



Effect Of Parental And Peer Influence On Spirituality And Psychological Well-Being Among Urban Youth In Mangalore

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the influence of parental involvement and peer dynamics on spirituality and psychological well-being among youth aged 18 - 25 years. In contemporary urban contexts, increasing spiritual disengagement among young people has emerged as a growing concern regarding its implications for holistic development. While previous research has explored religiosity and psychological outcomes independently, limited attention has been given to the combined role of parental and peer influences in shaping spirituality, particularly in non-Western contexts such as India. A quantitative, cross-sectional multivariate design was employed using a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). A sample of 151 youth (M age = 21.85 years, SD = 1.96), including 77 male and 74 female participants, was selected using a stratified convenience sampling method. Standardized instruments, including the Parent and Peer Influence Scale, Spirituality Measurement Scale, and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale, were used to assess key variables. The findings revealed a statistically significant multivariate effect of parental and peer influence on spirituality and psychological well-being. Specifically, higher levels of social influence were associated with significantly greater spirituality. However, no significant differences were observed in psychological well-being across influence groups. These findings suggest that interpersonal relationships, particularly peer associations, play a crucial role in shaping spiritual engagement among youth, though their direct impact on psychological well-being may be limited. The study highlights the importance of integrating family and peer-based interventions in promoting spiritual development among youth. Implications are discussed for counseling, education, and faith-based mentorship programs aimed at fostering holistic well-being.

Key Words – *parental involvement, peer influence, spirituality, psychological well-being, youth, emerging adulthood*



Spirituality constitutes a central dimension of human development, particularly during adolescence and emerging adulthood, where individuals actively engage in identity formation, value internalization, and meaning-making processes. It encompasses the search for purpose, moral orientation, and connection to transcendent or existential frameworks that guide behavior and psychological functioning (Koenig, 2012; Benson et al., 2003). During this developmental stage, spirituality not only supports emotional regulation and resilience but also contributes to the construction of a coherent self-concept (King & Roeser, 2009; Koenig, 2012).

Emerging adulthood (18–25 years) represents a critical developmental period characterized by identity exploration, increasing autonomy, and evolving social relationships (Arnett, 2004). Contemporary societal changes, including rapid urbanization, digital connectivity, and exposure to diverse belief systems, have influenced the ways in which young people engage with spirituality and religion. Recent studies have reported declining participation in traditional religious practices and changing patterns of spiritual engagement among youth in several cultural contexts (Twenge, 2017; Pearce & Denton, 2011). Reduced spiritual engagement may be reflected in lower involvement in spiritual practices, diminished commitment to spiritual values, and decreased participation in faith-based communities. Such changes have been associated with challenges related to meaning-making, identity development, and psychosocial adjustment during emerging adulthood (King & Roeser, 2009; Koenig, 2012).

Within this context, the role of primary socialization agents particularly parents and peers becomes critically significant. According to developmental and ecological frameworks, youth development is shaped by continuous interactions within familial and social environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Parents traditionally serve as the primary transmitters of values, beliefs, and moral frameworks, while peers increasingly influence behavioral patterns, identity formation, and social belonging during adolescence and early adulthood (Gunnore & Moore, 2002; Brown & Larson, 2009).

Parental involvement extends beyond academic supervision to include emotional support, moral guidance, and the transmission of values. Research has consistently demonstrated that warm, supportive, and communicative parent–child relationships are associated with positive developmental outcomes, including greater psychological adjustment, emotional competence, and value internalization among youth (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Kim-Spoon et al., 2012). Conversely, parenting characterized by low responsiveness, inconsistency, or emotional disengagement has been linked to increased emotional difficulties and poorer psychosocial adjustment (Steinberg, 2001; Leung & Shek, 2019). Despite these findings, relatively few studies have examined how parental involvement relates simultaneously to both spirituality and psychological well-being. Despite this, existing research has largely emphasized academic and behavioral outcomes, with limited focus on the role of parental involvement in shaping both spirituality



and psychological well-being simultaneously.

