



PSYCHOLOGICAL QUALITY OF LIFE AND WELL-BEING AS CORRELATES OF SPIRITUAL, RELIGIOUS AND PERSONAL BELIEFS

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Abstract

Today's youth are the shapers and leaders of our global future and are often seen as healthiest cohort. But, their distressing state such as anxiety, depression, self harm, and disobedience shows that youth of today is not healthy psychologically. They undergo severe psychological distress due to many factors such as their own and family expectations, pressure for achieving success and excellence in walk of life and many others. The present investigation was planned to study predictors of psychological quality of life & wellbeing among youth populations. The sample for the study consisted of 754 youth within the age range of 16-29 years. They were assessed with World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL BREF) & World Health Organisation Spiritual, Religious, Personal Beliefs (WHOQOL - SRPB) Field Test Instrument. Data were processed by correlation and regression analysis. The results revealed that psychological quality of life & wellbeing is positively associated with spiritual, religious and personal beliefs among youth. Stepwise regression analysis identified eight predictors of psychological quality of life and wellbeing i.e. spiritual connection, meaning and purpose in life, wholeness and integration, spiritual strength, inner peace, hope and optimism, and faith.

Key Words: Psychological Quality of Life, Wellbeing, Spiritual, Religious & Personal Beliefs



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• BACKGROUND

Presently the world has become a home to 1.8 billion young people and their population is still growing faster. Now, India is a place of world's highest number of youths, with 365 million young populations (UNFPA-2014). The youth population matters because they are the shapers and leaders of our global future. Youth are often seen as healthiest cohort and yet, WHO estimates suggest that each year, hundreds of millions develop harmful behaviours with short- and long- term health and non- health impacts. Further according to WHO, healthy youth means not only physically and mentally healthy, but also be fit emotionally with the positivity in mind that expresses love, compassion, peace, happiness, etc and known as life skills.

Recent epidemiological data has indicated that half of our psychological health disorders start by age of 14 years, but most cases are undetected and untreated. Research also indicates that 25%-50% of the general population of youths engage in multiple high-risk behaviours such as drug use, tobacco use, alcoholism, unprotected sex, exposure to violence, lack of physical activity, etc. Studies on risk

and protective factors for youth have led mental health professionals to become interested in intervention and prevention programmes. As humans they are supposed to understand the world around and the art of living in life journey. If they are to compete on a global scale, they are to arm with all the reasons and responsibility to become knowledgeable, aware and empowered.

The youth of today believe in science and they look upon science and technology as the main solution to all their personal and social problems as well as physical & mental disease. But after experiencing an application of science and technology in variety of fields of human life, it is now realized that development of science and technology made their lives easier but does not teach them how to live and no longer seem to occupy that exalted position as a panacea for all life problems.

There is awareness across multiple disciplines of the world that spiritual, religious and personal practices have the solutions of life related problems of all human being including the youth. These practices bring eminence sacredness in one's life. The power of such practices has not been fully explored. Currently available literature and research evidence supports the positive role of these practices in human life. Till recent past, it was considered that spiritual and religious practices belong only to Saints and Munies. But in reality, it is not limited to them and has a closed and complex relation with the life of all human beings. Now there is a growing recognition of the importance of spiritual, religious and personal practices even in advanced civil society.

Spiritual practices can play a very dominant role in increasing concentration of mind of all human beings including young generation. Concentration is important in many spheres of life of the youth such as sports, jobs, art and literature including academic achievement of them. Further, these practices also provide a glare of emotional benefits in several ways. A youth rich with these practices can see his life from a clear angle of vision. He can recognize the roots of his pain and can start to solve his problems in more realistic manner. By raising concentration and consciousness a youth may be aware of the causes of some of his feelings and correctly pinpoint area needed to work. Most importantly, it will help these youths to recognize themselves to their spiritual nature. Thus, there is an urgent need to educate youth at early stage of life (adolescent) and inspire them towards restoring the respect and honour of contemplative practices so that achievement in later stage, in all walks of life, for success, could be improved.

Above background has led to suggestions and research in relation to validating the incorporation of aspect of spiritual, religious and personal practices as one of the ways especially, by increasing concentration of the mind through some aged old, proved and effective contemplative practice. Raj yoga meditation is one of such practice of Indian Culture that helps a person to cultivate concentration, consciousness, especially internal, self-awareness and awareness of one's connection to the world. It is proved and effective prevention method for a range of problems with youth and is

an effective intervention for youths, experiencing a wide variety of emotional, behavioural and physical problems.

