

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE WORD “SPIRITUALITY”? (IN DENMARK)

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KNOWN DEFINITIONS – FROM “THE MEANING MAKING MATRIX”

- Continuum from “evolved human values” (without any notion of transcendence) to definitions based in the transcendent (Gods call for the individual). In the middle definitions were about striving for a inner truth (that might or might not be transcendent).
- Nearly everything were Anglo-American.
- We agree with Larry Churchill, when he says: “Spirituality is like politics a local phenomena. Nobody practices religion or spirituality in general.”



REALITY IS MUCH WORSE...

- In a meta-analysis on “spiritual needs” for elderly, the concept was never defined, but a number of journals were screened.
- *First examples* were OK: for instance “to describe oneself as a hindu“
- *Next examples* were strange: “to look out of the window”
- *Further on definitions*: Crafting, cooking, garden work, gambling (!) to speak about the weather, to deal with the family, and finally: the need for a warm smile and a friendly attitude
.....all academically understood as *spirituality* in health science journals.



THE BOTTOM-UP APPROACH: THE MAKING OF THE LIST

- Took keyword from known definitions
- Asked strategic selected 15 persons on both positive and negative associations
- Made an list divided by topics, removed overlaps and repetitions, covered all topics
- Groups: Spirituality as a trait in a person (20 items, for example “peace of soul”), as an object (7 items, ex candle lights), actions (17 items, ex “prayer”), faith content (20 items, ex “life after death”), factual or historical items (27 items, ex “immanent religiosity”), and last emotional condition (18 items, ex “love”).
- Asked scholars and got further unique meanings
- 115 items were put in alphabetic sequence (random to content)



Trait of person

- 1 Anti-intellektuel person
- 1 En dybere person
- 1 fromhed
- 1 Følelsesbetonet person
- 1 Glæde
- 1 glæde
- 1 Identitet
- 1 Indsigt
- 1 Interesse for det religiøse og det oversanselige
- 1 Ro
- 1 Sjælefred
- 1 Søgende
- 1 taknemmelighed
- 1 Tvivl
- 1 Uden for normen
- 1 Utiltalende person
- 1 Villighed til at bryde grænser/normer
- 1 Villighed til at udvikle sig
- 1 Vågen overfor åndelighed
- 1 Åndelighed

Object

- 2 Lys
- 2 Materielle goder
- 2 Musik
- 2 Natur
- 2 Penge
- 2 Poesi
- 2 Stearinlys

Practice/action

- 3 Alternativ behandling
- 3 Alternativ behandling
- 3 Astrologi
- 3 Bøn
- 3 Clair voyance
- 3 Den dagligdags, udlevede tro
- 3 Etableret medicin

Faith

- 4 Højere formål
- 4 Alt hvad der er ud over det håndgribelige
- 4 aura
- 4 Det hinsides
- 4 energier
- 4 Frelse
- 4 Liv efter døden
- 4 Livet uden for kroppen og sindet
- 4 Mening i livet
- 4 Mere mellem himmel og jord
- 4 Mystik
- 4 Ophøjethed
- 4 Opmærksomhed på det ultimative
- 4 Overtroisk
- 4 reinkarnation
- 4 Selvets ophøjelse
- 4 Stræben efter det inderste i eksistensen
- 4 Stræben mod gud
- 4 Svaret på guds kalden
- 4 Universel
- 4 Universel bevidsthed

Factual/historical

- 5 "krop, sind, ånd"
- 5 "Nyt Aspekt"
- 5 Alene-religiøsitet
- 5 Eksistentiel mening
- 5 Enhedsoplevelse
- 5 Guru-dyrkelse
- 5 Hellighed
- 5 Hinduisme buddhisme
- 5 Ikke organiseret religiøsitet
- 5 Immanent religiøsitet
- 5 Islam
- 5 Katolicisme
- 5 Kristendom
- 5 Lukkede kredse
- 5 metamorfose
- 5 Middelalder
- 5 Munkevæsen
- 5 Mysticisme
- 5 New age
- 5 New age
- 5 Okkultisme
- 5 Oplysning
- 5 Opvågnen
- 5 Protestantisme
- 5 Spiritisme
- 5 Transcendens
- 5 Uden for religionerne

