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Correlation between sports spiritual well-being and emotional intelligence among cricketers

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Abstract

This study looks at the relationship between young cricket players' spiritual health and emotional intelligence. Both are thought to be crucial psychological tools that help athletes manage stress, regulate their emotions, and stay motivated while competing. Forty male cricket players (ages 17 to 19) with at least a year of experience from 26 Aligarh cricket academies participated in the research. Standard questionnaires were used to collect the data, and Pearson's product-moment correlation methods were used for analysis. The results indicated that spiritual well-being and emotional intelligence had a somewhat favourable connection ($r = .323$, $p = .042$). This suggests that athletes who have access to spiritual resources are more likely to exhibit goal-directed behaviour, emotional intelligence, empathy, and effective social skills, all of which may have a significant impact on both individual performance and, consequently, team success. The study's conclusions emphasize the necessity for cricket academies to include values-based training, mindfulness, and meditation into their coaching curricula. The study offers insightful information on the psychological aspects of cricket.

Keywords: Cricketers, spiritual well-being, emotional intelligence, sports, adolescent athletes

Introduction

Modern sports are no longer evaluated merely on physical training and technical proficiency. Increasingly, scholars and practitioners acknowledge that athletes' inner lives, values, beliefs, emotions, and mental frameworks play an important role. As competitive sports evolve into high-pressure professions with global attention, athletes face not just physical but also mental, emotional, and existential challenges. This is especially true in cricket, that the sport characterized by lengthy formats, high concentration demands, and the psychological burden of public expectations.

Two emerging constructs (a) sports spiritual well-being and (b) sports emotional intelligence have begun to attract scholarly interest as important determinants of athletes' success and well-being. While conventional training emphasizes that the physical and tactical aspects, sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence have direct attention toward the athlete's inner resources: their ability to find meaning, regulate emotions, build resilience, and remain composed under pressure.

In cricket, instances of players relying on meditation, prayer, breathing routines, and visualizations are well-documented (Meditation for Cricketers: A Way to Improve Focus and Mental Strength, 2025). At the same time, the ability to understand and manage emotions, both individually and collectively, is seen as a hallmark of successful cricketers and captains (The Role of Mental Fitness in Cricket Coaching, 2024). Examining the relationship between sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence is therefore vital to understanding how athletes sustain peak performance while maintaining psychological health in demanding sporting contexts. Sports spiritual well-being refers to the integration of spiritual values, practices, and beliefs within athletic life (Singh, 2015) ^[10]. Unlike general spiritual well-being, it is embedded in the context of sports and often manifests through rituals before matches, mindfulness practices, reliance on inner strength, and the pursuit of transcendence through physical performance (Krupamani & N, 2025) ^[7]. Sports emphasize spiritual well-being. Meaning and purpose of viewing sports not only as competition but as a journey of personal growth. Connection with teammates, opponents, nature, or a higher

power. Experiencing moments of “flow” where the athlete feels beyond ordinary limits. Humility, discipline, fair play, compassion, and respect for the game.

In cricket, sports spiritual well-being may be observed when players engage in silent prayers before batting, meditate to focus, or view victory and defeat as opportunities for growth rather than as mere outcomes (Verma, 2025) [13]. Legendary players like MS Dhoni, Sachin Tendulkar, and Rahul Dravid have often been described as spiritually inclined in their approach to the game demonstrating calmness, humility, and composure in high-pressure situations.

Sports emotional intelligence (Sports EI) adapts the general concept of emotional intelligence to the specific context of athletic performance. It involves the ability of athletes to perceive, interpret, regulate, and utilize emotions in sporting environments.

