

Role of Discrimination, Religiosity and Coping in Spiritual Wellbeing of University Students

Iqra Rehman ^{1*} Irum Moeen ²

¹ BS Psychology, Department of Psychology, Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Email: iqrarehman24224@gmail.com |  <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1562-0083>

² BS Psychology, Department of Psychology, Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Email: ayeshaajann@gmail.com |  <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-2187-9093>

ABSTRACT: The present study examines the relationships between discrimination, religiosity, coping mechanisms, in spiritual well-being of university students. Discrimination refers to unequal treatment based on characteristics like ethnicity, disability, or gender, which can lead to stress and a sense of injustice. Coping encompasses efforts to manage stress, either voluntarily or automatically. Well-being involves subjective evaluations of life satisfaction and affective reactions, while religiosity includes various dimensions such as faith, belief, devotion, and piousness. The main aim of the study was to explore how these factors interact and influence students' psychological and emotional health. Specifically, the objectives were to investigate the relationships between discrimination and well-being (both religious and existential), social spirituality and well-being, and different types of coping (positive and negative religious coping) with well-being. The population targeted was all enrolled students at a Higher Education Commission (HEC) recognized university in Kohat, with a sample comprising 346 students from Kohat University of Science and Technology. Data were collected using a convenience sampling method through online surveys via Google Forms. The survey included a set of questionnaires accompanied by an informed consent form. For data analysis, we use statistical tool, IBM SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) 27 version were employed to test the research hypotheses. The main results indicated that discrimination negatively impacts both religious and existential well-being. Conversely, interpersonal and intrapersonal religious commitments, as well as positive religious coping, positively influence well-being, while negative religious coping has a detrimental effect on it.

Pages: 226 – 244

Volume: 5

Issue: 3 (March 2026)

Corresponding Author

Iqra Rehman

✉ iqrarehman24224@gmail.com

Cite this Article: Rehman, I., & Moeen, I. (2026). Role of Discrimination, Religiosity and Coping in Spiritual Wellbeing of University Students. *The Regional Tribune*, 5(3), 226-244.

<https://doi.org/10.55737/trt/v-iii.440>

KEYWORDS: Discrimination, Religiosity, Coping, Spiritual Wellbeing, University Students

Introduction

Unfair treatment based on group characteristics—such as gender, ethnicity, or disability—that are frequently beyond of the victim's control is known as discrimination. It can be stressful because it suggests that one has little control and mastery over one's life (Branscombe & Ellemers, 1998), that one is unfairly treated and the world is unfair (Major et al., 2007), and that one is negatively regarded and not accepted by others (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002).

Research on Pakistani young adults has also examined the relationship between problematic digital behaviours and psychological difficulties, including depression, aggression, and psychological distress (Shahid et al., 2024; Shahid et al., 2026). Although these studies did not directly examine discrimination, they provide relevant local context for understanding psychological difficulties among young adults in Pakistan.

A common definition of coping is making an effort to deal with a stressful or threatening situation, reduce the threat, or lessen its effects on an individual. Some researchers also include involuntary and automatic responses in the concept of coping (Carver et al., 1989; Eisenberg et al., 1997; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). According to Morling and Evered (2006), Skinner et al. (2003), and Wade et al. (2001), accommodation in coping refers to responses such as acceptance, cognitive restructuring, and adjusting personal goals when facing difficulties. Related research among Pakistani young adults has also examined social connectedness in relation to smartphone addiction and online relationships, as well as its role in the relationship between social media addiction and aggression (Khan et al., 2024; Shahid et al., 2024). These findings provide relevant context for understanding the role of social relationships in young adults' psychological experiences.

For at least two reasons, the concept of religiosity is complicated and challenging to define. The English language's ambiguity and imprecision are the first causes. According to Roget's Thesaurus (Lewis, 1978), concepts like religiousness, orthodoxy, faith, belief, piousness, devotion, and holiness are colloquially equivalent with religiosity. Cardwell (1980) summarizes the four characteristics of religiosity that Holdcroft (2006) identified: devotional, cultic, creedal, and cognitive. The cognitive dimension focuses on people's religious knowledge, or what they know about religion. The individual's religious rituals, or ritualistic behavior, are referred to as the cultic dimension. The devotional dimension, also known as the experiencing dimension, relates to a person's religious sentiments and experiences, whereas the creedal dimension deals with an individual's own religious beliefs.

Despite significant developments in technology, society, and education in the contemporary era, discrimination against people persists on a variety of levels for a variety of reasons, despite the fact that all people are born with equal fundamental human rights and dignity. According to Bhugra (2016), social discrimination is the inequity that people experience because of their sexual orientation, religion, sickness, handicap, or any other measure of diversity or change. Social discrimination can be measured in a variety of contexts, including political and personal ones (Brown et al., 2000). According to Finke and Fox (2017), religious minorities who do not practice the state-sponsored religion experience significant prejudice. Vigilante violence primarily affects religious minorities, according to Wybraniec and Finke (2001). The nation has undertaken a number of policies in the past that have been detrimental to religious minorities. A "us vs. them" narrative was incorporated into a biased school curriculum. Negative social identities, instability, and a lack of protection for human rights pose a serious threat to minority communities, which manifests in their everyday marginalization and disenfranchisement (Musnhey & Zahid, 2017).

Even when participants are primed with social support and social value, priming belongingness improves meaningfulness (Lambert et al., 2013). Accordingly, a sense of belonging gives a person a sense of security, aids in the formation of a social identity, and permits the pursuit of personal objectives (Haslam et al., 2009). Research conducted among young adults in Pakistan has also highlighted the relevance of social connectedness to psychological well-being. For example, studies have examined social connectedness in relation to smartphone addiction and online relationships, as well as its role in the association between gaming-related behaviours and mental health (Bashir et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2024). A secure group and a psychological sense of interconnectedness with another person constitute a sense of belonging. Humans have a fundamental urge to live in a community where they can feel like they belong. This community will provide them a sense of roots and serve as a source for the development of their social identities and social references. The need for a sense of belonging is the primary driver behind the

formation of communities, groups, and societies (Bhugra, 2016). Both academic and popular literature have extensively examined the idea of wellbeing (Beddington et al., 2008). The foundation of psychological wellness is eudemonic presumptions, which link wellbeing to whether a person has lived their life in accordance with their nature or spirit. This was mirrored in Abraham Maslow's idea of self-actualization. Two well-known models of psychological well-being exist. One is Ryff's model (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), which served as the basis for the psychological wellbeing scales. According to this paradigm, there are six dimensions that are essential to a happy and fulfilling existence. Anatomy, personal development, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery of the environment, and healthy interpersonal connections are the six areas. The most crucial of these is self-acceptance (Abbott et al., 2006; Burns & Machin, 2009). The second paradigm is the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2001), which emphasizes relatedness, competence, and autonomy—three fundamental psychological and social requirements. The internal and environmental factors that influence an individual's motivation are the main focus of this paradigm. In essence, it asserts that people are active agents in their lives with the capacity to control their own motivations and feelings. People are naturally growth-oriented, and in order to strive for optimal development, they need a supportive social environment. Age, changes in social status (retirement), relationships (widowed), physical condition (dementia), and proximity to death can all affect one's ability to meet demands. Thus, meeting these requirements is crucial to a person's growth (Abbott et al., 2006; Burns & Machin, 2009).

