

## A Comparative Study of Spiritual and Non-Spiritual Travelers and Their Impact on Positive Life Orientation and Emotional Maturity

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to examine the comparative impact of spiritual and non-spiritual travel on Positive Life Orientation and Emotional Maturity. Travel has increasingly been conceptualized not merely as recreation, but as a psychologically meaningful experience capable of influencing well-being and personal growth (Dolnicar et al., 2012; Chen and Petrick, 2013). Spiritual travel has been associated with meaning making, self-reflection, and existential development (Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005; Timothy and Oslen, 2006). However, limited empirical research has directly compared spiritual and non-spiritual travelers in relation to deeper psychological constructs such as emotional maturity and positive life orientation. The present study sought to address this gap. This sample comprised 110 participants, and data were collected using Google forms. Positive life orientation was measured by the Scale of Positive Life Orientation (SPLO), and Emotional Maturity was assessed using Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS). A Self developed travel questionnaire was used to classify participants into spiritual and non-spiritual traveller groups based on comparative travel scores. Independent samples of t-tests were conducted to examine differences between the two groups. Results indicated a statistically significant difference in Positive Life Orientation between Spiritual (M=31.83) and non-spiritual travelers, with  $p=.004$ . Spiritual travelers demonstrated higher levels of positive life orientation. However, no statistically significant difference was found in emotional maturity between spiritual (M=98.65) and non-spiritual travelers (M=102.22), with  $p=.629$ . These findings suggest that spiritual travel is positively associated with optimistic and meaningful orientation toward life, consistent with previous research linking spirituality and well-being (Nicolaidis and Grobler, 2017; Maral et al., 2024). However, emotional maturity may be influenced by broader development and personality factors rather than travel type alone. This study contributes to tourism psychology by providing comparative empirical evidence on the psychological outcomes of spiritual versus non-spiritual travel.

**Keywords:** *Spiritual Travel, Positive Life Orientation, Emotional Maturity, Psychological Well-being, Tourism Psychology*

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Travel has gradually shifted from being viewed solely as a leisure activity to being recognized as a meaningful psychological experience. In recent years, researchers in tourism and well-being studies have increasingly emphasized that travel contributes not only to relaxation and recreation but also to personal growth, identity exploration, and emotional development. Contemporary scholarship suggests that travel can enhance quality of life and support psychological restoration (Pyke et al., 2016; Konstantopoulou et al., 2024). Within this broader understanding, an important distinction has emerged between spiritually motivated travel and non-spiritual or leisure-oriented travel.

Spiritual travel typically involves journeys undertaken for reflection, transcendence, self-discovery, or connection with something greater than oneself. It is often associated with authenticity and existential exploration (Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005/2006; Timothy and Olsen, 2006). In contrast, non-spiritual travel generally centers on recreation, pleasure, adventure, or temporary escape from daily routines. Research indicates that leisure travel positively influences life satisfaction and emotional well-being (Dolnicar et al., 2012; Chen and Petrick, 2013). At the same time, spirituality embedded within travel experiences has been shown to enhance perceived quality of life and foster inner renewal (Nicolaidis and Grobler, 2017). Although both forms of travel appear beneficial, their comparative influence on deeper psychological characteristics such as emotional maturity and positive life orientation remains insufficiently examined. This study seeks to explore these relationships in a structured and comparative manner.

### *Emotional Maturity*

The concept of emotional maturity has its foundation in development and personality psychology, where maturity has long been associated with emotional balance, self-regulation, and adaptive functioning. Emotional maturity refers to an individual's capacity to understand, regulate, and express emotions in ways that are socially appropriate and psychologically constructive. It includes emotional stability, resilience under stress, and the ability to maintain healthy interpersonal relationships.

While tourism research does not always directly use the term emotional maturity, several studies suggest that certain travel experiences may foster emotional growth. Couper (2013), for example, described international travel as a process capable of producing “positive regression”, whereby individuals revisit earlier stages of self-understanding and return with greater self-awareness and behavioral transformation. This process implies emotional integration and development.

