

Effect of Daily Spiritual Experience on Corona Anxiety and Mental Wellbeing of Social Workers in the United Kingdom

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Abstract: The study focused to explore the association of Daily Spiritual Experience with the Mental well-being and Corona Anxiety of social workers in the United Kingdom. The research also tried to explore whether age, profession, and gender play a substantial role in the mental well-being, Daily Spiritual Experience, and Corona Anxiety of the respondents. The study is exploratory and cross-sectional in nature. The researcher administered Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) and Corona Anxiety Scale. Post reliability and validity tests, established scales are used to study the variable in the research. The data was analysed using Smart PLS SEM 3.3.2 and SPSS Statistics 21. The respondents include a cohort of 112 respondents who gave consent to be part of the study hailed from India to the United Kingdom. The research report shows an association between the gender of the respondents and corona anxiety, daily Spiritual Experience, and mental well-being. The study evinces an association between age and corona anxiety, Daily Spiritual Experience, and Mental well-being. Also, a significant association is reported between daily spiritual well-being and corona anxiety. This research also helps to demonstrate how important spiritual values are to control corona anxiety among the respondents.

1 INTRODUCTION

The first case of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was diagnosed in December 2019 and has swept the world and inspired global action. This has led to unprecedented efforts to establish physical distancing practices (called "social distancing" in most cases) in countries around the world, leading to changes in national behavior patterns and the shutdown of day-to-day operations. Although these steps can slow the spread of this disease, indubitably it will have short and term consequences on the mental health and well-being of the individuals. These consequences are very important and immediate preventive and direct intervention measures are needed to address the impact of the epidemic on the mental health of individuals and populations. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to notice the various mental health issues of affected populations (Hernández-Torrano et al., 2020).

Spirituality is a universally recognized concept that involves belief in and obedience to the full power commonly referred to as God, who controls the destiny of the universe and mankind. It involves how

people achieve what they think is the purpose of their life, seeking the meaning of life and a sense of connection with the universe. The universality of spirituality runs through creed and culture (Liu et al., 2021). At the same time, spirituality is very personal, and each person is unique. It is the sacred realm of human experience. Spirituality produces qualities in people such as love, honesty, patience, tolerance, compassion, detachment, faith, and hope. In view of the various data available, the present research tries to find the association between Corona anxiety, daily spiritual experience, and mental well-being of the Indian diaspora in the United Kingdom.

1.1 Spiritual Experience and Mental Wellbeing

Spirituality, is a source of comfort and support that implants the idea of a sense of belonging and existential interconnectedness, promoting mental health. In the literature, the intonation has been placed on the association that exists between spirituality and greater perception of well-being, and physical and mental health. A particularly important aspect is

related to coping, or the function performed by spiritual well-being in the management of stressful events. Spiritual coping could be stated as cognitive and behavioral efforts to discover or maintain meaning, purpose, and connection at the time of difficult situations and crises. Furthermore, some authors over the years have argued that faith and spirituality could also be perceived as a source of resilience from physical, psychological and mental points of view (Arslan et al., 2022).

Spiritual well-being is also defined as a state that ties the mind and body of the individual, society, intelligence, and health, supporting the individual in his/her attitudes and life goals. Spiritual well-being includes both psycho-social dimensions and more than a religious dimension, a unifying force that aims to integrate the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of health and well-being. Psychological well-being is fundamentally an evaluation of one's life, that includes an assessment of life satisfaction and mood or emotions. Emotional well-being and cognitive well-being are the two components of psychological well-being. Emotional well-being is defined as the occurrence of experiencing positive emotions by individuals more, as compared to that of negative emotions while cognitive well-being is defined as a general evaluation of the life satisfaction of an individual (Morton et al., 2020).

Spirituality is also seen as a more intimate dimension, a larger construct, an individual effort to discover the sacred or meaning of life without confessional constraints. Further, the dimension of spirituality is vital for humanity, as it contains philosophical aspects, religious and cultural beliefs, and practices. Therefore, the full integration of physical, mental, social, and spiritual aspects of life endorses peace of mind and creates a sense of wholeness and well-being. It has been reported in the media regarding the information about the treatment for this virus, suggesting engagement in spiritual and religious practices such as visiting churches and offering prayers in mosques can protect people from the virus. Spiritual coping is the cognitive and behavioral efforts that one places in order to find or maintain meaning, purpose, and connection upon the emergence of a difficult situation. Furthermore, some authors over the years have argued that faith and spirituality can also be perceived as a source of resilience both from a physical, psychological, and mental point of view (Folke et al., 2010).

