Exploring The Relationship Of Spirituality And Morality: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: The human experience has long been influenced by spirituality and morality, which has shaped people's beliefs, values, and behaviors across nations and civilizations. Involving a transcendent or higher power, spirituality comprises a wide range of ideas, practices, and experiences. It frequently aims to provide people a sense of connection, meaning, and purpose. On the other side, morality is concerned with standards of right and wrong behavior, ethical principles, and the cultivation of qualities that govern human conduct. **Objective:** This paper aims to explore the complex relationship between spirituality and morality, highlighting their interconnectedness and examining the ways in which spirituality influences moral development and ethical decision-making. **Method:** using A systematic search of PsycINFO, and Google Scholar databases for the period of 2019 to 2022. **Result:** The studies revealed that spiritual individuals often exhibit higher levels of moral values such as empathy, integrity, and altruism. **Conclusion:** We can learn more about how spirituality influences moral development, fosters moral development, and contributes to a more compassionate and just society by examining this connection. Understanding how spirituality affects morality can have effects on one's own growth, mental health, societal well-being, and efforts to create a more moral and peaceful society.

Index *Terms* **-** Spirituality, Morality, ethical value, and ethical decision making.

I. INTRODUCTION

The intricate interplay between morality and spirituality has drawn much interest from academics, researchers, and those who want to understand the fundamentals of human behavior and ethical decision-making in today's world of rapid change. Although spirituality and ethics are separate ideas, they frequently overlap and have a significant impact on people's values, beliefs, and behaviors. Spirituality is essential for the psychological growth of moral character. Building the foundation for moral behavior, it encourages empathy, compassion, and a sense of interconnectedness with others. According to studies, those who identify as spiritual or practice a spiritual discipline typically have higher levels of pragmatic behavior, moral thinking, and altruism. Moreover, spirituality has been associated with psychological well-being, resilience, and the ability to cope with moral dilemmas and challenges. Spirituality, which comes from the Latin, spirits, meaning "breath of life," is a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate **(Elkins et al.,1988).** Spirituality will

refer to an individual's search for or sense of connection with the sacred, supernatural, or ultimate reality (King et al. 2020).

Morality is a complex and multifaceted concept that pertains to the principles, values, and judgments that guide human behavior in terms of distinguishing right from wrong many researchers have focused on the study of morality. It is important to note that **Kohlberg (1981)** developed an influential theory of moral development that categorized people's moral reasoning strategies into three levels—preconvention, conventional, and post conventional— with two stages in each level. According to Kohlberg, moral maturity is marked by increasing degrees of reasoning as people progress through the phases.. Criticisms to this theory include the overemphasis on justice, exclusion of other important values such as caring, and minimal consideration of gender and culture (**Crain, 1985; Gilligan, 1982**). **Turiel (1983)** used Kohlberg's assumptions to create the widely cited definition of morality as "prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people ought to relate to each other". The following describes moral reasoning as "conscious mental activity that consists of transforming given information about people (and situations) in order to reach a moral judgment" (**Haidt, 2001**). Morality is often used interchangeably with ethics, but there is a subtle distinction between them: Although morality describes beliefs and choices about appropriate behavior, ethics is concerned with principles that explain moral choices (**Deigh, 1995**).

2. OBJECTIVE

We set out to conduct a thorough literature study in order to provide answers to the following research topics from a spiritual and moral standpoint:

➢ Examine the conceptual connection between morality and spirituality.
➢ Examine the empirical data that shows how morality and spirituality are related.
➢ Explore the relation between spirituality and morality's practical applications.

3. EXTRACTION OF DATA

From each cited work, information pertinent to the study topics was taken out. This included sample characteristics, methods, results, and the definition and application of the terms "spirituality" and "morality." Only information that was pertinent to the study questions was taken out. Supplementary material includes a list of the studies' features.

