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Spiritual Well-being and Happiness Among Research Scholars

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ABSTRACT

The current exploration purports to inspect the association between Spiritual well-being and happiness among research scholars of Aligarh Muslim University. They were also compared on Spiritual well-being and happiness with respect to gender. The figures for the research was acquired from Research Scholars [N = 100 (Males 60 & Females 40)] belonging to different departments of Aligarh Muslim University. Spiritual well-being scale developed by Paloutzian, R.F., & Ellison, C.W. (1982) and Oxford Happiness Scale developed by Argyle and Hills (2001) were used. Apposite statistical methods like Pearson's product moment correlation and t-test were used to analyze the figures. The outcomes revealed considerable positive correlation between spiritual well-being and happiness. Furthermore, the result also shows a considerable positive correlation between Existential well-being and happiness whereas no correlation has been found between Religious well-being and happiness. Significant difference was also found among research scholars on happiness and Existential well-being with respect to gender. However, no significant difference was found among research scholars on spiritual well-being and Religious well-being with respect to gender.

Keywords: Spiritual well-being, Happiness, Research scholars.

1. INTRODUCTION

Spirituality may refer to an activity through which a person searches for meaning of its life, mainly a "search for the sacred." It was a general or misinterpreted notion that spirituality is more or less concerned or associated with the religion. People generally connect spirituality with the religion but the concept of spirituality is prominently related with the inner peace and there are various ways to achieve that inner peace. There is no specific and universal way to experience spirituality as every individual is unique by its nature, personality, experiences. Different individual attain spirituality through different approaches. It is something which is very personal and one's way to acquire the sense of spirituality cannot be applied on

others ways to attain or reach on this ecstatic state of life. Spirituality refers to any kind of activity which accord us inner peace and enchanted experience. Spiritual well-being is becoming the most concerned area of interest among researchers as spiritual well-being is considering now as one of the most imperative facets of mental as well as physical health. The perception of spiritual well-being can be examined from two different standpoints i.e., Religious well-being and Existential well-being. The religious well-being includes individual's perception of health in his/her spiritual life related to a superior power. The existential well-being considers the individual's social and mental concerns and the person's ways of coping with the self, society and environment.

Spiritual well-being is regarded as vital element of emotional, physical and mental health. Spiritual well-being can be linked with a particular religion but does not have to be. At some point of our life we start pondering over the meaning of our existence and start experiencing things which are beyond ourselves. We start experiencing the self-actualization part of our personality and involve in the practices which illustrate our deviate us from the worldly affairs and entice us towards our inner self and ideal self which provide us contentment. It is a practice of discovering inner peace and reality in the journey of life. It can be performed in several ways, with its core intention being to discover life's meaning. According to Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger and Gorsuch (2003) the term "spirituality refers to personal, immaterial, psychological processes and the term religion refers to institutional and therefore sociological processes". It is a crucial or a contended immaterial reality, an inner course enabling a person to find out the quintessence of his/her being.

According to Ellison and Paloutzian (1982) "Spiritual well-being is the overall quality of life". It embraces two dimensions. The first one is existential well-being which focused on life purpose and the another one is religious well-being which focused on the relationship of human being with God and the way to attain spirituality through spiritual practices. Both the dimensions possess its own importance in comprehending and analyzing an individual's spiritual well-being.

Existential Well-being

When an individual exposed or encountered with adversities of life he/she start to seek the answers pertaining their existence. Every individual search for the meaning of their life sooner or later in their life depending upon the circumstances of their lives. As we know that well-being refers to the state of being happy, healthy and satisfied. Existential well-being means contentment and satisfaction with our existence. It has been found that individual who scored high in existential well-being attain high score in constructs of responsibility, reports less anxiety and enhanced overall health (Rivero, 2001).

Religious Well-being

Religious well-being may be explained as the source of satisfaction and contentment through religious practices and rituals. It is considered as one of the way to attain spirituality as we obtain mental peace when we immerse ourselves in religious practices and tries to seek the meaning of our life. But it can't be applied to every individual as different people apply different methods to seek this utmost quest of their lives.