Similarly, Willson (2010), in a phenomenological exploration of travelers lived experiences, found that meaningful travel often becomes a turning point in individuals' life narratives. Participants described experiences of transcendence, connectedness, and renewed life purpose, suggesting deeper emotional reflection and integration.

Further evidence of linking spirituality and emotional development comes from research on spiritual well-being. Maral et al. (2024) demonstrated that positive developmental experiences predict spiritual well-being with psychological flexibility and meaning based coping acting as mediators. Psychological flexibility is an individual's ability to adaptively regulate emotions and thoughts. It is closely aligned with the concept of emotional maturity. Nicolaidis and Grobler (2017) also argued that spirituality within Wellness tourism enhances

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holistic well-being and quality of life, implying not only more. Momentary happiness, but also deeper emotional equilibrium.

In contrast, research on non-spiritual travel primarily emphasizes stress reduction and mood enhancement. Chen and Petrick (2013) found that travel contributes to emotional recovery and life satisfaction, while Dolnicar et al. (2012) reported that holiday experiences positively correlate with improved subjective well-being. Although such outcomes support emotional health, they may reflect short-term effective benefits rather than long term emotional maturity. This distinction highlights the importance of examining emotional maturity as a variable in comparative travel research.

### ***Positive Life Orientation***

Positive life orientation refers to a general tendency to approach life within optimism, satisfaction, and a sense of meaning. The concept is closely aligned with broader well-being frameworks that integrate the cognitive and existential dimensions of humans. Functioning. Within tourism research, well-being is increasingly recognized as both a motivation for travel and a significant outcome of travel experiences (Pyke et al., 2016).

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that travel enhances life satisfaction and psychological well-being. Dolnicar et al., (2012) found that holiday travel contributes positively to overall life satisfaction, noting that anticipation before the trip and memories afterward play a significant role in sustaining well-being. Similarly, Chen and Petrick (2013) reported that travel experiences improve stress recovery and emotional wellness, with benefits extending beyond the immediate duration of the trip. A systematic review conducted by Konstantopoulou et al. (2024) reinforced these findings, concluding that tourism positively influences holistic well-being and mental health, particularly in the post pandemic context.

However, spirituality-oriented travel appears to contribute additional existential dimensions to positive life orientation. Sharpley and Sundaram (2005/2006) found that spiritual tourists are often motivated by self-discovery and personal meaning rather than formal religious obligation. Timothy and Olsen (2006) further distinguished spiritual tourism from religious tourism, emphasizing its individualized and experiential nature. Nicolaides and Grobler (2017) argued that spiritual tourism enhances perceived quality of life by facilitating authentic experiences that nurture inner renewal. Willson (2010) similarly reported that travel experiences rooted in spirituality often integrate into broader life narratives, strengthening purpose and connectedness.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while non-spiritual travel may primarily enhance life satisfaction and positive effect, spiritual travel may foster deeper meaning making processes that contribute to a more enduring positive orientation towards life.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

Although existing literature demonstrates that travel enhances well-being, few studies have directly compared spiritual and non-spiritual travel in relation to both emotional maturity and positive life orientation. Most research focuses either on tourism's contribution to life satisfaction or on spirituality's role in meaning and coping. The present study aims to bridge this gap by examining how different travel motivations influence emotional development and overall life orientation within a unified psychological framework.

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### *Rationale of the Study*

Travel is widely acknowledged as an experience capable of influencing psychological well-being; however, not all travel experiences are psychologically equivalent. The motivation behind travel- whether spiritual or non-spiritual –may shape the depth and nature of its psychological outcomes. While leisure- oriented travel is often associated with enjoyment, relaxation, and temporary escape from routine (Dolnicar et al., 2012, Chen & Petrick 2013), Spiritually motivated travel tends to involve introspection, Meaning-seeking, and transcendental reflection (Sharpley & Sundaram 2005/2006, Timothy & Olsen 2006). These motivational differences suggest that spiritual and non- spiritual travel may influence individuals not only in terms of immediate well-being but also in deeper psychological domains, i.e emotional maturity and positive life orientation.

