



The Impact of Spiritual Attitude and Involvement on Positive and Negative experiences in Youth

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Abstract

Spirituality is an intriguing concept which has managed to entice people time and again. Human lives are filled with positive and negative experiences. The current research is an effort to show how spiritual attitude and involvement manage to impact the positive and negative experiences of individuals. Primarily two scales have been used in this study. Spiritual attitude and involvement list (SAIL) and scale of positive and Negative experience (SPAN). The study was conducted on individuals aged 18 to 30 years of age; the responses were collected via Google Forms. A total 187 participants, comprising of 90 males and 97 females

participated. The results showed that there exists a significant relationship between Spiritual Attitude and Involvement List with individual's positive and negative experiences. The domains of Spiritual Attitude and Involvement List namely, Meaningfulness, Trust, Care for other, Connectedness with nature, Transcendent experiences and spiritual activity have a significant correlation with positive experiences whereas, trust, acceptance and spiritual activity have a significant correlation with negative experience. Furthermore, this research adds to growing body of literature and increasing importance of spirituality and mental health.

Keywords: *Spirituality, Positive and negative experiences, Transcendent experience, spiritual attitude*

INTRODUCTION

Spiritual Attitude and Involvement

Christina Puchalski, MD, Director of the George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health, contends that "spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred." Spirituality is a deeply personal and often multifaceted concept that pertains to the exploration and connection to something beyond the material realm, often involving the search for meaning, purpose, and transcendence. While spirituality can have different interpretations and expressions across cultures, religions, and belief systems, it commonly involves the following elements:

Individuals turn to spirituality as a deep well at difficult or challenging moments in their lives. It strengthens inner serenity and gives us a feeling of unity with something bigger than ourselves. Issues like low self-esteem, lack of confidence, inability to exercise self-control, and

fear of day-to-day responsibilities and problems can all be helped by spirituality. It can therefore be a beneficial addition to therapy programs for mental health issues. It may just be a means of maintaining mental stability. Spirituality is, therefore, a concept that is widely accepted in secular society; therefore, it can provide solace to those who do not practice any religion.

Positive and Negative Experience

While negative experiences, such as reported despair, primarily suggest the opposite (there is one question on physical pain on the index), good experiences, such as reported laughter, reflect positive psychological states. For many of us, the distinction between "effect" and "affect" is challenging enough. Researchers have gathered information that suggests we are more likely to find greater purpose in our lives on the days when we feel pleasant emotions. Positive experiences, on the other hand, refer to events, interactions, or situations, that bring about feelings of happiness, satisfaction, joy, or fulfillment. These experiences often contribute to a sense of well-being, growth, and positive emotions. Positive experiences can vary widely from person to person and may include achievements, relationships, pleasant sensations, moments of connection, acts of kindness, and success in various aspects of life.

Negative experiences, on the other hand, refer to events, situations, or interactions that evoke feelings of sadness, disappointment, stress, or discomfort. These experiences can lead to emotional distress, pain, or suffering. Negative experiences encompass a range of challenges, setbacks, losses, conflicts, and adverse circumstances that individuals may encounter throughout their lives.

Both positive and negative experiences play a crucial role in shaping individuals' perceptions, beliefs, behaviors and overall well-being. These contribute to personal growth, resilience, and understanding of oneself and the world. It's essential to acknowledge and learn

from both types of experiences to navigate life effectively and cultivate a balanced and fulfilling existence.

Problem Statement

Spirituality significantly influences individuals' beliefs, values, and behaviors, but there is a lack of understanding about its impact on positive and negative outcomes. While some research suggests spirituality promotes resilience and well-being, others suggest potential conflicts and distress. The current study aims to explore the influence of spirituality as an independent variable on individuals' positive and negative experiences as dependent variables. It seeks to understand the mechanisms through which spirituality shapes perceptions, emotions, and overall psychological well-being. This understanding can help develop tailored interventions and support strategies that promote positive outcomes and mitigate the negative consequences associated with spirituality.

Rationale

The research study aims to explore the relationship between spirituality and positive and negative experiences, focusing on young people and not just old people. Spirituality promotes responsibility and awareness of actions and behaviors, making it an interesting aspect of psychological well-being. By investigating how spirituality influences positive experiences like happiness, fulfilment, and resilience, this research can help identify factors promoting psychological flourishing and inform interventions to enhance well-being. By elucidating the pathways through which spirituality influences individuals' perceptions, emotions, and behaviors, this research can inform the development of holistic approaches to psychological well-being that integrate spiritual dimensions. However, empirical evidence on this relationship remains limited and inconclusive. By examining this relationship, researchers can

contribute to a deeper understanding of how spiritual beliefs and practices shape individuals' perceptions of control over their lives.