Parallel to parental influence, peer dynamics exert a powerful impact during emerging adulthood. Peer groups function as critical contexts for social learning, emotional support, and identity negotiation. Positive peer associations may reinforce prosocial values, ethical behavior, and adaptive coping, whereas peer groups characterized by risk-taking behaviors or conflicting value orientations may influence attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral choices during emerging adulthood (Brown & Larson, 2009; Leung et al., 2014). In increasingly globalized and digitally connected environments, peer influence often competes with or even overrides familial influence, particularly in shaping attitudes toward spirituality and lifestyle choices.

Furthermore, psychological well-being conceptualized through frameworks such as Ryff's multidimensional model includes self-acceptance, autonomy, purpose in life, and positive relationships (Ryff, 1989). Research indicates that spirituality serves as a significant predictor of well-being by providing meaning, coping mechanisms, and existential stability (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Research has identified several mechanisms through which parental and peer relationships influence spirituality and psychological well-being, including socialization processes, emotional support, value transmission, role modeling, and the development of social identity (King & Furrow, 2004; Desrosiers et al., 2011). Nevertheless, relatively few studies have examined the combined influence of parental and peer factors on both

spirituality and psychological well-being among emerging adults in India, where cultural, religious, and family systems may shape developmental experiences in unique ways.

Research has identified several mechanisms through which parental and peer relationships influence spirituality and psychological well-being, including socialization processes, emotional support, value transmission, role modeling, and identity formation (King & Furrow, 2004; Desrosiers et al., 2011). Nevertheless, limited empirical research has simultaneously examined how parental and peer influences relate to both spirituality and psychological well-being among Indian emerging adults. Therefore, further investigation is needed to better understand these relationships within the Indian socio-cultural context.

Despite substantial literature examining parental involvement, peer influence, spirituality, and psychological well-being independently, relatively few studies have explored how parental and peer influences jointly relate to spiritual engagement and psychological well-being among emerging adults. This gap is particularly evident in the Indian context, where spirituality continues to play an important role in personal and cultural identity.

Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining the influence of parental involvement and peer dynamics on spirituality and psychological well-being among youth aged 18 - 25 years. By adopting a multivariate analytical approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how interpersonal influences shape both

spiritual engagement and psychological functioning in emerging adulthood.

Furthermore, limited empirical studies in the Indian context have simultaneously examined the combined influence of parental and peer factors on both spirituality and psychological well-being, highlighting a critical research gap.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do parental and peer influences affect spirituality and psychological well-being among youth?
2. Do higher levels of parental and peer involvement predict greater spirituality?
3. Does parental and peer influence significantly impact psychological well-being?
4. Is there a significant multivariate effect of parental and peer influence on spirituality and psychological well-being?

Objectives

1. To examine the impact of parental involvement and peer dynamics on spirituality
2. To assess their influence on psychological well-being
3. To analyze the combined effect of these social factors on youth development

Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses

H01: There will be no statistically significant difference in spirituality scores between participants exposed to different levels of parental and peer influence.

H02: There will be no statistically significant difference in psychological well-being scores between participants exposed to different levels of parental and peer influence.

H03: There will be no statistically significant multivariate effect of parental and peer influence on the combined dependent variables of spirituality and psychological well-being.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Participants reporting stronger parental and peer influence will demonstrate significantly higher spirituality scores than those reporting lower levels of influence.

H2: Participants reporting stronger parental and peer influence will demonstrate significantly higher psychological well-being scores than those reporting lower levels of influence.

H3: Parental and peer influence will have a statistically significant multivariate effect on the combined dependent variables of spirituality and psychological well-being.