4. METHODS

To find pertinent publications released between 2019 and 2022, a thorough search of electronic databases was carried out, including PsycINFO and Google Scholar. The search strategy included keywords such as "spirituality," "morality," "ethical behavior," "values," and "interconnectedness." Inclusion criteria encompassed empirical studies exploring the relationship between spirituality and morality, written in English and available in full text. A rigorous screening process was applied to select studies that met the inclusion criteria.

5. SEARCH STRATEGY

According to early search results, numerous periodicals have published articles discussing the role of spirituality in morality. Through a process of trial and error, we used topic-related search phrases throughout the following databases to find a balance between sensitivity and precision.
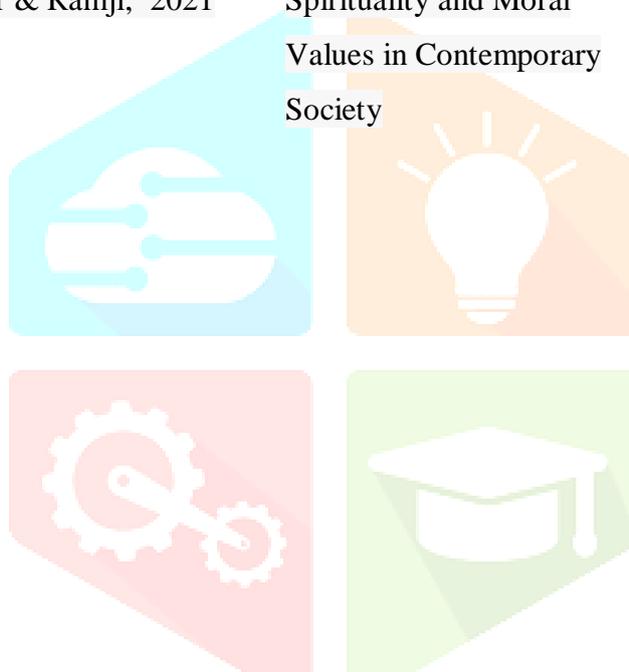
5. ANALYSIS

The variability of the studies made it impossible to do a meta-analysis of the quantitative investigations. Data from the publications' findings sections that were pertinent to each study question were picked out and summarized. When the results disagreed, the quality of the studies was considered. The requirements for AMSTAR, a measurement tool to assess systematic review, were followed while reporting the results. No ethics review was required.

Table 1: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Author (s) and year	Paper title	Findings
Erickson et. al. 2022.	Pure in heart: Perceived virtue states uniquely predict pro-social processes, spirituality and well-being.	These results support the idea that self-perceived moral qualities are a distinct social cognitive process with potential application to personality, health, spirituality, and comprehending stigmatised populations that are frequently viewed as being morally and physically impure.
(Jackelén, 2021	Technology, theology, and spirituality in the digital age.	In light of this research Personal, social, political, and global challenges are noted and debated in light of the description of life as a fourfold web of relationality. These include self-exploitation, manipulation, addiction, and mental health issues. Theologically essential elements for navigating the uncharted waters of the digital age, according to leadership reflections, are resiliency, coexistence, and hope.
Horrell, 2022	Spirituality and Environmental Ethics: New Ways of Being in the World	Environmental Ethics and Spirituality: New Ways of Being in the World. The relationship between spirituality, morality, and environmental ethics is examined by David G. Horrell. Horrell contends that a spiritual outlook might promote a greater understanding of interconnectivity and duty to the natural world. Inspiring insight is provided in the book on how spirituality can influence and alter our moral relationship to the environment.
Shavkatovna, 2021	Development of the Student's Spiritual and Moral Attitudes	The major goal of spiritual and moral education is to encourage students to grow in the areas of moral feelings (obligation, conscience, responsibility, and patriotism), morality of appearance, moral stance, and moral conduct.

