



ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY ON MENTAL WELL-BEING AMONG ADULTS

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Abstract: *An attempt was made to study the role of spirituality on Mental Well-being among adults. Sample of the study consisted of 100 post graduate students (50 male and 50 female) participants. Mental wellbeing scale developed by Warwick Edinburgh (2006) and Spirituality Attitude Scale developed by Akbar Husain, Shahin Zehra and Musaddiq Jahan (2015) was used for data collection. The data were analyzed, and Pearson product moment correlation was applied to study the relationship between spirituality and mental well-being after that linear regression was used to determine the role of Spirituality on Mental well-being. Further t-test was administered to examine the difference between mental health as well as well-being of Male and female post graduate students. The findings were showed that spirituality and mental well-being positively correlated to each other and spirituality has its significant contribution on mental well-being among both genders. It was also found that there was significant difference between spirituality as well as mental well-being of male and female post graduate students. Well-being is matter of concern for an individual by which he/she can lead a qualitative life on which the development of the society is based. The person who has the better mental well-being can contribute to the society in well mannered as well as in the productive way.*

Keywords: *Spirituality, Mental Well-being and Post-Graduate Students.*

MENTAL WELLBEING

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (WHO, August 2014).

The positive dimension of mental health is stressed in WHO's definition of health as contained in its constitution: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Five steps to mental wellbeing: Scientific evidence points to five steps that we can take to improve our mental wellbeing. If you give them a try, you may feel happier, more positive and able to get the most from your life.



Evidence suggests there are five steps we can all take to improve our mental wellbeing.

1. **Connect** – connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbors. Spend time developing these relationships.
2. **Be active** – you don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find the activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.
3. **Keep learning** – learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike?
4. **Give to others** – even the smallest act can count whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.
5. **Be mindful** – be more aware of the present moment, including your feelings and thoughts, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness", and it can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality Elkins and others (1988) propounded a humanistic definition of spirituality. According to them, "spirituality is a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life and whatever one considers being the ultimate".

Vrinte (1996), defined spirituality as, "it is inspired and sustained by transpersonal experiences that originate in the deepest recesses of the human being and they are but natural modifications of that domain of the human psyche and that contains greater depth of life".

Perrin (2007) proposed spirituality in terms of spirit. According to him, the spirit refers to human consciousness, a constitutive dimension of human beings, and to capacity for self consciousness.

Kabbani (2008) argued spirituality as a powerful weapon. He said it a struggle between acceptance and non acceptance, belief or unbelief.



Burkhardt (2007) suggest that “trying to define spirituality is akin to trying to lasso the wind. The wind is sensed and felt, and its effect on us and things around us is seen, but it cannot be contained within imposed boundaries, or even the best definitions.

Kuhalampi (2010) listed the following features of spirituality.

- Meaning the ontological significance of life; making sense of life situations; deriving purpose in existence.
- Value beliefs and standards that are cherished; having to do with the truth, beauty, worth of a thought, object or behaviour; often discussed as ultimate values.
- Transcendence experience and appreciation of a dimension beyond the self; expanding self –boundaries.
- Connecting relationship with self, others, God, and the environment.
- Becoming an unfolding of life that demands reflection and experience; including a sense of who one is and how one knows.
- Hope a prospect of confidence and trust towards the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies directly exploring the associations between spirituality and mental health generally find that spirituality contributes to improved quality of life, reduced incidences of affective disorders, including depression and anxiety, lowered rates of suicide and abstinence from alcohol or other substance abuse (Koenig & Larson, 2001; Sawatzky, Ratner & Chiu, 2005).

Baetz & Toews (2009) reported that the positive effects of typical spiritual messages, such as promotion of altruism and thoughts of gratitude and forgiveness, have also shown significant and positive relationships to an improved sense of wellbeing, stress reduction and increases in life satisfaction.

Three main processes appear to generate mental health gains through spiritual and religious practice (Koenig & Larson, 2001). First, that spiritual beliefs and practices encourage more optimistic worldviews that offer people a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives, even in light of turmoil or intensely stressful events. This has been consistently supported in other research including those around issues of bereavement and loss (Wortmann & Park, 2009), the atrocities of war (Tankink, 2007), and natural disasters (Henderson, Roberto & Kamo, 2009), as well as trauma (Peres, Moreira-Almeida, Nasallo & Koenig, 2007; Vis & Boynton, 2008). Hill & Pargament (2003) have further suggested that a perceived closeness to God



maybe likened to a positive attachment, such as those that children form with parents, which offers a sense of being cared for and protected in times of fear or adversity, including ill health, major life stressors or post disaster. Second, most religious practice promotes the support and care of others, which subsequently then promotes greater psychosocial interaction, realizes the benefits of altruism and, along with faith itself, promotes a sense of human agency (Tankink, 2007). Third, religious and spiritual practice has been shown to consistently correlate with increased social support (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Koenig & Larson (2001) noted that such enhanced social supports for practicing religious people also ensured the presence of assistance at times of stress, greater coping options and a protector against emotional disorder.

