

Role of Psychological Distress, Spiritual Intelligence, and Life Satisfaction during Covid-19 Pandemic among College Students of Punjab, Pakistan

Published:
September 30, 2023

Zeeshan Mehfooz Sindhu

*Clinical Psychologist, Department of Psychology,
Riphah International University, Faisalabad Campus,
Pakistan. Email: zeeshanmehfoozpsy@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2529-9198>*

Fareeha Akbar

*Clinical Psychologist, Department of Psychology, Riphah International
University, Faisalabad Campus, Pakistan
<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2630-1422>*

Muhammad Rizwan

*Clinical Psychologist, Riphah International University, Faisalabad
Campus, Pakistan*

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic was a severe and global health emergency with far-reaching effects. The goal of the study was to determine the association between psychological distress, spiritual intelligence, and life satisfaction among college students during Covid-19. In this study, a correlational research design was adopted. The sample for this research project was made up of (N= 380) college students who were chosen from several colleges in Punjab,

Pakistan, using a purposive sampling technique. The researcher used the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale for data collection. The results of the correlational study indicated a strong positive association between spiritual intelligence and life satisfaction; however, there was a significant negative relationship of psychological discomfort with the other two variables. Additionally, the findings indicate significant gender differences in psychological distress and life satisfaction among college students, but not in terms of spiritual intelligence. Through this study, the researcher was able to reveal that psychological distress and life satisfaction caused by COVID-19 differ significantly between male and female respondents, whereas differences in spiritual intelligence between male and female respondents were insignificant. The findings showed that female students were under more stress than male students. Additionally, it has been found that male students have higher life satisfaction than female students. Further findings regarding spiritual intelligence during this COVID-19 outbreak revealed a negligible gender difference.

Keywords: Psychological Distress, Life Satisfaction, Spiritual Intelligence, Covid-19.

Introduction:

SARS, a form of animal coronavirus that was first identified in southern

Role of Psychological Distress, Spiritual Intelligence, and Life Satisfaction during Covid-19 Pandemic among College Students of Punjab, Pakistan

China in 2002–2003, is caused by the coronavirus, which was not recently found. COVID-19 spread to 29 countries in North and South America, Asia, and Europe, resulting in 8,098 cases and 774 fatalities in humans (Kahn & McIntosh, 2005). The World Health Organization (2020a) Country Office in China received the first response from China on December 31, 2019, on the occurrence of an unidentified form of pneumonia in Wuhan, the administrative center of Hubei State. The rapid spread of the pandemic from China to more than 20 additional nations prompted the World Health Organization's Director General (DG), an authorized person in such a catastrophic scenario, to declare a Public Health Emergency (PHE) on January 30, 2020. When the epidemic had spread to more than 110 other countries around the world by that time, he gave it the name novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and declared it to be a pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020b). Around 1400 populaces, including those from Pakistan, were worried by the Tablighi group of 14,500 presenters in Malaysia in March 2020 (Arumugam, 2020).

Researchers and students experienced stress, anxiety, and other issues during the coronavirus outbreak, lockdown, and separation. We felt pressured or anxious when we are going through a substantial life transition or traumatic incident. Stress is an organic (physical, biological, secretory, and passionate) response to a demanding factor that causes variations in our awareness and body. The word stress was devised by Selye (1936) who is identified as the “father of stress”, and defined stress as a “nonspecific reaction of the body to whatever demand” (Tan & Yip, 2018).

When a psychological state (anxiety) starts to negatively affect a person's everyday life, it may develop into a psychological illness or mental health issue. The lockdown had been activated as a precaution to stop this cause from spreading over the planet to determine whether those under quarantine "were

suffering from this serious disease," quarantine "disconnected and controlled the movement of persons who first spread this deadly sickness (**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000**).

The global problem spread quickly. Covid-19 pushed governments all across the world to take significant action to stop it, or at the very least, Its quick expansion in the gearbox was slowing. Many countries had instituted lockdowns at the national level, and some declared a national lockdown that prohibited both domestic and international travel, froze attendance at schools, colleges, and universities, and outlawed all kinds of crowded public spaces while urging people to stay inside. Additionally, hourly electronic media outlets report on the coronavirus's rapidly rising incidence and mortality rate by citing global statistics for each nation. Due to the world's harsh actions, many individuals experience psychological discomfort (**Chen et al., 2020**).

The mode a person lives has a big impact on their happiness and success in life. Everyone wants to be happy with their lives. Psychologists and other mental health experts had long emphasized the importance of human spirituality and its development. Religion, religiousness, and spiritual intelligence among psychologists. Everywhere, spirituality can be identified as a habit or behavior of various religious traditions, and it had a significant impact on people's lives. People could benefit from spiritual influence since it is a means to lessen the negative effects of any stressful situations in their lives. Spirituality is an important component of life. There was a significant connection between religion, mental health, and overall contentment with life (Wong & Law, 2002; Kalampos & Roussi, 2017).

