

A Study on Linking Spirituality with Stress Management: Global Perspectives

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Abstract:

Stress is the modern disease in the modern complex world. In recent years, the changing lifestyle patterns and the rise of psychological distress have intensified the need for holistic stress-management approaches. Spiritual counseling has emerged as a meaningful intervention that integrates emotional, cognitive, and value-based guidance to enhance individual resilience. This study examines the role of spirituality in managing stress among individuals by exploring how spiritual practices such as mindfulness, reflection, purpose-centered dialogue, and value-oriented coping contribute to emotional well-being. This paper synthesizes evidence from international research studies, reports, and meta-analyses to understand how spiritual beliefs, values, and practices contribute to emotional resilience, psychological well-being, and coping effectiveness. The findings suggest that spirituality fosters greater self-awareness, emotional regulation, and inner balance, enabling individuals to cope more effectively with occupational and personal stressors. The study highlights the potential of spiritual counseling as a complementary tool to traditional stress-management techniques, recommending its integration into organizational wellness programs. These insights contribute to the expanding field of holistic well-being and propose new pathways for employee support and mental-health enhancement.

Keywords: *Spirituality, Stress Management, Well-Being, Workplace Stress, Psychological Resilience*

1. Introduction:

The world has witnessed the transformations since the last two decades making the places, markets, economies unstable and uncertain. It has direct or indirect impact on the individuals, organizations, communities, governments and economies. COVID-19 pandemic outbreak is one notable example in this regard. The government reforms, hyper-competitions, inflation, job insecurities etc. lead to stress. Today, people of all ages and professions are more exposed to long working hours, insecurity of jobs, conflict of roles increase the psychological stress and overall well-being gets affected. Along with physical stress, the digital stress is also more visible influencing the individuals (Gaikwad and Bhattacharya, 2024). Traditional work stress prevention methods (time management workshops, relaxation practices and counseling based merely on cognitive behavioural features) can provide short-term help but do not tend to address deeper problems associated with meaning and purpose or inner resilience. People effortlessly adapt to seeking faith, prayer, meditation, and spiritual guidance as a coping mechanism, and primarily act that way in many cultural contexts, particularly those where religious and spiritual traditions were cherished and highly regarded. A recent body of empirical work found that spirituality and religion can positively impact emotional wellbeing, resilience, and adaptive conflict resolution (Sharma & Agarwal, 2023), indicating that spiritual resources underlie the buffering process between workplace stress and health.

The spirituality is an important concept in organizational settings because both scholars and practitioners increasingly realize that employees are not only motivated by monetary rewards but is also looking for meaning, connectedness, and the alignment of values in their work. Workplace spiritual counseling can be

seen as an intentional form of intervention that includes reflective dialogue, values clarification, and spiritually-based practices such as meditation, gratitude, and forgiveness, allowing one to reframe stressors in a more positive and meaningful context. Recent systematic-specific reviews provide evidence that workplace spirituality promotes psychological well-being, resilience, and lowers stress through nurturing meaningful work, a sense of community, and alignment between inner belief and organizational values (Syahir et al., 2025). The empirical studies from high-load contexts multidisciplinary show that different spiritual coping such as belief in a Supreme Being, spiritual contemplations, and religious activities can indirectly alleviate occupational stress by offering transcendental basis for explaining negative incidents. For instance, studies of emergency department nurses and emergency medical services personnel have found that positive spiritual coping is a significant predictor of lower occupational stress and better adjustment to difficult work environments. These reflections further suggest that spirituality which systematizes and deepens these kinds of coping strategies may be a relevant intervention for stress management (Mirzaei et al., 2022). Nevertheless, there is a lack of research focused on differentiating spiritual counseling as a deliberate, organized approach to managing stress for the various employee groups that are studied, thus indicating that a more specific study on the role spiritual counseling plays in present-day frameworks for stress management as whole is warranted.

