Mediating Role of Religiosity in the Relationship between Coronavirus Stress and Life Satisfaction among University Students of Pakistan

Sumbal Mehmood [1] and Umm-e-Rubab Kazmi [2]

1. MS Health Psychology
Department of Applied Psychology,
Lahore College for Women University, Lahore,
Pakistan.
Email: sumbalmehmood7@gmail.com

2. PhD Psychology
Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Psychology
Lahore College for Women University, Lahore,
Pakistan.
Email: kazmi_rubab@yahoo.com
*Corresponding author
ORCID #. 0000-0002-2249-1977

ABSTRACT

The outbreak of COVID-19 had a major effect on the mental and physical health of students. This study aimed to explore the mediational role of religiosity between coronavirus stress and life satisfaction among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. A cross-sectional quantitative research design was used. Public and private sector university students (N= 300) with the age range of 18-25 years were selected through purposive sampling from February 2021 to June 2021. The results indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between religiosity and life satisfaction and a significant negative relationship between coronavirus stress and life satisfaction in youth. Danger and contamination subscales were negative predictors of life satisfaction. Furthermore, religiosity was a significant mediator between coronavirus stress in terms of danger, contamination, and life satisfaction. Campus counselors might consider incorporating the role of religiosity in their intervention plans to reduce the levels of coronavirus stress and consequently enhance students` life satisfaction. This study also has implications for supporting youth with interventions to improve positive aspects of religiosity and life satisfaction given Pakistan's high infectious disease burden and chronic disease burdens.

Keywords: COVID-19, religiosity, life satisfaction, intervention, and counseling plans.

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of COVID-19, restrictions on travel, and the closure of institutions across the world significantly influenced the educational system, socialization, and psychological health of students (Odriozola-González et al., 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a severe acute respiratory syndrome (Wang et al, 2020). Announced as a global pandemic, governments around the globe took precautionary measures to control its spread. The educational sector suffered from a crisis due to closure at the peak of each COVID-19 wave. Closure resulted in more than 81% of students not attending their colleges and universities all over the world (Cohen et al., 2020). Students, who had under-privileged backgrounds, experienced more negative impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, due to a reduction in family income, limited resources, costly internet packages, and unfamiliarity with modern technology.

Students' mental health and well-being were also adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, disruptions in their daily routine, lack of physical activity, altered sleep patterns, and social isolation (Aucejo et al., 2020). The effects were seen not only in terms of physical health but also in the way of life, religious views, and personal habits. This was partly because of the social isolation and restrictions that were put in place in every nation (Ghosh et al., 2020). While the biological significance of COVID-19 is undeniable, the global pandemic resulted in psychological and societal elements that shape people's behavior. The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the worst health events in recent years (Urzúa et al., 2020). Some researchers found a decrease in positive emotions (happiness) and life satisfaction, which is regarded as one of the most crucial constructs for assessing subjective well-being (Li et al., 2020). There has also been a noticeable rise in depressive and anxiety symptoms, along with other emotions including outrage, annoyance, and a sense of social danger.

The COVID-19-induced stress symptoms in the general population were attributed to coronavirus stress. Anxiety about being infected, contamination by non-natives who might spread the virus, and traumatic stress about the pandemic are all symptoms of coronavirus-induced stress (Taylor, 2019). People experienced anxiety, sadness, and panic and tried to use a variety of strategies to cope with the pandemic (Fullan, 2020). A decrease in well-being and an increase in insomnia symptoms were also found during the COVID-19 outbreak. To cope, some people tried to engage themselves in creative activities, leisure activities, exercise, online earning/learning activities, yoga, prayer, and meditation (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Religiosity is a sociological term that refers to a person's involvement, interest, and participation in a variety of religious activities, devotions, and beliefs. When people face difficult events and challenges in life, religion has a significant positive influence on their well-being (Park & Adler, 2003). It serves as a philosophical perspective that impacts how individuals perceive the world, as well as how they perceive reality and suffering. Active coping and positive reframing coping techniques are linked to religion (Imperator et al., 2020). Gender, religious affiliation, and age are found to be significant predictors of life satisfaction among students (Habib et al., 2018). In this context, religiosity emerges as a crucial factor that contributes to an individual's overall life satisfaction. Physical and mental health are also significant predictors of life satisfaction (Carmella, 2015). This underscores the interconnectedness of religiosity with various dimensions of an individual's well-being, highlighting its broader impact on both the mental and physical aspects of health.

