

# Fear Of Covid-19 And Hope: Mediating Role Of Spirituality

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## Abstract

**Objectives:** This study investigated the mediating role of spirituality between fear of covid-19 and hope among general population. It was assumed that fear of corona may create hopelessness among adult population while spiritual orientation might buffer the role of hopelessness. It was also assumed that in adult population, fear was likely to be the negative and spirituality to be the positive predictor of hope.

**Methodology:** Quantitative research design was followed and the convenient sampling technique was used. A sample of N=180, consisting of both, men and women were approached through google form, containing consent, demographics, fear of COVID-19, daily spiritual experience (DSE) and adult hope scale (AHS). Reliability of the scales were  $\alpha$  .71, .85, .85 respectively. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used to assess relationship among fear of COVID-19, spirituality and hope. Linear regression was applied to assess the fear of corona virus and spirituality as the predictors of hope and spirituality. Mediation analysis (through) Process was applied to investigate the spirituality to be the mediator between fear and hope.

**Results:** Positive relationship among fear of corona virus, spirituality and hope was identified. Fear of corona virus and spirituality emerged as predictors of hope. Mediation analysis indicated that the spirituality mediates the relationship between hope and fear of COVID-19.

**Conclusion:** It is concluded from results that due to covid-19, the adult population, have fear of corona virus and are losing hope, but people with good spiritual foundation have less fear and

better levels of hope. Fear of covid-19 is higher in men as compared to women, whereas the level of hope is more elevated in women. Furthermore, there is a negative relationship among religiosity, hope and fear of COVID - 19. Furthermore, spirituality has an indirect effect on hope.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Hope, Spirituality, Fear

## INTRODUCTION

According to a Gallup International Snap Poll, (2020) the fear of being ill by the coronavirus has taken over individuals across the world and 3 in 5 (61%). Pakistanis also claim that they are afraid that they or any of their family member may get diseased by the virus. The anxiety and concerns in society are universally affecting every individual to varying extents. Recent evidence reflects that individuals who are kept in segregation and quarantine experience significant distress in the form of anxiety, anger, confusion and post-traumatic stress symptoms. Globally, 67% of the people investigated, agreed that they are afraid of being infected by the Coronavirus while 29% said that they are not afraid that they or someone in their family will be infected by the Coronavirus<sup>1</sup>. Comparing Pakistan's figure with the global average figure, Pakistan ranks higher than 9 countries in terms of fear of the Coronavirus and lower than 17 countries (Gallup International association & impetus Research, 2020).

In addition to threatening human health, COVID-19 has an adverse psychological effect on human populations. Consequences of quarantine, lockdown, fear of illness, anxiety of losing the loved ones, and depression that follows the loss of a friends or family members are examples of these factors<sup>2</sup>. Covid-19 has a negative impact on people's health and well-being, causing fear, fatigue, and anxiety<sup>3</sup>. Fear easily manipulated emotion that mobilizes energy in response to a perceived threat. On the other hand, it may not be compliant with the actual danger, and this condition could be detrimental of personal and social implications. Fear of Covid-19 is also linked to hopelessness and life instability. When there are a lot of unknown factors, it is additionally necessary for people to control their tension and anxiety<sup>4</sup>. Fear of the coronavirus is said to be related to intolerance to confusion in particular, but individuals with high levels of hope are more confident, happier, and hopeful, and have stronger coping strategies for achieving their goals. Emotions represent their perceived level of optimism<sup>5</sup>. Hope is associated to dealing with uncertainty, finding value in life, pessimism, and well-being, according to research<sup>6</sup>. It can be inferred that people who have a high sense of optimism and a positive outlook on life are more resilient and able to deal with stressful circumstances.

Spirituality can be a sturdy sedative in communities witnessing the epidemic in the current global scenario, where the number of COVID-19 deaths is reorganized and reported regularly<sup>7</sup>. Several sects, amid their shortcomings, evoke optimistic feelings in their adherents. Humans benefit from spirituality and faith during periods of bereavement and crisis<sup>8</sup>. While epidemiologists have been attempting for a long time to address the question, whether spirituality is associated with mortality and health<sup>9</sup>, Spirituality is seen to be favorably by the majority of internal medicine

professionals<sup>10</sup>. Spirituality has a positive effect on human mental health by performing health assessments, delivering social care, and increasing self-efficacy and community solidarity<sup>11</sup>. For example, if one knows that the plague or another harmful infectious disease has spread to in a country, then one<sup>14</sup> should avoid going there; however, if it spreads to the country where one lives, then one should remain at home in that city,” said the Prophet of Islam nearly 1,400 years ago<sup>12</sup>. “Cleanliness is half the faith, and faith takes a man to heaven,” said the Prophet of Islam in another part. Furthermore, ablution (wudhu) is an Islamic washing rituals in which a person washes his hands, forearms, lips, nose, ears, face, hair, ankles, and feet three times each before each prayer, five times a day<sup>13</sup>. As a result, it contains all of the most important strategies for coping with COVID-19. Cult beliefs have been linked to a variety of negative health outcomes, according to studies<sup>14</sup>.

