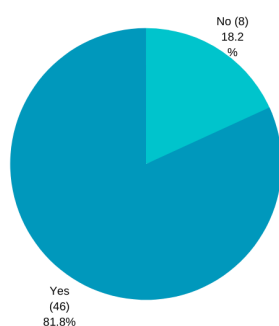


Figure H

Discipleship or Small Group Participation

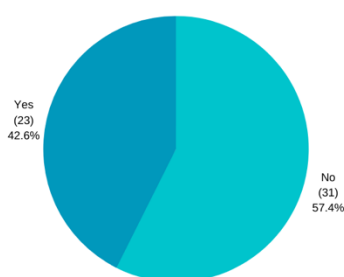


Figure I

Spiritual Formation as a Positive Experience

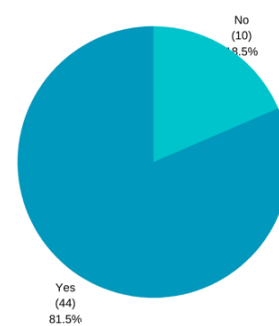


Figure J

Descriptive Statistics: Scale Level Variables

Descriptive statistical techniques were used to assess the study's demographic identifying information and additional scale-level variables. Frequencies (n), measures of typicality (mean), variability (minimum/maximum; standard deviations), standard errors of the mean, and data normality (skew; kurtosis) represented the descriptive statistical techniques used to address a segment of the study's scale-level variables. Figure K to the right showcases participant ages while

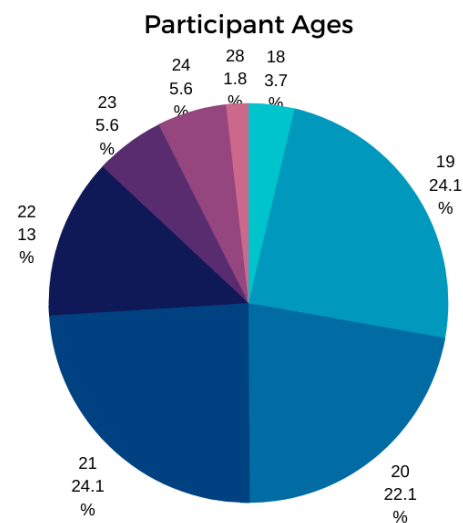


Figure K

Table 1 below contains a summary of finding for the descriptive statistical findings for the study's scale-level variables featured in the study: The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 28 years old with the average being 20 years old. The average overall campus involvement was 6.72, meaning students perceived their campus involvement to be fairly high.

Table 1
Scale Level Variable Summary Table

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Age	20.72	1.81	54	0.25	18.00	28.00	1.39	3.29
Overall Campus Involvement	6.72	2.48	54	0.34	1.00	10.00	-0.54	-0.44

Overall Campus Involvement by Class Designation

Descriptive statistical techniques were used to assess study participant perceptions of overall campus involvement by class. Frequencies (*n*), measures of typicality (mean), variability (minimum/maximum; standard deviations), standard errors of the mean, and data normality (skew; kurtosis) represented the descriptive statistical techniques used to address study participant perceptions of overall campus involvement by class designation. Figure L to the right contains a summary of finding for the descriptive statistical findings for study participant perceptions of overall campus involvement by class designation. A more in-depth analysis may be found in Appendix G.

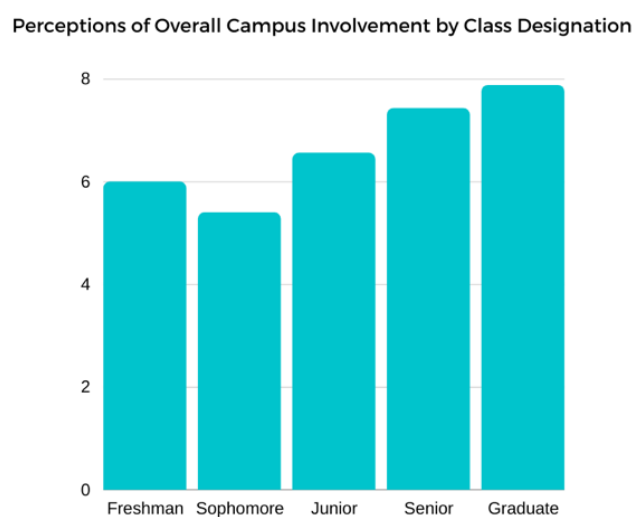


Figure L

Findings by Research Question

In order to fully analyze the data and recognize pertinent findings, this section will be outlined question by question the researcher asked. The study's research questions were addressed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The threshold adopted for statistical significance of finding in the study was $p \leq .05$. The following represents the findings achieved in the study by research question stated:

Research Question #1:

To what degree did first generation university student study participants perceive their overall level of campus involvement?

