

Spirituality, Perceived Stress and Coping of College Teachers in Thiruporur Block, Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND

Spirituality is understood to promote resilience, enhance internal and external resources, and foster a sense of social and emotional support, thereby contributing to overall health outcomes. Research indicates that there is a positive correlation between spiritual practices and reduced levels of stress and depression. In the teaching profession, spirituality can help the educator to manage their occupational stress and improve the coping ability, which not only benefit the teacher's mental well-being but also positively influences the students and institutional functioning. These constructs have received limited scholarly attention within the education sector.

OBJECTIVES

The study examines the correlation between spirituality, perceived stress and level of coping of college teachers working in self-finance colleges in Thiruporur Block, Tamil Nadu. The study addresses two key research questions: (1) what are the levels of spirituality, perceived stress, and coping among college teachers? and (2) What is the nature of the relationship between spirituality, perceived stress, and coping among college teachers?

METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from 100 college teachers using Google Forms, and the study adopted a descriptive research design. Standardised instruments were employed, including the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ellison, 1983; Fisher, 2010), the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et. al., 1983), and the Coping Inventory or, Brief COPE Scale (Carver, 1997).

KEY FINDINGS

The findings reveal a negative relationship between spirituality and perceived stress, and a positive relationship between spirituality and coping. The results further indicate that spirituality levels are significantly higher among the older teachers. These patterns position spirituality as a mediator, buffering stress through enhanced coping mechanisms, largely independent of age, income, or work

experience. Overall, spirituality enhances and strengthens the coping capacity and reduces the level of perceived stress. The findings align with transactional model of stress and coping. The study underscores the need for spiritual interventions and mindfulness-based workshops for college teachers, which may help them to improve their coping skills, thereby positively influencing the teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Spirituality plays a protective role in reducing stress and enhancing coping among college teachers. Integrating spirituality-based interventions can improve psychological well-being.

Keywords: Spirituality, perceived stress, coping, college teachers, quantitative study

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers in higher education are required to possess advanced professional skills to effectively train students, along with emotional stability to maintain a healthy work–life balance. The profession demands strong subject expertise, patience to motivate students toward improved performance, and the ability to sustain positive interpersonal relationships with institutional authorities and colleagues. Teachers in self-financing colleges face multiple challenges, including increased administrative responsibilities, heavy workloads, and involvement in admission-related tasks, job insecurity, and comparatively moderate pay scales. Teachers experience stress in academic institution due to various factors such as over workload, role ambiguity, and student behaviour and performance expectation. Globally, numerous studies have documented moderate and high level of stress among educators, often manifesting as burnout or emotional exhaustion (Kyriacou, 2001). Students can be influenced by the emotions and feelings, including joy, anger, sorrow and sadness of their teachers. Prolonged stress, if unaddressed, can impair teachers’ effectiveness, mental health, and creativity. Hence one of the effective ways to enable better coping strategies and management of stress can be done through spirituality based interventions in the institutions.

2. TEACHERS AND SPIRITUALITY

The word spirituality comes from the word spirits, which is derived from the Latin word spiritus meaning breath, courage, vigour or soul and breathe (Hjelm, 2010). Spirituality is one’s search for and expression if meaning of life (Zamaniyan et al., 2016). In simple terms it refers to how an individual understand the purpose of his existence and connect with self with others, nature and the divine (Fisher, 2021). Spiritual health is an essential dimension of one’s overall well-being (Eberst, 1984) as it integrates the body, mind and spirit. It enables individuals to find coherence and balance in their internal and external lives. Within the personal domain, spiritual health relates to an individual’s sense of meaning, purpose, and value in life, encompassing inner attributes such as self-esteem, self-awareness, and a sense of uniqueness. This shapes how individuals perceive themselves and respond to life’s challenges. The communal domain focuses on the quality of interpersonal relationships and social connectedness. It encompasses values such as love, fairness, respect, humility, trust, and compassion, along with the principles, values, and belief systems that guide ethical behaviour and social

responsibility. The environmental domain emphasizes care for nature, including the nurturing of plants and animals, and living in harmony with the surrounding ecosystem. Finally, the transcendent domain refers to an individual's relationship with the Creator, the divine, or a higher power, providing a sense of faith, hope, and existential grounding beyond the self. Knapik et al., (2010) enumerates the five characteristics of the spirituality. It generally includes meaning of life, value of life, transcendence, connecting with oneself, connecting with others and connection with super power which an individual's belief and the environment and becoming which denotes the growth and progress in life. Spiritual beliefs and practices can have impact on the way people understand health and strategies they use to cope with illness, their resilience, resources and sense of support and overall health outcomes.