Life satisfaction is the most important aspect of the overall well-being of individuals. Many other factors contribute to life satisfaction. These include primary need satisfaction, financial status, social relationships, and resilience of individuals whereas stress, poor physical

and mental health, and unemployment cause lower life satisfaction (Kong et al., 2015; López-Ortega et al., 2016). Numerous other significant factors, both positively and negatively influence life satisfaction (Proctor et al., 2017). In the context of this study people's spirituality and religiosity, which are regarded as psychosocial resources, are assumed to be positively associated with psychological well-being and improved mental health. The scientific community generally accepts that religion is a significant determinant of an individual's health; this is especially true in the present when spiritual and religious beliefs have been demonstrated to promote mental peace and relaxation in people (Fardin, 2020). Literature reveals that an outbreak of infectious diseases reduces well-being and life satisfaction among individuals (Dymecka et al., 2021; Gawrych et al., 2021). Experience of negative and difficult life events including fear of COVID-19 also reduces life satisfaction (Gee et al., 2018; Satici et al., 2020).

The Rationale of the Study

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the psychological health and well-being of students across the world and in Pakistan. Changes in daily routine work and the closure of educational institutes due to the COVID-19 lockdown have affected the students adversely and led them to develop symptoms of coronavirus stress which affected their life satisfaction negatively. However, a major factor that contributed to increased life satisfaction and reduced stress symptoms in some students was the presence of religiosity. According to studies, religiosity helps students to reduce coronavirus stress and improve their life satisfaction. The students who use religion as a coping strategy for stress have higher life satisfaction and happiness (Carmella, 2015). There is very limited data available on coronavirus stress, religiosity, and life satisfaction among students in Pakistan. There is a need to explore this area, especially in the context of Pakistan. As Pakistan is a developing country, there are fewer facilities available to students in

the educational sector. Most of the students in Pakistan belong to rural areas where they lack internet facilities and are unable to take classes online (Sohil et al., 2021). Moreover, the poor economic conditions of Pakistan, the increase in unemployment due to COVID-19, and financial constraints added to the poor life satisfaction of students (Mahmood et al., 2021). Therefore, the present study will explore the relationship between these variables.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the relationship between religiosity and life satisfaction in university students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- To find out the relationship between coronavirus stress and life satisfaction in university students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- To find out if coronavirus stress (along with its subscales) and religiosity act as predictors of life satisfaction in university students.

- To find out if religiosity will mediate between coronavirus stress subscales (danger and contamination) and life satisfaction in university students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The pandemic has led to an increase in anxiety, fear, stress, and depressive symptoms among students. It has also caused significant changes in the lives of students by shifting their on-campus classes to online. The students who belonged to less privileged areas and families experienced more negative impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Mahmood et al., 2021). Examples of negative impacts included a reduction in family income, limited resources, and costly internet packages. Students' mental health and well-being were adversely affected by

disruptions in their daily routine, a lack of physical activity, altered sleep patterns, and social isolation (Aucejo et al., 2020).

Rodríguez-Hidalgo and colleagues (2020) explored the level of fear, stress, anxiety, and depression among graduates during lockdown. This study included 641 undergraduates, 461 females, and 179 males, from Ecuador. The results indicated a high level of anxiety, depression, and stress among undergraduate students. Female students were more frightened of COVID-19 than male students. The findings suggested that significant mental health problems, among university students during the COVID-19 lockdown were induced, which included mild to moderate symptoms of anxiety, stress, and depression. These mental health problems were identified in university students during the initial phases of the pandemic. Similarly, Dymecka and colleagues (2021) explored the relationship between sense of coherence (SOC), fear of COVID-19, health-related hardiness (HRH), and life satisfaction. The results of the study indicate that there is a negative relation between HRH, SOC, and life satisfaction. They further found that SOC and HRH were significant mediators between fear of COVID and life satisfaction.

In addition to its impact on mental health, religious practices have been associated with broader well-being outcomes. Research indicates that individuals who engage in regular religious activities often experience not only a reduction in depression but also an enhancement in overall self-esteem (Bentsen et al., 2009). Furthermore, the positive effects extend to the familial sphere, contributing to improved family dynamics and marital unity. Greeley and Hout (2006) highlight the comprehensive benefits of spirituality and religion, emphasizing their correlation with good health, increased lifespan, and overall happiness. The profound influence of religious beliefs on an individual's happiness underscores the multifaceted role of spirituality in shaping one's

subjective well-being. Notably, positive religious coping strategies have been linked to positive affect and heightened life satisfaction, underscoring the importance of an individual's adaptive engagement with their faith during challenging circumstances. Conversely, weak religious coping is associated with negative affect and dissatisfaction, emphasizing the nuanced relationship between religious practices and mental well-being.