The one sample *t* test was used to assess the statistical significance of first-generation university student study participants' perceptions of their overall level of campus involvement. The Cohen's *d* statistical technique was used to evaluate the magnitude of effect of first-generation university student study participant perceptions of their overall level of campus involvement.

The assumption of data normality for the variable of overall campus involvement was assessed using the skew and kurtosis values. The skew value of -0.54 and kurtosis value of -0.44 for the variable of overall campus involvement were well-within the parameters of $-/+2.0$ (skew) and $-/+7.0$ (kurtosis) proposed by George and Mallery for data normality.⁴⁰ As a result, the assumption of data normality was satisfied.

⁴⁰ D. George and P. Mallery, "IBM SPSS statistics 25 step by step: a simple guide and reference," 11.0 update (15th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. (2018).

The finding for first-generation university student study participant mean score perception (6.72; SD = 2.48) of their overall level of campus involvement was statistically significantly greater than the median value (5.5) on the Likert-scale ($t_{(53)} = 3.62$; $p < .001$). The magnitude of effect for the response in research question one was considered medium ($d = .49$).

Table 2 contains a summary of finding for first-generation university student study participant perceptions of their overall level of campus involvement:

Table 2
Perceptions Overall Campus Involvement

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	μ	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Overall Campus Involvement	6.72	2.48	5.5	3.62	< .001	0.49

Note. Degrees of Freedom for the *t*-statistic = 53. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

Research Question #2:

To what degree did first generation university student study participants perceive spiritual formation activity as beneficial?

A majority of study participants (85.0%; $n = 45$) stated that they perceived benefit in engaging in spiritual formation activity. The statistical significance of the finding in research question two was addressed using the non-parametric binomial statistical technique. As a result, the

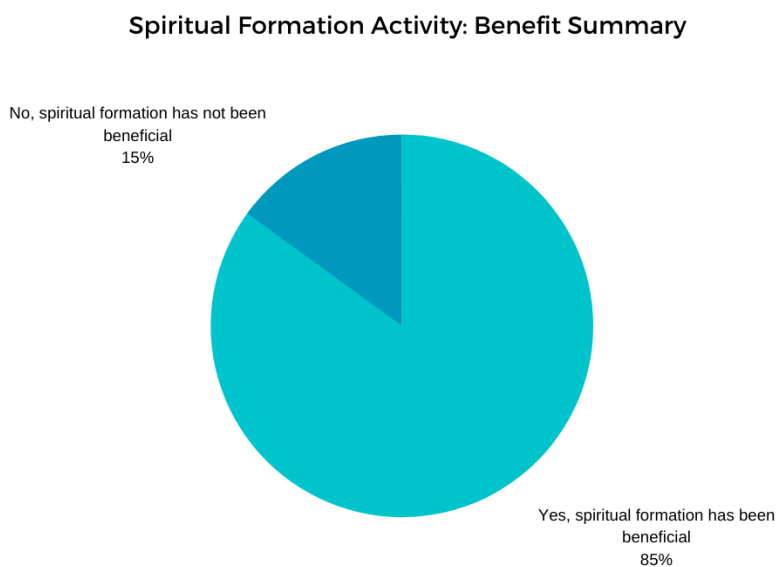


Figure M

proportion of study participants perceiving spiritual formation activity as beneficial was statistically significant ($p < .001$) using the test proportion of .50. Figure M above contains a summary of finding for the statistical significance of finding for study participants perceptions of spiritual formation activity as beneficial. A more in-depth analysis can be found in Appendix H.

Research Question #3:

To what degree did first generation university student study participants perceive spiritual formation activity as a positive experience?