Even though it seems that spirituality and mental health do not have anything in common, there is a thin line that binds the two together. Spirituality affects mental health in a positive way and creates an environment conducive for personal well being.

Mental health is a state of well being in which an individual is able to realize their abilities and lead a fruitful life. When mental health of an individual is affected, it can lead to instability.

Lack of mental well being and health can disturb the harmonious balance in one's life and give rise to anti-social behaviors as well as psychological disorders, such as depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.

Spirituality, on the other hand, is a way of helping one to find their meaning and purpose in life. Spirituality helps people:

- create a sense of purpose in life
- create a sense of connection with the inner self, other people, god, and nature
- continue their quest for attaining wholeness
- search for harmony in life and hope
- create a strong sense of belief in higher being

Spirituality helps to improve mental health

Both spirituality and mental health have been the center of many debates. For ages, benefits of spirituality on physical health and well being have been documented, but little is known as to how it affects mental health. There are several ways by which spirituality aids in the well being of a person on a purely mental or psychological plane. People suffering from



various mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and stress, benefit from spirituality in many ways. Some of the benefits are given below:

- Spirituality helps increase self worth and instill self confidence and self-esteem
- It helps boost self-control
- It aids in faster recovery from stress and other symptoms of mental ill health
- It helps improve personal and professional relationships. It also helps improve an individual's relationship with self.
- It provides peace of mind by renewing hope.

There are different types of practices that people around the world follow to achieve a state of mental well being. These practices help define the subtle connection existing between spirituality and mental health. These practices help people understand spirituality and embrace it so that they can achieve mental peace.

One of the most important spiritual practices that improve mental health is meditation. Meditation is a way of transforming the mind. It can help remove mental blockages and lets positive energy to flow. Meditation has several medical benefits, but more than that, it helps the mind focus on the self. Thus meditation helps a person not only follow a spiritual path, but also achieve mental peace. There are several other practices that connect spirituality and mental health and, if followed on a regular basis, can provide long-term mental peace and harmony.

In addition, feminist therapists have drawn on spirituality as an avenue for women to find solace, healing, and direction (Hunt 1995; Kaschak 2001). They also found that females are more spiritual than are men.

Spirituality helps people have a good mental and physical health. It also helps them cope up with stress in their daily routine and it can also keep these people grounded. Inclusive and tolerant spiritual communities also claim to provide valuable friendship and support. There are some evidences that link spirituality and the improvement in people's physical and mental health but researchers cannot explain how this exactly works.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the relationship between spirituality and mental well-being among post-graduate students.



- To study the role of spirituality on mental well-being among post-graduate students.
- To study the difference between spirituality as well as mental well-being of male and female post-graduate students.

HYPOTHESES

- There will be positive relationship between spirituality and mental well-being among post-graduate students.
- There will be significant influence on spirituality on mental well-being among post-graduate students.
- There will be insignificant difference between spirituality as well as mental well-being of male and female post-graduate students.

METHOD

SAMPLE

Participants of this study consisted of 100 post graduate student of AMU, Aligarh; they were selected through purposive sampling technique from the different departments of Arts and Social Science faculties of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The researcher randomly selected the participants. The age range was 20 to 25.

TOOLS

Spirituality Attitude Scale

Spirituality scale (Akbar Husain, Musaddiq Jahan, Ashfia Nishat, Roomana N. Siddiqui, and Mohd. Akram, 2012) consisted of 31 items with two dimensions. First one is sense of purpose and another is maintenance of discipline. Eighteen items are in the first dimension and remaining thirteen items are in the second dimension.

Reliability refers to the internal consistency and stability of scores. Cronbach's alpha for both the factors were found to be 0.84 and 0.82 respectively. Thus the scale has proven reliability coefficient out of 50 items which originally constituted the Scale, 19 items were rejected on the basis of item total score correlation and inter-item correlation. Thus, the present SAS scale consists of 31 items. The validation techniques used were internal consistency and construct validity. The reliability coefficient reported exceeds the prescribed significance level. Thus, the preliminary form of the scale is a reliable and valid instrument for measuring attitude towards spirituality.