Significance and Scope

The research highlights the impact and importance of spirituality among youth. It aims to understand if there is a relation between spirituality and locus of control and how it impacts the youth of India.

Clinical Practice and Training: Findings from research on spirituality and positive and negative experiences can inform clinical practice and training for mental health professionals. By incorporating spiritual assessments and interventions into therapeutic approaches, clinicians can provide more comprehensive and culturally competent care, thereby improving treatment outcomes and client satisfaction.

Psychological Well-Being: Understanding how spirituality influences individuals' positive and negative experiences can significantly contribute to advancing our knowledge of psychological well-being. Insights gained from this research can inform the development of interventions and strategies aimed at promoting resilience, happiness, and overall psychological flourishing among individuals across diverse spiritual backgrounds.

Mental Health Interventions: By elucidating the mechanisms through which spirituality impacts individuals' positive and negative experiences, this research can inform the design of culturally sensitive and spiritually informed mental health interventions. These interventions can effectively address psychological distress and promote adaptive coping strategies, considering individuals' spiritual beliefs and practices as integral components of their well-being.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Businesspeople and faculty are embracing spirituality in the workplace, recognizing its integration into their firm, family, community, and selves. This trend is evident in professional presentations, journal articles, and conferences (Cavanagh, 1999). The study on the ART-Excel programme for adolescents found that spirituality positively impacts mental health and well-being. Girls, Hindus, and those with better health status showed higher efficacy. The programme positively impacts social participation, relationships, future vision, and educational attainment. (Pandya, 2015). The study examined the correlation between spirituality, self-discovery, relationships, and eco-awareness, resilience, and mental health among adolescents. Results showed a positive relationship, with spirituality being a strong predictor of resilience and mental health, alongside eco-awareness and self-discovery dimensions (Ghazal, 2020). The authors highlight the importance of spirituality in treating medical and psychological conditions, highlighting its growing interest in counselling and psychology, and discussing current instruments and their psychometric properties (Sandhu, 2000).

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The aim of the study is to investigate the impact of spiritual attitude and involvement on different subscales like Meaningfulness. Trust, Acceptance, Care for others, Connectedness with nature, Transcendent experience and Spiritual Activity influence individuals' positive and negative experiences, elucidating their role in shaping well-being and psychological distress.

Objective

The primary objective of this study is to examine the relationship between spiritual attitude and involvement and individuals' positive and negative experiences. Specifically, the objectives include:

To find out the relation between spiritual attitude and involvement and positive and negative experiences in individuals.

To find out the relation between spiritual attitude and involvement with positive experiences in individuals.

Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant relationship of Spiritual attitude and involvement with Positive and Negative experience.

H2: There will be a significant relationship of the domains of spiritual attitude and involvement with positive and negative experience.

H3: There will be a significant impact of domains spiritual attitude and involvement on positive experiences.

H4: There will be a significant impact of domains spiritual attitude and involvement on negative experience.

Research design

The present research aims to fulfil the research objectives through quantitative research design

Variables

The *independent* variable is Spiritual attitude and involvement with subscales namely- Meaningfulness, Trust, Acceptance, Connectedness with nature, Caring for others, Transcendent experience and Spiritual Activities.

The *dependent* variable is positive and negative experiences.

Operational definition

Spiritual attitude and involvement: Spiritual attitude is a complex concept that encompasses beliefs, practices, and experiences related to transcendence, meaning-making, interconnectedness, and existential purpose. It involves religious rituals, prayer, meditation, and a connection to a higher power, nature, or the universe. Spirituality also involves the pursuit of values, virtues, and ethical principles that guide one's life and contribute to inner peace, fulfilment, and well-being. It is assessed through validated measures that capture various dimensions of spirituality.

Positive and negative experiences: Positive experiences are operationally defined as subjective states or events characterized by feelings of joy, satisfaction, contentment, fulfilment, and well-being. They contribute to a sense of emotional flourishing and overall life satisfaction.

Negative experiences: On the other hand, are operationally defined as subjective states or events characterized by feelings of discomfort, sadness, anxiety, anger, or frustration. They detract from a sense of emotional well-being and may lead to symptoms of psychological distress or impairment in functioning.

Sample

The sample size is 187 individuals, comprising 90 males and 97 females.

The sampling method used in the collection of data was simple random sampling. Google forms were made and distributed to individuals.