A majority of study participants (81.0%; $n = 44$) stated that they perceived engaging in spiritual formation activity as a positive experience. The statistical significance of the finding in research question three was addressed using the non-parametric binomial statistical technique. As a result, the proportion of study participants perceiving spiritual formation activity as a positive experience was statistically significant ($p < .001$) using the test proportion of .50.

Spiritual Formation Activity: Positive Experience Summary

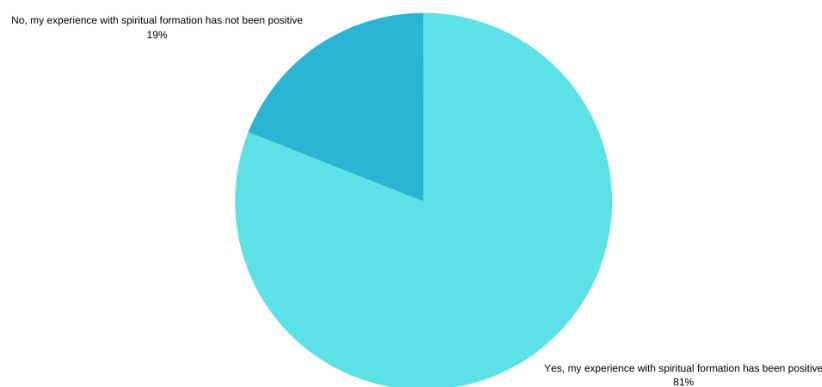


Figure N

Figure N to the left contains a summary of finding for the statistical significance of finding for study participants perceptions of spiritual formation activity as a positive experience. A more in-depth analysis may be found in Appendix I.

Research Question #4:

Will study participant perceptions of spiritual formation programming as a positive experience predict perceptions of spiritual formation programming as beneficial to a statistically significant degree?

The binary logistic regression statistical technique was conducted to evaluate whether perceptions of spiritual formation activity as a positive experience exerted a statistically significant predictive effect on the odds of perceiving spiritual formation programming as beneficial. The overall predictive model was statistically significant ($\chi^2(1) = 9.36, p = .002$), indicating that perceptions of spiritual formation programming as a positive experience exerted a statistically significant effect on the odds of perceiving spiritual formation programming as beneficial. The effect of perceptions that spiritual formation programming was perceived as a positive experience was statistically significant ($B = 2.59, OR = 13.33, p = .003$), indicating that perceptions of spiritual formation programming as a positive experience increases the odds of perceiving spiritual formation programming as beneficial by approximately 1233%.

Table 3 contains a summary of finding for the predictive model used in research question four:

Table 3

Predicting Spiritual Formation Programming as Beneficial

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% CI
(Intercept)	0.00	0.63	0.00	1.000	-	-
SF as a Positive Experience	2.59	0.87	8.85	.003	13.33	[2.42, 73.48]

Note. $\chi^2(1) = 9.36, p = .002, McFadden R^2 = 0.21.$

Research Question #5

Which of the study's variables was most statistically significant in predicting overall campus involvement?

The linear regression statistical technique was used to assess the predictive abilities of the study's variables with perceptions of overall campus involvement. As a result, one variable, participation in discipleship and small groups, represented the most robust, statistically significant predictor of perceptions of overall campus involvement.

The predictive model for participation in discipleship and small groups was statistically significant ($F(1,52) = 3.92, p = .05, R^2 = 0.07$), indicating participating in discipleship and small group activity accounted for 7.0% of the variance in the model's dependent variable of overall campus involvement. Participation in discipleship and small groups was statistically significantly predictive of study participant perceptions of overall campus involvement ($B = 1.32, t_{(52)} = 1.98; p = .05$), indicating that moving from not participating to participating in discipleship and small groups increases the value of overall campus involvement by 1.32 units.

Table 4 contains a summary of finding in the predictive model used to address research question five:

Table 4

Predicting Overall Campus Involvement by Participation in Discipleship and Small Groups

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	6.16	0.43	[5.29, 7.03]	0.00	14.19	< .001
Discipleship Group Yes	1.32	0.67	[-0.02, 2.65]	0.26	1.98	.05*

* $p \leq .05$

Summary of Study Findings

As this chapter of the thesis was rather exhaustive in its analysis, the results will be briefly abridged in order to assist the reader in digesting findings in a more simplistic and holistic manner.