Self-awareness in sports: understanding one's emotional state before and during competition (Thompson, 2025) [12]. Self-regulation in sports: managing anxiety, aggression, or frustration during critical moments (Beckmann, Waldenmayer, & Wolf, 2023) [2]. Motivation in sports: sustaining effort and focus through emotional drive (JR., 2023) [6]. Empathy in sports: recognizing teammates' and opponents' emotional states, which helps in team cohesion and sportsmanship (Bedir, Agduman, Bedir, & Erhan, 2023) [1]. Social skills in sports: fostering positive relationships, communication, and leadership in the team environment. In cricket, sports EI is evident in a captain's ability to keep the team mate motivated after a poor start, a bowler maintaining composure after being hit for consecutive boundaries, or a batsman calmly constructing an innings under crowd pressure.

Sports spiritual well-being and sports EI are mutually reinforcing. Spiritual practices enhance self-awareness and regulation, directly strengthening emotional intelligence. Likewise, emotionally intelligent cricketers are better able to adopt spiritual values such as compassion, humility, and resilience. Together, they contribute to psychological balance, team harmony, and sustainable performance in cricket.

Cricket has become a demanding career where players face different situations. Intense media scrutiny. Long and tiring schedules across formats like Tests, ODIs, T20s. Pressure of expectations from millions of fans. The challenge of balancing professional and personal lives. Traditional psychological interventions such as relaxation training, goal-setting, and visualization are effective but incomplete. By incorporating sports spiritual well-being and sports EI, a more holistic framework for athlete development can be achieved.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

While psychological factors are acknowledged as critical in cricket, research specifically exploring the correlation between sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence. This study seeks to bridge that gap “Is there a significant relationship between sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence among cricket players?”

So, the study is entitled as “Correlation between sports spiritual well-being and emotional intelligence among cricketers”

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To measure the level of sports spiritual well-being among cricket players.

2. To measure the level of sports emotional intelligence among cricket players.
3. To analyse the correlation between sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence.
4. To explore how sports spiritual well-being may serve as a predictor of sports EI in cricket contexts.

1.3 Hypotheses

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** There is no significant relationship between sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence among cricket players.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** There is a significant positive relationship between sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence among cricket players.

1.4 Significance of the Study

1. **For Athletes:** Provides a pathway to enhance mental resilience, inner strength, and emotional regulation.
2. **For Coaches:** Suggests training methods that integrate mindfulness, meditation, and emotional skills.
3. **For Sports Psychologists:** Contributes new insights into the interaction of spiritual well-being and EI in sports.
4. **For Cricket as a Sport:** Promotes ethical play, team harmony, and long-term athlete well-being.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The present study employed a descriptive correlational research design. This design was chosen to examine the natural relationship between two constructs, sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence, within a defined group of cricket players.

The descriptive component allowed for the assessment of the levels of sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence among players, while the correlational component sought to establish whether a statistically significant relationship exists between them. This approach is widely used in sports psychology research where the aim is to understand associations between psychological traits and athletic outcomes.

2.2 Population of the Study

The population of the present study consisted of male cricket players aged 17 to 19 years who were selected from different cricket academies in Aligarh. Cricket is one of the popular sports in Aligarh, with several academies nurturing the young talent, and the players are representing at the national and international level.

The focus on the 17-19 age group was intentional, as this represents a formative stage in cricket careers. At this stage, athletes are transitioning from adolescence into early adulthood, encountering emotional, social, and competitive challenges. Their psychological characteristics, particularly spiritual well-being and emotional intelligence, may play an important role in determining resilience, motivation, and long-term sporting success also.

2.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The final sample consisted of 40 male cricket players from 26 cricket academies in Aligarh. Minimum of 1 year playing experience in cricket academy. The participants were actively enrolled in one of the 26 recognized cricket

academies in Aligarh. A random sampling method was employed. The researcher contacted and visited the different academies of Aligarh and selected one on a random basis.

2.4 Tools Used

To measure the two main constructs, standardized and adapted instruments were used:

1. **Sports Spiritual well-being Scale:** Spiritual Well-Being is measured using the 'Sports Spiritual Well-Being Scale' (2024), developed by Mohammad Sharique *et al.*
2. **Sports Emotional Intelligence:** Emotional Intelligence is assessed through the 'Sports Emotional Intelligence Test' (2008), developed by C. D. Agashe and R. D. Hilde.