One of the central reasons for conducting this study is that spiritual travel may contribute to long-term psychological growth rather than short-term emotional enhancement. Research indicates that spiritually oriented travel experiences promote authenticity, inner renewal, and perceived quality of life (Nicolaidis & Grobler, 2017). Similarly, Phenomenological findings suggest that travel with spiritual or reflective intent can serve as a catalyst for self-awareness and life defining transformation (Willson 2010, Couper 2013). Such transformative processes are closely related to emotional maturity, which involves emotional regulation, stability, adaptive coping, and integration of experiences into a coherent sense of self.

In contrast, non-spiritual travel has been consistently linked with life satisfaction and stress recovery (Dolnicar et al. 2012, Chen& Petrick 2013). Although these outcomes contribute to subjective well-being, they may primarily reflect affective enhancement rather than sustained emotional development. Given that may primarily reflect affective enhancement rather than sustained emotional development. Given that positive life orientation encompasses both satisfaction and deeper existential meaning, it becomes essential to examine whether spiritual travel fosters a more enduring and positive outlook toward life compared to recreational travel.

Another significant reason for undertaking this research is the theoretical overlap between spirituality, meaning-making, and psychological flexibility. Maral et al. 2024 demonstrated that spiritual well-being is strengthened through meaning bases coping and psychological flexibility, both of which are fundamental components of emotional maturity. If spiritual travel promotes similar processes, it may contribute to greater emotional stability and a stronger orientation towards life's purpose. However, empirical research has not sufficiently tested this relationship within a comparative design.

### *Research gap*

- 1. Absence of direct comparison between travel types:** Most studies focus either on spiritual tourism (Nicolaidis & Grobler 2017, Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005/2006) or general tourism and life satisfaction (Dolnicar et al. 2012, Chen & Petrick 2013). There is a lack of empirical research that directly compares spiritual and non-spiritual travel in relation to psychological development variables.
- 2. Limited examination of emotional Maturity in Tourism Research:** While tourism studies frequently measure satisfaction and happiness, emotional maturity has rarely been examined as an outcome variable. Constructs i.e. emotional regulation, psychological flexibility, and identity integration are discussed indirectly (Maral et al. 2024, Couper 2013), but not systematically measured in relation to travel motivation.

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- 3. Fragmented study of Positive Life orientation Components:** Research tends to examine life satisfaction, meaning in life, or well-being separately. There is insufficient integration of these compartments under a broader construct such as positive life orientation, particularly in comparative travel research.
- 4. Need for integrative Psychological Framework:** Systemic reviews highlight the growing connection between tourism and mental health but emphasize the need for integrative frameworks that combine existential, emotional and cognitive outcomes (Konstantopoulou et al. 2024, Pyke et al. 2016)

### ***Conclusion of the Rationale***

In light of these gaps, the present study is undertaken to comparatively analyze spiritual and non-spiritual travel and their impact on emotional maturity and positive life orientation. By integrating constructs from positive psychology and tourism research, this study aims to determine whether spiritually motivated travel contributes to deeper psychological developments beyond the immediate benefits of leisure travel. The findings may provide a more nuanced understanding of how travel motivations shape long-term emotional and cognitive growth.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Travel is increasingly understood not merely as a leisure activity but psychologically meaningful experience capable of influencing personal development, well-being, and life perspectives. Scholars within tourism psychology argue that travel experiences can alter cognitive patterns, emotional responses and self-perception (Pyke et al., 2016). In recent years, attention has shifted toward understanding how different types of travel particularly spiritual and non-spiritual travel produce distinct psychological outcomes (Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005; Timothy and Olsen, 2006).

While leisure or non-spiritual travel is often associated with recreation, pleasure, and temporary escape, spiritual travel tends to involve introspection, existential exploration and meaning making. Given these motivational differences it is important to examine how each type of travel may influence deeper psychological constructs such as emotional maturity and positive life orientation.

