

Spirituality and Psychological Well-Being among Muslims and Christians Adolescents and Young Adults

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Abstract:

The present study examining the relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being among Muslims and Christians adolescents and young adults. Daily Spiritual Experience Scale and Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale were used to examine the study variables. The present study was carried out on the sample of (N = 254) i.e. Muslims (n = 123) and Christians (n = 131). The sub sample of Muslims and Christians were further divided into males (n = 48) and females (n = 75). Similarly Christian males (n = 60) and Christian females (n = 71). The instruments used to measure the variables possessed satisfactory reliability i.e. spirituality ($\alpha = .80$) for Muslims and ($\alpha = .92$) for Christians and psychological well-being ($\alpha = .82$) for Muslims and ($\alpha = .84$) for Christians. Results of the study revealed that spirituality not only had significant positive correlation with psychological well-being but also found to be significant positive predictor of psychological well-being among Muslims as well as Christians. Additional findings of the study further revealed that significant differences exist in the terms of gender and age. Limitations, suggestion and implications were also discussed at the end of the study.

Keywords: Muslims, Christians, spirituality, psychological well-being

Introduction:

Spirituality is a phenomenon of the personal transformation in accordance with religious ideals. According to Zubairi and Sawari¹, spirituality can be defined as the experiences and beliefs about higher meaning, intelligence, and purpose to

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existence and life. Spirituality is about enjoying the benefits of a connectedness with one's innermost self, as well as seeking one's place and purpose within the broader universe. Thus spirituality is a mighty, cohesive force within the individual, and within our humankind.

Along with the spirituality, psychological well-being has also been found related to one's life and perceptions of life success. Psychological well-being is considered essential for the individuals in order to function properly and utilize all their potentials. Psychological well-being has always been defined from the dimensional perspectives^{2 3} but Dodge, Daly, Huyton and Sanders⁴ for the first time defined psychological well-being as "the balance point between an individual's resource pool and the challenges faced." They defined this concept diagrammatically by placing resources and challenges on each side and well-being as the central balance point.

The existing literature supports the notion that with the passage of time, the researches examining the relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being are also increasing. A research conducted to examine the fact that daily spiritual experience predicts daily well-being revealed that daily spirituality was positively related to meaning in life, self-esteem, and positive affect⁵. Moreover, they also found out that higher daily spirituality, self-esteem and meaning in life the higher would be the individual's trait of psychological well-being. Zubairi and Sawari⁶ conducted a research to examine the psychological and spiritual health of the staff of Islamic college. The data was collected from the 100 respondents from different departments of Islamic college. Their findings concluded that significant relationship existed between the psychological health and spirituality of the Muslim staffs.

The existing literature undoubtedly presents that a large amount of research work exists in accordance to spirituality and psychological well-being. The present body of literature suggests that researches conducted in Pakistan excluded either one of the variable from the above mentioned combination for instance Ismael and Desmukh⁷ examined the relationship between religiosity and psychological well-being and found out that religiosity had a high positive correlation with different facets of psychological well-being. In addition, only a small number of research studies have been conducted in Muslim countries or with Muslim participants⁸ and little attention has been given to the spiritual and psychological health of Muslims⁹.

The aim of the present study was to determine the relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being among Muslim and Christians adolescents and young adults and to examine spirituality as predictors of psychological well-being. To meet the objectives of the main study, certain hypotheses were formulated upon the basis of empirical support. It was hypothesized that there will be a positive correlation between spirituality and psychological well-being among Muslims. Secondly, there will be a positive

correlation between spirituality and psychological well-being among Christians. Thirdly, spirituality will significantly predict psychological-wellbeing among Muslims and among Christians.

Method

Participants:

Participants for study ($N = 254$) i.e. Muslims ($n = 123$) and Christians ($n = 131$) were selected through purposive convenience sampling technique. The Muslim participants were selected from different colleges and schools of Sargodha including the Spirit School, Ambala Muslim High School for Boys, Dar-e-Arqam Model High School and College, Ambala Muslim College for Boys and University of Sargodha. For the sample comprising of Christians, the sample was collected from different Churches of Sargodha. Moreover the schools of Christian community were also visited including Presentation Convent High School and St. Patrick High School. On the basis of the demographics, the sample was further divided into adolescents (12-18 years) i.e. Muslims ($n = 73$), Christians ($n = 45$) and young adults (19-45 years) i.e. Muslims ($n = 50$), Christians ($n = 86$).