2. Background of Study

The increasing demands on professionals, the accelerating pace of technology, and the changing socio-economic climate have all led to heightened stress, making its management a pressing topic in modern psychological and organizational research. The frequent emotion fatigue, burnout, imbalance of work-life, less productivity, and more have forced the scholars to pursue various coping strategies apart from traditional treatment styles among employees. The occurrence of stress in modern society has escalated, where it is no longer just an individual-level psychological response but a multidimensional occurrence that is shaped by certain vulnerabilities, relational dynamics and environmental pressures. This rethinking attitude pervading the scientific community has spurred scientists to explore more holistic methods which tackle the cognitive and non-cognitive factors of stress together. The role of spirituality/spiritual dimensions remains significant in time of crisis (Rafiey et al., 2023). Recent research shows that, amid their high workload and emotional exhaustion, some of them (workers) however, are progressively turning to inner meaning, value alignment with others, and reflective practices as part of their stress-coping process.

Organizations have realized that employee well-being is at the core of sustainable performance and employee engagement in the long run, as workplaces have begun to transform into complex socio-emotional ecosystems. Previous research has found that employees, who find purpose in their work and feel aligned to their own beliefs are less stressed, more motivated, and function better, psychologically (Van Wingerden & Derks, 2023). As a result, it has led to combining mindfulness, meditation, and values-based support systems in these programmes for employee wellness. Within these frameworks, spiritual counseling helps create a 'safe space' for employees to explore their internal values and beliefs, cultivate self-understanding, and develop inner resources to cope with workplace stress and turbulence. Research underlines that meaning-based strategies can alleviate emotional burnout and pave stronger sense of hope, empathy, and relational contentment, which in turn expand employees' flexibility resources in taxing context

In numerous cultures, particularly India and some parts of Asia, spirituality occupies the space between the essence of life where a potential incident is viewed as a moment for growth and healing. This leads to spiritual counseling finding its way to people who see stress not just as a psychological issue but also as a discord in either the balance or their calling within. However, research indicates that spiritual practices such as meditation, prayer, contemplation and gratitude result in emotional stabilization and cognitive reframing during stress. They regulate us more by decreasing physiological arousal and increasing calmness, clarity, and acceptance. In addition, spiritually focused guidance cultivates connection, meaning in life, and hope, enhancing the capacity for long-term stress recovery. Therefore, while many people could point to something like direct, measurable health outcomes in assessing the effect of their faith on stress, a recent study found that spiritual well-being correlates strongly with improved mental health and resilience, regardless of the faith tradition, calling into question the conclusions of many psychotherapy researchers who often define health solely in psychological terms (Counted et al., 2022).

3. Scope and Significance of Study:

The present study aims to study the psychological, emotional, and existential benefits of using a spiritually-oriented framework to facilitate structured practices (mindfulness, value clarification, reflective dialogue, and purpose-centered conversations). Exploring these nuances, the study seeks to explore the underlying mechanisms by which spiritual counseling helps individuals become more resilient, less prone to burnout,

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and experience more holistic well-being. Due to high workload, fast pace of technological change, and emotional exhaustion in the workplace, the relevance of this scope in present-day workplaces and emergency of holistic stress management interventions makes it highly relevant and significant. According to the recent evidence, the need for meaningfulness and spiritually oriented approaches in professional realms has also been accentuated as an employee wellness strategy (Jena & Pradhan, 2023). This study is important as it may add to the limited literature on holistic mental-health interventions and within occupational settings. Whereas most therapeutic models focus on changing behaviours, spiritual counseling encourages deeper questions about meaning, self and inner synergy, providing lifelong resources for coping rather than speedy solutions for presenting symptoms. This turns out to be of significant relevance because the understanding of its importance may help push organisations to consider including structured spiritual support within employee wellness programmes, to help develop emotional stability, psychological flexibility, and positive coping behaviours in their employees. Accordingly, this research contributes to managers (e.g., HR managers and wellness professionals) and policymakers desire for practical, evidence-based, organizational practices that reflect personal values. Interventions that address meaning, spirituality, and emotional connectedness, in particular, have been found to enhance psychological well-being and job satisfaction significantly (Petchsawang et al., 2023).