Happiness

Happiness is a state of well-being that revolves around living a good life. Being in a state of happiness and satisfaction is the most common need which every individual aspire for. According to hedonists supposition

the purpose of life is to maximize happiness, which minimizes misery consequently. Even though different individual have different way of attaining happiness but the core purpose is same for all which is to avoid pain as much as possible. We endeavor to make us and our loved ones happy and try to avoid pain. Boehm and Lyubomirsky (2008) preliminarily define a happy person as “someone who frequently experiences positive emotions like joy, satisfaction, contentment, enthusiasm and interest”.

Since the beginning Philosophers have explored happiness more scrupulously than anyone. They have debated over two basic views of happiness which are Hedonia and Eudaimonia. Hedonism views happiness as pleasant feelings and favorable judgments. On the other hand eudemonism views happiness as a system of ethics that based on moral value which lead to possibility of actions generating happiness. Argyle, Martin and Crossland (1989) believe that “happiness is composed of three related components- positive affects, absence of negative affects and satisfaction with life as a whole”. Happiness is commonly defined as a state of well-being and its association with good feelings and pleasurable experiences.

Research Objectives

1. To study the association between Spiritual well-being and Happiness among research scholars of University.
2. To study the association between existential well-being and Happiness among research scholars of University.
3. To study the association between religious well-being and Happiness among research scholars of University.
4. To find the difference between male and female research scholars on Spiritual well-being and its dimension viz. Existential well-being and Religious well-being as well as on happiness.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no relationship between Spiritual well-being and Happiness among research scholars of University.

Ho2: There is no relationship between existential well-being and Happiness among research scholars of University.

Ho3: There is no relationship between religious well-being and Happiness among research scholars of University.

Ho4: There is no significant difference in spiritual well-being among the research scholars with respect to gender.

Ho5: There is no significant difference in Existential well-being among the research scholars with respect to gender.

Ho6: There is no significant difference in Religious well-being among the research scholars with respect to gender.

Ho7: There is no significant difference in happiness among the research scholars with respect to gender.

2. METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample of the current investigation comprised of 100 research scholars of Aligarh Muslim University of Aligarh district, Uttar Pradesh. Furthermore the sample has been further divided on the basis of gender (i.e., male = 60, female = 40). The purposive sampling technique was used for the present study.

Tools

Spiritual Well Being Scale: This Scale was developed by Paloutzian & Ellison (1982). It is a 20-item self-report inventory designed to measure spiritual well being. This inventory has two subscales. The first one is existential well-being and another one is religious well-being and. The Cronbach's alpha for the present sample is .77

Revised Oxford Happiness Scale: This feedback form contains 15 items. There are six point response criteria for each item of the questionnaire. Item number 1, 5, 6,10,13,14 had reverse scoring and the remaining are positively scored items. The reliability of this scale has been found to be .91.

Statistical Analysis: The information/responses collected from the respondents were subjected to various statistical treatments. The figures were analyzed using SPSS 16.0. Statistical techniques used for analyzing data were correlation and t-test. Pearson's product moment correlation and regression were used to analyze the data.

Procedure: The figures for the current inquiry was collected from the research scholars pursuing PhD from different departments of Aligarh Muslim university .Prior to data collection, rapport was established by the investigator with the subject to seek cooperation from them during session.. After taking informed consent from the participants the questionnaire was given to them. Participants have been given assurance that their responses will be kept confidential and will be utilized only for research purpose.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 reveals that there is a significant positive correlation ($r = .264$) between Spiritual well-being and happiness among the research scholars of Aligarh Muslim University, representing "more the Spiritual well-being more the happiness and vice-versa". Thus null hypothesis Ho1 of the present study which states that, "There is no relationship between Spiritual well-being and Happiness among research scholars of Aligarh Muslim University" stands rejected.

Table 1
Showing the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient(r) between spiritual well-being and happiness among research scholar of Aligarh Muslim University.

