

## Relationship of Meaning in Life, Psychological Well-Being and Resilience amongst Vipassana Practitioners

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### ABSTRACT

The present study explores the relationship between Meaning in Life, Psychological Well-Being, and Resilience among Vipassana practitioners. In a fast-paced and uncertain world, the search for purpose and emotional balance has become increasingly important. Vipassana meditation, rooted in ancient Buddhist practices, offers a structured path for cultivating self-awareness, inner peace, and equanimity. This research aims to examine how the dimensions of meaning in life—Presence and Search—relate to an individual's psychological well-being and capacity for resilience in the context of sustained Vipassana practice. A sample of 44 participants (26 males and 18 females), aged between 30 to 50 years, with a minimum of two years of consistent Vipassana meditation experience, was selected using convenient sampling. Standardized tools were used to assess the three variables: the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), and the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS). Data analysis was conducted using Pearson correlation and linear regression in SPSS. Results revealed a strong positive correlation between the Presence of Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being, as well as a moderate positive correlation between Presence of Meaning and Resilience. Conversely, the Search for Meaning was found to be negatively correlated with both Psychological Well-Being and Resilience. Regression analysis indicated that the Presence and Search dimensions together accounted for 46.4% of the variance in Psychological Well-Being and 24.7% of the variance in Resilience. A strong positive correlation was also observed between Resilience and Psychological Well-Being. These findings suggest that the cultivation of a stable sense of meaning, fostered through practices like Vipassana, contributes significantly to an individual's psychological health and adaptive capacity. The study highlights the importance of existential clarity and emotional regulation in enhancing mental well-being and resilience. It also underscores the potential value of Vipassana meditation as a transformative tool in psychological and wellness interventions.

**Keywords:** *Vipassana meditation, meaning in life, psychological well-being, resilience, presence of meaning, search for meaning, mindfulness*

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## Relationship of Meaning in Life, Psychological Well-Being and Resilience amongst Vipassana Practitioners

Vipassana meditation, rooted in principles of compassion and non-violence, has gained recognition for its psychological and social benefits, such as enhancing emotional regulation, and reducing stress and anxiety. In today's fast-paced society, it fosters peace, clarity, and resilience by training the brain to recognise subtle signals and fostering equanimity (samta) through non-reactivity.

Meaning in life reflects an individual's sense of significance, purpose, and connection, a critical factor influencing psychological and physical well-being (Heintzelman & King, 2014; Vail & Routledge, 2020). Viktor Frankl (1955) viewed meaning as something to be discovered, while Yalom (1980) suggested it is created through personal experiences, relationships, and attitudes towards life's challenges. Additionally, the concept of meaning in life can be understood through two dimensions: the presence of meaning and the search for meaning. The presence of meaning refers to the extent to which individuals perceive their lives as having significance and purpose, while the search for meaning pertains to the active pursuit of understanding and establishing that sense of significance and purpose in one's life. Both dimensions play a vital role in influencing mental health and overall well-being.

Psychological well-being, as defined by Ryff (1989), encompasses self-acceptance, autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and positive relationships. Keyes (2002) further identifies flourishing mental health as the highest state of well-being, marked by emotional vitality and strong social connections.

Resilience is the ability to adapt to adversity, stress, or trauma. Vipassana meditation enhances resilience through mindfulness, self-regulation, and non-reactivity. Richardson's (2002) model explains resilience as a dynamic process of recovery and growth, while Fredrickson's (1998) broaden-and-build theory highlights how positive emotions enhance coping abilities.

This research explores the correlations between meaning in life, psychological well-being, and resilience among Vipassana practitioners. The focus is to understand how Vipassana influences these psychological factors, providing insights into its role in fostering mental health and a sense of purpose.

Significance: As challenges in life are inevitable, understanding resilience and psychological well-being through the lens of Vipassana offers valuable insights. The practice not only helps individuals cope effectively but also promotes holistic growth, making it relevant in today's context of mental health and personal development.

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The current study aims to build upon existing findings by exploring the specific correlations between meaning in life, psychological well-being, and resilience among Vipassana practitioners.

Laura A. King (2021) highlighted that the meaning of life is rooted in subjective experiences, emerging from daily routines, goal pursuits, and social relationships. Rajakishore Nath (2018) discussed the significance of introspection, wisdom, and self-realisation in shaping life's meaning within Indian philosophy. Schnell (2002) found that personality traits influence sources of life's meaning, with extraversion and self-transcendence linked to higher meaningfulness.

