



## Spirituality and Mental Health among Public Primary School Teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

ADAMU AHMED

Gombe State University, Gombe, Nigeria

MUSTAPHA UMAR

Kashim Ibrahim University, Borno State, Nigeria

S. A. TIJJANI, T.A. AZEEZ, A. ABDULSALAM,  
University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

MARDIYYAT ABDULLAHI AZA

University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital, Borno State, Nigeria

**Abstract.** This study assessed association between spirituality and mental health among teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. Spirituality is known as a factor that positively adds to many individuals' health, and the concept of spirituality found in all and societies and cultures. In a literary meaning, it can be interpreted as a way by which individual involve himself/herself in religion participation or belief in God, naturalism, meditation, humanism, family and the arts. mental health occurs when a person satisfying with life, work effectively and vehemently, manage with usual stress, and contribute positively to his or her community and society. The ability of an individual to adjust in his/her environment socially, mentally, and physically is known as mental health of such individual. A school-based cross-sectional survey design was adopted for this study. The population of this study comprises all public primary school teachers in three selected Local Government in Maiduguri; Jere, Konduga and MMC, 406, 195 and 711 respectively numbering 1,312, while the sample size is 400. Proportionate sample technique was used to ensure equal aggregate as the number of respondents in each local government differs, while availability sampling method was used to administer the questionnaire to the available teachers in the school. The name of the instrument for this study is Association between Spirituality and Mental Health. It

uses 4-point likert scale where 4 = Strongly Agree SA, 3 = Agree A, 2 = Disagree D, 1= Strongly Disagree SD. The instrument validated for content and face validity by experts in the Department of Education University of Maiduguri by specialists in Testing and Measurement, and Psychology. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Split-half reliability method. The reliability of the instrument was test at Gwange Primary School Maiduguri, Borno State among 20 teachers. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha reliability full test of 0.71 and 0.83 respectively which adjudge it reliable. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the demographic information of the respondents, mean and standard deviation were used to answered the research questions, while inferential statistics of Independent Sampled t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) were used to test the hypotheses. The result indicated that level of spiritual health among teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria is high, but poor mental health. Moreover, the result indicated that there is significant relationship between spirituality and mental health among public primary school teachers in Borno State, Nigeria ( $P < .05$ ). It was concluded that the level of spirituality among public primary school teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria is, but their mental health is considerable low.

Government, proprietors, principal may develop programs that facilitate the identification, prevention, and treatment of mental health among teachers.

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Human Spirituality, Health, Mental Health

## 1. Introduction

Human Spirituality is increasingly being proven as real scientific phenomenon and not merely a mental illusion (Rose, 2001; Seaward, 2001). Spirituality is known as a factor that positively adds to many individuals' health, and the concept of spirituality found in all and societies and cultures. In a literary meaning, it can be interpreted as a way by which individual involve himself/herself in religion participation or belief in God, naturalism, meditation, humanism, family and the arts. All these factors can influence how patients and health care providers perceive health and illness and how they interact with one another (Association of American Medical Colleges, 1999). Many studies reported that when confronted with stressful conditions, schoolteachers mostly rely on their spirituality (Matiz et al., 2020; Mirshahi & Barani, 2016). Chirico, Sharma, Zaffina and Magnavita, 2020, reported in their empirical study that teachers in public schools in different nations demonstrated how teachers' spiritual beliefs and practices were used to cope with the numerous challenges they confronted. Additionally, a prior study discovered that spirituality could mediate the relation between nature-connection and psychological well-being among Australians (Kamitsis & Francis, 2013).

According to W.H.O. 2004, mental health occurs when a person satisfying with life, work effectively and vehemently, manage with usual stress, and contribute positively to his or her community and society. The ability of an individual to adjust in his/her environment socially, mentally, and physically is known as mental health of such individual. Hence, in the educational setting, mental health of a teacher contributes immensely to effective teaching and learning, and plays essential role in achieving the objectives of teaching. Also, it carries out the quality teaching learning process in general and student's holistic development in particular. Mental inequities such as anxiety, frustrations, tensions, depression, panic among others are the principal obstacles in the way of achievements among students and teachers (Goel, 2015).