	<i>Religious well being</i>	<i>Existential well being</i>	<i>Spiritual well-being</i>
Happiness	.174 ^{NS}	.293**	.264**

NS = Insignificant, *.P < 0.05 Level of Significance

Table 1 further exhibits that there is also a significant positive correlation ($r = .293$) between Existential well-being and happiness among the research scholars of Aligarh Muslim University, representing "more

the existential well-being more the happiness and vice-versa”. Thus null hypothesis Ho2 of the present study which states that, “There is no relationship between Existential well-being and Happiness among research scholars of Aligarh Muslim University” stands rejected.

Finally the table reveals that there is no correlation ($r = .174$) between Religious well-being and happiness among the research scholars of Aligarh Muslim University, representing “more the existential well-being less the happiness and vice-versa”. Thus null hypothesis Ho3 of the present study which states that, “There is no relationship between Religious well-being and Happiness among research scholars of Aligarh Muslim University” stands accepted.

Table 2
Mean scores of spiritual well-being and its two dimensions viz. (1) religious well-being
(2) Existential well-being and happiness among the research scholars of
Aligarh Muslim University with respect to gender

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>t-value</i>
Happiness	Male	60	117.10	14.791	98	-2.765**
	Female	40	125.35	14.357		
Spiritual well-being	Male	60	60.15	10.605	98	-1.877 ^{NS}
	Female	40	63.68	6.526		
Religious well-being	Male	60	29.82	10.605	98	-.835 ^{NS}
	Female	40	30.72	6.526		
Existential well-being	Male	60	30.33	5.862	98	-2.518*
	Female	40	32.95	3.623		

Total N = 100; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, Level of Significance.

Table 2 exhibits that there is a no significant difference in spiritual well-being ($t = -1.877, p = .064$) and Religious well-being ($t = -.835, p = .406$) between male and female research scholars Therefore, the null hypotheses Ho4, which states that “*There is no significant difference in spiritual well-being among the research scholars with respect to their gender*” and Ho6, which states that “*There is no significant difference in Religious well-being among the research scholars with respect to their gender*” stands accepted.

Table 2 further reveals that further reveals that there is a significant difference in Existential well-being and Happiness between male and female research scholars ($t = -2.58, p = .013$ & $t = -2.765, p = .007$). The results show that female research scholars have more Existential well-being as well as happier than their male counterparts. Thus, our null hypotheses Ho5, which states that “*There is no significant difference in existential well-being among the research scholars with respect to their gender*”; and Ho7, which states that “*There is no significant difference in Happiness among the research scholars with respect to their gender*” stands rejected.

4. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationship of spiritual well-being with happiness among research scholars of the University. The study also purports to inspect the distinction between male and female research scholars on spiritual well-being and happiness.

The result of the current investigation discloses that there is significant positive correlation between happiness and spiritual well-being. It shows that people who are high on the dimension of spirituality are

happier as compared to those who are low on the dimension of spirituality. The current findings can be corroborated with earlier Studies that have shown that spiritual intelligence of the students increased their happiness. (Yaghobi, Zoghi, Abdolazadeh and Mohagheghy, 2008). In another study conducted by (Nadery, Asgari, Roshani, Mehri and Adryany 2008) variables of spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence have been found as predictors for life satisfaction and happiness. These researches revealing an association between spiritual engagement and happiness.

Furthermore the table also reveals that there is no significant difference between male and female students on spiritual well being and one of its dimension i.e. religious well-being whereas significant difference has been found between male and female students on existential well-being as well on happiness. It has been found that female research scholars hold more existential well-being than their male counterpart as well happier than males. Some earlier studies are inconsistent with the findings of the present study. For instance, Jafari, Dehshiri, Eskandari, Najafi, Heshmati and Hoseinifer (2010) conducted a study to examine Spiritual well-being and mental health in university students and found that female students had higher level of existential well-being as compare to male counterparts. Similarly Jules et. al., (2015) conducted a study which reveals that females possessed significantly higher levels of spirituality than their male counterparts.

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