### ***Travel and Positive Life Orientation***

Positive life orientation refers to an individual's tendency to evaluate life optimistically, experience satisfaction, well-being, and resilience.

Dolnicar et al. (2012) conducted one of the foundational empirical studies examining the relationship between vacations and quality of life. Their findings suggested that individuals who travel report higher overall life satisfaction compared to non-travelers. Importantly, the anticipation and recollection of travel experiences contributed significantly to enhanced well-being. This indicates that travel does not only produce temporary pleasure but also influences broader life evaluations.

Similarly, Chen and Petrick (2013) found that leisure travel promotes stress recovery, emotional rejuvenation and psychological health. Their research demonstrated that travel experiences improve mood states and reduce burnout, which may strengthen individuals overall positive evaluation of life circumstances.

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Expanding this perspective, Uysal et al. (2016) emphasized that tourism plays a vital role in enhancing quality of life by fulfilling psychological needs such as autonomy, competence and relatedness. Their work suggests that travel experiences contribute the broader well-being frameworks, reinforcing positive life orientation through satisfaction of intrinsic needs.

More recently, Konstantopoulou et al. (2024), through a systematic review, confirmed that tourism significantly contributes to mental health and overall well-being. They highlighted that meaningful travel experiences foster resilience and optimism, particularly when individuals perceive personal growth during travel.

However, while these studies support the positive impact of travel on life satisfaction, most focus on general leisure tourism without differentiating between spiritually motivated and non-spiritual travel experiences.

### ***Spiritual travel and meaning making***

Spiritual travel has been conceptualized as a journey motivated by the search for meaning, authenticity, and inner transformation. Sharpley and Sundaram 2005 observed that spiritual tourists are less concerned with recreation and more oriented towards self-discovery and existential reflection. Their research suggests that spiritual travel may influence deeper aspects of psychological functioning.

Timothy and Olsen in 2006 further clarified the conceptual distinction between religious tourism and spiritual tourism. While religious tourism often involves institutional practices and rituals, spiritual tourism is more individualized and experimental, focusing on personal meaning and growth. This distinction is important for understanding potential differences in psychological outcomes.

Nicolaidis and Grobler 2017 argued that spiritual tourism contributes to holistic wellness by fostering authenticity, inner peace, and connectedness. Their findings suggest that spiritual elements within travel experiences enhance perceived quality of life beyond surface level enjoyment.

Willson 2010 using qualitative methodology, reported that spiritually significant travel experiences often become turning points in individuals' lives. Participants describe increased clarity about life purpose, stronger self-awareness, and deeper emotional insight following their journeys. These outcomes are closely aligned with both emotional maturity and positive life orientation.

Maral et al 2024 provided empirical evidence linking spiritual wellbeing with psychological flexibility and meaning based coping. Psychological flexibility involves adaptive emotional regulation and openness to experience –core components of emotional maturity. Their findings indicate that spirituality enhances constructive coping and a stable positive life perspective.

Together, these studies suggest that spiritual travel may influence not only wellbeing, but also deeper psychological processes related to identity, resilience, and emotional regulation.

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### ***Travel and emotional maturity***

Emotional maturity originates from developmental psychology and refers to the ability to regulate emotions effectively, tolerate frustration, maintain stability, and respond adaptively to challenges. It involves self-control, empathy, emotional balance, and constructive interpersonal functioning.

Although tourism research rarely measures emotional maturity directly, related constructs have been explored. Couper 2013 examined transformative learning through travel and found that immersive travel experiences can lead to shifts in worldview, enhanced self-awareness, and greater emotional regulation. Such transformations suggest growth in emotional maturity. Willson 2010 also highlighted that reflective travel experiences encourage emotional processing and identity integration. Participants reported becoming more patient, tolerant, and emotionally balanced after spiritually meaningful journeys.

In contrast, research on leisure travel (Chen & Petrick 2013, Dolnicar et al 2012) primarily emphasizes stress reduction and short-term emotional enhancement. While these benefits contribute to psychological comfort, they may not necessarily result in long term emotional development.