METHOD

Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, multivariate research design to examine the influence of parental involvement and peer dynamics on spirituality and psychological well-being among youth aged 18 - 25 years. A cross-sectional approach was considered appropriate as it enables the assessment of relationships among variables at a single point in time without experimental manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To analyze the combined effect of independent variables on multiple dependent variables, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was utilized. This statistical technique allows for the simultaneous examination of differences across groups while controlling for Type I error and accounting for intercorrelations between dependent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

This method was considered appropriate due to practical constraints in accessing a fully randomized sample while still ensuring representation across key demographic groups.

Participants

The sample consisted of 151 youth aged between 18 and 26 years ($M = 21.85$, $SD = 1.96$), representing the developmental period of emerging adulthood. Of the participants, 77 (51.0%) were male and 74 (49.0%) were female.

Regarding religious affiliation, 94 participants (62.3%) identified as Hindu, 40 (26.5%) as Christian, 16 (10.6%) as Muslim, and 1 participant (0.7%) did not report a religious affiliation. In terms of educational and occupational status, 63 participants (41.7%) were undergraduate students, 58 (38.4%) were postgraduate students, 22 (14.6%) were employed, 7 (4.6%) were both studying and working, and 1 participant (0.7%) was not employed. All participants reported belonging to nuclear family households.

Demographic Characteristics

As shown in Table 1, the sample consisted of 151 emerging adults with a nearly equal gender distribution. The majority of participants identified as Hindu (62.3%), followed by Christian (26.5%) and Muslim (10.6%). Most participants were undergraduate or postgraduate students, and all participants reported belonging to nuclear family households.

Table 1 : Demographic Characteristics of Participants ($N = 151$)

Variables	Categories	n	%
Gender	Male	77	51.0
	Female	74	49.0
Religion	Hindu	94	62.3
	Christian	40	26.5
	Muslim	16	10.6
	Not reported	1	0.7
Educational/Occupational Status	Undergraduate	63	41.7
	Postgraduate	58	38.4
	Working	22	14.6
	Studying and Working	7	4.6
	Not Working	1	0.7
Family Structure	Nuclear Family	151	100.0

Note. Mean age of participants = 21.85 years ($SD = 1.96$; range = 18–26 years)

Sampling Technique

The study employed a stratified convenience sampling method. Initially, participants were grouped into strata based on key demographic variables such as gender, education, and religious background to ensure representativeness. Within each stratum, participants were selected using convenience sampling from educational institutions, youth groups, and community settings. This approach allowed for practical data collection while maintaining a degree of diversity across important demographic categories. Although non-probability in nature, this method is commonly used in social science research where access to a fully randomized sample is limited.

Variables

For the purpose of MANOVA, participants were classified into influence groups based on their overall scores on the Parent and Peer Influence Scale. Individuals with relatively higher scores were categorized into the Higher Influence Group, whereas those with relatively lower scores were categorized into the Lower Influence Group. This categorization was employed to facilitate group-based multivariate comparisons. However, it is acknowledged that converting continuous scores into categorical groups may reduce statistical variability and statistical power, and this should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Independent Variables

1. Parental Involvement

Refers to the extent of parental engagement in emotional, moral, and spiritual domains of the youth's life, including communication, support, and value transmission.

2. Peer Influence

Refers to the degree of influence exerted by peer groups on an individual's behavior, beliefs, and social interactions, including peer support and conformity.

Dependent Variables

1. Spirituality

Defined as the level of engagement in spiritual beliefs, practices, and meaning-making processes.

2. Psychological Well-Being

Defined as a state of positive psychological functioning, including life satisfaction, emotional stability, and sense of purpose (Ryff, 1989).

Measures

1. Parent and Peer Influence Scale (PPSQ-Revised)

This scale assesses perceived influence from parents and peers across emotional, behavioral, and value-based domains.

Format: Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)

Subscales: Parental support, parental control, peer support, peer pressure

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha ranging from .80 to .90

Higher scores indicate stronger perceived influence.

2. Spirituality Measurement Scale (SMS)

This instrument measures levels of spiritual engagement, including faith, connectedness, and moral orientation.

Format: Likert scale

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha $\geq$.80

Higher scores reflect stronger spirituality.

3. Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (42-item version)

This widely used scale measures six dimensions of well-being:

- Self-acceptance
- Autonomy
- Environmental mastery
- Personal growth
- Purpose in life
- Positive relations

Scale range: 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree)

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha ranges from .70 to .90. Higher scores indicate greater psychological well-being.

Procedure

Data were collected from participants in educational institutions, youth organizations, and community settings. Participants were provided with a brief explanation of the study and informed consent was obtained prior to participation. The instruments were compiled into a structured questionnaire that included:

- a) Demographic details
- b) Parent and peer influence scale
- c) Spirituality scale
- d) Psychological well-being scale

The average time for completion was approximately 15 - 20 minutes.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to standard ethical guidelines in psychological research:

- Participation was voluntary
- Informed consent was obtained
- Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured
- Participants had the right to withdraw at any time

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using IBM SPSS software. The following statistical techniques were employed:

Descriptive statistics: Means and standard deviations.

One-way MANOVA: To examine the effect of parental and peer influence on spirituality and psychological well-being. A significance level of $p < .05$ was used for hypothesis testing. Prior to analysis, assumptions of MANOVA including normality, linearity, and homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices were assessed and found to be adequately met.

RESULT

Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary analyses were conducted to examine the assumptions underlying multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), including normality, linearity, and homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices.

No significant violations were observed, indicating that the data were suitable for MANOVA.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analyses indicated variations in spirituality scores across levels of parental and peer influence. Participants in the high-influence group reported higher levels of spirituality compared to those in the low-influence group.

However, psychological well-being scores appeared relatively consistent across both groups, suggesting minimal variation based on influence levels (Table 2).

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables ($N = 151$)

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Spirituality (SM)	139.30	27.22
Psychological Well-Being (PW)	192.10	14.37

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

Multivariate Analysis

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of parental and peer

influence on the combined dependent variables of spirituality and psychological well-being.

Table 3 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Spirituality and Psychological Well-Being

Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	p	Partial η^2
Spirituality (SM)	4309.222	1	4309.222	.015*	.039
Psychological Wellbeing (PW)	138.131	1	138.131	.415	.004

Note. $p < .05$. Partial η^2 = Partial Eta Squared.

The multivariate test using Wilks' Lambda indicated a statistically significant effect of parental and peer influence on the combined dependent variables, The multivariate analysis revealed a statistically significant effect of parental and peer influence on the combined dependent variables, Wilks' $\Lambda = .956$, $F(2, 148) = 3.37$, $p = .037$. The effect size was small, accounting for approximately 4.4% of the variance in spirituality and psychological well-being. The effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .044$) indicates a small but meaningful effect according to conventional benchmarks (Cohen, 1988). This result suggests that parental and peer influence collectively account for approximately 4.4% of the variance in spirituality and psychological well-being,

indicating a small but meaningful multivariate effect.

Univariate Analyses

Follow-up univariate analyses were conducted to examine the effect of parental and peer influence on each dependent variable separately.

Spirituality

A statistically significant difference was observed in spirituality scores between groups, A statistically significant difference was observed in spirituality scores, $F(1, 149) = 6.01$, $p = .015$. The effect was small, accounting for approximately 3.9% of the variance in spirituality scores. Participants with higher levels of parental and peer influence reported significantly greater spirituality

compared to those with lower levels of influence. This finding indicates that social influences play a meaningful role in shaping spiritual engagement among youth.

Psychological Well-Being

In contrast, no statistically significant difference was found for psychological well-being. No statistically significant difference was found in psychological well-being, $F(1, 149) = 0.67$, $p = .415$. The effect size was negligible, accounting for only 0.4% of the variance in psychological well-being scores. This suggests that parental and peer influence do not significantly differentiate levels of psychological well-being within this sample.