Emmons (2000) proposed the concept of spiritual intelligence, which combines spirituality and intelligence. The use of spiritual intelligence, which consists of a collection of clearly defined spiritual competencies and capitals,

could improve a person's capacity for adaptation (King, 2008). By encouraging individuals to think critically, accept life's hardships, and live a fulfilling existence, spiritual intelligence assists people in finding answers to problems. According to Bowell's speculative theory, a low or drowsy spiritual quotient can lead to an immature personality that showed problems with organization, life dissatisfaction, goal discrepancy, and well-being (Bowell, 2004). Another study found positive associations between spiritual intelligence and well-being. Rahimipour and Karami (2014) said spiritual intelligence, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being were positively correlated. An-others by to Bigdeloo and Bozorgi (2016) spiritual intelligence predicted life satisfaction.

Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic was a global and major health crisis that had terrible implications across the world. The coronavirus causes social isolation and mental health issues. Recent data also revealed that sheltering in place was associated with more headaches, unhappiness, and stress. The elderly and families with adolescents, who were already at risk for psychological dangers, depression, and self-destructive ideas, may suffer the most from social isolation (Panchal et al., 2020). Infectious disorders like COVID-19 have psychological repercussions and indicate mental illness.

Psychological distress is a generic mental health issue (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1982). Up till now, rendering to Wheaton (2007) Psychological distress—depressive and anxiety symptoms—requires special ability. Depression and general anxiety disorder assessments share many components. Thus, psychological suffering and mental diseases were distinct but interrelated (Payton, 2009). Depression and anxiety are comparable emotions. Depression is marked by self-criticism, misery, and regret. Depression makes life worthless. They often experienced disasters (Tanaka et al., 1998). People lost interest in

life and fail to feel positive. They disliked doing fun things again. They lost interest in hobbies and become cool about possessions. Touchiness may be linked to depression because people may be stubbornly indignant or obstinate over minor concerns. They also blamed others in severe ways (**American Psychiatric Association, 2000**).

Anxiety is triggered expecting risk causes anxiety (**Tanaka et al., 1998**). Nervous people constantly feared something bad might happen. This makes people nervous and unsteady. As these people anticipate the worst, they were frantically trying to stop it. Anxiety, evident with involuntary stimulation, caused mouth dryness, tremor, increased pulsation, sweet-breathed issues, and activity problems. Anxiety—constant worry about the future—causes physiological excitation, which disrupts sleep, eating, and concentration (**American Psychiatric Association, 2000**). Depression and anxiety cause humiliation, guilt, nervousness, and unhappiness. Depression often causes anxiety (**Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995**).

As well as psychologists were interested in spiritual intelligence, a new concept. "Intelligence Reframed" discusses spiritual intelligence proposed by **Gardner (1999)**. Spiritual intelligence means life preference and the power to improve any disrespect (**Selman et al., 2005**). Spiritual intelligence is a key concept in psychology. Emotional and spiritual intelligence differ. Spiritual intelligence combines intelligence and spirituality into a new idea. Spirituality is seeking and experiencing heavenly aspects, importance, purpose, vast degrees of vigilance, bigness, and top human potential. Spiritual intelligence to required potential from spiritual subjects and supply purpose and personal cooperation for precious end enhancement. Spiritual intelligence is distinct from spirituality, sacred experience, and monotheism (**Amran, 2009**).

The belief system is spiritual. Intelligence is used for problem-solving in

Role of Psychological Distress, Spiritual Intelligence, and Life Satisfaction during Covid-19 Pandemic among College Students of Punjab, Pakistan

special cultures as indicated (Gardner, 1997). **Gallagher et al., (2007)** indicated that spirituality strongly affects learning, yet it is unproven. Many educators and thinkers provide spiritual opinions based on intelligence, yet many disagree (King, 2010). Furthermore, **Spence (1983)** indicated that the people for such priorities are generally thriving and judging the demonstration against the outwardly and inwardly imposed standard that is high among ordinary people.

Many studies focused on the favorable association between spiritual and mental well-being (**Fabricatore et al., 2000**). Individual spirituality—separate from God-fearing beliefs and practices—is linked to life happiness in young adults and older persons. Spirituality and forgiveness were also linked in young school-going adults (**Powers et al., 2007**). Spirituality was also linked to other positive traits including forgiveness, appreciation, and sympathy among older adults, according to (**McCullough et al., 2005**).

Globally, mental illness affects young people the most. Although psychological issues affect society as a whole, college students had a higher frequency than the general population. College students experience various pressures, academic needs, study work, pressure to deliver, tutors and family pressure, financial difficulty, and future worries. All pressures could worsen kids' mental health and academic performance. College students had despair, anxiety, and stress. College students had a greater rate of these all-mental issues worldwide. Higher education, despite its many benefits, can be stressful during college/university (**Cvetkovski et al., 2012**).

The Rationale of the Study

This study focused on the connections between psychological discomfort, life satisfaction, and spiritual intelligence among college students during the COVID-19 pandemic. College students' psychological distress and life

happiness can be predicted by spiritual intelligence using COVID-19. College students are a generally active and mobile age group. Unexpectedly, individuals who did not attend college lived at home, did not associate with friends, did not exercise, did not travel, and ran the danger of self-infection, family infection, or friend infection was directly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Because they take their classes online rather than in person or college classrooms, they are missing out on frontal education and clinical/applied or exercise classes. This new life was difficult, and the student suffers from having to take the steps to leave the house, go somewhere else, and then come home. The sample used in this study had previously received very little or extremely infrequent attention, particularly in Pakistan.