The study's topic and research problem were addressed using a non-experimental design. A survey research approach represented the specific methodology used in the study. A response rate of 15% was achieved, representing one of the limitations of the study, as the customary response rate for internal surveying has been noted at 30% to 40%. The study's sample of participants was accessed through a non-probability, convenient approach. Five research questions were stated and addressed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

The study's sample was largely female (72.2%) by gender, White/Caucasian (63.0%) by ethnicity, and junior/senior by educational classification (59.2%). Nearly eight in 10 study participants indicated that they attended church on at least a weekly basis. Over 90% (94.4%) of study participants indicated that they participated in spiritual formation programming. Approximately 40% (37.0%) of study participants identified as engaging in community service activity on at least a weekly basis.

Two-thirds of the study's sample (66.7%) indicated that they had been mentored. Over 80% (85.2%) of study participants perceived that they were prepared for the challenges of university life. The average age of study participants was 20.7 (range 18 – 28). Perceptions of overall campus involvement were noted to increase commensurate with educational classification of study participants.

Overall mean perceptions of campus involvement were manifested at a statistically significant level greater than median expectations for involvement. The proportion of study

participant perceptions of spiritual formation programming as “beneficial” (85.0%) was statistically significant. Similarly, the proportion of study participant perceptions of spiritual formation programming as a “positive” experience (81.0%) was statistically significant.

When spiritual formation programming was perceived as a positive experience, the predicted outcome for perceptions of spiritual formation programming being “beneficial” was statistically significant. When spiritual formation programming was perceived as a positive experience, the odds of study participants perceiving of spiritual formation programming being “beneficial” increased by 1223%. Perceptions of overall campus involvement were most robustly predicted by study participant discipleship and/or small group participation.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

While studies have shown that fewer first-generation students participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities than continuing-generation students, students at the research site perceived their campus involvement to be significantly greater than average and 95% of those surveyed stated that they participated in some form of spiritual formation on their college campus. Of those 95%, 81% of those surveyed saw the effects of engaging in spiritual formation as positive. Moreover, participation in discipleship and small groups was statistically significantly predictive of participant perceptions of overall campus involvement. When asked to describe their experiences with spiritual formation on their campus, some participants who participated in discipleship or small groups responded the following:

- I have consistently had an upperclassman pouring into my life. Even when they leave or I decide to join another SEU group (small group), there has always been someone that has been excited to pour into my life and challenge me to become a better Christian and person.
- I went to chapel around 20 times a semester and was a part of a discipleship group for a semester. It helped me get more connected with campus as a commuter and helped me make friendships. It also grew me spiritually because I was able to worship more often than just on Sundays.
- I have enjoyed fellowship and conversations about spiritual life with others on campus and in my small groups!
- These experiences have marked my college years, and my life itself for a lifetime because it's impacted my life even outside of college.

Despite these positive reports, however, some participants responded with ways in which their university could improve their spiritual formation programs in order to better serve their needs as first-generation college students. Some of these responses can be found below:

- To be honest, [my university could] be more diverse in their way of communicating. I don't mean just diverse in culture but also in social and economic differences as well. A lot of students here at school feels as if the environment is catered to one specific people group. Not only in race but also in background of different aspects of it as well.
- [My university could] reach out to those who don't come from a rich family whether that be economically or spiritually... We need to learn how to better reach those who do not come from this background because they already feel ostracized so we cannot perpetuate this cycle in the church. After all, Jesus always went after the marginalized (whether it was racially, socioeconomically, or spiritually) and we should too.
- I think spiritual formation has been approached as a "one-size fits all" experience, which neglects students coming from different socio-economic or cultural backgrounds than the majority at Southeastern.

For the most part, the results of this study showcased that participation in spiritual formation was a positive experience despite not having any programs that specifically target first-generation college students. However, with the implementation of suggestions laid out in this study, further research, and increased targeting for first-generation college students, more can be done to further empower this student group.

Strengths, Limitations, and Areas for Future Research

One of the greatest strengths of this study was that this study was conducted at a faith-based institution that provided many opportunities for engagement in spiritual formational activities. This allowed for almost all participants to have engaged in spiritual formation at some point throughout their college career, allowing for participants to more accurately gauge their needs and share their experience.