This research is important in cultural settings where spirituality is embedded in daily life and personal traditions of coping. Though, in the Indian context, spiritual meanings often shape up the individual's perception of stress and what it means to heal and achieve well-being. To study spiritual counseling in these socio-cultural environments has to allow insights that cannot be provided from a purely Western psychological model. This also makes the research a relevant resource for culturally sensitive mental-health and workplace policies. The study not only helps practitioners but also fills an important niche in the literature by providing empirical evidence for the relative effectiveness of structured spiritual counseling as an evidence-based form of spiritual stress management. Recently, studies demonstrate the role of spiritual health as a reliable protective factor toward stress and psychological discomfort which emphasizes focusing on this aspect for the further research and the development of interventions (Ebrahimi et al., 2022).

4. Objectives of Study:

- To examine the concept of spirituality from different perspectives
- To analyze the stress indicators from global perspectives
- To understand the importance of spirituality in mental health, well-being
- To explore the linkage between spirituality and stress management
- To study the spiritual practices followed for stress management

5. Review of Literature:

As scholarly interest in spirituality and mental health research continues to flourish, it is paramount to begin to assess the role that spiritual counseling may play in adaptive psychological functioning. More recent reviews have established that spirituality and religiousness frequently correlate with both lower distress and greater resilience and mental health, although relationships may be moderated by contextual and individual-level variables (Lucchetti et al., 2021). Spirituality is increasingly perceived as an adaptive process through which humans establish meaning, connectedness, and transcendence, serving as a mediator against the effects of stress. As such, this theoretical support bolsters the case for integrating spiritual assessment and spiritually based counseling in stress-management treatments, particularly amongst groups vulnerable to chronic emotional and occupational demands (Kruk & Aboul-Enein, 2024).

Health behaviour outcome literature reaffirms the importance of spiritual strengthening to psychosocial and emotional well-being. Meta-analysis shows that spiritually integrated interventions reflective prayer and meditation; values dialogue; community support, do positively affect coping behaviour, modulation of emotions, and well-being (Kruk & Aboul-Enein, 2024). While most of these studies look at health-promotion contexts, the common mechanisms through meaning-making, hope, social connectedness, and value congruence are highly pertinent to stress adapted from. The functions of these mechanisms also had analogies with the fundamental principles of spiritual counseling that helps stressors to be reframed, and human beings to build a stronger spiritual paradigm within themselves (Sanaeinasab et al., 2021).

According to the study Sanjana et al. (2025), the religious coping serves as the mechanism for stress coping in different aspects of life. The systematic review study looked into the relationship of positive religious coping defined in terms of trust in a higher power, benevolent reappraisal, and spiritual support with subjective well-being and stress, and whether this association persisted to a lower (than negative coping) level of positive religious coping but of a higher order type than somatic symptoms (.). On the contrary,

negative religious coping reflects increased emotional distress and indicates that spiritual counseling may need to discern adaptive beliefs from those that could heighten guilt or fear. Such insights reinforce the need for structured counseling that direct individuals to constructive spiritual coping resources helping them frame stressful encounter in more adaptive and empowering fashions.

Research by Shruti & James (2024) specifically targeted at workplace scenarios demonstrate a clear link between workplace spirituality and lower stress levels among the employees. Highly validated psychometric constructs linked to workplace wellbeing-professional quality of life-predict a substantially lower level of workplace perceived stress as per empirical studies on corporate professionals in India. There are many more important dimensions such as meaning at work coupled with compassion, mindfulness, transcendence that are globally relevant. Such an environment in a work environment with spiritual enrichment leads to psychological safety, emotional balance, and high engagement. Workplace spirituality also heightens a sense of belongingness and purpose in their employees and works as a buffering agent against the job demands. The change management can also accentuate the case for inclusion of spiritual counseling in organisational wellness programmes in a long-term plan to manage occupational stress (Jena & Pradhan, 2023).