Global analysis on the COVID-19 epidemic and spirituality based on survey of literature from 1978 to 2019 suggests through electronic evidence and valid websites such as PubMed, Medline, Springer, Elsevier, Science Direct and Scopus that spirituality produced mental relaxation during the crisis of COVID-19 and other diseases<sup>1</sup>. Any of the theological ideas offered to fight COVID-19 may be useful. Moreover, general population having spiritual orientation has less fear of coronavirus. Women are more prone to fear than men and adolescents have more fear of coronavirus as compared to young adults<sup>15</sup>. Recent researchers provide evidence for spirituality as a significant predictor of hope in different populations. Spirituality and understanding of the cognitive components, help people to develop hope and commitment. Furthermore, religious orientation contributes in development of hope, happiness and found as a predictor of hope<sup>16</sup>.

Recent scenario is very challenging. It is effecting people’s daily life and their future planning. They are afraid of having corona virus which may affect them adversely. Furthermore, people are worried about their education, career, future and socio-economic challenges which may affect their hope negatively. Present study will help to understand that how fear, spirituality and hope are interrelated. Most of recent researches are related to the sufferings of corona virus patients, their physical and mental health and their coping strategies. This research will provide a base line for the upcoming research which will lead to spiritual dimension of positivity.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

This research was conducted during 2020 in Lahore. Correlational research design and convenient sampling was used in this study. A sample of N=180 adult, men and women from general population with the age range from 19 to 35 years was taken in this research. Adults faced more fear and uncertainty about their future. People facing some trauma or who had recently gone through some tragedy were not included. Individuals with any mental or physical disability were also excluded from the study. Covering letter was shared to explain the aim of this study. Consent form was also attached with the protocol. The demographic form was developed by the researchers

to acquire the required information regarding gender, age, birth order, qualification, family system, nature of job, marital status, socio economic status, physical condition and family background.

Daily spiritual experience scale (DSES) <sup>17</sup> (16 items), fear of COVID-19 Scale<sup>18</sup> and Adult hope Scale (AHS) <sup>19</sup> (12 items), was used in this research. All these scales have high reliability and validity. Due to pandemic situation (covid-19) data was collected online. For this purpose, a google form of questionnaire was developed. Proper instructions for filling the form were given in the beginning of the google form and introduction of the research was also explained. Participants were asked to read the consent form in which participants were ensured that the information they provided would be kept confidential, and their results would be used only for research purposes. Data was analyzed through SPSS-21 and Process,  $p < .05$  was considered statistically significant.

## RESULTS

Descriptive analysis was applied to investigate the demographical characteristics of the sample. A total of 60 men and 120 women participated in this study. The average age of the participants was 25.80 years. The number of married participants was 63 and 117 were unmarried. Reliability analysis was run to identify the Cronbach Alpha's of the measuring scales. The scales applied for measuring were the Reliability of fear of covid- 19 scale, Daily spiritual experience scale (DSES) and Adult hope Scale (AHS), whose Cronbach Alpha was .85, .71 and .85 respectively. Regression analysis revealed that fear and spirituality are the predictors of hope. Overall model explained 23% variance (Table 2). Results also indicated the existence of direct relationship between hope and religiosity but an inverse relationship was found in religiosity, hope and fear of COVID-19 (Table 3). Further, the total effect is significant and direct effect of Hope on Fear of Covid is also significant ( $B = .39, t = 3.96, p < .001$ ). Whereas, the indirect effect of hope on fear of covid is also significant as zero is within the lower and upper 95% confidence interval limits (LLCI =  $-.05$ , ULCI =  $.12$ ) (Table 4).