Religious participation and social support are important factors in improving the quality of life. Social services that promote religiosity and social support may be beneficial in promoting life satisfaction (Roh & Youngstock, 2010). Religiosity helps students to reduce coronavirus stress and improve their life satisfaction. The students who use religion as a coping strategy to manage stress have a higher level of life satisfaction and happiness (Lopez-Ortega et al., 2016). Religiosity is strongly linked with improved mental health and happiness of individuals (Pomerleau et al., 2020). Religious people have fewer anxiety and depression symptoms, as well as a better ability to cope with stressors. Furthermore, the literature reveals the impact of positive and negative religious coping on the life satisfaction of students. The findings show that positive religious coping is associated with positive affect and life satisfaction, whereas negative religious coping is associated with negative affect and dissatisfaction (Roh & Youngstock, 2010).

Another study explored the relationship between fear of COVID-19 with well-being and life satisfaction through psychological distress among college students (Lathabhavan, 2023). The study was carried out among college students during the first and second waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey was given to 768 students in the first wave and 884 students in the second wave of COVID-19. Fear of COVID-19 was found to be negatively correlated with well-being and life satisfaction and positively correlated with psychological distress; the effects were more pronounced in the second wave. Additionally, fear of COVID-19, well-being, and life

satisfaction were mediated by psychological distress, and the correlations were stronger during the second wave. The study concluded that appropriate coping skills and tactics can help students get over the challenges of such a situation.

Duong (2021) explored the role of fear and anxiety of COVID-19 on psychological distress, life satisfaction, and sleep disturbances among students. The results of the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between psychological distress and sleep disturbances, however, life satisfaction is negatively correlated with psychological distress. Moreover, it was found that fear and anxiety of COVID-19 lead to reduced life satisfaction and more sleep disturbances.

Pakistan is an Islamic state with a tradition of seeking religious help in a variety of difficult situations. People have been found to use religious coping strategies in difficult times (Habib et al., 2020). Literature reveals that exposure to COVID-19, the economic conditions of the country, physical health, and activity level were found to be significant predictors of life satisfaction among students during the pandemic (Rogowska et al., 2021). Overall, there is limited data available on coronavirus stress, the role of religiosity, and life satisfaction among students in Pakistan. Therefore, the present study aimed to explore the role of religiosity in life satisfaction and coronavirus stress during the pandemic in a sample of Pakistani university students. Following were the hypotheses of the study:

H1. There would be a positive relationship between religiosity and life satisfaction in university students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

H2. There would be a negative relationship between coronavirus stress and life satisfaction in university students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

H3. Coronavirus stress with its types and religiosity would likely predict life satisfaction in university students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

H4. Religiosity would likely mediate between coronavirus stress (danger and contamination subscale) and life satisfaction in university students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional research design was employed in the present study.

Research Participants and Procedures

Participants (N=300) were selected from BS and MS programs of three public sector universities (Government College University, Punjab University, and Lahore College for Women University) and one private sector university (University of Management and Technology) of Lahore, Pakistan. Their age ranged from 18-25 years (*M*=22.06, *SD*=2.0). Most of the participants were female students (66%). The majority of the students were from the BS program (74%) and were unmarried (91%). Nearly all the participants were Muslims (96%) and most of them were living in a joint family system (60%).

Measures

Corona Virus Stress Scale

The Corona Virus Stress Scale *(*CVRS) was used to assess the level of coronavirus stress in participants (Taylor et al., 2020). The scale has 36 items and has 5 subscales [danger and contamination fear (DCF), socio-economic consequences fear (SECF), xenophobia (WP), traumatic stress (TR), and compulsive checking subscale (CCS)]. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0-4. High scores indicated a higher level of COVID stress. The Urdu-

translated CVRS was used (Adil & Tahir, 2021). The reliability of the scale was found to be significant (α=.97).

The Religious Orientation Scale

The Urdu-translated version of The Religious Orientation Scale was used to assess the nature of religious orientation among participants (Khan et al., 2016). This is a 14-item Likert-type scale. It consists of two subscales, i.e., 1-intrinsic and 2-extrinsic religious orientation measuring an individual's orientation toward religion. Extrinsic religious orientation is related to achieving some self-serving end while intrinsic orientation is related to an ultimate end. Higher scores reflect a greater level of specific religious orientation. The reliability of the original English version of intrinsic religious orientation was .83 and the reliability of extrinsic religious orientation was .69 (Allport & Ross, 1967). The Urdu version was also found to have significant reliability (α=.89), with reliability results for the sub-scales also showing significant reliability (intrinsic subscale (α=.91), and extrinsic subscale (α=.75).