Spirituality enhances the resilience and encourages adaptive coping mechanisms. Individuals with higher levels of spirituality often experience better psychological health, lower anxiety, and enhance resilience to stress through compassion and meaning-making process (Pargament, 2013). Spirituality serves as a protective resource that buffers the impact of stress and facilitates adaptive coping behaviours. A strong spiritual orientation enhances self-awareness, a sense of purpose, and optimism, thereby reducing levels of perceived stress (George et al., 2015). Understanding the role of spirituality in shaping coping strategies among college teachers offers valuable insights for educational management, teacher welfare initiatives, and institutional well-being programs. Within this context, teachers' spiritual health is directly and significantly associated with students' learning outcomes, personal development, and overall psychological well-being. (Ismail et al., 2020). Understanding the relationship between these three constructs i.e spirituality, perceived stress and level of coping is very essential to develop intervention to improve the overall wellbeing of the college teachers which indirectly helps the student outcomes. This study fills the gap and provides evidence support practical interventions at institutions level.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study examining the relationship between spirituality, perceived stress, and coping among college teachers is grounded in the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). This model conceptualizes stress as a dynamic interaction between the individual and the environment rather than merely a response to external pressures. According to this model, stress occurs when individuals perceive that environmental demands exceed their personal resources and threaten their well-being.

The model emphasizes the role of cognitive appraisal, which occurs in two stages: primary appraisal and secondary appraisal. During the primary appraisal stage, individuals evaluate whether a particular situation is stressful, harmful, or challenging. In the secondary appraisal stage, individuals assess the resources available to cope with the perceived stressor. If individuals perceive that their coping resources are insufficient to manage the demands placed upon them, they experience higher levels of perceived stress.

The model further explains that individuals use different coping strategies to manage stressful situations. These coping strategies are broadly categorized into problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping involves efforts to directly address or manage the source of stress, such

as planning, problem-solving, and seeking instrumental support. Emotion-focused coping, on the other hand, involves regulating emotional responses to stress through strategies such as acceptance, relaxation, positive reframing, and spiritual practices.

Within this theoretical framework, spirituality can be understood as an important personal resource that influences the stress appraisal and coping process. Spirituality provides individuals with a sense of meaning, purpose, inner strength, and connection with a higher power or transcendent reality. These elements contribute to more positive interpretations of stressful experiences and enhance psychological resilience. In the context of the Transactional Model, spirituality strengthens the secondary appraisal process by increasing individuals' perceived coping resources and promoting adaptive coping responses. College teachers often encounter multiple occupational stressors, including heavy teaching workloads, administrative responsibilities, research expectations, time constraints, and student-related demands (Kyriacou, 2001). These demands can lead to increased levels of perceived stress when individuals perceive that the demands exceed their coping capacities. Spirituality may function as a moderating resource in the stress process by fostering optimism, emotional stability, and a sense of purpose in professional roles. Teachers with higher levels of spirituality may interpret stressful situations more constructively and utilize adaptive coping strategies such as reflection, mindfulness, prayer, and positive reframing.

Thus, spirituality can reduce the intensity of perceived stress and support effective coping processes. By strengthening psychological resilience and providing meaning in professional life, spirituality contributes to better coping strategies, reduced perceived stress, and improved psychological well-being among college teachers.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present review of literature examines previous research related to spirituality, perceived stress, and coping strategies among teachers and other professionals. The literature is reviewed under relevant thematic areas to provide a conceptual foundation for the present study and to understand how spirituality influences stress perception and coping behavior in educational settings.

Jon Hartwick and Sangwoo Kang (2013) conducted study Using qualitative interviews and narratives, this study explored spiritual practices as a defense against teacher burnout and attrition. Teachers reported that prayer and meditation provided the emotional comfort needed to handle classroom challenges. These practices foster a deeper sense of purpose and compassion, which not only improves interpersonal relationships but also serves as a protective factor that keeps educators committed to their profession long-term.

Rajesh Singh and Pooja Sharma (2016) examined examined the relationship between spiritual intelligence and coping strategies. The findings indicate that teachers with higher spiritual intelligence are more likely to use adaptive strategies like problem-solving and positive thinking. This intelligence contributes to personal resilience, ensuring that teachers remain motivated and effective even when facing heavy workloads and administrative pressure.

Mohd Hafiidz Osman et al. (2017) conducted study evaluated a spiritual coping module designed for teacher trainees experiencing academic and performance-related stress. The quantitative results showed that the module effectively improved the trainees' stress management skills and resilience. By fostering patience and positive thinking, spiritual coping helps trainees handle complex professional responsibilities more effectively.