However, the current study, as is the case with all research, was limited by several variables. First, the study was conducted as the research site (university) was slowly emerging from the ill-effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Conducting research was challenging during this period of time at every stage of the process. Second, the study's research design was non-experimental, thereby limiting the generalization of finding beyond the population from which the sample was accessed. Third, the sample size and sample composition were both limiting factors as they appear to be inadequate to accurately reflect the population from which they were accessed. The study's sample was, at best, half of the customary rate for internal sampling. The demographic identifying information, moreover, was skewed and not entirely reflecting of the population of first-generation students enrolled at the university.

Moreover, the current study should be replicated at a time when the research site has fully returned to normal operational status. Future research may also involve a broader sample of study participants from more than one research site to ensure proportionality of participant by demographic identifier. For instance, several participating research sites similar to that of the current study, such as another faith-based university, would increase the probability that greater representation might be achieved by demographic identifier than was achieved in the current

study. The increased research site participation would also allow for the use of probability sampling techniques, thereby increasing generalizability of findings.

The current study was limited to a quantitative research design. Future studies could perhaps be more qualitatively engaged. A mixed-methods research design would allow for a qualitative follow-up to the quantitative approach using open-ended interviews, focus groups, and even case studies. The qualitative element would allow for the attainment of data that could be more elaborate and explanatory through depth and added richness following the quantitative design element.

For comparative purposes, future studies might involve the inclusion of faith-based research sites that reflect diversity of doctrine and denomination. The current study, although incorporating a variety of Christian faiths and denomination, was conducted using one research site that is defined operationally by a specific denomination.

Implications for Future Practice

The study's findings would appear to provide a variety of important suggestions for professional practice regarding spiritual formation programming at the university level. First, first generation students perceived a noteworthy level of campus engagement. The finding is very positive in light of the precarious nature of one's being the "first" to attend university. From the finding, it would appear that the research site's attempt to engage first generation students is successful and should be nurtured to achieve even greater levels of overall campus involvement.

Second, study participants overwhelmingly perceived the university's spiritual formation programming as positive and beneficial. Although the percentages for both were exceptional,

15% to 20 % of study participants did not perceive the university's spiritual formation programming as positive nor beneficial. From these data, it would appear that increased attention should be focused upon identifying the specific reasons for the negative perceptions and adjust program protocol accordingly.

Third, the predictive robustness of perceptions of "positive" spiritual formation programming experiences for perceptions of the benefit of spiritual formation programming would appear to highlight the importance and focus upon ensuring positive spiritual formation experiences for first-generation students. It will be critical in the time ahead that the leadership of the research site thoroughly examine spiritual formation and adjust accordingly with follow-up research specific to the issue of the positive/negative elements of spiritual formation currently reflected in programming.

Fourth, in light of the study's finding for the predictive viability of study participant involvement in discipleship and/or small groups and overall campus involvement, it would seem logical and beneficial to encourage student engagement in discipleship and or small groups as a means by which to increase campus involvement. Although the study variables of church attendance, mentoring and community service appeared to be the more intuitive variables associated with overall campus involvement for first generation students, it was engagement in discipleship and/or small groups that was most predictive in enhancing overall campus involvement.

What Does This Mean for Faith-Based Institutions?

Before surveying these students, the researcher contacted and met with the Director of Academic Advising at Southeastern University for more information regarding first-generation students on campus and what the university is doing in order to target and support these students. In the Spring semester of the 2020-2021 school year, Southeastern University had 387 traditional undergraduate students and a total of 1,424 students across all divisions, deliveries, locations, and types. The university believes that it has a higher rate of non-traditional first-generation students due to the high cost of attending and the lower socioeconomic statuses of first-generation students. While Southeastern University does not ask for first-generational status on their application for admission, the data is collected through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that is required for all students to submit yearly. The retention rate of FGCS in the 2018 school year was 68.1% which is comparable to non-FGCS, however, this number could be higher with targeted support. During this meeting, the researcher learned that Southeastern University has no current targeted support on campus for FGCS. However, the university does have plans to implement programs to target and support these students. These plans involve including a label on the students' file on Jenzabar as well as JICS, two online programs the university uses. This would allow professors to more easily identify these students and further assist and support students who may need assistance. Additionally, the university plans on hosting a first-generation celebration day to identify and support these students, as well as creating a student success web page and a university glossary allowing FGCS to access resources that would lead to empowerment of these students.