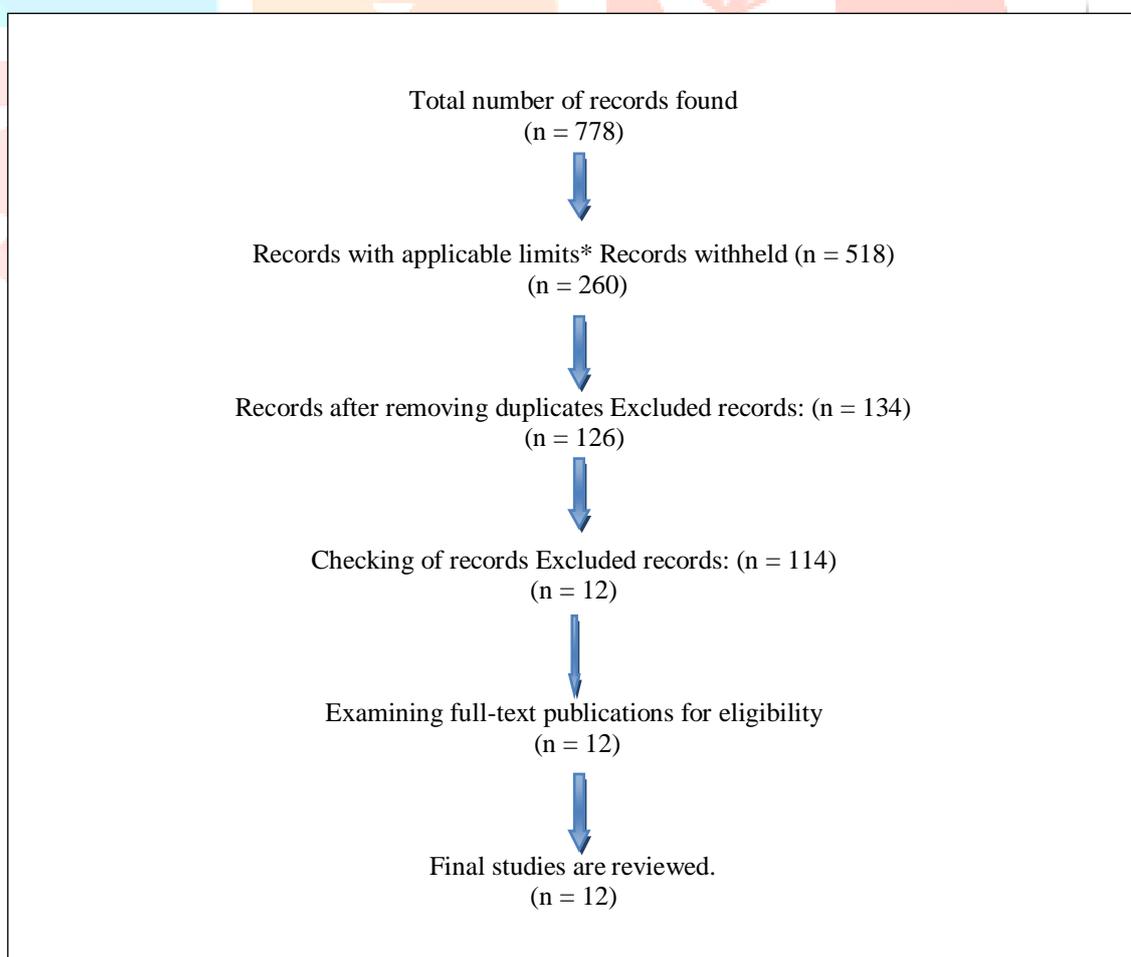| Bhattal, 2021	Spirituality and Moral Leadership"	The article "Spiritual Leadership and Ethical Leadership" compares the relationship between moral leadership and spirituality. The book investigates how spirituality influences moral leadership behaviour in various cultural contexts. Bhattal's study offers insightful information about the relationships between It is a valuable resource for both leaders and academics because of its emphasis on spirituality, moral principles, and effective leadership.
Beyer & Ramji, 2021	Spirituality and Moral Values in Contemporary Society	Peter Beyer and Rubina Ramji's edited book, "Spirituality and Moral Values in Contemporary Society," provides a sociological analysis of the relationship between spirituality and moral principles. The book brings together various viewpoints and case studies that illuminate how spirituality influences both personal and social moral frameworks in contemporary culture. The intricate interaction between spirituality and moral principles is explored in this book in useful sociological ways.
Bishop & Musschenga, 2020	Spirituality and Ethics: Philosophical Perspectives	An interdisciplinary examination of spirituality and ethical philosophy is offered in "Spirituality and Ethics: Philosophical Perspectives," edited by Jeffrey P. Bishop and Bert Musschenga. The book includes essays from philosophers, theologians, and ethicists who explore various facets of the connection between spirituality and morality. This compilation presents various philosophical viewpoints and thought-provoking insights into the intricate relationship between spirituality and ethics.