1.2 Corona Anxiety and Mental Wellbeing

Corona has taken a toll on the mental well-being of every individual. Contributory to recent literature reviews regarding the psychosocial impact of previous epidemics, done by researchers stated that fears, anxieties, and depression were common psychological symptoms. The research established a link between deteriorating mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns. Previous studies support the idea that religion, spirituality, and health have grown exclusively over recent decades. Basic religiosity measures are associated with positive mental and bodily health outcomes. In addition to this, the majority of the studies (72%) have shown a positive relationship between health and religion, and only sixteen percent have reported a negative opinion.

With this backdrop, the research started with three objectives

- To ascertain the association between age on corona anxiety, daily spiritual experience, and mental well being
- To examine the association between gender on corona anxiety, daily spiritual experience, and mental well being
- To find the association between employment status on corona anxiety, daily spiritual experiences, and mental well being
- To find whether any association exists between corona anxiety, spiritual experience and mental well being

1.3 Hypotheses

H1 - Age affects Corona Anxiety, Daily Spiritual experiences and Mental well being

H2- Gender affects Corona Anxiety, Daily Spiritual experiences and Mental well being

H3-Daily Spiritual experience is associated with corona anxiety

H4- Daily Spiritual experience is associated with mental well being

H5 - Mental well-being is associated with corona anxiety.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

The data were collected through Google forms from social workers in the United Kingdom and who gave

consent to be a part of the study. The reason behind selecting the Indians in the United Kingdom was based on the accessibility to reach out to the respondents through google based questionnaire. Snowball sampling was used to invite respondents to complete the questionnaires from the first week of September to the last week of November 2021. The researcher received 115 responses and excluding the invalid and repeated entries 112 samples were analysed using PLS-SEM 3.3.2 and SPSS Statistics.

2.1 Tools and Data

Standardized tools for Mental well-being and Daily Spiritual Experience were adopted and administered. The tool comprised of four sections namely Demographic Details, Mental Well-being, Daily Spiritual Experience, and Corona Anxiety (CAS) used to manage the life situation during the pandemic. The Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) (Underwood, 2011) is a 16-item self-report measure designed to assess ordinary experiences of connection with the transcendent in daily life. It includes constructs such as age, gratitude, mercy, sense of connection with transcendent and compassionate love. It also includes measures of awareness of

discernment/inspiration and a sense of deep inner peace. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) comprises 14 items of mental well-being covering subjective well-being and psychological functioning, in which all items are worded positively and address aspects of positive mental health. Corona Anxiety Scale comprises 5 items. The study is based on three constructs namely mental well-being, corona anxiety, and daily spiritual experience. The two constructs of the topic under study had a total of 29 indicators. After preliminary analysis, the reliability and validity analysis items were conducted and the items with loadings <.70 were removed and retained the values above 0.7. Also, VIF was examined and the values below the threshold were considered in the final model.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Construct Reliability and Validity

George and Mallery (2003) describe Cronbach alpha value of more than 0.7 to be acceptable and a value above 0.9 as excellent. Hence the tool is reliable. AVE values are greater than 0.5, hence convergent validity is established.

Table 1: Reliability.

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Corona Anxiety	0.787	0.803	0.860	0.606
Daily Spiritual Experience	0.987	0.997	0.989	0.888
Mental Well-Being	0.944	0.962	0.953	0.744
Age	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

