

The Contribution of Spiritual Beliefs to Psychological Resilience

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Cite this paper as: Ms. Priyanka Yadav, Dr Meghana N. Vyas (2024) " The Contribution of Spiritual Beliefs to Psychological Resilience". *Frontiers in Health Informatics*, (8), 5827-5836

ABSTRACT:

As mental health has evolved into what it is now, spirituality has been crucial. Human physical and mental evolution provides the basis for this. Many people mistakenly associate spirituality with religion, whereas some see it as a way of life. By providing life purpose, spirituality equips us with the path of life. In essence, it focuses on spirit and intellect. Bringing spirituality into our daily lives has a profound impact on our relationships with others, our mental health, and our way of thinking. It gives one a feeling of forgiveness, purpose, and tranquility. Our mental health can be generally improved by all of these benefits. It is employed by some to acquire and foster hope. Our sense of confidence, self-worth, self-control, inner strength, and ability to bounce back from illness are all able to be enhanced by spirituality. When faced with challenging circumstances like illness, grief, and unemployment, people turn to spirituality for solace; others utilize it to comprehend the concept of the afterlife. Everyone possesses access to spirituality as a source of potential, and each of us falls on the spectrum of spiritual health. Everybody has a different way of being spiritual. A few popular methods of pursuing spirituality are journaling, yoga, meditation, prayer, introspection, spending time in nature, and ritual reading. It has, in fact, been one of the most misapplied and misinterpreted ideas, and its meaning has become more and more contradictory all through time. However, this wasn't always the case; in fact, a great deal of Vedic literature focused on the relationship between humans and the higher self and cosmic force. The article aims to investigate and comprehend the relationship between spirituality and mental health. It explains how spiritual practice can help with mental health problems including stress, depression, or other mental health issues.

KEYWORDS: spirituality, well-being, mental health, depression, anxiety, emotions

INTRODUCTION:

A crucial element of general wellbeing has long been acknowledged to be spirituality, a very subjective and individualized idea. In recent times, there has been a notable focus on its impact on mental health. Studies have repeatedly demonstrated the profoundly beneficial effects of spirituality on mental health, including the reduction of symptoms associated with sadness, anxiety, and other psychiatric disorders.

Millions of people worldwide suffer from mental health illnesses, making the quest for mental well-being a critical priority in modern culture. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health illnesses generate around 13% of the world's disease burden, with anxiety and depression being the main causes of impairment.

Spirituality embraces a more comprehensive, large concept that goes beyond typical religious ties. It includes a person's quest for significance, direction, and a link to something bigger than themselves. Personal values, beliefs, and experiences are all part of this complex idea, which shapes a person's sense of self, community, and purpose in life. The positive effects of spirituality on mental health have been shown in numerous studies. It has been demonstrated that spiritual exercises including yoga, meditation, and prayer

1. Decrease stress levels by encouraging serenity and calm
2. Build coping mechanisms and emotional toughness
3. Encourage direction and a feeling of purpose
4. Encourage a feeling of community to lessen emotions of isolation and loneliness

Spiritual activities modify the structure and function of the brain and increase activity in areas linked to pleasant emotions and well-being, leading to changes in the brain's neurobiology. Psychological aspects also come into play since spirituality affects cognitive functions like developing optimism and rephrasing unfavorable views. There are important ramifications for how spirituality affects mental health treatment. Spirituality-based integrated treatment approaches can improve results. Taking care of spiritual needs holistically enhances general wellbeing. In order to provide good treatment, cultural sensitivity and recognition of various spiritual practices and beliefs are crucial. In order to provide compassionate and inclusive care, mental health practitioners must take into account the spiritual aspects of their patient's experiences.

Spirituality has several clinical uses in mental health treatment, such as:

1. Spiritual assessment: Assessing the activities and attitudes of patients toward spirituality
2. Spiritual interventions: Including religious activities in therapy regimens
3. Spiritual resource referral: Assisting patients in making contact with spiritual groups or resources

Even with spirituality's advantages in mental health treatment, there are still issues:

1. Creating a consensus definition of spirituality
2. Spirituality measurement: developing trustworthy evaluation instruments
3. Including spirituality in research-based procedures

By analyzing the impacts of spirituality on mental health outcomes and investigating the mechanisms underlying its influence, this study seeks to add to the expanding body of information on the role of spirituality in mental health. Through examining the intricate connections between spirituality and mental health, this study aims to provide guidance for evidence-based interventions integrating spirituality, encouraging holistic care that attends to spiritual needs and encouraging cultural sensitivity in mental health services. In the end, this paper seeks to clarify the complex relationships between these two essential facets of the human experience, deepening our knowledge of the profound influence of spirituality on mental health.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