Problem Statement

This study was designed to examine the role of spirituality/religiosity, coping, and well-being in participants facing discrimination among the students of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Previous studies didn't conduct research on the role of spirituality/religiosity, coping, and well-being among the people facing discrimination.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To find out the relationship between discrimination and well-being (Religious well-being, Existential well-being).
2. To find out the relationship between religiosity (Interpersonal religious commitment and Intrapersonal religious commitment) and well-being (Religious well-being, Existential well-being).
3. To find out the relationship between coping (positive religious coping, Negative religious coping) and well-being (Religious well-being, Existential well-being).
4. To explore the mediating role of religious coping b/w relationship of discrimination and spiritual well-being.

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

- H1:** Discrimination would relate negatively to religious well-being.
H2: Discrimination would relate negatively to existential well-being.
H3: Interpersonal religious commitment would relate positively to religious well-being.
H4: Interpersonal religious commitment would relate positively to existential well-being.
H5: Intrapersonal religious commitment would relate positively to religious well-being.
H6: Intrapersonal religious commitment would relate positively to existential well-being.
H7: Positive religious coping would relate positively to religious well-being.
H8: Positive religious coping would relate positively to existential well-being.
H9: Negative religious coping would relate negatively to religious well-being.

H10: Negative religious coping would relate negatively to existential well-being.

H11: Religious Coping (Positive & negative coping) would mediate the relation b/w discrimination & spiritual well-being.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons, addressing critical gaps in understanding the intricate interplay between discrimination, religiosity, coping mechanisms, and well-being among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

The study is particularly relevant in the socio-cultural context of Pakistan, where religion plays a significant role in everyday life, and where discrimination based on religious and other differences is prevalent. By highlighting the challenges faced by students, the study can empower marginalized groups and advocate for their rights, promoting social justice and equity. It explores how discrimination impacts the psychological and emotional well-being of students, providing insights into the negative effects on their mental health and life satisfaction. These research findings can also inform policies (including educational institutions)

aimed at reducing discrimination and promoting inclusivity within educational institutions. This has a positive influence on the learning of individuals. It can help educational institutions design and implement better support services that address the specific needs of students facing discrimination, fostering a more supportive and inclusive campus environment. Results can inform curriculum changes to include teachings on inclusivity, tolerance, and the importance of mental health and well-being.

Additionally, the research examines the role of religiosity in enhancing or detracting from students' religious well-being, contributing to the broader understanding of how faith and spirituality impact mental health. By investigating existential well-being, the study delves into how students find meaning and purpose in life amidst experiences of discrimination.

Furthermore, the study differentiates between positive and negative religious coping strategies, providing a nuanced understanding of how these approaches affect students' well-being. Insights from the study can guide the development of targeted interventions and support systems that enhance positive coping mechanisms and mitigate negative ones.

Research Gap

There are few or no studies specifically targeting the religious experiences, discrimination, and coping mechanisms of students in Kohat. This lack of research limits the understanding of how the unique socio-cultural and religious dynamics of Kohat influence students' spirituality.

Kohat, a city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, presents a unique and important context for studying spirituality among students. The socio-cultural and religious fabric of Kohat is distinct, characterized by a blend of traditional values and contemporary influences. This region has a rich history and diverse population, which includes various ethnic and religious groups. The interplay of these factors makes Kohat an ideal setting to explore how spirituality is experienced and manifested among students. Understanding spirituality in this context can provide deeper insights into the cultural specificity of religious practices and their implications for student well-being. There is an insufficiency of research studies focused on the spiritual experiences of students in Kohat. Most existing research on student spirituality in Pakistan is concentrated in larger cities such as Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad, neglecting smaller cities with distinct cultural contexts like Kohat. The unique cultural and religious dynamics of Kohat may

result in different religious experiences and needs among students compared to those in other regions. These nuances are not well-documented in the current literature.

Moreover, there is a need to investigate how religiosity specifically influences academic performance among students. While general studies suggest a positive correlation, region-specific factors such as teaching methodologies, educational infrastructure, and socio-economic conditions in students need to be considered. The impact of religiosity on the mental health and overall well-being of students remains underexplored. Research should focus on how religious practices and beliefs contribute to mental resilience, stress management, and emotional stability in this particular cultural setting.

Additionally, although previous research in Pakistan has examined social media addiction, gaming-related behaviours, social connectedness, and psychological well-being among young adults (Bashir et al., 2024; Shahid et al., 2024; Shahid et al., 2025), limited attention has been given to how discrimination, religious commitment, and religious coping jointly relate to spiritual well-being among university students in Kohat. The experiences of religiosity across different genders and socioeconomic groups within Kohat's student population also require further investigation. Moreover, limited evidence is available on the effectiveness of spiritual and religious support programs in educational institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). Future research should examine how these programs affect student well-being and how spiritual support can be integrated into broader student support services to improve students' overall well-being.

Methodology

Research Design

The design of the study is correlational. It involves the administration of self-report measures to gather data to test the research hypotheses.

Instruments

The instruments that we used in our research are the following:

Everyday Discrimination Scale

Discrimination was measured with 9 items of the Everyday Discrimination Scale. Items are rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Never") to 6 ("Almost Everyday"). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .84.

Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI)

Religiosity was measured with 10 items of the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI). Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Not at all true of me") to 6 ("Totally true of me"). It has two subscales measuring intrapersonal religious commitment (IARC) and interpersonal religious commitment (IERC). In the present study, Cronbach's alphas for these subscales were .78 and .75, respectively.

Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE)

Coping was measured with 14 items of the Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE). Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 ("Not at all") to 3 ("A great deal"). It has two subscales measuring positive religious coping (PRCOPE) and negative religious coping (NRCOPE). In the present study, Cronbach's alphas for these subscales were .88 and .82, respectively.

Spiritual Wellbeing Scale (SWBS)

Wellbeing was measured with 20 items of the Spiritual Wellbeing Scale (SWBS). Items are rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 6 ("Strongly Agree") to 1 ("Strongly Disagree"). It has two subscales measuring religious wellbeing (RWB) and Existential wellbeing (EWB). In the present study, Cronbach's alphas for these subscales were .79 and .67, respectively.

Population and Sample

The population of the study was all enrolled students at a HEC-recognized university. From Kohat University, there are 18 departments. In our sample from Kohat University, 34 students were graduate students, while 285 students were undergraduate students from the departments of Kohat University of Science and Technology. The survey was obtained through a convenience sampling method from both males and females. Data were collected from almost 346 participants.

Ethical Consideration and Procedure

Using a Google Form, information was gathered from various departments at Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST). IBM SPSS version was used for all analyses.

