

A Quantitative Study on the Relationship between Spiritual Well-Being and Psychological Well-Being among Novice Clergy and Senior Priests in Myanmar

James Cin Len Khai and Ma. Lourdes C. Medina

The Graduate School, University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2024.1108055>

Received: 20 July 2024; Revised: 30 July 2024; Accepted: 03 August 2024; Published: 09 September 2024

ABSTRACT

The study aims to explore the relationship between spiritual well-being and psychological well-being among novice clergy and senior priests because novice clergy and senior priests are the most important stages in priestly life. There is a big difference between these two groups in terms of number of years in priestly life, year of ordination, age and occupation. In order to achieve breadth and depth in the understanding of this phenomenon, the researcher employed a quantitative research design. 271 clergy (135 novice clergy and 136 senior priests) participated in the study and completed questionnaires about spiritual well-being and psychological well-being. The results of regression analyses showed that overall spiritual well-being is a significant predictor of psychological well-being among the clergy. The personal component of spiritual well-being alone and the environmental component of spiritual well-being alone were significant predictors of psychological well-being among novice clergy and senior priests respectively. The findings specifically showed that the experience of spiritual well-being within the personal component benefits personal growth, environmental control, self-acceptance, purpose in life and emotional stability among the novice clergy. The experience of spiritual well-being in environmental component, on the other hand, benefits peace of mind, self-acceptance and others-acceptance, increased ability of problem solving skills, increased happiness and a better physical health among senior priests.

Keywords: Spiritual well-being, psychological well-being, Novice clergy, Senior priests

INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is something which everyone experiences because we are spiritual beings (Laura, 2020). It is considered to be a natural part of universal human experience (Maria, 2022). Spirituality has also been described as an inner path that enables a person to discover the essence of his or her own being, leading to the deepest meanings and values of life (Bunch, 2021). Spirituality is an indispensable element in human experience because the spirit is the unifying “factor” in the whole person. That is the reason why spirituality is becoming an important element in conceptualizing human well-being (Laura, 2020) and in the practice of psychotherapy (Schuelka et al., 2021).

The concept of spiritual well-being is the fruit of several attempts having been made in recent years to establish a link between spirituality and well-being (Daniela 2019). These authors proposed adding spiritual well-being to the list of the other aspects of well-being, such as mental, physical and emotional well-being. This is because spiritual well-being appears to be an important aspect of human well-being. Spiritual well-being is a fundamental indicator of spiritual health (Keizer, 2022) or rather an indication of the underlying state of a person’s spiritual health (Ellison, 2023) or a state that reflects the quality of a person’s relationship with self, with others, with the environment and with the Transcendent (Gamze, 2021). These relationships are reflected in the four domains of spiritual well-being, namely, the personal, the communal, the Transcendental and the environmental (Gomez & Fisher, 2023). Thus, a person’s level of spiritual well-being is assessed by the harmonious quality of the relationships that one has with the four domains (Ellison, 2023).

It is important to explore and understand the quality of relationships one has with oneself, with others, with the

environment and with God or Transcendent (Sedat, 2022). It is because spirituality is metaphysical and, therefore, cannot be seen or directly assessed. It can only be perceived or understood through its indicators or consequences (Gomez & Fisher, 2023). That is why, the expression ‘quality of relationships’, for instance, is merely an indication of the extent or depth of a person's spirituality with respect to their well-being (Sedat, 2022). This seems to be the implication of Fisher’s theory or way of understanding a person’s spiritual well-being. An extensive review of the literature on spiritual health also indicates that these four areas of relationship are the key features that have been reappearing in all discussions on the topic of spiritual health over the last three decades (Ruiz, 2018). Recently, the most accepted definition of spiritual well-being in psychological field is Fisher’s definition (McNeal, 2020). Research has suggested that the components of spiritual well-being are interrelated. For instance, when communal well-being is developed, personal well-being is also enhanced, thereby contributing to a person’s overall or global spiritual well-being (Ritchie, 2019).

Research into psychological well-being also indicates that spiritual well-being has a direct effect upon psychological well-being. This would seem obvious since an individual’s connectedness and dependence on others is a noted characteristic of Asian people and their collectivist society (Sooy, 2021), where the quality of interpersonal relationship appears to be an important factor, leading to a deep level of happiness (Sedat, 2022). Moreover, relationship with God has recently been acknowledged to be a critical factor that accounts for psychological well-being (Freeze & Di Tommaso 2021). People who experience God’s attachment also experience a feeling of belonging (McDowell 2020), of being protected and secure (Gomez and Fisher, 2023), all of which, in turn, enhance and invoke the quality of psychological well-being (Halil, 2020). Research has also demonstrated strong positive correlation between spiritual well-being and psychological well-being (Bunch, 2021). A high level of spiritual well-being negatively correlates to depression, self-esteem (Grunwald, 2021) and positively correlates to emotional well-being and life satisfaction (Kyle, 2020), and is negatively associated with emotional instability and mood disorders (Cool, 2021). Spiritual well-being plays a vital role in adaptation to stress (Gamze, 2021). Spiritual well-being is more acceptance of the state of illness (Laura, 2020).

Spirituality has motivated the way of life of religious people because they see it as a way to pursue happiness (Mudge, 2021). People entering seminary are basically required to be mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually healthy in order to live happily and maturely in community with others as well as to perform their tasks and mission effectively. Furthermore, spiritual well-being is found to be an underlying element that influences and reinforces happiness (Keizer, 2022). Especially in the case of religious people, spiritual life experience serves as a significant element that uplifts their level of psychological well-being (Lee, 2019).