1]A literature review on spirituality and depression

Pan Meiqi (2024) states a significant amount of research has shown that spirituality is crucial for mental health and for reducing depression. Research has revealed a modest to weak but substantial relationship between spirituality and better mental health; almost half of them suggest that spirituality improves outcomes related to depression. Due to individual variances, cultural settings, and religious connections, the influence varies. Addressing spiritual needs and incorporating spirituality into psychological therapy require specialized, culturally aware methods. Given the differing impacts of many religious traditions, cooperation with spiritual leaders and religious specialists is advised. Improving mental health outcomes and ensuring inclusive care require a thorough strategy that incorporates qualitative and longitudinal research. Additionally, improving knowledge and evidence-based practices requires interdisciplinary and cross-national cooperation. (Pan, 2024)

2] Mental health and spirituality

Iko Shoko et al., (2021) portrays that there isn't a single, widely acknowledged definition for the complex relationship between spirituality and mental health. There are differences across mental health concepts, and every approach has drawbacks. Spirituality, according to Miller and Thoresen, can exist independent of religion and involves one's own experiences, emotions, and relationship with the divine. Prominent scholars like Emmons and William James emphasize the connection between spirituality and mental health. According to research, 70% of physical ailments have spiritual causes, and spiritual intelligence affects cognition. A comprehensive approach that incorporates biological, psychological, and sociological variables is crucial since research shows that spirituality enhances coping, reduces anxiety and depression, and fosters well-being. (Skoko, Stipic, Tustonja, & Stanic, 2021)

3] A Review of Scientific Research on Spirituality:

Ratnakar Rajesh & Nair Shree Kumar (2012) states that spirituality is a human search for values, meaning, and purpose outside of religion that emphasizes relationships with oneself, other people, and a greater ideal. Beyond cultural and theological barriers, spirituality is fueled by compassion, trust, and hope. In addition to the traditional religious contexts, spirituality can be expanded through the following three pillars: Relatedness/Connectedness (harmonious links), Beliefs (personal systems supplying meaning), and Expressions of Spirituality (expressed through relationships, art, nature, and transcendental experiences). (Ratnakar & Nair, 2012)

OBJECTIVES:

- To comprehend the impact of spirituality on our psychological well-being.
- To determine whether or not people incorporate spirituality into their daily lives.
- To determine which spiritual tradition is most popular.
- Gain insight into people's perspectives regarding spirituality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The effect of spirituality on mental health is the subject of this investigation. An extensive sample of

participants (ages 18-45 above, varying vocations) were surveyed on their personal experiences and spiritual practices (e.g., meditation, prayer) in order to gather primary data. Supplementing the primary findings were secondary data gathered from scholarly articles, books, and peer-reviewed journals. This research explores the connections between spiritual practices, individual experiences, and psychological well-being in order to offer a thorough knowledge of spirituality's impact on mental health outcomes. It accomplishes this by integrating both data sets.

DATA ANALYSIS:

This section of the study describes the data analysis and interpretation that was done using the responses that were submitted by 103 persons using a Google Form.

- **Basic information:**

Age (in years)	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	Percentage
Below 18	10	10	9.7
18 – 25	75	85	72.8
26 – 35	11	96	10.7
36 – 45	5	101	4.9
Above 45	2	103	1.9

Table 1(made by author)

Occupation	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	Percentage
Student	74	74	71.8
Working profession	25	99	24.3
Retired	1	100	1
Other	3	103	2.9

Table 2(made by author)

From table 1, it can be seen that the majority of respondents are of age 18–25, carrying 72.8 percent. The percentage of respondents whose age is below 18, 26-35, 36-45, and above 45 are 9.7%, 10.7%, 4.9%, and 1.9%, respectively.

From table 2, we have the majority of the respondents are students (71.8%), and many are working

professionals (24.3%), while only 1% of the respondents are retired.

- Past mental health issues

Have you experienced any mental health issues (e.g., anxiety, depression) in the past year?