Condition

- 6 Abstrakt
- 6 At være i forbindelse med noget åndeligt
- 6 Engagement
- 6 Feminin
- 6 Frihed
- 6 Fællesskab
- 6 Grådighed
- 6 Gudsforhold
- 6 harmoni
- 6 Helbredelse
- 6 Helhed
- 6 Ikke-rationelt
- 6 Individuel religiøs oplevelse



Spørgeskema: Hvad forstår du ved ordet SPIRITUALITET?

Baggrundsoplysninger:

Dato: _____

1.Fødselsår: _____

2.Køn: _____

3.Bopæl (by og postnr.): _____

4.Studerende? Angiv studie, studiested og semester _____

5.Ikke studerende Angiv evt. uddannelse: _____

5. INSTRUKTION: På denne og de næste 2 sider er der en lang række ord, som andre har knyttet til ordet spiritualitet. Vi har skrevet ordene i alfabetisk orden. Hvad er **for dig de vigtigste betydninger** af ordet spiritualitet – sæt kryds de væsentligste steder:

- Alternativ behandling
- Anti-intellektuel person
- Astrologi
- At være i forbindelse med noget åndeligt
- Aura
- Balance
- Buddhisme
- Bøn
- Clairvoyance



6. Oother, central to your understanding of spirituality:

7. *Do you consider yourself:*

(sæt et kryds)

Religious

Spiritual

Both of this

Neither of this

8. *Do you consider yourself:*

(sæt et kryds)

Believing

Not believing

Convinced atheist




MATERIAL

- 514 questionnaires – mostly from courses
- Two main sources: *Students* (49 % (mainly medicine, religion, theology, nursing, Ph.D. - stud))
- *Non-students*, mainly ministers from the Danish Lutheran Church gathered at courses. A group of psychiatrists.
- Gender: Men 32 %, Women 67 %. Age mean: 39 years (range 18-78, SD 15.6).
- It is NOT a “representative sample”, as the main purpose is to collect as many meanings as possible, not the distribution of meanings.