Some researchers reported that spirituality prevent mental disorder and it is positively associate with happiness, higher morale and life satisfaction (Cohen

& Koeing, 2004; MoreiraAlmeida et.al., 2006). In the study of Brady et.al. (1999), it was found that an individual who is mentally and spiritually developed is likely to have quality of life and capacity to adore life even especially during the difficult situations such as spiritual attack or illness, experiencing harsh illnesses, and stated further that spiritual people deal better with symptoms such as pain or fatigue. Sharma (2002) and Cohen and Koeing, (2004) established relationship between mental health and spirituality as the former author stated that a situation in which an individual demonstrate or show maturity, regular life, life satisfaction, self-evaluation, adjustability and absence of extremism is called mental health, while later authors explained that freedom from mental disorders such as depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia is not only mental health, but also as frequent experiences of positive emotions such as joy, contentment, and peace. It is against this background that this study was carried out to assess association between spirituality and mental health among teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.

### 1.1 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between mental health and spirituality among teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in spirituality among teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State based on gender.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference in mental health among teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State based on gender.

## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1 Design

A school-based cross-sectional survey design was adopted for this study.

### 2.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises all public primary school teachers in three selected Local Government in Maiduguri; Jere, Konduga and MMC, 406, 195 and 711 respectively numbering 1,312. By using formula  $n = z^2 pq/d^2$  discovered by Kish, 1965, a sample size of 384 was obtained, where  $n$  = desired sample size,  $z$  = S.D. at 1.96  $\equiv$  95% of confidence interval,  $p$  = prevalence rate of desired characteristic in the target population (0.5),  $q = 1-p$ ,  $d$  = degree of accuracy at 95% confidence interval = 0.05. In order

to correct for alterations or non-responses the figure was round up to 400. Proportionate sample technique was used to ensure equal aggregate as the number of respondents in each local government differs, while

availability sampling method was used to administer the questionnaire to the available teachers in the school.

**Table 1:** Population and Sample

S/N	L.G.A	Population	Sample
1.	Jere	406	119
2.	Konduga	195	57
3.	MMC	711	208
	Total	1,312	384

*Source: Borno State Universal Basic Education (UBE)*

### 2.3 Research Instrument

The name of the instrument for this study is Association between Spirituality and Mental Health. It is divided into 3 sections. Section A deals with demographic information of the respondents e.g (gender, age, years of experience). Section B deals with spirituality of the teachers. It was adapted and modified from previous study (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). For the purpose of this study, the response mode was modified from 6-likert mode to 4. It contains 20 items questionnaire with a 4-point response scale where 4 = Strongly Agree SA, 3 = Agree A, 2 = Disagree D, 1= Strongly Disagree SD. Items 1-10 evaluate the religious well-being (RWB), while items 11-20 evaluate existential well-being (EWB). The item 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,8 and 9 which are negative questions were modified to positive for easy analysis. The section C deals with Mental Health of the teachers. It was adapted from (Goldberg & Williams, 1988; Schmitz, Heckrath, Alberti & Tress, 1999) and the response mode was modified. It contains 12 items questionnaire with a 4-point response scale where 4 = Strongly Agree SA, 3 = Agree A, 2 = Disagree D, 1= Strongly Disagree SD. The criteria for determining the spirituality and mental health among the participants was obtained by sum up all the scores of the response mode across and divide it by 4. That is,  $4+3+2+1/4= 2.5$ . Olaitan (1983), stated that any score

$\geq 2.5$ , was adjudge high level of spirituality or mental health, while figure below 2.5 is considered low level of spirituality or mental health. Verbal approval was obtained from Borno State Universal Basic Education who gave us total number of teachers and permission to carry out the research work.

The instrument validated for content and face validity by experts in the Department of Education University of Maiduguri by specialists in Testing and Measurement, and Psychology. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Split-half reliability method. The reliability of the instrument was test at Gwange Primary School Maiduguri, Borno State among 20 teachers. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha reliability full test of 0.71 and 0.83 respectively which adjudge it reliable.

