

From Meaning to Mental Strength: A Systematic Review of Spiritual Health, Wisdom, and Psychological Wellbeing

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Abstract

Spiritual health is an important component of overall health as per the WHO health definition. It highlights the meaning and purpose of life through an actionable approach to lifestyle. The present paper studies the interrelationship between spiritual health, psychological well-being, and wisdom as they all are important indicators of a positive state of mind and mental health indicators. The systematic review has been done by using PRISMA framework evaluating the research work in the field during the last 5 years. Spiritual wisdom is developed in an individual with a knowledge-based understanding of spirituality and personal growth as a soul. Health and wellbeing of the community has significant roots of spiritual wisdom. The mental health of an individual can be developed through overall community involvement and participation in spiritual growth to understand themselves, their goal and purpose. The paper conceptualizes the framework for individual and community-based action plans for psychological wellbeing and mental health development. This clarity is significant for proper development of the psyche and spirituality of the being. Moreover, positive states like optimism, resilience and faith are indicators for spiritual health and psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: Health, Life, Positive states, Spiritual, Subjective well being

INTRODUCTION

“Health is the state of complete physical, mental, spiritual and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” defined by World Health Organization in 1998. The spiritual dimension of health is significant for the overall health enhancement. Spiritual health is the aspect that involves finding meaning, purpose and connection with something beyond self by focusing on beliefs, values, practices, and personal experiences. Spiritual health includes the main components related to transcendence, purposefulness, interconnectedness, integrative power, holistic wellbeing, and multidimensionality of its approach (Chapman, 2019).

Spiritual health focuses in the enhancement of overall health by reducing the stress by working in insightful relationships, personal values with meaning and purpose in life. Meanwhile on the other hand psychological wellbeing is the state of optimal mental health that is facilitated by sense of fulfilment, resilience, proper functioning, and the ability to cope with stressors effectively by working on the self-esteem, self-acceptance, autonomy, and positive relationships. While there is a similarity between these two phenomena as they fall into the category of wellbeing. And both these are an essential component for human development. Still their remains of plethora of misunderstanding that clarifies the relationship between spiritual health and psychological wellbeing.

Additionally, whenever there is talk of spirituality in any form it is followed by wisdom. The Hindu philosophy defines wisdom as ‘understanding one’s true nature i.e. Atman’. The existence as a being revolves in becoming self-aware and socially sensitized. What is the relevance of spiritual health, wisdom, and psychological wellbeing in it? With the growing demand and pressures in the personal and professional life of people, it is a requirement to know the interconnectedness between these concepts for better practical implications in person’s life.

Keeping these questions as the main theme the aim of this research is to understand the relationship between these three factors. Which is to understanding the relationship between spiritual health, wisdom, and psychological wellbeing. This is crucial due to their significant impact on individuals' mental wellness. To understand the relationship between these factors one first has to understand what actually spiritual health, psychological wellbeing and wisdom.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Spiritual health is defined as a sense of connection with others, meaning in life and relationship with transcendent power through the influence of practices characterized by a moral and intellectual connection with oneself, others, and the universe as a connection to higher being (Hoseini, 2019). Spiritual practices help the individual to cope better with illness and recover faster because enhancing one’s spirituality affect medical and health condition in terms of positive outcomes for overall wellbeing. Humanistic thinking facilitated by spiritual health exceed the passion of life

and human relationships with others to live happily and nothing to do with the supernatural.

Spiritual health comprises of two aspects knowledge and inspiration; which influences the expression of mental state through feelings and emotions. The knowledge component provides the cognitive framework to interpret the inspirational of spiritual health. Knowledge aspect is filtered by world view and inspirational is filtered by beliefs (Fisher, 2011). The effective ways of bringing inspiration in present for meaningful and purpose to elevate fulfilment can be through arts, meditation, and expressiveness. Music and dance are rooted in cultural conditioning for entertainment, rituals and cultural unification and have positive spiritual health (Chivukula, 2021) effects as these practices help in developing physical and psychological health. Mindfulness is an effective way in reducing anxiety levels that is action for understanding a purpose to cure disease (Deghan et al, 2021). Poetry can develop sense of belonging resulting in self-expression and meaning making post a critical phase (Zarai, 2019) by greater sense of peace and wellbeing to openness in envisioning purpose of future.