Statement of the Problems

A global health emergency known as COVID-19 spread catastrophic effects throughout practically the whole planet. The ability to recognize viral disease outbreaks in the prehistoric era is a crucial component of efficient disease control and prevention. Investigating how students of Punjab, Pakistan respond to outbreak scenarios and other natural calamities and how they assist other citizens is highly interesting. As the pandemic situation worsens, there was an opportunity to learn more about how Punjabis react to painful situations like the Coronavirus-19 happening, natural disasters, or danger. The purpose of this study was to quantify the relationship between psychological discomfort, spiritual intelligence, and life satisfaction among college students participating in coronavirus-19.

Significance of the Study

This study aids in determining the level of life satisfaction, spiritual intelligence, and psychological suffering in residents of Pakistan's Punjab area. The project also examines how factors like psychological strain enhance the

likelihood of developing various mental health conditions and reduce life satisfaction in college students during the Covid-19 scenario. This study also looks at how spiritual intelligence affects college students in this epidemic in terms of life satisfaction and psychological suffering. Researchers, mental health professionals, healthcare workers, and governmental authorities will all advantage from the verdicts of this study.

Hypotheses

1. Significant negative correlation between psychological distress and spiritual intelligence during covid-19.
2. Negative correlation between psychological distress and life satisfaction during covid-19.
3. Significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and life satisfaction during covid-19.
4. Spiritual intelligence is a significant predictor of psychological distress and life satisfaction during covid-19 pandemic.
5. The significant mean difference between both males and females among spiritual Intelligence, life satisfaction, and psychological distress during covid-19 pandemic among college students.

METHOD

Research Design

In the current study, a correlational research design was adopted.

Population

The target population for the current study was college students who were enrolled in Punjab's public and private sectors.

Sample

In this study, male and female college students from various public and private colleges in Punjab, Pakistan, made up the entire sample (N= 380).

Sampling Technique

Through convenient sampling, which includes both male and female college students, data for the current study was gathered. Students with any type of impairment or physical or mental condition were also excluded from this study.

Instruments

Demographic Sheet

Respondents were given a self-made demographic sheet including information on their gender, age, education, place of residence, family structure, and socioeconomic level.

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)

The respondent's psychological distress was measured using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) (Kessler et al., 2003). The (K10) scale, which has ten items concerning the emotional state, assesses how contestants practiced anxiety and depression indicators over the last four weeks (such as temperament, worthlessness, hopelessness, annoyance, and melancholy). This scale's response options ranged from one to four. This scale's reliability ranges from 0.89 to 0.91. For participants who fall within a range, psychological distress is classified as good for those in the age group of 10 to 19, minimal for those in the 20 to 24 age group, moderate for those in the 25 to 29 age group, and severe for those in the 30 to 50 age group.

Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI-24)

This was based on twenty-four items that were selected from an initial pool of 42 items that were created to gauge the amount of spiritual savvy among

adults. It had 24 statements and a Likert scale with a response range of 0 to 4. A response of 0 indicated that the item was not at all true for me, and a response of 4 indicated that it was entirely true. Item number 6 must be scored in reverse. High spiritual intelligence is indicated by the maximum mark on the scale. The inventory's total scores range from 0-96. Test-retest reliability will be reported using a score between 0.91 and 0.89, which is seen as split-half dependability. The scale may be valid for a variety of psychological tests and indicate significant constructs with divergent and convergent credibility. This inventory was compiled by (King, 2008).

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The life happiness of research participants was assessed using the Happiness with Life Scale (SWLS). There were five components in the instrument. Contributors were asked to react on a seven-point Likert-type scale depending on whether they agreed or disagreed with each item on the scale. The scale shows strong psychometric characteristics. The dependability level was approximately 0.75 (Diener et al., 1985).

Procedure

The researcher made direct contact with the sample. Purposive sampling was used in this research project to choose the sample from several public and private colleges in Punjab. Following receipt of approval from the creator of the instruments used in the current study, all of the scales were made available to the participants. Additionally, a demographics sheet and informed consent should be given to the respondents. All participants received unambiguous instructions regarding the instruments and response format. Participants were required to sign privacy and confidentiality agreements agreeing that the data they provided would only be used for the study. The contributors were greeted or thanks for

their interest, and valuable time after the data collection. Data was gathered in less than two months (April 2021 to June 2021).

Analyses Plan

Through the use of SPSS (26.0), the study's collected data was examined. Frequency distribution was utilized to get the proportion of the demographic data. In addition, bivariate correlation analysis, regression analysis, and a basic independent t-test were all used in the current study to quantify correlation and examine prediction effects.

Ethical Considerations

The goal, process, and rationale of this study were explained to the participants. This investigation was protected from the full extent of the anticipated harm to each individual, society, and research participant. All APA-recommended ethical guidelines, including informed consent, approval from instrument authors, and confidentiality, were followed in the meantime. Participants were guaranteed that any information they submitted would be kept confidential and would not be misused. Participants established a rapport and were given the assurance that the information they provided would be kept private and used only for study. Each participant was contacted one-on-one, and none of the information was shared.

RESULTS

After the data collection was finished, SPSS (26.00) was used to perform statistical analysis. Different statistical techniques were applied to this data analysis. The psychometric characteristics of the variables were measured first.