103 responses

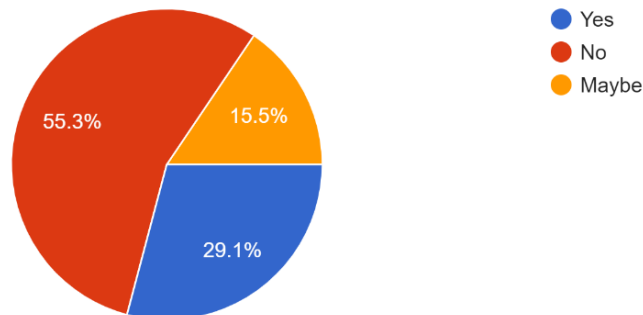


Fig 1(made by author)

According to the above pie chart, only 29.1% of the respondents have experienced some mental health issue in the past year, whereas the majority of the respondents (55.3%) haven't experienced any mental health issues, and 15.5% of the respondents are unsure.

- Current mental wellbeing

How would you rate your current mental well-being?

103 responses

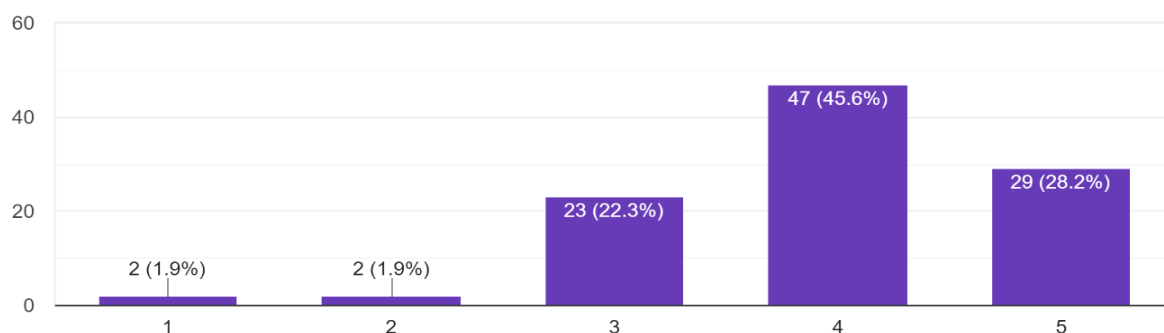


Fig 2(made by author)

45.6% of the respondents have rated their mental health 4 out of 5, 28.2% rated 5 out of 5, 22.3% of the respondents rated 3 out of 5, and only 1.9% of respondents rated 1 or 2 out of 5.

- Spiritual practices for stress or tough emotions

Do you use spiritual practices to cope with stress or difficult emotions?

103 responses

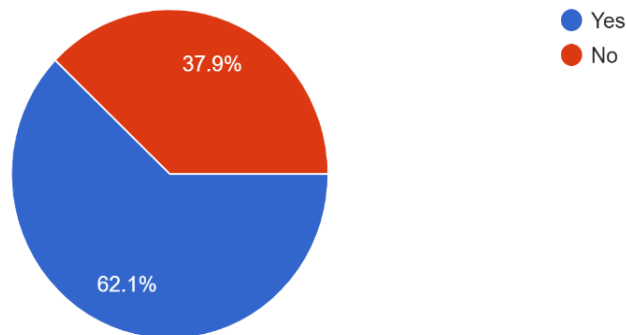


Fig 3(made by author)

Looking at the above data, we can see that 62.1% of respondents say they utilize spiritual activities to deal with stress or tough emotions, while 37.9% say they don't.

- Spiritual practices in daily life

What spiritual practices do you engage in?

103 responses

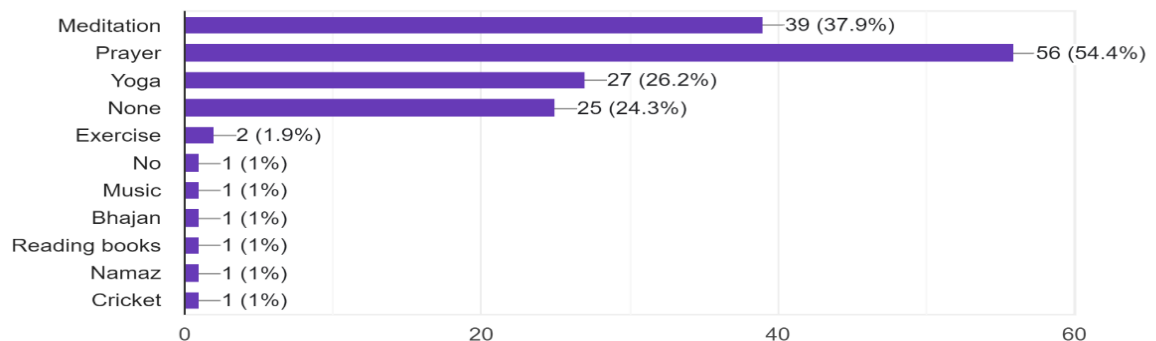


Fig 4(made by author)

The above chart indicates that the majority of respondents (54.4%) practice prayer, followed by meditation (37.9%), yoga (26.2%), exercise (1.9%) and other practices like music, bhajan, reading, cricket, and exercise. Additionally, there are respondents (24.3%) who do not practice any form of spirituality.