Instruments:

The Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES). DSES developed by Underwood and Teresi¹⁰ is a 16 item self-report measure that was used to measure spirituality in the present study. This scale has no subscales. It has six-point Likert type response format i.e., many times a day = 1, every day = 2, most days = 3, some days = 4, once in a while = 5 and never or almost never = 6. The low scores on the scale depict high daily spiritual experience. The 16th item of the scale has four response categories i.e. not close at all, somewhat close, very close and as close as possible. The scores can range from 16-94. The internal consistency of DSES ranges from .94 to .95 respectively.

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS).

To assess well-being, Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) developed by Stewart-Brown et al.¹¹ and Urdu translated by Stewart –Brown et al., 2009 was made a part of present study. The scale is designed to capture a broad conception of well-being including affective-emotional aspects, cognitive-evaluative dimensions and psychological functioning. The scale comprised of 14 items each answered on a five-point scale, ranging from none of the time (1) to all time (5), and is scored by summing all the items into the total well-being score (range 14-70). High scores obtained on this scale depict higher level of well-being whereas low scores on the scale depict lower level of psychological well-being. WEMWBS has been shown to have good validity, internal consistency, test-retest reliability and alpha reliability of .78 with a large sample of the students.

Results

Table 1: Correlation Matrix for All the Study Variables for Muslims and Christians (N = 254)

Variables	Muslims (<i>n</i> = 123)		Christians (<i>n</i> = 131)	
	Spirituality	Well-being.	Spirituality	Well-being.
Spirituality	--	.38***	--	.34***
Well-being		--		--

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

Table 1 shows the correlation co-efficient of the study variables. Findings indicate significant positive correlation among spirituality and well-being in both Muslims and Christians.

Table 2: Linear Regression between Spirituality and Psychological Well-being for Muslims and Christians (N = 254)

Variables	Muslims (<i>n</i> = 123)		Christians (<i>n</i> = 131)	
	ΔR^2	<i>B</i>	ΔR^2	<i>B</i>
Spirituality	.14	.38***	.18	.43***

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

Table 2 shows that spirituality is a significant predictor of well-being of Muslims [*F* (1, 121) = 20.04, *p* < .001] and explains 14 percent variance that could be attributed to spirituality. Results also shows that spirituality is a significant predictor of well-being of Christians [*F* (1, 129) = 29.12, *p* < .001] and explains 18 percent variance that could be attributed to spirituality.

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-values for Study Variables on the Basis of gender and religion

Variables	Muslim Male (<i>n</i> = 48)		Muslim Female(<i>n</i> = 75)		<i>t</i> (121)	<i>p</i>	95%CI	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Spirituality	68.46	9.32	68.56	8.67	.06	.95	-3.37	3.17
PWB	52.83	8.87	50.84	7.73	1.31	.19	-1.00	4.99

Variables	Christian Male (<i>n</i> = 48)		Christian Female(<i>n</i> = 75)		<i>t</i> (121)	<i>p</i>	95%CI	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Spirituality	70.57	11.26	72.24	12.65	.79	.43	-5.85	2.50
PWB	57.13	7.29	56.55	7.53	.43	.65	-1.99	3.16

Variables	Muslims Males (<i>n</i> =48)		Christians Males (<i>n</i> = 60)		<i>t</i> (121)	<i>p</i>	95%CI	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Spirituality	68.46	9.32	70.57	11.26	1.04	.30	-6.12	1.90
PWB	52.83	8.87	57.13	7.29	2.77	.00	-7.38	-1.22

Variables	Muslims Females (<i>n</i> =75)		Christians Females (<i>n</i> = 71)		<i>t</i> (121)	<i>p</i>	95%CI	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Spirituality	68.56	8.67	72.24	12.65	-2.06	.04	-7.21	-.15
PWB	50.84	7.73	56.55	7.53	-4.52	.00	-8.21	-3.21

Note. PWB = psychological well-being.