Ramakrishnan, P. (2018) conducted the cross-sectional survey of 300 teachers and parents in India explored the benefits of integrating religion and spirituality into the school curriculum. The findings suggest that spiritual education fosters emotional well-being, empathy, and ethical values in students while helping teachers develop better stress management skills. The study concludes that spirituality acts as a protective factor that promotes holistic development and psychological resilience within educational settings.

M. Mahipalan and Sheena (2018) investigated workplace spirituality among teachers in India, this quantitative study found a strong positive link between spiritual values and subjective happiness. Teachers who found meaning in their work and felt connected to colleagues reported higher job satisfaction and lower occupational stress. The authors suggest that supportive leadership and an organizational culture that promotes spiritual intelligence can significantly reduce burnout.

Shrivastava, A. (2020) highlighted that role ambiguity and unplanned workloads can undermine spirituality, though pragmatic teachers often find spiritual and secular techniques (like social media and meditation) equally effective for maintaining balance.

Francesco Chirico and Manoj Sharma (2020) focussed on Christian educators through qualitative interviews, this research explored the role of spirituality and prayer in preventing burnout. The findings indicate that spiritual practices provide emotional stability and inner peace, helping teachers find a deeper sense of meaning in their work. By enhancing resilience and reducing emotional exhaustion, spirituality serves as a vital psychological resource; the authors recommend educational institutions incorporate mindfulness-based interventions to support staff well-being.

Ritu Srivastava (2023) conducted quantitative research focused specifically on the impact of mindfulness practices among educators. The study found that while teachers face high stress from institutional expectations, those who practice mindfulness (e.g., breathing exercises and self-reflection) demonstrate significantly lower perceived stress. Mindfulness encourages adaptive coping strategies and emotional regulation, leading the researcher to advocate for formal stress management programs in schools.

Sanjay Kumar Sharma (2023) conducted study which used a conceptual and empirical approach to analyze how spiritual beliefs influence stress management among professionals and students. The findings reveal that engaging in activities like meditation and prayer significantly reduces psychological distress and increases life satisfaction. By promoting emotional regulation and optimism, spirituality functions as a key coping mechanism that helps individuals maintain a balanced perspective in stressful professional environments.

Sana Chaudhry and Ritika Chhajer (2023) did a quantitative survey of school teachers in India, this study examined how personal and organizational resources mitigate occupational stress. It identified workload and administrative demands as primary stressors leading to emotional exhaustion. However, the research highlights that emotional energy and positive psychological resources—combined with supportive work environments—are crucial for maintaining teachers' psychological balance and job satisfaction.

Nawaz et al. (2024) found that college faculty experience higher stress than university faculty and that workplace spirituality—defined by mindfulness and compassion—is a significant mitigating factor. Aziz (2024) emphasized that spirituality serves as an "inner anchor" for effective teaching, though many teachers are forced to rely on unguided practices due to a lack of institutional wellness programs.

Cena et al. (2025) noted that while spiritual well-being is often at a moderate level, specific stressors like material preparation and classroom observations still pose significant burdens due to time constraints.

Aamir Hussain and Sadia Hussain (2025) investigated how occupational stress affects teachers' psychological well-being and the strategies used to manage it. The researchers found that teachers face high stress levels due to heavy workloads, administrative duties, and classroom management, which negatively impact job satisfaction. Teachers utilize both problem-focused (e.g., time management) and emotion-focused (e.g., spirituality and relaxation) coping mechanisms. Ultimately, the study concludes that positive coping strategies and supportive institutional environments are essential for enhancing teacher resilience.

Teachers face significant occupational stress driven by heavy workloads, administrative duties, and classroom management. Research findings consistently demonstrate that spirituality, mindfulness, and spiritual intelligence serve as vital psychological resources that mitigate these stressors. Practices such as prayer, meditation, and reflection foster resilience, emotional regulation, and a sense of purpose, which significantly reduce burnout while increasing job satisfaction and subjective happiness. While some educators view spiritual and secular techniques as equally effective, high spiritual well-being acts as an "inner anchor" for effective teaching. To address these challenges, the sources recommend several institutional interventions. These include formal mindfulness-based stress management programs, professional development workshops, and counselling services. The implementation of spiritual coping modules in teacher training and the integration of spiritual themes into school curricula are also highlighted as effective strategies for promoting holistic mental health. Furthermore, fostering a supportive organizational culture—characterized by empathetic leadership and reduced role ambiguity—is essential to prevent teacher attrition and enhance professional performance. Despite these recognized benefits, many teachers currently rely on unguided individual practices due to a lack of formal institutional wellness initiatives.