(Heidari et. Al, 2022) provided application of spiritual health in work sphere, which facilitated organizational commitment among teachers because lack of job burnout can report in good emotional intelligence (Imran & Shabir, 2023). With this spiritual health practices with traditional treatments can be valuable to prevent and reduce postpartum depression (Noormohammadi et.al, 2020). This helps in coping with situations that results in requirement of training on spiritual and religious care for enhancing mental health because spiritual health can help in reducing stressors.

WISDOM

Wisdom is explored philosophically more than psychologically in the literature through various theories, components and types that are relevant in present scenarios. Two-dimensional theory of wisdom integrates virtue and wit to balance intellectual ability, prior knowledge, and experience (Zhang, et.al, 2022). Wisdom research encompasses a multidimensional, integrating cognitive and non-cognitive components to wise behaviour (Rodriguez, 2023); this integration interplay in challenging situations offering insights for decision (Gluck, 2022). This interplay highlights the ability of wisdom to adapt human nature by maintaining a balance between rigidity, cautiousness to acquire knowledge while recognizing, constructing new uncertainties, doubts and questions related to universal reality (Zhang, et.al, 2022). Without any gender differences but the level of masculinity and femininity lead to high opinions of real-life manifestations (Xiong & wang, 2021).

There are various types of wisdom with domains on specific, general, omniscient based on capabilities of humane and natural wisdom. (Zhang, et.al, 2022) because emotional regulation, humour, and self-reflection through internal dialogues. This identifies with age, intelligence, personality traits. Cultural uniqueness and cross-cultural understanding lie to prioritize features of wisdom. The need for wise decision making in aspects of life on individual, organizational and societal levels by perspective taking, recognition of limits to knowledge and reasoning behaviour in interpersonal conflicts (Xiong & Wang, 2021). This targets on interventions related to prosocial behaviours, emotional regulation, and spirituality for societal implications.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

Psychological wellbeing is often represented as having more positive emotions, less negative emotions by interventions of mindfulness practices, cognitive approached, physical activities impact the psychological wellbeing. This in turn promotes overall mental and emotional health. Evidences show that the high work demands, job stress, lack of control leads to burnout because of factors like age, work, environment which effects meaning in social demographics, intrapersonal relationship, and wellbeing of an individual; this situation affects psychotherapist equally if not managed appropriately (Hoy & Rzeszutek, 2022). Collective narcissism if exists in a system than social connectedness and gratitude can help in refining by providing in group satisfaction with self-transcendent emotions and self-compassion.

Physical sport education and participation has improvement in subjective wellness, emotional intelligence and social anxiety that are indicators of psychological wellbeing (Cossio & Martinez, 2021) but if the sleep quality is leading to fatigue can deteriorate the coping strategies to stay active and organized (Brooks & Greenberg, 2022). Mindfulness interventions show positive effects on fatigue, depression, and anxiety (Hughes, Marley, 2022). In addition, self-administered music interventions improve depression, mood, anxiety, and quality of life that have long term outcomes on psychological wellbeing (Pakdeesatitwara, 2024). These ways are important in addressing psychological wellbeing among individuals with chronic illness especially among LGBT people because these strategies to support these individuals effectively (Chan et.al, 2022) as self-esteem and adaptability are crucial factors in holistic care for

psychological health, this is important for cardiovascular diseases (Marino et.al, 2021). Connected health interventions have potential to improve wellbeing for better life even during the times of long Pandemic through relevant cognition and mental health practices (Hawke et.al, 2022).