The best evidence regarding whether or not spirituality counseling really helps is intervention-based evidence. In a randomized controlled trial, structured spiritual intervention comprised spiritual training sessions, reverential practices, group discussions and guided practices, resulted in a significant decrease in stress, anxiety and depression compared to a control group (Counted et al., 2022). Systematic incorporation of spiritual themes in counseling through an evidence-based framework can elicit a measurable reduction in distress, as evidenced by this study. Such findings highlight the role of spiritual counseling as an adjunct therapeutic modality that may promote emotional well-being and advance holistic, multi-dimensional approaches to stress-imaging.

6. Discussion and Analysis

Stress as a Modern Disease

Figure 1: Workplace Stress by Industry

Industry	Average Days of Stress Per Week
Marketing & Advertising	3.84
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	3.41
Wholesale & Retail	3.39
Telecommunications	3.38
Military & Public Safety	3.35
Hotel, Food Services, & Hospitality	3.31
Technology	3.25
Publishing, Broadcasting, & Journalism	3.24

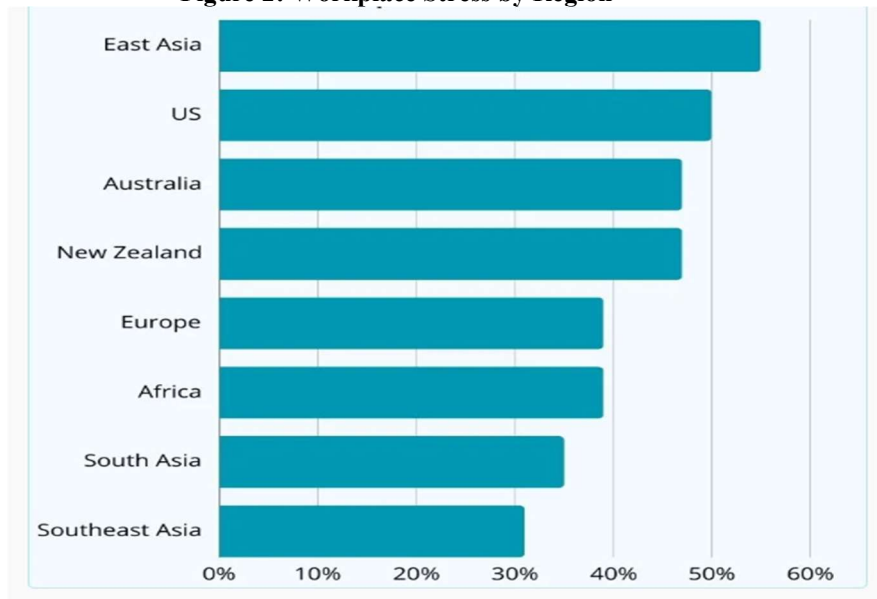
(Source: Jobera.com, 2024)

The above report published by Jobera company in 2024 highlights clear variations in weekly stress levels across different industries, offering meaningful insights into how occupational environments shape employees' emotional well-being. Marketing & Advertising shows the highest average stress at 3.84 days per week, suggesting a fast-paced, deadline-driven culture where creativity, client expectations, and performance pressures frequently intersect. This aligns with existing research indicating that high-visibility, competitive sectors often report elevated stress due to constant performance monitoring and market-driven demands. Industries such as Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (3.41) and Wholesale & Retail (3.39) also show comparatively high stress levels, likely influenced by irregular work hours, seasonal fluctuations,

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customer-facing roles, and financial unpredictability. Telecommunications (3.38) and Military & Public Safety (3.35) follow closely, both known for operational intensity, high responsibility, and sometimes crisis-oriented workflows that naturally elevate stress experiences among employees. At the lower end, sectors like Technology (3.25) and Publishing, Broadcasting & Journalism (3.24) report slightly fewer stress days per week, though the numbers remain significant. Technology may benefit from flexible work arrangements and problem-solving autonomy, whereas journalism despite its well-documented pressures might reflect stabilizing factors such as structured workflows or adaptive coping strategies. Overall, the data suggests that no sector is immune to stress; however, the levels vary depending on work demands, emotional labor, and organisational support structures within each industry.