- **OBJECTIVES**

The present study was aimed at exploring psychological quality of life and wellbeing among youth, in the light of spiritual, religious and personal beliefs. The generation of such knowledge is essential for better understanding about role of spiritual, religious and personal beliefs in psychological quality of life and wellbeing among youth. The objectives of the study were:

1. To study the relationship among the measures of spiritual, religious and personal beliefs and psychological quality of life and wellbeing among youth.
2. To study the predictors of psychological quality of life and wellbeing among youth.

- **HYPOTHESES**

In the present research the following hypotheses were proposed:

1. There is likelihood of positive relationship between psychological quality of life and wellbeing and spiritual, religious and personal beliefs.
2. Psychological quality of life and wellbeing is likely to show association with spiritual connection, meaning and purpose in life, wholeness and integration, spiritual strength, inner peace, hope and optimism, and faith.

- **METHOD**

The present study was conducted on a sample of 754 youths wherein youth must have age 16 -29 years, willing to participate in NIC, They don't have any previous spiritual retreat and camp experience and give consent to participate in the study whereas exclusion criteria were ages above 29 years, having any physical illness which prevents them from concentrating and participating in camp's activities, and suffering from any neurological or psychiatric illness. The selected youth sample consisted male and female from all over Indian states and from all communities. The sample was collected from Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Guru Gram, where the National Integration Camp (NIC) held every year with the collaboration of Union Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, India.

- **INSTRUMENTATION:** Following instruments were applied to collect data.

- I. **World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL BREF):** The WHOQOL BREF produces a quality of life profile. It also provides four domain scores which denote an individual perception of quality of life in each particular domain- physical, psychological, social and environmental. Domain scores are scaled in a positive direction from higher quality of life to lower quality of life. The mean score of items within each domain is used to calculate the domain score. In the present study only the Psychological domain is taken for the assessment.

- II. **World Health Organisation Spiritual, Religious, Personal Beliefs (WHOQOL- SRPB) Field Test Instrument:** It covers 32 questions, covering quality of life aspects related to spirituality,

religiousness, and personal beliefs. This questionnaire module contains eight facets of spirituality, religiousness and personal beliefs (connectedness to a spiritual being or force, meaning of life, awe, wholeness and integration, spiritual strength, inner peace/serenity/harmony, hope and optimism, and faith) expressed by four items each. Items are worded in ways that do not make any particular assumptions and thus applicable to individuals with a range of different spiritual, religious, and personal beliefs.

• **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

To study relationship among the measures of psychological quality of life and wellbeing with spiritual, religious, and personal beliefs, the coefficients of correlations (r) were computed. The correlations are shown in Table 1. The results reveal that psychological quality of life and wellbeing is positively associated with spiritual, religious, and personal beliefs (r=0.48) among youth. Psychological quality of life and wellbeing is also positively related to connection (r=0.34), meaningfulness (r=0.36), awe and wonder (r=0.30), wholeness and integration (r =0.37), strength (r=0.31), peace (r=0.36), hope (r=0.36), and faith (r=0.40), measures of spiritual, religious, and personal beliefs.

Although these correlations are low but all the components of spiritual, religious, and personal beliefs are positively correlated with psychological quality of life and wellbeing. It may be interpreted that overall psychological quality of life and wellbeing level of youth is affected by the presence of lasting conditions (NIC). The youth’s psychological quality of life and wellbeing is to some extent dependent on spiritual, religious, and personal beliefs strategies which lead to better adjustment. They have faith in the almighty and spiritual powers, hope and connection to the spiritual power provides inner peace, strength and wholeness, and able to find meaning and purpose of their life positively.

TABLE-1: Correlations of Psychological QOL &WB with SRPB (N=754)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Sub Scales</i>	<i>R</i>
SRPB	Spiritual Connection	.34**
	Meaning & Purpose in Life	.36**
	Experience of Awe & Wonder	.30**
	Wholeness & Integration	.37**
	Spiritual Strength	.31**
	Inner Peace	.36**
	Hope & Optimism	.36**
	Faith	.40**
	Spiritual Religious & Personal Beliefs	.48**

**p< .01 level

Although correlation is very useful statistical tool for observing the relationship between the variables, yet it does not provide any information regarding the prediction of the depended variable. Stepwise regression was used while taking psychological quality of life and wellbeing as dependent variable and spiritual, religious, and personal beliefs and its measures as predictor. Table 2 shows the results to stepwise regression analysis. The results revealed that out of all measures of Spiritual, Religious and Personal Beliefs.