The lifestyle behaviours have contribution in psychological health (Hill et.al, 2019) for emphasizing on health outcomes. Moreover, Nature based interventions have psychological and physiological influence through forest therapy, horse riding and music-based therapy for mood, relaxation and this enhance self-management (Taylor et al, 2022). Introduction of positive psychology courses for university students can enhance overall quality and implement the strategies in their day-to-day life (Hobbs, 2022); can also assist them during the management of organizations and deal with context implementation (Daniels et al, 2021). This existing review provides a roadmap to further understand the relation in an integrative approach that can be relevant for the existing situations requiring application of spiritual practices, wisdom, and psychological wellbeing.

The existing literature on the relationship between spiritual health, wisdom, and psychological well-being has limitations. Studies have shown conflicting results, with some indicating positive associations while others show zero or even negative correlations (Gluck, 2022). Additionally, research has highlighted a gap in incorporating religion and spirituality into psychological studies on wisdom, limiting a comprehensive understanding of these constructs. Some argue that the association between wisdom and well-being depends on how these constructs are defined and measured, leading to contradictory findings in the literature. Moreover, the relationship between wisdom and well-being is not always straightforward, with some suggesting a triangular relationship where highly wise individuals can maintain high levels of well-being even when reflecting on challenging aspects of life. Understanding spiritual health in relation to these constructs is not at all existing in the existing knowledge that highlights the lack of initiative in the process of finding the purpose and meaning in life through the mediating role of wisdom and psychological wellbeing.

This highlights the need for further research to clarify and deepen our understanding of these complex relationships between these concepts. Spiritual health is the dimension of health that relates with the purpose and meaning in life through an actionable approach but the research on the area in relation to other psychological states is not much explored and there has been lack of clarity on the principles of spirituality and spiritual health that requires more application in the practical life situations.

OBJECTIVES

Objective: To understand the relationship between spiritual health, psychological wellbeing and wisdom.

METHODOLOGY

Search Strategy

A systematic review of research on the area of spiritual health, wisdom and psychological wellbeing was performed to identify the relationship between them by finding the research and reviews conducted in the field of psychology. The systematic review was conducted by following the reporting checklist of the Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA). For the purpose a search strategy was developed to identify relevant literature. This was based on the 4 databases: Semantic scholar, PsycNet, PubMed, Google Scholar, and the search terms used were “Spiritual health” AND combination of “in Psychology” OR “Wisdom” AND combination of “in Psychology” OR “Psychological wellbeing” AND combination of “in Psychology. The searches spanned from the database 2019 onwards; 5 years of recent research in the field that included journal articles, review papers and research reports published in English only.

Selection Criteria

The selection criteria focused on mapping the existing literature in the field of psychology and was narrowed to specific areas of positive psychology spanning 2019-2024. All researches before 2019 were excluded from the search. The country of origin was not an exclusion criterion as the work in the area has been less frequent. A total of 1198 research articles excluded and 58 articles were included in the process. The study is based on original research articles, review papers and conference papers and to maintain the quality of review, all the duplications were checked. Abstracts of the research was studied as per inclusive criteria and then full text articles were checked thoroughly for the analysis to ensure the relevance of the data.