27. A set of questionnaires with an informed consent form attached was used to collect data. The consent form provided clear information about the study's purpose and advantages, students' right to decline participation and withdraw from the study, the confidentiality of any information collected, and who to contact regarding the research. The total sample was 346, of which 198 were female and 125 were male. And 23 participants did not disclose their gender. The data were collected in two phases; that is, a pilot study was conducted with a sample of 30 students to know the Role of discrimination, religiosity, and coping in the well-being of university students. In the second phase, the main study was conducted with a sample of 346 to know the basic purpose of our research.

Results

Table 1

Study Participants Demographics Characteristics (N = 346)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
≤ 20	95	27.5
≥ 21	195	56.4
Missing	56	16.2
Gender		
Male	125	36.1
Female	198	57.2
Missing	23	6.6
Marital Status		
Single	290	83.8
Married	35	10.1
Missing	21	6.1
Monthly Income		
< Rs.50,000	137	39.6
≥ Rs.50,000	182	52.6
Missing	27	7.8

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Father Education		
≤ 10 Years	94	27.2
≥ 12 Years	226	65.3
Missing	26	7.5
Mother Education		
≤ 10 Years	192	55.5
≥ 12 Years	126	36.4
Missing	28	8.1
Education Program		
Undergraduate	285	82.4
Graduate	34	9.8
Missing	27	7.8

The demographic characteristics of the participants are displayed in Table 4.1. 27.5% of participants were 20 years old, 56.4% were 21 years old, and 16.2% did not specify their age. The majority of participants were 21 years of age or older than those who were 20 or younger. 57.2% of participants were female, 36.1% were male, and 6.6% of participants indicated their gender. In a similar vein, the majority of participants were female. 83.8% of participants were single, 10.1% were married, and 6.1% did not disclose their marital status. Additionally, the majority of individuals were single rather than married. 82.4% of participants were undergraduates, 9.8% were graduates, and 7.8% did not specify their educational program. The bulk of participants were undergraduates rather than graduates.

Table 2

Frequency Distributions for the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS) (N = 346)

	Never %	Less Than Once A Year %	A Few Times A Year %	A Few Times A Month %	At Least Once A Week %	Almost Everyday %
EDS1	38.6%	13.8%	21.3%	9.6%	6.6%	10.2%
EDS2	40.3%	12.5%	19.7%	12.8%	5.4%	9.3%
EDS3	30.6%	15.6%	20.1%	13.5%	10.8%	9.3%
EDS4	30.0%	16.2%	18.6%	12.3%	9.0%	13.8%
EDS5	39.8%	10.5%	18.0%	10.2%	8.4%	13.2%
EDS6	46.0%	17.9%	13.1%	10.4%	4.5%	8.1%
EDS7	22.3%	13.1%	21.1%	16.7%	11.3%	15.5%
EDS8	36.3%	16.7%	16.4%	14.3%	9.8%	6.5%
EDS9	52.5%	12.5%	15.2%	8.7%	3.9%	7.2%

Table 2 shows responses by percentage subscale of the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS). The study participant responses on the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS1 to EDS9) have mostly endorsed “Never” because participants found it relatively difficult to understand all these items.

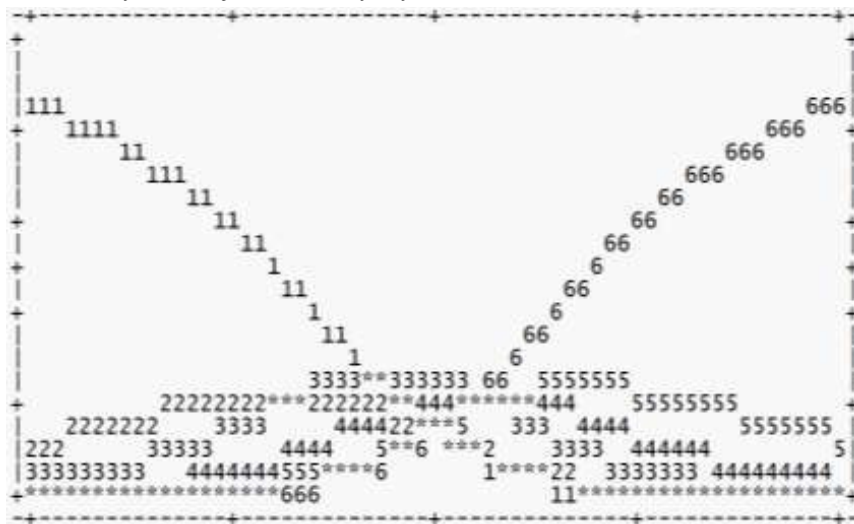
Figure 1
Probability Curve for the Everyday Discrimination Scale


Figure 1 shows the probability curve for the Everyday Discrimination Scale. Each probability curve should ideally show distinct peaks. “Never” is indicated as 1, “Less than once a year” is indicated by 2, “A few times a year” is indicated by 3, “A few times a month” is indicated by 4, “At least once a week” is indicated by 5, and “Almost Every day” is indicated by 6. However, the “Never” and “Almost Every day” make a curve, but “Less than once a year”, “A few times a year”, “A few times a month”, and “At least once a week” are hidden beneath other curves.

Table 3
Frequency Distributions for the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI) (N = 346)

Not At All True of Me		Somewhat True of Me	Moderately True of Me	Mostly True of Me	Totally True of Me
%		Me	of Me	Me	Me
		%	%	%	%
RCI1	22.2%	26.7%	18.9%	19.2%	12.9%
RCI2	15.1%	25.7%	22.4%	21.1%	15.7%
RCI3	12.2%	19.8%	20.7%	26.4%	21.0%
RCI4	6.6%	15.1%	13.6%	20.2%	44.6%
RCI5	17.1%	18.0%	16.8%	21.0%	27.1%
RCI6	16.8%	20.1%	17.1%	25.6%	20.4%
RCI7	10.6%	21.0%	18.8%	24.9%	24.6%
RCI8	12.5%	25.0%	24.1%	21.0%	17.4%
RCI9	14.1%	17.7%	23.5%	22.9%	21.7%
RCI10	19.3%	23.2%	24.5%	17.4%	15.6%

Table 3 shows responses by percentage subscale of the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI). The study participant responses on the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI 1 & RCI 2) have mostly endorsed “Somewhat True of Me” because the participants found it relatively difficult to understand all these items. Furthermore, the study participant responses on Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI 3 to RCI 7) have mostly endorsed “Mostly True Of Me” and “Totally True Of Me” because participants were relatively easily understanding all these items. Similarly, the participants’ responses on the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI 8 to RCI 10) have mostly endorsed “Somewhat True Of Me” and “Moderately True Of Me” because participants found it relatively difficult to understand all these items.