Spiritual Connection contributed maximum to the prediction of Psychological Quality of Life and Well being. The multiple R for this predictor is 0.34 and R2 = 0.11 (F= 96.74, p < .001), which means that Psychological Quality of Life and Well being accounted for 11% of variance in Spiritual Connection.

Meaning and Purpose in Life variable, appears to be another potent predictor which was entered at step two. Multiple R increased to .40 with the entry of Meaning and purpose in life in the equation after Spiritual Connection. The F ratio computed for the significance of multiple R, at step two, equals to 73.64 which is significant at a level < .001.

The next variable, which entered in the regression equation, is Experience of Awe and Wonder. With the entry of this predictor at step three the multiple R become 0.42. The F ratio at this step equals to 54.29, significant at .001 level.

TABLE- 2: Summary of Stepwise regression Dependent variable: Psychological QOL & WB

<i>Variables</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R²</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
1 . Spiritual Connection	.34	.11	96,74	.01
2 . Meaning & Purpose in Life	.40	.16	73.64	.01
3 . Experience of Awe & Wonder	.42	.18	54.29	.01
4 . Wholeness & Integration	.45	.21	48.90	.01
5 . Spiritual Strength	.45	.21	39.08	.01
6 . Inner Peace	.48	.23	37.70	.01
7 . Hope & Optimism	.50	.24	34.74	.01
8 . Faith	.50	.25	31.19	.01
9 . SRPB	.50	.25	28.17	.01

The next pertinent predictor of Psychological Quality of Life and Wellbeing is Wholeness and Integration. This variable entered in the equation at step four. Multiple R increased to .45 with the entry of Wholeness and Integration in the equation after Spiritual Connection, Meaning and purpose

in life and Experience of Awe and Wonder. The F ratio computed for significance of multiple R, at step four, equals to 48.90 which is significant at a level $< .001$.

The next variable which entered in the regression equation is Spiritual Strength, with the entry of this predictor at step five the multiple R increased to .45. The F ratio of this step equals to 39.08 which is significant at .01 level.

The results of stepwise regression analysis variable contribute significantly to the predictions of psychological distress among youth population. At the next step, Inner Peace is added in the regression equation. The multiple R is 0.48 whereas the R² became .23. At this stage the F ratio is equals to 37.70 which is significant at .01 levels.

Hope and Optimism entered the equation at step seven. With the entry of this predictor the multiple R increased to .50. The F ratio of this step equals to 34.74 which is significant at .01 levels.

Another potent predictor is Faith and was entered at step eight with multiple R of 0.50. The F ratio of this step equals to 31.19 which is significant at .01 level. The individual contribution of the variables is substantial and play role in the prediction of Psychological Quality of Life and Wellbeing.

The predictors Spiritual Connection, Meaning and purpose in life, Experience of Awe and Wonder, Wholeness and Integration, Spiritual Strength, Inner Peace, Hope and Optimism and Faith jointly account for 25% of the variance (R²=.25) and multiple R of 0.50 (F=28.17, $p < .01$) in Psychological Quality of Life and Wellbeing of the youth.

The present study was aimed at exploring Psychological Quality of Life and Wellbeing among Youth, in the light of Spiritual, Religious, and Personal Beliefs and its measures- Spiritual Connection, Meaning and purpose in life, Experience of Awe and Wonder, Wholeness and Integration, Spiritual Strength, Inner Peace, Hope and Optimism, and Faith. The generation of such knowledge explored is essential for better understanding about the role of Spiritual, Religious, and Personal Beliefs and its measures among youth.

• CONCLUSION

The obtained results are discussed in the light of the theoretical framework of the subject and the research studies already conducted in the field. It is pertinent to mention that results of the study appear to lend substantial support to the hypothesis formulated. Both the hypothesis regarding the relationship and prediction between Psychological Quality of Life and Wellbeing and Spiritual, Religious, and Personal Beliefs is rejected because it is found that there is positive relationship between the variables and prediction can be done on the basis of that. It is generally found also that more the Connection to Almighty, Meaning and purpose in life, Experience of Awe and Wonder, Wholeness and Integration, Spiritual Strength, Inner Peace, Hope and Optimism, and Faith, more will be the Psychological Quality of Life and Wellbeing. The findings may be interpreted that among

the youth, the Spiritual, Religious, and Personal Beliefs is very much effective in their Psychological Quality of Life and Wellbeing.

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