2.5 Procedure of Data Collection

Formal approval was obtained from the heads/coaches of the 26 cricket academies in Aligarh. Players were briefed about the purpose of the study, confidentiality measures, and their voluntary right to participate. Prepared by the researcher to capture participants' age, years of playing experience, academy name, and playing role (batsman, bowler, all-rounder, wicketkeeper) as demographic information. Written informed consent was collected from all participants (and from academy heads as guardians for under-18 players).

2.6 Statistical Analysis

The collected data were coded and entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The following analyses were performed:

In descriptive Statistics, mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum for levels of sports spiritual well-being and sports EI. For correlation analysis Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between sports spiritual well-being and sports EI.

3. Results

The result was drawn by using the above-mentioned statistics.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence of cricketers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sports spiritual well-being	40	67	122	102.95	13.066
Sports emotional intelligence	40	65	195	107.93	30.474

The table 1 presented above displays the descriptive statistics of two key psychological constructs measured among a sample of 40 participants: sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence of cricketers. Descriptive statistics are useful as they summarize and present data in a meaningful way, offering insights into the distribution, central tendency, and variability of the collected responses. The variables considered here are important dimensions in the domain of sports psychology, where spiritual well-being relates to the deeper sense of purpose, connectedness, and meaning experienced by cricketers, while emotional intelligence pertains to the

ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively within sporting contexts.

The first row of the table reports the descriptive statistics for sports spiritual well-being of cricketers. The results show that the number of valid cases (N) included in this analysis is 40, which indicates that data was collected from 40 participants without any missing values for this variable. The scores on spiritual well-being range from a minimum of 67 to a maximum of 122. This suggests that there is considerable variability in the level of spiritual well-being among the cricketers studied, with some reporting relatively lower well-being while others showed significantly higher values. The mean value, which represents the average score, was 102.95. This indicates that, on average, participants tend to score in the higher range of spiritual well-being. The standard deviation was 13.066, reflecting a moderate degree of dispersion of scores around the mean. A standard deviation of this magnitude implies that while most participants scored close to the average, there were still some who deviated substantially in either direction, indicating diversity in spiritual well-being within the sample.

The second row of the table pertains to sports emotional intelligence of cricketers. Similar to the previous variable, the number of valid participants (N) was 40, confirming complete data for this measure as well. The scores for emotional intelligence showed a much wider range, with the minimum score at 65 and the maximum score reaching 195. This wide variation suggests that emotional intelligence levels among athletes vary greatly, with some showing very low levels while others possess very high levels of this attribute. The mean score was 107.93, slightly higher than the mean for spiritual well-being. This indicates that on average, cricketers reported relatively high emotional intelligence, which could be an important resource for managing stress, handling competition pressures, and maintaining team dynamics. However, the standard deviation for this variable was 30.474, which is considerably larger than that observed for spiritual well-being. Such a high standard deviation points to a large spread in the data, meaning that while some participants scored close to the average, others deviated widely, reflecting substantial individual differences in emotional intelligence.

Table 2: Correlations among sports spiritual well-being, and sports emotional intelligence of cricketers

Correlations		Sports spiritual well-being	Sports emotional intelligence
Sports spiritual well-being	Pearson Correlation	1	0.323*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.042
Sports emotional intelligence	N	40	40
	Pearson Correlation	0.323*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.042	
	N	40	40

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The central objective of this research was to examine the relationship between sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence among cricket players. Statistical analysis was performed on data collected from 40 male cricket players aged 17-19 years, each with a minimum of

one year's playing experience from 26 academies in Aligarh.

The results reported below are derived from Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation, as presented in the SPSS output table. The findings highlight the degree of association between the two psychological variables and provide insights into the interplay between spiritual well-being and emotional intelligence in the context of competitive sports.