Figure 2
Probability Curve for the Intrapersonal Religious Commitment

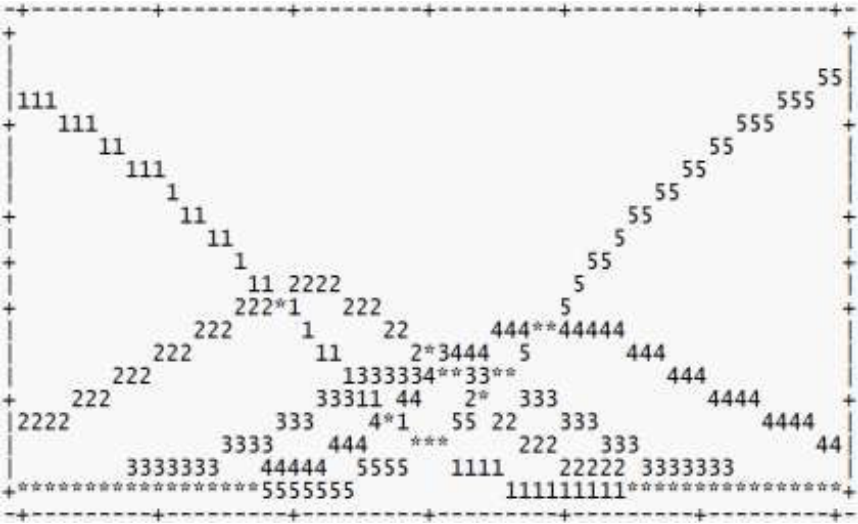


Figure 2 shows the probability curve for Intrapersonal Religious Commitment. Each probability curve should ideally show distinct peaks. “Not at all true of me” is indicated as 1, “Somewhat true of me” is indicated by 2, “Moderately true of me” is indicated by 3 , “Mostly true of me” is indicated by 4 , and “Totally True of me” is indicated by 5. However, the “Not at all true of me”, “Somewhat true of me”, Moderately true of me,” and “Mostly true of me” make a curve, but “Totally True of me” is hidden beneath other curves.

Figure 3
Probability Curve for the Interpersonal Religious Commitment

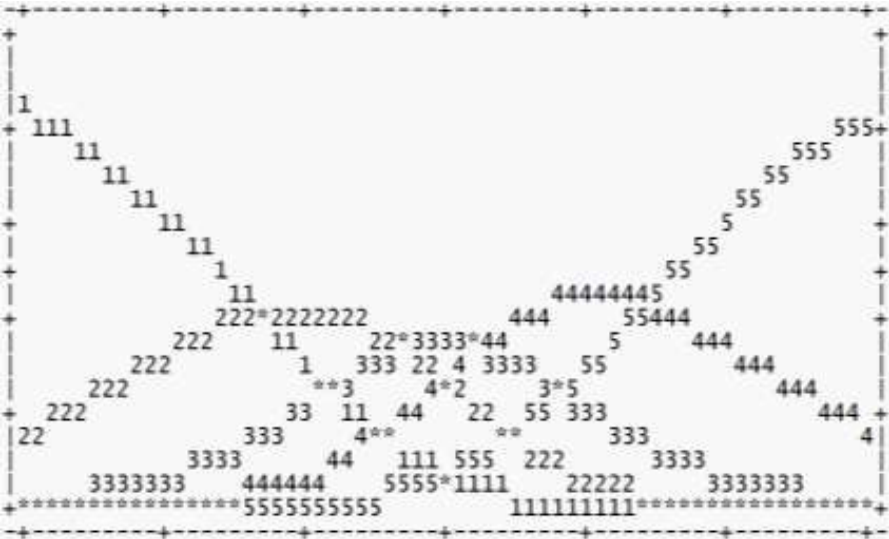


Figure 3 shows the probability curve for interpersonal religious commitment. Each probability curve should ideally show distinct peaks. “Not at all true of me” is indicated as 1, “Somewhat true of me” is indicated as 2, “Moderately true of me” is indicated as 3, “Mostly true of me” is indicated as 4, and “Totally True of me” is indicated as 5. However, the “Not at all true of me”, “Somewhat true of me”, Moderately true of me”, and “Mostly true of me” make a curve, but “Totally True of me” is hidden beneath other curves.

Table 4

Frequency Distributions for the Religious Coping (RCOPE) Scale (N = 346)

	Not At All %	Somewhat %	Quite A Bit %	A Great Deal %
RCOPE1	10.0%	13.1%	10.6%	66.3%
RCOPE2	5.5%	13.8%	16.3%	64.3%
RCOPE3	9.2%	19.1%	23.4%	48.3%
RCOPE4	10.9%	14.3%	18.4%	56.4%
RCOPE5	9.4%	16.0%	17.6%	57.1%
RCOPE6	6.6%	11.3%	15.6%	66.6%
RCOPE7	9.1%	13.4%	20.0%	57.5%
RCOPE8	29.0%	18.3%	18.3%	34.4%
RCOPE9	19.9%	26.9%	26.6%	26.6%
RCOPE10	20.4%	27.4%	23.9%	28.3%
RCOPE11	29.6%	18.6%	17.7%	34.1%
RCOPE12	35.5%	20.4%	22.4%	21.7%
RCOPE13	24.3%	26.5%	26.5%	22.7%
RCOPE14	45.4%	13.7%	12.8%	28.1%

Table 4 Shows responses by percentage subscale of the Religious Coping (RCOPE) Scale. The study participants' responses on Religious Coping (RCOPE 1 to RCOPE 11) have mostly endorsed "A Great Deal" and "Somewhat" because participants relatively easily understood all these items. Similarly, the study participants' responses on value (RCOPE 12 to RCOPE 14) have mostly endorsed "Not at all" and "Somewhat" because participants found it relatively difficult to understand these items.

Figure 4

Probability Curve for the Positive Religious Coping

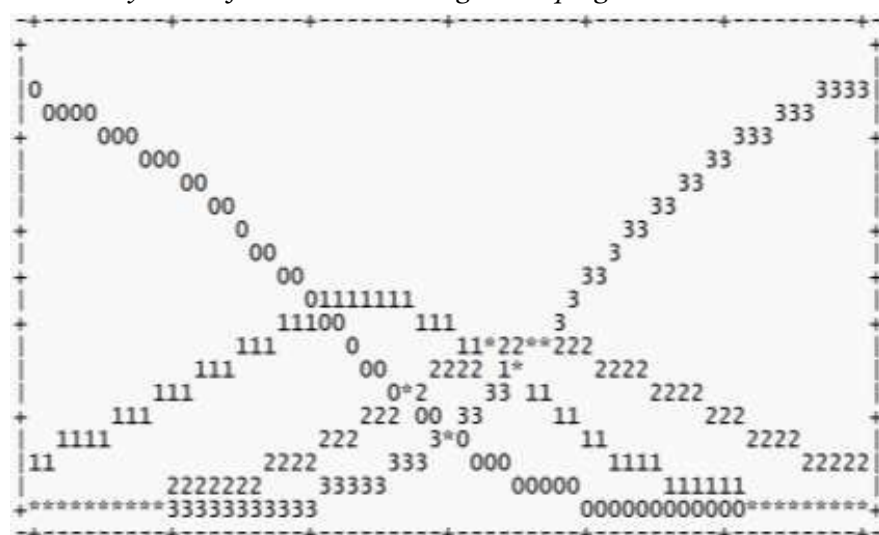


Figure 4 shows the probability curve for Positive Religious Coping. Each probability curve should ideally show distinct peaks. "Not at all" is indicated as 0, "Somewhat" is indicated by 1, "Quite a bit" is indicated by 2, and "A great deal" is indicated by 3. However, the "Not at all", "Somewhat", "Quite a bit", and "A great deal" make a curve in Figure 4.