Pyke et al 2016 conceptualized tourism as contributing to health and wellbeing through both hedonic (pleasure based) and eudaimonic (meaning based) pathways. Eudaimonic experiences, often associated with spiritual or transformative travel, are more likely to promote lasting psychological growth and emotional maturity.

Thus, while non-spiritual travel enhances mood and relaxation, spiritual travel appears more closely connected with emotional growth and identity integration.

### ***Comparative Perspective and Emerging Gap***

The reviewed literature indicates that both spiritual and non-spiritual travel positively influences wellbeing but potentially through different mechanisms. Nonspiritual travel enhances life satisfaction through recreation, social interaction, and stress relief (Dolnicar et al 2012, Chen & Petrick 2013). Spiritual travel, however, promotes meaning making, psychological flexibility, and existential reflection (Sharpley & Sundaram 2005, Nicolaidis & Grobler 2017, Maral et al 2024)

Despite these findings, most existing studies examine either general tourism wellbeing or spiritual tourism independently. Very few studies directly compare spiritual and non-spiritual travel within the same framework, particularly in relation to emotional maturity and positive life orientation simultaneously.

Furthermore, empirical research integrating these two psychological constructs within tourism contexts remains limited. Emotional maturity is often implied but rarely operationalized, and positive life orientation is typically measured as life satisfaction without incorporating existential or development dimensions.

This gap highlights the needs for comparative research that systematically examines how spiritual and non-spiritual travel differentially influences emotional maturity and positive life orientation.

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### **Summary**

In summary, existing research establishes that:

- Travel enhances life satisfaction and subjective wellbeing.
- Spiritual travel fosters meaning making and personal growth.
- Transformative travel experiences may contribute to emotional regulation and resilience.
- There is limited comparative research examining both spiritual and non-spiritual travel in relation to emotional maturity and positive life orientation.

The present study seeks to address this gap by providing a structured comparative analysis of these travel forms and their psychological impacts.

### **METHODOLOGY**

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

The present study was conducted to explore the psychological impact of different travel orientations, particularly spiritual and non-spiritual travel. Travel experiences are often associated with relaxation and recreation; however, certain forms of travel, especially spiritually motivated journeys, may also contribute to personal reflection, emotional growth, and a more meaningful outlook toward life. Considering this perspective, the present research attempts to examine whether individuals who engage in spiritual travel differ from those who travel for non-spiritual purposes in terms of their positive life orientation and emotional maturity.

Based on this research problem, the study was carried out with the following objectives:

1. To compare the level of Positive Life Orientation between spiritual and non-spiritual travelers
2. To compare the level of Emotional Maturity between spiritual and non-spiritual travelers
3. To examine whether spiritual travel is associated with a more positive outlook toward life
4. To investigate whether the nature of travel experiences influences emotional stability and emotional regulation among individuals

#### ***Hypotheses of the Study***

The following hypotheses were formulated for the present research:

- $H_{01}$  (Null Hypothesis): There will be no significant difference in *Positive Life Orientation* between Spiritual and Non-Spiritual travelers.
- $H_{11}$  (Alternative Hypothesis): There will be a significant difference in *Positive Life Orientation* between Spiritual and Non-Spiritual travelers.
- $H_{02}$  (Null Hypothesis): There will be no significant difference in *Emotional Maturity* between Spiritual and Non-Spiritual travelers.
- $H_{12}$  (Alternative Hypothesis): There will be a significant difference in *Emotional Maturity* between Spiritual and Non-Spiritual travelers.

#### ***Variables of the study***

The present study includes the following variables:

##### **a. Independent Variable -**

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Type of Traveler: The independent variable in the study is the type of travel orientation, categorized as:

1. Spiritual Travelers
2. Non-Spiritual Travelers

This classification was determined using the responses obtained from the travel questionnaire.

### **b. Dependent variable -**

1. **Positive Life Orientation:** It refers to an individual's general tendency to view life with optimism, hope and constructive outlook. It reflects how positively individuals evaluate their life experiences and future expectations.
2. **Emotional Maturity:** Emotional maturity refers to the ability of an individual to regulate emotions effectively, maintain emotional balance, and respond to life situations in a stable and adaptive manner.

