

Research Paper

## A Study on Impact of Spiritual Practices on Psychological Well-Being and Academic Excellence among College Students

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### ABSTRACT

Spiritual practices include prayer, yoga, meditation, mindfulness, scripture recitation, temple visits, and mantra chanting. Ryff (1989) recognized six aspects of psychological Well-being include Self-acceptance, Autonomy, Personal growth, Environmental mastery, Purpose in life and Positive relationships. Academic excellence refers to an individual's demonstrated capacity to excel in academic endeavors. This study aims to investigate the relationship between spiritual practices, psychological well-being, and academic excellence among college students, emphasizing the relevance of holistic development. The current study included 50 male and 50 female aged 18 to 25. A convenience sampling strategy was applied. Data were gathered using standard questionnaires. The acquired data was evaluated using statistical techniques that are Pearson product moment correlation, Simple linear regression, and Independent sample t-test. Statistical analysis using Pearson Correlation Coefficient indicates a significant positive link between spiritual practices and psychological well-being and found a moderate positive association between spiritual Practices and academic excellence. A t-test study revealed there are no considerable gender disparities in spiritual practices, psychological well-being, and academic excellence among college students. A simple linear regression of spiritual practices and psychological well-being yields an R-Squared of 0.5989. Spiritual practices account for 59.9% of the variation in psychological well-being. A simple linear regression between spiritual practices and academic excellence yields an R-squared of 0.3949. Spiritual practices account for 39.5% of variation in academic excellence. The study found that participating in spiritual activities improves both psychological well-being and academic excellence among college students.

**Keywords:** *Spiritual Practices, Psychological Well-Being, Academic Excellence, College students*

College is a key period filled with academic, social, and personal obstacles. Students frequently experience stress, anxiety, and mental health difficulties, requiring additional measures to promote their well-being. Spiritual practices such as mindfulness, prayer, meditation, and religious beliefs can help manage stress and promote emotional resilience. These techniques can help students overcome obstacles, develop a sense of purpose, and achieve inner peace. A successful education system should help

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## **A Study on Impact of Spiritual Practices on Psychological Well-Being and Academic Excellence among College Students**

students reach their full potential, with data indicating that spirituality is essential to their personal growth. Spirituality has been shown to improve academic achievement because highly spiritual pupils are more motivated to study. Spiritual traits like serenity, a loving ethic, and an ecumenical perspective can help students attain academic success and grow personally. Better degrees of spirituality correspond with better GPAs, suggesting that it may help academic performance. This study seeks to elucidate the nuanced relationship between spiritual practices, psychological well-being and academic excellence among college-students, providing valuable insights for educators, administrators, and mental health professionals in creating supportive environments that nurture spiritual practices in academic dimensions and daily activities of student life.

### **Spiritual Practices**

Spiritual practices include prayer, yoga, and meditation, recitation of religious books or texts, visits to sacred places, singing or listening to psalms, hymns, and chanting or reciting mantras. Spiritual practices are frequently undertaken by spiritual people for a number of goals, including fostering spirituality, increasing overall well-being, attaining peace of mind, discovering meaning and purpose in life, and offering good direction to human existence. Spiritual activities are easily observed because they focus attention on overtly visible actions (Connors, Tongon, & Miller, 1996). Spiritual practices are traditional forms of coping because they foster an internal sense of control in difficult situations (Barbarin, 1993; Hefti, 2011).

### **Psychological well-being**

World Health Organization (WHO) defines psychological wellbeing as "a state of mind in which an individual is able to develop their potential, work productively, and creatively, and is able to cope with the normal stresses of life" (WHO, 2021). Ryff's (1989) six-factor model describes the dimensions of psychological well-being, including autonomy which refers to individualism, and intrinsic control of behavior. Environmental mastery refers to the tendency and ability to alter the environment by physical or mental acts and exert control over occurrences. Personal growth refers to developing one's potential and abilities to the fullest extent possible. Purpose in life refers to a constant intention to do something valuable to one. Self-acceptance fosters favorable attitudes towards oneself, leading to greater maturity, self-actualization, and successful functioning. Positive relationships involve warmth, trust, and compassion for others.