Inclusion criteria

- a) Individuals above the age of 18 and below the age of 30
- b) Individuals able to read and speak English
- c) Individuals residing in India
- d) Individuals who were not facing any mental and, or medical condition.

Exclusion criteria

- a) Individuals above 30 and below 17 years of age
- b) Individuals residing outside India
- c) Individuals not knowing how to read and speak English
- d) Individuals who were on medication

Tools for data collection

In this research, two scales were used.

The Spiritual and Attitude Involvement List (SAIL) was used to measure the spiritual and attitude involvement of individuals. The authors are E de Jager Meezenbroek and Dirk van Dierendonck. The Cronbach alpha values are 0.73-0.86. There are 26 items under 7 dimensions namely Meaningfulness, Trust, Acceptance, Care for others, Connectedness with nature, Transcendent experience and Spiritual Activity.

To measure the positive and negative experiences of individuals, the *Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE)* was used. The author of this scale is Diener et al.; the Cronbach alpha is 0.81-0.90. This scale measures positive experiences and negative experiences.

Google Forms were made and distributed to individuals above 18 years of age and below 30 years of age.

Procedure for data collection

Data was distributed to individuals, and they were asked to fill out the form honestly.

Procedure for data analysis

Scores were arranged in an Excel sheet and SPSS was used for data analysis.

Ethical Consideration

The individuals were assured their identities would be kept confidential and would not be disclosed at any point in time. Informed consent was obtained from them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Correlation Table for Sail Score and Positive Experience and Negative Experience

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	N	Pearson Correlation	2 tailed
Sail Score	104.56	16.71	187	0.430**	<0.001
Positive experience	20.36	4.30			
Negative Experience	17.72	4.46		-0.16*	0.01

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2 tailed)

Table 2

Correlation table for domains of spiritual attitude and involvement with positive experiences and negative experience

Domains of SAIL	Positive Experience	Negative Experience
Meaningfulness	0.272**	-0.136
Trust	0.497**	-0.315**
Acceptance	-0.084	0.203**
Care for others	0.214**	-0.056
Connectedness with nature	0.292**	-0.125
Transcendent Experience	0.325**	-0.101
Spiritual Activity	0.333**	-0.160*

Table 3

Simple Linear Regression Table of domains spiritual attitude and involvement on positive experience

Predictor variable	R	Adjusted R square	df	F	Beta (std. coeff)	sign
Sail Score	0.430	0.181	1,185	41.998	0.430	<0.001

Meaningfulness	0.272	0.069	1,185	14.834	0.272	<0.001
Trust	0.497	0.243	1,185	60.823	0.497	<0.001
Care for others	0.214	0.041	1,185	8.886	0.214	0.003
Connectedness with nature	0.292	0.080	1,185	17.210	0.292	<0.001
Transcendent Experience	0.325	0.101	1,185	21.831	0.325	<0.001
Spiritual Activity	0.333	0.106	1,185	23.044	0.333	<0.001

Dependent Variable: Positive Experience

Table 4

Simple Linear Regression Table of domains spiritual attitude and involvement on negative experience

Predictor variable	R	Adjusted R square	df	F	Beta (std. coeff)	sign
SAIL	0.169	0.023	1,185	5.45	-0.169	0.021
Trust	0.315	0.094	1,185	20.393	-0.315	<0.001
Acceptance	0.203	0.036	1,185	7.972	0.203	0.005

Spiritual Activity	0.160	0.020	1,185	4.884	-0.160	<0.001
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Dependent Variable: Positive Experience

In table 1, For the research sample (N=187), the Sail Score (M=104.56, SD=16.71) and Positive Score (M= 20.36, SD= 4.30) is positively correlated and the correlation is moderate, ($r=0.43$, $p < 0.001$) and is significant. Hence the hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant relationship between the SAIL score and positive experience in youth. While the broaden-and-build theory of pleasant emotions may accommodate both religiousness and spirituality, it appears that spirituality—a reality characterized by universalism and openness to experience—corresponds more clearly to this theory (Saroglou & Buxant, 2008).

For the research sample (N=187), the Sail Score (M=104.56, SD= 16.71) and Negative Score (M= 17.72, SD= 4.46) is negatively correlated and the correlation is moderate, ($r= -0.16$, $p < 0.01$) and is significant. There is a significant relationship between the SAIL score and negative experience in youth. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.