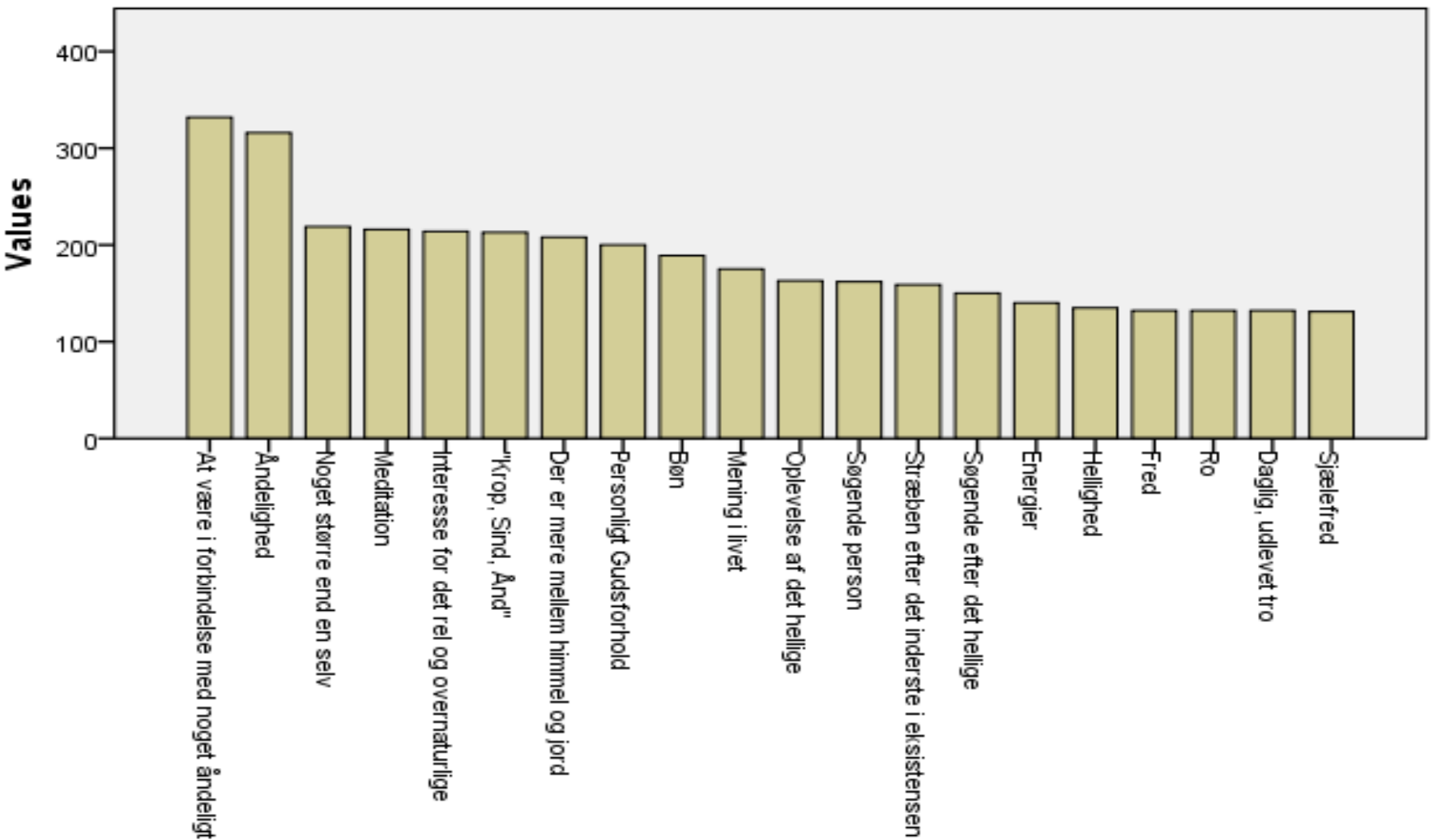


	Young lay group	Theologians
Believing	61,2% (N=218)	100% (140)
Not believing	28,7% (102)	0 % (0)
Convinced atheist	10,1% (36)	0 % (0)

	Young lay group	Theologians
Religious	23,0% (N= 81)	50,4% (69)
Spiritual	13,4% (47)	2,9% (4)
Both religious and spiritual	21,9% (77)	38,0% (52)
Neither religious nor spiritual	41,8% (147)	8,8% (12)



Descriptive Statistics Sum



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FACTOR ANALYSIS

Due to the huge material, 31 factors had *eigenvalue* > 1 but still explained only 63 % of the variance.

Limitations of material: Combining the “bend” of the scree-plot and the wish to explain approximately one third of the variance, a factor solution involving 6 factors were chosen

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	12,482	10,854	10,854	10,639	9,251	9,251
2	10,149	8,825	19,679	9,138	7,946	17,198
3	5,388	4,685	24,364	6,618	5,755	22,952
4	3,394	2,952	27,316	3,769	3,278	26,230
5	2,832	2,462	29,778	3,458	3,007	29,237
6	2,539	2,208	31,986	3,162	2,749	31,986



FACTOR ONE:

Spirituality as positive dimensions in human life and well-being

Rotated Component Matrix	Factor 1					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Gratitude	0,647	-0,101		-0,126		
Love	0,639		0,122	-0,115		0,103
Quality of life	0,585					0,148
Joy	0,582		0,153	-0,181		0,148
Meaning in life	0,573			0,275		
Freedom	0,562					0,123
Compassion	0,552					
Ethics	0,549		0,116			0,189
Love for your neighbor	0,545	-0,131	0,213			
Life Content	0,54	-0,138		0,128		
Peace	0,531				-0,146	
Nature	0,525	0,117				0,283
Wisdom	0,521		0,203			-0,13
Light	0,503	0,278				
Beauty	0,497		0,181	-0,112		0,196
Tranquility	0,496	0,164			-0,191	
Willingness to develop	0,475		-0,107	0,262		
Coherence	0,464	-0,144		0,131		-0,122

