

Psychological Well-Being, Positive and Negative Emotions, and Spiritual Experiences of Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Background: Though often part of everyday routines in India, spiritual healing and self-purification receive little research attention when it comes to mental health effects on today's youth. These traditions, long tied to inner renewal across societies, still lack clear evidence linking them to measurable well-being gains in younger populations. **Methods:** A comparative research design was built around for one hundred people - fifty men, fifty women between eighteen and thirty - took part, chosen on purpose for comparison. Administered tools included Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being, alongside PANAS and the DSES - all previously tested methods. Gender contrasts in results emerged when analyzed using one-way ANOVA across each measure. Though separate in approach, findings linked back to how emotional states and inner balance varied by sex. **Results:** Higher scores among men emerged for positive affect along with negative affect. When it came to positive relationships with people, women showed notably greater levels. Results revealed no meaningful gaps between genders regarding autonomy. Personal growth did not differ either across groups. Purpose in life stayed consistent regardless of sex. Self-acceptance displayed similar patterns for both females and males. Overall psychological well-being remained unchanged by gender. Daily spiritual experiences also showed no variation linked to being male or female. **Conclusions:** In India the Rooted tradition, inner development routines show shared mental benefits for all genders - yet patterns shift when feelings enter relationships. Emotional tones differ slightly between groups, but overall wellness gains remain steady. Findings point to spiritual habits as key anchors for young minds in India. Culture-aware therapy approaches become essential given these insights.

Keywords: *Spiritual Healing, Self-Purification, Psychological Well-Being, Positive Emotions, Spirituality, Young Adults*

For many years, researchers have studied on how spiritual habits has associated with mental health. Back then, acts like stopping breath, squeezing eyelids shut, or skipping meals were called faith. Now, scanners watch brain activity while those who meditate stay alert - focused not on chants, yet showing shifts scientists can measure in thinking, sleeping, and mood. Help sometimes comes without pills; instead, it grows from silence, repeating one act, releasing grip. Though quiet breathing may seem minor, Kabat-Zinn (1990) found it actually lowers mental strain, proving inward focus can shift health markers.

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From there, Ryff (1989), later with Singer (1998), argued wellness is more than symptom-free states; instead, it includes making one's own choices, evolving over time, feeling driven by something larger, staying close to others, and being at peace with oneself - areas often touched by reflective disciplines. Meanwhile, Pargament (1997) observed people under pressure who leaned into sacred habits like praying or interpreting hardship through faith managed emotions better, showing non-religious strategies sometimes fall short.

Looking back, Koenig, McCullough, and Larson pulled together more than 100 years of data showing how involvement in religion or spirituality often goes hand in hand with less anxiety, fewer depressive symptoms, and better access to community backing - this pattern held true among varied groups around the world. Young people between 18 and 30 face a distinct phase where questions about who they are, stress in relationships, and deeper concerns about meaning tend to rise, increasing their need for tools that support mental health. From another angle, it was showed how feelings like gladness, thankfulness, wonder, optimism, and calm aren't just signs of good mental shape - they help create it, widening thought patterns and slowly forming inner toughness. When spiritual habits reliably bring on these emotions, they grow into steady undercurrents of strength instead of passing moments of relief.

What Hill and Pargament noticed in 2003 was how spirituality works when someone actively seeks something sacred; such pursuit often brings deeper meaning, clearer sense of self, plus resilience during tough times. Oman and Thoresen showed five years later that regularity matters less than sincerity - people with committed spiritual routines tend toward higher levels of forgiveness, confidence, and long-term mental health. Notably, Pargament emphasized again in 2007: what counts is whether the experience feels significant inside, not how often it happens or where it takes place. Clearly, young adults show this pattern that personal spiritual experiences support emotional stability better than attending religious gatherings, particularly for younger people defining belief independently.

Sharma and Bhatt (2020), examining age-old practices such as controlled breathing, postural movement routines, and ceremonial cleansing - linked in teens to improved emotional stability and reduced stress. Ryff (2021) emphasized well-being built on meaning, development, and owning one's identity - elements deeply tied to inner vitality, which contemplative disciplines often nurture directly. Evidence from multiple sources adds weight; Aggarwal et al. (2023) analyzed seven dozen papers, showing links between spiritual belonging and fewer signs of depression, whereas internal conflict around beliefs tended to deepen distress. Then comes another layer: Vieten and team (2023) noted increasing agreement among therapists - nearly nine in ten - that understanding faith-based experiences matters in treatment, pointing to broader integration of these themes in real-world care settings.