Existing literature has shown that researchers have only looked at correlations among these variables. There is inconsistent evidence on the impact of each component of spiritual well-being on psychological well-being across groups (Gomez & Fisher, 2023). Clergy are considered as those who have high relevance to God and embedded themselves in community life; their relationship with God and others is proposed to be a source of their happiness (Mudge, 2021). There are limited studies on the relationship between spiritual well-being and psychological well-being among religious people. Moreover, none has examined the relationship between each component of spiritual well-being on psychological well-being among religious people in general and among Myanmar clergy in particular. The present study, therefore, first, attempted to explore the relationship between spiritual well-being and psychological well-being among clergy; secondly, the study investigated the relationship between each component of spiritual well-being and psychological well-being of the clergy; thirdly, the study explored if there is a difference between novice (newly ordained) clergy and senior priests group in terms of the role played by each component of spiritual well-being on psychological well-being among novice clergy and senior priests group. More importantly, researchers have not been able to fully explore the in-depth experiences of the role of spiritual well-being in psychological well-being among clergy. That is why the present study attempted to look into individual experiences of spiritual well-being among the clergy and to determine how it affects their psychological well-being.

METHOD

Research Design

In order to explore the relationship between spiritual well-being and psychological well-being among the clergy, the present study employed a quantitative descriptive correlational research design to gather the data.

The researcher followed the guidance of UST Graduate School Ethical Review Committee and obtained the required certificate from the UST-GS ERC in order to complete the ethical rules and regulations for scientific research writing process. The participants and the responsible persons were informed about the purpose of the study and their consents were sought for the research. The personal details of the participants were kept strictly confidential. The dignity of the participants was respected; their doubts were clarified and their concerns were attended to wherever needed.

Participants

The study used purposive sampling technique in choosing the participants of the study. Purposive sampling involves selecting specific individuals or groups intentionally based on certain criteria or characteristics that are relevant to the research objectives. This method is often used when researchers seek to obtain information from particular subsets of the populations that are most informative for their study (Molina-Azorin, 2016). The sample size of this study was based on Green's (1991) standard criterion, with independent K variables. Since this present study has 4 independent variables, a minimum sample size requires $50 + 8K$ or $50 + 8 \times 4 = 82$ for testing the overall fit of the regression model or R^2 and a minimum sample size requires $104 + K$ for testing the individual predictor or β_j , whose minimum sample size is $104 + 4 = 108$.

The participants of the study included 271 priests: 135 novice (newly ordained) clergy and 136 senior priests from 8 different dioceses. Their age range is 20 to 35 years for novice clergy and from 40 to 65 years for senior priests. The novice clergy are those who are within 5 years of their ordination to priesthood and senior priests are those who have completed at least 15 years of experience in their ministry. With the permission of their local ordinaries or superiors, packets of questionnaires were distributed to the novice clergy and returned immediately to the priests in charge of the participants on completion. The researcher himself then collected these packets from the priest in charge. In the case of the senior priests, where permission to participate had been given to them by their superiors, the packets of questionnaires were distributed and were likewise returned to the priest in charge immediately on completion.

Instruments

Demographic questionnaire for clergy

The demographic information for the clergy includes age, name of the diocese, number of years in priestly life, and occupation.

Spiritual Health and Life-orientation Measure (SHALOM)

This scale developed by Fisher (1999) and was used for this present study to measure overall spiritual well-being among clergy. Specifically the scale was used to assess the quality of the four relationships one has with oneself, with others, with the environment and with Transcendent. SHALOM provides a novel means of attaining insight into the quality of these components, which reflect spiritual well-being by assessing each person's ideals and their lived experience. This present study used the lived experience to measure spiritual well-being of the clergy. It means the study used only the Spiritual Health (SHA) part of the instrument. The clergy were asked to rate each item along a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 to 5, 1 = very low, and 5 = very high. The clergy rated ideal for life orientation measure and lived experience of spiritual health separately. The reliability of this scale is adequate with Cronbach's alpha values for the personal: 0.89; the communal: 0.79; the environmental: 0.76; the transcendental 0.86; and overall items: 0.92.

In order to make the items become more comprehensible to the participants for this present study, some items were adapted from the modified version, suggested by Moodley et al. (2012) to replace the original items, e.g., item (1) 'a love of other people' will be replaced by '*a love for other people*'; item (4) 'connection with nature' will be replaced by '*a connection between myself and nature*'; item (5) 'a sense of identity' will be replaced by '*I have an understanding of my identity*'; item (6) 'worship of the Creator' will be replaced by '*reverence for the Creator*'; item (7) 'awe at a breathtaking view' will be replaced by '*respect when I see a breathtaking view*'; item (15) 'prayer life' will be placed by '*prayer enriches my life*'; and item (20) "a sense of 'magic' in the environment" will be replaced by '*a sense of fascination in the environment*'.

Psychological Well-being Scale (PWBS)

Ryff's (1989) multidimensional model of psychological well-being was employed for this present study. The 42-item version was used in order to assess the level of psychological well-being of the clergy. This 42-item version has shown high internal consistency, Cronbach's alphas $> .80$. The clergy were asked to rate each item along the 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 6 where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 6 is "Strongly agree".

Data Gathering and Data Analysis

The data gathering procedure for the study began with formal letters sent by the researcher to the local ordinaries of 8 different dioceses. Questionnaires were sent to the priest in charge of each diocese, and then he again communicated by email to those participants in their dioceses. The researcher personally collected all the answers. The questionnaires were being sent by email to the priest in charge of each diocese and, then distributed by their respective superiors. Since all the communications were done by email, and distributed the questionnaires to the respondents, potential participants were given the necessary information by the priest in charge regarding the purpose of the research, and letters of consent were distributed. The priests who participated in the study were asked to complete the questionnaire packets, which they returned immediately on completion to their priest in charge, and then they were all sent back by email to the researcher.

Out of 300 questionnaires (150 for each group) distributed to the novice clergy and senior priests in eight dioceses, a total of 281 (93.67%) were returned to the researcher. However, 10 (3.33%) of these were incomplete in various ways and were, therefore, eliminated by the researcher. Thus, the number of questionnaires finally available for data encoding was 271 (novice clergy 135 and senior priests 136). Although the researcher wished to have equal numbers of participants in each group from different dioceses, this was impossible because the number of novice clergy differed from one diocese to another. Likewise, the number of senior priests who were able to answer the questionnaires was also different for a variety of reasons. That is why the number of participants in each group is unequal for different dioceses.