Satisfaction with Life Scale

An Urdu-translated scale was used to assess the life satisfaction of participants (Butt et al., 2014). It consists of 5 items on a 7-point rating scale. The reliability of the Urdu version was significant (α= .85).

Procedure

The study was presented to and accepted by the Department of Applied Psychology Board of Studies (BOS), Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Pakistan. Authorization was obtained by the authors of the Urdu versions of scales through email. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic data was collected online using a Google survey form. The data was collected from February 2021 to June 2021. Purposive sampling was used to approach the students of the BS and

MS programs of different public and private sector universities. The students were approached via the official WhatsApp group made by their teachers to communicate with the class. The teachers were requested to share the Google survey form link in their official WhatsApp groups.

Ethical consideration

Informed consent was taken from all participants. Participants were assured about the confidentiality of their data.

Statistical analysis

Data was analyzed by using SPSS version 26. Descriptive analysis was used to check the mean and standard deviation of the demographic variables. Correlation analysis was used to find out the relationship between coronavirus stress, religiosity, and life satisfaction in university students. Linear regression was used to identify the role of coronavirus stress and religiosity in predicting life satisfaction. Independent sample t-test was used to check the difference between coronavirus stress, religiosity, and life satisfaction across the genders. Additionally, mediation analysis was run, using Process software, to explore the mediating role of religiosity between the coronavirus stress subscale (danger and contamination) and life satisfaction in university students.

Reliability Analysis Results

Table 1 presents the alpha coefficients of all study variables which show significant internal consistency of all scales along with the subscales.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Psychometric Properties of Coronavirus Stress, Religiosity and Life Satisfaction (N=300)

Variables	K	*M*	*SD*	α	Ranges Actual	Potential	Skewness	Kurtosis
Coronavirus stress total	36	58.16	30.0	.97	0-36	5-180	.359	-1.1
Danger and contamination	12	20.2	10.3	.91	1-20	4-24	.274	-1.1
Socio-economic	6	10.4	6.1	.91	0-20	3-18	.085	-1.1
Xenophobia	6	10.4	5.4	.89	1-21	2-12	.059	-.96
Traumatic stress	6	10.1	5.7	.90	1-24	3-18	.063	-1.0
Compulsive checking	6	10.7	5.6	.87	0-30	2-13	.074	-1.0
ROS total	14	31.8	10.8	.89	2-28	5-70	.923	.32
ROS intrinsic	8	19.3	8.3	.91	1-14	4-32	.291	-1.3
ROS extrinsic	6	15.8	4.8	.75	3-18	5-30	.182	-1.2
Life satisfaction	5	20.97	6.5	.85	2-10	7-35	-.333	-8.2

Note: K=no of items, M=mean, SD=standard deviation, α= reliability alpha, ROS= religious orientation scale

RESULTS

Table 2 reveals that there is a significant negative relationship between coronavirus stress along with its subscales and life satisfaction (r=-.72**, -.67**, -.62**, -.61**, -.58**, -.62**) which suggests that students who had higher coronavirus stress had low levels of life satisfaction. Findings also revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between religiosity and life satisfaction (r = .57**), which indicates that university students who used religion as a coping strategy had higher levels of life satisfaction. All the subscales of the coronavirus stress scale have a significant positive correlation with the coronavirus scale.

Table 2

Correlation among Coronavirus Stress, Religiosity, and Life Satisfaction (N=300)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Coronavirus stress total	-	.92**	.83**	.85**	.81**	.84**	-.30**	-.41**	-.40**	-.72**
Danger and contamination	-	-	.82**	.85**	.78**	.81**	-.24**	-.39**	-.36**	-.67**
Socio-economic	-	-	-	.80**	.71**	.74**	-.22**	-.30**	-.27**	-.62**
Xenophobia	-	-	-	-	.77**	.78**	-.22**	-.30**	-.24**	-.61**
Traumatic stress	-	-	-	-	-	.82**	-.16**	-.27**	-.29**	-.58**
Compulsive checking	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.22**	-.29**	-.28**	-.62**
ROS total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.46**	.40**	.57**
ROS intrinsic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.82**	.52**
ROS extrinsic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.40**
Life satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: ROS = religious orientation scale

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

The results of multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 3. The overall model explained 65% variance in the outcome variable (i.e., life satisfaction) with R^2=.65, F=91.34), p<.01. The findings revealed that only danger and contamination subscale negatively predict life satisfaction (β= -.190, p<.01) whereas religiosity positively predicts life satisfaction (β=.239, p<.01). To run the mediation analysis, only danger and contamination subscale was taken as an independent variable because it significantly predicts life satisfaction while the remaining subscales of coronavirus stress scale do not predict life satisfaction.