Figure 5

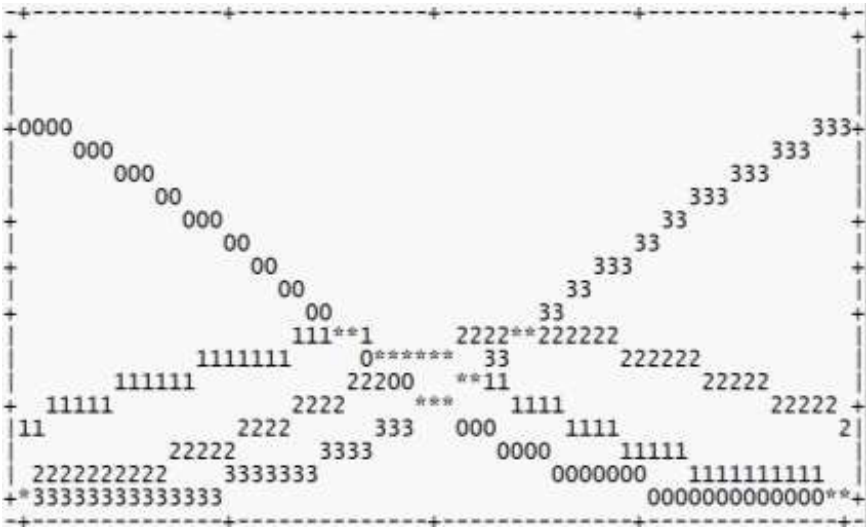


Figure 5 shows a probability curve for Negative Religious Coping. Each probability curve should ideally show distinct peaks. “Not at all” is indicated as 0, “Somewhat” is indicated by 1, “Quite a bit” is indicated by 2, and “A great deal” is indicated by 3. However , the “Not at all ”, “Somewhat”, “Quite a bit”, and “A great deal” make a curve in Figure 5.

Table 5

Frequency Distributions for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) (N = 346)

	Strongly Agree %	Moderately Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Moderately Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
SWBS1	29.1%	2.9%	23.3%	16.2%	8.1%	20.4%
SWBS2	27.0%	4.8%	24.8%	16.7%	11.6%	15.1%
SWBS3	3.5%	4.5%	5.8%	18.3%	6.4%	61.4%
SWBS4	3.9%	7.1%	7.1%	28.2%	21.1%	32.5%
SWBS5	30.8%	5.6%	31.1%	13.1%	8.9%	10.5%
SWBS6	11.3%	10.6%	22.9%	22.9%	17.4%	14.8%
SWBS7	6.8%	5.8%	6.1%	30.7%	16.2%	34.3%
SWBS8	3.3%	6.2%	9.4%	33.6%	19.9%	27.7%
SWBS9	29.5%	5.8%	26.0%	15.6%	9.7%	13.3%
SWBS10	5.3%	5.9%	10.2%	39.1%	19.4%	20.1%
SWBS11	2.7%	5.6%	7.0%	29.6%	14.6%	40.5%
SWBS12	14.5%	12.2%	26.0%	18.4%	15.5%	13.5%
SWBS13	28.8%	8.2%	28.4%	15.0%	8.8%	10.8%
SWBS14	5.6%	7.6%	8.6%	32.6%	18.1%	27.6%
SWBS15	7.0%	4.6%	4.6%	29.8%	10.6%	43.4%
SWBS16	10.5%	14.1%	28.9%	18.7%	12.5%	15.4%
SWBS17	5.2%	5.6%	7.5%	28.1%	12.7%	40.8%
SWBS18	18.9%	7.3%	33.1%	19.2%	10.3%	11.3%
SWBS19	2.6%	5.9%	8.6%	32.7%	12.2%	38.0%
SWBS20	4.6%	2.9%	4.9%	36.8%	12.7%	38.1%

Table 5 Shows responses by percentage subscale of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS). The study participants' responses on Religious Well-Being (SWBS 1 to SWBS 5) have mostly endorsed "Strongly agree" and "Strongly Disagree" because participants relatively easily understood all these items. Similarly, the study participant responses on Religious Wellbeing (SWBS 6 to SWBS 8) have mostly endorsed "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" because participants found it relatively difficult to understand all these items. Furthermore, the participant responses on Religious Wellbeing (SWBS 9) have mostly endorsed "Strongly Agree" because participants were relatively easily understanding all these items. Similarly, the study participant responses on Religious Wellbeing (SWBS 10) have mostly endorsed "Disagree" because participants found it relatively difficult to understand all these items. Similarly, the participant responses on Existential Wellbeing (SWBS 11 to SWBS 12) have mostly endorsed "Strongly disagree" because participants found it relatively difficult to understand all these items. Furthermore, the participant responses on Existential Wellbeing

(SWBS 13) have mostly endorsed "Strongly agree" because participants found it relatively easy to understand all these items. Furthermore, the participant responses on Existential Wellbeing (SWBS 14 and SWBS 15) have mostly endorsed "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" because the participant found it relatively difficult to understand all these items. Furthermore, the participant responses on Existential Wellbeing (SWBS 16) have mostly endorsed "Agree" because the participant was relatively easily understanding all these items. Furthermore, the participant responses on Existential Wellbeing (SWBS 17) have mostly endorsed "Strongly Disagree" because the participant found it relatively difficult to understand all these items. Furthermore, the participant responses on Existential Wellbeing (SWBS 18) have mostly endorsed "Agree" because the participant was relatively easily understanding all these items. Furthermore, the participant responses on Existential Wellbeing (SWBS 19 and SWBS 20) have mostly endorsed "Strongly Disagree" because the participant found it relatively difficult to understand all these items.