The treatments of the data were as follows: The data that includes responses obtained from the survey questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics and tables. Percentages, frequency, average and rank order were used to present the findings. To test the significant relationship between the spiritual and psychological well-being of the clergy, Pearson's product-moment correlation was used. Data analysis took several steps: first, the raw data from the questionnaires were encoded into the computer. The incomplete data were eliminated. Then the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences version 20 was applied to answer the research questions, using statistical analysis, including the calculation of descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation, and regression analysis.

RESULTS

Spiritual well-being

The spiritual well-being of the clergy was measured by using the SHALOM scale, the double-response method, in which ideal was measured by the Life-Orientation Measure (LOM) and lived experience was measured by the Spiritual Health Measure (SHA). However, the mean scores of lived experience alone of global spiritual well-being and the four components of spiritual well-being were used to understand the current level of spiritual well-being of the clergy.

The results of the descriptive statistics indicated that both the novice clergy and the senior priests reported highly on spiritual well-being with a mean score of 76.59 (SD = 10.17) and of 76.76 (SD = 10.74) of global well-being, which is above the midpoint of 50 scores. With regard to the four components of spiritual well-being, the results revealed that the sample mean for the novice clergy on transcendental component was 20.67 (SD = 3.01); on personal component was 19.48 (SD = 2.94), on communal component was 18.61 (SD = 2.86), and on environmental component was 17.82 (SD = 3.21). The sample mean for the senior priests on transcendental component was 20.62 (SD = 3.21); on personal component was 19.42 (SD = 2.88); on communal component was 18.61 (SD = 2.85) and on environmental component was 18.10 (SD = 3.48). These results show that both the novice clergy and the senior priests obtained a high mean score on each component

of spiritual well-being, which is above the midpoint of 12.5 scores. Table 1 shows the results of the mean scores and the standard deviations (SD) of global spiritual well-being and of each component of the spiritual well-being of both the novice clergy group and the senior priests group.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviations of Spiritual well-being among the clergy (n = 135, n = 136)

	Novice clergy	Senior priests		
	Mean	SD	Mean	
Global	76.59	10.17	76.76	10.74
Personal	19.48	2.94	19.42	2.88
Communal	18.61	2.86	18.61	2.85
Environmental	17.82	3.21	18.10	3.48
Transcendental	20.67	3.01	20.62	3.21

The results of frequency and percentage of respondents on spiritual well-being suggest that 40.7% of novice clergy and 43.4% of senior priests reported high overall spiritual well-being; 51.9% of novice clergy and 51.5% senior priests reported moderate spiritual well-being. Together, 92.6 % of the novice clergy and 94.9 % of the senior priests enjoyed above average spiritual well-being (see table 2).

Table 2 Frequency and Percentage of Respondents on the Scores of Global spiritual well-being

Level	Score	Novice clergy		Senior priests	
		<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
High	4.0 – 5.0	55	40.7	59	43.4
Moderate	3.0 -3.9	70	51.9	70	51.5
Low	1.0 – 2.9	10	7.4	7	5.1
Total		135	100	136	100

The results of Independent-Sample T-test shows that there is no significant difference between novice clergy and senior priests in terms of their level of spiritual well-being and its component as well as psychological well-being (see table 3).

Table 3: Mean differences on each component of spiritual well-being as well as psychological well-being between novice clergy and senior priests' group

	Mean difference	SE. D	t-value	p-value
Personal	.062	.354	.176	.86
Communal	.005	.347	.013	.99
Environmental	-.281	.396	-.709	.48
Transcendental	.049	.919	.126	.75
Global	-.165	1.271	-.130	.89
Psychological well-being	.289	.919	.315	.75

Psychological Well-being

The level of psychological well-being of the clergy was measured by Ryff’s PWB scale. The mean score of psychological well-being was treated as a single variable and the mean scores of the six subscales of psychological well-being were computed separately for the novice clergy group and the senior priests group (see table 4). The results of descriptive statistics reveal that the novice clergy obtained a mean score of 170.16 (SD = 14.84) and the senior priests had a mean score of 170.96 (SD = 16.89) on psychological well-being. This is above a midpoint of 126. The psychological well-being of the clergy had been assessed by using the Ryff (1989) scale of psychological well-being. This scale includes six subscales, namely autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations, purpose in life, personal growth, and self-acceptance. The results of descriptive statistics also revealed that both novice clergy and senior priests generally obtained an above average mean score in each subscale, which is above a midpoint of 21.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviations of Psychological well-being and its subscales

	Novice clergy		Senior priests	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Psychological well-being	170.16	14.84	170.96	16.89
Autonomy	24.51	4.02	26.65	4.47
Environmental Mastery	26.80	3.09	27.82	3.49
Personal Growth	32.87	4.08	30.81	4.06
Positive Relations	29.19	4.11	27.28	4.78
Purpose in life	30.94	3.91	29.36	4.09
Self-acceptance	25.84	4.10	29.06	3.94

The novice clergy obtained higher mean scores on personal growth, on purpose in life and on positive relations compared to the other remaining components of psychological well-being. The senior priests obtained higher mean scores on personal growth, purpose in life and environmental mastery compared to the other components of psychological well-being. These findings suggest that the clergy from both groups generally perceive themselves to be in continual development as growing and developing and open to new experiences. They have tried to improve themselves in terms of behavior, knowledge and potential. The novice clergy, in particular, obtained a higher mean score on positive relationships suggesting that they are satisfied with their relationships with others that they trust them and care for them. These findings concur with those in Tri’s (2004) study that priests, in general, enjoy an above average level of positive relations. For their part, the senior priests saw themselves as being capable of managing their environment as evidenced by their higher mean score on the dimension of environmental mastery. They were confident in being able to control their situation and responsible for their daily life.