Table 3 shows the mean, standard deviation and *t*- values on the basis of gender for spirituality and psychological well-being. Findings indicate that significant mean differences exists on psychological well-being {*t* (106) = 2.77, *p* < .001}, indicating high psychological well-being in Christian males as compared to Muslim males (*M* = 57.13, *SD* = 7.29). Results also depict significant mean differences on spirituality {*t* (144) = -2.06, *p* < .05} indicating that Christian females scored higher on spirituality as compared to Muslim Females (*M* = 72.24, *SD* = 12.65). Significant mean differences exists on psychological well-being {*t* (144), *p* < .001}, where Christian females as compared to Muslim females are higher on psychological well-being (*M* = 56.55, *SD* = 7.53). Findings indicate non-significant mean differences among Muslim males and females similarly non-significant mean differences exist among Christian’s males and females. Results also report non-significant mean differences on spirituality among Muslim and Christian males.

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-values for Age among Study Variables

For Muslims (N = 123)									
Variables	Late Adolescents (12-19) (n = 73)		Young Adults (19-45) (n = 50)		t(121)	p	95 (%) CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
	Spirituality	68.40	7.18	68.70			11.01	.19	
PWB	52.96	7.62	49.66	8.72	2.22	.03	.36	6.23	0.41
For Christians (N = 131)									
Variables	Late Adolescents (12-19) (n = 45)		Young Adults (19-45) (n = 86)		t(129)	p	95 (%) CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
	Spirituality	68.27	10.66	73.15			12.40	2.24	
PWB	58.96	5.91	55.70	7.87	2.43	.02	.62	5.90	0.45

Note. PWB = psychological well-being.

Table 4 shows the mean, standard deviation and *t*- values for Muslim and Christian late adolescents and young adults on spirituality and psychological well-being. Findings indicate significant mean difference on psychological well-being {*t* (121) = 2.22, *p* < .05}, where late adolescents have higher public practice as compared to young adults (*M* = 52.96, *SD* = 7.62). Results also indicate significant mean differences spirituality {*t* (129) = 2.24, *p* < .05} where young adults scored higher as compared to late adolescents (*M* = 73.15, *SD* = 12.40). Results also indicate significant mean difference on psychological well-being {*t* (129) = 2.43, *p* < .05}, where late adolescents have higher public practice as compared to young adults (*M* = 58.96, *SD* = 5.91).

Discussion:

The present study was aimed to examine the relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being. Spirituality was taken as independent variable and psychological well-being was taken as dependent variable. To measure these constructs, Daily Spiritual Experience Scale and Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale were used. The sample on which the study was conducted comprised of Muslims and Christians late adolescents and young adults. The results were in line with the previous literature. Further the theories described earlier also reveal some connection. Spirituality involves extracting happiness from every aspect of life may it be past, present or future. On the other hand subjective well-being demands happiness as the basic goal of life.

Similarly the present study hypothesized that spirituality and well-being were significantly correlated among Christian population. The results were also in line with the already present literature. For e.g. a study was conducted to explore the importance of spirituality in well-being. The study was a comparative in nature which compared two different samples i.e. Christians and Jews. The results revealed that the spirituality was significantly associated with well-being among Christians as compared to Jews¹².

Zubairi and Sawari¹³ conducted a research to examine the psychological and spiritual health of the staff of Islamic college. The data was collected from the 100 respondents from different departments of Islamic college. Their findings concluded that significant relationship existed between the psychological health and spirituality of the Muslim staffs. Boswell, Kahana and Anderson¹⁴ in their study observed that spirituality has a direct positive effect on the well-being of the older adults who encountered chronic illness.

In another study it was concluded that a significant correlation existed between mental health and spiritual well-being. It was also noticed that the spiritual well-being was the strongest predictor of mental health¹⁵. The findings of another study were similar to the existing findings e.g. Fletcher¹⁶ conducted a research in which he studied Bible to understand the basic principles that contributed to health and mental well-being of an individual. He concluded that Biblical principles if followed contribute to the spirituality which is strongly related to health and psychological well-being of an individual.

Conclusions:

The present study was conducted to explore the relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being. The sample that studied comprised of Muslims and Christians late adolescents and young adults. The results found significant relationship between the Independent and dependent variables in both of the samples i.e. Muslims and Christians. Spirituality showed significant positive correlation with psychological well-being. The effect of the demographic variables (i.e. gender and age) was also checked on the scales. Most of the demographic variables had non-significant mean differences.

Limitations and Suggestions:

Like another social research present study is also not free of many limitations that came under observation. One of the main limitations was the biasness on the part of the respondents. The present study used self-report measures due to which the respondents gave socially desirable responses. Another limitation was that the data was collected only from the residents of Sargodha so it has a low level of generalizability, so in future studies the data should be collected on a large scale especially with reference to cross cultural comparisons.

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