Eternity	0,458		0,306	0,118		0,213
Insight	0,458			0,116		
Music	0,457	0,144	0,217	0,165	0,107	
Doubt	0,456					0,203
Longing	0,453		0,231			
Serenity	0,45	0,131				0,287
Identity	0,44			0,121		
Community	0,436		0,173			0,104
Values	0,434			0,257		
Harmony	0,41	0,272	0,219	0,247	-0,23	
Song	0,379	0,195	0,264	0,101		0,2
Attention on the ultimate	0,377		0,119			0,178
Engagement	0,365		0,107			
Deeper person	0,365		0,117	0,175		0,132
Poetry	0,364		0,176	0,139		
Balance	0,349	0,178	-0,22	0,18	0,137	
Artistic	0,305	0,261				0,23

Factor two: *Spirituality as New Age-ideology*

Rotated Component Matrix

	Factor 2					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Crystals	-0,108	0,734				
Healing	-0,108	0,685				
Incense		0,662			0,122	
Yoga		0,651				
Aura		0,606		0,165		
Clairvoyance	-0,203	0,6			0,134	
Alternative therapy		0,59			0,136	0,131
Candle lights	0,252	0,558		0,134		
New age	-0,158	0,546	0,115	0,133	0,257	
Mysticism	-0,125	0,532	0,21		0,13	
Guru worship	-0,223	0,53	0,187	0,125	0,232	
Astrology		0,522				
Occultism	-0,203	0,499	0,136		0,389	
Sects		0,497	0,14	0,123	0,365	
Breath	0,245	0,488				0,106
Mystic	0,126	0,479	0,233			0,151
Energies		0,476	-0,18	0,245		
Meditation	0,206	0,454	0,14		0,147	

Reincarnation	0,45	0,1	0,2	0,2		
Spiritualism	1	92	75	43		
Ghosts	0,44		0,2	0,1		
Superstitious	-0,172	6	79	29		
"Toward the Light " (Danish sect)	0,43			0,3		
Guardian angels	5			64		
Healing	0,43		0,1	0,4	0,1	
Holism	2		78	13	12	
Atmosphere	0,40			0,1		
	1			79		
						-
			0,1	0,1		
	0,177	0,37	75	2		
						-
	0,36			0,1	0,1	
	0,31	8		64	48	
			0,1	0,1		
	0,35	7	42			
	0,32					
	0,287	3				



Factor 3 – Spirituality as an integrated part of established religious life and religious traditions

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Catholicism			0,181	0,679	0,126	0,123
Islam				0,615	0,175	0,153
Striving towards God		0,205		0,609		
Monasteries		0,162	0,16	0,607		
Holiness		0,229		0,557		-0,155
Eucharist		0,324		0,54	-0,225	
Experience of the holy		0,24		0,534		-0,192
Protestantism				0,531	0,123	0,174
Prayer		0,287		0,529	-0,259	-0,119
Searching for the sacred		0,21		0,525	0,103	-0,172
Hinduism		-0,12	0,313	0,508	0,192	0,27
Pilgrimage		0,295	0,226	0,472		-0,152
Personal relation to God		0,299	-0,131	0,471		
Salvation		0,282		0,451		
Religion		0,121		0,443	0,215	
Piety		0,151		0,429	-0,158	-0,123
Daily, practiced belief		0,312	-0,199	0,418	-0,101	
Life after death		0,343	0,123	0,391	0,154	
Buddhism			0,328	0,352	0,269	