Even with increasing data, few field investigations in India explore connections between spiritual healing, self-cleansing habits, and psychological wellness among young people living outside clinics. Instead, much of the work concentrates on patients receiving treatment, older citizens, or participants within structured faith-based groups. Chhajr and Hira (2024) brought reflection practices into school lessons, which led to clearer signs of gratitude, stronger feelings during tough times, along with closer peer bonds. Around the same time, findings from Chandel and Gill (2024) pointed in a matching direction - students tuned into moments of appreciation, energy, or stillness handled pressure more smoothly, also

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expressing deeper satisfaction. Recently, Sarna and Mhavan (2025) warned that common tools used to assess happiness often miss vital aspects valued by Indian teenagers, pointing toward deeper adaptation in study design. Though patterns emerge now and then, results about how men and women differ in spirituality and well-being rarely agree - some show women more involved spiritually, others spot little gap (Koenig et al., 2001; Unterrainer et al., 2010). Into this mix steps the current work, probing disparities between genders in emotional health, uplifting feelings, and spiritual life among young people in Lucknow practicing regular rituals of inner cleansing and healing.

METHOD

The aims of the study were to examine psychological well-being, positive and negative emotions, and spiritual experiences of young adults who regularly practice spiritual healing and self-purification techniques.

Sample

A group of one hundred individuals (fifty male and fifty female aged 18-30 years of age) participated in this study. Consent to join was confirmed individually. Participants able to read and understand the questionnaire independently or with neutral assistance. Individuals currently undergoing any active psychiatric treatment were excluded from this study.

Tools

- **Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being -SPWB** (developed by Ryff in 1989), uses 42 questions to assess six parts of eudaimonic well-being. Each item falls on a 6-point range from strongly disagree at one end to strongly agree at the other, though certain statements are flipped when scoring. Reliability checks show solid results, with Cronbach's alpha values running between .86 and .93. Testing in various cultural settings supports its credibility - Indian samples included - as shown in work by Ryff and Keyes back in 1995.
- **Positive and Negative Affect Schedule- PANAS** (Watson et al., 1988), a twenty-item scale was used. A set of mood questions known as PANAS includes ten parts for good feelings, ten for bad ones. Each part uses numbers one through five to show strength. People tend to answer consistently ($\alpha = .86-.90$). Indian college students have taken it too, proving its usefulness.
- **Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES)** was used. The scale was developed by Underwood and Teresi back in 2002, its strength was later confirmed again by Underwood in 2011. Starting at 16 points, climbing to 94, the DSES measures how often people notice spiritual moments in daily life - things like feeling guided, thankful, calm, or kind. Each of these sixteen questions uses a six-step scale to track occurrence. Scores show strong reliability, sitting between $\alpha = .90$ and .95.

Procedure

To begin, people learned what the research aimed to explore. Each person gave permission to take part after understanding the details. The setting where information was gathered had good lighting, fresh air, because comfort mattered during the process. Filling out forms happened face-to-face or using an encrypted web address - choice guided how it unfolded. Help arrived quietly if confusion surfaced, though answers stayed impartial throughout. One person put it plainly - answers came straight from their thoughts, untouched by outside pressure. To keep things safe, every reply stayed private, creating space where truth felt welcome. Should someone choose to step away, they could do so whenever it fit them best.

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Research Design

A cross-sectional research design was employed to examine differences in psychological well-being, positive emotions, and spirituality between the two groups.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive analysis in terms of means and standard deviations was used to examine the data across all the measures for both groups. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for each measure to establish any differences based on gender

RESULTS

A one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether statistically significant differences existed between males and females across multiple psychological outcomes. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and One-Way ANOVA

Measure		Males (n=50) M±SD	Females (n=50) M±SD	F	p
Positive and Negative Effect	Positive Affect	32.14±3.26	30.20±2.97	9.686	.002**
	Negative Affect	19.40±2.16	18.24±2.00	7.791	.006**
Psychological Well Being	Autonomy	22.52±3.66	23.66±3.56	2.492	.118
	Personal Growth	26.76±4.13	25.82±3.88	1.375	.244
	Positive Relations	31.22±2.56	32.40±3.02	4.439	.038*
	Purpose in Life	23.54±5.16	24.38±5.26	0.650	.422
	Self-Acceptance	23.44±3.68	23.80±3.43	0.256	.614
	Total	23.82±4.77	23.30±4.84	0.293	.590
	Psychological Well-Being				
Daily Spiritual Experience		151.30±9.82	153.36±9.32	1.157	.285

**p < .01, *p < .05

Affective Outcomes

The result reveals that men showed more positive feelings than women $F(1, 98) = 9.686$. Higher numbers appeared again for men when it came to negative emotions $F(1, 98) = 7.791$, one sign that emotional range ran stronger in male respondents across both sides.