Table I

Demographics Sheet of Respondents (N=380)

Respondent's Characteristics	f (%)	M(SD)
Age		24.10 (3.92)

Role of Psychological Distress, Spiritual Intelligence, and Life Satisfaction during Covid-19 Pandemic among College Students of Punjab, Pakistan

Gender	Male	180 (47.3)
	Female	200 (52.8)
Education	BA/BSc/BS	186 (49.1)
	MA/MSc	97 (25.4)
	MS/MPhil	97(25.6)
Residence	Urban	218 (57.5)
	Rural	162 (42.6)
Family System	Nuclear	207 (54.6)
	Joint	173 (45.5)
Marital Status	Married	74(19.4)
	Single	302(79.7)
	Divorced	4(1.1)
Monthly Income	Less than 20,000	71(18.7)
	21000 to 50,000	124(32.7)
	51,000 to 1 Lac	134(35.5)
	More than 1lac	51(13.1)

The frequency and proportion of each demographic attribute of the study sample were shown in Table 4.1. The participant's median age was 24.10 and their standard deviation was 3.92. 180 responders (47.3% of the total) were men, while 200 (52.8%) were women. Data were gathered based on respondents' educational backgrounds; 186 (49%), 97 (25.4%), and 97 (25.6%), respectively, were BA/B.Sc./BS, M.A./M.Sc., and MS/M.Phil. respondents. 218 (57.5%) respondents showed their place of residence as being urban, and 162 (42.6%) respondents indicated their place of residence as being rural. Additionally, 173 (45.5%) respondents identified as belonging to a joint family, while 207 (54.6%) respondents identified as belonging to a nuclear family. In terms of marital status, 74 respondents (19.4%) were married, 302 respondents (79.7%) were single, and 4 respondents (1.1%) were divorced. In terms of monthly income, 71 respondents (18.7%) reported having less than 20,000

monthly incomes, 124 respondents (32.7%) reported having between 21,000 and 50,000 monthly incomes, 134 respondents (35.5%) reported having between 51,000 and 1 lac monthly incomes, and 51 respondents (13.1%) reported having more than one lac monthly incomes.

Table 2

Descriptive and Reliability Analysis of Spiritual Intelligence, Psychological Distress Scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale, and Self-Report Inventory (N=380)

Variables	M	SD	α	Range		Skew	Kurt
				Min	Max		
Psychological Distress	21.9	7.34	.87	10	50	.38	-.46
Spiritual Intelligence	55.9	15.19	.91	0	94	-.52	1.16
Life satisfaction	23.5	6.28	.81	6	35	-.49	-.37

According to the reliability analyses, scales were reliable and had significant values (.81 to.91) as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 3

Correlation among Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory, Psychological Distress Scale, and Satisfaction with Life Scale (N=380)

Variables	Psychological Distress	Spiritual Intelligence	Life satisfaction
Psychological Distress	-	-.31**	-.45**
Spiritual Intelligence		-	.31**
Life satisfaction			-

** $p < .01$

According to the data in Table 4.3, psychological discomfort was significantly inversely related to both spiritual IQ ($r = -.31$, $p .01$) and life

Role of Psychological Distress, Spiritual Intelligence, and Life Satisfaction during Covid-19 Pandemic among College Students of Punjab, Pakistan

satisfaction ($r=-.45$, $p .01$). It suggests that among college students during COVID-19, a high level of psychological discomfort lowers levels of spiritual intelligence and life happiness. While there was a significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and life satisfaction ($r=.31$, $p .01$). It was discovered that among college students, a greater spiritual intelligence score increased life satisfaction.

Table 4

Predicting the role of Spiritual Intelligence in Psychological Distress among college students (N=380)

Predictors	B	β	Psychological Distress
			95% CI
Constant	31.17**		[28.45, 33.86]
Spiritual Intelligence	-.16**	-.31	[-.18, -.11]
R ²	.08		
F	37.66**		

** $p < .01$; β for regression coefficient; CI for Confidence interval

According to the aforementioned table, spiritual intelligence significantly predicts psychological anguish and contributes 9% of the variance in that distress. It indicates that during the COVID-19 outbreak, spiritual intelligence had a substantial impact on college students' psychological anguish.

Table 5

Predicting the Role of Spiritual Intelligence in Life Satisfaction among College Students (N=380)

Predictors	B	β	Life Satisfaction
			95% CI
Constant	14.28**		[11.89, 16.69]
Spiritual Intelligence	.14**	.32	[.11, .17]
R ²	.11		

F 42.14**

** $p < .01$; β for regression coefficient; CI for Confidence interval

According to Table 4.5's findings, spiritual intelligence significantly predicts life satisfaction and accounts for 10% of the variance in that measure. It means that during the COVID-19 pandemic, spiritual intelligence had a significant impact on college students' levels of life satisfaction.

Table 6

Comparison of Males and Females on psychological distress, spiritual intelligence, and life satisfaction (N=379)

Variable	Male (n = 179)		Female (n = 200)		t	p	95%CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
Psychological Distress	20.7	7.9	23.0	7.46	-3.08	.00	-3.75	-.82
Spiritual Intelligence	56.4	15.5	55.5	14.8	.60	.55	-2.14	5.0
Life Satisfaction	23.8	6.3	22.4	6.78	2.08	.04	.079	2.7

The results of a statistically significant comparison between the mean scores of psychological distress and life satisfaction among college students who were male and female were displayed in Table 4.6. In contrast to male college students, female college students had a considerably higher mean score for psychological discomfort during COVID-19. In contrast, male college students scored much higher on the COVID-19 life satisfaction scale than female college students did. Additionally, during COVID-19, male college students scored marginally higher on the spiritual intelligence scale than female college students did.