5. RESEARCH GAP

The review of literature has found that spirituality enhance the inner strength and how the spiritual resources are overwhelmed by frequently overwhelmed system failure such as role ambiguity, unplanned workloads and lack of institutional recognition. Even though there are recognised benefits of

spiritual coping, teachers have limited opportunities to attend the mindfulness or wellness programmes, forcing them to rely in individual unguided practices. The reviews show that limited research explores these variables in Chennai's college context and also there is limited empirical work focused specifically on self-financed college teachers in India context characterized by unique occupational challenges. The present study thus aims to fill this gap. Although numerous studies have explored the relationship between spirituality, stress, and coping among teachers, most of these studies have been conducted in Western countries or among school teachers. Limited research has focused on college teachers in the Indian context, particularly in rural or semi-urban areas. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical studies examining the combined relationship between spirituality, perceived stress, and coping strategies among college teachers in Thiruporur Block, Tamil Nadu. Understanding this relationship is important for developing effective stress management interventions for educators. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the role of spirituality in influencing perceived stress and coping mechanisms among college teachers in the selected study area.

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present research aims to enrich the related literature by investigating the link between spirituality, stress and level of coping. Hence this work addresses the following research questions:

Question 1: What is the level of spirituality, stress and coping of the college teachers?

Question 2: What is the relationship between spirituality, stress and level of coping?

These constructs received limited attention in education sector.

7. OBJECTIVES

1. To elicit the socio demographic details of the respondents
2. To assess the level of spirituality, perceived stress levels and level of coping of the respondents
3. To study the relationship between the selected socio demographic variables and spirituality, perceived stress and level of coping.
4. To examine the direction of relationship among spirituality, perceived stress, and coping.

HYPOTHESIS

H₀₁ - There is a no significant relationship between age and level of spirituality

H₀₂ - There is a no significant relationship between income and level of spirituality

H₀₃ - There is a no significant relationship between years of experience and level of spirituality

H₀₄ - There is a no significant relationship between age and level of Perceived Stress

H₀₅ - There is a no significant relationship between Income and level of Perceived Stress

H₀₆ - There is a no significant relationship between years of experience and level of Perceived Stress

H₀₇ - There is a no significant relationship between age and level of Coping

H₀₈ - There is a no significant relationship between Income and level of Coping

H₀₉ - There is a no significant relationship between years of experience and level of Coping

H₁₀ - There is a no significant relationship between spirituality, coping and perceived stress.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted.

PARTICIPANTS

The study included 100 college teachers working in self-financing arts and science colleges in Thiruporur Block, Tamil Nadu.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Purposive sampling technique was used.

TOOL OF DATA COLLECTION

The research has used questionnaire with socio demographic questions and three scales namely Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ellison, 1983), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983), and Brief COPE Inventory (Carver, 1997) were used. These instruments demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation were used.

DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the data collected the data analysis was done using SPSS Software. The data has been presented in form of tables.

- a. Socio demographic profile of the respondents

Table 1.1

Distribution of Respondents by Socio demographic Profile

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1. Current Age (In years)		
Less than 40 years	32	32.0
More than 40 years	68	68.0
2. Gender		
Male	22	22.0
Female	78	78.0

3. Monthly income		
Less than Rs. 62000	78	78.0
More than Rs. 62000	22	22.0
4. Marital Status		
Single	17	17.0
Married	83	83.0
5. Years of Experience		
Less than 16 years	51	51.0
More than 16 years	49	49.0
6. Education Qualification		
PG and M.Phil.	32	32.0
Ph.D.	68	68.0
7. Designation		
Lecturer	12	12.0
Assistant Professor	85	85.0
Associate Professor	3	3.0
Total	100	100

Based on the table it is inferred that more than two third of the respondents (68.0%) are above 40 years and rest are below 40 years. Three fourth (78.0%) of the respondents are females and rest are males.

Based on the table it is inferred that , three fourth (78.0 %) of the respondents earn less than ₹62,000 per month, while 22% **earn** more than ₹62,000. This shows that the majority belong to the middle income group. Majority of respondents (83%) are married, while others (17%) are single. The above data indicate that 51% of respondents have less than 16 years of teaching experience, while 49% have **more** than 16 years. A substantial majority (68%) of the respondents possess a Ph.D. degree, while 32% hold Postgraduate and M.Phil. qualifications.

The demographic profile indicates that the majority of respondents (68%) were above 40 years of age, and most were female (78%). A large proportion (78%) reported earning less than Rs. 62,000 per month. Most respondents were married (83%), suggesting the presence of family responsibilities alongside professional roles. In terms of teaching experience, respondents were almost equally distributed, with 51% having less than 16 years and 49% having more than 16 years of experience.

