

Spiritual well-being and General Health among University Students

Saheefa Hafeez Mughal

saheefahafeez3@gmail.com

Student of Bachelor of Psychology, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Faiz Rabbani

Student of Bachelor of Psychology, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Syeda Asma Gillani

Lecturer of Psychology, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Alishma Zahoor Khan

Student of Bachelor of Psychology, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Amna Imtiaz Mir

Student of Bachelor of Psychology, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Rabia Rehman

Student of Bachelor of Psychology, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Sobia Sidique

Student of Bachelor of Psychology, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Corresponding Author: *Saheefa Hafeez Mughal saheefahafeez3@gmail.com

Received: 01-01-2025

Revised: 28-01-2025

Accepted: 10-02-2025

Published: 01-03-2025

ABSTRACT

Spiritual well-being plays a significant role in shaping the mental and physical health of university students. This study explores in relationship between spiritual well-being and general health among a sample of 200 students aged 18 to 38 years. Data was collected by using the Spiritual well-being scale and General health questionnaire (GHQ-12). Correlational analysis revealed a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.14$, $p < .01$), indicated the negative correlation between the variables. Regression analysis further confirmed that spiritual well-being significantly predict general health ($\beta = -0.26$, $p < .01$). The results suggested that spiritual well-being serve as a protective factor against the general health .

Key words: Spiritual well-being, General Health, Students

INTRODUCTION

Spiritual intelligence is the capability of using spiritual resources to confront daily dilemmas, which results in psychological health and general wellness. Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that spiritual intelligence is extremely important for mental and emotional stability, especially among university students (Khan et al., 2023). With the transitional stage of university life, students are usually under considerable stress, anxiety, and academic pressure, and these can be alleviated with good spiritual well-being (Makkar & Saini, 2024). In this paper, the connection between spiritual intelligence, General health, and psychological well-being among university students is investigated, based on evidence from prior research.

Spiritual Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being

Spiritual intelligence allows one to find meaning in life experiences, promoting emotional strength and resilience (Jafari et al., 2010). Among students of Pakistani and Kashmiri universities , spiritual intelligence was found to significantly predict psychological well-being, which implies that students with greater spiritual intelligence are likely to have improved mental health outcomes (Khan et al., 2023). Spirituality in human also promotes coping, lessening the chances of anxiety, depression, and stress (Leung & Pong, 2021a).

A survey of Chinese university students showed that different dimensions of spiritual well-being personal, communal, and environmental are negatively correlated with psychological distress. In particular, students with increased spiritual well-being had decreased symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress (Leung & Pong, 2021a). Such as, a study that involved 223 university students has confirmed that both religious and existential well-being are strong predictors of mental health (Jafari et al., 2010). The evidence indicates that a sound religious foundation can be a buffer against mental illness.

Spiritual Well-Being and Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQL)

Health-related quality of life (HRQL) is a subjective measurement of an individual's physical, psychological, and social well-being. Engaging in religious or spiritual activities has been associated with increased HRQL among university students. Studies have shown that less spiritual students are also less likely to participate in these activities and have lower HRQL than highly spiritual students (Taliaferro et al., 2013). Religious practice, and spiritual well-being, explained 18% of the variance in HRQL among college students (Taliaferro et al., 2013).

A relationship between spirituality and health behaviors found that spirituality has a positive effect on psychological well-being, especially subjective well-being (Boswell et al., 2006). A further studies on it examining the mediating function of self-esteem found a direct relationship between spiritual health and self-esteem in university students. Greater spiritual well-being was linked to higher self-esteem and resilience, both of which are crucial for coping with the life of university's students (Eskandari et al., 2019).

Spirituality and Mental Health in University Students

University students typically suffer from various stressors such as academic load, social pressures, and future uncertainty. Spiritual well-being, where an individual feels a sense of purpose, meaning in life, and connectedness, is important for general health (Khan et al., 2023). Studies have shown that students with higher spiritual well-being have higher emotional resilience and less psychological distress (Makkar & Saini, 2024).