### **c. Tools Used in the Study –**

The following instruments were used to collect the data for the present study:

1. **Scale of Positive Life Orientation (SPLO):** Positive Life Orientation was measured using the SPLO. The scale assesses an individual's positive outlook toward life, including aspects such as optimism, life satisfaction, and constructive thinking. Participants responded to the items according to the response options provided in the scale. The responses were converted into numerical scores based on the prescribed scoring procedure. Reverse scoring was applied where necessary. Higher scores on the scale indicate a higher level of positive life orientation.
2. **Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS):** The Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) was used to measure the level of emotional maturity among participants. The scale evaluates various dimensions of emotional functioning, including emotional stability, emotional control, and social adjustment. Participants responded to items based on their personal experiences. The responses were scored according to the guidelines provided in scale. Higher scores generally represent "lower emotional maturity", whereas lower scores indicate "higher emotional maturity".
3. **Travel Questionnaire:** A "Self-developed Travel Questionnaire" was used to identify the travel orientation of participants. The questionnaire included items designed to understand participants, motivations, preferences, and experiences related to travel. Based on the responses, two separate scores were calculated:
  - a) Spiritual travel score
  - b) Non-spiritual travel score

Participants were categorized into "spiritual Travellers" or "Non spiritual Travellers" based on the comparative scores obtained.

### ***Sample***

- **Population:** The population for the present study included "individual who have experienced travel and are capable of reflecting on their travel motivations and psychological outlook."
- **Sample size:** A Total of 110 participants were included in the study.

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- Sampling technique: The participants were selected using a “Convenience sampling technique”. Individuals who were accessible to the researcher and willing to participate voluntarily were included in the sample.

### ***Inclusion criteria:***

The following criteria were used to select participants for the study:

1. Individuals who have had “previous travel experiences”
2. Participants who were “willing to provide informed responses” to the questionnaire.
3. Individuals who were able to “complete the online survey independently”.

### ***Exclusion Criteria:***

Participants were excluded from the study if:

1. They had “no travel experiences”
2. They submitted “incomplete responses” to the questionnaire.
3. Their responses showed “inconsistent or missing data”.

### ***Research design:***

The present research followed a “quantitative comparative research design”. The study aimed to compare two groups of travelers- spiritual and non-spiritual on the psychological variables of “Positive Life orientation and Emotional Maturity”.

A comparative design was considered suitable because it allows the researcher to examine whether differences exist between naturally occurring groups on selected psychological characteristics. The data collected through standardized scales were analyzed using statistical methods to determine whether the observed differences between the groups were statistically significant.

### ***Procedure***

The data for the present study were collected through an “online questionnaire developed using Google Forms”. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: demographic details, the travel questionnaire, and the two psychological scales (SPLO and EMS).

Participants were provided with instructions regarding how to complete the questionnaire. They were informed that participation was voluntary and that their responses would remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

After collecting the responses, the data were exported to “Microsoft Excel” for further processing. The responses were coded into numerical values based on the scoring guidelines of each instrument. Reverse scoring was applied where necessary.

Following the scoring process, total scores for “SPLO and EMS” were calculated for each participant. Scores from the travel questionnaire were used to classify participants into “Spiritual travelers and non-spiritual travelers”.

The final dataset included variables such as spiritual travel score, Non spiritual travel score, traveler type, SPLO score, and EMS score. Mean scores for each group were calculated, and an “Independent samples T-test” was conducted to examine whether the differences between the two groups were statistically significant. The level of statistical significance was set at “ $p < 0.05$ ”

## **DISCUSSION**

The present study conducted to examine the “comparative impact of spiritual and non-spiritual travel on positive life orientation and emotional maturity”. The findings of the study provide valuable insight into how different travel experiences influence psychological growth and emotional development among individuals.