Table 5: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents on the Scores of psychological well-being

Level	Score	Novice clergy		Senior priests	
		<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
High	4.5 – 6.0	13	9.6	18	13.2
Moderate	3.5 – 4.5	112	83.0	105	77.2
Low	1.0 – 3.5	10	7.4	13	9.6
Total		135	100.0	136	100.0

The results of the frequency and percentage of respondents on psychological well-being suggest that almost all the clergy from each group reported from moderate to high on psychological well-being. More specifically, the results of the frequency and percentage of respondents on psychological well-being suggest that 9.6% of the novice clergy and 13.2% of the senior priests reported high psychological well-being; 83.0% of the novice clergy and 77.2% of the senior priests reported moderate psychological well-being. Together, 92.6% of the novice clergy and 90.4% of the senior priests enjoyed above average psychological well-being. Only 7.4% of the novice clergy and 9.6% of the senior priests fell into the low category of psychological well-being (see table 5). These findings imply that most clergy perceive themselves as functioning well psychologically.

Correlations

The correlations among variables were obtained by using Pearson’s r product moment. The results indicate that spiritual well-being and each of its components is significantly and positively correlated with the psychological well-being (PWB) of the clergy, both in the combined group of clergy and in the separated groups of the priests. In the combined group, spiritual well-being was significantly and positively correlated with PWB ($r = .313, p < .001$); personal component was significantly and positively correlated with PWB ($r = .305, p < .001$); communal component was significantly and positively correlated with PWB ($r = .226, p < .001$); Environmental component was significantly and positively correlated with PWB ($r = .284, p < .001$); Transcendental component was significantly and positively correlated with PWB ($r = .253, p < .001$) (see table 6).

Table 6: Correlations among variables, the combined group of clergy (n = 271)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Personal	1	.714**	.614**	.773**	.903**	.305**
2. Communal		1	.551**	.682**	.854**	.226**
3. Environmental			1	.518**	.793**	.284**
4. Transcendental				1	.871**	.253**
5. Global					1	.313**
6. Psychological well-being						1

** p < .001

Regression

The assumptions of regression analysis such as testing the relationships between each independent variable and the dependent variable as well as testing the relationships among the independent variables using scatterplots and correlations, indicated that each component of spiritual well-being, as predictor variable, was significantly and positively correlated with psychological well-being as criterion variable among the combined group of clergy as well as the separated groups of priests. Stepwise regression was considered to be the best method for use in this present study instead of hierarchical regression because there is no theoretical base for which component of spiritual well-being is the strongest predictor of psychological well-being among clergy. Regression analyses attempted to answer the following questions: (1) does spiritual well-being influence psychological well-being among the clergy? (2) Does each component of spiritual well-being influence the psychological well-being of the clergy? And (3) does the relationship between spiritual well-being and psychological well-being differ in the case of novice clergy as compared to senior priests?

Does spiritual well-being influence psychological well-being among the clergy?

Simple regression was employed to analyze the relationship between spiritual well-being and psychological well-being of the clergy. The result indicated that spiritual well-being significantly influenced psychological well-being among the clergy. Spiritual well-being explained 9.8% ($R^2 = .098, F(1, 269) = 29.270, p < .001$) of

the variability in the psychological well-being of the priests. Similarly, when psychological well-being was regressed on spiritual well-being to see the effects of spiritual well-being on psychological well-being in the novice clergy and senior priests group separately, the results revealed that spiritual well-being explained for 10 % ($R^2 = .100$, $F(1, 134) = 14.762$, $p < .001$) of variability in psychological well-being among the novice clergy, while it accounted for 9.7 % ($R^2 = .097$, $F(1, 135) = 14.365$, $p < .001$) of variability in psychological well-being among the senior priests.

Does each component of spiritual well-being influence the psychological well-being of the clergy?

Linear multiple regression, in particular stepwise regression, was employed to analyze the relationship between each component of the spiritual well-being and the psychological well-being of the priests. The results suggest that only personal and environmental component of spiritual well-being were significant predictors of psychological well-being among the clergy. Personal component of spiritual well-being alone can explain 9.3 % ($R^2 = .093$, $F(1, 269) = 27.612$, $p < .001$) of the variability in the psychological well-being of the priests. Together, personal component and environmental component of spiritual well-being explained 10.8 % ($R^2 = .108$, $F(2, 268) = 16.238$, $p < .01$) of the variability in their psychological well-being. Thus, holding other predictor variables constant in the model, personal component of spiritual well-being were positively related to psychological well-being, increasing by .210 for every extra point of personal component of spiritual well-being and increasing by .155 by every extra point of environmental component of spiritual well-being. The strongest influential factor of psychological well-being was personal component ($\beta = .210$, $p < .01$) followed by environmental component ($\beta = .155$, $p < .05$).

Does the relationship between spiritual well-being and psychological well-being differ in the case of novice clergy as compared to senior priests?

Linear multiple regression, in particular stepwise regression, was also employed to analyze the relationship between each component of spiritual well-being and psychological well-being among the novice clergy and the senior priests. For the novice clergy group, the results of stepwise regression reveal that 16% ($R^2 = .160$; $F(1, 133) = 25.255$, $p < .001$) of the variability in the psychological well-being of the novice clergy is accounted for by personal well-being. Personal component of spiritual well-being appears to be the strongest and the only significant predictor of the psychological well-being of the novice clergy ($\beta = .399$, $p < .001$). For the senior priests' group, the results of stepwise regression reveal that environmental component of spiritual well-being can explain the 12.6% ($R^2 = .126$; $F(1, 134) = 19.284$, $p < .001$) of the variability in the psychological well-being of the senior priests. Environmental component of spiritual well-being appears to be the strongest and the only significant predictor of the psychological well-being of the senior priests ($\beta = .355$, $p < .001$).