DATA EXTRACTION

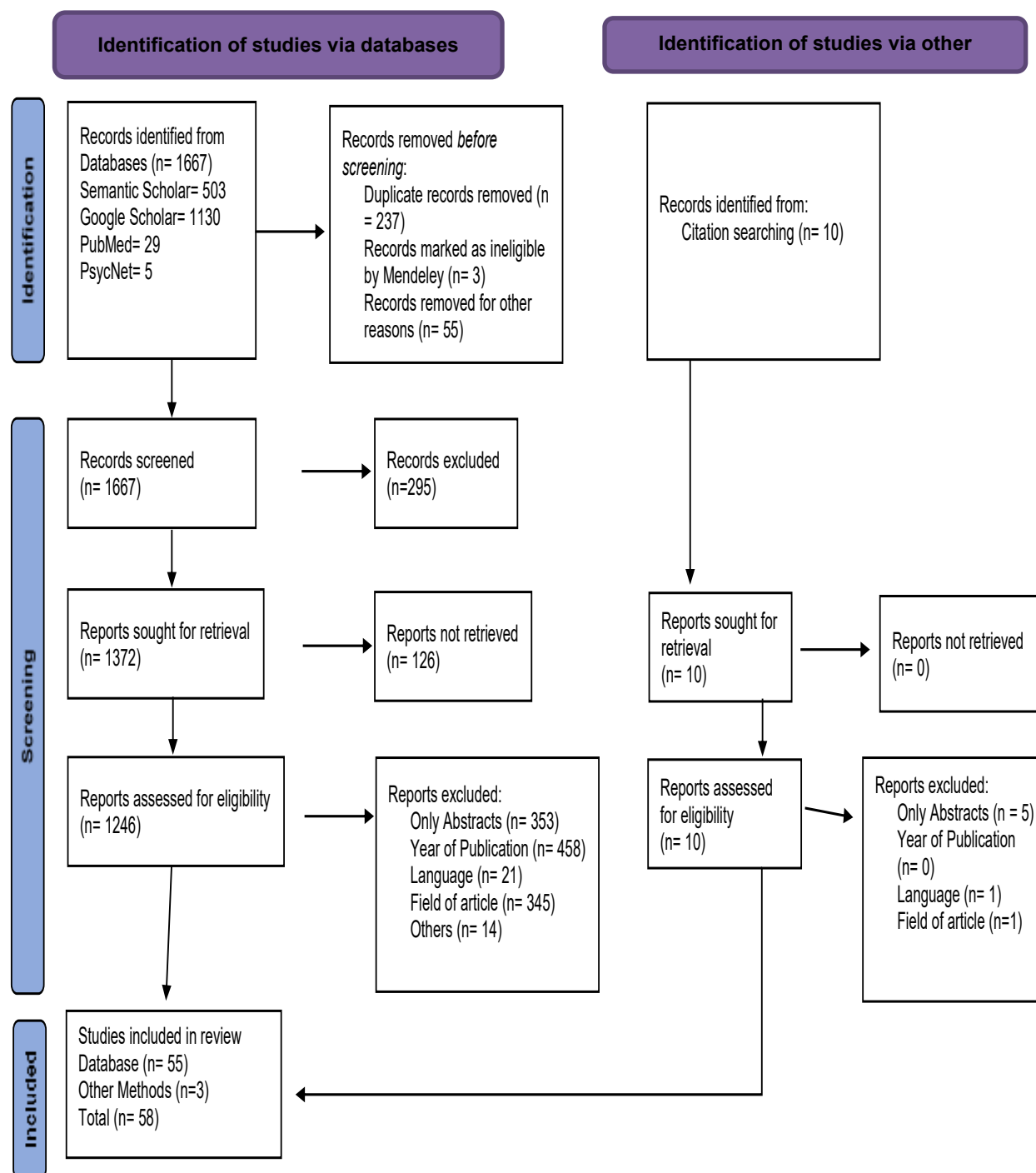
In the data extraction phase, articles were extracted as they were published as original review or research papers in the field of psychology. The relevance of the article was studied by checking the abstract and then full text articles were

analysed others were excluded. The step also filtered the articles Published in other languages as English was the Language preferred for inclusion of the article. Data was extracted and analysed from the articles published in last five years specifically in the field of psychology. Duplicated records were removed for better analysis of the data.