### 2.4 Method of Data Analyses

Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the demographic information of the respondents, mean and standard deviation were used to answered the research questions, while inferential statistics of Independent Sampled t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) were used to test the hypotheses. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 20.

3. Results

**Table 2: Demographic Information of the Respondents n=380**

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender		
	Male	170	44.7%
	Female	210	55.3%
2.	Age		
	≤ 25	42	11.1%
	26-30	40	10.5%
	31-35	58	15.3%
	36-40	59	15.5%
	41-45	75	19.7%
	46-50	53	13.9%
	≥51	53	13.9%
3.	Teaching Experience		
	> 2yrs	82	21.6%
	2-4yrs	87	22.9%
	5-7yrs	95	25.0%
	8-10yrs	73	19.2%
	≥11yrs	43	11.3%
4.	Edu. Qual.		
	NCE/DIPLOMA	123	32.4%
	HND	107	28.2%
	B.Sc./ B. Ed	96	25.3%
	PGDE	54	14.2%

Table 2 which is on demographic information of the respondents indicated that 170(44.7%) of the respondents were male, while 210(55.3%) were female teachers. The ages of the respondents revealed that 42(11.1%) of the respondents were less than or equal to 25, 40(10.5%) were between the ages of 26-30, 58(15.3%) were between the ages of 31-35, 59(15.5%) were between the ages of 36-40, 75(19.7%) were between the ages of 41-45, 53(13.9%) were between the ages of 46-50, while 53 (13.9%) of these respondents were greater than or equal to 51 years of age. The table further showed that most of these teachers had 5-7years of experience. The table also revealed that most of these teachers 123(32.4%) had NCE/DIPLOMA

**Table 3: Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWS) of the Respondents n=380**

SN	Statement	Mean	S.D	Decision
1.	I find much satisfaction in private prayer with God.	2.4	1.06	Low
2.	I believe that God loves me and cares about me.	2.6	1.06	High
3.	I believe that God is concerned about my problems.	2.6	1.02	High
4.	I believe God is impersonal and interested in my daily situations.	2.7	1.05	High
5.	I get much personal strength and support from my God.	2.3	1.04	Low
6.	My relation with God contributes to my sense of well-being.	2.8	1.00	High
7.	I have a personally meaningful relationship with God.	2.6	1.06	High
8.	I have a personally satisfying relationship with God.	2.7	1.02	High
9.	My relationship with God helps me not to feel lonely.	2.6	1.47	High
10.	I feel most fulfilled when I am in close communion with God.	2.5	1.05	High
11.	I know who I am, where I came from, or where I am going.	2.5	1.06	High
12.	I enjoyed much about life	2.5	1.05	High
13.	I feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life.	2.6	1.03	High
14.	I feel good about my future	2.5	1.05	High

15.	I have a sense of well-being about the direction of my life.	2.7	1.04	High
16.	I feel that life is not full of conflict and unhappiness.	2.4	1.09	Low
17.	I feel that life is a positive experience.	2.8	2.28	High
18.	Life do have much meaning.	2.5	1.04	High
19.	I feel comfortable about my future.	2.6	1.04	High
20.	I believe there is some real purpose for my life	2.6	1.03	High
	Total	2.6	1.1	High

Result of table 3 indicates mean and standard deviation scores of spiritual well-being among the respondents. The analysis reveals that more of the items were rated above a mean score of 2.5 by the respondents. The responses by these respondents are evident in a grand mean and SD score of 2.6 and 1.1 respectively. This implies that the level of spiritual well-being among the respondents is high.