Moreover, the research shown within this study shows that participation in discipleship and small groups is significantly predictive of overall campus involvement and thus overall

success. Faith-based institutions such as Southeastern University should create and develop small group and discipleship opportunities for these students as a way of increasing targeted support for first-generation students. In this study as well as in previous studies, across the board, one thing is clear: there is an intense need for community and creating spaces that are both safe and supportive for students, especially first-generation students. So, in order to more effectively reach, target, support, and empower FGCS, faith-based institutions should seek to provide a rich, authentic community for their students that specifically target their first-gen status.

Lastly, while all first-year students at Southeastern University are required to enroll in an introductory course, SEU 101, the university is currently designing an SEU 101 course specifically for FGCS that would further support and educate these students in the nuances of “college life.” This class could also be used as a discipleship tool through a holistic approach to education that would integrate faith into the classroom.

All of these things can be utilized as tools to help address and begin mending some of the unique challenges and difficulties that first-generation students often face. More than that, however, developing discipleship and small group opportunities that foster community for first-generation students can also be used to reach a far deeper issue at the core of each student: belonging. As first-generation students venture to be the first in their family to walk across the stage, developing spiritual formation programs allows connections with students in a way that allows them to feel understood and makes them feel as if they belong as they venture to be the first to not only climb, but to conquer, the big, steep mountain.

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CHAPTER 7: APPENDECIES

APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Institutional Review Board, Email <irb...>  Fri, Mar 19, 10:44 PM   

Good evening,

Your application has been reviewed and deemed exempt! Please see the form attached below!

Institutional Review Board
Southeastern University
1000 Longfellow Blvd
Lakeland FL, 33809

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Hello!

My name is Kayla Ferreira, and I am working on my thesis investigating the effects of spiritual formation on first-generation college students. The survey is linked below. It would be wonderful if you would be willing to participate!

The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete, and participation is voluntary.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to email me at [REDACTED] or my thesis advisor, Dr. Joshua Britt, at [REDACTED].

[Link](#) to survey:

Thank you so much for your help!



Kayla Ferreira
Southeastern University
E: [REDACTED]

APPENDIX C: STUDY APPROVAL FORM

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Title: The Effects of Spiritual Formation on First-Generation College Students

Investigator(s): Dr. Joshua Britt; Kayla Ferreira

What to Expect: This research study is administered online. Participation in this research will involve completion of one questionnaire. You will be expected to complete the questionnaire once. It should take you about 15-20 minutes to complete.

Risks: There are no risks associated with this project which are expected to be greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you. However, you may gain an appreciation and understanding of how research is conducted.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

Your Rights and Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. Data will be destroyed five years after the study has been completed.

Contacts: You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses and phone numbers, should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study: [REDACTED].

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the IRB Office [REDACTED]

APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Are you a first-generation college student (students who are the first in their family to obtain a Bachelor's degree from a four-year institution of higher education)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. What year in college are you?
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
3. Gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Prefer not to say
4. Age
5. Declared major/minor
6. What is your ethnicity?
7. What country were you born in?
8. On a scale of 1-10, rate your overall involvement on your campus with 1 being uninvolved and 10 being involved
9. What activities, if any, are you involved in on campus? (Ex: Student leadership, clubs, volunteering. etc.) Enter N/A if you are not involved on campus.

10. Did you feel prepared to attend this university academically, spiritually, financially, or emotionally? Select all that apply.

- a. Yes, I felt prepared academically
- b. Yes, I felt prepared spiritually
- c. Yes, I felt prepared financially
- d. Yes, I felt prepared emotionally
- e. No, I did not feel prepared in any of these areas

11. How would you define spiritual formation?

12. Do you participate in any spiritual formation program (ex: attending chapels, small groups, mentorship, etc.) on your university campus?

- a. Yes
- b. No

13. If you do participate in a spiritual formation program, do you feel that it has benefitted you in any way? Select all that apply.