Percentile Norms table shows the degree of spirituality

	Very high	High	Average	Low	Very low
Maintenance of discipline	Above 59	Below 59 to 56	Below 56 to 48	Below 48 to 45	Below 45
Sense of purpose	Above 78	Below 78 to 73	Below 73 to 59	Below 59 to 51	Below 51
Over all	Above 135	Below 135 to 128	Below 128 to 108	Below 108 to 98	Below 98

Mental Well-Being Scale

This scale consisted of 14 items covering both hedonic and eudemonic aspects of mental health including positive affect (feelings of optimism, cheerfulness, and relaxation), satisfying interpersonal relationships and positive functioning (energy, clear thinking, self acceptance, personal development, competence and autonomy). Individuals completing the scale are required to tick the box that best describes their experience of each statement over the past two weeks using a 5-point Likert scale (none of the time, rarely, some of the time, often, all of the time). The Likert scale represents a score for each item from 1 to 5 respectively, giving a minimum score of 14 and maximum score of 70. All items are scored positively.

Test-retest reliability

Test-retest reliability at one week in the student sample was 0.83 ($p < 0.01$), indicating a high reliability for the new scale.

Procedure

The respondents were approached and before administering the questionnaires good rapport was established. Afterward they were asked to read the instructions carefully and give their responses to complete the questionnaire of spirituality and mental well-being. Participants were taken 20 to 30 minutes to give their complete responses. All the respondents were also told that their anonymity will be preserved and their responses will be confidential. Consequently, with special thanks questionnaires were collected from them and scored manually.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In order to meet the research objectives data were analyzed; Pearson product moment correlation was administered to study the relationship between spirituality and mental well-being. The multiple regressions were applied to examine the impact of spirituality on mental



well-being. Further t-test was computed for the comparison of spirituality as well as mental well-being of both groups.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table- 1: shows Multiple Regression analysis, spiritual attitude as a predictor of mental well-being among post graduate students

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.657 ^a	.431	.426	3.100

a. Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual Attitude Total

In which correlation between spiritual attitude and mental well-being was found to be $R = .657$, and $R\text{ Square} = .431$, which represents the actual contribution of spiritual attitude to mental well-being is **43.1%**. It means that **56.9%** of the variation mental well being cannot be explained by spiritual attitude alone. Therefore, there must be other variables that have an influence also.

Table: 2- shows the coefficients details of spiritual attitude and mental well-being among Post graduate students

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	16.836	4.877		3.452	.001
Spiritual Attitude Total	.352	.041	.657	8.622	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Mental Well-being Total

The Value of Beta = **.657** which indicates that spiritual attitude has positive correlation with mental well-being among post graduate students. It means that when spiritual attitude increases mental well-being also increases and vice versa.

The statistical value given in the table-2 indicates that $t = 8.622$ which is larger than the table value it means that spiritual attitude has its significant impact on mental well-being.



Table- 3: shows linear Regression analysis, spiritual attitude as a predictor of mental well-being among post graduate Male students

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.659 ^a	.435	.423	2.631

a. Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual Attitude Male

In which correlation between spiritual attitude and mental well-being was found to be $R = .659$, and $R\text{ Square} = .435$, which represents the actual contribution of spiritual attitude to mental well-being is **43.5%**. It means that **56.5%** of the variation mental well being cannot be explained by spiritual attitude alone. Therefore, there must be other variables that have an influence also.

Table: 4- shows the coefficients details of spiritual attitude and mental well-being among Post graduate Male students

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	21.345	6.241		3.420	.001
Spiritual Attitude Male	.326	.054	.659	6.076	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Mental Well Being Male

The Value of Beta = **.659** which indicates that spiritual attitude has positive and significant correlation with mental well-being among post graduate Male students. It means that when spiritual attitude increases mental well-being also increases and vice versa.

The statistical value given in the table-4 indicates that $t = 6.076$ which is significant for spiritual attitude it means that spiritual attitude has its significant impact on mental well-being.

Table- 5: shows Multiple Regression analysis, spiritual attitude as a predictor of mental well-being among post graduate Female students

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.869 ^a	.754	.749	2.320

a. Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual Attitude Female



In which correlation between spiritual attitude and mental well-being was found to be $R = .869$, and $R\text{ Square} = .754$, which represents the actual contribution of spiritual attitude to mental well-being is **75.4%**. It means that **24.6%** of the variation mental well being cannot be explained by spiritual attitude alone. Therefore, there must be also other variables that have an influence.

Table: 6- shows the coefficients details of spiritual attitude and mental well-being among Post graduate Female students

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	1 (Constant)	-12.398	5.840		
Spiritual Attitude Female	.578	.048	.869	12.141	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Mental Well Being Female

The Value of Beta = **.869** which indicates that spiritual attitude has positive and significant correlation with mental well-being among post graduate students.

Table-6 also indicates that $t = 12.141$ which is much greater than the table value, it means that spiritual attitude has its significant impact on mental well-being.