The majority of participants (68%) held Ph.D. qualifications, indicating a highly educated sample. Regarding designation, most respondents were Assistant Professors (85%), followed by Lecturers (12%) and Associate Professors (3%). These characteristics reflect a predominantly experienced and academically qualified teaching population.

b.Spirituality, Perceived Stress, and Coping among Respondents

Table 1.2

Distribution of Spirituality, Perceived Stress, and Coping among Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1. Level of Spirituality		
Low Level	25	25.0
Moderate Level	28	28.0
High Level	47	47.0
2. Level of Perceived stress		
Moderate Level	93	93.0
High Level	7	7.0
3. Level of Coping		
Low Level	25	25.0
Moderate Level	27	27.0
High Level	48	48.0
Total	100	100

The above table shows that little less than half of respondents (47%) exhibit high spirituality levels, with 28% moderate and 25% low, indicating strong spiritual orientation dominates among college teachers. A vast majority (93%) report moderate stress levels, while only 7% experience high stress, with no low or extreme categories. This suggests manageable occupational pressures without widespread distress. High coping prevails little less than (48%), followed by moderate (27%) and low (25%), reflecting robust adaptive capacities overall. One-fourth at low levels signals intervention needs. Overall, the results indicate that a considerable proportion of teachers exhibit high levels of spirituality and coping, while most experience moderate levels of stress, highlighting the potential role of spirituality in strengthening coping capacity and supporting mental well-being.

b. Analyzing the relationship between the socio demographic variables and spirituality

Table 1.3

Distribution of Respondents by relationship between social demographic variables and level of spirituality

Selected Background Characteristics of the Respondents	Level of Spirituality	
	Mean	Total
1. Current Age (in Years)		
Less than 40 years	150.53	32
Above 40 years	154.40	68
Kruskal wallis test	94.847 ; df -4 ; P value =0.00, P<0.05 It is significant	
2. Monthly Income		
Less than Rs.62000	155.76	78
More than Rs. 60000	143.95	22
Kruskal wallis test	4.762 df=1 P value =0.029 Since it is P<.05 It is significant	
3. Years of experience		
Less than 16 years	151.88	51
More than 16 years	154.49	49
Kruskal wallis test	0.022 df=1 P value is .882 P> 0.05 It is not significant	
Total	100	100

The above table presents results from Kruskal-Wallis tests examining associations between respondent background characteristics and mean level of spirituality scores. The association between selected background characteristics and the level of spirituality among respondents was examined using the Kruskal–Wallis test.

Hypothesis

H₀₁ - There is a no significant relationship between age and level of spirituality

Respondents above 40 years had a higher mean spirituality score (154.40) compared to those under 40 (150.53), with a test statistic of 94.847 (df=4, p=0.00). Since p<0.05, the difference is statistically significant. Similar finding has been found by the study conducted by The study revealed a significant but weak association, highlighting that while age may play a role in spirituality, other factors could also influence this relationship. The findings suggest that as individuals age, their spiritual beliefs and practices may increase, despite to a modest degree (C. Derasin, 2024)

The results revealed a statistically significant difference in spirituality levels based on age (Kruskal–Wallis = 94.847, df = 4, p < 0.05). Respondents above 40 years of age (Mean Rank = 154.40) reported higher levels of spirituality compared to those below 40 years (Mean Rank = 150.53). This finding suggests that spirituality tends to increase with age, possibly due to greater life experience, maturity, and meaning-making processes developed over time.

H₀₂ - There is a no significant relationship between income and level of spirituality

Those with monthly income less than Rs.62,000 showed a higher mean score (155.76) than the higher income group (143.95), with a test statistic of 4.762 (df=1, p=0.029). This association is significant at p<0.05.

Similarly, a statistically significant difference was observed between monthly income and spirituality (Kruskal–Wallis = 4.762, df = 1, p < 0.05). Respondents earning less than Rs. 62,000 (Mean Rank = 155.76) reported slightly higher levels of spirituality compared to those earning more than Rs. 62,000 (Mean Rank = 143.95). This may indicate that individuals with lower income levels rely more on spirituality as a coping resource to manage life stressors

H₀₃ - There is a no significant relationship between years of experience and level of spirituality

No notable difference emerged between respondents with less than 16 years of experience (151.88) and those with more (154.49), as the test yielded 0.022 (df=1, p=0.882). With p>0.05, the result is not significant.

These findings suggest spirituality levels vary significantly by age and income but not by experience in this sample. However, no statistically significant difference was found between years of experience and spirituality (Kruskal–Wallis = 0.022, df = 1, p > 0.05). This suggests that professional experience alone may not significantly influence teachers’ spirituality levels.