Table 3
Multiple Linear Regression for Coronavirus Stress subscales and Religiosity as a Predictor of Life Satisfaction

Variables	Life Satisfaction		
	B	S. E	β
Constant	21.18	.90	
Danger and contamination	-.190***	.05	-.300
Socio-economic	-.151	.07	-.139
Xenophobia	.024	.09	.020
Traumatic stress	-.108	.07	-.095
Compulsive checking	-.138	.08	-.119
Religiosity	.239**	.02	.431
R²	.65		
F	91.34		

Mediation Analysis Results

The results of Table 4 reveal the mediating role of religiosity in the relationship between danger and contamination and life satisfaction. The regression-based method (Hayes, 2017) was used to determine the mediating role of religiosity between danger and contamination subscale and life satisfaction in university students. Path 'a' significantly negatively (α= -.28, p<.001***) predicts religiosity thus indicating that higher levels of coronavirus stress of danger and contamination are associated with lower levels of religiosity. Path 'b' positively predicts religiosity (b= .23, p<.001***), indicating that higher levels of religiosity improve life satisfaction. Path 'c' was also significant (c'=-.43, p<.001***) indicating a negative relationship between danger and contamination subscale and life satisfaction. The mediation pathway of danger and contamination subscale, religiosity, and life satisfaction are presented in Figure 1.

Mehmood & Kazmi, *Forman Journal of Social Sciences* (2024) Vol. 4, Issue 1

Table 4
Role of Religiosity as a mediator between Danger and Contamination subscales and Life Satisfaction

			M(RO)		Consequent		Y(LS)	
Antecedent		β	SE	p		β	SE	p
DC (X)	A	-.28	.06	.000***	C'	-.43	.02	.000***
RO (M)		--	--	--	B	.23	.02	.000***
			R²= .06				R²= .63	
			F (18.85), p =.00***				F (253.9), p =.00***	

Note: DC= danger and contamination, RO= religious orientation, LS= life satisfaction, p<.000**
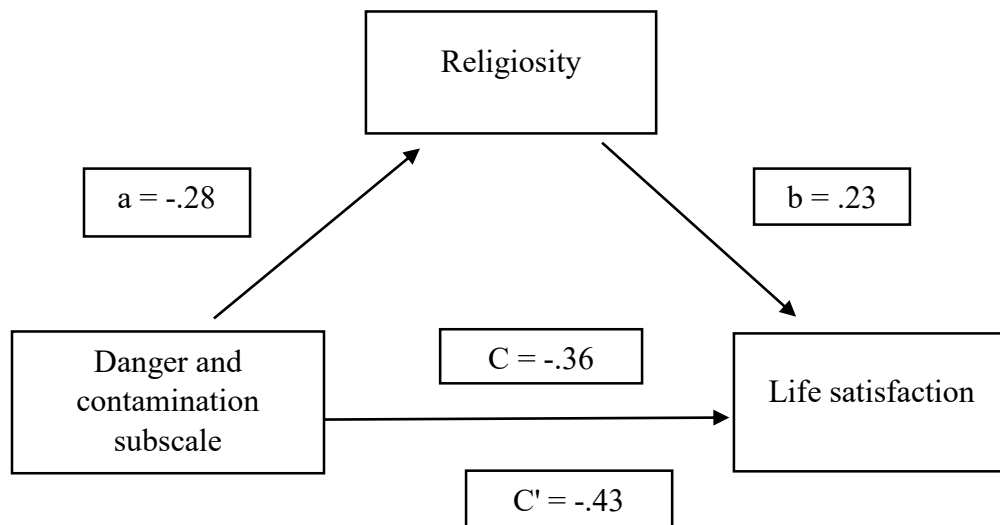

Figure 1.
*The mediation pathway of danger and contamination subscale, religiosity, and life satisfaction in university students p<.001***.*

DISCUSSION

Literature suggests that the outbreak of coronavirus affected the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of individuals across the world, especially youth, and students (Cohen et al., 2020; Odriozola-González et al., 2020; Taylor, 2019; Urzúa et al., 2020). The present study explored the relationship among coronavirus stress, religiosity, and life satisfaction in university

students during the COVID-19 outbreak. Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression, and mediation analysis were run to explore the relationship, predictive role of variables and the mediating role of religiosity in university students. The first hypothesis of the study stated that there would be a positive relationship between religiosity and life satisfaction in university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two types of religious orientations (extrinsic and intrinsic) were explored along with the overall religiosity level.