SYNTHESIS METHOD

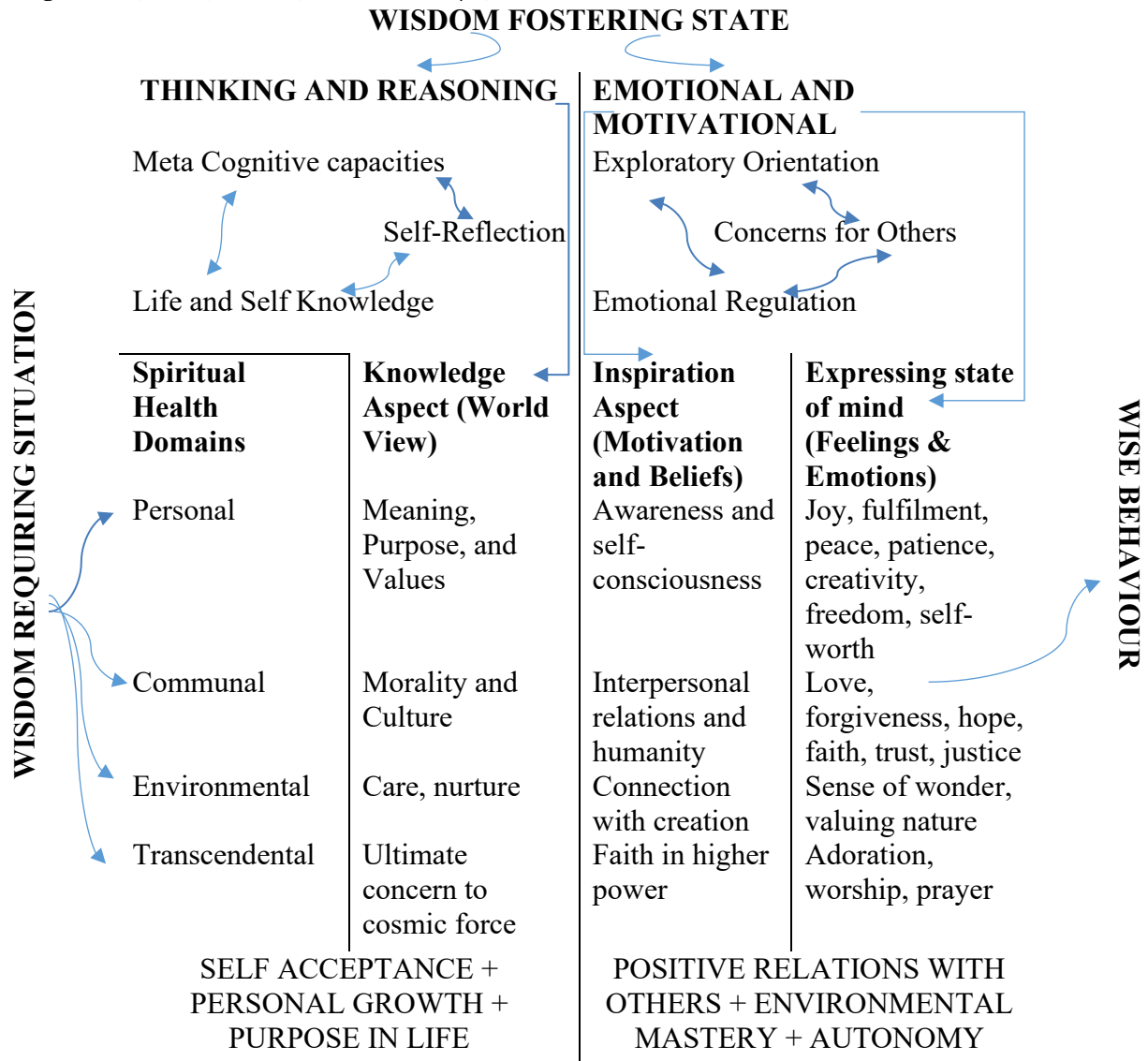
The aim of this review is to understand the relationship between spiritual health, psychological method and wisdom. For this purpose, the research employed thematic synthesis approach. This helped in identifying the core themes and pattern regarding the relationship between spiritual health, psychological wellbeing and wisdom.