Summary of Findings

Overall, the results indicate that parental and peer influence significantly affect spirituality but do not have a direct significant impact on psychological well-being. While social relationships contribute to spiritual development, their influence on broader psychological functioning appears to be limited or indirect.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to examine the influence of parental involvement and peer dynamics on spirituality and psychological well-being among youth aged 18 - 25 years. The findings revealed a significant multivariate effect of social influence on the combined outcomes, with a distinct pattern emerging across the two dependent variables. Specifically, parental and peer influence significantly predicted spirituality but did

not demonstrate a significant effect on psychological well-being. These findings offer important theoretical and contextual insights into youth development, particularly within contemporary sociocultural environments.

These findings reinforce the importance of relational and ecological frameworks in understanding spiritual development among youth.

These findings reinforce the importance of immediate interpersonal relationships in shaping spiritual development among youth. In particular, parental and peer relationships represent key microsystem influences that contribute to the formation of values, beliefs, and spiritual engagement during emerging adulthood.

Social Influence and Spirituality

The results indicate that higher levels of parental and peer influence are significantly associated with greater spirituality among youth. This finding aligns with developmental theories that emphasize the role of socialization agents in shaping value systems and identity formation. From an ecological systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), both family and peer contexts serve as proximal environments that influence internal belief structures, including spirituality.

The significant role of social influence in predicting spirituality can be interpreted through the lens of relational spirituality, which posits that spiritual development is embedded within interpersonal relationships (Mahoney et al., 2001). Parental involvement particularly through modeling, communication, and shared practices

facilitates the internalization of spiritual values. Similarly, peer groups provide a social context in which beliefs are either reinforced or challenged.

Interestingly, the findings also suggest that peer influence may play an increasingly prominent role during emerging adulthood. This supports previous research indicating a developmental shift from parental to peer-centered influence during this stage (Brown & Larson, 2009). In contemporary contexts, where youth are highly connected through digital and social networks, peer norms may significantly shape attitudes toward spirituality, either promoting engagement or contributing to spiritual disengagement.

Absence of Significant Effects on Psychological Well-Being

Contrary to expectations, parental and peer influence did not significantly predict psychological well-being. This finding diverges from a substantial body of literature that highlights the positive role of supportive relationships in enhancing well-being (Leung & Shek, 2019; Prime et al., 2020). Several explanations may account for this discrepancy. First, psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct influenced by a wide range of factors beyond interpersonal relationships, including personality traits, life circumstances, socioeconomic conditions, and individual coping mechanisms (Ryff, 1989). While parental and peer influences contribute to social support, they may not be sufficient to directly determine well-being outcomes in isolation.

Second, the findings may reflect the indirect nature of influence, where

parental and peer factors impact well-being through mediating variables such as spirituality. Theoretically, spirituality can function as a pathway linking social relationships to psychological outcomes by providing meaning, emotional regulation, and coping resources (Ryan & Deci, 2001). However, the present study did not explicitly test mediation effects, which may explain the absence of direct associations.

Third, the cultural context of the sample may play a role. In collectivistic societies such as India, interpersonal relationships, family obligations, and community connectedness are often emphasized, which may influence how individuals experience and evaluate psychological well-being (Sinha & Tripathi, 1994). As such, the effects of parental and peer influence may be embedded within a broader network of social and cultural influences.

Differential Impact across Developmental Domains

The contrasting findings for spirituality and psychological well-being suggest that these constructs may be influenced through different developmental processes. In the present study, parental and peer influence were significantly associated with spirituality but not with psychological well-being. One possible explanation is that spirituality is closely connected to socialization processes through which values, beliefs, and practices are transmitted within family and peer contexts (Desrosiers et al., 2011). Consequently, interpersonal relationships may have a more direct influence on spiritual engagement.



In contrast, psychological well-being is a broader multidimensional construct that may be shaped by a variety of factors, including personality characteristics, life experiences, socioeconomic conditions, coping resources, and social support systems (Ryff, 1989; Ryan & Deci, 2001). The absence of a significant relationship in the present study suggests that parental and peer influence alone may not be sufficient to explain variations in psychological well-being among emerging adults. Future research should examine additional factors and potential mediating mechanisms that may account for these relationships.