Figure 6

Probability Curve for the Religious Well-being

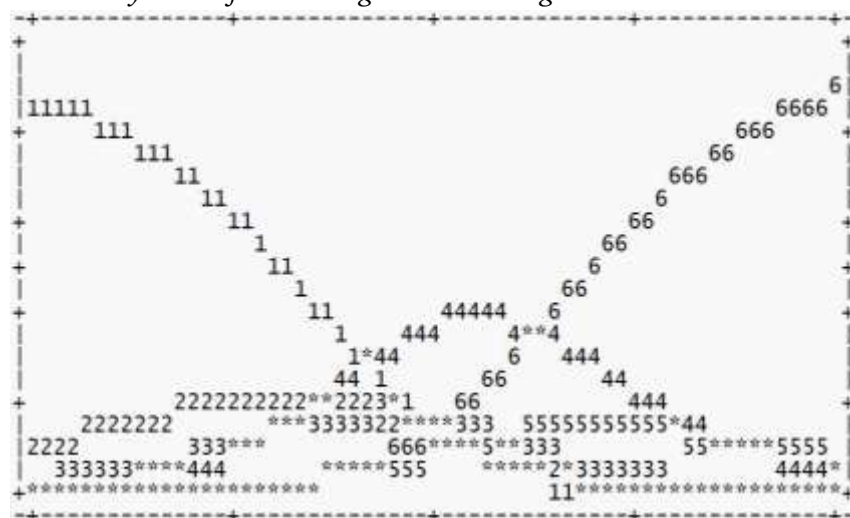


Figure 6 shows the probability curve for Religious Wellbeing. Each probability curve should ideally show distinct peaks. "Strongly Agree" is indicated as 6, "Moderately Agree" is indicated by 5, "Agree" is indicated by 4, "Disagree" is indicated by 3, "Moderately Disagree" is indicated by 2, "Strongly Disagree" is indicated by 1. However, the "Strongly Agree" and "Strongly Disagree" make a curve, and "Moderately Agree", "Agree", "Disagree", and "Moderately Disagree" are hidden beneath other curves in Figure 6.

Figure 7
Probability Curve for the Existential Well-being

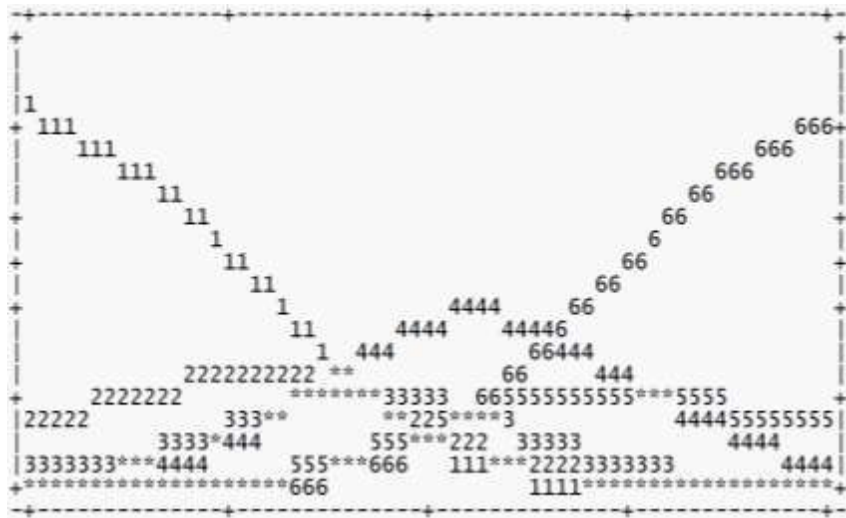


Figure 7 shows the probability curve for Existential. Each probability curve should ideally show distinct peaks. “Strongly Agree” is indicated as 6, “Moderately Agree” is indicated by 5, “Agree” is indicated by 4, “Disagree” is indicated by 3, “Moderately Disagree” is indicated by 2, “Strongly Disagree” is indicated by 1. However, the “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” make a curve, and “Moderately Agree”, “Agree”, “Disagree”, and “Moderately Disagree are hidden beneath other curves in Figure 7.

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients of Instruments Used in the Study (N = 346)

Range								
Measure	Items	M	SD	α	Skewness	Kurtosis	Actual	Potential
EDS	9	24.33	9.94	.84	.59	.44	9-54	9-54
RCI	10							
IARC	6	19.43	5.57	.78	-.21	-.22	6-30	6-30
IERC	4	12.17	4.07	.75	.10	-.53	4-20	4-20
RCOPE	14							
PRCOPE	7	15.95	5.32	.88	-1.01	.38	0-21	0-21
NRCOPE	7	10.31	5.74	.82	.22	-.64	0-21	0-21
SWBS	20							
RWB	10	43.70	9.10	.79	.10	-.68	16-60	10-60
EWB	10	40.06	7.42	.67	.37	.35	13-60	10-60

Note: EDS = Everyday Discrimination Scale; RCI = Religious Commitment Inventory; IARC = Intrapersonal Religious Commitment; IERC = Interpersonal Religious Commitment; RCOPE = Religious Coping Scale; PRCOPE = Positive Religious Coping; NRCOPE = Negative Religious Coping; SWBS = Spiritual Well-Being Scale; RWB = Religious Well-Being; EWB = Existential Well-Being.

The study's instrument reliability coefficients and descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 6. Reliability coefficient ranges in the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS) were from .84. The reliability coefficients in the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI), which has two subscales, varied from .75 to .78. Reliability coefficients for the two subscales of the Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE) were from .82 to .88. The reliability coefficients

for the Spiritual Wellbeing Scale (SWBS), which has two subscales, varied from .67 to .79. As a general rule, deviation from normalcy is not harmful if $|\text{Skewness}| > 3.0$ and $|\text{Kurtosis}| > 10.0$ (Kline, 2016).

Table 7

Correlations among Scores on Study Variables (N = 346)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.EDS	--						
2.IARC	.00	--					
3.IERC	-.04	.76**	--				
4.PRCOPE	-.13*	.52**	.44**	--			
5.NRCOPE	.28**	.11	.18**	.23**	--		
6.RWB	-.23**	.35**	.30**	.54**	-.33**	--	
7.EWB	-.34**	.35**	.36**	.37**	-.28**	.60**	--

Note: EDS = Everyday Discrimination Scale; IARC = Intrapersonal Religious Commitment; IERC = Interpersonal Religious Commitment; PRCOPE = Positive Religious Coping; NRCOPE = Negative Religious Coping; RWB = Religious Well-Being; EWB = Existential Well-Being.