**Table 4:** Mental Health of the Respondents  
n=380

SN	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Play useful part in things (P)	2.6	1.06	High
2.	Face up to problems (P)	2.7	1.02	High
3.	Could concentrate (P)	2.5	1.04	High
4.	Reasonably happy (P)	2.5	1.05	High
5.	Enjoying day-to-day activities (P)	2.6	1.05	High
6.	Lost sleep over worry (N)	2.3	1.02	Low
7.	Constantly under strain (N)	2.4	1.04	Low
8.	Difficulty in decision making (N)	1.9	0.87	High
9.	Could not overcome difficulties (N)	2.4	1.06	Low
10.	Unhappy and depressed (N)	2.7	1.06	High
11.	Felt worthless (N)	2.4	1.03	Low
12.	Lost self-confidence (N)	2.1	0.99	Low
	Total Mean/SD	2.4	1.02	Low

Result of table 4 indicates mean and standard deviation scores of mental health among the respondents. The analysis reveals that more of the items were rated above a mean score of 2.5 by the respondents. The responses by these respondents are evident in a grand mean and SD score of 2.4 and 1.02 respectively. This implies that the level of mental health among the respondents is moderately low.

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between mental health and spirituality among teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State.

**Table 5:** Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of relationship between Spirituality and Mental Health among Public Primary School Teachers in Borno State, Nigeria.

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev	N	df	R	Prob	Decision
Spirituality	2.97	0.289	380	378	1*	0.000	Rejected
Mental Health	2.15	0.210	380				

Df =378, r=1, prob.=0.000

Table 5 indicated that spirituality has a mean of 2.97 and standard deviation of 0.289; also, mental health has mean of 2.15, and standard deviation of 0.210. Correlation coefficient (r) value of 1 indicates a strong positive correlation between spirituality and mental health. The low p-value (0.000) suggests that this correlation is statistically significant, further supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis. This shows that the stated hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between spirituality and mental health among public primary school teachers in Borno State, Nigeria was rejected. Hence, there is significant relationship between spirituality and mental health among public primary school teachers in Borno State, Nigeria (P<.05).

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in spirituality among teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State based on gender.

Table 4 Shows Summary of Independent Sample t-test on Mental Spirituality among Teachers in Public Primary Schools in Borno State, Maiduguri Based on Gender.

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P-value	Decision
Mental Health	Male	170	2.7597	.2651	378	1.942	0.150	retained
	Female	210	2.6480	.2460				

t= 1.942, df=378, P-value=.150

Table 4 contain information on spirituality among teachers in public primary schools in Borno State, Maiduguri based on gender. Independent sample t-test was applied to test the null hypothesis. The result indicated that there is no significant difference in spirituality of public primary school teachers in Borno State, Maiduguri based on gender (P>0.05). Hence, the null hypothesis was retained.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference in mental health among teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State based on gender.

Table 4 Shows Summary of Independent Sample t-test on Mental Health among Teachers in Public Primary Schools in Borno State, Maiduguri Based on Gender.

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P-value	Decision
Mental Health	Male	170	2.6497	.2652	378	1.952	.520	retained
	Female	210	2.5960	.4682				

t=-.496, df=359, P-value=.620

Table 4 contain information on mental health among teachers in public primary schools in Borno State, Maiduguri based on gender. Independent sample t-test was applied to test the null hypothesis. The result indicated that there is no significant difference in mental health of public primary school teachers in Borno State, Maiduguri based on gender (P>0.05). Hence, the null hypothesis was retained.

#### 4. Discussion

This study assessed association between spirituality and mental health among teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. The result indicated that level of spiritual health among teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria is high. These respondents know and belief that their religious engagement contribute to their better health condition by making happy, excited, unnecessary aggression which free them from stress and contribute to their live satisfaction positively. This could be attributed to the fact that in Nigeria and Africa at large people practice religion and hold on to it tenaciously (2001). This is in line with the study of Bansal, Maroof, Parashar, et al (2008) who conducted study among Northern India doctors, found that among doctors of North India, more than 65% had very strong belief in the spiritual dimension of health; 55.22% believed in the preventive role of spirituality; 80% believed in the curative role of spirituality and a similar proportion held the view that spirituality has an important role in dayto-day patient care; and 92.5% wanted to know more about the scientific work being

done in the field of spirituality. The result of this study also similar to previous study conducted by Mohamed, Roslan, Zaremohzzabieh & Ahrari (2022), who reported that schoolteachers who had a strong connection to nature were less likely to experience burnout, and spirituality acted as a buffer in the relationship between connection to nature and burnout.