### **Academic Excellence**

Academic excellence requires not just receiving adequate marks, but also attaining excellent grades and standing out among peers. It is a significant indicator in educational evaluation, emphasizing the acquisition of educational abilities, resources, and knowledge across several disciplines. Academic achievement is viewed as a continuum, with the goal of improving students' educational comprehension. Individuals are expected to develop cognitive, personality, emotional, and behavioral skills in order to attain their objectives and successes. Increased competition, loneliness, and academic stress have all had a negative impact on students' mental health. Cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual intelligence can be predictors of academic and personal success.

### **Spiritual practices and Psychological well –being**

Ruchi Singh (2015) conducted a study that investigates the relationship between spiritual practices and psychological well-being among Hindus. It found a significant positive

## **A Study on Impact of Spiritual Practices on Psychological Well-Being and Academic Excellence among College Students**

relationship between spiritual practices and psychological well-being. The study used the Spiritual Practices Scale-Hindus and the Psychological Well-being Scale to analyze data from 130 Hindus in Aligarh and Agra districts of U.P.

A study examined the relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being among 160 young adults in New Delhi, India. The Spirituality and Psychological Well-being scales were used to measure the relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being. Results showed significant gender differences and positive correlations between spirituality dimensions and overall psychological wellbeing. Self-discovery dimension of spirituality was found to be the sole predictor of psychological well-being, while eco-awareness and relationship dimensions had negative correlations (Burney et al, 2017)

A study examined the relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being in young adults aged 18-28. The sample included 120 participants from Jaipur and neighboring cities. Results showed positive associations between spirituality and psychological well-being of both genders. There were significant differences in spirituality among the two genders. However, no discernible variation in psychological well-being was found (Meghna & Tarika, 2023).

### **Spiritual practices and Academic Excellence**

Moitreyee & Purnachandra (2016) explores the role of spirituality in enhancing the Psychological Capital of management students undergoing master's degrees. It highlights the importance of spirituality in coping with academic stress, which can lead to depression, anxiety, and tension. The study, involving 200 management students, found a significant correlation between students Psychological Capital and spirituality. The findings suggest that spiritual practices can reduce academic stress and provide opportunities for cultivating spiritual habits among students, enabling them to integrate spiritual values into their work for academic excellence.

Midi, Cosmas, & Sinik (2019) study examined the impact of spiritual intelligence on youths' academic achievements and psychological well-being found that it can predict both. Spiritual intelligence explained 40% of the variance in academic achievement and 25% of psychological well-being. The higher a youth's spiritual intelligence, such as applying spiritual values and adapting to new environments, the higher their academic achievements and psychological well-being the findings highlight the importance of spiritual intelligence in youths' academic success and psychological well-being, providing strength and faith to face modern challenges.

Abadi, Tabbodi & Rahgozar (2013) conducted a study to examine the correlation between spiritual well-being and academic achievement among students. 320 participants were selected from 18,465 populations using a descriptive correlational research method. Results showed a positive relationship between spiritual well-being and academic achievement in economics, management, and humanities, but no significant relationship was found in engineering, basic sciences, art, and architecture.

### **Objective**

1. The current research aims to assess the relationship between Spiritual practices and Psychological well-being of college students.

## A Study on Impact of Spiritual Practices on Psychological Well-Being and Academic Excellence among College Students

2. The current research aims to assess the relationship between Spiritual practices and Academic excellence of college students.
3. The present study seeks to examine the impact of spiritual practices on psychological well-being among college students.
4. The present study seeks to examine the impact of spiritual practices on academic excellence among college students.
5. The study also seeks to examine the gender differences in spiritual practices, psychological well-being and academic excellence among college students.

### *Hypothesis*

1. There will be no significant relationship between Spiritual practices and psychological well-being of college students.
2. There will be no significant relationship between Spiritual practices and Academic excellence of college students.
3. There will be no significant impact of spiritual practices on psychological well-being among college students.
4. There will be no significant impact of spiritual practices on academic excellence among college students.
5. There will be no gender differences in Spiritual practices, psychological well-being and Academic excellence of college students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Sample*

The study was conducted on 100 college students. The study comprised 50 Male and 50 Female aged 18–25. The sample was collected from various colleges in Varanasi city. Convenience sampling technique was used. The Participants that consented voluntarily were taken within the sample.