The results of Pearson's r correlation suggest that overall spiritual well-being is significantly and positively correlated to the psychological well-being of the clergy ($r = .313$, $p < .001$). This finding is consistent with previous studies that spiritual well-being was significantly correlated with psychological well-being (Li, 2018). The results of Pearson's r correlation also reveal, though mildly, that each component of spiritual well-being, namely personal, communal, environmental and transcendental, correlated positively and significantly to the psychological well-being of the clergy ($r = .305$, $p < .01$; $r = .226$, $p < .01$; $r = .284$, $p < .01$; $r = .253$, $p < .01$). Compared to other components of spiritual well-being, personal component appears to be particularly significant and more strongly correlated to psychological well-being among the novice clergy, whereas, among the senior priests, environmental component that appears to be more significantly correlated to psychological well-being. These results are somehow supported by the previous studies, in which personal and communal component were found to be positively and significantly correlated to happiness and that personal and transcendental were also positively and significantly correlated with happiness.

Finally, there are no specific studies on the relationship between the component of spiritual well-being such as personal, communal, transcendental, environmental, and psychological well-being among priests. However, several studies that have linked the possible predictors of the psychological well-being of priests indicated that the elements that are close to the personal component of spiritual well-being such as self-esteem, self-worth are significantly and positively correlated to psychological well-being among priests. For instance, Tri (2014) found that self-esteem plays a significant role in their psychological well-being. The priests, who had high self-esteem, saw themselves as capable of coping with life's difficulties and challenges. As a result, they were also

more willing to accept changes, to risk new experiences, to try new things, and strive for further self-development. In short, they dare to grow as persons. They were happy because they are aware of their growth, and feel more confident in themselves. They can see both purpose and meaning in what they do. Another study found that the more meaningful one's perceived experience in life, the greater one's psychological well-being; community support, encouragement and appreciation are the main sources of happiness among clergy. Similarly, support from one's fellow priests and a peaceful community atmosphere play an important role in their happiness. In other words, communal component of spiritual well-being is positively and significantly correlated to psychological well-being among the clergy. Moreover, attachment to God or a striving for a relationship with God was also found to be positively and significantly correlated to psychological well-being as revealed in other studies, where attachment to God accounted for different facets of psychological well-being. Attachment to God is positively and significantly correlated to all core dimensions of psychological well-being. Among the priests, environmental component also appears to be significantly and positively correlated to psychological well-being. This finding implies that living in harmony with nature, connected with nature, perceiving oneself as being in tune with nature can make the priests happier.

DISCUSSION

The results of descriptive statistics showed that the priests generally reported from moderate to high on overall spiritual well-being and on each of its components. The result of the paired-sample T-test indicated that there was a significant difference between the idea and the lived experience within each component of spiritual well-being among clergy, both novice clergy and senior priests. The results suggested that ideally, the priests want to become more spiritual. In particular, they want to increase more the quality of relationships that one has within each component of spiritual well-being. The results of descriptive statistics also indicated that the priests from both novice clergy and senior priests group reported from moderate to high level on psychological well-being. In other words, the priests in general, perceived themselves psychologically functioning well. The result of the T-test Independent sample suggested that there was no significant difference between novice clergy and senior priests group in terms of the levels of their spiritual well-being and psychological well-being. The results of Pearson's correlation suggest that overall spiritual well-being as well as each of its components is significantly and positively correlated to psychological well-being among the combined group of the clergy as well as the separated groups of the priests. The results of linear multiple regression especially stepwise regression revealed that personal well-being is the strongest and most significant predictor of psychological well-being, followed by environmental well-being among the combined groups. These results suggest that personal well-being and environmental well-being significantly influenced the psychological well-being of the clergy. The results also showed that there is a difference between the novice clergy group and the senior priests group in terms of the role played by spiritual well-being on their psychological well-being. In the case of novice clergy, the results of linear multiple regression especially stepwise regression reveals that personal well-being alone had a significant influence on the psychological well-being of novice clergy. For further exploration of the relationship between each component of spiritual well-being and each core dimension of psychological well-being among the novice clergy, the results showed that personal well-being predicted all six core dimensions of psychological well-being in the case of the novice clergy, namely personal growth, self-acceptance, purpose in life, positive relations, environmental mastery and autonomy. Of the six core dimensions of psychological well-being, personal well-being in particular seems to have more influence on the personal growth of the novice clergy on his self-acceptance and purpose in life compared to the remaining dimensions of psychological well-being. Although the model is weak, communal well-being also plays a significant role in the dimensions of autonomy and personal growth in the case of the novice clergy. In the case of senior priests, the results of linear multiple regression especially stepwise regression also revealed that environmental component alone has a significant influence on their psychological well-being. For a further exploration of the relationship between each component of spiritual well-being and each core dimension of psychological well-being among the senior priests, the results showed that environmental well-being alone has a significant and positive influence on the four core dimensions of their psychological well-being namely self-acceptance, positive relations, environmental mastery and autonomy.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study found that spiritual well-being significantly impacts psychological well-being among clergy.

The study aims to explore the relationship between spiritual well-being and psychological well-being among novice clergy and senior priests. As a result, it is significant to look into spiritual well-being when conceptualizing the priests' psychological well-being. However, the results of the study showed that spiritual well-being explained only 9.8 % in the variability of psychological well-being among the priests. This finding proved that other factors may account for psychological well-being among the priests respectively. That is why the present study cannot conclude that spiritual well-being is a significant determinant predictor of psychological well-being among clergy. In terms of the relationship between the components of spiritual well-being on psychological well-being among the clergy, personal component of spiritual well-being is a significant factor of psychological well-being among novice clergy and it accounted for only 16% in variability of their psychological well-being. Environmental component of spiritual well-being is a significant factor of psychological well-being among senior priests and it accounted for only 10.8 % of their psychological well-being. The findings suggest that the quality of the relationship with self and with the natural environment significantly impact psychological well-being among these two groups. However, it is not strong enough to conclude that these components of spiritual well-being are determinant predictors of their psychological well-being. Relationships with God and with others enhanced the quality of relationship with self among novice clergy while these relationships are increased by connecting with the natural environment which in return brings them closer to the natural environment as well. These findings showed that there are interrelations among the components of spiritual well-being when one component of spiritual well-being is developed, the other components of spiritual well-being are increased as well. The differences between the novice clergy and senior priests in terms of how they experienced psychological well-being revealed that for the novice clergy, personal component is the main concern for them while environmental component is the main concern for the senior priests.

