

Research Paper

Understanding the Impact of Spiritual Well-being on the Self-esteem in Emerging Adults among the Protestant Christian Population

Elsheba R Portia^{1*}, Rajeshwari R²

ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between spiritual well-being and self-esteem among emerging adults aged 18-29 within the Christian community specifically the CSI – Protestant denomination in India. Rooted in the context of identity development and psychological residence, the research adopts a quantitative correlation design to examine how spiritual well-being influences self-esteem in this demographic. A purposive sample of 100 participants completed the Spiritual Well Being Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Data analysis, conducted using Jamovi, revealed a statistically significant moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.392$, $p < 0.001$) between spiritual well-being and self-esteem. Furthermore, regression analysis indicated that spiritual well-being significantly predicts self-esteem, while ages does not. These findings support the alternative hypothesis and highlight spirituality as a meaningful factor in shaping self-worth during emerging adulthood. The study contributes to the limited body of literature focused on Christian youth in India and has implications for mental health professionals, educators and spiritual leaders aiming to foster psychological well-being through spiritual engagement. Limitations and recommendations for further research, including border sampling and longitudinal designs are discussed.

Keywords: *Self-confidence, Self-respect, Self-assurance, Soulfulness, Spiritual health, Spiritual happiness, Spiritual welfare, Inner peace, Christian faith*

The influence of spirituality on self-esteem has been a topic of interest among many of the spiritual leaders and psychological researchers. There are numerous studies in this area, which studies how spirituality influences the individual's self-worth, self-concept. Self-worth and self-concept are the two major concepts of self-esteem which are studied in detail when we study the area of self-esteem. Self-esteem can be defined in a variety of ways, including as an attitude, a negative or positive response, a behavioural response, a discrepancy between the ideal-self and the perceived self, a person's response to themselves, and a personality.

¹MSc. Counselling Psychology Montfort College, Bangalore

²Asst. Professor, Montfort College, Bangalore.

*Corresponding Author

Received: August 13, 2025; Revision Received: October 10, 2025; Accepted: October 14, 2025

Understanding the Impact of Spiritual Well-being on the Self-esteem in Emerging Adults among the Protestant Christian Population

Statement Problem

In India, where Christianity is not the majority religion, emerging adults who are Christian can be required to actively define their spiritual author identity in a world that is mostly non-Christian. Such a cultural setting has the ability to shape the relevance of spiritual well-being in relation to self-esteem and therefore, it is imperative to have a specific insight. Spiritual health characterised by meaning, belonging and inner peace can give resilience and a positive attitude. Researching the practices like those of mindfulness, prayer, studying scriptures, and serving the community may identify how they can assist with self-acceptance, self-worth, and coping in the young adults.

Research Gap

The lack of attention paid to emerging adults as a separate developmental group is the research gap in the area of comprehending the relationship between spiritual well-being and self-esteem. Research specifically focusing on people between the ages of 18 to 29 is conspicuously lacking, despite the fact that many studies have examined the connection between spiritual well-being and self-esteem in general populations, such as adolescents, older adults, or clinical groups. This is a crucial omission because emerging adulthood is a distinct stage of life marked by significant changes in relationships, work, education, and autonomy as well as identity exploration. People frequently experience psychological instability, increased self-doubt, and a quest for meaning during this time, all of which have a direct impact on self-esteem. Emerging adults must deal with more complicated life decisions and obligations than adolescents, but they might not have the emotional resources and support networks necessary to handle these challenges. Because of which it places a strong emphasis on purpose, inner peace, and connection, spiritual well-being may be a valuable source of support and self-validation.

Theoretical Framework

The current research is based on positive psychology, since this branch focuses on the well-being, personal strengths, and functioning at one of the highest levels. One of them is that spiritual well-being, meaning, purpose and sense of connectedness to a higher power, values, or life itself is essential to mental health and life satisfaction. It encompasses religious as well as existential experiences and it is perceived here as being a factor that affects self-esteem or self-esteem.