- a. Yes, it has benefitted me academically
- b. Yes, it has benefitted me spiritually
- c. Yes, it has benefitted me financially
- d. Yes, it has benefitted me emotionally
- e. No, it has not benefitted me in any of these areas
- f. Other:

14. Do you attend church or another religious gathering?

- a. Yes
- b. No

15. If so, how often?

- a. Daily
- b. Bi-weekly
- c. Weekly
- d. Bi-monthly
- e. Monthly
- f. Quarterly

16. If you attend a church, in what areas of your church are you involved in (ex: children's ministry, youth ministry, worship, greeting, etc.)? If none, please write N/A.

17. How often do you participate in community service?

- a. Weekly
- b. Bi-monthly
- c. Monthly
- d. Quarterly
- e. Bi-yearly
- f. Yearly

18. Do you have a mentor currently or have you had one in the past?

- a. Yes, I have a mentor currently
- b. Yes, I have had a mentor in the past
- c. No, I have never had a mentor

19. Are you involved in a discipleship group or small group?

- a. Yes

- b. No
20. Do you have positive or negative experiences with spiritual formation on your college campus?
21. Describe these experiences.
22. How can your university improve their spiritual formation programs to best serve your needs as a first-generation college student?

APPENDIX E: DEMOGRAPHIC IDENTIFIER VARIABLES

Descriptive Statistics: Demographic Identifier Variables

Variable	<i>n</i>	%	Cumulative %
Gender			
Female	39	72.22	72.22
Male	15	27.78	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	100.00
Class			
Freshman	4	7.41	7.41
Sophomore	10	18.52	25.93
Junior	18	33.33	59.26
Senior	14	25.93	85.19
Graduate Student	8	14.81	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	100.00
Ethnicity			
White/Caucasian	34	62.96	62.96
Black/African American	4	7.41	70.37
Hispanic	15	27.78	98.15
Multi-Ethnic	1	1.85	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	100.00

APPENDIX F: NOMINAL LEVEL RESPONSE VARIABLES

Summary Table: Nominal Level Response Variables

Variable	<i>n</i>	%	Cumulative %
Church Attendance			
At Least Weekly	42	77.78	77.78
Bi Weekly or Less	12	22.22	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	100.00
Community Service Frequency			
Weekly	20	37.04	37.04
Less Frequently than Weekly	34	62.96	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	100.00
Spiritual Formation Activity Engagement			
No	3	5.56	5.56
Yes	51	94.44	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	100.00
Benefit of SF Programming			
No	8	14.81	14.81
Yes	45	83.33	98.15
Missing	1	1.85	100.00
Mentored			
No	18	33.33	33.33
Yes	36	66.67	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	100.00
Prepared for University			
No	8	14.81	14.81
Yes	46	85.19	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	100.00
Discipleship or Small Group Participation			
No	31	57.41	57.41
Yes	23	42.59	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	100.00
SF: Positive Experience			
No	10	18.52	18.52

Yes	44	81.48	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	100.00

APPENDIX G: PERCEPTIONS OF OVERALL CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT BY CLASS DESIGNATION

Perceptions of Overall Campus Involvement by Class Designation

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Freshman								
Overall Campus Involvement	6.00	2.94	4	1.47	3.00	9.00	0.00	-1.85
Sophomore								
Overall Campus Involvement	5.40	2.41	10	0.76	1.00	8.00	-0.40	-0.96
Junior								
Overall Campus Involvement	6.56	2.77	18	0.65	1.00	10.00	-0.60	-0.38
Senior								
Overall Campus Involvement	7.43	1.87	14	0.50	5.00	10.00	0.08	-1.30
Graduate Student								
Overall Campus Involvement	7.88	2.23	8	0.79	4.00	10.00	-0.82	-0.78

APPENDIX H: SPIRITUAL FORMATION ACTIVITY BENEFIT SUMMARY*Spiritual Formation Activity Benefit Summary*

SF Benefit	<i>n</i>	Observed Proportion	Test Proportion	<i>p</i>
Yes	45	.85	.50	< .001
No	8	.15		
Total	53	1.00		

**APPENDIX I: SPIRITUAL FORMATION ACTIVITY: POSITIVE EXPERIENCE
SUMMARY**

Spiritual Formation Activity: Positive Experience Summary

SF: Positive Experience	<i>n</i>	Observed Proportion	Test Proportion	<i>p</i>
Yes	44	.81	.50	< .001
No	10	.19		
Total	54	1.00		