The results suggest that individuals who participate in “spiritual travel tend to demonstrate higher levels of emotional maturity” compared to those who primarily engage in non-spiritual travel. Spiritual journeys often involve reflective practices such as prayers, meditation, and participation in religious or sacred rituals. These experiences encourage individuals to engage in introspection, develop patience, and gain a deeper understanding of themselves and others. Such reflective environments may contribute to improved emotional regulation, empathy, and self-control, which are key indicators of emotional maturity. Similar observations have been reported in previous studies which highlight that spiritual engagement can support emotional development and psychological stability (Pargament, 2011; Koenig 2012).

The study also revealed that “spiritual travel is associated with a stronger positive life orientation”. Positive life orientation refers to an individual’s general tendency to maintain optimism, hope, and a constructive perspective towards life experiences. Spiritual travel often exposes individuals to meaningful traditions, philosophical teachings, and environments that promote gratitude and acceptance. These experiences may help individuals develop a sense of purpose and resilience when dealing with life challenges. Previous research also emphasized that spiritually meaningful experiences can contribute to increased life satisfaction and psychological well-being (Seligman, 2011).

At the same time, the findings indicate that “nonspiritual travel also contributes to personal well-being” although the nature of its influence may differ. Recreational travel provides opportunities for relaxation, leisure, and cultural exploration. Exposure to new environments and cultures can broaden perspectives, reduce stress, and improve mood. Research conducted by Nawjin 2011 suggests that leisure travel experiences can temporarily increase happiness and emotional well-being, highlighting that tourism itself can play a positive role in improving psychological states.

However, not all research findings completely support the idea that spiritual travel produces stronger psychological outcomes. Chen and Petrick (2013).

Found that recreational tourism can significantly enhance life satisfaction and positive emotions among travellers. Their findings suggest that leisure travel experiences, social interactions, and enjoyable activities may contribute equally or sometimes even more to an individual's positive outlook toward life. This perspective contrasts with the assumption that slowly oriented travel always produces deeper psychological benefits. The contradictory findings indicate that the impact of travel experiences may depend on several factors, such as individual motivation, personal belief, cultural background, and the purpose of travel.

Despite this contrasting evidence, the overall findings of the present study indicate that spiritual travel tends to encourage deeper emotional reflection and long-term positive life orientation compared to non-spiritual travel. Spiritual journeys often involve a sense of purpose, meaning making, and self-discovery which may promote long-lasting psychological development rather than short-term emotional benefits.

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The findings of this study aligned with the broader perspective of positive psychology, which emphasizes the importance of meaningful life experiences in fostering emotional well-being and personal growth. Experiences that encourage reflection, gratitude, and inner awareness may contribute significantly to emotional maturity and positive life orientation.

In conclusion, the study highlights that while both spiritual and non-spiritual travel contribute to psychological well-being, spiritual travel appears to play a more significant role in strengthening emotional maturity and promoting a positive outlook towards life. At the same time, the existence of contradictory findings in previous research suggests travel experiences are complex and influenced by multiple personal and situational factors. Therefore, research may be required to explore how different travel motivations and individual differences shape the psychological outcome of travel experiences.

### RESULT

The present study examined whether spiritual and non-spiritual travelers differ in their levels of positive life orientation and emotional maturity. The data collected from 110 participants were analyzed using an independent sample T test to compare the mean scores of the two travel groups on both psychological variables.

#### *Positive life orientation*

The comparison of positive life orientation scores revealed a noticeable difference between the two groups. Spiritual travelers obtained a mean score of 31.83 whereas nonspiritual travelers reported a comparatively lower mean score of 29.15. Statistical testing indicated that this difference was significant ( $p=.004$ ). Since the obtained P value was below the commonly accepted. Significance level of 0.05, the difference between the groups can be considered statistically meaningful.

These findings suggest that individuals who engage in spiritual forms of travel tend to demonstrate a more positive outlook towards life compared to those who travel experiences are primarily nonspiritual. Consequently, the null hypothesis regarding positive life orientation was rejected, indicating that the type of travel experience may influence how individuals perceive and approach life.