The researcher received no financial support from any funding agencies.

REFERENCES

1. Alireza Armani Kian, Mehdi Fathi, Zahra Moeen, Bahram Rostami, Seyed Zein, Al-Abedin Safavi, Ehsan Fakour (2020). Relationship of Tendency towards Substance Abuse with Spiritual and Psychological Well-being in Students of Zanjan University of Medical Sciences. *Journal of Health, Spirituality and Medical Ethics* – .7(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.29252/jhsme.7.2.59>
2. Aliya Ismail Nadaf and Vinayak M. Honmore (2022). Role of Coping Resources and Gender on Psychological Well-being among Frontline Physicians. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology*,-.13(2), 175-178. http://www.iahrw.com/index.php/home/journal_detail/19#list
3. Angela Hamidia, Pouria Amiri, Mahbobeh Faramarzi, Mohamah Hadi, Yadollahpour and Soraya Khafri (2020). Predictors of Physician's Empathy: The Role of Spiritual Well-being, Dispositional Perspectives, and Psychological Well-being. *Oman Medical Journal*-.35(3). DOI 10.5001/omj.2020.56
4. Arreola, M. (2022). Psychological well-being in the community-dwelling elderly: A quantitative study (Order No. 29065335). Available from ProQuest Central. (2729037647). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/psychological-well-being-community-dwelling/docview/2729037647/se-2>
5. Boateng, A. K. (2022). Attitudes and views towards mental well-being in second- generation ghanaians-americans (Order No. 29060359). Available from ProQuest Central. (2654040974). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/attitudes-views-towards-mental-well-being-second/docview/2654040974/se-2>
6. Bong (2007). Moderating Effects of Religious/Spiritual Coping in the Relation Between Perceived Stress and Psychological Well-Being
7. Bunch, J. H. (2021). Non-roman catholic chaplains administering roman catholic sacraments: A study of diverse pastoral practices (Order No. 28863486). Available from ProQuest Central. (2605656426). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/non-roman-catholic-chaplains-administering/docview/2605656426/se-2>
8. Cemile Kütmeç Yılmaz (2020). The effect of spiritual well-being on adaptation to chronic illness among people with chronic illnesses. *Journal of Perspect Psychiatr Care*-. 57:318–325. DOI: 10.1111/ppc.12566
9. Chris Feli Joy P. Tajonera1 and Dennis V. Madrigal (2022). Correlating the Psychological and

- Spiritual Well-Being of Junior High School Students in Selected Catholic Schools in Central Philippines. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361020678>
10. Cool, B. C. (2021). Catholic identity on a college campus (Order No. 28850394). Available from ProQuest Central. (2586461389). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/catholic-identity-on-college-campus/docview/2586461389/se-2>
 11. Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods approaches* (4th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
 12. Crisp, C. S. (2022). Senior pastors' leadership capacity to support healing & wholeness ministries in the local church (Order No. 29255256). Available from ProQuest Central. (2707617923). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/senior-pastors-leadership-capacity-support/docview/2707617923/se-2>
 13. Cydney J. (2009). The relationship of religious coping and spirituality to adjustment and psychological distress in urban early adolescents
 14. Daniela Villani, Angela Sorgente, Paola Iannello and Alessandro Antonietti (2019). The Role of Spirituality and Religiosity in Subjective Well-Being of Individuals with Different Religious Status. *Journal of Frontiers in Psychology, Front. Psychol.* 10(1525). doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01525
 15. Earnest (2013). The Relationship Between Spiritual Well-Being and Health- Related Quality of Life in College Students
 16. Ellison (2023). Prayer, attachment to God, and symptoms of anxiety-related disorders among US adults. *Sociology of Religion.* 75(2), 208-233. Doi:10.1093/socrel/srt079.
 17. Emel Esen, Gülsüm Elik Besdil, Turhan Erkmén (2021). Moderating Role of Psychological well-being on the Relationship between Psychological Capital and Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Management Research and Practice.* 13(4).
 18. Fehring, R. J., Brennan, P. F., & Keller, M. L. (1987). Psychological and spiritual well-being in college students. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 10, 391 – 398.
 19. Fisher, J. W. (2013a). Relating with God contributes to variance in happiness over that from personality and age. *Religions.* 4(3), 313 – 324
 20. Fisher, J.W. (2013b). Assessing spiritual well-being: relating with God explains greatest variance in spiritual well-being among Australian youth. *International Journal of Children's spirituality.* 18(4), 306 – 317. Fisher, J.W.
 21. Freeze, T. A., & Di Tommaso, E. (2021). Attachment to God and Church Family: Predictors of spiritual and psychological Well-being. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 34, 1, 60– 72.
 22. Friedrich Unterrainer (2019). Validation of the Multidimensional Inventory for Religious Spiritual Well-being with Iranian samples. *Journal of Mental Health, Religion & Culture* -. 22(6) 591–601. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2019.1628194>
 23. Gallien, L.T., Bian, H., Kim, J., & Anye, E.T. (2014). Existential well-being and health-related quality of life in young adults. *American Journal of Health Studies.* 29(4), 309 – 317. *International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society.* 6(1), 41 – 46.
 24. Gamze Bilgiç • Nevin Çıtak Bilgin (2021). Relationship Between Fear of Childbirth and Psychological and Spiritual Well-Being in Pregnant Women. *Journal of Religion and Health.* 60:295–310. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01087-4>
 25. Gomez, R., & Fisher, J.W. (2023). Domains of spiritual well-being and development and validation of the spiritual well-being questionnaire. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 35, 1975-1991.
 26. Grunwald, S. (2021). Embodied liberation in buddhism, participatory theory, and feminine spirituality: A metamodern critical hermeneutics (Order No. 28494704). Available from ProQuest Central. (2543471733). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/embodied-liberation-buddhism-participatory-theory/docview/2543471733/se-2>
 27. Halil Ekşi, Umut Kermen, Feyza Dinçer and Hanife Musa (2020). Investigating teachers' happiness in the contexts of spiritual well-being and stress in Turkey. *Journal of Mental Health, Religion & Culture.* 23(1), 10–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2019.1710828>
 28. Hargrove-Scott, S. (2020). Influence of spiritual leadership theory and spiritual well-being on clinical social workers burnout (Order No. 28094457). Available from ProQuest Central. (2449507041). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertation-theses/influence-spiritual-leadership-theory-well-being/docview/2449507041/se-2>
 29. James Cin Len Khai and Ma. Lourdes C. Medina (2024). Exploring the Relationship between Spiritual