The findings of the correlation analysis revealed that both types of religious orientations along with overall religiosity have a positive relationship with life satisfaction. The students, who engage in more religious practices/coping, have better life satisfaction. The higher the level of religiosity in university students, the higher will be their life satisfaction. The research findings are consistent with the research conducted in other countries which reported that there is a significant positive relationship between religiosity and life satisfaction (Carmella, 2015; Fardin, 2020). Another study conducted in Pakistan also revealed that religious practices, behaviors, activities, and a close relationship with God are positively associated with satisfaction with life (Habib et al., 2018). The more the people are closely affiliated with God, the higher will be their life satisfaction.

The second hypothesis stated that there would be a negative relationship between coronavirus stress and life satisfaction in university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of the study reveal that there is a significant negative relationship between coronavirus stress and life satisfaction in university students. All the subscales (danger and contamination, socioeconomic, xenophobia, traumatic stress, compulsive checking) of the coronavirus stress scale have a significant negative relation with life satisfaction. Two different analyses were run (Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression). The results of correlation

analysis revealed that all the subscales had a negative correlation with life while the results of multiple linear regression revealed that only the danger and contamination subscale negatively predicted life satisfaction. These findings are consistent with literature that confirms that coronavirus stress significantly influences life satisfaction (Ahmed et al., 2020; Aucejo et al., 2020; Janon & Izhar, 2020; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2020). Other literature also revealed that fear of COVID-19 is negatively associated with life satisfaction, a sense of coherence, and hardiness (Dymecka et al., 2021).

The third hypothesis of the study stated that coronavirus stress with its types and religiosity would likely predict life satisfaction in university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of multiple linear regression revealed that the danger and contamination subscale of coronavirus stress was found to be a negative predictor of life satisfaction while religiosity was found to be a positive predictor of life satisfaction. However, the other subscales of the coronavirus stress scale did not significantly predict life satisfaction. These findings reveal that the fear of contracting an infection, and the fear of being contaminated negatively predict life satisfaction. These findings are aligned with the literature (Habib et al., 2020; Kong et al., 2015). Research also reports that the growing number of COVID-19 cases, and confirmed number of deaths daily harmed the quality of life of people (Satıcı et al., 2020). Other research confirms that fear of COVID-19 is a significant negative predictor of life satisfaction and that religiosity is a significant positive predictor of life satisfaction (Fardin, 2020; Habib et al., 2018).

The fourth hypothesis of the study stated that religiosity would likely mediate between coronavirus stress (danger and contamination subscale) and life satisfaction in university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of the analysis reveal that religiosity significantly mediates between danger and contamination and life satisfaction among students.

17

The literature suggests that religious practice lowers pandemic-related stress and improves life satisfaction. The current study also reveals that higher levels of religiosity were linked to higher levels of life satisfaction (Duong, 2021; Roh &Youngstock, 2010). The literature further reveals that religiosity is a significant mediator in the relationship between stressful life events and the psychological adjustment of individuals (Pomerleau et al., 2020).

Limitations and Suggestions

Data was collected online through Google Forms due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a small sample size. The data was only collected from Lahore, Pakistan, which reduced the generalization of results across other cities/provinces. It is recommended that in the future studies should include a qualitative portion to better understand the nature and impact of coronavirus stress on students.

CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the present study highlighted many key points that are important to consider in improving the life satisfaction of university students. The study also brings to attention the significance of the role of religiosity as a predictor of life satisfaction in youth. Based on these findings, different awareness campaigns may be designed to improve the role of religion and religious coping for youth during difficult life circumstances. College and university authorities need to organize educational workshops and seminars in which they can invite religious scholars to promote awareness regarding religious coping in times of stress, chronic illness, and infectious diseases. Collaboration with different religious institutes may be done and interactive platforms can be utilized. It is important to teach youth how to use their religious beliefs to cope with life challenges in a positive and progressive way. Religious faith and spirituality may be developed

through prayer, reading material on religion/religious books, and inspirational and motivational talks that may help youth enhance their psychological well-being and life satisfaction. Furthermore, it is essential to develop intrinsic religiosity where youth faith is motivated by internal values and beliefs. This study also has implications for supporting youth with interventions through community programs in neighborhoods and through the primary health workforce.