## Relationship of Meaning in Life, Psychological Well-Being and Resilience amongst Vipassana Practitioners

Dodge et al. (2012) proposed the equilibrium model, asserting psychological well-being as a dynamic balance between personal resources and life challenges. Sharad Philip et al. (2021) revealed high burnout rates among Indian medical students, negatively impacting their well-being. Brown (2003) introduced the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, showing mindfulness's strong link to enhanced well-being and reduced stress.

Herrman (2011) defined resilience as positive adaptation amid adversity, influenced by personal, biological, and environmental factors. P. Vijayalakshmi et al. (2022) found resilience moderately improved Indian nursing students' quality of life during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ungar (2013) emphasised the role of environmental and cultural contexts in shaping resilience.

Kleftaras et al. (2012) observed a strong link between life's meaning and reduced depressive symptoms, enhancing psychological health. García-Alandete (2015) confirmed that meaning in life significantly predicts psychological well-being among Spanish undergraduates.

Ostafin (2020) demonstrated that a strong sense of life meaning reduces psychological distress and repetitive negative thoughts during stress. Platsidou (2021) found teachers with a strong sense of life's meaning exhibited higher resilience.

Sagone (2014) identified positive correlations between resilience, psychological well-being, and effective coping strategies among Italian students. Hossein (2014) highlighted optimism's mediating role between resilience and psychological well-being in medical students.

Du et al. (2017) concluded that resilience moderates the relationship between life's meaning and psychological health, reducing depression and loneliness among children with vulnerable backgrounds.

### ***Statement of the Problem:***

- To explore the relationship of meaning in life, psychological well-being and resilience amongst vipassana practitioners.

### ***Objectives of the Study:***

1. To study the correlation between meaning in life and psychological well-being
2. To study the correlation between meaning in life and resilience
3. To study the correlation between psychological well-being and resilience

### ***Hypothesis of the Study***

- H1: There is a positive relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being
- H2: There is a positive relationship between meaning in life and resilience
- H3: There is a positive relationship between psychological well-being and resilience

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Sample***

The sample of 44 has been selected through the convenient sampling method,

1. Inclusion Criteria

## Relationship of Meaning in Life, Psychological Well-Being and Resilience amongst Vipassana Practitioners

- Participants must have a minimum of 2 years of regular practice in Vipassana meditation.
  - Age group of participants must be between 30-50 years
  - Participants must be of middle socio-economic status
  - Participants who are married.
2. Exclusion Criteria
- Individuals with no prior experience or less than 2 years of Vipassana practice
  - Individuals currently diagnosed with severe mental health conditions or undergoing psychiatric treatment
  - Individuals who are unemployed

### ***Research Design:***

Correlational Research Design is used for this study. Further followed with regression for the variables correlated.

### ***Variables Used in the Study:***

1. Predictor variable:

a) Meaning in Life (Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning)

2. Criterion variables:

a) Psychological Well-Being

b) Resilience

3. Controlled variables:

a) Age

b) Marital Status (only married individuals included)

c) Working Status (only employed individuals included)

d) Duration of Vipassana practice

### ***Operational Definition:***

- 1. Meaning in Life:** Meaning in Life refers to the extent to which individuals perceive their lives as having purpose, significance, and coherence. It is measured through two subdimensions: Presence of Meaning (already having meaning) and Search for Meaning (actively seeking meaning), assessed by the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) by Steger et al. (2006).
- 2. Psychological Well-Being:** Psychological Well-Being (PWB) refers to an individual's perceived emotional balance, life satisfaction, and positive functioning across domains such as purpose in life, self-acceptance, autonomy, personal growth, and positive relations. It is measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) by Tennant et al. (2007).
- 3. Resilience:** Resilience is defined as the ability to recover quickly from stress, adversity, failure, or challenges. It reflects emotional strength, adaptability, and perseverance. Resilience is measured using the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) by Smith et al. (2008).