Overall, the findings indicate that age and income are significant factors associated with spirituality, while years of teaching experience do not show a significant influence.

B. Analyzing the relationship between the socio demographic variables and Perceived Stress

Table 1.4

Distribution of respondents by relationship between the socio demographic variables and Perceived Stress

Selected Background Characteristics of the Respondents	Level of Perceived stress	
	Mean	Total

4. Current Age (in Years)		
Less than 40 years	15.7812	32
Above 40 years	15.8824	68
Kruskal wallis test	0.118 ; df -1 ; P value =0.731, P>0.05 It is not significant	
5. Monthly Income		
Less than Rs.62000	15.6923	78
More than Rs. 60000	16.4091	22
Kruskal wallis test	0.250; df-1 P value-0.617 P>0.05 It is not significant	
6. Years of experience		
Less than 16 years	15.6275	51
More than 16 years	16.0816	49
Kruskal wallis test	0.490 ; df -1 ; P value =0.484, P>0.05 It is not significant	
Total	100	100

The table presents Kruskal-Wallis test results for associations between demographics and mean perceived stress levels (refined measure), showing no significant differences across groups.

H₀₄ - There is a no significant relationship between age and level of Perceived Stress

Respondents under 40 years averaged 15.7812, while those above 40 scored 15.8824 (n=32 and 68). Test statistic 0.118 (df=1, p=0.731) indicates non-significance (p>0.05). The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in perceived stress based on age (Kruskal–Wallis = 0.118, df = 1, p > 0.05). Although respondents above 40 years (Mean Rank = 15.88) reported slightly higher perceived stress compared to those below 40 years (Mean Rank = 15.78), the difference was not statistically significant. This suggests that perceived stress levels were relatively similar across different age groups.

H₀₅ - There is a no significant relationship between Income and level of Perceived Stress

Lower income group (<Rs.62,000, n=78) had mean 15.6923 versus 16.4091 for higher income (n=22). Result of 0.250 (df=1, p=0.617) lacks significance. Similarly, no significant association was found between monthly income and perceived stress (Kruskal–Wallis = 0.250, df = 1, p > 0.05). Respondents earning more than Rs. 62,000 (Mean Rank = 16.41)

reported marginally higher stress levels than those earning less than Rs. 62,000 (Mean Rank = 15.69), but the difference was not statistically significant. This indicates that income level may not be a determining factor influencing teachers’ perceived stress.

H₀₆ - There is a no significant relationship between years of experience and level of Perceived Stress

Less experienced (<16 years, n=51) scored 15.6275, compared to 16.0816 for more experienced (n=49). Statistic 0.490 (df=1, p=0.484) confirms no association (p>0.05). Unlike prior stress measure showing age effects, this refined version reveals demographic neutrality, aligning with stronger inverse correlations to spirituality/coping. Furthermore, years of teaching experience did not show a statistically significant association with perceived stress (Kruskal–Wallis = 0.490, df = 1, p > 0.05). Respondents with more than 16 years of experience (Mean Rank = 16.08) reported slightly higher stress levels compared to those with less experience (Mean Rank = 15.63), but the difference was not significant. Overall, these findings suggest that perceived stress is experienced relatively uniformly among teachers, regardless of differences in age, income, or years of professional experience. This may indicate that occupational stress is a common experience among teachers and may be influenced more by workplace-related factors rather than demographic characteristics alone.

c. Analyzing the relationship between the socio demographic variables and level of coping

Table 1.5

Distribution of respondents by socio demographic variables and level of coping

elected Background Characteristics of the Respondents	Level of Coping	
	Mean	Total
7. Current Age (in Years)		
Less than 40 years	37.03	
Above 40 years	37.00	
Kruskal wallis test	0.639 ; df -1 ; P value =0.424, P>0.05 It is not significant	
8. Monthly Income		
Less than Rs.62000	36.91	78
More than Rs. 60000	37.36	22
Kruskal wallis test	1.333 ; df -1 ; P value =0.248, P> 0.05 It is not significant	
9. Years of experience	37.67	51

Less than 16 years	36.33	49
More than 16 years		
Kruskal wallis test	0.211 ; df -1 ; P value =0.646, P>0.05	
	It is not significant	
Total	100	100

The table presents Kruskal-Wallis test results on associations between respondent demographics and mean coping levels, showing no significant differences across groups.