DECLARATION STATEMENTS

Conflicts of interests
There are no conflicts of interest between authors.

Ethical Approval
The study was approved by the Ethical Review Committee and Board of Studies, Department of Applied Psychology Lahore College for Women University, Lahore.

Funding
None.

Data Availability Statement
Data will be available upon request from the corresponding.

Acknowledgments
All authors are thankful to the participants for their participation in the research.

REFERENCES

Adil, A., & Tahir, W. (2021). *Urdu translation of COVID stress scale*. Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha, Lahore, Pakistan

Ahmed, M. Z., Ahmed, O., Aibao, Z., Hanbin, S., Siyu, L., & Ahmad, A. (2020). Epidemic of COVID-19 in China and associated psychological problems. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, 51, 102-192.

Allport, G. W., & Ross, J. M. (1967). Personal religious orientation and prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *5*(4): 432.

Aucejo, E., French, J. F., Araya, M. P. U., & Zafar, B. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on student experiences and expectations: Evidence from a survey. *Journal of Public Economics*, *191*, 104271. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2020.104271

Proctor, C., Linley, P. A., Maltby, J., & Port, G. (2017). Life satisfaction. Encyclopedia of adolescence, 2(1), s2165-s2176.

Bentsen, P., Mygind, E., & Randrup, T. B. (2009). Towards an understanding of descale education outside the classroom in a Danish context. *Education,* 37(1), 29-44.

Butt, M., Ghori, A., & Khan, S. (2014). Urdu translation of satisfaction with life scale. Department of Psychology, GC University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Carmella, A. C. (2015). After Hobby Lobby: The Religious For-Profit and the Limits of the Autonomy Doctrine. Mo. L. Rev. 2015; 80: 381.

Cohen, A. K., Hoyt, L. T., & Dull, B. (2020). A descriptive study of COVID-19–Related Experiences and Perspectives of a national sample of college students in Spring 2020.

Journal of Adolescent Health, *67*(3), 369–375.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.06.009

Duong, C. D. (2021). The impact of fear and anxiety of COVID-19 on life satisfaction: Psychological distress and sleep disturbance as mediators. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *178*, 110869. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.110869

Dymecka, J., Gerymski, R., Machnik-Czerwik, A., Derbis, R., & Bidzan, M. (2021). Fear of COVID-19 and Life satisfaction: The role of the Health-Related Hardiness and Sense of Coherence. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *12*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2021.712103

Fardin, M. A. (2020). COVID-19 Epidemic and Spirituality: A Review of the Benefits of Religion in Times of Crisis. *Jundishapur Journal of Chronic Disease Care*, *9*(2). https://doi.org/10.5812/jjcdc.104260

Fullan, M. (2020). Learning and the pandemic: What`s next?. *Prospects, 49*, 25-28. doi: 10.1007/s11125-020-09502-0

Gawrych. M., Cichoń, E., & Kiejna, A. (2021). COVID-19 pandemic fear, life satisfaction, and mental health at the initial stage of the pandemic in the largest cities in Poland. *Psychology, Health, & Medicine, 26*(1), 107–13. doi: 10.1080/13548506.2020.1861314

Gee, S. L. M., Höltge, J., Maercker, A., & Thoma, M. V. (2018). Sense of Coherence and Stress-Related Resilience: Investigating the mediating and moderating mechanisms in the development of resilience following stress or adversity. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2018.00378

Ghosh, A., Arora, B., Gupta, R., Anoop, S., & Misra, A. (2020). Effects of nationwide lockdown during COVID-19 epidemic on lifestyle and other medical issues of patients with type 2

diabetes in North India. *Diabetes & Metabolic Syndrome: Clinical Research and Reviews*, *14*(5), 917–920. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsx.2020.05.044

Greeley, A., & Hout, M. (2006). *Happiness and lifestyle among conservative Christians. The truth about conservative Christians*. Chicago, Oxford University Press.

Habib, D. G., Donald, C., & Hutchinson, G. (2018). Religion and Life Satisfaction: A correlational study of undergraduate students in Trinidad. *Journal of Religion & Health*, *57*(4), 1567–1580. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0602-6

Habib, H. A., Hussain, S., & Habib, N. A. (2020). Religious coping as a predictor of positive affect and life satisfaction during epidemic conditions of COVID-19. *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research*, 3(3), 42-48.

Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford Publications.

Imperator, C., Bersani, F. S., Massullo, C., Carbone, G. A, Salvati, A., Mazz, G., & Farina, B. (2020). Neurophysiological correlates of religious coping to stress: a preliminary EEG power spectra investigation. *Neuroscience Letters,* 728, 134-956.