The theoretical framework is anchored on the premise that a person endowed with solid spiritual foundations tends to be better informed of whom they truly are, more emotionally resilient, and feel more meaning in life, which is associated with the elevated sense of self-esteem. The analysis is supported by Maslow Hierarchy of needs where the need of self-esteem and self-actualisation are at the top and the theory of Erikson which emphasizes on the formulation of identity and self-esteem in adolescence and young adulthood, which can be characterized by the search of spiritual.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study employs a quantitative, correlational research design to examine the relationship between spiritual well-being and self-esteem among individuals. This design is appropriate for identifying and analysing the strength and direction of associations between variables without attempting to manipulate or control them. The research follows a non-experimental, cross-sectional approach, where data were collected at a single point in time,

Understanding the Impact of Spiritual Well-being on the Self-esteem in Emerging Adults among the Protestant Christian Population

allowing for a snapshot of the participants' levels of spiritual well-being and self-esteem. Standardized and validated self-report questionnaires were used to gather data, ensuring both reliability and consistency in measurement. The study population was selected using a purposive sampling method, focusing on individuals who met specific inclusion criteria relevant to the research objectives. This design enables the researcher to statistically assess whether a significant relationship exists between the two psychological constructs, contributing to a better understanding of their interconnection in the context of individual well-being.

Objectives

The objectives of this research was to examine the relationship between spiritual well-being and self-esteem among individuals. Specifically, the study seeks to understand how one's spiritual well-being may influence their self-perception and overall self-worth. The key objectives of this research are to assess the levels of spiritual well-being and self-esteem among the participants, to analyse the correlation between these two variables, and to determine whether spiritual well-being can be considered a significant predictor of self-esteem.

Hypothesis

Two hypotheses are proposed in this study to facilitate this study.

1. H0: It is believed that there is no significant relationship between spiritual well-being and self-esteem in the participants.
2. H1: The relationship between the spiritual well-being and the self-esteem is significant and is a matter of statistical testing.

Participants

In the given research, the target population was consisted of 18–29 year old individuals of Christian population. It is identically frequently characterized by the exploration of identities, the search of meaning and the formation of personal values which also pertain to spirituality and notion of self. The subjects of study was particularly selected based in different parts of India, so that the study supports the uniqueness of the country and its preponderant socio-cultural situation. The researcher used purposive sampling to ensure that they get participants who have met the inclusion criteria of the study. The technique is best to choose people according to particular features being age, religious identity, geographical location, and the desire to take part in the research voluntarily. Even though purposive sampling does not allow the researcher to generalize the outcomes of the research to the whole population, the author was able to collect targeted population with respect to applicable data concerning a specific, well-defined sub-group. The targeted sample size was 100 participants and this would suffice as far as statistical analysis like correlation and regression is concerned and due to time limitations as well.

Materials

1. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE)
2. SWB Scale

Data Collection

Data is captured online through surveys and offline questionnaires which are shared through the use of tools such as Google Forms, as well as physically approaching the participants. This strategy will be convenient and accessible in view of the fact that the Indian Christian

Understanding the Impact of Spiritual Well-being on the Self-esteem in Emerging Adults among the Protestant Christian Population

mainly among the CSI Protestant population. The form begins with an information sheet giving details of the limits of the study, kind of participation, and the ethical standards that are being followed. The participants are required to provide informed approval before they start the survey, and this statement proves their willingness to participate in the survey and their understanding of the study procedure. The form contains three 3 sections, which include the RSES, the SWBS, and the demographical data (initials, age, and current level of education, gender, location, and denomination). To achieve the intended 100 participants, the researcher will ensure that the research takes care of only valid and complete responses in the final analysis.

Scoring

1. Rosenberg Selg-Esteem Scale For items 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7:
 Strongly agree = 3 Agree = 2
 Disagree = 1 Strongly disagree = 0
 For items 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 (which are reversed in valence): Strongly agree = 0
 Agree = 1
 Disagree = 2 Strongly disagree = 3
 The scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are within normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

2. Spiritual Well-Being Scale
 The positively worded items are numbered 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, and 20. For these items, an answer of
 Strongly Agree = 6, Moderately Agree = 5, Agree = 4
 Disagree = 3, Moderately Disagree = 2 Strongly Disagree = 1.
 The negatively worded items are numbered 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 16, and 18.
 Strongly Agree= 1, Moderately Agree =2, Agree = 3,
 Disagree = 4, Moderately Disagree = 5 Strongly Disagree = 6
 Total the scores for the positively and negatively worded items and this will give the total score for spiritual well-being.
 20 – 40 = low overall spiritual well-being. 41 – 99 = moderate spiritual well-being.
 100 – 120 = high spiritual well-being.