Table- 7: shows correlation between different dimensions of spiritual attitude and mental well-being among post graduate students

	Spiritual Attitude Total	
	Sense of Purpose	Maintenance of Discipline
Mental well-being Total N 100	.688**	.647**

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

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

The mental well being in post graduate students significantly correlated with Sense of Purpose ($r = .688^{**}$) and Maintenance of Discipline ($r = .647^{**}$).



Table- 8: shows correlation between different dimensions of spirituality and mental well-being among Male and Female post graduate students

Correlations		
	Spiritual Attitude	
	Sense of Purpose	Maintenance of Discipline
Mental well-being of Male N 50	.762**	.739**
Mental well-being of Female N 50	.871**	.746**

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

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

The mental well being in Male post graduate students significantly correlated with Sense of Purpose ($r = .762^{**}$) and Maintenance of Discipline ($r = .739^{**}$). It is also significantly correlated among female group that is Sense of Purpose ($r = .871^{**}$) and Maintenance of Discipline ($r = .746^{**}$)

Table: 9- show the spiritual attitude mean difference between male and female post graduate students

SPIRITUAL ATTITUDE				
Groups	N	Means	SDs	t-value
Male	50	116.10	7.00	3.20**
Female	50	122.40	6.95	

**Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Above table-9 shows the significant difference (t-value 3.20) of spiritual attitude among male and female post graduate students.

Table: 10- show the sense of purpose mean difference between male and female post graduate students

SENSE OF PURPOSE				
Groups	N	Means	SDs	t-value
Male	50	57.20	5.08	4.58**
Female	50	61.60	4.58	

**Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Above table-10 represents the significant difference (t-value 4.58) of sense of purpose among male and female post graduate students.



Table: 11- show the maintenance of discipline mean difference between male and female post graduate students

MAINTENANCE OF DISCIPLINE				
Groups	N	Means	SDs	t-value
Male	50	59.20	2.70	3.80**
Female	50	60.80	1.34	

**Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Above table-11 shows the significant difference (t-value 3.80) of maintenance of discipline among male and female post graduate students.

Table: 12- show the mental well-being mean difference between male and female post graduate students

MENTAL WELL-BEING				
Groups	N	Means	SDs	t-value
Male	50	55.20	3.46	3.95**
Female	50	58.40	4.63	

**Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The table-12 indicates the significant difference (t-value 3.95) of mental well-being among male and female post graduate students.

It was found that spiritual attitude and mental health significantly correlated with each other it was also found by Sawatzky et al. (2005) they explore the associations between spirituality and mental well-being.

Findings show that spiritual attitude has its significant role on mental well being among post graduate students in this regards several researchers has found that spiritual attitude influence mental well being in different age groups. Koenig et al. (2005) found that spirituality contributes to improved quality of life, reduced incidences of affective disorders, including depression and anxiety, lowered rates of suicide and self-denial from alcohol or other substance abuse. Baetz & Toews (2009) reported that the positive effects of typical spiritual messages, such as promotion of altruism and thoughts of gratitude and forgiveness, have also shown significant and positive relationships to an improved sense of wellbeing, stress reduction and increases in life satisfaction. Women's-healthcare organization (2009) exhibits that spirituality helps people have a good mental and physical health. It also helps them cope up with stress in their daily routine and it can also keep these people grounded.



Inclusive and tolerant spiritual communities also claim to provide valuable friendship and support. There are some evidences that link spirituality and the improvement in people's physical and mental health but researchers cannot explain how this exactly works. It means that the people who have spiritual attitude will experience better mental well being. These both variables are highly correlated with each other in both genders.

It was also found that in the female group spiritual attitude has major contribution as compare to male group which is an indicator of better mental well being of female group than male participants. We can say that females are tender hearted that is why they adopt spiritual values rapidly/smoothly which lead them towards the better spiritual attitude. In turn they enjoy better mental well being. In addition Hunt (1995); and Kaschak (2001), are feminist therapists having drawn on spirituality as an avenue for women to find solace, healing, and direction. They also found that females are more spiritual than men.

The mean value of spiritual attitude including its both dimensions i.e. sense of purpose and maintenance of discipline was found greater in female participants as compare to male individuals, which is also an indicator of better mental well being of female participants.

CONCLUSION

Consequently, it is concluded that spiritual attitude has its significant and positive correlation as well as contribution on mental well being of post graduate students. The difference between spiritual attitude and mental well being is also found significant in men and women participants.

SUGGESTION

The findings of study show a glimpse of the impact of spiritual attitude on mental well-being among post graduate students. However, more researches are needed to consider the impact of spiritual attitude on mental well-being among other age groups in order to better understanding of the spiritual attitude issues related to mental well-being. More research about the relationship between mental well being and dimensions of spiritual attitude i.e. Sense of Purpose and Maintenance of Discipline should be conducted. It is also necessary to understand the gender differences of mental well being and spiritual attitude.

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