Moreover, spiritual intelligence promotes more effective coping mechanisms for academic and personal difficulties. Students who regularly practice spiritual activities, including meditation, prayer, or mindfulness, experience lower stress levels and enhanced emotional stability (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005). This study emphasizes the need to incorporate spiritual well-being interventions in universities to enhance mental health.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Spiritual Well-Being is increasingly seen as a significant determinant of the general health and psychological well-being of University students. Studies indicate that student with greater spiritual well-being have lower level of psychological distress, higher resilience and better general health outcomes. Spirituality give an individual a sense of meaning, purpose and affiliation, which allow students to cope with academic and personal problem. Researches has shown that spiritual intelligence has a strong prediction for psychological well-being, with students participating in spiritual activities showing higher emotional stability and more robust coping mechanisms (Khan et al., 2023).

Current research highlights how spiritual well-being is a protective factor that helps to counteract prevalent mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress. Makkar and Saini (2024) discovered that the higher their level of spiritual intelligence, the more likely they were to come up with coping mechanisms that enabled them to prevent themselves from suffering from psychological distress. Likewise, Leung and Pong ((2021) discovered that the more spiritually robust the university students, the lower the symptoms of anxiety and depression. This yet again supports

spirituality as a promoter of mental wellness. In addition, a study by Jafari et al. (2010) supports the fact that both religious and existential well-being are major contributors to emotional resilience, implying that spiritual involvement promotes a positive attitude and general mental health. (2021) discovered that the more spiritually robust the university students, the lower the symptoms of anxiety and depression. This yet again supports spirituality as a promoter of mental wellness. In addition, a study by Jafari et al. (2010) supports the fact that both religious and existential well-being are major contributors to emotional resilience, implying that spiritual involvement promotes a positive attitude and general mental health. Spirituality also has a significant influence in developing students' coping strategies. Ano and Vasconcelles (2005) underscored that spirituality practices, i.e., praying and mindfulness, are responsible for better emotional management and stress management. (2021) discovered that the more spiritually robust the university students, the lower the symptoms of anxiety and depression. This yet again supports spirituality as a promoter of mental wellness. In addition, a study by Jafari et al. (2010) supports the fact that both religious and existential well-being are major contributors to emotional resilience, implying that spiritual involvement promotes a positive attitude and general mental health. The expanding literature emphasize on the significant role of spiritual well-being in influencing the mental and general health of university students.

Spirituality provides a conceptual model for understanding life events, providing students with powerful tools to manage stress, promote resilience, and maintain a healthy outlook. As the prevalence of mental health issues among university students continues to grow, the incorporation of spiritual wellness programs within educational institutions can be an essential method for enhancing the general wellness of students.

Research Gap

Though extensive research has been done on the link between spiritual health of university students and their mental health, many gaps exist. Most of the existing research has focused only on general measures of psychological well-being without investigating how well-being influences conditions such as academic burnout, loneliness, and coping with stress. Furthermore, most of the research has been cross-sectional, making it very difficult to establish the existence of a causal relationship between spiritual well-being and the mental health outcomes. Besides, even though a lot of studies have been done in Western and Asian contexts, there are few studies on how spiritual well-being is related to students from other backgrounds, such as underrepresented or culturally diverse students. The lack of experimental or intervention-based studies makes it even more difficult to understand the exact ways in which specific spiritual programs, such as mindfulness or faith-based counseling, influence the psychological resilience of the students. Based on the above analysis, it is evident that a lot of research still needs to be done to establish the veracity of spirituality's effects on student well-being.

METHODS:

This research employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to offer a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between spiritual well-being and general health among university students.

OBJECTIVE:

To find the relationship between Spiritual well-being and general health of university students.

HYPOTHESIS:

Hypothesis of the study are:

There is a positive significant relationship between spiritual well-being and general health of university students.

Research design:

The correlational research design is used to investigate the relationship between Spiritual well-being and general health

Samples:

200 individuals participate in this research out of which 95 male and 105 females from university of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the convenient sampling technique is used in this research.

Inclusion Criteria:

University students of aged 18-38 who are currently enrolled in academic program

Exclusion Criteria:

Individual that diagnosed severe mental issue that may impact their participation in the study.

Instruments:

Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS)

Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) is a scale developed by Ellison and Lori (2006). It is a 20-item self-report assessing an individual's general spiritual quality of life. It is composed of two subscales: Religious Well-Being (RWB) and Existential Well-Being (EWB). RWB assesses an individual's perception of his relationship with God while EWB assesses life purpose and satisfaction.