### ***Research Tools***

- 1. Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006):** The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) was developed by Michael F. Steger, Patricia Frazier, Shigehiro Oishi, and Matthew Kaler in 2006. It consists of 10 items divided into two subscales: Presence of Meaning (5 items) and Search for Meaning (5 items). Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "Absolutely Untrue" to "Absolutely True." The MLQ demonstrates good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.86 for Presence and 0.87 for Search. It is widely used to assess individuals' perceptions of meaning in their lives.
- 2. Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) (Tennant et al., 2007):** The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) was developed by Ruth Tennant and colleagues in 2007. The scale consists of 14 items designed to measure positive aspects of mental health including positive affect, satisfying interpersonal relationships, and positive functioning. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "None of the time" to "All of the time." The scale shows excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91. It is widely recognized for measuring overall psychological well-being.
- 3. Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) (Smith et al., 2008):** The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) was developed by Bruce W. Smith and colleagues in 2008. It consists of 6 items aimed at measuring the ability to bounce back or recover from stress. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The BRS demonstrates good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging between 0.80 and 0.91. It is a widely utilized and validated tool to assess resilience across different populations.

### ***Procedure for Data Collection***

In the current study, data was collected from 44 Vipassana practitioners who met the required inclusion and exclusion criteria. Purposive sampling method was used to ensure that participants fit the research requirements. A consent form was provided, and the objectives and instructions of the research were explained to the participants thoroughly. The Personal Data Sheet (PDS) and standardized questionnaires (Meaning in Life Questionnaire, Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale, and Brief Resilience Scale) were administered while maintaining confidentiality and ethical standards. The process of data collection stretched over a period of approximately 60 days. Data collection was conducted in offline mode.

### ***Statistical Treatment***

For data analysis, SPSS software version 30 was used. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the quantitative data, which included measures of central tendency and variability (mean, standard deviation, skewness, standard error of skewness, kurtosis, and standard error of kurtosis) to assess the data distribution. As the data was found to be normally distributed, parametric tests were used. Pearson's correlation was applied to assess the relationships between the variables. Linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive value of Meaning in Life on Psychological Well-Being and Resilience.

# Relationship of Meaning in Life, Psychological Well-Being and Resilience amongst Vipassana Practitioners

## RESULTS

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics*

		Meaning in Life (Search)	Meaning in Life (Presence)	Psychological Well-Being	Resilience
N	Valid	44	44	44	44
	Missing	1	1	1	1
Mean		16.86	24.23	51.57	22.73
Median		16.50	23.50	52.50	23.00
Std. Deviation		8.270	7.640	9.699	5.041
Skewness		.110	-.262	-.063	-.695
Std. Error of Skewness		.357	.357	.357	.357
Kurtosis		-.954	-.658	-.486	1.125
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.702	.702	.702	.702
Minimum		5	5	32	7
Maximum		35	35	70	30

It was observed from the provided table that the normality of data has been calculated. The skewness and kurtosis values for Meaning in Life (Search), Meaning in Life (Presence), Psychological Well-Being, and Resilience fall within the acceptable range, indicating a normal distribution for these variables. Therefore, the researcher has selected parametric statistics for reference.

## CORRELATION:

*Table 2: Correlation between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being of Vipassana Practitioners*

	PWB
Meaning in Life (Search)	-.460**
Meaning in Life (Prescence)	.645**

*Table 3: Correlation between Meaning in Life and Resilience of Vipassana Practitioners*

	Resilience
Meaning in Life (Search)	-.471**
Meaning in Life (Prescence)	.382*

*Table 4: Correlation between Resilience and Psychological Well-Being of Vipassana Practitioners*

	PWB
Resilience	.683**

# Relationship of Meaning in Life, Psychological Well-Being and Resilience amongst Vipassana Practitioners

**Table 5: Regression between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being of Vipassana Practitioners**

	<b>R SQUARE</b>	<b>ADJUSTED R SQUARE</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Standard Coefficients Beta</b>
<b>1</b>	.489	.464	-	-	-
<b>Regression</b>	-	-	19.641	.000 <sup>b</sup>	-
<b>Meaning in Life (Search)</b>					-.285
<b>Meaning in Life (Prescence)</b>					.555

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Well-Being

b. Predictors: (Constant), Meaning in Life (Search), Meaning in Life (Prescence)

**Table 6: Regression between Meaning in Life and Resilience of Vipassana Practitioners**

	<b>R SQUARE</b>	<b>ADJUSTED R SQUARE</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Standard Coefficients Beta</b>
<b>1</b>	.282	.247	-	-	-
<b>Regression</b>	-	-	8.052	.001 <sup>b</sup>	-
<b>Meaning in Life (Search)</b>					-.389
<b>Meaning in Life (Prescence)</b>					.259

a. Dependent Variable: Resilience

b. Predictors: (Constant), Meaning in Life (Search), Meaning in Life (Prescence)