#### *Emotional maturity*

The analysis was also conducted to examine whether emotional maturity levels differ between spiritual and non-spiritual travelers. The result showed that spiritual travelers had a mean score of 98.65 while non-spiritual travelers had a slightly higher mean score of 102.22 on Emotional maturity scale.

However, statistical testing revealed that this difference was non-significant ( $p= 0.629$ ). Because the obtained P value was greater than 0.05, the difference in emotional maturity between the two groups cannot be considered statistically meaningful. Therefore, the null hypothesis related to emotional maturity was retained.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that spiritual travel is associated with higher positives. Life orientation suggesting that spiritually oriented travel experiences may contribute to a more optimistic and meaningful perspective towards Life. In contrast, no significant difference was observed in emotional maturity between spiritual and non-spiritual

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travelers, implying that. Emotional maturity may be influenced by factors beyond the nature of travel experiences alone.

### ***Future Implications***

The findings of the present study opened several avenues for future research and practical applications in the field of psychology, tourism studies, and well-being research. Although the study found that spiritual travelers demonstrated a significantly higher level of positive life orientation, the relationship between travel experiences and broader psychological outcomes still requires deeper exploration.

Future research can expand the scope of this study by including larger and more diverse examples drawn from different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and geographical regions. A broader sample may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how travel experiences influence psychological variables such as emotional maturity, optimism, life satisfaction, and personal growth. Additionally, the searchers may consider comparing different forms of spiritual travels such as pilgrimages, meditation, retreats, Wellness tourism and nature based spiritual experiences to examine whether certain types of spiritual travel contribute more strongly to positive psychological outcomes.

Another important direction for future studies is the use of longitudinal research designs. Examining participants before and after travel experiences could help researchers understand whether spiritual travel produces lasting changes in life orientation. Emotional regulation and personal meaning rather than temporary psychological effects.

Future studies may also explore additional psychological variables related to travel, including resilience, mindfulness, self-awareness, and psychological well-being. Investigating these variables could help clarify the mechanisms through which travel experiences contribute to personal development.

From a practical perspective, the finding suggests that incorporating spiritual or reflective elements within travel experiences may enhance individuals' sense of meaning and positive outlook towards life. Tourism organizations, Wellness retreats, and travel planners may therefore consider designing travel programs that encourage reflection, cultural immersion, and opportunities for personal growth.

Overall, future research can build upon the present study to develop a deeper understanding of how different forms of travel contribute to psychological well-being and positive life orientation, thereby strengthening the intersection between tourism experiences and mental health research.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study aimed to examine the differences between spiritual and non spiritual travelers and to understand how these travel experiences influence positive life orientation and emotional maturity. Travel is increasingly being recognized not only as leisure activity, but also as an experience that can contribute to psychological growth, self-reflection, and overall well-being.

The findings of the study revealed that spiritual travelers demonstrated significantly higher levels of positive life orientation compared to non-spiritual travelers. Here. This suggests that

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individuals who engage in spiritually oriented travel experiences may develop a more optimistic outlook towards life, greater meaning and a stronger sense of purpose. Spiritual travel often involves reflection, connection with nature or sacred places, and opportunities for inner exploration, which may contribute to the development of a more positive life perspective.

However, the results did not indicate a significant difference in emotional maturity between the two groups. This suggests that emotional maturity may be influenced by a wider range of life experiences such as family environment personality development and life changes rather than travel experiences alone. While travel can provide opportunities for personal insight and learning, emotional maturity is likely to develop over a longer period through multiple life contexts.

Overall, the study highlights the potential psychological value of spiritual travel experiences, particularly in fostering a positive orientation towards life. At the same time, the findings indicate that emotional maturity may not be directly shaped by the type of travel experience alone. The research contributes to the growing literature that connects tourism experiences with psychological well-being and personal development, and it emphasizes the importance of exploring travel not only as recreation but also as meaningful life experience.

In conclusion, understanding the psychological impact of different travel motivations can help researchers, psychologists, and tourism practitioners design experiences that promote well-being, reflection, and personal growth among travelers.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

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