Janon, N. S., & Izhar, A. C. (2020). The relationship between religiosity and psychological distress among university students during COVID-19 and Movement Control Order (MCO). *IIUM Journal of Human Sciences,* 2(2), 15-24.

Khan, A., Ghous, R., Malik, J.A. (2016). Validation of the Urdu version of religious orientation scale. *Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society, 13*(2): 8-11.

Kong, F., Ding, K., & Zhao, J. (2014). The relationships among gratitude, self-esteem, social support, and life satisfaction among undergraduate students. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *16*(2), 477–489. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9519-2

Lathabhavan, R. (2023). Fear of COVID-19, psychological distress, well-being, and life satisfaction: A comparative study on first and second waves of COVID-19 among college students in India. *Current Psychology*, *42*(23), 20203–20210. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03207-7

Li, S., Wang, Y., Xue, J., Zhao, N., & Zhu, T. (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 Epidemic declaration on psychological Consequences: A study on active Weibo users. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(6), 2032. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17062032

Lopez-Ortega, M., Torres-Castro, S., & Rosas-Carrasco, O. (2016). Psychometric properties of the satisfaction with life scale (SWLS): secondary analysis of the Mexican Health and Aging Study. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, *14*(1): 1-7.

Mahmood, Z., Saleem, S., Subhan, S., & Jabeen, A. (2021). Psychosocial reactions of Pakistani students towards COVID-19: A prevalence study. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences, 37*(2), 456-460. https://doi.org/10.12669/pjms.37.2.3063.

Odriozola-González, P., Planchuelo-Gómez, Á., Muñiz, M. J. I., & De Luis-García, R. (2020). Psychological effects of the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown among students and workers of a Spanish university. *Psychiatry Research*, *290*, 113108. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113108

Park, C. L., & Adler, N. E. (2003). Coping style as a predictor of health and well-being across the first year of medical school. *Health Psychology*, *22*(6), 6-27.

Pomerleau, J. M., Pargament, K, I., Krause, N., Ironson, G., & Hill, P. (2020). Religious and spiritual struggles as a mediator of the link between stressful life events and

psychological adjustment in a nationwide sample. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 12*(4), 451–459. doi: 10.1037/rel0000268

Rodríguez-Hidalgo, A. J., Pantaleón, Y., Dios, I., & Falla, D. (2020). Fear of COVID-19, Stress, and Anxiety in university Undergraduate Students: A Predictive Model for Depression. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *11*. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.591797

Rogowska, A. M., Ochnik, D., Kuśnierz, C., Jakubiak, M., Schütz, A., Held, M. J., Arzenšek, A., Benatov, J., Berger, R., Korchagina, E., Павлова, Ю., Blažková, I., Konečná, Z., Aslan, İ., Çınar, O., & Cuero-Acosta, Y. A. (2021). Satisfaction with life among university students from nine countries: Cross-national study during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic. *BMC Public Health*, *21*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-12288-1.

Roh, S., &Youngstock, D. (2010). *The impact of religion, spirituality, and social support on depression and life satisfaction among Korean immigrant older adults* (Doctoral dissertation, New York University).

Satıcı, B., Gocet-Tekin, E., Deniz, M. E., & Satıcı, S. A. (2020). Adaptation of the Fear of COVID-19 Scale: Its Association with Psychological Distress and Life Satisfaction in Turkey. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, *19*(6), 1980–1988. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-020-00294-0

Sohil, F., Sohail, M. U., & Shabbir, J. (2021). COVID-19 in Pakistan: Challenges and priorities. *Cogent Medicine, 8*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331205x.2021.1966179.

Taylor, S. (2019). *The Psychology of Pandemics: Preparing for the Next Global Outbreak of Infectious Disease*. UK, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Taylor, S., Landry, C., Paluszek, M. et al. (2020). Development and initial validation of the COVID stress scales. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 72, 1-7.

Urzúa, A., Vera-Villarroel, P., Caqueo-Urízar, A., & Carrasco, R. P. (2020). La Psicología en la prevención y manejo del COVID-19. Aportes desde la evidencia inicial. *Terapia Psicológica*, *38*(1), 103–118. https://doi.org/10.4067/s0718-48082020000100103

Wang, C., Pan, R., Wan, X., Tan, Y., Xu, L., Ho, C. S., & Ho, R. (2020). Immediate Psychological Responses and Associated Factors during the Initial Stage of the 2019 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Epidemic among the General Population in China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(5), 1729. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17051729