Table no 2 shows the relationship between sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence. Pearson correlation coefficient (r) = 0.323. Significance value (p) = 0.042. N (sample size) = 40. These results indicate a positive, statistically significant correlation between the two constructs at the 0.05 level.

The Pearson correlation coefficient r = 0.323 lies between 0 and 1, which indicates a positive correlation. However, the value falls within the low to moderate range of correlation strength. Magnitude (0.323): Indicates that the relationship is not very strong, but it is meaningful enough to suggest.

Positive sign (+) suggests that as sports spiritual well-being increases, sports emotional intelligence also tends to increase. Players who report higher spiritual orientation in sports tend to demonstrate greater emotional awareness, regulation, and social competence (Contributors, 2024).

The p -value (Sig. 2-tailed) = 0.042 indicates that the probability of obtaining such a correlation by chance is less than 5%. Since $p < 0.05$, the relationship is statistically significant. This means we can confidently reject the null hypothesis ("there is no significant correlation between sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence") and accept the alternative hypothesis ("there is a significant positive correlation").

4. Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between sports spiritual well-being and sports emotional intelligence among cricket players aged 17-19 years, each with a minimum of one year of playing experience from 26 academies in Aligarh. The findings revealed a moderate positive correlation ($r = .323, p < .05$), indicating that higher levels of sports spiritual well-being are associated with greater sports emotional intelligence. This result provides important insights into the psychological dimensions of cricket and highlights the interplay between spiritual orientation and emotional competence.

The moderate positive correlation suggests that spiritual well-being does not completely determine emotional intelligence, but it plays a meaningful role in shaping it. Cricketers who engage with their sport in a spiritually enriching way perceiving cricket as meaningful, aligning with ethical values, and experiencing connection or transcendence tend to demonstrate stronger emotional intelligence skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social competence.

This aligns with the notion that spiritual well-being provides athletes with an inner foundation or "anchor" that supports emotional stability, especially in competitive contexts characterized by stress and uncertainty. In cricket, where players must endure long matches, face unpredictable outcomes, and manage public scrutiny, the ability to regulate emotions is vital. The findings imply that spiritual well-being may serve as a protective and enhancing factor for emotional intelligence in young cricketers.

The relationship found in this study resonates with earlier research across both psychology and sports science. Studies by Emmons (2000) ^[4] and Pargament (2007) ^[9] suggest that spiritual well-being fosters self-regulation and meaning-making, which are core components of emotional intelligence. Goleman (1995) ^[5] emphasized that individuals with spiritual grounding often display enhanced empathy and interpersonal skills. Watson and Nesti (2005) ^[14] highlighted the role of spiritual well-being in athletes' coping strategies and motivation. More recent studies. Thus, the present findings support and extend previous literature, specifically applying it to cricket players in the Indian context.

Cricket is unique compared to many other sports due to its duration, complexity, and cultural prominence in India. Emotional intelligence is critical in scenarios such as: A batsman managing pressure during the final overs. A bowler controlling aggression after conceding boundaries. A captain empathizing with teammates after a loss.

Spiritual well-being may strengthen these emotional responses by offering perspective (seeing failure as learning), promoting discipline, and reinforcing values like teamwork and humility. The moderate correlation suggests that while spiritual well-being is not the sole determinant, it meaningfully complements other psychological skills in cricket performance.

5. Conclusion

The study contributes to the growing recognition of spiritual well-being and emotional intelligence as important psychological resources in sports. The finding of a moderate, significant correlation ($r = .323, p < .05$) suggests that while spiritual well-being does not entirely determine emotional intelligence, it meaningfully enhances it. For young cricketers, spiritual grounding may provide resilience, perspective, and motivation qualities that translate into improved emotional intelligence and, potentially, better performance on the field.

By integrating spiritual well-being-oriented practices into cricket coaching, academies can promote not only technical excellence but also the holistic well-being of players. This study, though limited in scope, highlights the importance of nurturing both the inner and outer dimensions of athletes for sustainable success in cricket.

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