## INTERPRETATION:

1. Correlation between Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being: The Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.460 between Search for Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being (PWB) indicates a moderate negative correlation. ( $p < 0.01$ ). The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.645 between Prescence of Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being (PWB) shows a strong positive correlation. ( $p < 0.01$ ). The R value is .489 and the Adjusted R Square is .464. This indicates that Meaning in Life (Search and Presence) accounts for 46.4% of the variance in Psychological Well-Being. The F value is 19.641 with a significance level of .000, suggesting that the model is statistically significant. The Standardised Coefficients Beta indicates that Meaning in Life (Search) has a negative impact (-.285) whereas Meaning in Life (Presence) has a positive impact (.555) on Psychological Well-Being.
2. Correlation between Meaning in Life and Resilience: The Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.471 between Search for Meaning in Life and Resilience indicates a moderate negative correlation. ( $p < 0.01$ ). The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.382 between Prescence of Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being (PWB) shows a moderate positive correlation. ( $p < 0.05$ ). The R value is .282 and the Adjusted R Square is .247. This indicates that Meaning in Life (Search and Presence) accounts for 24.7% of the variance in Resilience. The F value is 8.052 with a significance level of .001, suggesting that the model is statistically significant. The Standardised

## Relationship of Meaning in Life, Psychological Well-Being and Resilience amongst Vipassana Practitioners

Coefficients Beta indicates that Meaning in Life (Search) has a negative impact (-.389) whereas Meaning in Life (Presence) has a positive impact (.259) on Resilience.

3. Correlation between Resilience and Psychological Well-Being: The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.683 between Resilience and Psychological Well-Being (PWB) shows a strong positive correlation. ( $p < 0.01$ )

### DISCUSSION

The Pearson correlation indicated a strong positive correlation between Presence of Meaning and Psychological Well-Being ( $r = 0.645$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and a moderate negative correlation between Search for Meaning and Psychological Well-Being ( $r = -0.460$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The results indicated that higher presence of meaning in life leads to higher psychological well-being among Vipassana practitioners. In contrast, those who are still actively seeking meaning may experience internal conflict, ambiguity, or even distress, which may lower their psychological well-being. The regression analysis confirmed a strong relationship where meaning in life was found to be a significant predictor of psychological well-being, explaining 46.4% of the variance.

García-Alandete (2015) also studied the relationship between meaning in life and psychological well-being and concluded that presence of meaning was a strong positive predictor of psychological well-being. Similarly, Krok (2015) found that individuals with high presence of meaning demonstrated greater psychological health and satisfaction.

Referring to the PDS, many participants reported that regular Vipassana practice helped them develop a deeper sense of acceptance and purpose, which enhanced their overall mental well-being.

Thus, the hypothesis stating, “There is a positive correlation between meaning in life and psychological well-being among Vipassana practitioners” is accepted and supported by data. The Pearson correlation indicated a moderate positive correlation between Presence of Meaning and Resilience ( $r = 0.382$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and a moderate negative correlation between Search for Meaning and Resilience ( $r = -0.471$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The results indicated that a higher presence of meaning in life leads to greater resilience among Vipassana practitioners. In contrast, those in a state of active existential search may have a more fragile or unsettled internal framework, which could diminish their resilience in the face of adversity. Regression analysis showed that meaning in life was a significant but moderate predictor of resilience, explaining 24.7% of the variance.

Research conducted by Mohseni (2019) also found that individuals with a strong sense of meaning showed higher resilience in the face of adversity. Platsidou (2021) supported similar conclusions, indicating that meaning in life acts as an important psychological resource that fosters resilience.

Referring to the PDS, participants shared that understanding the impermanent nature of life events through Vipassana meditation helped them bounce back from emotional challenges more easily, thus strengthening their resilience.

This indicates that the hypothesis, “There is a positive correlation between meaning in life and resilience among Vipassana practitioners” is accepted and supported by data.