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Framework for Data extraction and Inclusion (Sohrabi et.al, 2021)



RESULTS

Table 1. The integrative approach to domains of spiritual health, fostering of wisdom and factors of psychological wellbeing (Fisher,2011), (Gluck, 2022) and (Ryff,2014)



The integration of the structure is by utilising the four domains model connecting spirituality, health, and wellbeing (Fisher, 2011); an integrative model of wise behaviour (Gluck, 2022) and psychological wellbeing model (Ryff, 2014)

Table 2. Core themes to understand spiritual health, wisdom and psychological wellbeing based on the review of literature

Themes	Spiritual Health	Wisdom	Psychological Wellbeing
Origin	Rooted in religious or spiritual traditions, practices, beliefs, and	Acquired through life experiences, reflection, mentorship	Influence of genetics, upbringing, social environment, and experiences

	experiences		
Focus area	Connection to something beyond oneself to find purpose and meaning in life	Insight on deeper truths of existence and nature of reality	Developing mental and emotional health through self-esteem, coping skills
Cultural Variation	Philosophical traditions and religion	Desirable trait of a particular culture	Differences in expression and interpretation across cultures.
Application	Addressing existential questions and enlightenment of self	Practical decision making in interpersonal relations by understanding existential complexities.	Reducing effect of psychological distress through coping strategies for life satisfaction.

This table highlights the themes emerged from the review highlighting the original source of development, focused area in life, variation in cultures and applications in real life situations of spiritual health, wisdom, and psychological wellbeing.

Table 3. Relationship between Spiritual Health, Wisdom and Psychological Wellbeing based on review of literature

Relationship	Spiritual Health, Wisdom, Psychological wellbeing
Self-awareness	Encourages to explore thought patterns, emotions, beliefs, and behaviours for self-acceptance and understanding.
Purpose and meaning	Bringing sense of belongingness in existence for connection and direction on life path.
Inner Harmony	Encompass peace of mind, emotional stability towards life situations
Coping ability	Following regular practices and sensible utilization of resources with awareness.
Personal Growth	Cultivating mindset for valuing existence and life experience with consistent learning
Mind-body Integration	Understanding the importance of attending to one's physical, mental, emotional needs
Emotional Regulation	Developing expression and awareness on feeling with gratitude
Fulfilment	Contentment on life experiences with regular improvisation of self for better response to situations.

DISCUSSION

As the findings of the study highlighted the relationship between spiritual health, psychological wellbeing and wisdom. Where the factors that played a key role in clarifying the connections were self-awareness, purpose and meaning, inner harmony, coping abilities, personal growth, mind-body integration, emotion regulation and fulfilment as mentioned in table 3. Now let us discuss the possible behind these findings.

The integration of the personal, communal, environmental, and transcendental domains of spiritual health are facilitated by knowledge and inspiration aspects that are related to the thinking and reasoning; emotional and motivational wisdom fostering states and utilization of these wisdom states helps in understanding psychological wellbeing through purpose in life, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, relations with others effectively (Table 1). Influence of purpose and meaning becomes more relevant through spiritual practices like mindfulness, arts, self-expression through poetry. With this dealing with the adversity becomes more meaning by incorporating wise behaviours towards an action because the exposure to experiences of life helps in self-reflection, observation and reasoning that becomes possible by regularly following the practices to develop psychological wellbeing in an individual. Answering the research questions in detail following relationships have been suggested by the review.

Relationship between Spiritual Health and Wisdom

They are distinct yet interconnectedness concepts. Beliefs about connection with God is the link between practical wisdom through different pathways. Emotional regulation and prosocial behaviours are effective ways in enhancing wisdom, this is helpful in mastery and purpose that develops internal strengths of overall health. Health promoting lifestyle is an essential contribution of spiritual health (Rafiei 2020). Internal dialogues towards critical life experiences and autonomy leads to purpose in life.