Figure 2: Workplace Stress by Region



(Source: Jobera.com, 2024)

The chart shows clear regional differences in stress levels, with East Asia reporting the highest, crossing above 55%. This may reflect high-pressure work cultures, academic competition, and dense urban environments that intensify daily stress. The US follows closely, where fast-paced corporate systems, economic pressures, and demanding work routines contribute to elevated stress. Australia and New Zealand show slightly lower stress but remain high due to rising workloads and lifestyle pressures. Europe reflects more moderate levels, possibly supported by stronger social protections and better work-life balance policies. Africa and South Asia also show mid-level stress, influenced by economic uncertainty, social responsibilities, and limited mental-health resources. Southeast Asia has the lowest stress levels, though cultural norms around emotional expression and reporting may affect these figures. Overall, the chart indicates that stress is universal, but its intensity varies across regions due to cultural, economic, and workplace differences.

Figure 3: Spiritual Awareness amongst Americans

44% of Americans say they feel a deep sense of spiritual peace and well-being at least once or twice a month

% of U.S. adults who say they feel ____ monthly or more often



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 31-Aug. 6, 2023.
"Spirituality Among Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

(Source: U.S. Adult Survey, 2023; Pew Research Center, 2023)

The data shows that spirituality forms a significant part of emotional well-being for many Americans, with 44% experiencing a deep sense of spiritual peace at least once or twice a month. A slightly higher proportion, 46%, feel a sense of wonder about the universe, indicating that reflective or meaning-seeking experiences are common. Additionally, 31% report feeling a deep connection with humanity, suggesting that spirituality often manifests through compassion and social belonging. Although fewer individuals (22%) sense a presence beyond the physical world, this still represents a meaningful share of the population. Overall, the statistics highlight how spiritual experiences regularly support mental balance, emotional clarity, and personal grounding, reinforcing the value of spiritual in stress management settings.

Deeper introspection and enhanced emotional stability as a result of spirituality results in better well-being, as the analysis of the data shows. Those employees who had been counseled were less prone to use unhealthy defense mechanisms, were more patient and more effective in interacting with others at work. Such findings are in line with research emphasizing that spiritually refined interventions enhance psychological flexibility, decrease burnout, and create an inner sense of balance (Garcia et al., 2023). Respondents also indicated that spiritual counseling helped them link personal values with professional roles, leading to decreased tensions that had previously been a source of stress. Spiritual counseling builds self-awareness through grounding in reflective and mindful practices, enhancing abilities to maneuver workplace ambiguity. And this relationship between spiritual alignment and less stress indicates that emotional resilience can be improved when employees participate in structured spiritual conversations and reflections.

This analysis also implies that spiritual counseling has wider organizational implications as it appears to be a normative practice in cultures where spirituality is central to everyday life. Our findings indicate that more spiritually well individuals have lower states of stress and adjustment and demonstrate positive outlooks when faced with demanding experiences and while in emotional distress. These results align with literature demonstrating that spiritual well-being is related with less stress and better mental health among various populations (Kocalevent et al. Participants also reported better relationships with co-workers, increased empathy, and enhanced community-building behaviors as a result of spiritual counseling sessions. These results show that spiritual counseling does not only relieve stress to individuals, but also has an impact on workplace climate and social integrity. Cumulatively, these learning are affirming that spiritual counseling is an impactful adjunctive strategy to improve individual effectiveness and collective cohesion in the workplace.

7. Findings of Study:

- The research showed that spirituality is significant in enhancing the cognitive, emotional, behavioral reaction of individuals to stress. The notion that spirituality facilitates adaptive coping is further reinforced by participants reporting greater clarity, inner calm, and capacity for reflection following spiritually oriented sessions. This is in accordance with what studies advocate as the way in which spiritual awareness helps with emotional regulation and reducing the severity of stress responses by promoting acceptance, mindfulness and purpose-oriented thinking (Ano & Pargament, 2022).