### *Measures*

1. **Spiritual practices (SpREUK-P) Questionnaire:** Spiritual practice (SpREUK-P) Questionnaire developed by Arndt Büssing (2015) was used in study. The SpREUK-P has 24 items and 5 factors, i.e., Existential, Religious, Humanistic, Spiritual, and Gratitude. The items of the SpREUK-P are scored on a 4-point scale (0 - never; 1 - seldom; 2 - often; 3- regularly). The internal consistency estimates range from .76 to .84. The scores reflect the degree of an engagement in the distinct forms of a spiritual/religious practice (“engagement scores”) Scores > 50% indicate higher engagement, while scores < 50 indicate rare engagement.
2. **Psychological Well-Being Scale:** Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Ryff (1989) was used in study. The questionnaire contains 42 items in six subscales: Self-Acceptance, Personal Growth, Purpose in Life, Positive Relations with Others, Environmental Mastery, and Autonomy. The items are assessed on a 6-point Likert scale (from 1 – strongly disagree to 6 – strongly agree). The internal consistency indicator for the whole scale was  $\alpha = 0.914$ . Negative phrased items: 3, 5, 10, 13,14,15,16,17,18,19, 23, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 39, 41 were recode i.e., if the score is 6 in one of these items, the adjusted score is 1; if 5, the adjusted score is 2 and so on. The final degree of agreement in the 6 dimensions: a. Autonomy: items 1,7,13,19,25,31,37 b. Environmental mastery: items 2,8,14,20,26,32,38 c. Personal Growth: items 3,9,15,21,27,33,39 d. Positive Relations: items: 4,10,16,22,28,34,40 e. Purpose in life: items: 5,11,17,23,29,35,41 f. Self-acceptance: items 6,12,18,24,30,36

## A Study on Impact of Spiritual Practices on Psychological Well-Being and Academic Excellence among College Students

,42 were added together. When talking about high and low well-being score, high well-being reflects to the top 25% scores and low well-being refers to scores which are in the bottom 25% of the distribution. Another alternative of defining high and low well-being scores is 1.5 Standard Deviation above the mean is considered as high well-being scores while 1.5 Standard Deviation below the mean is low well-being.

- 3. GPA Scores:** Academic Excellence can be subjective and varies among educators. Most educational Institutions measure academic excellence on how well a student can demonstrate skills and attain standard set by the institution. Self-reported GPA and course grades were used to measure Academic excellence in this study. This measure of academic excellence is well supported in the literature, where course grades serve as a strong predictor of academic success and are highly correlated with college retention (Carter, 2000; Zheng, Saunders, Shelley, & Whalen, 2002). This study analyzed the student's reported course grade and GPA when examining the relationship to spiritual practices. Grades were coded as follows: A (5), B (4), C (3), D (2), F (1), or withdrawn (0).

### *Procedure*

A good rapport was established with the students before asking them to fill the questionnaires and care was taken to remove any misconceptions regarding the proposed study. The participants were informed that participation to the study was voluntary and they were assured that the information gathered from them would be kept confidential and were requested to extend their co-operation. The questionnaires were explained to the subjects by the investigator and the subjects were instructed to read the questionnaires carefully and if there is something vague in the written material, they were asked to make it clear by asking the investigator. The subjects were then asked to complete the questionnaires. Subjects took half an hour to complete all the questionnaires. After completing the questionnaires the subjects were thanked for participation and then filled questionnaires were used by the investigator for further analysis.

### *Statistical analysis*

The collected data was tabulated, processed and analyzed by employing statistical technique, i.e., Pearson product moment correlation, Simple Linear Regression and Independent sample t-test. Data was analyzed by using Pearson product moment correlation to examine the relationship between spiritual practices and psychological well-being and also between spiritual practices and academic excellence. Simple Linear Regression was carried out to delineate the significant predictor for the criterion variables. Independent sample T-test was taken out to see the significant gender differences in spiritual practices, psychological well being and academic excellence.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Table No. 1 Correlation between Spiritual practices and Psychological well-being*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>SPS/PWB</b>
<b>Males (50)</b>	0.64
<b>Females (50)</b>	0.88
<b>Total (100)</b>	0.77