Research has explored the role of spirituality in understanding, managing, and resolving traumatic experiences. It explores whether spirituality can be a positive resource for posttraumatic growth (PTG) or a source of struggle and discusses factors determining its impact. It concludes by discussing practical implications for helping people cope with major trauma (Kenneth and Kavita, 2006).

There is a significant relationship between the SAIL score with Positive and negative experience in youth.

In table 2, it is observed that domains of spiritual attitude and involvement list, namely, Meaningfulness, Trust, Care for others, Connectedness with nature, Transcendent experience

and Spiritual Activity have a correlation with Positive experiences. Whereas, only Acceptance, Trust and Spiritual activity have a correlation with Negative experience. Hence Hypothesis 2 is accepted.

In table 3, For this research sample (N=187), the SAIL score is a significant predictor for scores on positive experiences. $F(1,185) = 41.998$, $p < 0.001$. Predictor variable SAIL score contributes 18% of variance in criterion variable (adjusted R square= 0.181). This means that SAIL score can significantly predict positive experience (Beta= 0.430, $p < 0.001$).

The Meaningfulness score is a significant predictor for scores on Positive experiences. $F(1,185) = 14.834$, $p < 0.001$. Predictor variable Meaningfulness score contributes 6.9% of variance in criterion variable (adjusted R square= 0.069). This means that Meaningfulness score can significantly predict positive experience (Beta= 0.272, $p < 0.001$). Past research has shown that pursuit of meaning leads to pleasure. Coexperienced, compassionate, and synchronously joyful emotions could be especially well-suited to fostering an individual's sense that life is meaningful (Prinzing et al, 2023). The Trust score is a significant predictor for scores on Positive experiences. $F(1,185) = 60.823$, $p < 0.001$. Predictor variable Trust score contributes 24.3% of variance in criterion variable (adjusted R square= 0.243). This means that Trust score can significantly predict positive experience (Beta= 0.497, $p < 0.001$). In China, people generally do not trust strangers, but positive experiences with outgroup members can increase trust. Three experiments found that perceiving support, receiving help, and being trusted by outgroup members led to higher trust in strangers. Indirect reciprocity mediated this relationship, and intrapersonal trust increased after positive outgroup experiences (Yao & Zhang, 2017).

The Care for others score is a significant predictor for scores on Positive experiences. $F(1,185) = 8.886$, $p < 0.003$. Predictor variable Care for others score contributes 4.1% of variance in criterion variable (adjusted R square= 0.041). This means that care score is able to significantly

predict positive experience (Beta= 0.214, $p<0.003$). A review of 14 studies on healthcare workers' experiences with mindfulness training found that it reduces stress and improves patient interactions. The training shifts focus from caring to self-care, leading to increased personal wellbeing and self-compassion. Benefits include enhanced presence, compassion, and shared humanity. The study discusses training focus, motivation, clinical implications, and research avenues for further study (Morgan & Simpson, 2015).

In a research study exploring the experience of resilience-based clinical supervision and its influence on care towards self and others among student nurses. Participants showed positive experiences with resilience-based clinical supervision, enhancing their self-care and commitment to care. They maintained self-care competencies even after qualifying as nurses, despite limited time and resources. This suggests resilience-based clinical supervision can help healthcare practitioners develop competencies to manage workplace stress effectively (Stacey & Dutta, 2017)

The Connectedness with nature score is a significant predictor for scores on Positive experiences. $F(1,185) = 17.210$, $p<0.001$. Predictor variable Connectedness with Nature score contributes 8% of variance in criterion variable (adjusted R square= 0.080). This means that Connectedness with Nature score can significantly predict positive experience (Beta= 0.292, $p<0.001$). The study found that indoor plants and nature views evoked relaxation, positive emotions, and reflection, fostering a sense of connectedness to nature. These elements also enhanced the sense of being taken care of, strengthening well-being and resilience to life stressors (Raanaas & Patil, 2016).

Another research investigates how participants with stress-related mental disorders perceive and interact with garden smell-scapes during nature-based rehabilitation. Results show that nature smells, particularly pelargonium, can significantly reduce stress and promote mental recovery. The study, conducted over five years, found that nature odors evoke

associations, emotions, and physical reactions, and can act as a catalyst for sensory awareness and memories. The findings are relevant for nature-based therapy development and the horticultural industry (Pálsdóttir & Spendrup, 2021).