Variables

- **Independent variable**
 Spiritual well-being - Evaluated using Spiritual Well-being Scale
- **Dependent variable**
 Self-Esteem in Adulthood – Evaluated by Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

RESULTS

Table 1 Table showing the Correlation Matrix using Pearson's (r) correlation, between Spiritual- welling and Self-esteem

Variables	Spiritual- wellbeing	Self- esteem
Spiritual- wellbeing	—	0.392*
Self-esteem	0.392*	—

Note. $p < .001^*$

Understanding the Impact of Spiritual Well-being on the Self-esteem in Emerging Adults among the Protestant Christian Population

The Pearson correlation indicated that there is a moderate positive correlation between the spiritual well-being and the self-esteem ($r = 0.392$, $p < .001$) among the emerging adults, which indicates that the greater the self-esteem is in the participants, the higher spiritual well-being will be. The finding is not only realistic but also statistically serious and not likely based on chance which makes one agree that spiritual well-being is a factor that has a lot to do with positive self-esteem in this group.

Table 2 Table showing Regression Coefficient table showing the relationship between Spiritual Well-Being and Self-Esteem

Overall Model Test							
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	df1	df2	p
1	0.395	0.156	0.139	8.98	2	97	<.001

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=100

The fit between the regression model was found to be statistically significant, $F(2, 97) = 8.98$, $p < .001$ with the value of R being 0.395 which was positive and moderate and R² was 0.156 which shows that spiritual well-being and age can explain 15.6 percent of the variance in the self-esteem. The adjusted R² proves the highness of the model without exaggeration. These latter results support the study framework as spiritual well-being is an important concept in promoting self-esteem in emerging adults who undergo an identity-development process, as well as life change and meaning-making.

Table 3 Table showing Regression Coefficients Predicting Self-Esteem from Spiritual Well-Being and Age

95% Confidence Interval						
Predictor	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	t	p
Intercept	11.5999	1.8378	7.9524	15.2473	6.312	<.001
Spiritual- wellbeing	0.0573	0.0138	0.0300	0.0846	4.167	<.001
Age	-0.0289	0.0548	-0.1376	0.0799	-0.52	0.600

Note. The table presents unstandardized regression coefficients, standard errors 95% confidence intervals, t-values and $p < .001$ indicated statistically significant results.

The intercept of the above table is 11.5999, with a standard error (SE) of 1.8378, and is statistically significant because $t = 6.312$, $p < .001$, indicating the baseline level of self-esteem. Spiritual well-being was found to be a significant positive predictor of self-esteem $\beta = 0.0573$, $SE = 0.0138$, $t = 4.167$, $p < .001$. The 95% confidence interval for this estimate ranged from 0.0300 to 0.0846, indicating a reliable effect.

This means that for every 1-unit increase in spiritual well-being, self-esteem increases by approximately 0.057 units which can hold age constant. The effect size is considered moderate, highlighting that spiritual well-being plays an important role in shaping self-esteem.

Understanding the Impact of Spiritual Well-being on the Self-esteem in Emerging Adults among the Protestant Christian Population

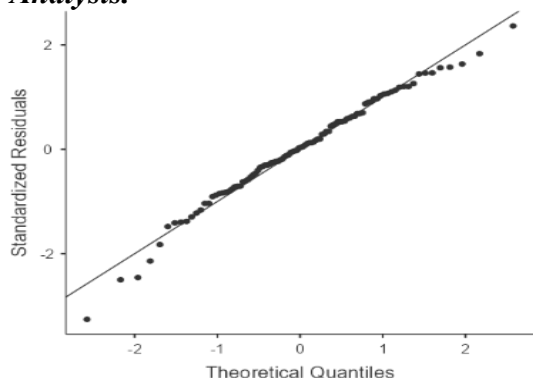
Table 4 Table showing ANOVA Test Summary for Predictors of Self-Esteem Using Type III Sum of Squares