Implications for Spiritual Engagement

The findings suggest that parental and peer relationships are associated with differences in spiritual engagement among youth. Participants reporting stronger social influence demonstrated higher levels of spirituality, indicating that interpersonal relationships may play an important role in the transmission and reinforcement of spiritual values and practices. However, given the cross-sectional nature of the study, causal conclusions cannot be drawn. Future research should examine the mechanisms through which family and peer relationships contribute to spiritual development over time.

Integration with Existing Literature

The results partially align with previous studies that emphasize the role of family and peer systems in youth development. Consistent with Desrosiers et al. (2011), the findings highlight the importance of relational contexts in shaping spirituality. However, the lack of significant findings for psychological

well-being contrasts with studies suggesting strong links between social support and well-being.

This divergence underscores the need for more nuanced and integrative models that account for mediating and moderating variables. It also highlights the importance of distinguishing between different dimensions of development rather than assuming uniform effects across outcomes.

Contribution to the Field

The present study makes several important contributions:

- (a) It advances the literature by integrating parental and peer influences within a single analytical framework.
- (b) It highlights spirituality as a distinct and measurable developmental outcome.
- (c) It contributes to the growing literature on spirituality and youth development by examining how parental and peer influences relate to spiritual engagement and psychological well-being within an Indian context.
- (d) It provides insights from a non-Western context (India), addressing a major gap in existing research

Conclusion of Discussion

In summary, the study demonstrates that parental and peer influences play a significant role in shaping spirituality among youth, but their impact on psychological well-being is less direct and potentially mediated by other factors. These findings emphasize the need for a holistic understanding of youth development that incorporates both social and spiritual dimensions.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS & LIMITATIONS

Conclusion

The present study examined the role of parental involvement and peer dynamics in shaping spirituality and psychological well-being among youth aged 18 - 25 years. The findings indicate that social influences significantly contribute to spirituality, with higher levels of parental and peer engagement associated with greater spiritual involvement. However, these influences did not demonstrate a significant direct effect on psychological well-being.

These results highlight that spirituality, as a value-oriented and relational construct, is more sensitive to interpersonal influences than broader psychological functioning. The findings underscore the importance of relational environments in shaping spiritual engagement among youth and highlight the potential contribution of family and peer relationships to spiritual development during emerging adulthood.

Overall, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of youth development by distinguishing between spiritual and psychological domains and emphasizing the need for integrative approaches that consider both family and peer systems.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The study extends existing literature by integrating parental and peer influences within a single framework, thereby supporting ecological and relational models of development. It also

reinforces the conceptualization of spirituality as a distinct developmental domain, highlighting its relevance within psychological research.

Practical Implications

The findings suggest that parental and peer influence are associated with spirituality among emerging adults. Therefore, interventions aimed at fostering spiritual engagement may benefit from involving family and peer networks. Programs that encourage constructive communication, value sharing, and supportive interpersonal relationships may contribute to the development of spirituality. However, because parental and peer influence were not significantly associated with psychological well-being, the present findings do not support the assumption that strengthening social influence alone will necessarily improve well-being outcomes.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. The use of a cross-sectional design restricts causal interpretations, and the reliance on self-report measures may introduce response biases. Additionally, the use of stratified convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings and the use of non-probability sampling may limit external validity.

An additional limitation concerns the categorization of parent and peer influence scores into comparison groups for MANOVA. Although this approach facilitated group-based analyses, converting continuous variables into categorical groups may have reduced statistical power and obscured individual



differences among participants. Future studies may benefit from employing analytical approaches that retain the continuous nature of these variables. Future research should consider longitudinal designs to examine developmental changes over time and

explore potential mediating variables, such as spirituality, in the relationship between social influence and psychological well-being. Further studies in diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts are also recommended to enhance the robustness and applicability of findings.



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