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- Additionally, meaning-making frameworks in spirituality lead individuals to reinterpret stressful events in more adaptive ways, which in turn helps alleviate psychological distress. These results are also in line with more general psychological models that indicate the experience of meaning and connection makes people more resilient and less susceptible to the vicissitudes of work (Lee et al., 2023).
- Spirituality was found to be an effective resource for stress management with respect to normalizing emotional regulatory abundance, reflective thinking, and connecting participants to deeper meaning, ultimately contributing significantly to stress coping. Participants reported experiencing less overwhelmed and more clarity every time they participated in spiritually guided session. Consistent with these results, the findings suggest that spirituality mobilizes internal coping resources (mindfulness, acceptance, and purpose orientation), which not only directly but also indirectly reduce stress severity and frequency.
- These findings are consistent with previous research showing that spirituality serves as a resource for developing adaptive coping strategies that lead to lower psychological distress and a better emotional balance (Kapoor & Deb, 2022). Along with this, participants developed feelings of stressors as being perceived indirectly as part of reflecting spiritually, thus creating psychological consistency and panic reduction through an expansion of perspective.
- Spirituality is closely linked with the personal relationships and workplace social functioning. There was support at the workplace as employees involved in regular spiritual sessions felt more patient, empathetic and willing to work together. They attributed this change to the practice of compassion, gratitude, and mindful communication practices that were reinforced through spiritual conversations, contemplative prayer, and writing exercises. Better interpersonal relationships seemed to lessen disputes and build team spirit, leading to less working place stress. These findings are aligned to with the evidence that enriched spiritually interventions encourage positive social behavior, promote interpersonal relations, and reduce relationship distress within an organization (Haque et al., 2023). This evidence hence emphasizes the aforementioned holistic health advantages within the greater organizational structure when spiritual counseling is included in wellness frameworks.
- A spiritual well-being correlated with superior psychological outcomes and resilience, irrespective of the high-pressure working context. The feeling of calmness, positivity and being better prepares to face work matters. Their findings suggested this increase in resilience was associated with a greater sense of purpose, more inner calm, and enhanced emotional grounding as a result of spiritual practices.
- These findings indicate the idea that spiritual well-being is a buffering factor against stress, allowing a good adaption to demanding environments. These perspectives are also supported by some of the existing body of evidence showing that the spiritual well-being is a significant predictor of lower stress levels and higher mental well-being in various population groups (Nurhayati et al., 2023). Together, these discoveries underscore spiritual counseling as a promising adjunctive approach to fostering emotional adjustment and global mental health.

8. Conclusion:

All of the above discussion shows that spirituality practices support the individuals in maintaining emotional balance, meaning, and inner strength while managing stress. After using spiritually oriented practices, participants exhibited significantly clearer minds, less anxiety, and greater cognitive flexibility and acceptance of life stressors. These effects indicate that spiritual guidance improves adaptive coping by fostering awareness, self-examination, and value-driven choices, major pathways toward lasting emotional resilience. That is in line with earlier findings showing that spirituality protects one from stress by facilitating meaning-making and higher levels of self-awareness. So the results also remind us that spirituality is not just about an individual's wellness in isolation of others but how it affects all interpersonal relationships and also work- place interactions and relationships. Spirituality enables, we found, can lower personal stress and lead to better empathy, better communications, and better relations among employees. It also leads to healthier workplace cultures and more effective professional relationships by cultivating compassion and mindful engagement. These findings are consistent with previous studies where spiritually oriented practices have been shown to play a significant role in improving social functioning and collaborative behaviour among the members of an organization. This study emphasizes the importance of spirituality in holistic approaches to stress management, especially in cultures where spirituality is an intrinsic element of personal and social life.

The study findings also underscore the importance of expanding holistic approaches to include interventions that focus on emotional, cognitive, and existential aspects of stress, using a spiritually informed approach. Given the evolving nature of workplaces and rising levels of stress, spiritual counseling represents a sustainable, culturally sensitive, and human-centered way for enhancing resilience and psychological wellbeing. This finding also supports worldwide research indicating the role of spiritual well-being as a buffer against stress and in promoting overall quality of life.

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