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Spiritual- wellbeing	70.28	1	70.28	17.362	<.001
Age	1.12	1	1.12	0.277	0.600
Residuals	392.65	97	4.05		

Note. Type 3 sum of squares

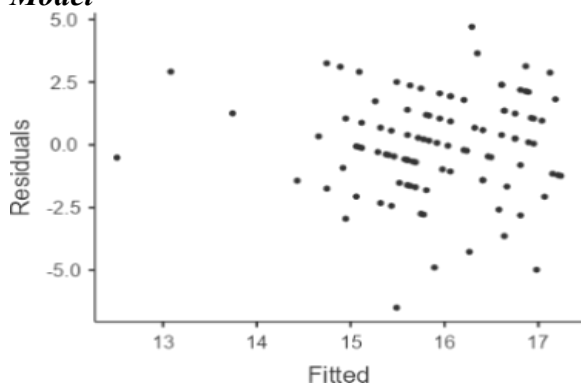
The ANOVA test by the Type III Sum of Squares was further carried out to further discuss the individual predicted variance in self-esteem. These findings revealed that spiritual well-being significantly influenced the value of self-esteem at an F-value being 17.362 ($p < .001$) and a sum of squares being 70.28 which represents a significant amount defining the percentage of the outcome feature as related to the total variance of this characteristic. Conversely, age did not make a big difference with an F-value of 0.277 ($p = 0.600$) and a low value of sum of squares of 1.12. The value of the residual sum of squares was 392.65 and the mean square error was 4.05 and it encompasses the variance in self-esteem that is not accounted by predictors.

Figure 1: Q-Q Plot Depicting Normality of Standardized Residuals in the Regression Analysis.



The Q-Q plot of standardized residuals was observed to have the points run near to the diagonal axis implying normal distribution with slight deviations in the tails. Since its sample size is 100 and the variables used are spiritual well-being and self-esteem, the model satisfies the normal distribution assumption implying that parametric tests could be used even without the heavy bias caused by non-normal errors.

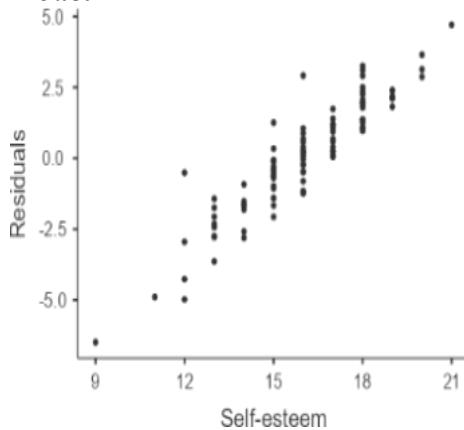
Figure 2: Residuals vs. Fitted Values Plot Assessing Homoscedasticity in the Regression Model



Understanding the Impact of Spiritual Well-being on the Self-esteem in Emerging Adults among the Protestant Christian Population

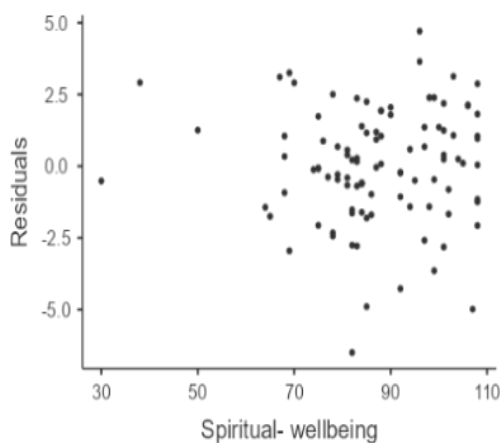
In residuals-versus-fitted plot, randomly distributed residuals indicated that homoscedasticity is to a significant extent met. A slight funnel shape exists but there are no strong evidences of heteroscedasticity or non-linearity that support the stability and adequacy of the model in determining how spiritual well-being and self-esteem can be assessed among emerging Christian adults.

Figure 3: Residuals vs. Self-Esteem Plot Indicating Non-Linearity in the Regression Model



A plot of residuals-versus-self-esteem was not randomly scattered but exhibited a diagonal curve and therefore contravened the assumption that the relationship between the two variables was linear. This implies that this model might not be fully representing the relationship or it might be non-linear or the relationship may have missing variables. Fit and predictive accuracy may be increased by the addition of non-linear terms.

