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The Predictive Role of Spiritual Values for Happiness Among College Students

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Abstract: This study examines how spiritual values are connected to happiness in college students. Spiritual values were measured using the *Spiritual Values Scale* developed by Fauzia Nazam, Prof. Akbar Husain, and Dr. S. M. Khan. Happiness was measured, using the *Happiness Scale* developed by Yashpreet Kaur. The current study includes 100 participants (52 females and 48 males) newly admitted in an undergraduate program. The data was collected using the simple random sampling method. The acquired data is evaluated using the Pearson product-moment correlation and simple linear regression. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a significant positive relationship between spiritual values and happiness ($r=0.615$, $p<0.01$). Further analysis indicated that spiritual values significantly predicted happiness ($B=1.007$, $t=7.726$, $p<0.01$). A simple linear regression of spiritual values and happiness yields an R-square of 0.379. Thus, spiritual values account for 37.9% variance in happiness.
Keywords: Spiritual values, Happiness, College students.

Introduction - College students face a lot of stress due to academic pressure and career choices. College is the time for fun as well as future development. It is important for young college students to be happy and have a positive mindset to achieve academic success, enjoy college life, make new friends, and work towards their future self. In this way come the spiritual values that can help them sustain their positivity and happiness. Students are always striving to bridge the gap between their current self and the future self, which may deviate them from their happiness, here, if spiritual values are assimilated into their daily life then, they may create an impact in keeping their happiness.

Happiness is a multifaceted psychological concept defined as subjective cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction alongside frequent positive feelings (such as joy and contentment) and occasional negative affect (Diener, 1984). In positive psychology, it extends beyond momentary pleasure to include eudaimonic elements like purpose, meaning, and personal growth, where individuals estimate their lives as worthwhile and flourishing (Lyubomirsky & Sheldon, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2001). This broader view posits happiness as a dynamic state that broadens thought-action repertoires, builds resilience, and predicts favorable outcomes like better relationships and health, distinguishing it from mere hedonic pursuits (Fredrickson, 1998).

Research has consistently demonstrated that happiness is not merely an outcome but also a predictor of success across multiple life domains. A comprehensive review of over 200 studies found that happier individuals tend to experience better interpersonal relationships, improved physical health, and greater professional success, suggesting that happiness contributes to positive life outcomes rather than simply resulting from them (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Empirical evidence also suggests that positive emotions are directly linked to increased resilience and life satisfaction. Studies indicate that the people who frequently feel good have better coping abilities and resilience, which improve their overall wellness (Cohn et al., 2009).

In psychological research, spiritual values buffer against stressors by promoting resilience, optimism, and purpose, particularly among youth navigating identity formation and societal pressures (Husain et al., 2020). Spiritual values represent the unifying principles of the human psyche that foster personal growth and ethical living, encompassing altruistic behaviors like truthfulness and selflessness, humanistic ideals such as justice and harmony, personal virtues including self-restraint and humility, affective bonds rooted in compassion and forgiveness, and divine orientations like piety and submission to a higher purpose (Nazam et al., 2018). These values transcend material pursuits, guiding individuals toward inner peace, moral integrity, and interconnectedness with others and the universe, often independent of religious dogma (Tanyi, 2006). For college students, cultivating these values enhances emotional regulation amid academic demands, laying a foundation for holistic development

(Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008). Spiritual values encompass transcendent principles like altruism, humanism, personal integrity, affective bonds, and divine orientation that guide ethical behavior and foster inner harmony (Nazam et al., 2018). Spiritual values guide an individual's moral decisions, personality development and also help in establishing better social relationships (Akram et al., 2021). The age of adolescence is very special for spiritual personality development and this is also the age when most of the students enter college life.

Spiritual values interconnect with happiness by providing a transcendent framework that enhances subjective well-being, resilience, and meaning-making, particularly among college students facing academic and developmental stressors (Reyes-Pérez et al., 2025). Empirical research demonstrates significant positive correlations, where higher spiritual values predict elevated happiness levels through mechanisms like optimism, forgiveness, and purpose, buffering against anxiety and depression in university populations (David et al., 2022; Anand & Pradhan, 2025). This linkage operates via psychological pathways: spiritual values broaden positive emotions, build coping resources, and promote eudaimonic flourishing over hedonic pleasure, explaining variance in well-being outcomes among youth (Feizi et al., 2020). In Indian contexts, similar patterns emerge, with spiritual intelligence and values correlating positively with happiness in religious versus secular students, underscoring implications for educational interventions (Nadifa et al., 2024).