Findings

The demographic factors' frequency was shown in Table 1's results. The mean age of the students was (M = 24.10; SD = 3.92) on average. 180 men

Role of Psychological Distress, Spiritual Intelligence, and Life Satisfaction during Covid-19 Pandemic among College Students of Punjab, Pakistan

responded (47.3%), whereas 200 women took part (52.8%). According to respondents' level of education, 186 (49.1%) were BA/B.Sc./BS respondents, and 97 (25.4%) were M.A./M.Sc. respondents and 97 (25.6%) were MS/M.Phil. respondents. 218 (57.5%) of the participants were from metropolitan areas, while 162 (42.6%) were from rural areas. 173 participants (45.5%) belonged to a nuclear family, while 207 (54.6%) belonged to a combined family arrangement. In terms of marital status, 74 (1.9%) people were married, 4 (1.1%) were divorced, and 302 (79.7%) people were not married. In terms of monthly income, 71 respondents (18.7%) said they made less than 20,000, 124 respondents (32.7%) said they made between 20,000 and 50,000, 134 respondents (35.5%) said they made between 50,000 and 1,000,000 per month, and 51 respondents (13.1%) said they made more than 1,000,000 per month.

A model using spiritual intelligence as a predictor can explain a significant 09% of the variance in psychological discomfort, according to the results of Table 4. It shows that during COVID-19, spiritual intelligence has a significant impact on psychological suffering among college students. Table 5's findings also showed that a model using spiritual intelligence as a predictor can account for a significant 10% of the variance in life happiness. Additionally, during COVID-19, it was shown that spiritual intelligence has a significant impact on college students' levels of life satisfaction.

Both genders have a significant difference in the factors, as shown in Table 6. During COVID-19, female college students had a mean psychological distress score that was considerably greater than that of male college students. Additionally, in COVID-19, male college students scored on average higher for life satisfaction than female college students. Additionally, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of men and women because spiritual

intelligence was higher in women and lower in men. Additionally, during COVID-19, male college students scored marginally higher on the spiritual intelligence scale than female college students did.

Discussion

The purpose of choosing this topic was to investigate the relationships between the effects of psychological discomfort, life satisfaction, and spiritual intelligence among college students during COVID-19. There is a link between psychological disorders and medical concerns. Human health can be impacted by what individuals do, how they go about their everyday lives, the choices, and preferences they make, how they handle difficulties in life, and the environment in which they live. Studying the consequences of psychological strain on human well-being was one of the goals. The sample for this research project was made up of (N= 380) college students who were chosen from several colleges in Punjab, Pakistan, using a purposive sampling technique.

According to the results of Table I resolute the percentage and occurrence of demo-graphical variables. The participants' average age was 24.10. 180 responders (47.3% of the total) were men, while 200 (52.8%) were women. In terms of education, 186 (49% of participants) hold a BA, B.Sc., or BS degree. 97 (25.4%) participants have a master's or higher degree, and 97 (25.6%) participants have a master's or higher degree in philosophy. 218 (57.5%) of the participants lived in urban regions, while 162 (42.6%) were from rural areas. 173 respondents (45.5%) were from a nuclear family, while 207 (54.6%) belonged to a joint family. When asked about their marital status, 302 people (79.7%) said they were single, 74 people (19.4%) were married, and 4 people (1.1%) were divorced. In terms of monthly income, 71 respondents (or 18.7%) said they made less than 20,000 each month, 124 respondents (or 32.7%) said they made between 20,000 and \$50,000 each month, 134 respondents (or 35.5%) said they made between 51,000 and 1 million each month, and 51

respondents (or 13.1%) said they made more than one million each month.

Table 2's findings indicate that the psychological distress scale, spiritual intelligence scale, and life satisfaction scale all fall within the acceptable range of alpha (.81 to .91). According to the study's first hypothesis, there would be a bad link between spiritual intelligence and psychological suffering. The noteworthy findings in Table 4.3 support this idea. It demonstrates that when psychological anguish rises, spiritual intelligence falls. A person with great spiritual intelligence finds significance in the psychological stresses and inevitable difficulties that come with life and sees them as challenges for human growth rather than calamities. As a result, he or she can keep or rapidly regain his or her optimistic attitude despite the circumstances (Zohar & Marshall, 2004). People's physical and mental health are affected by spiritual intelligence, which also enables them to maintain their stability, lessen their worries, and interact with others on a deeper level (Moalemi et al., 2010). One of the key elements in achieving happiness is having spiritual life and communicating with God through prayer (Panahi, 2009).

Different techniques that can harmonize inner life and soul with outer life and bring about happiness are included in spiritual intelligence. Spirituality generates the force that has an impact on communications, emotions, and physical circumstances. Interfaith and spiritually active people can deal with tension and their spiritual challenges. In reality, spirituality has a protective effect that results in improved mental and physical health, a sense of meaning and purpose in life, and hope (Babanazari et al., 2012). "Significant negative relationship between psychological distress and life satisfaction" is the second hypothesis in this study. The results in Table 3 show a negative correlation between psychological discomfort and life satisfaction. Additionally, it demonstrates that as psychological distress rises, each person's level of life

satisfaction falls.