H₀₇ - There is a no significant relationship between age and level of Coping

Respondents under 40 years had a mean coping score of 37.03, while those above 40 scored 37.00. The test statistic was 0.639 (df=1, p=0.424), exceeding the 0.05 threshold, so age does not significantly relate to coping. Unlike prior analyses where age linked to spirituality and stress, coping levels remain unaffected by age, income, or experience in this sample, suggesting demographic neutrality in coping capacity.

The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in coping levels based on age (Kruskal–Wallis = 0.639, df = 1, p > 0.05). Respondents below 40 years (Mean Rank = 37.03) and those above 40 years (Mean Rank = 37.00) reported nearly similar coping levels, suggesting that coping ability is relatively consistent across age groups.

H₀₈ - There is a no significant relationship between Income and level of Coping

Lower income respondents (under Rs.62,000, n=78) averaged 36.91, compared to 37.36 for higher income (n=22). Similarly, no statistically significant association was found between monthly income and coping level (Kruskal–Wallis = 1.333, df = 1, p > 0.05). Respondents earning more than Rs. 62,000 (Mean Rank = 37.36) demonstrated slightly higher coping levels compared to those earning less than Rs. 62,000 (Mean Rank = 36.91), but the difference was not statistically significant.

H₀₉ - There is a no significant relationship between years of experience and level of Coping

With a statistic of 1.333 (df=1, p=0.248), this difference lacks significance (p>0.05). Less experienced respondents (under 16 years, n=51) scored 37.67, versus 36.33 for more experienced (n=49). The result of 0.211 (df=1, p=0.646) confirms no significant association. Furthermore, years of teaching experience did not show a statistically significant association with coping level (Kruskal–Wallis = 0.211, df = 1, p > 0.05). Respondents with less than 16 years of experience (Mean Rank = 37.67) reported marginally higher coping compared to those with more than 16 years of experience (Mean Rank = 36.33), but the difference was not significant. Overall, the findings indicate that coping ability among teachers does not significantly vary across demographic characteristics such as age, income, and years of experience. This suggests that coping may be influenced more by individual psychological resources, such as spirituality, resilience, and personal coping styles, rather than demographic factors alone. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening internal psychosocial resources to enhance teachers’ coping capacity and mental well-being.

Analyzing the correlation between spirituality, coping and perceived stress.

Table 1.6

Distribution of respondents by correlation between spirituality, coping and perceived stress.

		spiritual	coping	Stress
spiritual	Pearson Correlation	1	.419**	-.545**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	100	100	100
coping	Pearson Correlation	.419**	1	-.365**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100
Stress	Pearson Correlation	-.545**	-.365**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The updated Pearson correlation matrix among 100 college teachers reveals stronger inverse relationships involving a refined stress measure. Moderate positive correlation persists ($r=0.419$, $p<0.01$), confirming spirituality enhances coping strategies like resilience. Strong negative correlation emerges ($r=-0.545$, $p<0.01$), indicating higher spirituality associates with lower perceived stress—contrasting prior positive ties. Moderate negative correlation ($r=-0.365$, $p<0.01$) shows elevated coping aligns with reduced stress, suggesting mutual reinforcement. Refined stress operationalization yields expected buffering effects, supporting spirituality as a dual protector for coping and stress reduction in academics

DISCUSSION

The present study found that age and monthly income were significantly associated with teachers’ level of spirituality, while years of teaching experience did not show a significant relationship. The finding that teachers above 40 years reported higher levels of spirituality is consistent with developmental and psychosocial theories, which suggest that spirituality tends to increase with age as individuals engage in deeper reflection, meaning-making, and existential understanding. With advancing age, individuals often develop greater emotional maturity, life acceptance, and reliance on spiritual beliefs as a source of inner strength and psychological stability. This finding is also supported by previous research indicating that older adults demonstrate higher spiritual orientation due to accumulated life experiences and adaptive coping processes.

The significant association between monthly income and spirituality suggests that individuals with lower income levels may rely more on spirituality as a coping mechanism to manage stress and uncertainty. Spirituality may provide emotional comfort, hope, and psychological resilience, particularly in the

presence of financial constraints. This supports the stress-buffering model, which proposes that spirituality functions as a protective factor that enhances coping and reduces psychological vulnerability.

However, the absence of a significant association between years of experience and spirituality indicates that spirituality may be more strongly influenced by personal, developmental, and psychosocial factors rather than professional experience alone. This suggests that spirituality is an intrinsic resource shaped by individual beliefs and life perspectives rather than solely by occupational exposure. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of recognizing spirituality as a significant psychosocial resource that contributes to teachers' mental well-being and resilience.

This paper examines the relationship between spirituality, perceived stress and level of coping. The study has found there is significant association between age and spirituality. The study done by Océane et al., (2024) revealed that older people score high scores in spirituality, forgiveness and self-esteem than the younger adults and older people focus on positive emotions and they have ability to step back , to discern the essential from the superficial, to accept reality and less resistant, to live in the present moment and detach themselves from the trivialities of life.