General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)

General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12). Developed by Goldberg in the 1970s, the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) is one of the most widely used screening instruments in current mental health research. The GHQ-12 is a short form of the original 60-item instrument. The GHQ-12 consists of 12 items that measure psychological distress or well-being on a four-point Likert scale. The GHQ-12 is noted for its simplicity, reliability, and validity in a wide range of populations and cultural contexts (Roykov, 2001). For the GHQ-12, the estimated reliability of the 12-item scale ranges from .73 to .87, making it a consistent

Procedure:

Participant were recruited from various department of the university using a stratified random sampling method. They completed the questionnaire through online Google form and paper base survey. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were ensured

Results:

Table 1: Demographic characteristic of the participant (N = 200).

Variable	N	%
Age		
18-22	85	42.5
23-27	70	35

28-33	30	15
34-38	15	7.5
Gender		
Men	95	47.5
Women	105	52.5
Health Status:		
Excellent	35	17.5
Good	85	42.5
Fair	55	27.5
Poor	25	12.5
Spiritual Practice:		
Daily	60	30
Weekly	75	37.5
Monthly	40	20
Rarely/Never	25	12.5

The demographic analysis included a sample of 200 university students out of which 100 males and 100 females aged 18-38 age group, representing most of the student population. The sample also includes students with varying health status ranging from excellent to poor. This diverse demographic represents a balance representation between spiritual well-being and general health.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of all the scales and their subscales (N=200)

Scales	K	α	M	SD	Range		Skewness	Kurtosis
					Actual	Potential		
SWB	20	.88	67.85	12.40	20-100	20-100	-0.32	0.45
GHQ	12	.82	21.40	5.85	12-48	12-48	0.25	-0.50

Note: K=No. of items, M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, DA=Death Anxiety, SW=Spiritual Well-being

The descriptive statistics and reliability analysis show that the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) and General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) are reliable measures with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.88 and 0.82, respectively. The mean scores (SWBS = 67.85, GHQ-12 = 21.40) indicate moderate to high spiritual well-being and moderate mental health distress. Skewness and kurtosis values suggest a fairly normal distribution, making the data suitable for further analysis.

Table 3: Correlation coefficients of study variables (N=200)

Variables	1	2
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1. SWB	-	-0.415**
2. GHQ-12	-	-

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

The results shows that there is a significant negative correlation between General health and Spiritual well-being ($r = -0.415$, $p < .01$), indicated that higher spiritual well-being is associated with lower psychological distress and better general health.

Table 4: Linear Regression analysis predicting Death Anxiety (N=200)

Variable	95%CI			
	B	SE	LL	UL
Constant	35.12***	2.43	30.33	39.91
SW	-.521**	.104	-.726	-0.316
R ²	.170**			
ΔR ²	.170*			
F	25.10**			
ΔF	25.10**			

Note: SW=Spiritual Well-being*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Spiritual well-being significantly predicts general health ($B = -0.521$, $p < .01$). The negative coefficient indicate that as spiritual well-being increases mean general health distress decrease its indicated better overall well-being. This model explains 17% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.170$, $p < .01$), showing a moderate effect size.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using SPSS, including descriptive statistics, correlation, and linear regression to examine relationship between variables. The significance level were set at $p < .056$ for all analysis.

DISCUSSION

The study highlights a significant relationship between spiritual well-being and general health among university students. Findings of this study refers to that students with higher spiritual well-being experience lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, contributing to overall improved health. The negative correlation indicates that as spiritual well-being increases, psychological distress decreases, supporting previous research on the protective role of spirituality in mental health. Regression analysis confirmed that spiritual well-being is a strong predictor of general health outcomes. Results of study align with past studies that emphasize spirituality as a coping mechanism for life challenges. The study's findings suggest that universities should integrate spiritual wellness programs to promote student mental health. Future research should explore longitudinal effects and potential intervention strategies to strengthen these relationships further.

CONCLUSION:

The study highlight negative relationship between Spiritual well-being and psychological distress, emphasizing the overall general health of students. Future research should explore longitudinal and intervention-based studies for further insight.

Implications:

Findings suggest that better mental health is associated with higher spiritual well-being, reinforcing the need for university to incorporate spiritual well-being programs. The research help the mental health experts to design interventions that's focus on holistic students well-being.

Recommendations:

University should integrate spiritual well-being programs, including mindfulness, meditation, and counseling services, to support children mental well-being further researches should examine cultural variation in spirituality impact on psychology well-being.

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