Another empirical study has demonstrated that the most unreasonable motivation results in harmful emotions when a person experiences a distressing condition. The uncontrollable, persistent thoughts tend to strengthen hostility, fear, and disheartening evidence. Meanwhile, these feelings may contribute to out-of-control conditions, reduced self-worth, and decreased self-confidence. They may also occasionally cause significant disruptions in daily activities, which is harmful to a person's overall well-being (Christ et al., 2020). As a result, mental adversity or psychological distress brought on by obsessions can have a positive effect on life satisfaction. Previous studies have discussed how improving cognitive functioning, social performance, and raising hope, social influence, thankfulness, interpersonal relationships, and well-being are all fundamentally tied to life happiness (Trzebinski et al., 2020).

If we talk about other variables and check the results of the correlation between variables that studies have been conducted during the Covid-19 period a study on health workers found that death anxiety has a significant ($p = .01$) but negative correlation with life satisfaction ($r = -.37, p < .01$) and optimism ($r = -.42$). The relationship between life satisfaction and fear of death shifts in a way that is unfavorable to optimism. Death anxiety, life satisfaction, and optimism mean scores also differed between men and women. Doctors and psychologists have very different scores (Sindhu et al., 2022).

The majority of people in our Pakistani culture experience psychological discomfort as a result of the absence of a solid economic base. As a result, people's psychological distress gradually worsens, which harms pupils' spirituality and sense of fulfillment in life. Numerous other factors, such as college closures, online learning, disease panic, increased academic stress, academic load, and online exams, among others, also contribute to psychological distress. Students who have COVID-19 plus any of the aforementioned characteristics usually

Role of Psychological Distress, Spiritual Intelligence, and Life Satisfaction during Covid-19 Pandemic among College Students of Punjab, Pakistan

experience feelings of worry, melancholy, helplessness, and dissatisfaction. Both frustrations and hopelessness play a significant part in the rise in psychological suffering. Spirituality immediately declines when someone is discouraged and loses hope, which also affects their level of life satisfaction. According to the literature of another study, various experimental discoveries uncovered that the understudies of the colleges are at tall hazard to mental well-being issues. The discoveries of the display think about recommended that college student's population juvenile specific the understudies who are considering within the distinctive colleges in Pakistan are at more hazard to mental wellbeing issues, i.e., on the variable of destitute self-esteem, loneliness due to web habit. Certain proactive variables position, related stressors and self-esteem demonstrate to be significant in their mental well-being (Akbar et al., 2023).

According to the third prediction of this study, "there would be a positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and life satisfaction." The findings of recent studies indicate a strong correlation between life pleasure and spiritual intelligence. The previous study by Kousar (2019) showed that life satisfaction and spiritual intelligence are positively connected. Other findings demonstrated a favorable correlation between the two factors under consideration, and it is widely acknowledged that an increase in spiritual intelligence and life satisfaction occurs as people age (Ardelt & Jacobs, 2009). Results of a previous study showed a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and life happiness in senior Muslims in Pakistan.

According to Table 4, linear regression is also used to predict how spiritual intelligence may affect students' psychological suffering. The hypothesis is verified by consequences that are significant at ($p < 0.01$). The findings of this study indicate that a model using spiritual intelligence as a predictor can explain a significant 09% of the variance in psychological distress in the whole sample

(N=379). It has been demonstrated that, during the COVID-19 epidemic, spiritual intelligence has a significant impact on psychological suffering among college students.

Table 5's findings also indicate that a model including spiritual intelligence as a predictor can be responsible for a significant 10% of the variance in life happiness. Additionally, during COVID-19, it was shown that spiritual intelligence has a significant impact on college students' levels of life satisfaction. Spirituality may produce a shift in adjustment or settlement and assist people to achieve their goals and solve their issues, making spiritual intelligence the primary determinant of life satisfaction and spiritualism as well as a predictor of any work, action, and fitting (Mull, 2004).

It also serves to raise both his and another person's consciousness. It amplifies admirable traits like sympathy, compassion, openness, and endurance (Bolghan-Abadi et al., 2014). Many mental health professionals had made the connection between spiritual intelligence and a person's situation, environment, and eventuality (Sisk & Torrance, 2001). Therefore, to achieve success and fullness, spiritual intelligence may have a variety of incarnate abilities, values, and attributes that change impermanently with goodness and sympathy to achieve harmony. Therefore, psychologists are interested in the relationship between intelligence level and life satisfaction in gifted individuals.

In terms of psychological anguish, spiritual intelligence, and life happiness, there would be a considerable difference between men and women, according to the study's fourth hypothesis. Table 6 showed that there are substantial differences between the variables for both genders. During COVID-19, female college students had a mean psychological distress score that was considerably greater than that of male college students. The earlier study highlighted the significance of gender differences or their impact on distress and demonstrated that females experience higher levels of ongoing, daily stress than males (Hogan

et al., 2002).