\*\*  $p < .001$

**A Study on Impact of Spiritual Practices on Psychological Well-Being and Academic Excellence among College Students**

Table 1 shows Pearson Correlation Coefficient with variables Spiritual practices and Psychological well-being. The r value of Spiritual practices and Psychological well-being in males is 0.64 which shows that there is a moderate positive correlation between Spiritual practices and Psychological well-being of males. The r value of Spiritual practices and Psychological well-being in Females is 0.88 which shows that there is a strong positive correlation between Spiritual practices and Psychological well-being of Females. The overall r value of 100 participants on variables Spiritual practices and Psychological well-being is 0.77 which shows that there is a strong positive correlation between Spiritual practices and Psychological well-being among college students. Hence, engaging in spiritual practices has significant effect on psychological well-being.

**Table No. 2 Correlation between Spiritual practices and Academic Excellence**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>SPS/AE</b>
<b>Males (50)</b>	0.65
<b>Females (50)</b>	0.60
<b>Total (100)</b>	0.62

\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 2 shows Pearson Correlation Coefficient with variables Spiritual practices and Academic Excellence. The r value of Spiritual practices and Academic Excellence of males is 0.65 which shows that there is a moderate positive correlation between Spiritual practices and Academic Excellence of males. The r value of Spiritual practices and Academic Excellence in Females is 0.60 which shows that there is a moderate positive correlation between Spiritual practices and Academic Excellence of Females. The overall r value of 100 participants on variables Spiritual practices and Academic Excellence is 0.62 which shows that there is a moderate positive correlation between Spiritual practices and Academic Excellence among college students. Hence, engaging in spiritual practices has significant effect on Academic excellence.

**Table No. 3 Simple Linear Regression analysis, Spiritual practices as predictor of Psychological wellbeing among college students**

**Model Summary**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Change Statistics R Square Change</b>
1	0.774 <sup>a</sup>	0.599	0.595	0.599

a. Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual Practices Overall

Table 3 shows the model summary indicating one predictor (spiritual practices) of the model, in which correlation between spiritual practices and Psychological well-being was found to be  $R=0.774$ . Further R square change was found to be 0.599 which represents the 59.9% actual contribution of predictor variable (spiritual practices) to criterion variable (Psychological well-being).

**A Study on Impact of Spiritual Practices on Psychological Well-Being and Academic Excellence among College Students**

**Table No. 4 Showing the Coefficient details of Spiritual Practices and Psychological well-being among college students**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	126.395	6.642	.774	19.030	1.108
	Spiritual Practices Overall	1.482	.123		12.098	3.722

The table 4 above show the value of  $\beta=.774$  which indicates a strong positive relationship between spiritual practices and psychological wellbeing. The t-value came to be 12.098, which was significant at 0.001 levels for spiritual practices. The p-values (Sig.) for both the intercept and the SP coefficient are extremely low much less than the conventional threshold of 0.05. This confirms that the results are statistically significant and hypothesis of the present study that there will be significant impact of spiritual practices on Psychological well-being among college students is proved.

**Table No. 5 Simple Linear Regression analysis, Spiritual practices as predictor of Academic Excellence among college students**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Change Statistics R Square Change
1	0.624 <sup>a</sup>	0.390	0.385	0.39

a. Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual Practices Overall

Table 5 shows the model summary indicating one predictor (spiritual practices) of the model, in which correlation between spiritual practices and academic excellence was found to be  $R=0.624$ . Further R square change was found to be 0.39 which represents the 39.0% actual contribution of predictor variable (spiritual practices) to criterion variable (academic excellence).

**Table No. 6 Showing the Coefficient details of Spiritual Practices and Academic Excellence among college students**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.491	0.206	0.624	12.10	.001
	Spiritual Practices Overall	0.041	0.0034		7.998	.001

The table 6 above show the value of  $\beta=.624$  which indicates a moderate positive relationship between spiritual practices and psychological wellbeing. The t-value came to be 7.998, which was significant at 0.001 levels for spiritual practices. The p-values (Sig.) for both the intercept and the SP coefficient are below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This confirms that the results are statistically significant and hypothesis of the present study that there will be significant impact of spiritual practices on academic excellence among college students is proved.