Transcendent experience score is a significant predictor for scores on positive experiences. $F(1,185) = 21.831, p < 0.001$. Predictor variable Transcendent Experience score contributes 10.1% of variance in criterion variable (adjusted R square = 0.101). This means that Transcendent experience score is able to significantly predict positive experience (Beta = 0.325, $p < 0.001$). A study investigated the relationship between transcendent experience, flow, and happiness in mountaineering. Survey data from 339 Taiwanese mountain climbers shows that transcendent experience positively impacts flow and happiness, with flow mediating this effect. However, hedonic enjoyment is insignificant for novices (Tsaur, 2013). Another article explored the intricate connection between nature-based recreation and spirituality, highlighting factors like personal history, motivation, socio-demographic characteristics, and spiritual tradition. It suggests future research and model development to better understand and address this complex relationship (Heintzman, 2009).

Spiritual Activity is a significant predictor for scores on Positive experiences. $F(1,185) = 23.044, p < 0.001$. Predictor variable Spiritual Activity score contributes 10.6% of variance in criterion variable (adjusted R square = 0.106). This means that Spiritual Activity score can significantly predict positive experience (Beta = 0.333, $p < 0.001$).

A study aimed to assess the relationship between a culturally tailored intervention and preexisting religious/spiritual practices among elderly rural women in Haryana, India. The study involved three groups: field experimental group (FEG), practitioners of preexisting Religious and spiritual (R/S) practices for at least 6 weeks (Satsang, Brahma Kumaris, and Radha Soami), and non-practitioners of R/S practices. Results showed that FEG participants improved significantly on physical health, body balancing, and self-care, while no changes

were observed on other well-being measures. Practitioners of preexisting R/S practices were found to be significantly different from non-practitioners (Singh & Junnarkar, 2020).

In table 4 it is shown that for this research sample (N=187), the SAIL score is a significant predictor for scores on negative experiences. $F(1,185) = 5.45, p < 0.021$. Predictor variable SAIL score contributes 2.3% of variance in criterion variable (adjusted R square = 0.023). This means that SAIL score can significantly predict negative experience (Beta = -0.169, $p < 0.021$). Spirituality and religious attendance may influence how people see and handle challenging circumstances in life (Kidwai & Brent, 2014)

Trust score is a significant predictor for scores on negative experiences. $F(1,185) = 20.393, p < 0.001$. Predictor variable Trust score contributes 9.4% of variance in criterion variable (adjusted R square = 0.094). This means that Trust score can significantly predict negative experience (Beta = -0.315, $p < 0.001$).

Five studies examined the impact of foreign travel experiences on generalized trust. Results showed that breadth, but not depth, predicted trust behavior in a decision-making game. However, broad experiences increased generalized trust. A longitudinal design showed that focusing on differences rather than similarities among countries visited was critical for greater trust. Using various methods, samples, and operationalizations, a robust relationship was found between the breadth of foreign travel experiences and generalized trust (Cao, 2014).

A crucial study explores the impact of negative life events (NLEs) on spirituality among Nigerian Catholic sisters in the US. The research, which involved 20 sisters, identified four themes: immediate reactions to stress, reframing NLEs using spiritual approaches, and the outcomes of the process. The findings underscore the importance of integrating spirituality into clinical practice for improved mental health. (Ekwonaye & Nwosis, 2021).

Acceptance score is a significant predictor for scores on negative experiences. $F(1,185) = 7.972, p < 0.005$. Predictor variable Acceptance score contributes 3.6% of variance in criterion variable (adjusted $R^2 = 0.036$). This means that Acceptance score can significantly predict negative experience ($Beta = 0.203, p < 0.005$).

The Spiritual Activity score is a significant predictor for scores on negative experiences. $F(1,185) = 0.160, p < 0.001$. Predictor variable Spiritual Activity score contributes 2% of variance in criterion variable (adjusted $R^2 = 0.020$). This means that Spiritual Activity score can significantly predict negative experience ($Beta = -0.160, p < 0.001$).

A study on Research on psychological maltreatment is a growing issue with potential negative effects on well-being from childhood to adulthood. The results showed that psychological maltreatment was a negative predictor of social connectedness and social acceptance, but not subjective well-being. Social acceptance and connectedness were significant and positive predictors of subjective well-being. The study supports the importance of social connectedness and acceptance on adolescents' wellbeing, and suggests suggestions for future research (Arslan, 2018).

CONCLUSION

There exists a significant relationship between Spiritual Attitude and Involvement List with individual's positive and negative experiences. It has also been proven that the domains of Spiritual Attitude and Involvement List namely, Meaningfulness, Trust, Care for other, Connectedness with nature, Transcendent experiences and spiritual activity have a significant correlation with positive experiences. On the other hand, Trust, acceptance and spiritual activity have a correlation with negative experience.

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