Additionally, according to COVID-19, male college students scored on average more highly for life satisfaction than female college students. In addition, it appeared that women had a higher level of spiritual intelligence than males, as evidenced by the fact that men's mean scores are lower on this issue. Similar conclusions were also made by fewer researchers in earlier studies. The researcher believes women are more spiritually intelligent. Numerous academics have highlighted how spirituality or spiritualism affects female students (**Braxton et al., 2007**). Additionally, during COVID-19, male college students scored marginally higher on the spiritual intelligence scale than female college did.

Recommendations

The research's data was only gathered from five cities in Punjab (Faisalabad, Lahore, Jhang, Chiniot, and Sargodha); hence its findings cannot be generalized to the entire province of Punjab in Pakistan. It is therefore advised that future researchers gather data from other Punjabi cities, such as Liyyah, Multan, Bahawalpur, Rajanpur, and Rawalpindi, to streamline their findings regarding other cities. It is advised that psychologists offer seminars, conferences, and webinars among college students since psychological anguish is linked to mental health, which results in other psychological issues. Also recommended is that research into the potential mental health effects of this traumatic event should continue throughout the entire pandemic. Because the results of our study suggest that spiritual people experience less psychological distress and suffer from psychological issues, psychological distress may decrease when a person leads an upright and well lifestyle, engages in spiritual or religious activities, and overcomes negative feelings. People who experience psychological distress can also benefit greatly from cognitive restructuring because it will lessen mental health problems and psychological distress (such as depression, anxiety, and

stress).

Conclusion

This research concludes that psychological distress and life satisfaction caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) varies significantly between male and female respondents, although there was no difference in spiritual intelligence between the sexes. The findings showed that female students were under more stress than male students. Additionally, it has been found that male students have higher life satisfaction than female students. Further findings regarding spiritual intelligence during this COVID-19 outbreak revealed a negligible gender difference. The research also revealed that life pleasure and spiritual acuity were inversely connected with psychological suffering. Thus, during this coronavirus pandemic among college students, spiritual intelligence and life satisfaction are positively associated with each other. The other variables in this analysis, life satisfaction, and psychological distress, are both significantly predicted by spiritual intelligence.

References

1. Amran, Y. (2009). *The contribution of emotional and spiritual intelligence to effective business leadership* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, California, Palo Alto.
2. Akbar, F., Sindhu, Z. M., Siddique, S., & Rasheed, N. (2023). The Impact of Internet Addiction on Self-Esteem, and Loneliness Among University Students of Punjab, Pakistan. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, *15*(2), 627-638.
[https:// DOI: 10.48047/INTJECSE/VI15I2.85](https://doi.org/10.48047/INTJECSE/VI15I2.85)
3. American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.). Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association.
4. Arumugam, T. (2020). *14500 Malaysians at 'Tabligh' gathering, 40 test positive for COVID-19*. *New Straits Times*.
Available <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2020/03/574484/14500>.

Role of Psychological Distress, Spiritual Intelligence, and Life Satisfaction during Covid-19 Pandemic among College Students of Punjab, Pakistan

5. Ardel, M., & Jacobs, S. (2009). Wisdom, integrity, and life satisfaction in very old age. In M. C. Smith & N. DeFrates-Densch (Eds.), *Handbook of research on adult learning and development* (pp. 732–760). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group
6. Babanazari, L., Askari, P., & Honarmand, M., M. (2012). Spiritual intelligence and happiness for adolescents in high school. *Life Science Journal*, *9*(3), 2296-2305.
7. Bigdeloo, M., & Bozorgi, Z. D. (2016). Relationship between the spiritual intelligence, self-control, and life satisfaction in high school teachers of Mahshahr City. *Review of European Studies*, *8*(2), 210-216.
8. Howell, R. A. (2004). *The seven steps of spiritual intelligence*. London: Brealey.
9. Braxton, N. D., Lang, D. L., Sales, J. M., Wingood, G. M., & DiClemente, R. J. (2007). The role of spirituality in sustaining the psychological well-being of HIV-positive Black women. *Women & Health*, *46*(2), 113-129.
10. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2000). *Quarantine and isolation*. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/index.html> (accessed 21 June 2020).
11. Chen, Q., Liang, M., Li, Y., Guo, J., Fei, D., Wang, L., ... & Zhang, Z. (2020). Mental health care for medical staff in China during the COVID-19 outbreak. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, *7*(4), e15-e16.
12. Christ, N. M., Contractor, A. A., Wang, X., & Elhai, J. D. (2020). The mediating effect of rumination between post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and anger reactions. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, *12*(6), 619-625.
13. Cvetkovski, S., Reavley, N. J., & Jorm, A. F. (2012). The prevalence and correlates of psychological distress in Australian tertiary students compared to their community peers. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, *46*(5), 457-467.
14. Diener, E. R., Emmons, A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffen, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *69*(2), 71-75.
15. Dohrenwend, B. P., & Dohrenwend B. S. (1982). "Perspectives on the past and