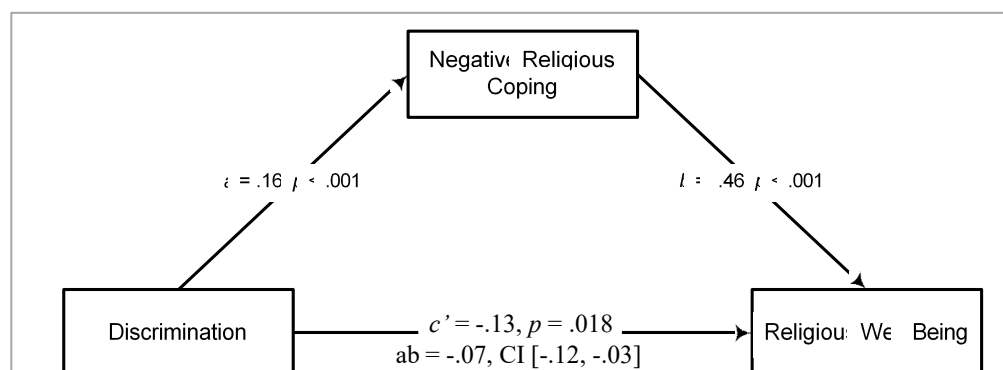
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Correlations between study variable scores are displayed in Table 7. Our hypothesis states that there was a significant negative connection ($r = -.23$) between religious wellbeing and prejudice. In a similar vein, our hypothesis indicated that there was a negatively significant correlation ($r = -.34$) between discrimination and existential wellbeing. Our hypothesis states that there was a positive significant correlation ($r = .35$) between intrapersonal religious commitment and religious wellbeing. In a similar vein, our hypothesis indicated that there was a positive significant correlation ($r = .35$) between existential health and intrapersonal religious devotion. Our hypothesis states that there was a positive significant correlation ($r = .30$) between interpersonal religious commitment and religious wellbeing. Additionally, our hypothesis states that there was a positive significant link ($r = .36$) between interpersonal religious commitment and existential health. Our hypothesis states that there was a positive significant correlation ($r = .54$) between religious wellbeing and positive religious coping. In a similar vein, our hypothesis stated that there was a positive significant correlation ($r = .37$) between existential wellbeing and positive religious coping. Our hypothesis states that there was a negatively significant correlation ($r = -.33$) between religious wellbeing and bad religious coping. In a similar vein, our hypothesis states that there was a negatively significant correlation ($r = -.28$) between existential health and bad religious coping.

Mediation Analysis

Figure 8

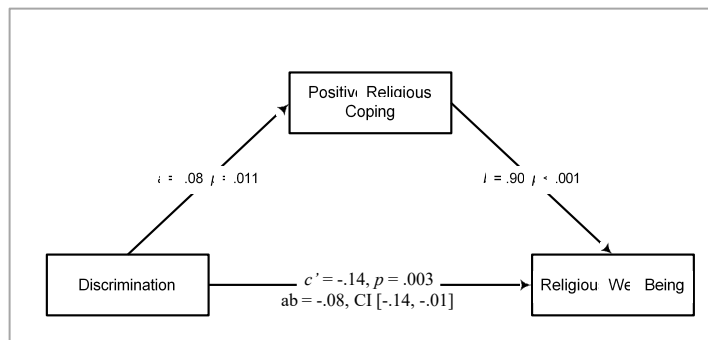
Negative Religious Coping as Mediator between the Relation of Discrimination and Religious Well-being.



The mediation path analysis results are displayed in Figure 4.8. According to the model, prejudice has an indirect impact on religious well-being by causing negative religious coping ($ab = -.07$, CI $[-.12, -.03]$). Essentially, high levels of discrimination were associated with high levels of negative religious coping ($a = .16$, $p < .001$), and high levels of negative religious coping were associated with low levels of religious well-being ($b = -.46$, $p < .001$). Additionally, there is evidence that discrimination had an independent impact on religious well-being ($c' = -.13$, $p = .018$).

Figure 9

Positive Religious Coping as Mediator between the Relation of Discrimination and Religious Well-being.



The mediation path analysis results are displayed in Figure 9. Through its impact on positive religious coping, prejudice indirectly affects religious well-being, according to the model ($ab = -.08$, CI $[-.14, -.01]$). Essentially, low levels of positive religious coping were associated with high levels of discrimination ($a = -.08$, $p = .011$), and low levels of positive religious coping were associated with poor levels of religious well-being ($b = .90$, $p < .001$). Additionally, there is proof that discrimination had an independent impact on religious well-being ($c' = -.14$, $p = .003$).

Discussion

The study's results showed that religious well-being ($r = -.23$, $p < .01$) and existential well-being ($r = -.34$, $p < .01$) were adversely and significantly correlated with perceived discrimination. Perceived prejudice was linked to worse psychological well-being among ethnic minorities, immigrants, Muslim populations, and refugees, which is consistent with previous research (Karlsen & Nazroo, 2002; Noh et al., 1999; Rippey & Newman, 2006). This might be the result of unfair treatment, which is especially pertinent to students' overall feeling of purpose and contentment in life. Research among Pakistani young adults has also linked problematic social media use with depression and aggression, as well as psychological distress (Bashir et al., 2024; Shahid et al., 2024). Although these studies focused on digital behaviours rather than discrimination, they provide additional context for understanding psychological difficulties among young adults. Additionally, religious and existential well-being were positively and significantly correlated with both interpersonal and intrapersonal religious commitment, confirming H3–H6.

Intrapersonal commitment correlated with religious well-being ($r = .35$) and existential well-being ($r = .35$), while interpersonal commitment correlated with religious well-being ($r = .30$) and existential well-being ($r = .36$), with all associations significant at ($p < .01$). These findings are consistent with the religious meaning and religious belonging perspectives. Religious beliefs may provide comfort, coherence, and purpose, whereas participation in religious communities may foster belonging and social support (Ellison & George, 1994; Lim & Putnam, 2010; Park, 2005). Both dimensions of religious commitment may therefore represent resources associated with students' spiritual and existential well-being.

Positive religious coping demonstrated the strongest correlation with religious well-being ($r=.54$, $p<.01$) and was also positively associated with existential well-being ($r=.37$, $p<.01$), supporting H7 and H8. These findings align with Pargament et al. (1998), who found that positive religious coping was associated with fewer psychological distress symptoms following stressful experiences. Positive religious coping may help students interpret difficulties constructively and maintain spiritual connection and personal meaning. Conversely, negative religious coping was negatively associated with religious well-being ($r=-.33$, $p<.01$) and existential well-being ($r=-.28$, $p<.01$), supporting H9 and H10. This pattern is consistent with research linking religious struggle and spiritual discontent to poorer well-being (Exline, 2013; Pargament et al., 2001). Thus, the psychological implications of religious coping may depend on whether students experience religion as a source of comfort or conflict.

The mediation study also revealed that the association between discrimination and religious well-being was partially mediated by poor religious coping. Negative religious coping was positively correlated with discrimination ($a=.16$, $p<.001$), while religious well-being was inversely correlated with discrimination ($b=-.46$, $p<.001$). The direct effect was still significant ($c'=-.13$, $p=.018$), but the indirect effect was significant ($ab=-.07$), 95% CI $[-.12, -.03]$. These results imply that one avenue between perceived discrimination and lower religious well-being may be negative religious coping. This explanation aligns with the findings of Pargament et al. (1998), who made a distinction between religious reactions involving spiritual struggle and suffering and adaptive religious coping. However, because the reported study focused on negative religious coping and religious well-being rather than both coping dimensions and both well-being outcomes, the mediation hypothesis was only partially investigated.

Recommendations

Implementing these recommendations will help address the identified research limitations and enhance the quality and reliability of future studies:

1. Ensure a more balanced representation of undergraduate and graduate students through stratified sampling.
2. Consider longitudinal designs and mixed-method approaches to better understand relationships between variables and students' experiences.
3. Employ random sampling and include students from multiple institutions in Kohat and other regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
4. Improve online data collection through authenticity verification, confidentiality, and a combination of online and offline methods.
5. Use larger pilot samples, refine research instruments, and ensure balanced gender representation.