- Positive impact of spirituality on our mental health

Do you think spirituality has a positive impact on our mental health?

103 responses

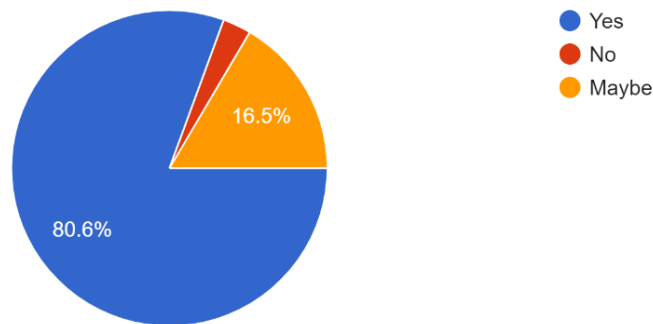


Fig 5(made by author)

Based on the pie chart presented above, 80.6% of respondents agreed that spirituality has a beneficial effect on mental health; 2.9% disagreed, and 16.5% were unsure at all.

- Rating importance of spirituality

How important is spirituality in your life?

103 responses

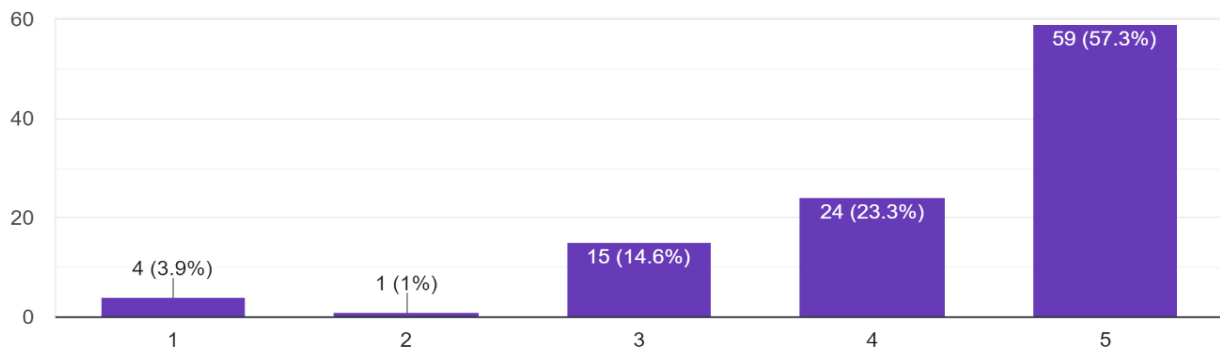


Fig 6(made by author)

57.3% of respondents stated that spirituality is very important in their lives, 23.3% said that it matters in they live, 14.6% said that spirituality is not highly significant in their lives, 1% said that it is of little significance, and 3.9% said that spirituality is of lesser significance in their lives, according to the above chart.

- Spirituality in creativity

Does spiritual practices enhance our creativity?

103 responses

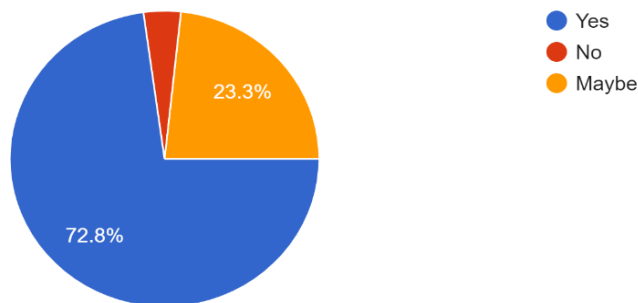


Fig 7(made by author)

As can be seen from the pie chart above, 72.8% of respondents believed that spiritual practices foster creativity, while 3.9% disagreed and 23.3% were not sure.

- Impact of spirituality on overall wellbeing

Do you think spirituality contributes to overall well-being?