- future of psychiatric epidemiology." *American Journal of Public Health*, 72(1), 1271-1279.
16. Emmons, A. (2000). Is spirituality intelligence? Motivation cognition, and the psychology of ultimate concern. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 10(1), 3-26.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327582IJPR10012>.
17. Fabricatore, A. N., Handal, P. J., & Fenzel, L. M. (2000). Personal spirituality as a moderator of the relationship between stressors and subjective well-being. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 28(2), 221–228.
18. Gallagher, S. J., Rocco, T. S., & Landorf, H. (2007). A phenomenological study of spirituality and learning processes at work: Exploring the holistic theory of knowledge and learning. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 18(4), 457-480.
19. Gardner, H. (1997). Multiple intelligences as a partner in school improvement. *Educational Leadership*, 55(1), 20-21.
20. Gardner, H. (1999). *The disciplined mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
21. Hogan, J. M., Carlson J. G., & Dua, J. (2002) Stressors and stress reaction among university personnel. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78(2), 725-736. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327752Jpa4901_13
22. Kahn, J. S., & McIntosh K. (2005). History and recent advances in coronavirus discovery. *Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal*, 24(11), S223–S227.
23. Kaliampos, A., & Roussi, P. (2017). Religious beliefs, coping, and psychological well-being among Greek cancer patients. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 22(6), 754 -64.
24. Kessler, R. C., Barker, P. R., Colpe, L. J., Epstein, J. F., Gfroerer, J. C., Hiripi, E., Howes, M. J., Normand, S. L. T., Manderscheid, R. W., Walters, E. E., & Zaslavsky, A. M. (2003). Screening for serious mental illness in the general population. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 60(2), 184-189.
25. King, D. (2008). *Rethinking claims of spiritual intelligence: A definition, model, and measure applications of modelling in the Natural and social science program*. Trent University, Canada.
26. King, D. B. (2010). Personal meaning production as a component of spiritual

Role of Psychological Distress, Spiritual Intelligence, and Life Satisfaction during Covid-19 Pandemic among College Students of Punjab, Pakistan

- intelligence. *International Journal of Existential Positive Psychology*, 3(1), 1-10.
27. Kousar, R. (2019). *Impact of Spiritual Intelligence and Grit on Subjective Well-being of Young Adults: Mediating Role of Resilience* (Doctoral dissertation).
28. Lovibond, P. F., & Lovibond, S. H. (1995). The structure of negative emotional states: Comparison of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) with the Beck Depression and Anxiety Inventories. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 33(3), 335-343.
29. McCullough, M. E., Bono, G., & Root, L. M. (2005). Religion and forgiveness. In R. F. Paloutzian & C. L. Park (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (pp. 394-411). The Guilford Press
30. Mull, H. B. (2004). *Spiritual intelligence in psychotherapy with grieving clients* (Doctoral dissertation). Arizona State University, Arizona
31. Panahi, A. A. (2009). Factors of vitality and happiness in spouses from the perspective of religion and psychology. *Journal of Knowledge*, 14(5), 15-38.
32. Payton, A. R. (2009). Mental health, mental illness, and psychological distress: same continuum or distinct phenomena? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 50(2), 213-227.
33. Powers, C., Nam, R. K., Rowatt, W. C. & Hill, P. C. (2007). Associations between humility, spiritual transcendence, and forgiveness. *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, 18(4), 75-94.
34. Rahimpour, M., & Karami, E. (2014). The Mediating Role of Spiritual Intelligence with Psychological Well-being and life satisfaction in Mehriz Elderly People. *Rehab Medicine*, 3(3), 72 -80.
35. Selman, V., Selman, R. C., Selman, J., & Selman, E. (2005). Spiritual-intelligence/-quotient. *College Teaching Methods & Styles Journal (CTMS)*, 1(3), 23-30.
36. Sindhu, Z. M., Shahbal, S., Khurshid, S., Irshad, N., Khan, A., & Batool, R. Death Anxiety and Life Satisfaction among Health Workers during Covid-19; with Moderating Role of Optimism. *Journal of Xi'an Shiyou University, Natural Science Edition*, 18(8), 199-220.
37. Sisk, D., & Torrance, E. (2001). *Spiritual intelligence: Developing higher*
-

consciousness. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation Press.

38. Spence, J. (1983). *Achievement and achievement motives*. San Francisco, CA: W.H. Freeman and Company.
39. Tan, S. Y., & Yip, A., (2018). Hans Selye (1907–1982): founder of the stress theory. *Singapore Medical Journal*, 59(4), 170–171. DOI 10.11622/smedj.2018043.
40. Tanaka, E., Sakamoto, S., Kijima, N., & Kitmaru, T. (1998). Different personalities between depression and anxiety. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 54(6), 1043-1055.
41. Trzebiński, J., Cabański, M., & Czarnecka, J. Z. (2020). Reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic: the influence of meaning in life, life satisfaction, and assumptions on world orderliness and positivity. *Journal of Loss Trauma*, 25(1), 6–7.
42. Wheaton, B. (2007). "The twain meets: distress, disorder and the continuing conundrum of categories (comment on Horwitz)." *Health*. 11(1), 303-319
43. Wong, C. S., & Law, K. S. (2002). The effects of leader and follower emotional intelligence on performance and attitude. *Leadership Quality*, 13(3), 243 -74
44. World Health Organization. (2020a). *WHO Virtual press conference on COVID-19*. World Heal. Organ.<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/transcripts/who-audio-emergencies-coronavirus-press-conference-full-and-final-11mar2020.pdf>(ac-cessed 3.29.20).
45. World Health Organization. (2020b). *WHO Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation*. World Heal. Organ <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/685db9125cd>(accessed3.29.20).
46. Zohar, D., & Marshall, I. (2004). *Spiritual capital: Wealth we can live by*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.