Several Indian studies have investigated links between spirituality and college students' happiness and well-being, often reporting positive correlations. Deb et al. (2020) conducted a study among Indian participants and found a significant positive link between spirituality and subjective happiness, as well as purpose in life and life satisfaction. A study on 110 Indian college students (54 males, 56 females) found a strong positive association between spirituality and subjective well-being, with no significant gender differences (Kaur, 2024).

Another study was conducted on middle-aged adults living in the Delhi NCR area, the study shows that the higher spirituality levels are positively correlated with life satisfaction, mediated by resilience and social relationships during life transitions (Paul & Sahai, 2025). Additional research includes Anand et al. (2015), which reported that Indian university students with elevated spirituality scores exhibited improved longevity and satisfaction, consistent with Jalilian et al.'s (2017) findings on spiritual health. Recent work by Singh (2025) at BHU highlighted spirituality's role in happiness among youth, though focused more on educators.

Despite extensive research demonstrating a positive link between spirituality and happiness, significant gaps remain in the literature. Most existing researches have focused on spirituality as a broad concept in relation to happiness, with comparatively limited attention given specifically to spiritual values. Additionally, much of the research has been done on general adult or mixed populations, with little focus on students who have just transitioned from school to college and are still in their teenage years. According to Erikson's psychosocial stage of identity versus role confusion (Erikson, 1968), this period represents a crucial developmental stage marked by identity formation along with academic pressure and adjustment challenges, which may uniquely influence both spiritual values and happiness. Furthermore, while numerous studies have established an association between spirituality and well-being, fewer have examined the predictive role of spiritual values in determining happiness among this specific age group. There is also a lack of focused research within the Indian context addressing this transitional phase. Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by investigating the relationship and predictive role of spiritual values on happiness among teenage college students who have recently entered higher education.

Objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between spiritual values and happiness among college students.
2. To assess the extent to which spiritual values contribute to the prediction of happiness.

Hypothesis:

1. There will be a significant relationship between spiritual values and happiness among college students.
2. Spiritual values will have a significant predictive effect on happiness among college students.

Methodology

Participants: A total of 100 college students who had recently been admitted to the first year of an undergraduate program, participated in the study. The sample included 48 male and 52 female participants aged 18-19 years. The participants were selected from various departments in the Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut. The data was collected using the simple random sampling. The goal of the study was explained to all participants and their consent was taken.

Research Design: This study adopts a **correlational research design**, with spiritual values as the predictor variable and happiness as the criterion variable. The study uses a **survey method**, where data was collected from participants at a single point using standardized questionnaires. This design is suitable because it allows measurement of naturally occurring variables without manipulation and helps in understanding their statistical association.

Tests and tools

1. Spiritual Values Scale: This scale was developed by Fauzia Nazam, Prof. Akbar Husain, and Dr. S. M. Khan. The scale consists of 27 items and 5 dimensions. The items of the scale are scored on a 5-point scale. The scale

demonstrates high reliability, with a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.911. Content validity, including face and logical validity, has been verified by experts and academicians. Additionally, construct validity has been established through factor analysis using varimax rotation.

2. Happiness Scale: The Happiness Scale developed by Yashpreet Kaur was used in the study. The scale consists of 40 items and 6 dimensions. The items of the scale are scored on a 5-point scale. The scale demonstrates good reliability, with a split-half reliability coefficient of 0.81. In terms of validity, the items, once constructed, were evaluated by 10 judges for their relevance, establishing content validity. Additionally, the scale was subjected to item analysis, further supporting its content validity.

Procedure: Prior to starting the study, all the participants gave their verbal consent after explaining the purpose of the study, their rights and the voluntary nature of their participation. A good rapport was built with the participants before requesting them to fill the questionnaires. Participants were assured that their answers will remain confidential. The researcher explained the questionnaires to the participants. Participants were given clear instructions to read carefully each items and if there is something they don't understand, they were asked to make it clear with the help of researcher. Participants were requested to respond to all the items honestly and not to skip any item.

Statistical Analysis: The gathered raw data was analyzed by applying statistical techniques, i.e., descriptive statistics, pearson product moment correlation and simple linear regression. The mean and standard deviation of the data were calculated through descriptive statistics. The data was analyzed by using the pearson product moment correlation to explore the relationship between spiritual values and happiness. Simple linear regression was employed to see the role of spiritual values in happiness.

Results and Discussion

Table No. 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	SD	N
Happiness	147.02	18.697	100
Spiritual Values	109.66	11.420	100

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of happiness and spiritual values among the sample of 100 participants. Results demonstrate that the mean score of happiness is 147.02 with SD 18.697 and the mean score of spiritual values is 109.66 with SD 11.420. The value of standard deviation shows that the scores of happiness vary more across the participants than the scores of spiritual values.