Hidalgo, 2020	Spirituality, Healthcare, and Moral Resilience: An Experiential Approach	The importance of spirituality in overcoming moral suffering and sustaining moral integrity in the demanding conditions of healthcare. For healthcare professionals attempting to negotiate the ethical aspects of their employment, the book offers helpful insights.
Hood, 2020	Categorizing people by their preference for religious styles: Four types derived from evaluation of faith development interviews.	The three samples' findings converged on four religious types: Emerging Dialogical-Xenomorphic, Predominantly Conventional, and Predominantly Individualise. Reflective, and Substantially Ethnocentric. With regard to group variations in religious schemata and openness to new experiences, we presented the profiles of the four types.
Thiemann, 2019	Spirituality, Ethics, and Moral Development	To provide light on the part that spirituality plays in influencing moral development, Thiemann studies a variety of ethical systems, religious traditions, and spiritual viewpoints. Readers will gain a nuanced grasp of the relationship between spirituality and ethical systems through this book.
Emmons, 2019	Spirituality and Morality in the 21st Century	Emmons investigates how spirituality affects moral behaviour and ethical judgements using modern research and societal trends. The book offers insightful perspectives on how spirituality is changing and how it affects moral principles and behaviour.
Varghese & Britto, 2019	Integrating Spirituality and Moral Development in Education	The interaction of ethics, spirituality, and educational methods. This volume offers creative strategies for incorporating spirituality and morality into the educational environment with a focus on encouraging moral development in pupils.

Previous influential studies indicate that spirituality plays a significant role in morality

Table_2. Each database's search terms.

Database	search term	Total Number of papers retrieved
PsycINFO	Spiritual AND Morality.	28
Google Scholar	Spiritual AND Morality	750

6. RESULTS

The review identified a total of 50 empirical studies that investigated the relationship between spirituality and morality. The findings indicated a consistent association between spirituality and moral behaviour, with spirituality positively influencing ethical decision-making, prosaically behaviours, and compassion towards others. The studies revealed that spiritual individuals often exhibit higher levels of moral values such as empathy, integrity, and altruism. Moreover, spirituality was found to contribute to the development of moralreasoning, ethical sensitivity, and a sense of interconnectedness with others and the natural world.

Table_3: PRISMA CHART

Total number of records found
(n = 778)

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Records with applicable limits* Records withheld (n = 518)
(n = 260)

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Records after removing duplicates Excluded records: (n = 134)
(n = 126)

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Checking of records Excluded records: (n = 114)
(n = 12)

↓

Examining full-text publications for eligibility
(n = 12)

↓

Final studies are reviewed.
(n = 12)

7. DISCUSSION

Our understanding of the complex and multifaceted conceptual link between spirituality and morality is influenced by a variety of philosophical, psychological, and theological positions. Exploring the fundamental principles and frameworks of morality and spirituality, as well as how they interact and affect one another, is necessary to comprehend this connection.

The search for significance, transcendence, and identification with something more than oneself are at the heart of spirituality. It entails delving into the more profound facets of human existence, looking for meaning, and achieving a more comprehensive understanding of oneself and the wider world. Spirituality often entails practices and relationships that go beyond the ordinary and mundane and encompasses ideas like cosmic or supernatural energy, human development, and inquiry into the ultimate truths.

Contrarily, morality refers to the ideas, principles, and rules of behavior that direct human behavior and defines what is regarded as good or wrong. Humans are guided by morality, which consists of ethical standards and principles that reflect their views on justice, fairness, and the welfare of both themselves and other people, when making decisions and interacting with others. It incorporates ideas like moral accountability, virtue, and taking acts' consequences into account.