Figure 4: Plot of Residuals Against Spiritual Well-Being Score.



Scatter plot of residuals against spiritual well-being was explored to ensure presence of linearity and absence of heteroscedasticity. The residuals appear to be diffused across the score (30 to 110) in the random and even distribution manner which indicates that the assumptions are satisfying on the moderate level. This qualifies the appropriateness of the linear regression model and further buttresses the fact that spiritual well-being is a predictor of self-esteem amongst young Christian adults as shown by regression and ANOVA.

CONCLUSION

Hypothesis Testing

These findings lead to rejection of null hypothesis, which stated that there is not significant relationship between spiritual well-being and self-esteem. At the same time, it supported the alternative hypothesis that a significant relationship does exist. The results suggest that the spiritual well-being plays a meaningful role in sharing self-esteem among emerging adults, highlighting the importance of spirituality in promoting positive psychological development during this critical life stage.

Findings

The present study aimed to explore the impact of spiritual well-being on self-esteem among emerging adults within the Christian population. The descriptive statistics revealed that participants reported a moderate level of self-esteem $M=15.9$ and $SD = 2.17$ and a relatively high level of spiritual well-being $M=87.4$ and $SD = 14.7$. Pearson's correlation analysis showed a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between spiritual well-being and self-esteem, indicating that individuals with higher levels of spiritual well-being tends to have higher level of self-esteem. Further a multiple linear regression analysis revealed that spiritual well-being predicted self-esteem while age was not a significant predictor. The over model was statically significant, explaining 15.6% of variance in self-esteem.

These findings lead to rejection of null hypothesis, which stated that there is not significant relationship between spiritual well-being and self-esteem. At the same time, it supported the alternative hypothesis that a significant relationship does exist. The results suggest that the spiritual well-being plays a meaningful role in sharing self-esteem among emerging adults, highlighting the importance of spirituality in promoting positive psychological development during this critical life stage.

The findings suggest that spiritual well-being plays a key role in shaping self-esteem during emerging adulthood, supporting theories like Erikson's psychological development that suggests that emerging adulthood is a critical period for identity exploration, including spiritual identity. Further, more the study aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which proposes that spiritual fulfilment contributes to self-actualization and overall psychological well-being. The results highlight spirituality as a stabilizing factor that contributes to a positive self-concept and emotional well-being. The study reinforces the idea that spiritual fulfilment supports identity formation and psychological resilience, and encourages the inclusion of spiritual dimensions in models of self-esteem and personal development, especially in culturally or religiously rooted populations.

Implications

The research validates some of the existing psychological theories including psychological development by Erikson and the hierarchy of needs by Maslow because it demonstrated that the spiritual well-being contributed to the attaining self-esteem. it also affirms the need of ensuring that therapeutic change models, especially during the emerging adulthood must incorporate spirituality as a tool of self-esteem and development of identity. The results point out the usefulness of the practice of spirituality in evoking self-esteem among emerging adults. This may be used on communal life programs, youth groups and support systems that target to enhance good mental health with the help of spirituality.

Understanding the Impact of Spiritual Well-being on the Self-esteem in Emerging Adults among the Protestant Christian Population

Limitations of the Study

The study used purposive sampling because the study participants were based on selection criterion which included age, religion and willingness of the respondent to participate in the study. Although such an approach made the study relevant to the research goals, it causes sampling biasness and constrains the representation to the population of border Christian emerging adults in India. Besides, the sample of 100 can be adequate to the statistical analysis, but not to the diversity in regions denominations and socio-economic background.

The study employed both concept and linear regression methods, which lacked the possibility of interfering the causality between the variables, but a significant association was found between spiritual well-being and self-esteem which cannot be concluded about directionality and prolonged effects due to cross-sectional nature. There are also other variables which could play a role in self-esteem but have not been measured like family background, mental-health or church-involvement and therefore could not be included in the analysis.