Psychological Well-Being

One of the six PWB areas showed a clear gap between genders - positive relationships - with women has significant difference with man $F(1, 98) = 4.439$. Autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life and self- acceptance (domains of well- being) were not found significant.

Daily Spiritual Experience

No significant difference was reported between genders for daily spiritual experiences.

DISCUSSION

The objective of the present study was to study psychological well-being, positive and negative emotions, and spiritual experiences of young adults. At the measure of positive and negative effect men scored better than women. Studies show men and women experience

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emotions at similar levels internally, but differ in how they express them. Men may show stronger outward expressions of both positive and negative emotions, while women often display emotions in socially acceptable ways (e.g., sadness rather than anger). While most researchers (Kring and Gordon, 1998) concur that women tend to be more emotionally expressive, they do not necessarily argue that women experience a greater intensity or frequency of emotions compared to men. In a study conducted by Carlton et al. (2020) explained that males experience increased stress associated with emotional suppression. Our results contribute to a growing body of evidence that challenges gender stereotypes. Rather than women being more emotional men actually demonstrate a broader expressive range across both positive and negative emotion. This highlights the importance of considering cultural norms, biological mechanisms, and methodological approaches when interpreting gender differences in emotionality.

One of the six PWB areas showed a clear gap between genders - positive relationships - with women has significant difference with man. Autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life and self- acceptance (domains of well- being) were not found significant. In the investigation done by Matud, López-Curbelo and Fortes (2019), Ryff and Keyes (1995), Karasawa et al (2011) it was also found that women scored higher than men in personal growth and positive relations with others. Research in emerging adulthood (Matud, López-Curbelo and Fortes, 2019) showed that men and women reported similar levels of autonomy, personal growth, and life purpose, suggesting these aspects of eudaimonic well-being are less influenced by gender. Higher scores among women in positive social connections fit patterns seen before - studies note young women frequently gain stronger well-being through deep, meaningful ties (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2016).

Despite common assumptions, results here reveal no meaningful gap between men and women in how often they encounter spiritual moments each day. Earlier studies had suggested otherwise - women typically expressing deeper spiritual involvement (Koenig et al., 2001). Yet within this group, male and female participants described nearly identical patterns of daily occurrences like thankfulness, calmness, or oneness. Ongoing practice might level what were once seen as gendered disparities. When spirituality becomes part of routine living, it appears less shaped by identity markers such as sex. Findings align with recent observations: when people immerse themselves in contemplative routines, distinctions based on gender fade notably (Timmins & Calhoun, 2019).

Implications and Limitations

Young adults in India, regardless of gender, may gain real mental health advantages through spiritual healing and acts of personal cleansing. Because these activities often help manage stress, therapists might consider asking about habits like praying, meditating, breathing exercises, or writing thoughts down during regular sessions - seeing them as tools people already use (Vieten et al., 2023). Schools and colleges could also build space into daily life where quiet reflection or spirit-based customs feel welcome, helping more students stay emotionally balanced without bias.

Facing constraints, the research focused only on Lucknow, making wider application uncertain. Since data came from a single time point, cause-effect links remain unclear. Responses relied on personal recall, opening room for skewed answers. Rather than examining specific methods, spirituality was measured in broad terms. Factors such as past psychological conditions, life pressures, or community networks were left out of analysis.

CONCLUSION

This work shows how spiritual healing and personal cleansing routines matter psychologically for young people in India. When it comes to those who often meditate, pray, control their breathing, write in journals, or follow rituals, mental wellness and everyday spiritual moments look much alike between men and women. Though slight contrasts appear in emotional strength and connection quality, general psychological thriving remains similar - pointing toward inclusive routes through which both genders find purpose, inner progress, and steady feelings amid the tough phase of early adult life. Helping youth approach such activities with care and regularity - whether in schools, therapy spaces, or local groups - might support long-term mental toughness just as much as standard counseling methods. Studies ahead could track changes over time, examine individual practices closely, compare regions across India, and build assessment tools tied directly to Indian views on living well.

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Conflict of Interest

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