0,243

Factor 4 – Spirituality as a vague striving, opposed to religion

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Something bigger than oneself		0,289		0,123	0,498	
There is more between heaven and earth			0,199		0,497	-0,1
Interest for the religious and supernatural			0,17	0,118	0,493	
Being connected to something spiritual			0,146	0,131	0,476	-0,199
"Body, Mind, Spirit" (Danish "holistic" fair)			0,29		0,473	-0,187
Striving for the essence of existence	0,222				0,46	
Believing, but not religious			0,173		0,405	0,148
Something not concrete			0,214		0,379	0,217
The beyond			0,216	0,29	0,347	
Searching person	0,308		0,198		0,336	0,1
Universal consciousness	0,124		0,107	0,104	0,303	0,173



Factor 5

Spirituality as selfishness

Rotated Component Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Anti-intellectual person		0,159				0,585	
Unappealing person		0,129		-0,126		0,56	
Superficial person				-0,102		0,52	
Medieval		0,21	0,225			0,4	
Self-absorbed person		0,324				0,398	0,17
Outside the norm		0,128		0,135		0,363	
Egoism		0,205				0,332	0,142



Factor 6 – Spirituality as ordinary, secular inspiration in human activities

Rotated Component Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sport		0,273		-0,144		0,711
Medical science		0,138		-0,136		0,613
Coziness		0,23				0,574
Diets		0,276	0,14			0,563
Sex		0,354	0,111		0,142	0,494
Science		0,229				0,354



SIX UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE WORD “SPIRITUALITY” IN A SECULAR REGION - DENMARK

- 1. Spirituality as the positive dimensions in human life and well-being**
- 2. Spirituality as New Age-ideology**
- 3. Spirituality as an integrated part of established religious life and religious traditions**
- 4. Spirituality as a vague striving, opposed to religion**
- 5. Spirituality as selfishness**
- 6. Spirituality as common inspiration in human activities**



Table 3 Pearson correlations between the computed factor scores of informants

	New Age	Part of religion	Weak striving	Selfish	Inspiration
Positive dimensions	,062	,448**	,217**	,006	,389**
New Age		,151**	,394**	,409**	,109*
Part of religion			,168**	,036	,041
Weak striving				,173**	,103*
Selfish					,146**

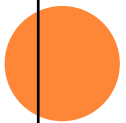
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



Most different items, where clergy group are highest	Clergy group %	Lay Group %	Difference in %
Prayer	66	26	40
Daily, lived belief	43	19	24
Experience of the holy	48	25	23
Holiness	43	20	23
Longing	30	9	21
Striving for God	40	20	20
Searching for the sacred	43	23	20
Most different items, where lay group is highest	Clergy group	Lay group	Diffe- rence
More between heaven and earth	19	49	30
“Mind, Body, Spirit”	22	49	27
Believer, but not religious	5	25	20
Connected to something “åndeligt”	52	70	18
Energies	14	32	18
Spiritism	11	27	16
Striving for the essence of existence	19	36	16
Something not concrete	10	26	16
Aura	9	23	14
Clairvoyance	8	21	13

Factor	Clergy group	Lay group	Significance level
1.Positive dimensions	17,8	14,6	NS
2 New Age	10,6	15,2	**
3 Part of religion	27,5	16,6	***
4 Vague striving	21,0	34,8	***
5 Selfishness	1,5	2,7	NS
6 Inspiration	1,0	2,6	*



CONCLUSIONS? TO BE DISCUSSED...

A common understanding of the concept of spirituality *does not exist* in a modern secular context

Is it word as broad as "green" – green fingers, green paint, green environment, green as the hope, green traffic light

Three possible consequences

1. *Abandon the word*
2. *Always specify what is meant*
3. *Define the word precisely*



OUR MORALE:

It is from now on forbidden (!) to use the word "spirituality" without a notion of one or two keywords on what is meant by the word

Some examples

- "Spirituality, understood as inner striving"
- "Spirituality, understood as the feeling of something sacred"
- "Spirituality, understood as feeling connected to something bigger, the world as a whole"
- "Spirituality understood as lived belief"



INVITATION

Everybody are invited to do a similar study in another culture and language-group.

Just mail for a copy of the list:
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