- Well-being and Psychological Well-being among Novice Clergy and Senior Priests in Myanmar: A Basis of Development and Implementation of a Psycho-Spiritual Intervention Program. *GSC Advanced Research and Reviews*, 2024, 19(02), 190–203. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/gscarr.2024.19.2.0187>
30. Jessica (2009). Factors Associated with the Psychological Well-Being and Distress of University Students Jieun Yoo, Sukkyung You and June Lee (2022). Relationship between Neuroticism, Spiritual Well-Being, and Subjective Well-Being in Korean University Students. *Journal of Religion-* 13(505). <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13060505>
 31. Judy Leung and Kin-Kit Li (2023). Faith-Based Spiritual Intervention for Persons with Depression: Preliminary Evidence from a Pilot Study. *Healthcare* 2023, 11, 2134. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11152134>. <https://www.mdpi.com/journal/healthcare>
 32. Keizer, D. (2022). Spellbound: A qualitative study of the lived experiences of spiritual workers and spiritual healers of trinidad and tobago on the treatment of intentional spiritual harm (Order No. 29326442). Available from ProQuest Central. (2715464074). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/spellbound-qualitative-study-lived-experiences/docview/2715464074/se-2>
 33. Kwee, M.G. (2012). Relational Buddhism: A psychological quest for meaning and sustainable happiness. In P.T.P. Wong (Ed.). *The Human Quest for Meaning: The Human Quest for Meaning: Theories, Research, and Application*. (pp.249 – 273). New York: Routledge.
 34. Kyle, J. W. (2020). An exploration of human dignity as a foundation for spiritual leadership (Order No. 28460697). Available from ProQuest Central. (2519378704). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/exploration-human-dignity-as-foundation-spiritual/docview/2519378704/se-2>
 35. Laura Edwards, Roger Bretherton, Mark Gresswell and Rachel Sabin-Farrell (2020). The relationship between social support, spiritual well-being, and depression in Christian clergy: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Mental Health, Religion & Culture-*. 23(10), 857– 873. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2020.1838459>
 36. Lee B. (2009). Feeling at Peace with College: Religiosity, Spiritual Well-Being, and College Adjustment
 37. Ley, D. P. (2022). Spiritual leadership transition in the alaska native evangelical church: Exploring the experiences and perspectives of alaska native evangelical leaders (Order No. 29209853). Available from ProQuest Central. (2705675003). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/spiritual-leadership-transition-alaska-native/docview/2705675003/se-2>
 38. Li, W. (2018). Religious commitment and spiritual well-being as predictors of happiness among middle-aged Chinese catholics.
 39. Lian, C. T. (2018). Pastoral care to single males in myanmar immigrant churches in the U.S (Order No. 10791968). Available from ProQuest Central. (2056814530). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/pastoral-care-single-males-myanmar-immigrant/docview/2056814530/se-2>
 40. Ling (2016). International students' attachment and psychological well-being: the mediation role of mental toughness Mahboubeh Dadfar, David Lester, Yahya Turan, James A. Beshai and Human-
 41. Mahboubeh Dadfar, John F. Gunn III, David Lester and Ahmed M. Abdel-Khalek (2021). Love of Life Model: role of psychological well-being, depression, somatic health, and spiritual health. *Journal of Mental Health, Religion & Culture -*. 24(2),142–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2020.1825360>
 42. Mahoney, A., & Cano, A. (2014). Introduction to the specific section on religion and spirituality in family life: pathways between relational spirituality, family relationships and personal well-being. *Journal of Family Psychology-*. 28(6), 735-738.
 43. Maria Stavradi, Ricardo García-Márquez, Miriam Bajo, Ana I. Callejas-Albiñana, Borja Paredes, and Darío Díaz (2022). Brief Version of the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scales for Children and Adolescents: Evidence of Validity. *Journal of Psicothema -*. 34(2), 316-322. doi: 10.7334/psicothema2021.235
 44. Mark D. (2010). Spirituality, Religiousness, and Happiness in Children Aged 8– 12 Years
 45. Martinez, C. T. (2014). In search of the meaning of happiness through flow and spirituality. *The International Journal of Health, Wellness, and society-*. 4, 1-14.
 46. McDowell, M. (2022). Workplace well-being programs: Comparing differences in participants and non-participants (Order No. 29398938). Available from ProQuest Central. (2729474261). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/workplace-well-being-programs-comparing/docview/2729474261/se-2>
 47. McNeal, T. A. (2020). Relations between childhood maltreatment and adult psychological well-being: The influence of age at maltreatment onset (Order No. 28002083). Available from ProQuest Central.