The reason behind this finding can be given through the theory of 'Logotherapy' and 'Will to Meaning' by Viktor Frankl. This highlights the concept of focusing on self-evolution, self-actualization and realizing one's full potential. By finding purpose and inner fulfilment through universal love and compassion through replacement of negative emotions (Shakib.et.al, 2021). Thus, the findings of this study, mentioned literature and the theory supports the idea that spiritual growth and wisdom are related. Moreover, the help in promoting wellbeing and resilience among individual.

Relationship between Spiritual Health and Psychological Wellbeing

As the finding of this study suggest that spiritual health and psychological wellbeing are aligned. The study by Hosseinbor (2022) supports it by stating 'communication with oneself and communication with others are the predictors for social functioning'. It has meditating roles in compassion and life satisfaction because of the self-beliefs (Kurtulus, 2022). Spiritual wellbeing has association with self-efficacy, resiliency, hope, optimism. It enhances mental health to deal with situations effectively; spiritual practices lead to reduction in stress. In addition, these two plays role in predicting organizational commitment among professionals (Heideri, 2022).

Furthermore, the hierarchy model of needs by Maslow backs up the findings. As it states that 'when spiritual needs are met, individual report higher life satisfaction, inner peace and resilience'. This concept of self-transcendence illustrates the importance of spiritual health for the fulfilment of the psychological needs at the highest level (Venter, 2017). Hence based on the findings, mentioned evidences and the hierarchy model it can be said that there is a relationship between spiritual health and psychological wellbeing.

Relationship between Wisdom and Psychological Wellbeing

Wisdom influences psychological wellbeing as openness to experience, hedonic and eudaimonic happiness influence social desirability (Dong, 2022). Identity internal dialogues moderate the relationship of critical life experiences and reflectiveness for better response to life (Malgorzata & Wasyl, 2023).

The reason behind this can be found in Developmental Process theory of Wisdom (Gluck, 2022). Which stats that 'wisdom is developed through a lifelong process of learning from challenging and meaningful life experiences. Suggesting that emotional regulation, openness and humour are positive predictors as the certain aspects of wisdom and internal dialogues play a role in highlighting self-reflection for promoting overall wellbeing (Wasyl, 2023) reflecting on challenging aspects of human existence and deeply about life's complexities experience positive wellbeing outcomes through connection (Gluck et. al, 2022). Therefore, based on the findings, supportive studies and the theory it can be said that wisdom and psychological wellbeing are interrelated.

Furthermore, based on the data analyses through review, it is suggested that the relationship is determined by the

practices incorporated by the individual with purposeful and meaningful action, this becomes possible through wisdom and leads to psychological wellbeing. With this there is an inference that spiritual health is behavioural, wisdom is cognitive and psychological wellbeing is affective in nature because they deal with action, knowledge and feelings aspects that provides clarity to the journey and helps in fostering self-acceptance for better growth and development as a being.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE IMPLICATION

Health, wellbeing and wisdom, the three essential aspects when it comes to the development of the individual. Despite being essential to one these three aspects are still misunderstood. With the aim to clarify these misconceptions, this study aimed at finding the relation between these three factors. Based on the review, it was found that there is the integrative application of spiritual health, wisdom, and psychological wellbeing. There is positive relationship between the concepts. Suggests that an individual's knowledge seeking behaviour and belief development impacts psychological wellbeing, raising the possibility of self-awareness and introspection for clarity in thought and action for decision making, problem solving and cognitive functioning. As a result, the spiritual health component provides clarity on meaning and purpose with optimism, resilience, faith and focus on spiritual and religious rituals for personal growth and development.

The limitations of the study are that the incorporated articles had more review than researches, the research on these domains with participations is lacking. With this the implication of future research is that the concepts have relevance in life and can be explored more through cross sectional and longitudinal researches.

Moreover, the study strongly recommends regular spiritual practices. Such practices can help in enhancing one's psychological wellbeing. And if one's wellbeing is strong then it will have positive impact in their decision making. As Vedanta Philosophy states 'Wisdom is at the end of the Veda'. This study recommends that 'Spirituality is the beginning of the wellbeing'.

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