The level of mental health among the respondents is moderately low. This is consistence to the study of Bauer et al. 2007; Dagar and Mathur, 2016; Zhang, Deng, and Li, 2006; Lei, 2007; Nagai, Tsuchiya, Toulopoulou, and Takei (2007) pinpointed that psychological problems are more serious among female teachers than male teachers. Thus, it indicates that both male and female teachers suffer more from mental problems. However, Medmood, Inamullah and Çerçikaya, (2022), who conducted study on teacher's mental health: a descriptive study of subject specialist teachers at higher secondary level in Pakistan, and reported that both male and female teachers rarely suffer from mental problems and physical problems. Also, both the groups possessed better mental health. However, there is no significant difference between mental health of male and female teachers. The disagreement in the study could be attributed to differences in job satisfaction.

There is significant relationship between spirituality and mental health among public primary school teachers in Borno State, Nigeria (P<.05). This means

that the higher the level of spirituality the higher the mental health of these teachers. More accurately there is conclusive evidence that spirituality leads to mental health. Moreover, spirituality of individuals stimulates mental health, and spiritual individuals enjoy better mental health status. The result of this study buttresses the study of Govind and Amalor (2015), who carried out study on mental health in relation to spirituality among adolescents, and discovered that there is a significant positive correlation between mental health and spirituality ( $r=0.274$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). This similar to the previous study of Hill and Pargament, (2003). They reported that spiritual people may draw strength, comfort, and confidence from their personal relationship with God and feel less loneliness, depression, and stress in their lives.

The result of this study indicated that there is no significant difference in spirituality of public primary school teachers in Borno State, Maiduguri based on gender ( $P>0.05$ ). This is related to the previous study that discovered that males 132.90 and female 133.27 students do not differ in their spiritual qualities. That is there is no significant gender difference with regard to spirituality. But it was observed that males and females differ in self-esteem dimension of spirituality (Govind & Amalor, 2015). Similarly, when the authors compare the respondents in terms of locations (rural and urban), the observed that the mean of spirituality score of rural students is 131.24 and that of urban students is 133.83. The obtained t-value is -0.793 is not statistically significant which indicates that the difference is not significant. The result indicates that rural students have equally spiritual tendency with the urban students. The result of this study does not support the study of Gautam, Dwivedi, Jain et al (2017), who noticed that females inculcate spiritual practices in their day-to-day life more in comparison to males. People doing spiritual practice for at least 10 years belong to good or moderate health status & enjoy other benefits more than those not doing any such practice. The result of this study also showed that there is no significant difference in mental health of public primary school teachers in Borno State, Maiduguri based on gender ( $P>0.05$ ). This is related to study of Medmood, Inamullah and Çerçikaya, (2022), who stated that their respondents displayed that there is no significant difference among the mental health status of male and female teachers, which means that the mental health of male teachers is significantly related to the mental health of female teachers. The finding of this study is also concurred with the study of Srivastava and Asthana (2008); Pachaiyappan (2012) revealed that, as compared to male teachers, female teachers have a high level of mental health. The researcher believes that male and female teachers have

the same profession, they deal with same students but with different strategies and have same workload. Therefore, male and female teachers have no differences in mental health. However, the result of the current study disagrees with study of Mundia (2013) who reported that his respondents differs in mental health significantly based on gender. The differences could be attributed to job motivation, job satisfaction, incentives among others.

## 5. Conclusion

It was concluded that the level of spirituality among public primary school teachers in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria is, but their mental health is considerable low. That is, they have high level of spirituality, whereas they suffer from mental health problem. Actually, the mental health problems among these respondents is considerably low.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations were made:

Government, proprietors, principal may develop programs that facilitate the identification, prevention, and treatment of mental health among teachers. Teachers may be provided with facilities like free consultancy, financial aids, etc.

A Mental Health desk for teachers may be established in every school to prevent any form of mental health problems.

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