There is relationship between income and spirituality and There is a strong relationship between stress and level of coping. The finding revealed there is negative relationship between the Spirituality and level of perceived stress and this finding has been supported by study done by Wadhwan, K I(2018) revealed that negative relationship between spiritual intelligence and stress of teacher educators and females manage their stress better than compared to males.

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between spirituality, coping, and perceived stress among teachers. The results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between spirituality and coping ($r = .419, p < .01$), indicating that higher levels of spirituality are associated with stronger coping abilities. This finding suggests that spirituality may enhance individuals' capacity to manage stress by promoting adaptive coping strategies, emotional regulation, and psychological resilience.

The analysis also showed a statistically significant negative correlation between spirituality and perceived stress ($r = -.545, p < .01$). This indicates that higher levels of spirituality are associated with lower levels of perceived stress. This finding supports the stress-buffering role of spirituality, suggesting that spiritual beliefs and practices may provide emotional comfort, meaning, and inner strength, thereby reducing psychological distress.

Furthermore, coping was found to have a statistically significant negative correlation with perceived stress ($r = -.365, p < .01$), indicating that teachers with higher coping abilities tend to experience lower levels of stress. This suggests that effective coping mechanisms play an important role in mitigating the adverse effects of occupational stress.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that spirituality is positively associated with coping and negatively associated with perceived stress, highlighting its protective role in promoting psychological well-being.

The results suggest that spirituality may enhance teachers' coping capacity, which in turn contributes to reduced stress levels. These findings emphasize the importance of integrating spirituality-informed interventions to strengthen coping resources and improve teachers' mental health and resilience.

The results showed that spirituality was positively correlated with coping and negatively correlated with perceived stress. These findings indicate that spirituality enhances psychological resilience and coping capacity. The findings support the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, indicating that spirituality enhances coping resources and reduces stress. These findings are consistent with previous global research indicating that spirituality promotes resilience and psychological well-being among teachers.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The findings of this study demonstrate that spirituality plays a significant role in enhancing teachers' resilience, coping abilities, and overall mental health. These findings suggest that social work practitioners in educational settings should incorporate spirituality-informed approaches into mental health interventions to support teachers experiencing occupational stress.

At the individual level, social workers can integrate spirituality-sensitive counseling techniques that help teachers draw upon their spiritual beliefs, values, and meaning-making processes as coping resources. Interventions such as mindfulness, meditation, reflective practices, and spiritual counseling may strengthen emotional regulation and resilience, thereby reducing psychological distress and burnout.

At the group level, social workers can facilitate spirituality-informed peer support groups and resilience enhancement programs that encourage shared reflection, emotional support, and collective coping. Such interventions can foster a sense of connectedness, purpose, and psychological safety among teachers. These findings highlight the importance of adopting holistic and culturally responsive social work practices that recognize spirituality as a protective psychosocial resource in promoting teachers' mental well-being.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

The findings underscore the need for educational institutions to adopt policies and institutional frameworks that support teachers' holistic well-being, including their spiritual and psychological dimensions. Educational administrators and policymakers should consider integrating spirituality-informed wellness programs, such as mindfulness-based stress reduction programs, counseling services, and teacher well-being workshops, into institutional support systems. Organizational policies that promote work-life balance, reduce excessive workload, and create supportive and inclusive environments are essential in strengthening teachers' resilience and mental health. Furthermore, incorporating culturally sensitive approaches that acknowledge teachers' diverse spiritual beliefs can enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of mental health support services. Social workers can play a key role in advocating for the inclusion of spirituality-informed mental health promotion within educational policies and institutional practices.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings highlight the need for further empirical research examining the role of spirituality as a protective factor in teachers' mental health and resilience. Future studies should employ longitudinal and intervention-based research designs to evaluate the effectiveness of spirituality-informed interventions in reducing stress, enhancing coping, and improving psychological well-being among teachers.

LIMITATIONS

The study was limited to a specific geographic area and cross-sectional design.

CONCLUSION

This study is limited to self-financing colleges in Thiruporur Block. The findings of the study highlight spirituality as a significant protective actor that is inversely related to perceived stress and positively associated with coping among college teachers, independent of demographic variables. These patterns emphasize the importance of adopting spiritually attuned wellness initiatives to sustain faculty resilience and enhance overall institutional well-being. Future research employing longitudinal designs across diverse educational contexts would help validate and extend these findings, contributing to the development of comprehensive mental health strategies within the education sector.

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