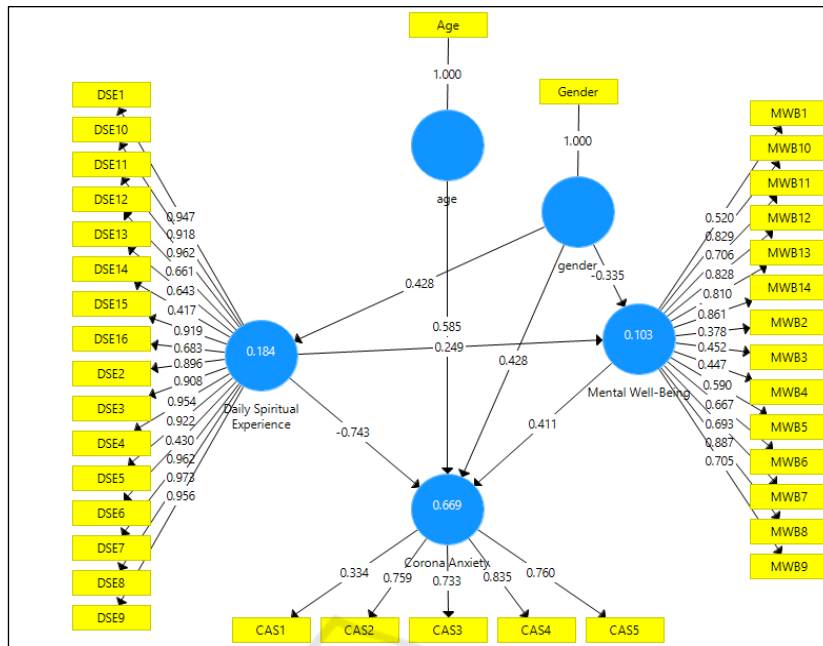


Figure 1: Preliminary Constructs.

The items causing multicollinearity and having a factor loading below 0.70 were removed.

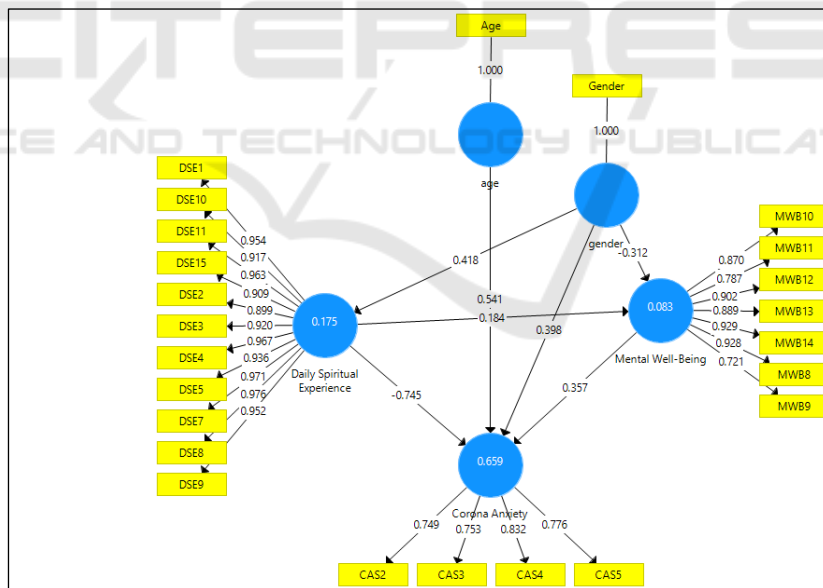


Figure 2: Final Constructs.

The final construct had 11 items to measure Daily Spiritual Experience, 4 items to measure Corona Anxiety and 7 items to measure mental well-being. There were some questions pertaining to demographic details as well.

Table 2: Measure of Age on Mental Well being, Corona Anxiety and Daily Spiritual Experience.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Mental Well being	Between Groups	1486.333	2	743.167	18.705	.000
	Within Groups	4330.667	109	39.731		
	Total	5817.000	111			
Corona Anxiety	Between Groups	422.333	2	211.167	21.716	.000
	Within Groups	1059.917	109	9.724		
	Total	1482.250	111			
Daily Spiritual Experience	Between Groups	8369.083	2	4184.542	12.884	.000
	Within Groups	35401.917	109	324.788		
	Total	43771.000	111			

Table No:2 portrays the result of one-way ANOVA, it is observed that there was a statistically significant difference between age and Mental-well-being as demonstrated (F(2,109= 18.7, p=.000)(p-value is less than the .05 alpha level). There was a statistically significant difference between age and Daily Spiritual

Experience as demonstrated (F(2,109= 12.88, p=.000 (p-value is less than the .05 alpha level).Corona Anxiety and age also reported statistical significance (F(2,109= 21.71, p=.000) (p-value is less than the .05 alpha level).

Table 3: Measuring constructs across Gender.