REFERENCES

- Alorani, O. I., & Alradaydeh, M. F. (2017). Spiritual well-being, perceived social support, and life satisfaction among university students. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 23(3), 291–298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2017.1352522>
- Awan, S., & Sitwat, A. (2014). Workplace spirituality, self-esteem, and psychological well-being among mental health professionals. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 29(1), 125–149.
- Barmola, K. C., & Saini, V. (2024). Association between self-esteem, resilience, spirituality, and stress. *Journal of Mental Health and Well-being*, 12(2), 45–60.
- Cotton, S., Zebracki, K., Rosenthal, S. L., Tsevat, J., & Drotar, D. (2006). Religion/spirituality and adolescent health outcomes: A review. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 38(4), 472–480. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2005.10.005>
- Craig, D. J., Fardouly, J., & Rapee, R. M. (2022). The effect of spirituality on mood: Mediation by self-esteem, social support, and meaning in life. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 61(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01354-4>
- Ellison, C.G. (1991). *Religious involvement and subjective well-being*. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 32(1), 80–99. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2136801>
- Elvina, R., Fitriani, D. R., & Astiningsih, N. W. W. (2025). Correlation between spirituality levels and self-esteem among first-year students in health science programs. *Genius Journal*, 6(1), 27–38. <https://doi.org/10.56359/gj.v6i1.453>
- Fedorova, N., Levit, V., & Cavalcante, L. C. V. (2019). Impacts of tropical cyclones in the Northern Atlantic on adverse phenomena formation in Northeastern Brazil. In *Current Topics in Tropical Cyclone Research* (Chapter 9). IntechOpen. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.88804>
- Fitriani, D. R., Sari, I. P., & Milkhatun, M. (2025). Correlation between spirituality levels and self-esteem among first-year students in health science programs. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 28(6), Ser. VII, 60–72. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2806076072>
- Joseph, J., George, B., Benny, J. K., George, A., Kuriachan, A., Babu, G. M., & Shibu, L. (2024). Spirituality and spiritual well-being among nursing students. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 14(2), 30–42.
- Koenig, H.G. (2012). Religion, spirituality, and health: The research and clinical implications. *ISRN Psychiatry*, 2012, 1–33. <https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/278730>

Understanding the Impact of Spiritual Well-being on the Self-esteem in Emerging Adults among the Protestant Christian Population

- Leondari, A., & Gialamas, V. (2009). Relation of church attendance and religious beliefs to the self-esteem of Greek adolescents. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 37(3), 205–215. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009164710903700305>
- Pargament, K. I. (2002). The bitter and the sweet: An evaluation of the costs and benefits of religiousness. *Psychological Inquiry*, 13(3), 168–181. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1303_02
- Pavelea, A., & Culic, L. (2023). *Religiosity, spirituality, and well-being in emerging adulthood*. In *The Social Contexts of Young People – Engaging Youth and Young Adults* (Chapter, open access). IntechOpen. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.113963>
- Ranjith, G. G., V, K., & A, M. (2025). Impact of self-esteem on tendency to forgive and spiritual well-being among social work students in higher education. *International Journal of Research -GRANTHAALAYAH*, 13(3), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v13.i3.2025.5986>
- Singh, M., & Imran, M. (2024). Impact of spirituality on self-esteem and life satisfaction in young adults: A quantitative analysis. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Approaches in Psychology*, 8(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.29121/ijiap.v8.i1.2024.291>
- Smith, C., & Snell, P. (2009). *Souls in transition: The religious and spiritual lives of emerging adults*. Oxford University Press.
- Szcześniak, M., & Timoszyk-Tomczak, C. (2020). Religious struggle and life satisfaction among adult Christians: Self-esteem as a mediator. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 59(6), 2833–2856. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01082-9>
- Yoo, J. (2023). The influence of spiritual well-being on depression among Protestant college seminarians in Korea with a focus on the mediating effect of self-esteem. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 51(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00916471221118605>
- Zinnbauer, B. J., Pargament, K. I., & Scott, A. B. (1999). The emerging meanings of religiousness and spirituality: Problems and prospects. *Journal of Personality*, 67(6), 889–919. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6494.00077>

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Elsheba, R.P. & Rajeshwari, R. (2025). Understanding the Impact of Spiritual Well-being on the Self-esteem in Emerging Adults among the Protestant Christian Population. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(4), 168-177. DIP:18.01.016.20251304, DOI:10.25215/1304.016