- (2584303399). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/relations-between-childhood-maltreatment-adult/docview/2584303399/se-2>
48. Mnyaitre Ghoshal and Sakshi Mehrotra (2017). Maternal spiritual health as a predictor of psychological well-being and resilience of her young adult offspring. *Journal of Mental Health, Religion & Culture*-. 20(2), 101–108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2017.1320369>
49. Mohammad S. Sargolzaei, Milad G. Shirsavar, Jasem Allahyari, Ali Bazi, Abolghasem P. Nasirabady (2022). The Effect of Happiness Training on Psychological Well-Being in Patients with Thalassaemia Major: A quasi- experimental study. *Journal of Clinical and Basic Research* -. 22(3), pp. 370–375. <https://doi.org/10.18295/squmj.8.2021.109>
50. Moira (2007). Relationships between quality of life, spiritual well-being, and psychological adjustment styles for people living with leukaemia: An exploratory study
51. Mudge, I. J. (2021). Job satisfaction and well-being in clergy: A quantitative correlational study (Order No. 28647454). Available from ProQuest Central. (2564516598). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/job-satisfaction-well-being-clergy-quantitative/docview/2564516598/se-2>
52. Ng, T. (2014). A study of a link between self-esteem and spiritual experience of parents living in the „city of sadness“ of Hong Kong. *Journal of North American Association of Christians in Social Work* -. 41(1), 45 – 59. attachment to God and identity styles with psychological well-being in married teachers. *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences* 174, 1922- 1927.
53. Nisa Rachmah Nur Anganthi, Zahrotul Uyun (2019). The path of Psycho-spiritual intervention for self-healing: The multi religion perspectives. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*. eISSN: 2395-6518, Vol 7, No 3, 2019, pp 176-180. <https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2019.7327>
54. Nurul Sakinah binti Aziz1, Rafeah Saidon, Siti Khadijah Ab. Manan, Rosilawati Sueb (2020). Psycho-Spiritual Treatment: An exploratory study on its practices. *Journal of Critical Reviews*. ISSN- 2394-5125 Vol 7, Issue 8, 2020
55. Ritchie, R. A. (2019). Comparing atheist, non-religious, and religious peoples' cardiovascular reactivity: A laboratory stressor (Order No. 27765765). Available from ProQuest Central. (2356747023). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/comparing-atheist-non-religious-peoples/docview/2356747023/se-2>
56. Roohafza, H. R., Afshar, H., Keshteli, A. H., Mohammadi, N., Feizi, A., Taslimi, M., & Adibi, P. (2014). What’s the role of perceived social support and coping styles in depression and anxiety? *Journal of Research in Medical Sciences* -. 19, 944-949.
57. Ruiz, R. W. (2018). Mindfulness, anxiety, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and spiritual well-being: A study of the psychological effects of martial arts (Order No. 10838629). Available from ProQuest Central. (2074890202). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/mindfulness-anxiety-self-efficacy-esteem/docview/2074890202/se-2>
58. Samitha Udayanga (2020). Distress relief and stabilizing psychological well-being: spiritual coping among Sinhalese Buddhist in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Mental Health, Religion & Culture* -. 23(5), 398–414. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2019.1639650>
59. Sanders, C. E. (2019). Comparing religious intolerance across religious groups: An analysis of covariance using self-report survey responses (Order No. 27668938). Available from ProQuest Central. (2341737641). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/comparing-religious-intolerance-across-groups/docview/2341737641/se-2>
60. Sawatzky, R., Ratner, P.A., & Chiu, L. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relationship between spirituality and quality of life. *Social Indicators Research*, 72, 153-188.
61. Schuelka, M. J., et al. (2021). Happiness, wellbeing, and mental health in Bhutanese higher education: Exploring student and staff experiences and perceptions within a framework of Gross National Happiness, *Journal of International and Comparative Education (JICE)* -.10 (1), 33-50.
62. Sedat Alev (2022). The Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being in the Relationship Between the Psychological Contract and Professional Engagement. *Journal of Psihologija* -. 55(3), 227–244. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2298/PSI210204014A>
63. Shultz, L. (2018). Frontier ministry in 21st century America: Building meaningful connections with persons who are not religious (Order No. 10826817). Available from ProQuest Central. (2072565547). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/frontier-ministry-21st-century-america-building/docview/2072565547/se-2>

64. Silvi Jose and Julom Angelina (2020). Efficacy of Psycho-Spiritual Meaning Intervention (PSMI) on depression and suicide ideation of young adults in Kerala, India. http://www.iahrw.com/index.php/home/journal_detail/19#list. <https://doi.org/10.15614/ijpp.v11i01.5>
65. Singh, S., Finnemore, J (2015). Restoring Inner Peace in a Science Dominated Society.
66. Smith, L., Webber, R., & Defrain, J. (2013). Spiritual well-being and its relationship to Resilience in Young people: A mixed methods case study. Sage Open, 1-16. doi: 10.1177/2158244013485582.
67. Sooy, M. S. (2021). Enhancing the spiritual well-being of adjunct faculty in online accelerated higher education (Order No. 28963396). Available from ProQuest Central. (2622762288). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/enhancing-spiritual-well-being-adjunct-faculty/docview/2622762288/se-2>
68. Sungsim Lee, Sookyoing Jeong, and Youngsoon Choi (2022). Effects of Psychological Well-Being and Depression on Menopausal Symptoms in Middle-Aged South Korean Women and the Necessity of Exercise. Journal of Environmental and Public Health -. 2022, Article ID 6529393, 8 pages. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6529393>
69. Torgeson, L. J. (2021). Music listening habits and psychological well-being in young adults (Order No. 28320408). Available from ProQuest Central. (2566386247). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/music-listening-habits-psychological-well-being/docview/2566386247/se-2>
70. Vineet (2014). Workplace spirituality as a moderator in relation between stress and health: An exploratory empirical assessment
71. Vishva Choudhary and Bharti Sharma (2022). Study of Nature Connectedness and Psychological Well-being among Adults. Indian Journal of Positive Psychology, 13(2), 146-149 http://www.iahrw.com/index.php/home/journal_detail/19#list
72. White, P. M. (2020). Discovering meaning in ireland: Megalithic spiritual experiences (Order No. 28316282). Available from ProQuest Central. (2494303628). Retrieved from <https://www.Proquest.com/dissertations-theses/discovering-meaning-ireland-megalithicspiritual/docview/2494303628/se-2>