## Relationship of Meaning in Life, Psychological Well-Being and Resilience amongst Vipassana Practitioners

The Pearson correlation indicated a strong positive correlation between psychological well-being and resilience ( $r = .683$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The correlation is highly significant and indicates that higher psychological well-being leads to greater resilience among Vipassana practitioners. Although regression analysis between these two variables was not conducted in the current study, the strong correlation suggests that psychological well-being and resilience are closely linked.

Sagone (2014) found that individuals with higher levels of psychological well-being demonstrated greater resilience in challenging situations. Similarly, Hossein (2014) concluded that psychological wellness significantly predicts resilience, supporting the findings of the present study.

Referring to the PDS, several participants mentioned that the emotional balance they developed through Vipassana meditation helped them stay composed and recover faster during stressful life events, reflecting higher resilience.

Thus, the stated hypothesis, “There is positive correlation between psychological well-being and resilience among Vipassana practitioners” is accepted.

After analyzing multiple correlations, it is evident that a higher sense of meaning in life leads to greater psychological well-being, and both together contribute significantly to enhancing resilience among Vipassana practitioners. Vipassana meditation appears to serve as a foundation for building inner meaning, mental stability, and emotional strength.

### CONCLUSION

1. There is a positive correlation between meaning in life and psychological well-being among Vipassana practitioners.
2. There is a positive correlation between meaning in life and resilience among Vipassana practitioners.
3. There is positive correlation between psychological well-being and resilience among Vipassana practitioners.

### Limitations

1. The research was conducted on a relatively small sample size ( $N = 44$ ), limiting the generalizability of the findings.
2. The study sample included only individuals aged between 30 to 50 years, and results might differ for younger or older age groups.
3. Participants were all married and belonged to the middle socio-economic class, which does not capture diversity in relationship status or socio-economic background.
4. Only practitioners with a minimum of two years of Vipassana experience were included; results might vary for beginners or advanced practitioners.
5. Other psychological variables such as anxiety, depression, or past trauma history were not taken into account and may have influenced the results.
6. The study relied entirely on self-report questionnaires, which may be subject to social desirability bias or self-perception inaccuracies.
7. While the study was conducted in the context of Vipassana practice—rooted in Indian spiritual traditions—cultural influences on meaning-making, well-being, and resilience were not specifically measured or controlled.

## Relationship of Meaning in Life, Psychological Well-Being and Resilience amongst Vipassana Practitioners

8. The study used only quantitative methods, which may not fully capture the depth and subjective experience of meaning in life and Vipassana practice. Qualitative insights could have enriched understanding, particularly around how participants interpret their meditation experiences in relation to their psychological functioning.

### ***Future Research Directions:***

1. Future studies can be conducted on Vipassana practitioners across various age groups to compare generational differences in meaning, resilience, and well-being.
2. Research can be expanded with a larger and more diverse sample to enhance external validity.
3. Comparative studies can be carried out between Vipassana practitioners and practitioners of other meditation techniques (e.g., Transcendental Meditation, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction).
4. Longitudinal research can be conducted to assess how continued Vipassana practice influences changes in meaning, well-being, and resilience over time.
5. Further studies may include variables like stress, anxiety, depression, or mindfulness to explore their mediating or moderating roles.
6. Research could examine the impact of Vipassana on individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds and relationship statuses for a more inclusive understanding.

### ***Implications:***

1. This research helps highlight the importance of existential clarity in enhancing mental health outcomes among individuals practicing meditation-based interventions like Vipassana.
2. The findings emphasize that the Presence of Meaning in Life is a strong predictor of both resilience and psychological well-being, reinforcing the idea that meditation may help individuals find purpose and direction.
3. The study sheds light on the role of Vipassana in developing equanimity, acceptance, and self-regulation, which are crucial for both resilience and psychological stability.
4. The negative impact of ongoing existential search on well-being suggests the need for structured support in guiding individuals through periods of inner questioning and uncertainty.
5. Mental health professionals, counsellors, and wellness coaches can consider incorporating Vipassana-based reflective practices in therapeutic settings to promote meaning, well-being, and resilience.

### ***Summary***

This study explores the relationship between meaning in life, psychological well-being, and resilience among Vipassana practitioners. The findings suggest that a stable sense of meaning, cultivated through Vipassana, contributes to psychological health and adaptive capacity. The study highlights the importance of existential clarity and emotional regulation in enhancing mental well-being and resilience.

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## Relationship of Meaning in Life, Psychological Well-Being and Resilience amongst Vipassana Practitioners

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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