Gender Construct	Males		Females	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Spiritual Wellbeing	18.00	8.49	24.80	2.96
Corona Anxiety	5.63	3.10	7.00	3.33
Mental Wellbeing	20.27	3.24	19.20	3.10

From table 3 it is evident that the Daily spiritual experiences of females (24.80±2.96) are better than their male counterparts (18.00±8.49). Corona anxiety experienced by the females (7.00±3.33) is reported higher than the males (5.63±3.10). There is not much differences reported among the male (20.27± 3.24)

and females (19.20± 3.10) when it comes to mental well-being. Furthermore, table 9 reported the significant association between gender and Daily Spiritual Experience (P=.000); gender and Mental well-being (p=.000); gender and Corona Anxiety (p=.000).

Table 4: Measuring constructs across the nature of employment.

Nature of Employment Construct	Government		Semi-Government		Private	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Spiritual Wellbeing	13.0000	11.41524	21.0000	.00000	21.1538	6.98717
Corona Anxiety	9.0000	5.18875	4.0000	.00000	5.7692	2.67946
Mental Wellbeing	25.0000	.00000	18.0000	.00000	19.3077	2.85460

From table 4, it is evident that government employees experienced low spiritual well-being (13.00 ± 11.41) as compared to the semi-government ($21.00 \pm .00$) and private employees (21.15 ± 6.98). At the same, a noticeable result is the corona anxiety experienced by the respondents working in the government sector is high as compared to the semi-government and private employees. Another aspect is Mental well-being is high among government employees ($25 \pm .00$) than their counterparts working in semi-government ($18.00 \pm .00$) and private sectors (19.30 ± 2.85).

From below Table 4, reports the result of the hypotheses proposed in the preliminary section of the study. It is reported that an exists between age of the respondents and corona anxiety ($p = .000$). Hence the

hypothesis is accepted. The study could not establish the association between Daily Spiritual Experience and Mental Well-being ($p > .05$). Hence the hypothesis could not be accepted. Mental Well-being and Corona Anxiety established a significant association ($P = .000$). Hence the proposed hypothesis is accepted. There is also an association between the age of the respondents, corona anxiety ($p = 0.000$); age and Daily Spiritual experience ($p = .000$); age and Mental well-being ($p = .000$) which are reported in table 9 already reflected in table 7 and the hypothesis stands accepted. The result also reported the association of gender and corona anxiety ($p = 0.000$); gender and Daily Spiritual Experience ($p = .000$); gender and Mental well-being ($p = .000$). Hence the hypothesis is valid.

Table 5: Path Coefficients.

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Remark
Daily Spiritual Experience -> Corona Anxiety	-0.745	-0.735	0.078	9.575	0.000	Accepted
Daily Spiritual Experience -> Mental Well-Being	0.184	0.194	0.144	1.273	0.204	Not Accepted
Mental Well-Being -> Corona Anxiety	0.357	0.348	0.054	6.585	0.000	Accepted
age -> Corona Anxiety	0.541	0.550	0.066	8.221	0.000	Accepted
gender -> Corona Anxiety	0.398	0.396	0.061	6.559	0.000	Accepted
gender -> Daily Spiritual Experience	0.418	0.418	0.050	8.418	0.000	Accepted
gender -> Mental Well-Being	-0.312	-0.304	0.120	2.599	0.010	Accepted

This study is an attempt to explore the daily spiritual well-being, corona anxiety and mental well-being among Indian social workers in UK. During the pandemic, people are likely to adopt more spiritual ways to adapt to the situation. Psychological anguish among people during pandemic has become a universal concern. During the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals and families experienced novel situation forcing them to stay indoors for long span of time. The respondents also commented that "Being in touch with the family members in India through skype and online family meetings helped us to manage stress and anxiety". "Meditation helped me to become calmer". "The UK Government has tried to reach us with all the facilities required to face lockdown". Mental Health, spiritual well-being, grief and loss were known themes for many individuals, families, and communities in diverse contexts.

4 CONCLUSION

This study summarizes the various mental and emotional impacts that COVID has made in the life of individuals. In addition to its physical health implications, the pandemic has had numerous effects on psychological well-being, people's economic situations, and social relationships (Valian et al., 2018). Adopting preventive measures, and following the standard operating procedures will be equally as important as medical care in order to contain and eventually eradicate the virus. In this regard, different factors, such as spirituality, and psychological well-being, have different influences. Education is identified as one of the most significant social indicators. In conclusion, the result of the study portrays spiritual well-being and mental well-being

are emerging areas of research during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide.

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