103 responses

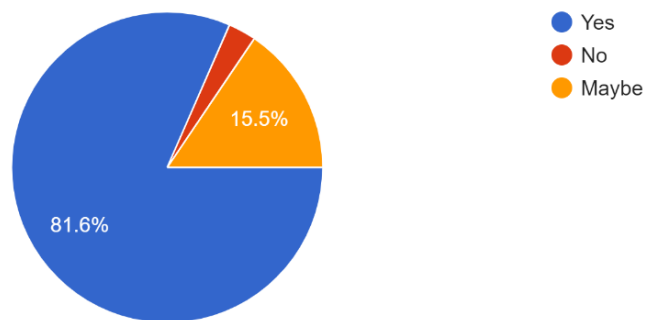


Fig 8(made by author)

According to the pie chart above, 81.6% of respondents believed that spirituality enhanced overall wellbeing, 2.9% disagreed, and 15.5% were not sure.

- Spiritual experience that affected mental health

Have you experienced spiritual or mystical experience that impacted mental health?

103 responses

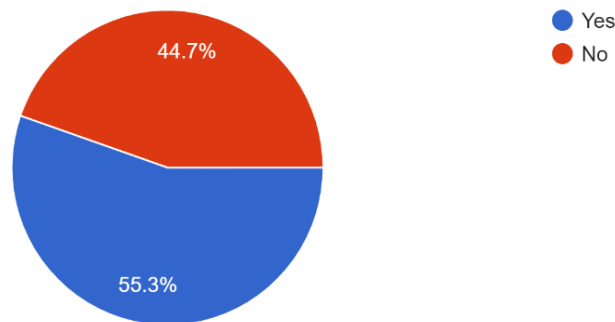


Fig 9(made by author)

55.3% of respondents reported having had a spiritual or mystical experience that affected their mental health, whereas 44.7% reported having no such experience, as shown in the pie chart above.

- Suggestions on spirituality on mental

At the end of the questionnaire, there was an open-ended question on a person's experience and beliefs on the impact of spirituality on mental health. Several responses were given by the respondents. These are among the top ones.

Spirituality can help improve mental health by bringing peace and a sense of purpose. It encourages calm thinking and helps people deal with stress better. Simple practices like meditation or gratitude can make us feel more relaxed and positive in daily life.

Practice spirituality. Initially it might feel like a waste of time to some but over a period of time, you will realize having a soothing effect on your mind which further boosts productivity.

In today's world, depression, anxiety, etc are normal. To overcome this things we must have to practice some spiritual things like meditation, yoga, etc.

Everyone should read at least one page of a book daily related spirituality like bhagwat geeta, ramayan, krishna the supreme personality of godhead etc...

Everyone should get into spirituality for overall well-being and specially everyone should read bhagvat gita once not as religious book but as life guide.

It is better to have some source to depend on when you are in trouble mentally rather than none.

Spiritual practices may be helpful in being more focused and maintaining healthy mental balance.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

The majority of people, according to the research, think that spirituality plays a significant role in how their mental health develops. Numerous individuals who incorporate spiritual practices into their daily lives have reported improved mental health. People used yoga, meditation, prayer, and other spiritual practices in their daily lives as a coping mechanism for stress, depression, and other emotional difficulties.

Spirituality has a clear and significant positive influence on mental health. This study has shown the advantages of spiritual practices in lowering symptoms of anxiety, depression, and other psychiatric diseases, illuminating the intricate and varied links between spirituality and mental health. The results of this study highlight the significance of incorporating spirituality into mental health treatment, supporting a comprehensive strategy that attends to spiritual needs and enhances general wellbeing. In order to provide compassionate and inclusive care, mental health practitioners must place a high priority on cultural awareness and acknowledge the diversity of spiritual practices and beliefs. The issues raised by this study should be the subject of future research, which should concentrate on establishing a common definition of spirituality, producing trustworthy evaluation instruments, and incorporating spirituality into evidence-based practice. In the end, this study adds to the expanding corpus of research on spirituality's impact on mental health, guiding evidence-based treatments and encouraging all-encompassing care. We may find new ways to support resilience, wellbeing, and the best possible mental health if we acknowledge the significant influence of spirituality on mental health. The complicated and beautiful connections that exist between mental health and spirituality highlight how rich and multifaceted the human experience is. Expanding our comprehension of these connections could lead us to discover fresh avenues for recovery, development, and overall health.

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