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics regarding fear, spirituality and hope (N=180)**

Variables	K	M	SD	A	Actual Min	Max	Potential Min	Max	Ske w	Kurtosis
Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale	15	32.6 7	9.46	.85	1	90	17	62	.90	.40
Fear of COVID-19 Scale	7	21.7 8	7.72	.71	1	35	7	85	2.50	21.30
Adult Hope Scale	12	70.0 6	12.2 6	.85	1	96	29	94	-.41	-.079

Note: K represents no. of items, M= means, SD= standard deviation,  $\alpha$ = reliability value

**Table 2. Correlation among study variables (N=180)**

Variables	Fear	Spirituality	Hope
Fear	-	-.07	.27**
Spirituality		-	.42**
Hope			-

**Table 3. Fear and Spirituality as predictors of Hope in both genders (N=180)**

Variables	B	B	F	R2
Fear	.39	.24**		
Spirituality	-.55	.41**		
			33.61	.23

Note: R=.48, Adjusted R=.23

**Table 4. Mediating role of spirituality between fear of covid-19 and hope (N=180)**

Total effect	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
.43	.11	3.97	.0001	.21	.035
Direct effect	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
.39	.09	3.96	.0001	.19	.59
Indirect effect	SE	Range			
.03	.04	-.05 - .12			

## DISCUSSION

The present research was conducted to explore the relationship between fear of Covid-19, spirituality, and hope, in adult population men and women of Lahore, Pakistan. A relationship among fear of covid-19, spirituality, and hope, in adult population was assumed. Findings revealed a positive correlation between fear of covid-19 and hope ( $r=.42$ ), spirituality and hope ( $r=.27$ ). These results are in line with the findings of a recently conducted study, which reported that spirituality has a positive effect on human mental health. It helps in performing health assessments, delivering social care, and increasing self-efficacy and community solidarity<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, humans benefit from spirituality and faith during periods of bereavement and crisis<sup>8</sup>.

Fear and spirituality were assumed as the predictors of hope in adult population. The results showed that fear and spirituality are significant indicators of hope. Fear of Covid-19 is linked to hopelessness and instability of life. When there are a lot of unknowns, it's much more necessary for people to control their tension and anxiety<sup>4</sup>. Same results were found in a latest research, which reported that fear of Covid-19 was linked to hopelessness and life instability. When there are a lot of unknowns, it's much more necessary for people to control their tension and anxiety<sup>4</sup>. These findings are in line with the recent global analysis<sup>2</sup>. He based his survey on the literature from 1978 to 2019, to investigate COVID-19 epidemic and spirituality. Electronic evidence and valid

websites such as PubMed, Medline, Springer, Elsevier, Science Direct and Scopus were used. The findings revealed that spirituality produce mental relaxation during the crisis of COVID-19 and other diseases.

In the present study spirituality emerged as the mediator between fear of covid-19 and hope. Spirituality has a significant effect on fear. Individuals who adopt spiritual approach are less likely to develop fear, as spirituality helps individuals in strengthening their personalities. Literature suggests that spirituality is one of the coping strategies used by the adult population. The results show that spirituality mediates the relationship between hope and fear of covid-19, indicating that the hope effects fear through spirituality. Spirituality along with hope, helps in reducing the fear of covid-19 in adult population. The results are also supported by the previous literature as it suggests that the spirituality mediates when people encounter adversity in their life and help to endorse hope in them. Spirituality is a valid resource in identification of significant paradigms in health studies. Spirituality and hope are considered for improving the individual's abilities to manage with the severe health consequences. Spirituality plays a significant mediating role by facing the demanding challenges and hope <sup>20</sup>.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is concluded from this study that adult men and women had fear of covid-19 on a moderate level and felt hopelessness in this recent situation. Fear of covid-19 and spirituality are important indicators of hope. People who adopt spirituality lead to hope, during the covid-19 pandemic. The results conclude that the people who were spiritually well oriented, had higher level of hope and less fear.

## **LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The author researched on limited sample size, but future studies can be conducted through increasing the sample size. The study was quantitative in nature, but qualitative or mixed method approach can help us to understand the constructs in deeper sense. The future studies can also study gender differences on the study variables that will provide vast information about the differences on fear of covid-19, hope, and spirituality.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY**

Fear of covid-19 is an issue that needs to be deeply studied related to hope, fear, and spirituality among individuals passed through covid-19 pandemic. This paper reflects the needs of counselors and psychotherapists to psycho-educate people about the ways to deal with this fear. Besides, Islamic psychologists should motivate people to involve in the religious practices to combat with the fear of covid-19 and increase hope.

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