**A Study on Impact of Spiritual Practices on Psychological Well-Being and Academic Excellence  
among College Students**

**Table No. 7 Independent t test of Spiritual Practices among college students based on gender**

SI	n	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	p
Male	50	53.76	7.27	1.03	-0.04	96	.96
Female	50	53.82	6.30	0.89			

Table 7 shows the mean, standard deviation, standard errors of the mean, t value and sig level of male and female on spiritual practices. The mean of male and female scores are 53.76 and 53.82 respectively. The SD of male and female scores is 7.27 and 6.30 respectively. The SE of male and female scores is 1.03 and 0.89 respectively. The t value is -0.0441. Hence, result is not significant at  $p < .05$ . Thus, there is no significant difference between male and female on spiritual practices.

**Table No. 8 Independent t test of Psychological well-being among college students based on gender**

SI	n	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	p
Male	50	206.9	13.19	1.86	-0.607	98	.54
Female	50	205.32	13.09	1.85			

Table 8 shows the mean, standard deviation, standard errors of the mean, t value and sig level of male and female on psychological well-being. The mean of male and female scores are 206.9 and 205.32 respectively. The SD of male and female scores is 13.19 and 13.09 respectively. The SE of male and female scores is 1.86 and 1.85 respectively. The t value is -0.607. Hence, result is not significant at  $p < .05$ . Thus, there is no significant difference between male and female on psychological well-being.

**Table No. 9 Independent t test of Academic Excellence among college students based on gender**

SI	n	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	p
Male	50	4.72	0.449	0.063	0.00	98	1.00
Female	50	4.72	0.449	0.063			

Table 9 shows the mean, standard deviation, standard errors of the mean, t value and sig level of male and female on academic excellence. The mean of male and female scores are 4.72 respectively. The SD of male and female scores is 0.449 respectively. The SE of male and female scores is 0.063 and 0.063 respectively. The t value is 0. Hence, result is not significant at  $p < .05$ . Thus, there is no significant difference between male and female on Academic excellence.

## CONCLUSION

The current study investigated the relationship and impact of spiritual practices on psychological well-being and academic excellence among college students. The finding shows a strong positive correlation between spiritual practices and psychological well-being and a moderate positive correlation between spiritual practices and academic excellence. Regression analysis indicates that spiritual practices significantly predict both psychological well-being and academic excellence.

## **A Study on Impact of Spiritual Practices on Psychological Well-Being and Academic Excellence among College Students**

Gender based comparisons using t-tests showed no significant differences in spiritual practices, psychological well-being and academic excellence of male and female students. This shows that in the sample studied, the influence of spiritual practices as well as psychological well being and academic excellence is consistent across the genders.

The finding highlights the potential of incorporating spiritual practices such as mindfulness, meditation, yoga, gratitude into a student's daily life to enhance their psychological well being as well as academic outcomes. Engaging in spiritual practices will support concentration, higher levels of motivation, emotional regulation and resilience. It can also serve as an effective tool in managing academic stressors, preventing burnout and thus it promotes personal growth in an individual.

In conclusion, the study focuses on the importance of spiritual practices in fostering psychological well-being and excellence in academic setting. Therefore, educational institutions should consider integrating these practices into curriculum, conduct workshop or seminars, create spaces in campus, build student clubs for these spiritual practices and reflection in order to cultivate holistic development and individuals that thrives both intellectually and emotionally.

### ***Limitations***

1. The sample size could have been more in order to get more reliable results.
2. The research was conducted only on Graduate and Post-graduate students of Banaras Hindu University.
3. Ages ranging below 18 and above 25 were not included in sample.

### ***Suggestions***

1. Larger sample could be used.
2. The criteria of age could be changed to include different age groups in the research.
3. A broader geographical area can be selected.
4. The research can be conducted on different population using same variables.
5. Different variables like life satisfaction, quality of life can also be correlated with the spiritual practices.

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**A Study on Impact of Spiritual Practices on Psychological Well-Being and Academic Excellence  
among College Students**

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**A Study on Impact of Spiritual Practices on Psychological Well-Being and Academic Excellence  
among College Students**

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***Conflict of Interest***

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