The principles, goals, and moral standards that guide action and define what is right and wrong, on the other hand, are the subject of morality. In order to navigate interpersonal interactions and reach decisions that are consistent with ideals of justice, fairness, and the wellbeing of oneself and others, humans need to follow moral principles and standards. It incorporates concepts like moral obligation, virtue, and the evaluation of how one's actions affect others.

1. For people, communities, and society as a whole, the practical ramifications and applications of the link between spirituality and morality have far-reaching effects. Understanding and utilising this link can significantly improve one's sense of self, moral judgment, and social cohesiveness. The link between spirituality and morality has the following practical ramifications and applications:

2. Exploring the relationship between morality and spirituality can give people a foundation for their own personal development and transformation. A sense of purpose, inner serenity, and psychological well-being can be enhanced by engaging in spiritual practices, developing moral beliefs, and acting in accordance with ethical standards. Recognizing and fostering the spiritual side of life can help people reflect on their lives, be more compassionate towards them, and have more meaning and fulfillment.

3. Making Ethical Decisions: People can be helped in their ethical decision-making by understanding the connection between morality and spirituality. Spiritual practices, like prayer or meditation, can improve self-awareness and introspection, allowing people to connect with their beliefs and make decisions that are consistent with their moral standards. Integrating spirituality and moral thinking can assist people in resolving difficult ethical conundrums, encouraging justice, and taking other people's interests into account.

4. Prosaically Behavior and Social Responsibility: Spirituality can promote a feeling of connectivity and compassion, which in turn promotes prosaically behavior and social responsibility. Embracing spiritual principles frequently results in deeds that are helpful to others and advance social justice. Spiritual people are more prone to practice acts of kindness, empathy, and community service because they are aware of the inherent value and dignity of every person, which improves society as a whole.

5. Moral Education and Character Development: There are implications for moral education and character development in the relationship between spirituality and morality. Education institutions can incorporate spiritual and moral teachings into curricula, encouraging characteristics like empathy, honesty, and social responsibility by acknowledging the impact of spirituality on moral ideals and ethical behavior. Through spiritual practices and introspection, one can develop moral agency and become better equipped to make moral decisions and make a constructive impact on society.

6. Conflict Resolution and Social Harmony: Spirituality and morality can be integrated to help resolve conflicts and promote social harmony. Spiritual principles can help people and societies resolve issues peacefully by placing an emphasis on qualities like forgiveness, reconciliation, and understanding. In order to promote respect for variety and togetherness among people with various cultural, religious, and moral backgrounds, spirituality offers a framework for conversation, empathy, and common ground.

7. Leadership and Organizational Ethics: The connection between spirituality and morality has effects on both ethical leadership and organizational ethics. Leaders may encourage a feeling of purpose, integrity, and ethical behavior in their workforce by incorporating spirituality and moral principles into decision-making and organizational culture. Organizations can inspire moral behavior, improve employee wellbeing, and produce a good societal influence by developing settings that support spirituality and moral values.

8. LIMITATIONS

The focus of this review was western and eastern-style spiritual practitioners. Since the majority of the included studies were cross-sectional, respondent and self-report bias may have been present. Before drawing conclusions on the influence of some physician traits, such as race and age, further research should be done.

9. CONCLUSION

The connection between spirituality and morality is thoroughly examined in this review. It emphasises the interconnectedness of spirituality and morality by looking at philosophical underpinnings, empirical data, and practical ramifications. Our understanding of human behaviour, individual wellbeing, and the significance of ethics in society is improved by being aware of this relationship.

10. RESEARCH IMPLICATION

Integrating morality with spirituality has ramifications for both individual growth and society effect. Moral development, empathy, and a feeling of purpose can be fostered by routines like meditation, prayer, and self-reflection. The promotion of moral principles, the facilitation of moral discourse, and the promotion of social cohesiveness and constructive social change are all important functions of religious and spiritual groups.

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