Table No.2: Correlation between Spiritual values and Happiness

		Spiritual Values	Happiness
Spiritual Values	Pearson Correlation	1	.615**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100

**p<0.01

Table 2 displays the Pearson correlation coefficient between the variables spiritual values and happiness. The r value of spiritual values and happiness is 0.615 (p<0.01), which shows that there is a positive correlation between spiritual values and happiness.

Table No.3: Simple Linear Regression analysis

Model		B	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	36.551	2.543	0.013
	Spiritual Values	1.007	7.726	0.000
R	.615[a]			
R2	.379			
F	59.696**			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual values, **p<0.01

Table 3 presents the results of the simple linear regression analysis examining spiritual values as a predictor of happiness among college students. The overall regression model was found to be statistically significant (F=59.696, p<0.01), suggesting that the model fits the data well. The correlation coefficient (R=0.615, p<0.01) suggests that spiritual values and happiness are positively correlated. According to the coefficient of determination (R^2=0.379) spiritual values account for 37.9% of variance in happiness. Furthermore, it was found that spiritual values significantly predict happiness (B=1.007, t=7.726, p<0.01). The B value shows that for every one-unit increase in spiritual values, happiness increases by approximately 1.007 units. The constant (B=36.551, t=2.543, p<0.05) represents the baseline level of happiness when spiritual values are zero and is also statistically significant.

The current study's results are in agreement with previous research indicating that spirituality significantly enhances happiness and psychological well-being. Koenig (2012) reported that higher levels of spirituality are positively related with improved psychological wellness and overall happiness, highlighting spirituality as an important contributor to mental health. Similarly, Steger et al. (2006) found that spirituality-related constructs, particularly meaning in life, significantly predict satisfaction and subjective well-being, suggesting that meaning serves as a key mechanism through which spirituality enhances happiness.

Further supporting these findings, Peterson and Seligman (2004) identified spirituality as a core character strength that positively predicts well-being outcomes, emphasizing its independent role in fostering happiness beyond other psychological factors. In addition, Frankl (1963) proposed that the search for meaning, a central component of spirituality, is fundamental to human well-being; his logotherapy framework suggests that individuals who find meaning in their life, experience greater life satisfaction and psychological resilience. Moreover, Pargament (1997) highlighted that spirituality and religious coping mechanisms help individuals deal with stress and life challenges, thereby enhancing psychological adjustment and well-being. Similarly, Diener and colleagues (2011) emphasized that factors contributing to meaning, purpose, and positive emo-

tions—often rooted in spirituality—are strongly linked with higher levels of subjective well-being across cultures. In line with these findings, another study reported that engagement in spiritual practices significantly enhances mental health and academic achievement among college students, indicating that spirituality contributes not only to mental health but also to overall personal development. (Agarwal & Srivastava, 2025)

Prior research consistently indicates that spirituality is an important determinant of happiness and mental health (Koenig, 2012). Studies have shown that higher levels of spirituality are associated with greater meaning in life, life satisfaction, and subjective well-being (Steger et al., 2006), and significantly predict positive psychological outcomes (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Additionally, spirituality has been found to enhance individuals' ability to cope with stress and life challenges, thereby improving psychological adjustment and overall well-being (Pargament, 1997). Research also suggests that spirituality contributes to positive emotions and a sense of purpose, which are strongly linked to higher levels of subjective well-being (Diener et al., 2011). Theoretical perspectives further emphasize that spirituality facilitates the development of meaning, which in turn enhances overall happiness (Frankl, 1963). Recent research also supports that engagement in spiritual practices enhances psychological well-being and contributes to overall development among college students (Agarwal & Srivastava, 2025).

Conclusion: The present study examined the association between spiritual values and happiness, as well as the role of spiritual values in predicting happiness among college students. The study results show that there is a positive association between spiritual values and happiness. Regression analysis indicates that spiritual values significantly promote happiness among college students. The research findings highlight the importance of incorporating spiritual values into a student's daily life to increase their happiness. Enhancement in spiritual values will contribute to the personal and spiritual growth of the student. These values will also serve as promoters of humanity and as reinforcers in personal relationships. These values will help in developing greater harmony with the self and others.

The study concludes by focusing on the importance of spiritual values in promoting happiness. Therefore, students should consider focusing on these values to promote their happiness as well as educational institutions should consider integrating these values in the curriculum, conduct workshops and build students clubs to spread awareness about these values in daily life.

Limitations and Suggestions: The current study was conducted on the college students of Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut; future researches can include participants from a bigger demographic area and from different universities or colleges for better generalization of research findings.

The present study includes young participants aged 18-19 years, future studies may include a wider range of participants to see whether the association between spiritual values and happiness differs across different age groups.

The current study solely relied on the self report measures for data, which may be influenced by the participant's perception and response bias. Future studies can consider different methods for data collection, such as interviews or observational approaches.

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