References

- Abbott, R. A., Ploubidis, G. B., Huppert, F. A., Kuh, D., Wadsworth, M. E., & Croudace, T. J. (2006). Psychometric evaluation and predictive validity of Ryff's psychological well-being items in a UK birth cohort sample of women. *Health and quality of life outcomes*, 4(1), 76. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1477-7525-4-76>
- Bashir, S., Shahid, M. S., & Salman, F. (2024). The mediating role of social connectedness in linking Ludo Star game addiction and mental health problems in young adults. *Gomal University Journal of Research*, 40(3), 359-369. <https://doi.org/10.51380/gujr-40-03-08>
- Bashir, S., Shahid, M. S., Bibi, M., & Mukhtar, S. (2024). ludo star game addiction, social connectedness and psychological well-being in university students of Lahore, Pakistan: Ludo star game addiction, social connectedness and psychological well-being in university students. *Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Research*, 4(3), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.61919/jhrr.v4i3.1273>
- Beddington, J., Cooper, C. L., Field, J., Goswami, U., Huppert, F. A., Jenkins, R., Jones, H. S., Kirkwood, T. B., Sahakian, B. J., & Thomas, S. M. (2008). The mental wealth of nations. *Nature*, 455(7216), 1057-1060. <https://doi.org/10.1038/4551057a>
- Branscombe, B., & Ellemers, N. (1998). Use of individualistic and group strategies in response to perceived group-based discrimination. In *Prejudice: The target's perspective* (pp. 243-266). Academic Press.
- Branscombe, N. R., & Wann, D. L. (1994). Collective self-esteem consequences of outgroup derogation when a valued social identity is on trial. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 24(6), 641-657. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420240603>
- Cardwell, J. D. (1980). The social context of religiosity.
- Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., & Weintraub, J. K. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56(2), 267-283. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.56.2.267>
- Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R. A., Shepard, S. A., Murphy, B. C., Guthrie, I. K., Jones, S., Friedman, J., Poulin, R., & Maszk, P. (1997). Contemporaneous and longitudinal prediction of children's social functioning from regulation and emotionality. *Child Development*, 68(4), 642. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1132116>
- Ellison, C. G., & George, L. K. (1994). Religious involvement, social ties, and social support in a southeastern community. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 33(1), 46. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1386636>
- Exline, J. J. (2013). *Religious and spiritual struggles*.
- Finke, R., Martin, R. R., & Fox, J. (2017). Explaining discrimination against religious minorities. *Politics and Religion*, 10(2), 389-416. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1755048317000037>
- Haslam, S. A., Jetten, J., Postmes, T., & Haslam, C. (2008). Social identity, health and well-being: An emerging agenda for applied psychology. *Applied Psychology*, 58(1), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2008.00379.x>
- Holdcroft, B. B. (2006). What is religiosity. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.1001082013>
- Karlsen, S., & Nazroo, J. Y. (2002). Relation between racial discrimination, social class, and health among ethnic minority groups. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(4), 624-631. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.92.4.624>
- Khan, P., Shahid, M. S., & Majid, H. A. (2024). Mediating role of online social connectedness in smartphone addiction and online relationship among young adults. *Gomal University Journal of Research*, 40(3), 327-336. <https://doi.org/10.51380/gujr-40-03-05>
- Kline, R. B. (2005). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*.

- Lambert, N. M., Stillman, T. F., Hicks, J. A., Kamble, S., Baumeister, R. F., & Fincham, F. D. (2013). To belong is to matter. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 39(11), 1418-1427. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167213499186>
- Lewis, N. (1978). *The New Roget's Thesaurus of the English Language*. Putnam.
- Lim, C., & Putnam, R. D. (2010). Religion, social networks, and life satisfaction. *American Sociological Review*, 75(6), 914-933. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122410386686>
- Major, B., Kaiser, C. R., O'Brien, L. T., & McCoy, S. K. (2007). Perceived discrimination as worldview threat or worldview confirmation: Implications for self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(6), 1068-1086. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.6.1068>
- Pargament, K. I., Koenig, H. G., & Perez, L. M. (2000). The many methods of religious coping: Development and initial validation of the RCOPE. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 56(4), 519-543. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(sici\)1097-4679\(200004\)56:4<519::aid-jclp6>3.0.co;2-1](https://doi.org/10.1002/(sici)1097-4679(200004)56:4<519::aid-jclp6>3.0.co;2-1)
- Pargament, K. I., Smith, B. W., Koenig, H. G., & Perez, L. (1998). Patterns of positive and negative religious coping with major life stressors. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 37(4), 710. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1388152>
- Pargament, K. I., Tarakeshwar, N., Ellison, C. G., & Wulff, K. M. (2001). Religious coping among the religious: The relationships between religious coping and well-being in a national sample of presbyterian clergy, elders, and members. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 40(3), 497-513. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0021-8294.00073>
- Park, C. L. (2005). Religion as a meaning-making framework in coping with life stress. *Journal of Social Issues*, 61(4), 707-729. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2005.00428.x>
- Rippy, A. E., & Newman, E. (2006). Perceived religious discrimination and its relationship to anxiety and paranoia among Muslim Americans. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, 1(1), 5-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15564900600654351>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and Eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 141-166. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.141>
- Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, C. L. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(4), 719-727. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.69.4.719>
- Schmitt, M. T., & Branscombe, N. R. (2002). The meaning and consequences of perceived discrimination in disadvantaged and privileged social groups. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 12(1), 167-199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14792772143000058>
- Shahid, M. S., Abid, S., Anmol, H., Ain, S. F. U., & Saleem, Z. E. H. (2025). Addictive behaviours and mental health outcomes: A quantitative comparative study. *Regional Lens*, 4(3), 144-154. <https://doi.org/10.55737/rl.2025.42104>
- Shahid, M. S., Bashir, S., & Fatima, S. (2024). Social media addiction and aggression in Pakistani young adults: Social connectedness as a moderator. *Journal of Professional & Applied Psychology*, 5(3), 424-433. <https://doi.org/10.52053/jpap.v5i3.308>
- Shahid, M. S., Yousaf, R., & Munir, H. (2024). Social media addiction, depression and aggression in young adults. *Journal of Professional & Applied Psychology*, 5(2), 276-285. <https://doi.org/10.52053/jpap.v5i2.297>
- Skinner, E. A., & Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J. (2007). The development of coping. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 58(1), 119-144. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.58.110405.085705>

- Skinner, E. A., Edge, K., Altman, J., & Sherwood, H. (2003). Searching for the structure of coping: A review and critique of category systems for classifying ways of coping. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(2), 216-269. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.2.216>
- Wybraniec, J., & Finke, R. (2001). Religious regulation and the courts: The judiciary's changing role in protecting minority religions from Majoritarian rule. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 40(3), 427-444. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0021-8294.00067>